

every day? / O Lord my God. look at me and give me an answer.”

Luke 18:1 / 11:13 / Matt. 7:11

“And Jesus told them this parable that people should keep on praying and not lose heart (quit, get discouraged, give up. etc.) / “Keep on asking and you will receive. Keep on seeking and you will find. Keep on knocking and the door will open.

The Agony Go back to that Christian who prayed but did not get the job he needed, and the one who did, had no interest in God or church. This is the agony side of praying and we have all been through it.

In Luke 11 and 18 Jesus gives us two strange parables and encourages us to keep on praying when God says no and leaves us in some kind of painful situation. In the first an unexpected visitor comes to a man’s house and he does not have enough food in the house. He asks a neighbor for help, but he does not want to get out of bed. Jesus says if he keeps on yelling, the man he will give in and give him some food. In the second a widow being treated unfairly goes to see a judge. He pays her no attention, but finally does because he is tired of her bothering him.

When God tells us “no” in painful situations, we might be tempted to see Him as being like this. It seems he has given us a snake when we asked for a fish and we lose heart and give up on praying.

Using the present tense verb of habitual action, Jesus says we should “keep on asking; keep on seeking and keep on knocking”, until we see what God is doing. When we do, we will see how His “no” answer was best – a blessing in disguise.

The Problems Don’t See

Numbers 11:20 -35

“The Lord will give you meat until it comes out of your noses. / And God sent a very great plague.”

Psalm 106

“In the desert they gave in to their cravings. / They tested God, so He gave them what they asked for and sent a terrible disease.”

Numbers 11 Sometimes God’s refusals are *best for us*. He knows what we ask for will hurt us. In the wilderness years the Israelites grew tired of Manna and complained and begged so much for meat that Moses prayed to die.

God sent millions of Quail and a sickness spread that killed many. God knew meat was not a healthy diet in the desert. But they thought they knew better than God.

The job that dedicated Christian man prayed for may have put so much stress on him that it would hurt his relationship with his family and with God. The stress also could have ruined his health. That girl or boy you wanted to marry might have broken your heart. God knew it and saved you from it.

Mary Ann and I loved our first church out of seminary, but after five years we felt it was time to leave. We asked God to send a “Pastor Search Committee” to listen to me if that was His will. God answered and a committee came. It was a beautiful church in South Georgia and we asked God to send us there. The church never contacted me and that can break a pastor’s spirit and confidence.

Five years later in the church God led us to, we called a Minister of Music and found out later he came from that church. We told him about our experience and he said, “You need to thank God you didn’t go there. That church has hurt every pastor it has ever had had.” Mary Ann and I prayed again and thanked God. He said “no” and saved my family a lot of heartache.

“God’s refusals are our greatest protection.” - C.H. Spurgeon