

LEAP 4 – Diagnosing Unanswered Prayer

Faith and prayer go hand in hand. Prayer is the expression of our faith.

The mystery of unanswered prayer. Let's de-mystify this issue so our prayers can be effective in our own lives and the lives of others we are praying for.

Unanswered prayer has less to do with a lack of a faith and more with misapplied faith.

We all use faith constantly. We believe all kind of stuff. Unfortunately most of the stuff we believe does not agree with what God wants for us.

- We believe we deserve punishment, God wants to give us love.
- We believe we'll never get ahead and God wants us to be blessed.
- We believe we'll never get well, God wants to heal us.
- We believe we may never find that perfect person, God's will is perfect.

1. Eternal Issue

The very names of God throughout the Bible declare His will:

- Jehovah-Shalom The Lord our peace
- Jehovah-Jireh The Lord our provider
- Jehovah-Rapha The Lord our healer
- Jehovah-Tsidkenu The Lord our righteousness
- Jehovah-Sabaoth The Lord of Hosts
- Jehovah-Shammah The Lord is Present
- Jehovah-Rohi The Lord our Shepherd
- El-Shaddai The God Who is Sufficient for the Needs of His People

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. 3 John 1:2

And let them say continually, "The LORD be magnified, Who delights in the prosperity of His servant." Psalm 35:27

Some feel it is wrong to believe for healing or God's blessing like its selfish and some kind of badge of honor to suffer.

If that is the case why do you go to a doctor or take medicine. Why do you work so hard. This is a religious attitude that doesn't want to get out of the boat, doesn't want to risk. I don't think this honors God.

Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

³ who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. Psalm 103:2-5

I like that word "benefits". Do you have benefits at your job. Do you take them? The only people who don't are those who are afraid, or work for themselves.

David's faith was based on revelation from being with God.

"O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer. ²⁸O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. ²⁹Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign LORD, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever." 2 Sam. 7:27-29

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. I John 5:14-15

2. Internal Issues (How we disqualify or negate our faith)

Let God speak to you about issues that are blocking faith and stopping God from meeting our needs. Here are a few.

Doubt (*Opposite of faith*)

Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God. ²³I assure you that you can say to this mountain, 'May God lift you up and throw you into the sea,' and your command will be obeyed. All that's required is that you really believe and do not doubt in your heart. ²⁴Listen to me! You can pray for anything, and if you believe, you will have it. Mark 11:22-24

You think Jesus said this to tease us? To dangle a carrot?

Sin

if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. ¹⁵Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. 2 Chron. 7:14-15

Wrong Motives

You do not have, because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. James 4:2-3 (Faith took a hit from the prosperity message)

Unforgiveness

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." Mark 11:25

Stinginess

If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered. Prov. 21:13

Idolatry (Maybe even a good thing like healing or financial need)

Anything that is more important than God. *God if you don't do this...*

Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices!

⁷"When any Israelite or any alien living in Israel separates himself from me and sets up idols in his heart and puts a wicked stumbling block before his face and then goes to a prophet to inquire of me, I the LORD will answer him myself. ⁸I will set my face against that man and make him an example and a byword.

Ezek. 14:6-8

Lack of Persistence

“And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened. ¹⁰For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks. Luke 11:9-10

Lack of Patience

follow the example of those who are going to inherit God’s promises because of their faith and patience. Heb. 6:11

3. External Issue

Jackie Robinson broke through the color barrier to be the first black to play MLB. He faced jeers in ever stadium across the nation even in his own home field in Brooklyn. One day he committed an error and the people began to boo him. As he stood on second base the great “Pee Wee” Reese came up alongside him, put his arm around him and just stood there. The crowd went silent. Robinson latter said that act saved his career.

We need friends like that. This is what we are going to do today.

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:14-16

Paul and Jesus both requested others to pray with them.

The Most Important Prayer You’ll Ever Pray

As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” ¹²For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Rom. 10:11-13

Simplify your prayer life and be more effective

1. Get in God's presence, alone, quiet.
2. Drop your agenda and laundry list of prayer.
3. Pray what God puts in your heart.
4. With that prompting comes faith.

Offering.

I am grateful God asked us to give Him a tithe and to give offerings beyond the tithe. Every time I give it tests my heart. Is it my money of God's? Am I trusting God or myself?

Next week: SexEd.