

# Unanswered Prayers

## What's up with that?

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Recently I read an article by Veronica Neffinger, where she expounded on the point of what we should learn from unanswered prayers.

She highlights that well known and often asked question by many of us and that is, have you ever called out to God and felt like He is nowhere around. While I'm writing this study my hand is raised high as being a witness to the fact that, I have often asked God, where are you???

I'm sure you would agree that regardless of how much we have, as Christians we have all likely experienced periods in our life in which we felt as though God was not hearing us and not answering our prayers.

John Starke wrote an article titled "What to do with unanswered prayers", he makes the point that the Psalms can be a great comfort when we go through times of feeling distant from God.

### *Psalm 13:1-6*

In the Psalm of David he makes the statement of beginning forgotten by God. David states: "How long. O Lord? Will you forget me forever? (v1)

*Surely you know that God has not forgotten us!*

David continues: "Consider and answer me, O Lord my God" (v3). David had not experienced an answer to his prayer for a while, and was asking God "Why?"

But David is a serial offender in the Psalms. How would you or I answer David in this situation? Maybe you would quote the Psalms to David and correct him! "He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see? (Ps. 94:9).

Still, David and other psalmists consistently ask the God who never forgets, if He has forgotten them.

Theologically, there is no such thing as "unanswered prayer," and that if God doesn't immediately answer a prayer, He is still listening to us and working in our lives, it can be tough to trust Him when we are walking by faith and not by sight.

In the Psalms, David and others were honest with God about their struggles and their grief. We too can be honest with God about the everyday struggles that we encounter with people, situations, and just life all together. Let's read Psalm 94:1-19.

Finding companions, when we read Psalms 77:3, we find that David as well as ourselves have companions like Asaph who prayed for relief: "When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints". (Psalms 77:3). He's grown tired of asking. The morning comes, and it's time to pray, but he's too tired of being disappointed to

love forever ceased? Are His promises at an end for all time? Has God forgotten to be gracious? (Psalms 77:7-9). Asaph knows the answer to his questions. In fact, elsewhere he answers them.

Even Jesus begs for relief (Mark 14:36). When He experiences the Father's absences, He cries aloud: "Why have you forsaken me"? (Mark 15:34)

Jesus was not trying to get out of the task of the cross.

This "cup" was the agony of alienation from God, His Father, at the cross. (Hebrews 5:7-9). Jesus was aware of what doing the Father's will, would cost Him. But He prayed not my will but your will be done.

When we sit patiently with these Psalms, you find something more. You remember these aren't just the words of David and Asaph; these are the words of God. Before David gave me the words, "Will you forget me forever?" God gave them to David. These complaints are God's gifts. He knows how we are. When we are at the end of our rope, these words are His way of lengthening the tether. Grace and more grace, but not forsaken.

Isn't that something? God has inspired words of complaint and protest to say to Him when we are confused and sad, angry and desperate. He gave us words to say into our pillow as we drink our tears. "Here," He says, "these words will help you. Go ahead. I'm not self-conscious

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