

# Prayer Is Providential

## Part 2

Text: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

### INTRODUCTION:

1. There is a God who hears and responds to prayer!
2. However, His answer to one's prayer is often different than expected or desired.
3. Sometimes, God's answer to one's prayer is, "No" or "Wait."
4. It is helpful to understand the connection between God's providence and the answer to prayer.

### I. WHEN GOD SAYS, "NO"

- A. God encourages His children to pray to Him in all situations and to ask for what they think is best (Philippians 4:6-7; Matthew 7:7-8; 1 Peter 5:7).
- B. However, there are times when God does not grant the request asked of Him.
- C. This does not mean that the petitioner has been rejected.
  1. Consider the request of Moses (Deuteronomy 3:23-27).
    - a. Remember the sin of Moses (Psalm 106:32-33; Numbers 20:10-12).
    - b. This does not mean that Moses was not forgiven.
  2. God had a greater purpose for Moses – *to teach His people the serious nature of sin.*
  3. God had a greater blessing for Moses (Luke 9:30-31; Revelation 15:3).
- D. Often, man's petition is not for what is truly best.
- E. Because God works through His providence, He acts with grace for man's best interest (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10).
- F. Thus, for the child of God, there are no "unanswered" prayers.

### II. WHEN GOD SAYS, "WAIT"

- A. There are times when God wants His children to wait for the answer to prayer.
- B. Again, this is always for the good of the petitioner and in harmony with the will of God – even if it is difficult to comprehend in the moment.
- C. Often, God wants to deepen one's understanding (Job 19:7; 30:20; 42:1-6).
- D. Sometimes, God wants to strengthen one's faith (Matthew 15:21-28).
- E. Always, God is working to accomplish His purpose (Mark 5:22-42).
- F. At times, God is seeking to demonstrate His power (John 11).
- G. Ultimately, God is striving to encourage obedience (Luke 23:34).

### CONCLUSION:

1. God hears and answers every prayer of His faithful children.
2. Sometimes the answer is different from what we want to hear.
3. Yet, when we understand that God is working through His providence on our behalf, we learn to trust that His answer is both right and good.
4. Thus, we are encouraged to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

## Exercises

### Prayer Is Predicated

1. Read Isaiah 59:1-2. What does this passage indicate will keep one's prayers from being heard? Each of us must examine ourselves before we pray.
2. Read Psalm 66:18 and Proverbs 28:9. What must I do if I want my prayers to be answered by God? Each of us must look into our hearts and motives before we pray.
3. Read Luke 18:9-14. In this parable, whose prayer was heard? Why? Whose prayer was not heard? Why? What is the lesson of this parable?
4. Read 1 Peter 3:7. How does disunity in the home hinder one's prayers? What are some other things that the Bible says will hinder one's prayers?
5. Read James 1:5-8 and 5:15-16. What is the prayer of faith?
6. Read Isaiah 41. How is praying to God different from praying idols?