

Title: The God over answers prayer

Scripture reading: 1 Samuel 1:10, 20

"In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. And she made a vow, saying, "Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

"So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the Lord for him."

I remembered that when I was a very young Christian attending a cell group, the cell leader made a statement that until today, I cannot forget. She said, 'I have a notebook that I write down all the prayer requests I made to God. And whenever God answers a prayer request, I will tick that request, indicating that it has been answered.' Then she said, 'You will be very surprised that God always answer all your prayer requests, whether small request or big request, significant or insignificant request.' Of course, she constantly

prayed over her prayer requests to God. I think we should do that.

The thing is God always answers! Someone once said, 'the faith to pray must include the faith to believe God can give (answer) even when our prayers are lacking.' **There are all sorts of things we pray all the time and we do not necessary believe them to come to past – but yet they are prayers that get answered.** Wow. An enlightening statement. I challenge you to get a pen plus a notebook and write down the prayers that you have prayed: to see how God has answered you thus far! Remember, He hears you. Let us learn something about prayer.



1. Introduction to prayer



The simplest answer to this question is **"talking to God." or "to have a conversation with The Father."** It is the picture of a communal bond between God and His children and it starts with us opening up our mouth and heart to speak with or petition Him. I remembered I was in the military and I wanted to be selected for the Air Defense Artillery but it was only for a select group of 60 air force personnel and I needed to be interviewed. I prayed as I was going for the interview and I was selected even though I knew it was very difficult to get in. As we consistently move into a life of prayer, we grow in intimacy and fellowship with the Father. We begin to understand who God is and His goodness, and ultimately our relationship is strengthened with Him. As a result, prayer aligns us to the will of God. The bible references prayer countless times and reminds us in **Philippians 4:6-7, "not to worry about anything but instead, to pray about everything..."** Jesus, while on this earth, lived a life of praying to his heavenly Father. Jesus prayed often and for many different reasons.

Luke 3:21 (NLT) mentions Jesus praying as he was being baptized by John the Baptist: *"One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus himself was baptized. As he was praying, the heavens opened."* Meditate on this verse: as he was praying, the heavens opened. It means that heaven's barrier is removed and it is a symbol of new access to God.



What is the purpose of prayer?

Contrary to what the world tells us; God is not our spiritual Santa Claus (for those praying, you must comprehend this truth. God is not our sugar daddy.) He is not at our beckoning call to just answer every prayer with a YES but God will answer our prayers (there is a difference)! The purpose of prayer is not to get God to do our will but instead for us to align with God and the will that He has for our life. And there are many things that you desire and it is in line with the will of God. So pray. I wanted to go to university and I was on the borderline case, because I did not study hard at that time as I was a non-Christian. But I got saved and a desire to pursue university was rekindled. I prayed to God for an opening and I received a slot because God wanted me to learn to do research in university. He knew that as a pastor, I need to learn how to research to prepare messages. It aligned with the will of God. **1 John 5:14 says, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."**

God is still in the business of answering prayers.

All throughout scripture, there is evidence to show that prayers are answered (even if the answer is not YES). God shows us through his word that he truly is a God who will answer our prayers!

In the book of Samuel, Hannah prayed to God for a child. The bible says in chapter 1, verse 10, "In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. And she made a vow, saying, "Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head." Later on, in the book of Samuel, God answered her prayer and gave her a son. The scripture goes on to say in verse 20, "So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, **"Because I asked the Lord for him."**



GOD ALWAYS ANSWERS!

Joy and Jan are very afraid of Pastor Lily's prayer because they always get answered. When Joy had her first pregnancy, quietly she wanted a boy but claimed that she doesn't mind whether it is a boy or girl. Well, Pastor Lily wanted her to have a girl because girl is better in the sense that they always bring their husband to the side of her family. Like Joy and Jan would bring Ben and Darly to our side. My two sons-in-law are closer to my family than their family. So, Pastor Lily prayed for a girl. And when Elise was born Joy and Ben were kind of sad and she was a little angry when she found out that Pastor prayed she will have a girl. She questioned, 'Why did you pray for a girl?' Because she actually wanted a boy at that time. Now for this second child, Pastor Lily knowing that she wanted a boy in her first pregnancy, prayed for a boy this time. But then Ben and Joy were a little uneasy because they felt that children of the same sex can keep one another company and be better playmate. She was a little sad because she wanted a girl. I don't understand my children sometimes. They are fickle. I mean I saw the facial expression of Ben and Joy when they saw Noah. Joy would frequently visit Jan just to see Noah. I mean in my mind, she wants a boy. Of course, this time, we did not tell them that we prayed for a boy for Joy.

A Christian lady gives personal testimonies of God always answering her prayer. She had a notebook of her answered prayer. She said, 'Here are my personal testimonies of answered prayers:



*4 months of waiting - **answered prayer.***

I was working a job but was not making enough money to survive. I had a dollar amount (a figure of my salary) in mind that I wanted to make and so I took a leap of faith and left my salaried job to embark on a journey for a better paying job. For four months, I wrote resume, flex all my eloquence, search for job interviews, and applying for jobs. I got an interview with a university and the job was exactly what I was looking for but when it came time to discuss pay, it was not even close to my number. With no job in sight, I still

rejected it and told myself that I am waiting for the Lord to come through. The next day, I heard back from this company I had interviewed with a while back and they made me an offer that **GREATLY EXCEEDED** what I asked the Lord for. The job was also exactly what I was looking for! Again, God is FAITHFUL! This is a career desire that gets answered.

9 years of waiting - answered prayer.

In 2014, my husband and I had our first child - a son (Isaiah). At the time, it was my desire to have daughters and I prayed for them. God spoke to me years ago and told me that our family would go on to have six children (3 boys, 2 girls, + last a son). He even gave me the names and told me what their calling + purpose in life is. We went on to have two more sons - Jeremiah + Josiah. In the fall of last year, one of my church brothers told me that God was getting ready to send me a daughter. The next month, my church sister in Christ told me the same thing. I found out, by surprise, in Jan of 2023, that I was 3 and a 1/2 months pregnant and expecting our first of two daughters (in July of 2023). God is FAITHFUL!

20 years of waiting - answered prayer.

I want to share a very personal experience to where God answered a prayer of mine. Back in 2005, I was starting undergraduate at Michigan State University and there was a desire in my heart to work in the medical field. I did not come from an academically inclined high school and so when I got to college, it was extremely hard for me. I literally had to reteach myself EVERYTHING. Long story short, I wanted to go into nursing but the program was so competitive that I was discouraged. In the spring of 2020, God put it on my heart to go back to school for nursing. I had a dream shortly after that:(In that dream, I was filling out an application that asked the question - why do you want to become a nurse? I remember writing down that "God has called me for such a time as this.") I was accepted to GSU's pre-nursing program and was able to retake all of my pre-requisites. I applied to their official nursing program and was rejected 3 times.I figured I would just apply one more time to GSU, and look what happened?! Here I am (accepted) and I am on my way to be second semester nursing student at Georgia State University! Again, God is Faithful!

I remembered Pastor Lily prayed for her sister's salvation for more than 30 years. There was one time she wrote a long letter begging her to accept Christ as her personal savior, some 30 years ago.

While writing that letter, she was in tears and told her sister she loved her and wanted her to be saved. There was no response at all. It was as if the letter was not written. It was a long letter. But God heard Pastor Lily. God even allowed Pastor Lily to be instrumental to leading her sister to Christ. God answers prayer.

2. God over answers prayer

I want to act as a lawyer and build a case that will prove to you that in everything – all through the bible and continuing to the present day, God always over answers the prayers of His children. He continually gives much more than we ask for – and often things we would not think to request from God.

One of the most often-heard phrases in the church is, 'God answers prayer!' Yet that is only half the truth. The whole truth is 'God over answers prayer!' All through the Bible and continuing to the present day – God always over answers the prayers of His children. He continually gives us much more than we ask for – and often things we would not think to request. Look at the biblical records and see the examples

Firstly, God over answers in prayer request.

Hannah's story is a powerful example of how God not only answers prayer but over answers it. I am not talking about sweeping prayer, haphazard prayer, obliged prayer, shallow prayer. When you made a prayer, it must be earnest, honest, persistent, humble, and a faith that will lead to confidence and trust after prayer. Here is how it happened. Hannah was barren and deeply grieved. The bible says in **Proverbs 30:15-16** that there are three things that are never satisfied and one of them is a barren womb. Hannah was that woman and she prayed specifically for one son, vowing to dedicate him to the Lord's service: 'And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.' Her prayer was simple: 'Lord, just one child.' God heard and over answered her prayer request. In what ways? She bore Samuel, whose name means '**God has heard.**' God did not just give Hannah a son. He gave her a history shaping prophet. Then God visited her again and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. Instead of one child, she received six in total. The spiritual truth behind this story is surrender our

desires to God and he will answer abundantly more than we ask or imagine. Everyone has prayed prayers of desperation. But when we pray in faith and surrender, God does more than we ask. Hannah's story is a powerful example of how God not only answers prayer but over-answers it, going beyond what was asked. She asked for a son – God gave her a prophet. She dedicated one – God gave her many. She came in sorrow – God filled her with joy. Her private pain became public testimony. Sometimes we pray small, specific prayers out of desperation. But often God goes beyond doing, 'exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think.' The lessons we can learn is that whatever you bring to God in humility and faith, expect Him not only to answer – but to over answer. Are you holding a burden like Hannah? Pour it out before the Lord. Trust Him with your request, and be ready to receive more than you imagined.

Secondly, God over answers concerning our sin. Maybe some of you are in this position right now. And here is God's response to you.

In **Hosea 14** God over answered Israel concerning their sin. This example is for those who have sinned against God in whatever capacity. There is hope today for those who have sinned. In Hosea

14:2, Hosea prophesied to Israel, 'You are backslidden – but you are still God's people. Now return to the Lord and pray. "Take with you words and unto Him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.' Their prayer was simple. All Israel asked God to do was to take away their sin and receive them graciously: 'Lord, have mercy. Cleanse us – receive us back into your grace.' Yet God not only forgave their iniquities – He not only cleansed them and received them back graciously. He also added blessings beyond imagination! I want you to put yourself in **Hosea 14: 4-7** as if God is speaking to you. God says, 'I will heal your backsliding. I will love you freely: for Mine anger is turned away from you. I will be as the dew unto you: you shall grow as the lily, and cast forth your roots as Lebanon. Your branches shall spread, and your beauty shall be as the olive tree, and your smell as Lebanon. You that dwell under his shadow shall return; you shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.'

Dew of heaven is the presence of the Lord. Up to this point in your life there has been drought. Everything is dying because God's favor has been taken away. But now, because of your true repentance and heartfelt prayer, God will cause life to spring up on all sides. You will not only be

forgiven, but revived as well. You will grow, become well-rooted, and spread, thrive.! All you ask for is mercy, forgiveness, and acceptance. But instead, God opened the windows of heaven and poured on you blessings that you dare not even hope for. God will largely over answer your prayer.

Hosea 14:2-7 is God's call to you who have sinned and are going through judgment. Here God gives a message of hope, repentance, and restoration. As I say, there are some of you that are in this category. If you are, when you truly repent, God will not only forgive – He renews, restores, beautifies and make you a blessing to others. Maybe you have been unfaithful, but you can end with God's amazing offer of forgiveness. And He reveals a pathway back to God: repentance, renewal, restoration, blessing. How to repent? Honest word. No to a priest, simply to Christ who is here today. Not empty rituals but confession and sincerity.

Thirdly, God over answers concerning enemies.

Judges 10:9 says, 'Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight, so that Israel was sore distressed'

The ammonites were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew. The name means 'sons of my people.' So these people are related to us, literally and figuratively, probably in the church. If there are people, there are enemies. Some are intentional to do you harm. Some are unintentional. For the unintentional, I call them well-intentioned dragon. These are people who with good intentions may criticize constantly, resist change, spread negativity and drain leaders' energy. They are not necessarily evil – just challenging. I call them well intentional dragon. And you will face people, who feel and acts like dragon. They are difficult, but not malicious church friends. So, these are the 2 kinds of people that we will face in life.

Going back to the text, Ammon had been used by God to correct Israel's sins. God uses enemies to correct our sins. God's people were perplexed and downcast. And they began to confess their sin, which is the right step forward. In **Hosea 14:15** they say, 'We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.' When the enemy comes in like a flood, they began to be haunted by their sin. Isn't that the case with many of us? So, they could not conceive of asking God for anything more than just to spare them. That is the first right

step you should take. Their simplest of prayer is, 'Lord, deliver us just this one time! Don't let us be defeated or overrun by our enemy.' That was what happened to me in 2012. They prayed for a single victory. But God had something more in mind, and He over answered their prayer mightily. Not only did Israel get protection, they got the upper hand! They totally subdued the Ammonites. God will use an unlikely person, like, Jephthah, someone unexpectedly, not even close to you. **Joshua 11:32-33 says**, 'So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them into his hands. And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities. Thus, the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.'

Most Christians pray, 'Lord, just give me victory in this one battle.' But the Lord responds, 'I will give you that – yet I have much more in store for you. I want to subdue your enemy so you will not have to get just one victory at a time. I want you to have a total victory.' Beloved God wants to give you power not just to overcome – but to subdue every enemy. He wants you not just to conquer sin – but to be more than a conqueror! Not just to have life but life more abundantly! Not just to have joy – but joy unspeakable and full of glory. Not to

be free of fear for a day, a week or a month; but all the days of your life.

God over answers in His giving.

This can be seen in the example of Elisha and the widow's oil. Many of us often find ourselves in the position of the widow. She was not just a widow but a prophet's widow. She, like us are people of God. Yet she found herself in desperate debt. Creditors came to take her two sons as slaves. She only had a small jar of oil. Elisha told her to borrow many jars and pour out the oil. Miraculously, the oil kept flowing until every jar was full. She sold the oil, paid her debts, and lived on the rest. How about you. The widow asked for survival – God gave abundance. She needed just enough to settle her debt. God gave so much oil that not only was the debt cleared, but she had leftover to live on. God does not just cancel your debt; He provides for your future. The next part is the most important part. It had to be acted in faith. Many of us dare not take that steps of faith. I remembered in my early years as a Christian; I would give everything in my pocket to God. It was not much. Yet it was my all. There was one time, I gave until I had no money in my pocket. I was in the army. 18 years old. My army camp was maybe 5 kilometres from the church. I ran from the church

to my army camp. I did it several times in giving my all in my pocket. That was what happened to that widow. She gave a little but it was her all. And God multiplied it into a lot. Many a times we asked, 'why was the windows of heaven not opened as promised in the bible? That answer can be found in this widow's giving.

Jesus knew how much you sacrificed in your giving. He took note of your sacrificial giving. He remembered the widow who gave two mites and was praised because it was her all. The story of the widow with two mites is powerful. Jesus was in the Temple watching people put offerings into the treasury. Jesus is still doing the same today. A poor widow came and gave two small copper coins, the smallest currency in circulation. But she gave out of sacrifice, not surplus. She gave all she had – it cost her deeply. God values the heart and sacrifice behind the gift more than the size of the gift. She demonstrated total trust in God. She gave quietly and humbly. No show, no announcement, no pride – just simple obedience. Jesus noticed her, even though no one else did. God seeks what others overlook. He measured devotion not display.

What happened to the prophet's widow. All she had was a small jar. In God's hands, the little became more than enough. What you surrender to God, He

can multiply beyond expectation. Her obedience positioned her overflow. She obeyed Elisha's strange instructions: borrow jars, shut the door, and pour. The miracle flowed according to her measure of faith. If she borrowed a few jars, she would receive little, with many jars, much. The result blessed more than just her. Her sons were spared from slavery. The family's future was secured. When God over-answers, the blessing often extends beyond you to others. I know that Pastor Lily and I had given much and many times, sacrificially. Yet I can testify that the blessing extends beyond my immediate family, but also my brothers and sisters and parents and even this church.

The bible tells us He is inclined to answer us with abundantly more: **Luke 6:38 says**, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.' 1 **Corinthians 2:9-10 says**, 'But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.'

A well-known philosopher approached Alexander the Great to make a request because he'd done a good deed for him. He asked the king for a gift of

one hundred talents - a fortune in silver - for his daughters.

Everyone present was aghast. But Alexander had a big smile on his face. He said, "Give it to him! It is a request worthy of King Alexander. It is worthy of my wealth and my ability to give!" Today, God is greater than Alexander the Great. He will have a big smile on his face to you and say, 'I give it to you. It is a request worthy of me as God. It is worthy of my wealth and my ability to give.'

I ask you - have you embarrassed God by your puny requests? "... prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" **(Malachi 3:10).**

In conclusion we can grieve God, even anger Him by not asking.

We have a greater Hannah today. At the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed and was in sorrow and anguish. He said, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death' when he prayed. Yet God did not answer his prayer. In fact, immediately the soldiers came and took him after that prayer of anguish to be beaten, crucified. It was so that

when he died, he died for our sins. When he arose from the dead, 'the veil was torn from top to bottom' that that we can freely come to the father, having our sins forgiven. Because when God looks at you today, He sees Jesus and was pleased with you because of Jesus. So that he can over answers your prayer today.

We think it is spiritual to say, "I just worship the Lord - I don't ask Him for anything. Whatever He wants for me is good enough." That may sound holy - but it is not, according to the Word of God! Over and over Jesus implores us, "Ask! Ask in My name! Ask, and you shall receive. Ask anything - whatsoever you ask. Ask what you will. You have not because you ask not. God gives good things to those who ask. He knows what you need even before you ask. Ask the Father in My name, and He will give it to you...."