

When God Says “No”

- A. Consider that God not giving you what you ask for now may not mean that God has altogether said “no.” God’s answer may be “not now.”
1. Although God promises to answer prayers that are according to His will, He answers them in His time.
 2. It is the scoffer who questions God’s promise because He does not grant something right away. **2PE 3:3-4.**
 3. Receipt of a promise may be delayed. **HEB 6:12-15.**
 4. Jesus taught in the parable of the unjust judge that we do not always get what we pray for right away. **LUK 18:1-8.**
- B. Consider that God may have given you what you asked for, as in giving someone grace to obey, but that person has received it in vain. **2CO 6:1.**
1. Although God *enables* men to obey Him, He does not *force* them to do so. That is His method in dealing with men.
 2. God does not change His method of government to accommodate our prayers.
- C. Following are examples of times when God said “no” to the prayers and desires of His people.
1. Moses prayed to enter into the promised land. **DEU 3:23-28.**
 2. Job longed to die. **JOB 3:20-22; 7:15-16.**
 3. David desired to build a house of God. **1CH 28:2-6.**
 4. David prayed for his baby to live. **2SAM 12:15-20.**
 - a. David's prayer was not answered because of a judgment. Such is not always the case.
 - b. There are times when it is a mercy to not have a baby. **LUK 23:28-29.**
 - c. Sometimes the deferral of a baby indicates a special blessing to come. **GEN 30:1, 22-24.**
 5. Paul prayed that the thorn in his flesh would depart from him. **2CO 12:7-10.**
- D. God says “no” to prayers that are not according to His will. **1JO 5:14-15.**
1. The above examples are examples of requests that did not accord with God’s will.
 2. We are assured that we receive anything we ask of God that is according to His will.
 - a. God's will is revealed in His word. **EPH 5:17 c/w PSA 119:104.**
 - b. The Lord Jesus connected effectual prayer with His words abiding in us. **JOH 15:7.**
 - c. When we pray according to the Scriptures we may be assured that our prayers will be heard.
 3. Our Lord taught us to make the will of God our foremost desire and request in our prayers. **MAT 6:9-13.**
 4. Prayer is our appeal to the will of God. It is not a means to manipulate God to do our will.
 - a. God is not a magic genie at our service.
 - b. Doubts may arise when you try to get God to bless your plans instead of surrendering to His will.
 - c. Do not assume that because your motives are good in something and you have prayed about it, that God is obligated to do what you want. Consider the example of David wanting to build the house of God.
 5. These passages are examples of Scriptural requests:
COL 4:3-4; 2TH 3:1-2; PHIL 1:9-11; COL 1:9-12.

- a. Observe how Paul's prayers emphasize spiritual things above natural things. **MAT 7:7 c/w MAT 6:33.**
 - b. In praying for evangelism, do not discount the value of the conversion of a single soul. **LUK 15:7, 10.**
- E. God says “no” to prayers for things to consume upon our lusts (**JAM 4:3**). Such prayers are not seeking the glory of God, but rather the gratification of self.
- F. God says “no” when we do not ask in faith. **MAR 11:24; JAM 1:5-7.**
 - 1. The wavering man vacillates between believing and doubting.
 - a. Rather than a settled faith in what God has said, he is driven and tossed like a wave of the sea.
 - b. He is driven by circumstances or emotions rather than by the word of God.
 - 2. Remembering that “...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (**ROM 10:17**), a prayer in faith will always be a prayer according to the word and will of God.
 - 3. True faith is submission to God. Faith without works of obedience to God is dead. **JAM 2:14-26.**
 - a. Consider that a seeming unanswered prayer made according to God's will was frustrated by a lack of faithful duty on your part.
 - b. What of the person who prays for wisdom (**JAM 1:5**) but never studies his Bible?
 - c. What of the person who prays for deliverance from temptation but continues to make provision for his flesh's lusts? **ROM 13:14.**
 - d. What of the person who prays for health (**3JO 1:2**) but persists in what he knows are unhealthy habits?
 - e. What of the person who prays for opportunities to witness (**COL 4:3**) but clams up when a door is opened?
- G. God says “no” to your prayers when you say “no” to His word. **PRO 1:24-28; 28:9.**
 - 1. Those who keep God's commandments receive whatsoever they ask. **1JO 3:22-23.**
 - 2. Consider that water baptism is “...the answer of a good conscience toward God...” (**1PE 3:21**). If you would have God answer you, have you given Him this answer?
- H. An unanswered prayer request may be owing to a lack of bold, dedicated persistence.
 - 1. God honors dedicated efforts to obtain His favor. **MAT 15:22-28.**
 - 2. “...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (**JAM 5:16**).
- I. Because of the fall, we will always experience wants, inequities, and troubles in this world.
 - 1. Through prayer some of these will be removed, but not all of them.
 - 2. God did not ordain prayer to make a paradise of this world!
 - 3. God did ordain prayer as a means to help us deal with this fallen world.
 - 4. Christ assured us that “in this world” we would have tribulation. **JOH 16:33.**
 - a. Christ spoke the things that He did in that upper room discourse that in Him His tried disciples might have peace.
 - b. Christ spoke much of prayer in that discourse. Hence, prayer is a means to have peace.
- J. God knows what to give us because He knows us better than we know ourselves. **PSA 147:5; 139:1-6.**
 - 1. He knows all our weaknesses and what we would do in given circumstances.
 - a. God may be saying “no” to something, which you in your weakness could not bear. **1CO 10:13.**

- (1) Paul knew he was capable of pride. **2CO 12:7.**
 - (2) Agur knew what he was capable of in poverty and in wealth. **PRO 30:7-9.**
 - (3) Before you say, “I would never,” remember David’s downfall and Peter’s downfall. **MAT 26:33-35.**
- b. Tribulations are in our lives “...if need be...” (**1PE 1:6**).
2. God knows how our lives impact others.
- a. God’s saying “no” to Moses and to David stand as warnings to us to not sin as did they.
 - b. The occasion of God’s saying “no” to Paul gives us great comfort.
 - c. God may not remove your trouble so that He can comfort you in it so that you may comfort others in their trouble. **2CO 1:4.**
 - d. God knows what He wants to do with you.
 - e. If God says “no” to one area of service, then seek how you may serve in another way as David, who, when he could not build the house of God, yet he provided for it.
3. Recall that Job wanted to argue with God about how God was dealing with him. **JOB 23:3-4.**
- a. Job thought he knew best and that God had made a mistake. **JOB 32:2.**
 - b. When Job got his day in court, God pitted His great power and knowledge against Job and silenced his objections. **JOB 40:1-8.**
- K. Because of our infirmity “...we know not what we should pray for as we ought...” (**ROM 8:26**). Hence, God gives us His Spirit to help us by making intercession for us “...according to the will of God” (**ROM 8:27**).
- L. You will more humbly accept God’s “no’s” if you recall that there are times when God’s people insist on what they want and He gives it to them “in His wrath.” **ISAM 8 c/w HOS 13:11; PSA 106:14-15.**
- M. In the light of the foregoing, all of our requests should be made known to God with faith in God’s perfect understanding to know what to do about what we request. **PHIL 4:6-7.**
1. In this way we truly *cast all of our care upon Him* (**1PE 5:7**) and thus come away *careful for nothing*.
 2. Even though we may not get specifically what we want, we will come away with “...the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.”
 - a. We do not have to understand everything to have this peace.
 - b. It is enough to know that God understands what is going on and that He has our best interest at heart.
- N. Do not let God’s “no’s” discourage you from asking at all.
1. Remember all the many times that God has given you what you requested.
 2. We will deny ourselves much by refusing to ask. **JAM 4:2.**
 3. By restraining prayer you will not obtain the peace that passeth all understanding.
 4. By restraining prayer you will not find the grace you need to help you. **HEB 4:16.**
 5. By restraining prayer you will deny God that which delights Him. **PRO 15:8.**
- O. Lastly, consider how blessed we are that God said “no” to His Son. **MAT 26:39; LUK 22:42.**
1. If removing the cup was not God’s will, Christ prayed that God would say “no.”
 2. Hence, God still answered Christ’s prayer.
 3. God’s saying “no” to you may be the way to greater blessing! It was for Christ. It was for me.