

DOES GOD HOLD BACK?

1 John 5:14 ... "Now this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."

Today's verse which suggests that God does not hear our prayers if we pray for things that are not part of his will for us. Many believers find it reasonable that God may not give them what they ask for, but fewer believers can accept that God might ignore them.

Picture yourself preparing dinner after a long, hard day. Your patience has been worn thin by the challenges of your job. Your 11-year-old son comes to you and asks, "Mom, is it okay if I skip dinner and go over to Mark's house for some beers and shabu? Then go home with one of the girls from school and sleep with her tonight?" If you are like me, I would not consider such a stupid request even worth my time answering. I might ignore him, while handing him a broom so he can get to work sweeping the floor.

But, we sometimes are guilty of being this dumb when we ask God for things that are clearly outside of his will for us: "God, please protect me as I race my motorcycle down the highway at 80 km/hr" or, "God, please keep me from getting pregnant when I sleep with my boyfriend;" or, "Please protect me from getting shot when I rob the store." Those are obvious mistakes. But, what about, "God, please do not let my creditors find me," or "Please help me hide my son from the police," or "Cause my husband to have an accident so he will spend more time with me." And, "God, I'm tired of working. Can you supply my family with something to eat so I can go and gamble my salary at the cock fight?"

How do you get God to listen to you? First, you must submit to his authority. If you are intent on making the important decisions in your life without God's help, then you are not living in submission to God. If the Holy Spirit is trying to guide you on the straight path, but you refuse to take his advice and insist on being your own guide, you are living outside of God's will and you cannot expect him to hear your prayers. Second, your submission must be genuine and for the right reasons. If you are trying to obey God simply to get to Heaven, your motives are not pure because God is more concerned with your actions and your commitment to him here and now. Heaven is not the goal. It is a reward for serving him. If you are asking for God's help just as another source of advice like you get from your friends, then your submission is not genuine.

The first step in finding God's will for your life and his help, is to submit fully and genuinely to him BEFORE you pray. Until you do that, your prayers may not be heard. I want you to know God's will for you and for you to live in harmony with him. But only you can make that happen by submitting to him.

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