

When Your Prayers Go Unanswered

“If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up” (Dan. 3:17-18, MEV).

Have you ever been disappointed, even angry with God when He has not answered prayer in the way you wanted or expected? I am sure we all have. The thing is God usually has different priorities than we do.

We ask to be delivered from a trial when God wants us to go through it. We want our prayers answered now when God wants us to grow through waiting. We ask to be spared from suffering when God knows that our current difficulties are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs all of our troubles (2 Cor. 4:17).

It is hard to understand though, if we have trusted God for something that we really felt was His will, only to suffer a huge reversal and have our hopes dashed. Unanswered prayers reveal our heart. If we get angry with God, it shows that, at least in this area of our life, He is not at the center—we are. If He is in the center, then whether He delivers us or not (Heb. 11:35), we can agree with that old hymn that, *“it is well with my soul.”*

God is not fazed by our anger. He knows us so well. But He does want us to grow and become more like His Son, with that same spirit of submission: “Let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26:39, MEV). God will strive with us to get us to the place of surrender expressed by John Wesley:

"I am no longer my own but Thine. Put me to what Thou wilt; rank me with whom Thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me employed for Thee—or laid aside for Thee; exalted for Thee or brought low for Thee. Let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to Thy pleasure and disposal."

Can God trust us with reversals and disappointments in prayer? Maybe what we think is an unanswered prayer is actually God's answer to prayers we once prayed—the ones where we asked Him to take us into a deeper walk of faith. Our current circumstance might be very the thing God is using to help achieve that deeper walk. At the end of the day it's all about trust, trusting His heart when we don't understand His ways.

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