

What to Do When God Doesn't Answer Your Prayers

During the holidays, I spend quite a bit of time reflecting. I feel extra sentimental and pensive during the final months of the year. As another year comes to an end, I enjoy taking the time to ponder over what is, what was and what could have been, and I once again give thanks and glory to God for another year to enjoy family, friends and freedom.

As I look back on the last several months, I can't help but realize how many of my prayers were unanswered, how many situations I desperately wanted to pan out that never came to fruition and how many setbacks and failures I experienced. That reality may seem bleak to some, or as if I'm lingering in the past, but unanswered prayers and supposed disappointments are blessings in disguise, and I am grateful! We serve a deliberate and purposeful God. He makes no mistakes. So, an unanswered prayer is actually an answered prayer in itself, and for that I am thankful.

Finally, remember the words of Jesus: "Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you" (Matt. 6:32-33).

Closed doors, failed friendships and situations not panning out often feel frustrating, disappointing and even as if the end of the world is near. However, those failed situations or loose ends were purposefully planned. Yes, planned. God did not set you up to fail. He planned for something better to happen. There are blessings in "no," and thanking God for His no's can truly revolutionize your life as a believer.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He

will direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6).

He does not close doors out of spite, entertainment or just because. He closes doors and does not answer prayers in the way you desire because His purpose for your life is much bigger than you or I could imagine.

Instead of trying to decipher His plan or reason, give thanks.

Instead of harping over the past and stirring up feelings of resentment or anger, give thanks.

This is the season of giving and gratitude, right? Well, now more than ever, thank Him! Thank Him for giving you the strength to push through despite not receiving what you thought was best for your life. Thank Him for closing doors because only God knows where those doors lead. Thank Him for listening to your every cry, prayer and thought. He is a selfless God who never stops His watch for you. Thank Him for knowing what is best for your life. When you truly understand and accept that God is and will always move in your life for your advantage, you will realize that unanswered prayers are not a letdown or defeat.

Do not pray in fear. Instead, boldly proclaim, "Not my will, but Yours," and watch your faith unfold in a powerful way.

"He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done'" (Luke 22:41-42). {eo}

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