**Delayed Answers to Prayer TMTPL # 11 Handout**

Sometimes when we pray, we get fast answers. We like fast answers, but sometimes answers to prayer are delayed. What are some of the reasons that prayers are delayed?

**Daniel 10:10-14 NIV**

**10A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11He said, “Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.**

**12Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. 13But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.14Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.”**

* Daniel’s prayer was delayed in receiving its answer because of spiritual warfare.
* Another very complicated reason has to do with the reality that God answers our prayers through circumstances, other people, spiritual power, and, yes even, prophetic timing.
* Because the complexity on this Divine scale is so far above us, we should persevere in prayer because God is pleased by our prayers that are according to His will.

**2 Peter 3:3-10 NIV**

**3Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” 5But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water.6By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. 7By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.**

**8But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

**10But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.**

This is especially important to remember when we are praying for the salvation of someone we care about. No matter how long it takes, do not give up praying for their salvation. God has not given up on them, neither should we.

* God works through other people and the interconnectedness of our interactions. So, sometimes the answer is delayed because someone or several someone’s need to take actions for your answer to arrive. Also, we must recognize that things need to come together in the proper alignment and sequence for some answers.
* Of course, sometimes answers are delayed because of one’s own self. No matter the cause of the delay, if it causes us to draw nearer to God then we are far better off.
* Everything will ultimately serve to bring glory to God, even delays to prayer.

**John 11:1-5 NIV**

**11 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2(This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) 3So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.”**

**4When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” 5Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, 7and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”**

* Delayed answers to prayer bring us to wrestle at the nexus of our finite humanity and God’s mysterious limitlessness.

**John 11:40 NIV 40Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”**

* So, when we encounter delays and even seeming impossibilities to receiving the answer to our prayers, we do well to take Jesus’ counsel and keep believing. Keep praying, keep drawing nearer to God, and keep letting God transform and mature you. Even those things that seem like dead ends to us, are tools of divine providence.