PREREQUISITES TO PRAYER

Before you can pray effectively there are some requirements that must be met.

Just as a servant would not dare enter the presence of the king in a disrespectful manner we cannot enter the throne room of God any way we please. We must meet God on His terms.

We must be in a right relationship with God (saved).
We must be in a right fellowship with God (sanctified)

I. THE PERSON GOD WILL NOT ANSWER

A. AN UNSAVED PERSON

1. You need to be in God's family
(an unsaved man is not part of God's family - Eph.2:2-3)

God does not answer the Devil's kids (Jn. 8:44)
Ex. Of a child who comes up to some one other than his dad and says "I want you to buy me a new bicycle" He is under no obligation to answer that request.

You need to be born again! (Jn. 3) = born into God's family by
adoption.

How can one pray in “Jesus Name” if they do not belong to Jesus? (John 14:13)

How can one pray “according to His will” when they have not done His will which is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? (I John 5:14-15)

Note: However, God does hear the sincere prayer of one who is seeking His salvation (ex. Cornelius - Acts 10; The Publican, who said: “God, be merciful to me the sinner”)

2. You need to pray in the Spirit
Eph 6:18
Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;
Jude 1:20
But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,
(an unsaved man does not have the Spirit - Rom. 8:9)

God will not answer the prayers of…

B. AN <u>UNSANCTIFIED</u> PERSON (An unholy believer)
(This refers to a person who is unholy; not set apart from sin unto God)

Illustration: Answers to prayer are like water - they meet a basic need in life. Prayer like the pipes through which water passes provides a channel for God's power to flow into our lives. To actually have water in our homes we must tap the main water supply. However the pipes often become <u>blocked up</u> by dirt etc. and our water supply dwindles or stops altogether. This is similar to our prayer lives. God will not and can not answer prayers that come from hearts filled with sin. <u>Sin</u> blocks the channel.

What is it that clogs the channel of our prayer life? The answer is one word - "<u>sin</u>"

GOD WILL NOT ANSWER PRAYER IF THERE IS <u>UNCONFESSED SIN IN THE HEART</u>!

Ps 66:18
If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:
Isa 59:1-2
Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:
But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

God is not demanding "sinless perfection" (but confession is essential - I Jn.1:9)

Don't blame God because He refuses to give you your requests.
His power has not diminished, nor is He losing His hearing, nor has He changed.
<u>You</u> are responsible for God's silence; You are to blame! YOur sins have cut the lifeline of prayer.

Isa 1:13-15
Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.
Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.
And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

The phrase "spread forth your hands" means to hold out the hands (palms up in prayer) expecting to receive from God.

Can you imagine God forbidding a man to pray?

Jer 7:16
Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.

No one can both sin and pray. "True prayer will prevent us from sinning, or sin will prevent us from praying"

Ex. Simon the Sorcerer (acts 8) who asked Peter to pray for him because he knew he was not able to pray for himself while in such wicked sin.

Obedience is necessary before prayer will be answer.
I Jn 3:22
And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

THE SINS THAT PREVENT GOD FROM ANSWERING YOUR PRAYERS ARE:

A. PRAYING WITH A SELFISH SPIRIT

James 4:3 - Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Wrong motives in prayer. ex. of selfish praying - Mt. 20:20-ff The mother of James & John.

"seek ye first the kingdom ... and all these things shall be added unto you" Mt.6:33.

Some pray that their spouse will get saved just so that they might enjoy (the benefits of his/her salvation) a peaceful and "happy" home rather than out of concern for their soul.

B. PRAYING WITHOUT FAITH

Mt.21:22 - And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Unbelief is sin!

The word "amen" comes from the Hebrew word [ ] which is most often translated "believed".
Example: Gen 15:6 "Abraham believed God..." Transliterated it reads "Abraham amened the Lord" When you conclude your prayer with "amen" you are actually saying "so be it" or "it will truly happen" This is faith!

C. PRAYING WITH UNFORGIVENESS

Mark 11:25 - And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

Bitterness and holding grudges are the equivalent of hatred. Such attitudes grieve the Holy Spirit.

We are to forgive 70 times 7 (Mt. 18:21-22)

We must forgive as Christ forgave us (Eph.4:32)

D. PRAYING WHEN THERE IS <u>DISOBEDIENCE IN YOUR MARRIAGE</u>

1 Pet 3:7 - Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Wives not submitting (v.1) "hinders" your prayers v.7.
Husbands not loving (v.7) "hinders" your prayers v.7.

"hindered" = cut in on (interfered with)
You will not pray together if your relationship is not right.
God will not answer you if your relationship is not right (because you are living disobediently to His commands)

II. THE PERSON GOD <u>WILL</u> ANSWER

God will absolutely answer your prayers, if you meet these 4 Conditions:

A. THE ONE WHO PRAYS IN ACCORDANCE WITH <u>GOD'S WILL</u>

I Jn 5:14 - And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

Praying in Christ's name is praying in Christ's will.

John 14:13 - And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

B. THE ONE WHO <u>ABIDES</u> (REMAINS) IN RIGHT FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST

John 15:7- If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

> Our relationship never changes, but our fellowship may.
> Our union with Christ never changes, but our communion with Him may.

The one who pleases Him recieves answers to prayer:
Ps 66:18-20 -
If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:
But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

C. THE ONE WHO IS <u>OBEDIENT</u> TO GOD'S WORD

I John 3:22 - And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

D. THE ONE WHO PRAYS - <u>BELIEVING</u>!

Mark 11:24- Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

James 1:6-7 - But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.
For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

Concl. If you are not experiencing answers to your prayers you must make sure that you have 1) a right <u>relationship</u> to God (saved), and if you are saved 2) a right <u>fellowship</u> with God (sanctified).

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D. THE ONE WHO PRAYS - _____! Mark 11:24