

I don't think God hears me when I pray. What's wrong?

by Pastor John E. Dubler www.johndubler.com

First:

God does not promise to hear the prayer of the unbelieving person. So, here is the first thing to ask yourself: “Am I a believer?”

Isaiah 59:2 “But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.”¹

Proverbs 15:29 “The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.”

Obviously, if you are not a believer, you must first reconcile your heart to God. Salvation is a free gift of God, through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and requires no works on your part. If you are not a believer in Jesus, consider this:

1. All have sinned. Romans 3:23 states: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Isaiah 53:6 reminds us, “All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”

2. There is a penalty for sin, namely eternal death and separation from God: Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Further, in Hebrews 9:27 we learn: “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.”

3. The Good News is that Jesus has paid the penalty. Romans 5:8 clearly declares: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” First Peter 3:18 shows us that His death pays our penalty and brings us to God: “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”

4. No matter what anyone else may have told you, salvation is not by works. Ephesians 2:8-9 clearly declares: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Further, Titus 3:5 tells us: “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”

5. But you must receive Jesus Christ. “Repent and believe” are the first words we must consider. This means accepting fully Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross as payment for your sin, believing that He lives and is the only Son of God, and asking Jesus to come in to your life, to take over and be

¹ All scripture references are to the New American Standard Updated Version, published by the Lockman Foundation.

Lord. John 1:12 assures us: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” Revelation 3:20 shows us Jesus, standing outside the door of our lives and knocking: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”

6. Finally, if you pray and ask Jesus to be Lord of your life, you may be assured that He hears you and answers your prayer. First John 5:13 tells us: “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” And our Lord Jesus Himself tells us in John 5:24, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

Second:

If you are already a believer, God tells us that He will not hear our prayer if we are giving place to iniquity in our hearts. For example, immoral thoughts are the equivalent of adultery, and anger is the equivalent of murder (Matthew 5).

Psalm 66:18 “If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.”

Third:

Sometimes God says “no” or “wait” as an answer to our prayers. These answers should not be confused with not receiving an answer at all. A mature believer thanks God for the times God says “no,” recognizing that many of the things we ask for in prayer would not be God's will for us, and sometimes even be harmful for us if we received them.

Fourth:

We may not be praying in accordance with the will of God. First John 5:14-15 tells us: “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 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.” In addition, James 4:3 clearly tells us that our motives can be a problem in receiving answers to prayer: “You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

Be sure that God hears you

If you are a believer who has confessed and repented of his sins, then you may be sure that God hears your 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.”

Zechariah 13:9 “. . . They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say . . . They are My people, “And they will say . . . The LORD is my God.”

Be aware there are some conditions

Believers should take into account the conditions which Scripture imposes on the seemingly vast promises for answered prayer. Most of the conditions deal with truly loving God and with living a life of obedience to His commandments.

Ask in Jesus’ Name

John 14:13-15 “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

John 16: 23-24 “In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.”

Seek to please Him

1 John 3: 22 “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.”

Believe

Matthew 21:22 “And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

Confess sins

James 5: 15-16 “And the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

Finally, here are some additional scriptures concerning God hearing you when you pray:

Psalms 4:3 “But know that the LORD has set apart the godly man for Himself; The LORD hears when I call to Him.”

Psalm 34: 15-17 “The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous And His ears are open to their cry. The face of the LORD is against evildoers, To cut off the memory of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD hears And delivers them out of all their troubles.”

Psalm 91:15 “He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble.”

Isaiah 65: 24 “It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.”

Matthew 7:7-8,11 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. . . . If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”