



## Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Prayer” Series Lesson 11 – April 24, 2016

“Unanswered Prayer”

### I. **Lesson Starters:**

Have you ever had unanswered prayer? Why do we tend to think that unanswered prayer relates to our own behavior or sin? Can't I just “do the right things” to get an answer from God? Do you ever get frustrated with God for not answering? Can there be prayers that we think we got no answer, but the answer from God was blatantly clear?

We will break the series into multiple lessons/subject matter:

1. Why Does God want us to Pray?
2. The Effectiveness of Prayer
  - a. Does Prayer Change the Way God Acts?
  - b. Effective Prayer made possible through Jesus
  - c. Who are we supposed to pray too?
  - d. Role of Holy Spirit
3. Important Considerations for Effective Prayer
  - a. Pray “According to God’s Will”
  - b. Praying with Faith and Obedience
  - c. Forgiveness and Humility
  - d. Praying Continually and Earnestly
  - e. Waiting on the Lord; Fasting
  - f. *What about Unanswered Prayer?***
4. Praise and Thanksgiving

### II. **Unanswered Prayer:**

#### **Galatians 4:3-4**

***3 So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. 4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law***

#### **Rev 6:10-11**

***10 They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” 11 Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.***

The whole question of “unanswered prayer” must begin by recognizing that as long as God is God and we are his creatures, there will always be unanswered and unknown results of prayer. God has his own wise plan for the future and even though people pray, many events will not come about until the appointed time that God has decreed.

In the above scriptures, God does not answer straight away, but rather tells them to wait a little longer. There can be long periods of delay during which prayers go unanswered, since we do not know God’s sense of timing.

#### **James 4:3**

***3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.***

#### **James 1:6-8**

**6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.**

Prayer will go unanswered by:

- We do not know how to pray (Romans 8:26)
- We do not always pray according to God's will (James 4:3)
- We do not always ask in faith (James 1:6-8)
- Sometimes we have one solution, but God knows what is best and has a different answer (Gen 37:23-36; Gen 50:20 - Such as Joseph in the pit and being carried off into slavery)

We join elect company when our prayers go unanswered and we should not feel isolated or left alone by God:

- Jesus in the Garden about removing "this cup", nevertheless your will be done, not mine (Luke 22:42)
- Paul prayer to remove the thorn from his side (2 Cor 12:8-9)
- David prayed for his son's life to be saved (2 Sam 12:20,23)

### **Romans 8:26-28**

**26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. 28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**

We must continue to trust God even in the face of unanswered prayer. We must also continue to pray and cast our prayers and worries on Him.

### **Hebrews 13:5**

**5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." 6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"**

Long suffering examples:

- Hannah giving birth after many years (1 Sam 1:19-20)
- Simeon saw the Savior enter the temple (Luke 2:25-35)

But sometimes, prayer will go unanswered in our lives. God will answer those prayers in His time possibly after the believer had died.

### **III. Group Questions:**

1. We have all been there with unanswered prayer, so have you found yourself gravitating to "thinking" that the prayers go unanswered due to our own sin? If you answered no, then why do we typically try to be on our spiritual P&Q's if we are wanting something from God?
2. What does God's word and this lesson above suggest are some main reasons that God may not answer our prayers.
3. How do we continue to have the ultimate faith in God on answering prayer when we can go through our entire life and yet it still goes unanswered? How do we deal with that conundrum?
4. Can you think of other long suffering examples of prayer in the bible where God eventually answered their prayer during their lifetime?