



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

January 4, 2015

Answered Prayer

O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. —Isaiah 25:1

One of the biggest challenges to our faith is when God's answer to our prayer is, "No." Desire can be so intense and our need so glaring, yet God withholds our earnest request. Why? How do we understand a God who promises to answer our prayers but says know when we ask? How do we keep praying?

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," the Lord tells us (Isaiah 55:8), and that helps. We really don't want to pray to a God we can figure out. We expect Him to be bigger than us and beyond our understanding. But prayers over life and death matters and things of eternal significance receive heaven's silence. What are we supposed to make of that? What are we supposed to do?

Often, God has an alternative answer, when He says "No" to our prayers. Usually His "No" is more of a, "Not *this*, but instead *this*." It helps when we have the opportunity to see how His answers are better than what we asked for, and God often builds our faith by allowing us to learn how He knew best all along. In the mean time, though, we need a simple, stubborn faith.

Jesus, as we might expect, gives the best example. *"In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him"* (Hebrews 5:7-8).

The Father said, "No" to Jesus' impassioned prayer in the garden, yet His earnest plea—and humble submission—was heard. And the outcome brought salvation to all mankind. Even our Savior, in His perfect humanity, cried out for God to go contrary to His plan for the ages. The answer to His prayer brought agony in the short run but glory and salvation in the end. And so much of God's work in our lives is to make us like His Son.

In 2015, keep praying, and keep trusting. God answers prayer. Learn from the way He answers. Let Him show you His loving wisdom as He does His work in you and through you, in the way He chooses to answer your prayers.

Prayer for Northpoint: Pray for God to win our affections at Northpoint. The first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength. Pray that we will love God, because He first loved us.

Prayer for the United States: Four areas of American society to keep in prayer are 1) our state and federal governments, 2) the educational system, 3) entertainment and the media, and 4) the business sector. Ask God to raise up leaders in all these sectors, who will honor God's will and follow His ways.

Prayer for the World: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:5). In a church in Baghdad, nearly surrounded by ISIS, believers gather to pray. On their hearts are two things: Fellow believers undergoing persecution and their enemies committing persecution. God uses the military might of nations, but that is not the means by which He conquers. Ask God to bring His salvation to the hearts of those in Nigeria, Laos, North Korea, Syria, and other parts of the world, who are bent on destroying the only hope there is in the world.

Prayer Supporting Ministry:

- *Winter Camps:* Ask God to be present in power at our camps for children and youth. Pray that His truth will establish Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in young lives.
- *Women's Conference:* Ask God to speak peace to the women who attend the upcoming Women's Conference, as they learn to trust God to bear fruit in their lives.

Prayer for the Week

Sunday Church & Ministry: Pray for John Sloan, the Preaching Pastor, to feed us from God's Word and lead us in His will.

Monday Home & Family: Pray for Your parents and brothers and sisters: May God provide what they need so they grow in His grace.

Tuesday *School or Job:* Pray for Your spiritual example and testimony, so those around you will see Christ in you.

Wednesday Neighbors & Community: Pray for creative ways & good opportunities to get to know the neighbors to the left & right of your home. Pray for Christ's love to shine through you.

Thursday Nation: Pray for The leaders of our state & federal governments to have wisdom to obey God's will. Pray that He will turn the heart of California's leaders to honor Him.

Friday World & Kingdom: Pray for The Lord to reign in the affairs of men throughout the earth: May God's justice, righteousness, truth, and grace cover all the earth.

Saturday Praise for God's Blessings: Praise God for His provision for your daily needs and answers to your prayers

Prayer Record

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