**Four Ways That God Answers Prayer**

**INTRODUCTION**

**1. In our study on prayer, we have examined...**

**a. The purpose of prayer d. The principles of prayer**

**b. The power of prayer e. The persistence of prayer**

**c. The privilege of prayer f. The practice of prayer**

**2. Why don't people pray more often...?**

**a. Perhaps they don't believe their prayers are being answered**

**b. Not knowing how God answers, they may have lost faith in prayer**

**We should remember that there are at least four ways that God answers**

**prayer.**

**I. PETITION GRANTED...COMES THROUGH......**

**SEEKING, TRUSTING, ACKNOWLEDGING, FEARING THE LORD ,HONORING, CALLING.**

**A. GOD MAY ANSWER "YES"...**

**1. Especially when we put Him first in our lives -**

[**Mt 6:33**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mt%206.33)**But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.**

2. [**Pr 3:5-10**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Pr%203.5-10)**5Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.6In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.7Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.8It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.9Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase:10So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine**.

**3.God often grants the petitions we ask of Him -WHEN WE CALL ON HIM**

[**Ps 118:5**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20118.5) **5I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.**

**Ps.**[**138:3**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20138.3) **In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.**

**HOWEVER.......**

**B. FOR GOD TO ANSWER "YES"...**

**1. We must ask according to His will -**

[**1Jn 5:14**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Jn%205.14) **And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:**

**2. We must be doing His will in our lives -**

[**1Jn 3:22**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Jn%203.22) **And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.**

**[Naturally we rejoice when God grants our request.**

**But sometimes we may receive the answer...]**

**II. PETITION GRANTED, BUT NOT YET**

**A.IN OTHER WORDS.... GOD MAY ANSWER "YES, BUT WAIT..."**

**1. God may grant our request, but in His time and according to His purpose.**

[**Ec 3:1**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ec%203.1)**,**[**11**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ec%203.11)**To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:...... He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.**

**2. So we may think God is saying "No", when He is really saying**

**"Yes, but wait" -**

[**Lk 18:7**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lk%2018.7)**And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?**

**B. WHEN THE ANSWER SEEMS TO BE "WAIT"...**

**1. We need to have patience -**

[**He 6:10-12**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/He%206.10-12)**10For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.11And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:12That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**

**2. We need to keep asking, seeking, knocking -**

[**Lk 11:8-10**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lk%2011.8-10)**8I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.9And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.10For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.**

**3. We need to remember God's promise -**

[**Ro 8:24**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%208.24)**For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?**

**[When God seems to be saying "yes, but wait", it is a time for patience and trust in His providence. We need similar trust should it become apparent that God's answer is...]**

**III. PETITION GRANTED, BUT NOT AS EXPECTED**

**A. GOD MAY ANSWER "YES, BUT NOT AS YOU THINK..."**

**1. Sometimes God answers in a way differently than we may**

**anticipate**

**2. Remember, His thoughts and methods are much different than ours**

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[**Isa 55:8**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Isa%2055.8)**,**[**9**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Isa%2055.9)**For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.**

**For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

**3. For example, asking God for strength and perseverance...**

**a. He may give us trials to bear - e.g.,**

[**Php 1:29-30**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Php%201.29-30)**29For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;30Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.**

**b. Which in turn develops the virtues we prayed for!.**

[**Rom. 5:3-4**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%205.3-4)**3And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;4And patience, experience; and experience, hope:**

**B. WE MUST NOT LIMIT GOD'S OPTIONS...**

**!!!!!!Word of Caution!!!!!**

**1. We should be careful and not dictate to God how to answer our**

**prayers**

**a. There are forces at work beyond what we can imagine - cf.** [**Eph 3:20**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ep%203.20)**Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,**

**b. Plus, we do not always know what to pray for as we ought**

[**Ro 8:26**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%208.26)**26Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.**

**2. Limit the how and we might limit the result;**

**e.g., when praying for the sick...**

**a. Do we pray simply that God bless the use of natural means**

**(doctors, medicine, etc.)?**

**b. If so, might we limit God as to how He might restore them?**

**(in ways beyond what we are able to imagine)?**

**c. Is it not better to simply ask God to restore the sick, and leave the methods to Him?**

**[As we pray, our trust in God should allow Him latitude to answer**

**however He deems best. We especially need trust in God should it become apparent that the answer to prayer is...]**

**IV. REQUEST DENIED**

**A. GOD MAY ANSWER "NO"...**

**1. There may be times when God denies our requests - cf.**

[Jam 4:3](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jm%204.3)Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

**2. We must trust that God, who knows what is best, would do so only if granting our request might not be for our good - cf.**

[**He 12:5-11**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/He%2012.5-11)**5And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:6For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.7If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?8But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.9Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?10For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.11Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.**

**B. WHEN GOD SEEMS TO SAY "NO"...**

**1. We may not fully understand, but we can still fully trust Him!**

[**Hab 3:17-19**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Hab%203.17-19)**17Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:18Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.19The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.**

**2. Especially in light of the promise in**

[**1Co 10:13**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Co%2010.13)**There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.**

**3. God will provide the grace and mercy to do without - e.g.,**

[**2 Co 12:7-9**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2%20Co%2012.7-9)**And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.8For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.9And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**

**CONCLUSION**

**1. In at least four ways, then, God answers our prayers...**

**a. Request granted**

**b. Request granted, but not yet**

**c. Request granted, but not as expected**

**d. Request denied**

**2. However God may choose to answer our prayers...**

**a. We can have confidence that it will be for our good**

**b. We should never grow weary in praying to God**

**"The Lord has heard my supplication; The Lord will receive my prayer."**

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[Ps 6:9](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%206.9)The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer