

Prayer

When God Answers No (Various)

4-11-10

Scripture Reading – Matthew 7:7-11

We need to be able to handle a no from God.

Have you ever gotten no for an answer from God? How did that make you feel?

No's from God can be devastating, especially when He says no to something we really want.

- Question our faith and condemn ourselves.
- Question God's goodness, love, or even His existence.

Learning to handle no for an answer is one of THE MOST IMPORTANT lessons a person can learn in life.

- My kids do great with yes.
- So do I.
- If you can't handle no, you can't handle life.

The same is certainly true in our relationship with God. If every time He answers no we either flip out in anger or fall apart in despair our relationship with Him will be very unhealthy.

If we want to have a strong, healthy relationship with God then we need to be able to handle it when His answer is no.

So how do we do it?

We need to learn from God's no's.

Six questions to ask yourself when God answers no. (the 30)

- 1) Did we pray according to God's revealed WILL?
 - a. God reveals His will primarily through His Word.

b. The better you get to know God's Word, the more you will be able to pray according to God's will, and the more you'll receive yes for answer.

i. **John 15:7 (ESV)**

⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

ii. **James 1:5 (ESV)**

⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

iii. **1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV)**

¹³No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

c. The opposite of course it also true.

i. Romans 13 example

d. Was the 30 in accordance with to God's revealed will?

i. **Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)**

¹⁹... go and make disciples...

ii. **John 3:16 (NIV)**

¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that *whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

iii. **2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)**

⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, *not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

iv. John 3:3 & 5 (my translation)

³Unless you are born again you can neither see nor enter the Kingdom of God.

v. 1 Corinthians 3:5-7 (NIV)

⁵What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe--as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, *but God made it grow.* ⁷So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, *but only God, who makes things grow.*

2) Was there unrepentant SIN our lives that hindered our prayers?

a. Psalms 66:16-20 (ESV)

¹⁶Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. ¹⁷I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. ¹⁸*If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.* ¹⁹But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. ²⁰Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!

b. Proverbs 1:28-30 (ESV)

²⁸Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. ²⁹*Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord,* ³⁰would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof,

c. James 5:15-16 (ESV)

¹⁵And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶*Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.*

d. 1 Peter 3:7 (ESV)

⁷Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since

they are heirs with you of the grace of life, *so that your prayers may not be hindered.*

3) Did we pray FERVANTLY enough?

a. Passionately or with intense feeling

b. **Hebrews 5:7 (ESV)**

⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, *with loud cries and tears*, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

c. Ultimate example Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

i. **Matthew 26:38-39 (ESV)**

³⁸Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." ³⁹And going a little farther *he fell on his face and prayed*, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

ii. **Luke 22:41-44 (ESV)**

⁴¹And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴²saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." ⁴³And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. ⁴⁴*And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

iii. Note two things...

1. Despite Jesus' fervency, His Father's answer was still no.
2. Not my will but yours be done.

4) Did we pray DILIGENTLY enough?

a. Steadily, earnestly, painstakingly

b. **Luke 18:1-8 (ESV)**

¹ And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. ³ And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' ⁴ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.' " ⁶ And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.

c. **Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV)**

⁷ "Ask and it will be given to you; *seek and you will find*; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; *he who seeks finds*; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

d. **Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NIV) – important qualifier**

¹³ You will seek me and find me *when you seek me with all your heart*.

5) Did we pray with right MOTIVES?

a. **James 4:1-3 (ESV)**

¹ What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. (diligence) ³ *You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.*

6) Did we pray with FAITH?

a. **Mark 11:20-24 (ESV)**

²⁰ As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. ²¹ And Peter remembered and said to

him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." ²²
And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. ²³ Truly, I say to you, *whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.* ²⁴
Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

We need to trust God's no's.

Once we've gone through these questions and learned what God wants us to learn from them, then we need to simply trust that His good and perfect will was done, regardless of whether our prayer effort was good or bad.

- God's will is always done.
 - **Job 42:2 (ESV) –another text like this?**
² "I know that you can do all things, and that *no purpose of yours can be thwarted.*
- If our prayer effort was good, then God had something better.
 - Jesus
 - Paul
 - **2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (ESV)**
⁷ *So to keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated.* ⁸ *Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.* ⁹ *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong
- If our prayer effort wasn't good, then God will still use it.

o **Romans 8:28 (NIV)**

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose

o Ways God used our prayers for the 30 for good

- Focused and united us (new prayer aim for this year)
- Challenged and motivated us (to get out and share)
- Tested us (persevere and trust God)
- Humbled us (God saves, not us)
- Resulted in at least 6 people coming to Christ and many taking one step closer
 - Two more since

• God always give us what's best.

o **Matthew 7:9-11 (NIV)**

⁹ "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?
¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!*