

What God Is Trying to Tell You When He's Silent

"God, are you OK?" four-year-old Vinnie prayed. "That's an unusual prayer," his mother commented as she pulled the blanket under his chin.

"I was just curious," he said, "because you said God will speak to my heart when I pray. I've never heard Him say anything. So I was wondering if He was OK." Phyllis paused to think of the best way to answer her son's question. Before she could figure out where to begin, Vinnie said, "Can we have pancakes for breakfast in the morning?" Then he turned over and faced his little teddy bear, the signal that he was ready to sleep.

A cartoon pictured a little boy kneeling in prayer. Obviously disgruntled with God, he was saying, "Aunt Harriet hasn't gotten married, Uncle Hubert hasn't any work, and Daddy's hair is still falling out. I'm getting tired of praying for this family without getting any results."

Although these illustrations are comedic, at some point you will have to answer some of your child's troublesome questions about God. Like most parents, you hope the question is soon forgotten, as in the case of Phyllis. But what happens when it's not? It can become a stumbling block to your little one's spiritual progress. Children are curious about God. They want to know what He's like and who He really is. And they deserve a good answer.

The answer to Vinnie's question, "God are You OK?" is a resounding "Yes!" God is all-sufficient! He has no needs. God is OK! What Vinnie was trying to get at is this: Why does God sometime respond to my prayer immediately and other times not respond at all? Jesus spoke to that very point when He told

His disciples that “they should always pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1, MEV). Persistence in prayer is a quality we all need if our prayer lives are to blossom into something special.

Being persistent is not being a nuisance. D. L. Moody drew that same perspective when he said: “Some people think God does not like to be troubled with our constant coming and asking. The way to trouble God is not to come at all.”

In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed for the same thing three times over what appears to be a three-hour time span (Matt. 26:44). Three times He prayed: “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done” (Matt. 26:42, MEV). His persistence was born out of a troubled heart. He was never doubtful or unsure of God’s willingness to answer Him.

Jesus was just gripped by the thought of being alienated from God. Never before was this a reality. The thought of His bearing the sins of the world as He hung from the forthcoming cross weighed heavily on His heart. His persistence in prayer was simply a confirmation that the cross was the only option. God’s redemptive love had to be demonstrated through His atoning death, burial and resurrection. God’s silence confirmed the necessity of Jesus’ impending death. God was OK. Humanity was about to have a Savior. All was well! God’s silence satisfied Jesus’ prayer request. The cross was God’s will—and Jesus’ too. All is well!

The Bible shows that Paul, the great apostle, also prayed three times concerning one of his personal needs. The time span for his prayers is unknown. But what is known is the answer. Paul said: “I asked the Lord three times that this thing [a thorn in the flesh] might depart from me. But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will boast in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”

(2 Cor. 12:8-9).

Paul's persistence was steeped in faith. He had a bold trust in God's willingness to answer him. At the end of Paul's third request God spoke. The answer may not have been what Paul wanted to hear, but it brought him to a place of peace. God's answer was so medicinal that it did not matter if the thorn was removed or not. Paul was changed. The Lord showed him that when he's weak, Christ is strong within him. Paul's victory was his becoming more dependent on God in the face of adversity. He did not let God's initial silence deter him from praying.

Your child must learn similar lessons. The silence of God is God's way of saying: "Pursue Me! Draw closer to Me! Don't back away! Get fired up about building a deeper relationship with Me!" The silence of God is not meant to provoke you to anger or make you conclude that your needs are unimportant to God. His silence is a time for renewing your passion for a deeper communion with Him. {eoa}

✖ *Adapted from Raising a Child Who Prays—Teaching Your Family the Power of Prayer by Dr. David D. Ireland, copyright 2016, published by Charisma House. This book is a powerful parenting tool for those who not only enjoy a strong prayer life but also want to teach their children to do the same and become powerful prayer warriors. To order your copy click [here](#).*

Prayer Power for the Week of September 18, 2016

This week determine to be persistent in your prayers. If you have young children, lead them by example in your persistence and faith. Ask God to help you teach your children how to wait on Him for answers that may not come right away. Thank Him that He is ever faithful to answer according to His will, with what's best for all concerned, in a way that glorifies Him in the end. Continue to pray for the nation during these

turbulent times. Ask the Lord for wisdom as you make choices in the upcoming elections (Matt. 26:42; 2 Cor. 12:8-9).