

TRY ASKING

James 4:2-3; Matthew 9:27-29

Introduction: Everyone has said a prayer at some time in his her life. Some have had answers, some have not. Most of the prayers made are "spur of the moment" requests that have been given little if any thought, just words and wishes uttered or thought quickly, hoping for some help from God. Usually the requests are not serious, just a quick, superficial request, as if God is some sort of servant, waiting to fulfill our wildest dreams at the snap of our finger. That is not what prayer is all about and that is why most people's prayers are not answered. Let's give prayer some serious thought.

1. Reading the first chapters of the Bible (Genesis), it is revealed how God created this world - God made everything and He made it for us. He told Adam and those after Adam to go out, conquer and subdue it it was all his, made for him, and it was to be for his own good.
2. When we ask God for help, we are, in a way, asking God to help us accomplish what He, Himself, wants us to do ourselves. So it can't be all that displeasing to God to ask Him for His help and blessings.
3. However, all of us have prayed, asked God for something and didn't receive a thing. Remember Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn? Huckleberry (Huck) talked about his experience with prayer:
"Miss Watson, she took me in the closet and prayed, but nothing come of it. She told me to pray everyday and whatever I asked for I would get it, but it wasn't so. I tried it. Once I got a fish-line, but no hooks. It warn't any good to me without hooks. I tried for the hooks three or four times but somehow I couldn't make it work. By and by, one day, I asked Miss Watson to try for me, but she said I was a fool. She never tole me why and I couldn't make it out no way.
I got down one time back in the woods, and had a long think about it. I says to myself, if a body can git anything they pray for, then why don't Deacon Winn get back the money he lost on pork? Why can't the widow get back her silver snuff box that was stole? Why can't Miss Watson fat up? No, says I to myself, there ain't nothing in it." (quote from the book "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn").
4. If everybody who agreed with Huck Finn about prayer were to say "AMEN" together, it could be heard around the world probably.
5. We have prayed for health and more sickness came - prayed for loved ones to get well, but they got worse and some even died - prayed for material blessings but none ever came. YES, we have prayed and it is as Huck Finn said, "Nuthing come of it.." So, what's the answer to prayer?
6. **James 4:2-3** - Without a right relationship with God, we are merely speaking words and call those words prayers. Someone may give you a beautiful lamp, but no light will come until it is plugged into an electrical outlet.
7. So it is with prayer. We can use the most beautiful words and phrases, say all the right things, but until we are connected with the great source of power, our prayers are just empty, meaningless words and sounds.
8. It is useless to turn on the "switch" seeking the blessings of prayers until our life has become properly connected with God. THAT is who so many fail to have answered prayers.

9. **Matthew 9:17-29** - We must ask in FAITH ! When we exercise faith in our prayers we are doing three things:
- We are developing CONFIDENCE in ourselves. If we believe in ourselves, we develop power and strength, we never knew we even possessed.
 - A person with no self-confidence is to be pitied. He/she will always shrink from every task - turn away from every opportunity.
 - We are developing FAITH in others. *"...no man liveth to him/herself..."* We need each other. We need to draw on our friends' strength, therefore we learn to believe in the goodness and reliability of other people.
 - Finally a CONFIDENCE in God is developed. *"...But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him..."*

CONCLUSION:

1. God made everything and has turned everything over to us (in a way).
2. There are countless things we cannot do without some help and most often we need God's help.
3. Everyone has "prayed," asked God for help and most everyone has heard nothing from God concerning most of their "prayers."
4. So does God care about us or not? Can God help us or not? Was Huck Finn right in his conclusion about prayer?
5. God does care, God can do something, God does want to do something, BUT there's a RIGHT way to go to God with our needs.
6. We've got to have a right relationship with God, we must have faith that God cares and wants to help, we must be persistent in our requests of God and we must wait for God to answer our prayers in His way and in His time.