

Didn't Like That

Answer

READING
Matthew 6
Isaiah 59
James 4
2 Corinthians 12
Romans 8

I say to you, don't be anxious about your life, what you might eat, and what you might drink, nor about your body, what you should wear. Isn't life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the sky, because they neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into a storehouse, and your heavenly father looks after them. Aren't you of even more consequence than them?

Before I start let me just say that I have seen so much miraculous answer to prayer.
Broken (and separated) bones healing overnight leaving no trace of injury.
Fevers and fatal allergies to medication healing in hours.
Severed nerves being re-joined in seconds.
Money that's actually needed, arriving out of nowhere.
Demons instantly leaving people they've lived in for decades.

And I'm usually kind of tentative when people ask me to pray for them. I want to find out first if this is from the Holy Spirit or not. If I don't think it is, I won't pray.

But every now and then I pray for something, and then I feel like God is saying, "Not this time".
If it's something for myself then I'm learning to accept that more, but sometimes my fleshly first reaction isn't very godly.

Maybe you've had similar experiences.
You prayed... but then didn't like the answer. So now you're angry with God?
"He doesn't care about me."
"I'm sick of praying - he never does what I want."
"Forget God, he's useless."

God doesn't have to do everything you pray for.
And that's a good thing.
God will choose what is best for you. Even if that is saying "No".

God is also focused on his own plans for the entire world.
And this might be a surprise for you, but you're not the middle of it!

The obvious prayer example is two committed Christians both praying for their football team to win. But they barrack for teams playing against each other.
Most likely, God doesn't care who wins, and he's staying out of it.

BTW: There are a lot of things we worry about which we don't even need to pray for. God cares about your home, your food, your body. And you don't even need to ask. (Like the birds in Matthew 6).
Although I'd say he cares more about your character, your faith, your role in the church body. And I think he wants you to care more about those things too.

If we don't like the answers to our prayers, maybe we need to change our questions?

Or maybe our behaviour?
Isaiah said, "Behold, Yahweh's hand is not shortened, that it can't save; nor his ear dull, that it can't hear. But your iniquities have separated you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."

Although, honestly, I think this is less of a problem for Christians.
We're not asking in our own name, we're asking in the name of Yeshua.
And his sacrifice has covered over our sins. Yahweh doesn't see them.
I genuinely believe that sin does not block a faithful Christian's prayer.

But I also believe that sin reflects your character, which should be one of your top priorities in life, and especially in your prayer life.

I think for us, it's much more likely to be our wrong motive, as James says, "You request but you don't receive, because you request evilly, so that you may spend it on your pleasures."

Ask yourself, why did you pray that prayer? What outcome did you want, and more important, why did you want that?
Just so you have an easier life? A bigger house? A nicer car? Tastier food? Better "stuff"?
Ask yourself, how would answering your prayer have advanced the kingdom of God?

I doubt any of us have a prayer life anything like the apostle Paulus.
Yet even he pleaded 3 times to God to take away the messenger of Satan which harassed him all the time.
But God said no. Very clearly, because it's good for you to have some weakness otherwise you would become proud.

In the end, like Paulus we need to graciously accept that God loves us, and he has our best interests at heart, and his priorities are better than our own priorities for our lives.
Ultimately we have the peace that comes from knowing that he's got it under control. He'll look after us no matter what. And anything he lets happen has a purpose.

Like that famous Romans 8 verse... "All things work together to result in good, for those who are called according to his purpose."
It's true.
Trust it.

Accept the "No".