

When God Says No (2 Corinthians 12:1-10)

Experience God's Power – Part 12

Life Church St. Louis – September 4, 2016

Lead Pastor – Dr. Dan Walker

Luke 18:1 (NIV) Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

Luke 11:9 (NIV) “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

James 1:6-7 (NIV) But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

1 John 5:14 (NIV) This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

1. Don't _____ about your greatness

2 Corinthians 12:1 (NIV) I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord.

1A. Some _____ are not to be shared

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 (NIV) I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.

1B. Boast about your _____

2 Corinthians 12:5-7a (NIV) I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, or because of these surpassingly great revelations.

2. God's plan is to keep you _____

2 Corinthians 12:7b (NIV) Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger [an angel] of Satan, to torment me.

2A. God says _____ to prayers not in His will

2 Corinthians 12:8 (NIV) Three times I pleaded with the Lord ~~to take it away~~ [that he might remove him] from me.

2B. God's _____ is perfected in your weakness

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (NIV) 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.

Action Plan for This Week

- Have a daily quiet time of Bible reading, prayer & writing.
 - Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun
- Study 2 Corinthians 10-13 to better understand today's message in context.
- Invite your friends, relatives, workmates & neighbors to our Sunday service.

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Study Guide

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Intro. What do you think that some people get angry or bitter at God over unanswered prayer?

Why does God sometimes make us wait for a prayer answer (Luke 18:1)?

Why is it that some prayer answers take place gradually (Luke 11:9, Mark 8:22-26)?

In what ways do unbelief and sin block God's answers to our prayers (James 1:6-7, Psalm 66:18)?

Why would God answer "No" to a prayer (1 John 5:14-15)?

- 1A. Why would God give revelations to Paul that he could not share (2 Corinthians 12:1-4)?
- 1B. Why did Paul boast about his weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:5, 11:16-30)?
- 1C. Why should a leader not be thought more of because of his revelations (2 Corinthians 12:6-7a)?

- 1D. How do false teachers seek to elevate themselves based on their "revelations or visions"?
- 1E. What is the general purpose of dreams and visions (Acts 2:17-18)?
- 2A. Explain in your own words why God allowed an angel of Satan (demon) to buffet/torment Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7b).
- 2B. In what ways was Paul's prayer similar to Jesus' prayer (2 Corinthians 12:8, Matthew 26:38-44)?
- 2C. How did this thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan, allow God's power to be perfected in Paul's life (2 Corinthians 12:9a)?
- 2D. Why is it important to understand that this thorn in the flesh was not a life-long illness of Paul?
- 2E. How did Paul respond to God's answer of "No" to his prayer (2 Corinthians 12:9b-10)?
- 2F. What did Paul realize about his battle with Satan's demons (Ephesians 6:12)?
- 2G. How did Paul know when to quit praying for the removal of his thorn?
- 2H. Why should most of your prayers be answered "Yes" (John 14:14)? How should you respond if you receive a "No" answer to a prayer?