

WHEN GOD SAYS NO

40 Days of Prayer -Week 7

(Note – may only be reproduced for use as a participant in MCF's 40 Day of Prayer campaign)

Today we conclude 40 DOP. *Still have a dozen messages left!*

Many times in Bible **God promises to answer** our prayers.

One ex: **JER. 33:3** **“Call to Me and I WILL answer you...”**”

God *always* answers... but NOT always the answer we want.

Covered: *Not a genie, nor a vending machine!*

- 4 ways: Yes, No, Wait, Grow

BIBLE: Full of examples when God said ‘NO’ to a prayer

God said NO to *Abraham, Moses, David, Job, Jonah, Peter, Paul*

Even Jesus had prayers *answered no!*

I didn't want to end w/o dealing specifically with (title)

o Often **confusing**. If God is **loving & all power** – why is request denied?

o Can be **frustrating**. WHY?

do some get miracles & others don't?

do some sick people we pray for *get well* & others die?

do some get relief from pain & *others don't*?

does God *sometimes* say yes & *other times* no?

When you think about it, there are some obvious reasons

why God doesn't answer every prayer with a YES. *For instance...*

1. Some prayers conflict with other prayers

& both cannot be answered at the same time

o A child praying for *bad weather* so they can stay home from school

A praying for *good weather* so they don't miss work.

o People praying for opposing teams ... *Can't answer both!*

I wonder if God cares who wins? opposing candidates

2. Some prayers would require God to take away someone's free will

& choice. God won't do that!

o What if someone: **“I'm praying that God will force you to marry me!”**

God gives you a choice so he won't force you to do anything

o Some of you prayed that your spouse would stay in your marriage

. *But they left. Can force someone– fall in love...stay in love*

God doesn't force YOU to always do the right thing. Neither will..

3. Praying for someone sick to stay alive will not always get a YES because we aren't meant to live on earth forever!

- If faith was the only factor – some people would never die!

- But Heb. 9:27 says *“It is appointed...”*

I want to live forever – just not here!

4. But many times.. the NO answer is unexplainable It makes no sense. In fact, it is tragic

And **that** is the greatest test of your faith

- **the tragic accident... the unexpected death**

- **the dashed dream ... the unfulfilled longing**

the denied request

That's when a NO is heartbreaking! *It feels unbearable*

TODAY: 1st Just a few reasons **why God might say no**

2nd (more imp) **What to do when God says no**

There may be 1,000 good reasons why God says NO.

Before I share 3 possibilities, I want to give this caution:

Only use these reason to comfort yourself. NEVER use then with someone in pain because you don't know why God said 'no' to them!

o **Never presume to know why God did something unless he tells you**
STORY OF JOB (tell) **His unexplained suffering made no sense!**

- His 3 friends did the right thing at first. Sat in silence with him 7 days

- But then -starting offering reasons & explanations for his pain

They got it all wrong!

JOB 42:7 *screen* (End) **God said to Job's 3 friends “I am angry with you, for you have not been right in what you said about me! My servant Job is the only one who spoke the truth and got it right.”**

o **You're on thin ice when you try to explain what God doesn't explain!**

ILL *“This hurricane is God's judgment”* Katrina -New Or- Bourbon

1 PET 4:17 *scr* **“The time of judgment will begin first with God's own people, the family of God”** He won't start with unbelievers!

So, with these cautions – we'll look at 3 possible reasons - AFTER A SONG 3 OF THE MANY REASONS GOD SOMETIMES SAYS NO

1. GOD SAYS 'NO' WHEN HE HAS A BIGGER PERSPECTIVE

God sees the **whole** picture - we don't! He has a **wider** view.
We have limited perspective. We can't see the future!

HEB.4:13 "He knows about everyone everywhere. Everything about us is bare and wide open to the ALL-seeing eyes of our living God; nothing can be hidden from Him..."

o One problem with our limited perspective:
We can't see the unintended consequences of our requests.

o If **you could see your life the way God does**-
- would your prayers be different? Yep!
- would it solve many of your problems?

YOU'D never have unexpected trouble! Could prepare in advance!
- you'd never ask for the wrong thing

Q: Do you give your kids everything they ask for? *Of course no!*
WHY NOT? You have a bigger perspective.

Fact: When I ask God for something - there's no way I can imagine
all that's set in motion...the dominos...implications...consequences

Every answered prayer sets off an entire chain of events!
GOD CAN SEE AHEAD!

Sometimes God says "no" to **protect you from unforeseen problems!**

PR. 2:8 "God **GUARDS** the course of the just and **PROTECTS** the way of His faithful ones." "guards & protects"

That DOESNT mean- he always pulls you out of the frying pan.
He just protects you from burning up!

o Daniel prayed "**Keep me from being fed to the den of lions**"
God allowed him to be tossed to the lions BUT shut their mouths!

o 3 Hebrews men- "**Keep us out of the furnace of fire**"
God went *THRU* it with them AND burned their ropes off!

o St Paul's greatest prayer was to preach in Rome!
His idea: book Coliseum & hold giant Harvest Crusade!

God did get Paul to Rome.- but not the way he expected!
As a *prisoner in chains!* Why God? While in prison wrote letters. NT
God had a bigger perspective: *much larger impact thru his writing*

a **bigger perspective**

GOD SAYS NO WHEN HE HAS A BETTER PLAN

Often God wants to fulfill your desire *-but in a different way*
In his infinite wisdom, he has a BETTER IDEA!

ISA.55:8-9 God: "**This plan of mine is not what you would work out, neither are My thoughts the same as yours! For My WAYS are higher than yours.**" Circle "ways" Plural!

God has more than one way of doing things!
Unlike you, His options **are unlimited!** - many alternatives
- *never forced to answer in only 1 way!*

Example: If you are deep in debt – financially stressed

God can answer in *many* different ways
- many ways to *increase your income*
- many ways to *decrease your expenses* (spend less)

PROBLEM: We want God to answer **in our preferred way**.
We want to prescribe not only WHAT but HOW He answers

o Of course we want the **easiest** way
But God always wants the **best way**– way that helps you **GROW!**

The way that grows your faith sometimes requires a *delayed answer*
Remember: A delay is not a denial. Maturity is knowing: *No & Not Yet*

Many heroes with the greatest faith did NOT -answer on earth
HEB.11:39-40 "**These were commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better...**" circle "**planned something better**"

Write: **God has all of eternity to fulfill his promises**

Looking back - I'm *grateful* God said no to **some** of my prayers!

- o 1970 -Soph, HS - prayed "go to DC as a Senate page"
- o 1979 – Kay & I prayed- missionaries overseas
- o 1980- started SVCC –my plan- enlist 5 financial sponsors
Instead we *moved on faith*. No money...members...
I wouldn't trade the lessons I learned.
 - Bill Grady
 - Nursery Equip (garage) \$32.50
- o 1981 -I prayed God would give us **12** acres of land in Lag. Hills.
God: NO! He *knew we'd need 120!* Glad He said no!

o I asked Kay; **What are you glad God said no to?**

"There were 2 guys I wanted to marry but God said NO!"

o If you've ever been to HS reunion-you're glad God said no to some...
That handsome Hunk - Tub of Goo!

Stop praying "God bless MY plans" Start: "God I want YOUR plans!"

a bigger perspective... better plan

3. GOD SAYS NO WHEN HE HAS A GREATER PURPOSE

God will never let your prayer interfere with your purpose!

PS. 57:2 "I cry out to God Most High, who fulfills his purpose for me."

o God is NOT obligated to explain *why* He does *what* He does
He doesn't need our approval. Doesn't have to check out.

o But everything God allows in your life **does have a purpose!**
including problems & unanswered prayers.

You may be in a tough spot right now:

1 PET. 1:7 "The purpose of these troubles is to test your faith as fire tests how genuine gold is. Your faith is more precious than gold..."

Anytime you feel discouraged, remind yourself, God has a greater purpose:

2 COR. 4:17-18 "These present troubles are quite small and won't last very long. Yet they will produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever."

*IF YOU WANT TO BE HAPPY, must learn to accept 3 facts of life:

1st There are some things we won't understand until heaven

DEUT. 29:29 "There are some things the Lord our God has kept secret, but there are some things he has let us know." (NCV)

ECCL. 11:5 "Just as you'll never understand how the mystery of life forms in a pregnant woman, so you'll never understand the mystery at work in all that God does." (Mes)

2. There are some things that will never change until heaven

Permanent problems in a broken world.

3. Sometimes your suffering is for the benefit of others

Many of our Ministries exist because God said "No" to someone **CARD 1**

God even allowed his own son to suffer for the benefit of others
WHY? He had a **greater purpose: Your salvation!**

III. WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN GOD SAYS 'NO'?

1. TRUST THAT GOD DOES EVERYTHING IN GOODNESS & LOVE

PS. 25:10 "All the ways of the Lord are loving..." All!

ROM.8:28 "In everything God works for the good of those who love Him."

Anytime God says "NO"- Satan always steps in with *doubts*
"See! God doesn't care about you! He doesn't love you!" LIAR

o I don't have to understand God's answer
to know that it is motivated by love

TRUTH: God loves you **too much** to give you everything you ask for!
So you have **3 options in response:**

- **Resist it.** Fight God! Get mad. Turn your back on him
"If you won't do things my way, forget it God!"
- **Resent it** - Become bitter and miserable. Doubt God's love.
- **Relax** knowing that God has your best interests...& loves you.

WHEN IN PAIN,

2. PRAY WHAT JESUS PRAYED FACING THE CROSS

MK. 14:35-36 "Going a little farther, Jesus fell to the ground praying that, if possible, he might not have to suffer what was ahead of him. Jesus prayed "Abba! My Father! All things are possible for you! Please take this cup of suffering away from me! Yet I want your will, not mine, to be done!" The Right Way to Pray

- o **AFFIRM GOD'S POWER!** "Father I know you can do anything!"
- o **ASK WITH PASSION!** "Father, please, give me what I ask!"
- o **ACCEPT GOD'S PLAN!** "However, what I want most is your will!"

3. EXPECT GOD TO GIVE HIS GRACE TO HANDLE HIS ANSWER.

Grace is God's power to handle pain & do what's right anyway

Even Apostle Paul didn't get all his prayers answered:

2 COR.12:8-10 (Paul) "Three times I prayed to the Lord about this and asked him to take it away. But his answer was: "My grace is all you need, for my power is greatest when you are weak." So I gladly boast about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power can flow through me! ...For when I am weak, then I am strong!"

ILL: Many-know I've struggled w a handicap since childhood.

Born with a brain disorder that make *speaking painful & sleep difficult*

Mayo Clinic "syndrome"- My brain runs hot & fast

- 50 yrs I've asked God to heal it, "**My grace is sufficient for you...**"
Instead -used it to shape me & make me depend on him.

ILL: For 27 years I asked God to heal my youngest son's Mental illness...
"My grace is sufficient for you.."

Everything important I've learned through pain!

I've learned *nothing from pleasure.* Criticism /Compliments
The thing I've prayed about most- *God has chosen to not remove*

SO what have YOU prayed for – and so far- it hasn't happened?

Remember GOD HAS A
BIGGER PERSPECTIVE. May be protecting you from an unforeseen
BETTER PLAN – the story hasn't ended yet.
GREATER PURPOSE – *right now He's working on you!*
He will give you the grace/power to handle that situation!

PS. 9:10 **"Those who know you, Lord, will trust you! You do not abandon anyone who comes to you!"**

If you don't trust God when he says NO, it means you *really don't know him..*
CARD 2: Kelfer Poem

PRAY

CARD 1 I was thinking this week about all the ministries of Saddleback that have blessed thousands of people because God said NO to someone's request for a miracle:

Our **Adoptive Parents Ministry** and our **Infertility Ministry** began when some couples prayed for children and God didn't answer the way they wanted him to.

Our **Hope for Separated Men & Hope for Separated Woman ministries** – began because God didn't force a spouse to return home.

Our **Empty Arms Ministry** began when some parents lost a child they prayed would live.

Celebrate Recovery... Hospital Care... Lay Counseling.
Debt Free Living /Crown Ministry.. Career link- for those who lost their jobs

CARD 2: Russell Kelfer wrote this poem called
Praise for the Planner, Praise for the Plan

You are who you are for a reason.
You're part of an intricate plan.
You're a precious and perfect unique design,
Called God's special woman or man

You look like you look for a reason.
Our God made no mistake.
He knit you together within the womb,
You're *just* what he wanted to make.

The parents you had were the ones he chose,
And no matter how you may feel,
They were custom-designed with God's plan in
mind, and they bear the Master's seal.

No, that trauma you faced was not easy.
And God wept that it hurt you so;
But it was allowed to shape your heart
So that into his likeness you'd grow.

You are who you are for a reason,
You've been formed by the Master's rod.
You are who you are, beloved,
Because there is a God!ⁱ
