



WEEK 4
REQUEST: A QUIET VOICE
I KINGS 19

REVIEW

What were some of the key things you took from today's message?

REFLECT

Do you ever struggle with letting the wrong voice influence you?

Do you ever find it hard to ask things from God? Why or why not?

What are some of the things you have recently asked God for?

What are some of the biggest things that you have asked God for?

How did He answer your request?

Did the things that you requested turn out like what you had asked?

How do you know God hears and responds to your requests?

How do you differentiate between what God is doing and things like coincidence?

Do you believe that God is working everything out for your good and His glory? What do you think that looks like?

Have you ever seen God work something out, and you had to live with circumstances that were maybe a little different than what you had wanted or planned?

Was it hard to be obedient as those events played out differently?

What's the hardest thing that God has ever asked of you to remain obedient to Him?

How do we stay faithful, even when the answer to our request is different than what we wanted? In what ways does your obedience require faith?

RESPOND

God hears *all* our prayers, and in one sense, He answers all our prayers. But we do not always receive what we ask for. When we ask God for something, the response will be "Yes," "No," or "Wait."

When our prayers don't seem to be answered, it may be that we don't see all the implications of what we are asking for. John Stott writes that God will answer "no" if the things we ask for "are either not good in themselves, or not good for us or for others, directly or indirectly, immediately or ultimately."

In the following passages, we see examples of all three types of responses from God.

1. God says “yes.”

Psalm 17:13-15

What is the first thing you do when you wake up in the morning? David sets a great example:

¹⁵“As for me... I shall be fully satisfied when I awake to find myself beholding Your form and having sweet communion with You.”

He started each day seeking God’s presence and finding satisfaction in Him. This is the heart of what prayer is all about. It is not just about asking for things, it is about seeking God’s face and enjoying “sweet communion with Him.” This is the context of David’s request. He cried out to God for help in the face of his enemies in verses 13-14. God heard and answered his prayers with a “yes” response.

Lord, thank You that nothing that this world offers compares with the satisfaction of seeing “Your face.” Each day, may I “be satisfied with seeing Your likeness.”

2. God says “no” to one request, but “yes” to another.

Matthew 20:20-34

Bill Hybels writes, “If the request is wrong, God says ‘no.’ If the timing is wrong, God says ‘slow.’ If you are wrong, God says ‘grow.’ But if the request is right and the timing is right and you are right, God says ‘go.’” In this passage, we see two requests. The first receives the answer “no” in verses 20-28, and the second receives a “yes” answer in verses 29-34.

Jesus points out that true greatness does not come from lording it over others or from what the world regards as success (wealth, position, fame or having a “successful” ministry). Rather, He says that true greatness comes from becoming “a servant,” following the example of Jesus who came “to serve, not be served,” as pointed out in verses 26-28. This is an example of where the disciples were wrong, and God said “grow.”

I think I have learned more in my own life from the times when my prayers have not seemed to be answered than from the times when they have been answered with a “yes.” Certainly, the disciples must have learned a huge amount from this “unanswered” prayer.

Lord, thank You that even when You don’t appear to answer our prayers, it is also out of compassion. Thank You for the lessons that we learn from “unanswered” prayers. Thank You that You showed us what true greatness is all about. Help us to devote our lives to Your service and to the service of others.

3. God says “wait.”

Job 15:1-18:21

There are times when we go through trials, and the answer is to wait. Learning to trust God though waiting can be difficult, but it is essential to our spiritual health. Remember even in our waiting, God is still working.

As John Wimber used to say, “The good news is that Jesus is praying for us. The bad news is that we are going to need it!”

Lord, thank You so much that You promise to be our Advocate. Thank You that in the times when, like Job or Peter, it seems that Satan is sifting us like wheat, You are praying for us. Thank You that we know that even if it seems like we are having to wait, the answer to our Advocate in heaven’s prayer will always ultimately be “yes.”

This week spend some time making requests to God and find a place to write down His answer and to praise Him for His response, regardless of the outcome.