

Does God Always Answer Prayer? (Part 2)  
(Rev. Dr. John Bartol)

Prayer is a great privilege. We have no right to approach a holy God in prayer except through the merits of Christ our Savior, the one true mediator between God and human kind.

Last week I listed 4 ways in which God answers prayer. Let us look at these in more detail. First, there are times when God says *Yes*. I have experienced those times and I hope you have also. God will always answer certain prayers in the affirmative. For example, God has promised to answer the prayer of any sinner who prays for pardon in the name of Jesus. He promises to give wisdom and spiritual insight to those who seek it. Thank God for the affirmative answers.

Then there are times when God seems to say *No*. Unconfessed sins of commission, omission or disposition can act as a roadblock to answered prayer. You may suddenly realize that you are asking for something not beneficial to others, or even right – not to mention the will of God. As I look back on life, I thank God that my prayers were not always answered the way I wished.

Then again, God often answers *Wait*, because waiting may be an important part of the answer. God's delays are not necessarily God's denials. It may be that you are looking for an easy way out, one which could leave you weaker and more irresponsible. But God wants to provide a way for your faith to be strengthened, so He says wait.

And then there is God's fourth answer to prayer- *Yes If!* Yes, if you are willing to be part of the answer and let Him work through you. Yes, if you are serious enough about the person or situation you are praying for, to give some of your time, treasure and talent to see this change take place. Yes if, may be God's most frequent answer allowing us to be coworkers with Him. As one person prayed, "Lord, help me to understand that you're not going to send anything my way today, that you and I can't handle together."

So, when you pray, if you do all the talking, you will miss God's answers. But, if you listen and pray in faithful expectation, allowing God to search and cleanse your heart, you will discover God's answers. You will hear the yes's, the no's, the wait's and the yes if's. And you will find that your prayers do not go ignored or unanswered.