

WHY GOD SAYS "NO" WHEN WE ARE HURTING

Psalm 13

**"How much longer will you forget me, Lord?
Will it be forever? How much longer will you
hide your face from me? / Look at me O Lord
my God and answer me."**

TESTING OUR FAITH

Soon after I came to one of my churches, I saw how a young lady in her early twenties had nothing to do with church even though the rest of her family was very dedicated to the Lord. I asked her mother why and she said as a child she was very active. But in high school her dog, her constant companion, got sick and she begged God to make him well. When he died, she lost all interest in church.

This is the agony side of praying. We pray and our mother dies; our father does not get the job he needs to support us; our doctor's report is bad; the one we love leaves us; etc. Paul called it "wrestling" and the term he used is where we get the word "agony". Jesus knew all about this. Hebrews five says,

**"During the time Jesus lived on this earth, He
offered up prayers and petitions with loud
cries and tears."**

Most believe this was when God said "no" to Jesus in Gethsemane, when he asked Him if there was some other way than the cross to bring forgiveness to you and me.

This is when a lot of us give up on praying. We become like the little boy who was "sick and tired of saying prayers that don't do any good". In Luke 11 and 18 Jesus gives two parables about people who refuse to give someone what they need and said this: **"People should keep on praying and not lose heart (give up and quit.)"**

I understand how Christians say they don't know how people without the Lord

make it through horrible times. I believe that too. But there's another side to it. Sometimes being a Christian, especially a dedicated Christian trying to live for God, makes it harder for us than for those who are not Christians.

If we send our daughter off to college and pray for her to have a safe trip, and she is killed on the way there, we not only have to bear the great sorrow of grief, but also the burden of trying to interpret and understand this in light of God's love for us and promise to answer our prayers.

If our neighbors who care nothing for the church and live selfish immoral lives, send their daughter off to college and she makes it safely, this makes us wrestle even more. Things like this should be like a flashing red light on our dash telling us to stop the car and find out the why of it.

People say it is not right to question God, but in times like this we all do, whether we verbalize it or not. The truth is II, Jesus tells us to do this by moving to the deeper levels of praying, going from asking to seeking answers. If we don't we will lose the joy of living and the peace that only God can give.

TESTING OUR LOVE

Daniel 3

**"O (King) Nebuchadnezzar, if we are thrown
into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is
able to deliver us. But even is He doesn't, we
will not bow down."**

When we get angry or have a pity party because we feel God has let us down, we think more of His gifts than we do of Him. We have a "you scratch my back and I'll scratch your back" relationship with Him. **God always wants to know what we want the most, His hand or the coin in His hand**

The three young men being threatened with a horrible death, if they did not bow before the image of the king, knew God