

What to do when... **GOD SAYS, “NO.”**

📖 2 Corinthians 12:7–9 (NIV) “To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But He said to me...”

WHY DOES GOD SOMETIMES SAY, “NO”?

Because of a **BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE**

1. Do I have **access to God**? (Proverbs 15:29, Eph 3:12)
2. Do I have **unconfessed sin**? (Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:1-2)
3. Are my **motives selfish**? (James 4:3; Proverbs 21:3)
4. Is my **faith flimsy**? (James 1:6-7)
5. Are my **relationships healthy**? (1 Peter 3:1-7; Matthew 6:14-15)
6. Does my request coincide with **God’s Word**? (Proverbs 28:9, 1 John 5:14)

Because of a **BROADER PERSPECTIVE**

📖 Proverbs 2:7–8 (NIV) “He holds victory in store for the upright, He is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, ⁸ for He guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.”

📖 Psalm 139:16 (Msg) “Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you, The days of my life all prepared before I’d even lived one day.”

Because of a **BETTER PLAN**

📖 Hebrews 11:39–40a (Msg) “Not one of these people, even though their lives of faith were exemplary, got their hands on what was promised. ⁴⁰ God had a better plan...”

📖 Isaiah 55:8–9 (LB) “This plan of mine is not what you would work out, neither are my thoughts the same as yours! ⁹ For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours, and my thoughts than yours.”

Because of a **BIGGER PURPOSE**

📖 Luke 22:42 (NIV) “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

📖 Isaiah 53:5 (NIV) “But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.”

📖 2 Corinthians 4:16–17 (NIV) “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”

WHAT TO DO WHEN GOD SAYS, “NO”

Trust that God **loves** you and that He hasn’t **forgotten** you.

📖 Psalm 25:10 (NIV) “All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of His covenant.”

📖 Romans 8:28 (NIV) “...we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”

Trust that God will **give** you the **power**, **strength**, and **grace** to handle it.

📖 Philippians 2:13 (NLT) “For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.”

📖 2 Corinthians 12:8–9 (NIV) “Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ 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.”

1. Do I have **access to God**?

📖 Proverbs 15:29 (NIV84) “The LORD is far from the wicked but He hears the prayer of the righteous.”

📖 Ephesians 3:12 (NIV84) “In Him and through faith in Him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.”

2. Do I have **unconfessed sin**?

 Psalm 66:18 (NIV) "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;"

 Isaiah 59:1-2 (NIV) "Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

3. Are my **motives selfish**?

 James 4:3 (NIV) "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

4. Is my **faith flimsy**?

 James 1:6-7 (NIV) "But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord."

5. Are my **relationships healthy**?

 1 Peter 3:7 (NIV84) "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers."

 Mark 11:24-25 (NIV84) "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵ And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

6. Does my request coincide with **God's Word**?

 Proverbs 28:9 (NIV) "If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable."

 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."

Digging Deeper: What have you asked God to do that He has chosen not to do? Is there anything that you are doing that  is hindering your prayers from being heard? Have you learned to appreciate a "No" from God yet? Do you believe that God always gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him? What are some things that God is showing you during this season of your life?