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Daily Devotional - Waiting for God to Answer

JULY 24TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Waiting for God to Answer

Psalms 17:1-6

Yesterday we learned several reasons why a prayer may seem to go unanswered. Let's consider more possibilities.

One is unconfessed sin. God promises to forgive us once we admit our action is wrong and turn away from it ([1 John 1:9](#)). But if our confession is mere lip service or we persist in ungodly ways, petitions won't be granted. An unrepentant heart always hinders our prayer life.

What about those times when our heart is right and what we ask is in line with God's will, but He remains silent? Sometimes He waits because our longing for Him is in danger of being replaced by our desire for something else. Certain petitions—such as a request for a spouse, a baby, or a loved one's healing—generate strong emotions in us. Unless we are careful, these desires could divert our attention from God. He will not share first place with anyone or anything. So sometimes He patiently waits for our focus to return to Him before He answers.

At other times, God uses delays to prepare us for future service or greater blessing. He could be protecting us from consequences we fail to see, or He may want to strengthen our trust. Strong faith means believing Him even in trials, persevering while awaiting an answer, and being confident that He always keeps His promises.

Prayer is the communication link between us and our loving Father. Instead of letting “static” block His message to us, we must confess and turn from all known sin. Then we’ll be able to hear God’s voice and obediently carry out whatever He asks.

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Daily Devotional - Avoiding Obstacles to Effective Prayer

JULY 23RD 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Avoiding Obstacles to Effective Prayer

[James 1:5-8](#)

Some of King David’s prayers are recorded in the Psalms. There we read how he praised the Lord, confessed sin, and cried out about his troubles. He also asked God to hear his

prayers and not be silent.

We all want to pray effectively like David. To do so, we must avoid certain hindrances, such as:

Wavering faith. Doubts about God's character or dependability diminish our trust in Him. Therefore, we must not allow feelings to dictate what we believe.

Wrong motives ([James 4:3](#)). Petitions motivated by selfish desires won't receive an affirmative answer. God wants us to pray for *His* will to be done—not ours.

Conflict in relationships. Being resentful or argumentative with others will affect communication with the Father.

Lack of generosity ([Proverbs 21:13](#)). God is displeased when we ignore people's needs or give begrudgingly to the church. He hears us asking for a blessing yet sees us refusing to obey Him in our giving ([1 Timothy 6:17-19](#)).

Indifference ([Proverbs 28:9](#)). Apathy to the Scriptures is another stumbling block. God has given us the Bible so that we might know Him and serve Him wholeheartedly. Failure to read and apply His Word consistently will diminish our ability to maintain a godly lifestyle.

It takes effort and commitment to develop a strong prayer life, but the rewards are great. If your prayers have not been answered, consider which, if any, of the above issues may need correction. Then, start by personalizing the prayers you read in the Psalms or elsewhere in God's Word

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Daily Devotional - Softening Your Heart

JULY 22ND 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Softening Your Heart

Psalms 25:1-22

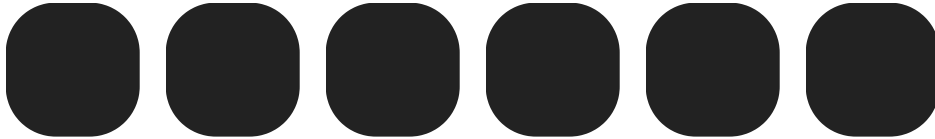
When you are continually on your face before God, seeking Him in His Word, His presence will saturate your heart, making it sensitive and teachable. Just as a marriage relationship can begin to grow cold unless proactive steps are taken daily to keep it warm, your heart can gradually harden when you aren't seeking intimacy with God. You must also obediently—and promptly—respond to whatever He tells you to do so that your heart will stay soft and receptive. Then it won't take much for the Lord to get your attention, and when He convicts you of sin, you will want to deal with the problem right away. This is why we must walk in the Spirit moment by moment.

If you believe that God might be leading you in a certain direction, take the time to earnestly seek His mind on the matter, and open your heart to listen to Him. Be careful about getting busy with a substitute for what He originally called you to do.

It would be tragic to work extra hard doing what you and others consider good, only to discover that your effort was expended in accomplishing something that was not God's intention. Resisting the Lord often amounts to putting your life on the shelf, which leaves you feeling that something is missing. There is no substitute for God's will, even when His plan might seem difficult or impossible. But when you trust Him with a cooperative heart, there is no limit to what God can do through your life. Step out in obedience today and say, "Lord, I want Your will—no matter what."

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Daily Devotional - Friendship: A Help to Holiness

JULY 21ST 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friendship: A Help to Holiness

[John 15:12-15](#)

In all of God's creation, just one thing did not meet with His approval. He beheld Adam, who was the only being of his kind, and said, "It is not good for the man to be alone" ([Genesis 2:18](#)). The Creator designed people for emotional, mental, and physical intimacy so they'd be able to share their innermost selves with one another.

Jesus explained this to His disciples, saying they should love each other as He had loved them. In a God-honoring friendship, two people build each other up and spur one another toward Christlikeness. Many people, however, fall far short of making and maintaining relationships that sharpen their faith ([Proverbs 27:17](#)). They instead welcome the trivial talk of casual acquaintances: The weather, tough bosses, and world affairs are safe topics. Sadly, believers often shy away from the penetrating conversations about sin, accountability, and biblical living that would serve to enrich their faith.

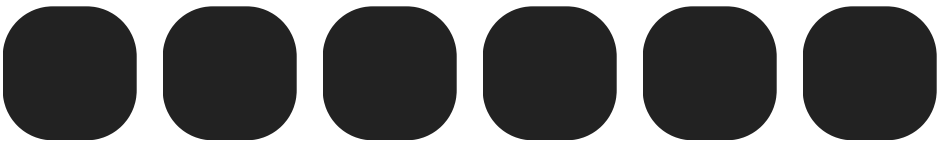
Strong relationships begin with men and women who decide to risk their pride and comfort in order to love as Jesus does. They recognize that one of the reasons we have friends is so we can motivate one another toward holiness. In a friendship of mutual trust and submission, two people will confess sin, offer gentle reproof, and share burdens.

The walls we build to keep people at a distance are often defenses against God as well: We don't want Him too close to our most personal business. But as believers learn to share openly and freely with a brother or sister in Christ, they develop the capacity to be more honest with God.

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Daily Devotional - The Need for Friendship

JULY 20TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - The Need for Friendship

2 Timothy 4:9-22

Independence is a prized attribute in our culture, but biblically, it isn't a worthy aspiration. Nowhere in Scripture will you find the erroneous quote, "God helps those who help themselves." The very fact that the Lord formed the church—a community of believers—should tell us that He did not create people for self-sufficiency or isolation.

When we place faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit indwells us so we can have a fulfilling relationship with the Lord and satisfying friendships with one another. In God's design, a close, committed biblical friendship between two believers serves to build both toward Christlikeness. Over and over in Scripture, we find evidence of God's followers relying upon a close friend or confidante for support. Paul, in particular, spoke freely and often of his dependence upon dear companions and encouraged others to form intimate partnerships as well ([2 Timothy 2:22](#)).

It's interesting to me that our modern culture seems to be headed in the opposite direction. The farther we drift from God, the more pervasive our self-sufficient attitude becomes. Neighbors treat each other with suspicion instead of congeniality, and that mindset has even invaded the church. We're hesitant to give to others, which in turn makes us reluctant to receive.

Scripture tells us to love one another, bear our brothers' burdens, and confess our sins to fellow believers ([John 13:34](#); [Galatians 6:2](#); [James 5:16](#)). In other words, we're to give ourselves away to others and receive from them in return. That's how church members can encourage one another to Christlikeness.

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