

“He Shuts Out My Prayer!”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from Internet Sources)

Introduction:

- A. Lam. 3:8 - “Even when I cry and shout, He shuts out my prayer.”
 - 1. Psalm 66:20 - “Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer, Nor His mercy from me!”
 - 2. This is not an apparent contradiction, but is an illumination of where these men were spiritually when they wrote
- B. Statistics state that 78% of all Americans pray at least once a week; 57% pray at least once a day.
 - 1. Serious and consistent prayer usually begins after age 30 when the illusion that we are masters of our own fate fades.
 - 2. Prayer is powerful - Eph. 3:20

I. WHAT PRAYER WILL DO

- A. Prayer can strengthen the soul - Psalm 138:1-3
- B. Prayer can be a source of stability and preservation - Psalm 121:2-3
- C. Prayer can impart peace - Phil. 4:6-7
- D. Prayer will access the blessings of God for His children
 - 1. Matt. 7:7-11; Phil. 4:19
 - 2. Prayer is answered according to the will of God - 1John 5:14
 - 3. God knows what we need - Matt. 6:8, 32
- E. Prayer petitions forgiveness - 1John 1:9, 2:1-2
- F. Intercessory prayers of Christians can impact the lives of others
 - 1. Rom. 15:30-31; Eph. 1:16-18; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 4:3; 1Tim. 2:1-3

II. WHAT PRAYER WILL NOT DO

- A. Prayer alone will not save the lost.
 - 1. The Gospel is preached to the lost - Rom. 1:16; Acts 2:14
 - 2. The apostles did not hold prayer meetings to save the lost; they went out and preached the gospel and baptized penitent believers
- B. Prayer will not relieve us of our responsibilities. Some seem to think that instead of doing what God has commanded, they can simply pray.
 - 1. Prayer is no substitute for visiting the sick, restoring the erring, and living a moral life - James 1:27; Gal. 6:1-2; 2Cor. 7:1
- C. Prayer will not convey faith. When the jailer asked how to be saved, he was told to believe. The word was then preached to him so he could develop faith
 - 1. Acts 16:30-31; Rom. 10:17; John 20:30-31
- D. Prayer will not keep the Christian from trials.
 - 1. Difficulties often serve as a means of growth - James 1:2-4
 - 2. Difficulties remind us to prepare for heaven - 1Peter 1:3-7
 - 3. Difficulties are often just part of the world we live in - Ecc. 9:11
 - 4. God promised a way of escape - 1Cor. 10:13
- E. Prayer will not reveal the will of the Lord.
 - 1. 2Tim. 2:15, 3:15-17

F. Prayer will not save the sinner - John 17:17

G. Prayer will not always be answered the way we expect

1. Mark 10:38; Rom. 8:26-27

H. We have no assurance that our prayers will be heard and answered apart from a faithful relationship with God

1. Psalm 145:18-19; Prov. 15:29; Jer. 29:12; John 15:7; 1John 3:22, 5:14

Conclusion:

A. Prayer was designed by God for a purpose, a purpose it accomplishes to the fullest extent God intended for it

1. If prayer falls short of our expectations for it, then our expectations differ from God's purpose for prayer

2. We need to bring our understanding of prayer to His purpose

3. When we do so, our prayer life will be a blessed and cherished part of our day