able to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 1:1-4). 3) *Yes.* Elijah’s prayers for rain were answered immediately by *God* (James 5:16-18). 4) Y*es, but different than asked for*. Paul’s thorn remained—he received grace instead (2 Cor. 12:8,9). 5) *Yes, and even more than asked for*. Solomon asked for wisdom and also received long life and riches (1 Kings 3:11-13).

Many people have false ideas about prayer. They suggest many reasons why prayers are not obviously or immediately answered. 1) Because you didn’t pray hard enough. 2) Because God knows what is best for you better than you do. 3) Because someone else’s prayer for the opposite result was more worthy. 4) Because prayer is a sham; God doesn’t hear prayers. 5) Because there is no God. Of course, believers know that God’s ear is always open to our prayers (1 Pet. 3:12) and that “we will reap in due season, if we do not faint (Gal. 6:9).

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**Fate & Fatalism**

Greek and Roman mythology held that the length of human life is determined by three “fates.” They believed that at birth a person’s life is suspended by a thread woven by one of the fates. The length of the thread is measured by the second fate, and the thread is cut by the third fate, which ends life. Those who feel that their lives are ruled by fate have the view that they are powerless to influence the future or their own actions. It is an attitude of resignation that accepts the inevitable. Fatalists feel that the course of their life is preordained. In spite of their actions, they are moving toward some inevitable end. Several similar philosophies share the common view that human life is governed by random and uncontrollable events. 1) **Luck** is a combination of circumstances and events that operate by chance to bring good or ill to a person. 2) **Fortune** is a power or force, often personalized, regarded as being responsible for human affairs. 3) **Destiny** is a set of predetermined events within your life that you take an active course in shaping. Coincidence has no direct or indirect relationship with the series of events--“It just happened.” 4) **Lot** is described as the overall circumstances or condition in life (including everything that happens to you). 5) **Chance** is the unknown and unpredictable element in happenings that seems to have no assignable cause.

**Pantheism**

Pantheism is the philosophy that “God is everything, and everything is God.” According to pantheists, 1) the [Universe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universe) ([Nature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature)) and [God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God) ([divinity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divinity)) are identical. 2) There is no [personal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_god) god. 3) "God" is best seen as a process of relating to the Universe. 4) The Cosmos is an all-encompassing unity. 5) The Universe and Nature are sacred. 6) Most pantheists do not conceive the divine power as an observer or punisher of our misdeeds. 7) The biosphere is more valuable than humans and non-humans.

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