



Condensed Milk

Reasons for Denied Prayers

Reasons in Us for Denied Prayers, 3

"Until now you have not asked for anything in my name.
Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

John 16:23-24

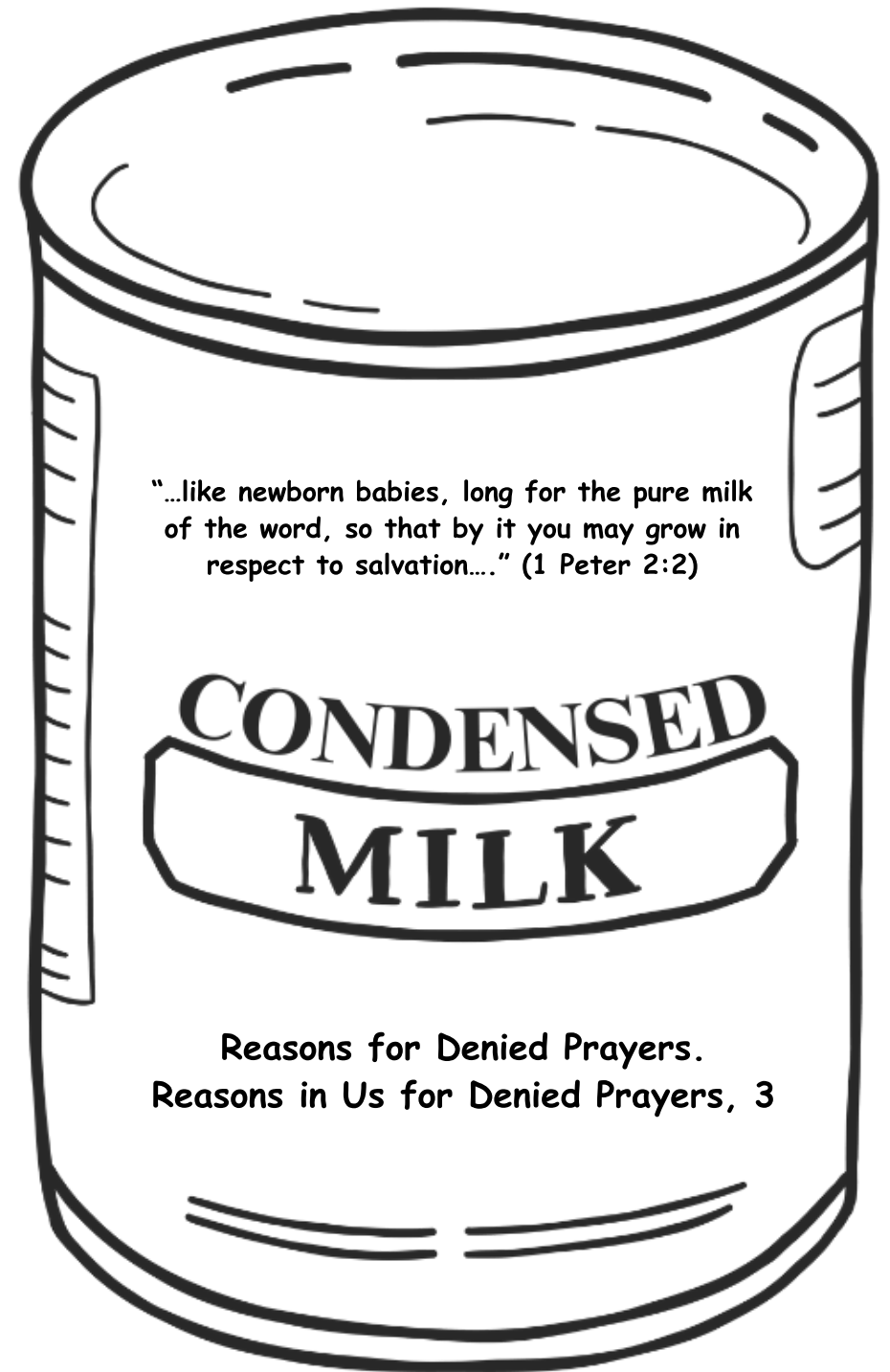
Jesus wants us to have a sense of joy through the experience of receiving what we have asked of God. If we are not experiencing that joy, if we do not have stories to tell, it is not because the promise is reserved for exceptional people. At times there are very basic reasons, in us, for denied prayers. But these obstacles can be identified and removed if we are willing to do so.

So far, we have discovered that self-centeredness and unrepented sins will stand in the way of our petitions. The apostle Peter gets even more specific. A third obstacle to granted petitions is directed at husbands. "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers" (1 Peter 3:7). God is watching my marriage relationship. He sees how I treat my spouse. If I am failing to treat her well it will likely lead to my petitions being denied.

Husbands, are we being considerate of our wives' needs and wishes and feelings? Do we put those needs ahead of our own? Cutting remarks will hinder our prayers. Being overbearing will result in denied petitions. Failure to be affirming, treating her as inferior, will stand in the way of answered prayers. Robbing her of marital joy will result in our own loss of joy. "He who loves his wife loves himself," the apostle Paul says, and this is one example. If I love my wife, I remove an obstacle to granted petitions.

Peter does not stop at husbands, nor does Jesus. He goes on to expand the application of his exhortation to all of us in the next verse. "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing..." (1 Peter 3:8-9). Jesus elsewhere states that God does not even want our worship, let alone our petitions, if we have offended anyone and not made it right (Matthew 5:23-24). He is concerned not only with how husbands treat wives but how wives treat husbands, parents treat children, children treat parents, church folk treat church folk, and so on.

Six years ago, I stepped down from my pastoral position. With that decision my wife and I anticipated making a move from Crossfield Alberta to Kamloops British Columbia. Our only grandchildren were there and we wanted to be part of their lives. We were dismayed to discover that the price difference between what we had and the same in Kamloops was at least \$200,000. It was impossible for us to make up that difference. Over the next four years we continued to receive house listings but the market in Kamloops only got hotter while our area seemed stagnant. But I was praying that God would cause the Kamloops market to drop significantly and for the Crossfield market to heat up... significantly. In the meantime, I was privileged to provide interim ministries for two churches in Alberta that had lost their pastors. They were the most fruitful and satisfying of all my ministries. At the end of that four-year period the Kamloops market died, the Crossfield market exploded, and we sold our home for more than we paid to replace it in Kamloops. You can be sure, we experienced joy in having our petition granted. You can as well.



"...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)

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MILK**

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