



SPEAK

LESSON THREE: GOD ANSWERS - 1 KING 17:1-24

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Once we have lifted prayers up to God, our next step is to joyfully wait for His answer. The waiting is not easy. In fact, waiting can be down-right hard. We have become conditioned to expect an immediate answer because of emails, cell phones, and texting. With the advent of technology, we are more connected now in some ways than we have ever been before; however, we may have become more impatient because of these tools. Think of how many times you send a text and expect an instant reply. When we do not receive our response, we may be left wondering what is taking the recipient so long to respond?

We can be confident trusting that God hears our prayers and that He answers every single prayer we lift -up to Him. Psalm 10:17 tells us, "O LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will strengthen their heart, You will incline Your ear." Sometimes the answers are immediate and sometimes they take time. We rest assured knowing He hears us and answers our prayer, but we must keep in mind that His answers may be yes, no, or not yet. Prayers that are answered in the way we hope and pray they will be are welcomed news to our ears and hearts. 1 John 5:14 tells us that, "And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us." Hebrews 4:16 reminds us that, "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Has the Bible recorded a time when God answered a prayer with 'yes'? If we look in 1 Kings chapter 17, we are introduced to a prophet by the name of Elijah. Elijah was a prophet who was sent by God to wicked King Ahab to tell him there was to be a great drought in the land until the Lord sends the rain to return. Shortly after he told wicked King Ahab the news, the Lord told Elijah to leave quickly and hide in a ravine where he would drink water from the brook and the ravens would bring him bread and meat each morning and evening. The drought was severe and caused the brook to dry up. The Lord then sent him to Zarephath which also was experiencing the drought where he met a widow who was gathering sticks. Elijah called out to her for some water and a piece of bread. The widow replied that she did not have any bread and only had a handful of flour and little olive oil left in her home. She explained that she was gathering a few sticks to return home to make a meal for herself and her son that they would eat it and then die. Elijah instructed the widow to return home and do what she had explained, but to first make a small loaf of bread for him and to bring it to him and then to make a little something for herself and her son. Because of her obedience, the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry during the time of the severe drought. However, some time later her son became sick and grew worse and worse until he stopped breathing. She immediately went to Elijah and asked him why this was happening and feared he had something against her as a result of her son dying. Elijah took her son to the room he was staying in and laid him on his bed. Elijah cried out to the Lord asking why He had brought tragedy on the widow. He then stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the Lord praying, "Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!" The Bible records that the Lord heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. Elijah returned the son to the widow who responded, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth."

Can you imagine the reunion between the widow and her son? What an amazing immediate yes answer to prayer. While we were not there to witness this and scripture does not go into any further detail about the widow's response, I wonder how she thanked God? Did she pray a prayer? Did she make extra big loaves of bread that evening for dinner in thanks to the Lord for restoring her son to life? Who did she run and tell others about this miraculous news, or did she keep this miracle to herself?

Another example of God answering a prayer immediately is found in Daniel chapter 9.

How has God answered your prayers immediately or perhaps after a little time with a yes? After you received His answer, how did you thank Him for His good and perfect gift? The bible is full of how the people of God showed their thanksgiving to God. After God saved the Hebrews from the Egyptians after they crossed the Red Sea, Miriam played her tambourine and danced for joy. Hannah prayed a long prayer of thanks to God for her son and later after her son was weaned, she and her husband brought him to the priest to be dedicated to the Lord. Solomon showed his thanks to God by praying a prayer of dedication for the temple. Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, thanked God for her son and for removing her barrenness. Mary, the mother of Jesus, sang a beautiful song that is known as the Magnificat which gave thanks to the Lord for being chosen to bear the incarnate Son of God, and Jesus gave thanks to God before he distributed the bread and fish when he fed the five thousand people who gathered to hear him teach.

YOUR TURN: Think of how God has answered a prayer with a resounding, yes! After reading the scripture passages below, write or say a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord thanking Him for what He has done.

Exodus 15:20-21

1 Samuel 2:1-10

2 Samuel 22:1-51

1 Kings 8:14-21

Psalms 111

Luke 1:24-25

Luke 1:46-55

Luke 17:11-19

John 6:11