

How God Answers Prayer

Jeremiah 33:3

‘Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.’

Scripture contains over 450 answers to prayer. As we explore God’s answers to various prayers of the Bible, we can identify four specific patterns that exist when God answers prayer.

1. God answers prayer according to _____ . (James 1:5-8; Matt 8:5-13)

James 1:5-8 reads 5 “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

- *The size of our _____ determines the size of our _____ .*
- Too frequently we allow our prayers to be sabotaged by doubt because the text states that if we have doubts we might as well not pray at all.
- *The size of our _____ determines the size of our _____ . (James 2:17)*
- Our daily actions either support our prayers or sabotage our prayers.

2. God answers prayer according to _____ . (Gen 25:20, 21, 26)

20. and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. 21. Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived. 26. Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau’s heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

- *In order to receive God’s answer, we need to _____ .*
- God answers when it is best for us and not when it appears to be best for us.
- *We need to learn that God never gets _____ .*

3. God answers prayer according to _____ . (1 John 5:14, 15; Eph 1:11)

1 John 5:14, 15 states, "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

- *His purposes are revealed through _____ .*
- *God's purposes have greater benefit than our purposes.*
- Our purposes are often short-lived and focus on our immediate gratification. God has eternal purposes that were present before we arrived and will continue after we depart and he created us so that we can fulfill a unique purpose.

4. God answers prayer according to _____ . (Jer 29:11)

Jeremiah 29:11 – "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

- God answers prayers according to the unique plan he has for us individually.
- *God answers prayers _____ .*
- We need to avoid comparison because the plan he has for your life is unique and he may not answer your prayer because your prayer is not within his plan for your life.

Small Group Questions

1. Which principle spoke to you the most about how God answers prayer? Do you have personal experience with one of the principles?
2. Read Isaiah 38:1-8 and discuss how God answers prayer in this passage.
3. Share how your fasting and prayer time has been. We have ten days left.
4. On Sunday, Pastor Carter asked us to pray about a financial commitment for 15 months and a sacrificial gift on Sunday, Feb. 5 for Greater Expectations. How are you preparing to assist the church in reaching our financial goal?