
When God Says No

Possible Answers to Our Prayers

1. God grants all of our requests

A genie in a lamp God – we're in control

2. God grants none of our requests

A God that does not exist – atheist view

3. God grants some of our requests

A sovereign God

Reasons for Answers of “No” to our Prayers

1. Desire to be seen by men

Matthew 6:5

When you pray, you are not to be like hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that they can be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

2. Desire to satisfy pleasures

James 4:3

You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

3. Disobedience to God’s Word

Proverbs 28:9

He who turns away his ear from listening to the Law, even his prayer is an abomination.

Reasons for Answers of “No” to our Prayers

4. No fear of God

Proverbs 1:28-29

Then they will call on Me, but I will not answer; they will seek Me diligently but they will not find Me, because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.

5. Evil actions

Micah 3:4

Then they will cry out to the Lord, but He will not answer them. At that time He will hide His face from them because of the evil they have done.

6. Not listening to God

Zechariah 7:13

When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen, says the Lord Almighty.

Reasons for Answers of “No” to our Prayers

7. Failure to help those in need

Proverbs 21:13

If a man shuts his ear to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.

8. Desire to be like the world

1 Samuel 8:18

When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day.

9. No loving your wife

1 Peter 3:7

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Reasons for Answers of “No” to our Prayers

10. Praying outside of God’s will

Mark 10:37

They said to Him, "Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory."

Luke 9:54

When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

11. Testing God

Matthew 4:7

Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

Reasons for Answers of “No” to our Prayers

12. Failure to realize that man is appointed to die

James 5:15

The prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.

Hebrews 9:27

It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.

13. Unbelief

Matthew 15:38

And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

Luke 17:6

And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you."

Reasons for Answers of “No” to our Prayers

14. Thinking that quantity of prayer impresses God

Matthew 6:7

When you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.

15. Failure to forgive others

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

16. Wanting our way

Matthew 6:10

“Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

Those Who Have Had an Answer of “No”

- ❖ Abraham – Asked for Ishmael to be his heir (Gen 17:18)
- ❖ Moses – Asked to enter Promised Land (Deut 3:25-26)
- ❖ David – Prayed that his son might live (2 Sam 12:16)
- ❖ Elijah – Asked that he might die (1 Kings 19:4)
- ❖ Jonah – Asked that Lord would take his life (Jonah 4:3)
- ❖ Martha – Asked Lord to rebuke her sister (Luke 10:40)
- ❖ Paul – Prayed for relief from thorn in flesh (2 Cor 12:7)
- ❖ Believers in Hebrews 11 – Many were persecuted & killed
- ❖ Lord Jesus – Lament for Jerusalem (Matt 23:37)
“Let this cup pass from Me” (Mark 14:36)

Value in Answers of “No”

- ❖ Protects us from unwise decisions
- ❖ Frees us from the illusion that we have a formula for controlling God
- ❖ Frees us from a false dependence on God

Answers to Prayer

- ❖ We shouldn't expect God to grant us all of our prayer requests. In fact, we should be thankful that He doesn't.

Our trust should not be in prayer, but rather
in the One who answers prayer