



# Condensed Milk

## Reasons for Denied Prayers

### Reasons in Us for Denied Prayers, 1

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you,  
ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

Jesus, in John 15:7

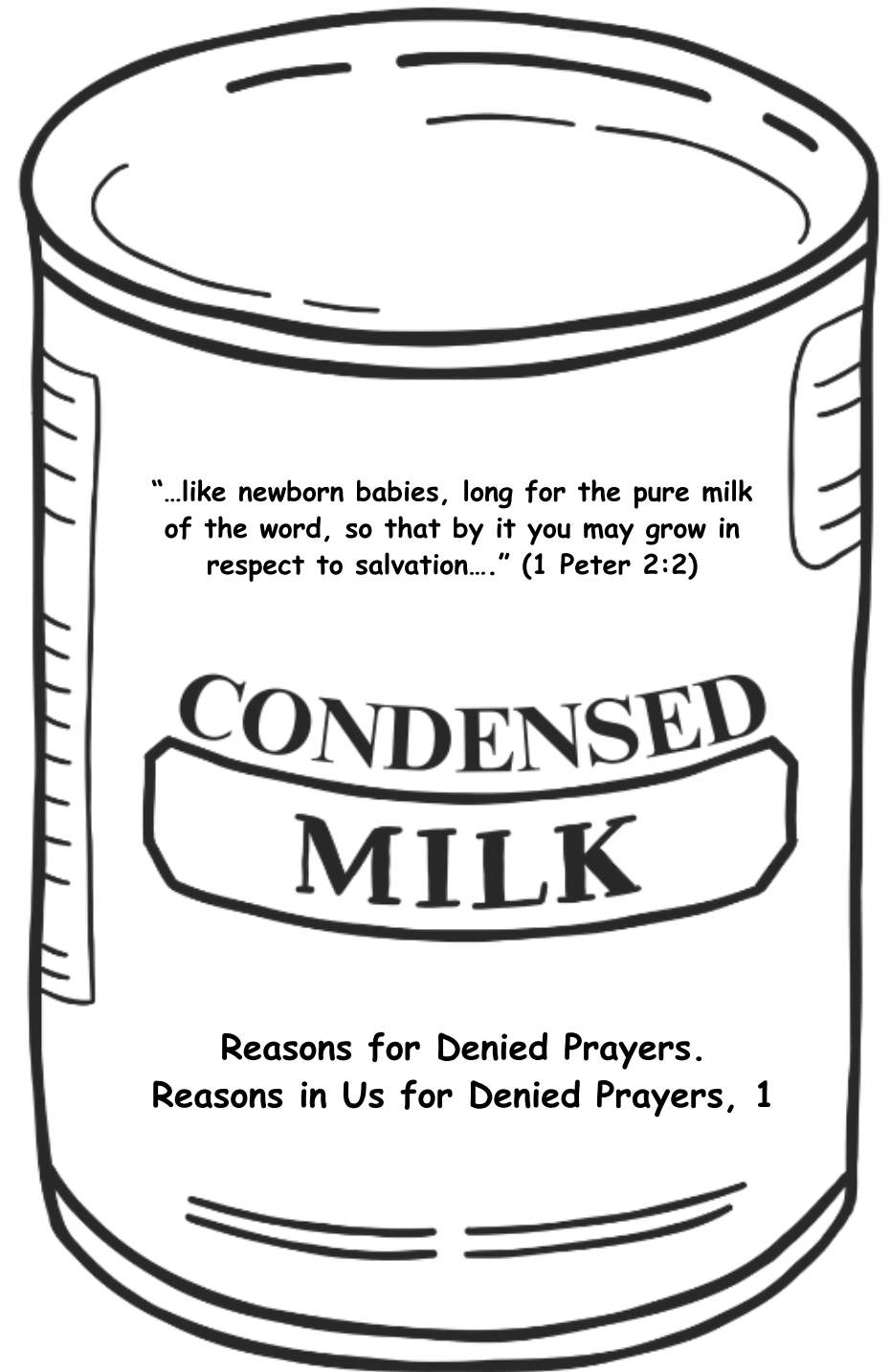
It is wonderful to experience answers to prayer. When I was a seminary student and had no money to speak of, my wife became pregnant with our third child. We did not have a washer or dryer in our rented place and so I was concerned about the laundry burden this would put on Elsie. I began to ask God to provide us with a cheap washing machine. Then, at least, Elsie could wash at home and only have to dry the laundry at the laundromat. About two weeks into praying Rob called me. I hadn't talked to Rob in at least four years. I'm not even sure how he got my phone number. He lived twelve hours away but happened to be in our area because his father, sadly, happened to pass away. He and his sister had only the weekend to prepare his house for sale, and he invited me to come take anything out of the house I wanted. I thought, “Maybe we can get some lamps. We could use some lamps.” To make my story short -- I brought a crew of people to help with the clean-up and came away with an almost new washer *and* dryer.

God wants us to regularly experience answers to prayer. He wants us to have joyful stories to tell. However, every Christian will also experience denied petitions and this can be disillusioning. We pray for a healing, a wayward child, financial relief, or a spouse but God does not grant it. But Jesus' encouragement that we will receive whatever we ask for in prayer has a biblical context that limits the “whatever”. With a little thought the need of limits becomes obvious. I can't imagine, for example, God granting my request to make my robbery of a bank successful. Similarly, there is always a reason for denied petitions. As we grow in our walk with God, identify and remove these obstacles, we can experience granted petitions often. To be sure, our asks will become fewer but more of them will be granted.

**The first reason**, in us, for denied requests is *self-centeredness*. James 4:3 says, “You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.” One of the tendencies we find most difficult to change in our prayers is our self-centered natures. We are deeply self-centered. It is painful for us even to put God and his concerns above our own.

Now, if you make yourself follow the themes and priorities of the Lord's Prayer (the only model of prayer we are commanded to follow in Scripture), meaning you begin with God and what he wants, it will guide you to pray in a God-centered way. You will likely find this priority disappointing. We want what we want! As you become more God-centered, your desires will come into line with what God is willing to grant and you will have growing assurance that he is willing to give what you ask for. God was willing to grant us a washer and dryer. He did not grant my request, in my younger years, for a million dollars... not even when I promised to give him most of that.

One of the most important transformations we must go through in order to experience answered prayer requests is the transformation from self-centeredness to God-centeredness. We must progressively reorient everything about our lives around Jesus and what he has said. As we “remain” in him and his words in us, as we grow in making his priorities our own, our prayers will align with God's will and our petitions will be granted.



"...like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation...." (1 Peter 2:2)

**CONDENSED  
MILK**

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