5 2 W E E K S O F G R O W T H

> Give it a Year Week 23



**2 Corinthians 12: 8-10** 

"Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

What happens when we pray and pray and pray... and God says no?

This can be very confusing and even frustrating. Why do some people get miracles and others don't? Why when we pray for people who are sick, some of them get well and some don't? Why do some people get relief from their pain and others don't?

Why does God sometimes say yes and why does God sometimes say no?

And the truth is, we don't know. We never want to assume that we know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, why God does things. But there are some possibilities for us to think about. The first being that God has given us free-will and He isn't going to take that away in order to answer prayers. God will not force anyone to do the right thing. Also, we have to understand that some prayers can go unanswered because God has bigger perspective than us. He has a better plan and greater purpose for our life than we can see. God sees the whole picture. He can see every implication for every decision, and we can only see a narrow speck. Often times, we can't see the consequences of what we are asking and how an answered prayer can snowball into a chain reaction that can affect generations.

Think about it: God didn't keep Daniel out of the Lion's Den, but He shut the mouths of the lions. God didn't keep the Hebrew boys out of the furnace, but they were unharmed in there. The Apostle Paul wasn't kept out of jail, but he used that time to write letters and minister to the guards. God may not keep you out of the storms or struggles even if you pray for it, but He promises to always be there and that no weapon formed against us will prosper.

So, what do I do when God says no?

1. Trust that God is good, and God is love.

I can 1000% trust that God does everything for me in goodness and love. God is love. Psalm 25:10, "All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of His covenant. The enemy is quick to sweep in and start attacking our minds with doubt that our prayers aren't getting answered because God doesn't love us or care about us. So, it's important to prepare our minds ahead of time by knowing Who God is and Who He isn't. Because we don't have to agree with God's answer or even understand it to know that He loves us.

2. I can begin praying for God's will to be done in my life. Getting to a place where God's will for us is more important than anything is difficult, but it actually becomes very comforting. The night before Jesus went to the cross, He was in the garden of Gethsemane. He knew what was coming. He didn't want to go through this pain any more than you or I do. Mark 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!"

## 3. Expect God to give His grace to handle His answer.

Even if I have to go "through the valley of the shadow of death", I can trust that God will supply His grace to get me through it. God wants us to learn to turn to Him for His grace in everything that we are going through in our life. He wants us to get in the habit of turning to Him verse turning to the world. And when we turn to Him, He promises to be with us every step of the way. (2 Corinthians 12: 8-10)

Always remember that God has a plan and it's always better than we can image. Your story isn't over yet. Some things we might never find the answers until we get to heaven. But, until then, hold on, there is something great that God is working out in you. Keep turning to Him for the strength, power, and grace to handle all the obstacles of this life.

## **READ:**

Isaiah 55: 8-9

Romans 8: 28

Hebrews 4: 13

Isaiah 54: 17

Jeremiah 29:11

## **REFLECT:**

- What unanswered prayer have you continued to seek
  God for?
- When your prayers go unanswered, do you lean into God or lean into the world?
- How can you begin to shift your prayers from the desires of your heart to the desires of God's heart?

## PRAYER:

Father God, Thank You for never leaving me or forsaking me. Thank You for always being with me even when I'm walking through uncertain situations. Lord, help me to keep turning to You instead of the world. Shift my mind to desire all that is in Your heart for my life. And show me how to trust You in all areas of my life. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.