

When God Answers Prayer

It is indeed a true blessing to be able to talk to God through prayer at any time we desire (Psalm 34:15, 17a; 1 Peter 5:6; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). But, like any good father, God wants us to be comfortable going to Him with requests (Philippians 4:6; Matthew 7:7).

So often, when we don't get what we desire, we feel like God has not answered our prayer. But that is not true! God answers prayers in a variety of different ways.

Sometimes He will say "Yes."

- We see this with the example of Hannah (1 Samuel 1:9-18).
- We see this with the example of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:14-37).
- We see this with the example of Samson (Judges 16:28-31).
- We see this with the example of Elijah (1 Kings 17:1; 18:36-38; James 5:17-18).
- Jesus teaches us that God wants to give us the things that we request (Luke 11:5-13).

Sometimes He will say "No."

- God did not remove Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Instead of removing the thorn, the Lord left it because it served a good purpose in Paul's life.
- God did not remove the "cup" of suffering from Jesus (Luke 22:41-46). The Father gave Him the strength He needed to drink it.
- If God would not answer every request of Jesus with a "yes," what makes us think He will deal with us any different?
- Sometimes what we ask for is not in our best interest. It doesn't mean that God has not heard our prayer. It just means that the answer is different than we may want. This is why we must always pray for the Father's will to be done (Matthew 6:10; Luke 22:42).

Sometimes He will say, "Yes, but not right now."

- It would be nearly twenty years before Joseph was reunited with his family (Genesis 37-45).
- It would be twenty-five years before God blessed Abraham with Isaac (Genesis 21:5).
- This reality challenges us to be patient, trust God, and truly believe that He knows what is best for our lives.

Conclusion:

Prayer is how we access the power of God in our lives (James 5:16). The only thing that will keep God from hearing and responding to our prayers is sin (Isaiah 59:1-2)!

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