

## Prayer

I would suspect that most of us have at times felt that the Lord was not paying any attention to our prayers, but I also suspect that we have many times not properly followed the scriptural directives regarding the subject of prayer. I would hope that none of us are in the category of those of whom it is said, "God heareth not sinners," for if we applied this in its strictest sense, then we would have to say that God would not hear *anyone's* prayers, for we are *all* sinners, both by nature and by practice. But this only applies to *unregenerate* sinners, those who do not have the Spirit of God abiding within them. Surely, God does not refuse to hear the prayers of His people merely because they are sinners, but He does fail to answer some prayers because of other reasons.

Now, let us go back to John 9:31 and read the whole verse and see if we can't find one good reason why God does not answer at least some of some people's prayers: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him he heareth." The implication is clear then that if a person is not a worshipper of God and if he does not do God's will then he cannot expect God to hear his prayers. Proverbs 15:8 says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is His delight." May we not then conclude that if the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to God, his prayers would likewise be an abomination to Him?

Another reason that our prayers might not be effective could be that our behavior is not what it ought to be. Christ said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). And James 4:3 says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." And lastly, we will site one other scripture from which we may conclude that we often do not receive an answer to our prayers because we do not ask our petitions "according to God's will" (1<sup>st</sup> John 5:14). And, taking all this together, let us never conclude that it is because of stinginess on God's part when He does not answer our prayers as we wish Him to do. The fault is always on our part, never on God's. There is *never* any fault in God.---**Elder Ralph Harris**

