

When Your Prayers Go Unanswered, Try This Faith-Filled Response

Wouldn't it be wonderful if prayer were a way we could control God? Oh my, did I really put that thought into print?

Maybe this isn't a godly idea, yet we've all been guilty of this unspoken notion when we've faced what seemed to be a major failure in prayer. We've agonized, *But I thought I was an insider. I thought God loved me. I thought I was God's boss.*

Oops! Most people would never admit to aspiring to boss God, yet most of us, when faced with a grave difficulty, have tried to do just that, whether we've realized it or not.

Consider Mary and Martha, two godly sisters who no doubt considered themselves to be a part of Jesus' inner circle. Jesus and their brother, Lazarus, were friends. They'd fed Jesus and His disciples more times than they could count. And so, when they sent Jesus a note instructing Him to hurry to Bethany because their brother was sick, Jesus did not run to their rescue. In fact, by the time He showed up, Lazarus had been rotting in the grave for four days.

Martha was crushed. She fell at Jesus' feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21). And Mary? She was so distraught, all she could do was cry. I understand. There have been times when God's silence felt as though He was ignoring me completely. That kind of rejection hurts. It's no easy thing to process or to get over.

Mary and Martha felt this same sting. Even so, Martha told Jesus, "But even now I know that whatever You may ask of God, God will give You" (John 11:22).

Wow. Martha's response would be a great response to our own unanswered prayers: Trust that God has another plan.

Mary and Martha's unanswered request for Jesus to promptly return to Bethany brought them an unimagined miracle. Though Jesus waited too late to heal Lazarus from his illness, He still had the power to call him out of the grave, and He did!

I like how Pastor David Wilkerson described this scene: "Mary and Martha exhibit that faith is not trusting in what you want Jesus to do, but trusting in Jesus in the midst of unanswered requests."

So when we are faced with unanswered prayer, we should trust God anyway. For Jesus has the power to call heartache into joy, pain into peace and death into new life in ways we never expected.

Dear Lord, I give You my unanswered prayer. I am sorry if I ever tried to control You with prayer, and though it's not wrong for me to ask You my requests, it's wrong to think You must perform my every plea because I said so.

Forgive me. Now I humbly request that You turn my unanswered prayer into miracles I have yet to imagine.

Thank You, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen. {eoa}

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