Bringing it Home

1. Look back through the sermon outline. Which of the seven barriers to answered prayer stood out to you? What part of your prayer life feels particularly limited right now? Are you withholding certain requests from God? Why?

2. At the same time, what human relationship feels strained and lacking to you? How is this limiting your ability to pray? What needs to be done to clear away your relational barrier?

3. With your new awareness of prayer (and how it works), what next step do you need to take in your prayer life? How can you make a decision, right now, to intentionally move toward God and (possibly) toward someone you care about?

Why Don’t My Prayers Get Answered?

Selected Scriptures
November 16, 2014 • Dr. David Jeremiah

Sermon Notes

Introduction
Habakkuk 1:2; Job 31:35; Psalm 13:1

I. Our prayers are not answered because of un-prayed prayers. - James 4:2b

II. Our prayers are not answered because of unconfessed sin. - Psalm 66:18; Prov. 15:29; Isaiah 1:15; 59:1-2; Ezekiel 14:1-3; I Peter 3:12; I John 1:9

III. Our prayers are not answered because of unbelieving minds. - James 1:6-8; Mark 11:23-24; Hebrews 11:6; 10:38

IV. Our prayers are not answered because of unrighteous motives. - James 4:3; I John 5:14; Matthew 6:9-10; Psalm 37:4; Luke 12:13, 15

V. Our prayers are not answered because of unresolved conflicts. Mark 11:25-26; Matthew 5:23-24

VI. Our prayers are not answered because of uncompassionate hearts. Proverbs 21:13; I John 3:16-22

VII. Our prayers are not answered because of unresponsive husbands. I Peter 3:7; Matthew 18:19-20; Psalm 86:5

Conclusion
Small Group Questions

Getting Started
1. Describe a person you know who is strong in the area of prayer. How have you seen God work in their life?

2. Generally, how do you view prayer? What are the parts and pieces of praying? What is the earliest prayer (in your memory) that you prayed?

Digging Deeper
1. This week we heard that, “…there are times when God says He does not answer our prayers.” When was a time that God didn’t answer one of your prayers? How did you react to God when the prayer wasn’t answered?

2. Sometimes, one unanswered prayer makes us stop making certain requests to God. How has this been part of your spiritual journey? When have you withheld prayers to God because you were certain He wouldn’t respond?

3. We also learned that sin is a huge barrier to answered prayers. Go back to the sermon notes and read the verses cited in point II. Discuss the critical function that confession of sin plays in our prayer life. When have you found that confession and answered prayer work together?

4. R.G. Lee said, “Unbelief clips our wings…” How does unbelief limit our ability to pray? When has this happened to you? What are some ways we can push back against unbelief and courageously take our requests to God?

5. Unresolved conflict can severely limit our prayer life (Matthew 5:23-24 and Mark 11:25-26). How does our relationship with others hinder or build-up our ability to pray? When have you seen this played out (in your life, or in someone else’s life)?