

5 Day Devotional – Curious Faith

06/09/24

Why didn't God answer my prayer?

Day 1

John 14:13-14

The promise Jesus gives in John 14 about doing whatever we ask in His name is both inspiring and perplexing. Prayer can feel powerful when we think of this assurance. However, that sense of power can also bring confusion when the outcomes we dearly seek don't materialize. Sometimes the silence in the face of fervent prayer can leave us questioning, yet it's in these very moments our faith can grow stronger and our understanding of God's nature deepen.

Instead of looking at unanswered prayers as a sign of divine indifference, we might consider them an invitation to explore God's character and His grand design for our lives and the lives of those around? In this exploration, the transformative journey isn't just about receiving, but about becoming more attuned with God's voice and aligning our desires with His divine will.

- When have you felt your prayers were not being answered and how did you respond?
- In what ways can unanswered prayers deepen your trust in God's wisdom?
- How can the promise of John 14:13-14 be understood in the context of a prayer that seems unanswered?
- Seek deeper understanding rather than immediate answers in your prayers today.
- Pray for alignment of your desires with God's will, even when it's hard to understand.

Day 2

Mark 11:24

Mark's portrayal of Jesus' words on prayer emphasizes the act of believing—faith as a prerequisite for receiving. Understanding this can be challenging when we face the apparent contradictions of reality. Prayer is not a method to bend God's will to ours; rather, it's a spiritual practice that shapes our hearts to embrace His plan for us. The concept of unwavering belief does not negate the complexities of life, but inspires us to hold onto hope even when answers are not readily visible.

Faith is a dynamic and evolving journey, not a static state of being. Our belief is not just about expecting specific outcomes but trusting in God's inherent goodness, regardless of what we perceive. It's about surrendering our limited understanding and embracing a faith that says, 'Not my will, but Yours be done.'

- What does genuine faith mean to you, and how do you practice it in your prayer life?
- How can you reconcile the directive to 'believe and receive' with the reality of an answer that didn't match your prayer?
- How does embracing God's goodness comfort you when prayers seem unanswered?
- Contemplate on the nature of God's goodness in your prayers today.
- Ask God to strengthen your faith, especially in the areas of doubt or confusion in your life.

Day 3

Matthew 6:33

At times, our prayers can become so centered around our needs and desires that we can lose sight of God's larger purpose. Matthew 6:33 instructs us to seek first His kingdom and righteousness, and in doing so, we can trust that God will take care of our needs according to His riches and glory. When faced with unanswered prayers, it's an opportunity to reassess our priorities and align them with God's kingdom values.

Focusing first on God's kingdom is not a trade-off but a transformation of our desires. It shifts our perspective from what we want to what God deems as integral for our growth and service to others. This kingdom-centric mentality is not just about submitting our wish lists to God, but about actively participating in His divine narrative.

- How can prioritizing God's kingdom impact the way you approach prayer?
- Reflect on a time when redirecting your focus towards God's will provided clarity in your life.
- What adjustments can you make to ensure your prayers reflect seeking God's kingdom first?
- Pray for God's kingdom priorities to take precedence in your life.
- Ask for a heart that desires what God wants more than personal wants.

Day 4

James 4:3

When we examine our intentions, we may discover that our prayers are sometimes tinted with motives that do not align with God's heart. James challenges us to consider our reasons for asking—highlighting that when guided by wrong motives, we should not expect to receive. A pure heart is a conduit for pure prayers, ones that resonate with the essence of God's will, and bring inner peace and clarity, whether or not they're answered in the way we hope.

The desire for self-examination leads to authentic prayers that mirror our submission to God's authority. It is in this posture of humility that we can truly discern God's will and aspire to pray with a pure heart. Authenticity in prayer paves the way for a deeper and more meaningful connection with God, as we share our true selves, beyond mere words or wishes.

- How can you ensure that your prayers are not rooted in selfishness but in a genuine desire for God's will?
- In times of need, how do you balance asking for God's provision with surrendering to His plan?
- What role does self-reflection play in your prayer life?
- Seek purity of heart in your prayers today, asking God to reveal any personal desires that may not align with His will.
- Pray for discernment to understand God's purposes beyond your immediate circumstances.

Day 5

Romans 8:28

The profound truth of Romans 8:28 reassures us that God is working all things for good for those who love Him. But embracing this verse requires a trust that goes beyond our limited understanding of present circumstances. It's a belief that God's definition of 'good' transcends our expectations and that His ways are indeed higher than our ways. When prayers seem to go unanswered, it might be God redirecting our paths toward something we couldn't have anticipated but ultimately needed.

Through the lens of God's sovereignty, unanswered prayers become less about what we're missing and more about what we're gaining. Growth, strength, and a deeper relationship with our Creator can be the rich outcomes of moments when things don't go as we planned. It's a shift from our will to God's will, from our vision to His vision, and from a temporal perspective to an eternal mindset.

- How does Romans 8:28 influence your reaction to unanswered prayers?
- What might 'all things work together for good' look like in a difficult situation you're facing?
- How can you cultivate trust in God's sovereignty even when His plan diverges from your own?
- Reflect on God's faithfulness in the past as you pray about current circumstances.
- Pray for the ability to embrace God's larger narrative for your life, even when it disrupts your expectations.