

How You Can Find God's Will When 'Not Yet' Looks Like 'No'

Knowing God's will can be hard. In our fast-paced culture, we want the answer, and we want it now! But God often works through a process.

In part 2 of this three-part series on myths about God's will, we'll look at when a *no* is really a *not yet*. Read part 1 [here](#).

When 'Not Yet' Looks Like 'No'

This is a great struggle, as we see it displayed thorough the lives of many biblical characters. Take David, for instance: Samuel anointed him as a young man to be the next king of Israel. How excited he must have been! He was quickly elevated after he killed Goliath and became commander of Israel's armies—the throne seemed like the next step. But King Saul got very jealous of David and tried to kill him, sending 300 trained assassins after him. David spent the next eight years running for his life!

How hopeless he must have felt at times, wondering if the promise of becoming king would ever come true. But God didn't forget His word, and suddenly—as quickly as David fled from Saul—David was elevated. David became king in one day, achieving this God-given dream, and reigned for a total of 40 years (see 2 Sam. 1–2).

His destiny was sure all along, despite the hardship and delay. All he needed to do was keep following the Lord, who was certain to lead him to “green pastures” and “still waters” (Ps. 23:2)—and it is the same for us!

Joseph's Story

Joseph is another great example. He had a dream as a young man that his parents and brothers would bow down to him. He shared this with his family, but they became angry. Genesis 37:8b tells us his brothers “hated him even more” and conspired to sell him into slavery in Egypt.

Later in Egypt, Joseph was imprisoned after his master’s wife falsely accused him (Gen. 39); and then while in prison, he was forgotten about for two more years after he correctly interpreted the dreams of two of Pharaoh’s servants (see Gen. 40–41). Scripture says that God’s word “tested [Joseph]” during this time (Ps. 105:19). Would Joseph give up his dream because people mistreated him, or keep believing that the Lord would bring about what He had promised?

Joseph, too, was elevated in a day (Gen. 41:14, 39-41), and a few years later, his whole family bowed to him. His brothers were scared that Joseph would retaliate against them for how they mistreated him, but he responded with a hopeful message, saying, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good” (Gen. 50:20b). Isn’t it amazing how God can work things for our good (Rom. 8:28), even as we wait in the queue of *not yet*?

Going Against Our Have-It-All-Now Culture

In a day and age when few things are worth waiting for (instant messaging, fast food, instant downloads), God’s timetable is often quite different. He sees time from eternity, and “with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet. 3:8b). Instead of getting discouraged about waiting, we can cling to His promises, while keeping in mind that He is Lord over *how* and *when* they will be fulfilled.

Joseph could never have foreseen the great deliverance God would work for him, and for the nations of the earth, through the persecution he endured. Every misstep by others was

actually moving him one step closer to his destiny! David would likely not have been the great leader that he was, and would not have written all his psalms if he had not spent years running for his life. It was a really hard time, but God brought him out of it because he didn't quit.

Why does God sometimes delay the answer we are seeking, even if we know it's something that's in His will and is good for both us and the kingdom (like a ministry opportunity, marriage or a healing)?

Potential Reasons

Sometimes we're not ready for the fulfillment of the promise yet, or others aren't ready; and sometimes God is using the delay to build our faith and work out a greater miracle. The Lord is always faithful to fulfill His promise in our lives, although it often requires perseverance from us in its delaying process.

Other times, God blocks certain situations by His answer, and the "no" is truly a "no." However, these are moments we are invited to dialogue with our Father (and trusted counselors) to discern if that's truly the case. This is not an attempt to provide "easy" answers and excuses when things are hard, but rather an invitation to press into God, in faith, instead of losing heart at the first "no" we receive when pursuing our goals.

God is good and always has our best interests at heart—even when our emotions and circumstances say otherwise. Press into Him today! "You shall seek [Him] and find [Him], when you search for [Him] with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).

What "not yet" do you believe is a "no" in your life? {eo}

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This post originally appeared at .