



When the Answer Is No

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Focus We all know that we need to pray, but what do we do when God's answer to us is no? Hearing "no" from God can feel confusing. But God wants us to know that, no matter what, we can trust Him. And when we are weak, God makes us strong.

Fun If you could have a 10-minute interview with anyone, who would it be, and what would you talk about?

Review Key Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:1–12

- **Something dies in us.**

When Paul the Apostle prayed for the thorn in his flesh to be removed, God answered him saying: "My grace is sufficient for you." In the same way, sometimes God answers us by saying, "no." God wants us to know that His grace is sufficient and His strength is made perfect in our weakness. When we hear "no" from God, something dies in us. Hearing "no" from God does not mean something is wrong with us. And "no" is not God's rejection or abandonment.

- **Someone lives in us.**

We have an opportunity to rely on God and to surrender to Him after we hear "no." We must allow God to help us to process the "no" so that the Holy Spirit can come in at that moment. This will allow Jesus to live in us and with us during every moment we face.

- **Some things change in us.**

When something dies in us and Jesus lives in us, then some things will change in us. Receiving a "no" from God gives us an opportunity to learn something about who God is in a whole new way. God's power works best in

our weakness because it is then that He is truly glorified as we learn obedience and surrender.

Group Dynamics Idea Knowing others goes beyond knowing their names and their favorite sports. Keep people in your group by honoring them, encouraging them, and speaking to their character—who they are on a deeper level.

- Discuss**
1. Tell about a time when you were a child and you heard “no” from your parents or teacher. How did you feel and how did you respond? Do you feel differently about that “no” now that you are an adult? Why or why not?
 2. Most of us are familiar with the story of Paul’s prayer for the thorn to be removed from his flesh. But, did you learn anything new as Pastor Tim shared?
 3. Are you quick to come to God with your weaknesses? Share. Why do you think it is sometimes easier to accept a “yes” from God instead of a “no”?
 4. Share about a time when you were praying about something and you received a “no” from God. How did this situation make you feel?
 5. How would you encourage someone who’s in a season where they have heard a very difficult “no” from God? Or they have heard that the thorn in their flesh will not be removed and that God’s grace is sufficient for them?

- Take Home**
- As we conclude, remember the following:
- Something dies in us when we hear “no” from God.
 - Jesus lives in us as we surrender to God.
 - Things change in us when Jesus lives in us.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for all the ways You love and care for us. Help us open up our hearts to You in new ways. Give us the courage that we need to be completely honest with You and to trust You even when we hear “no.” Shine Your Light in our lives and help us to see Jesus more clearly. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

New Leader Tip

You can model relational care in several ways as a group leader: respond to phone calls in a timely manner. Stay in touch with people outside the group meeting (via coffee, lunches, email, or social media). When there is a crisis or urgent need in a group member's life, proactively help or arrange for them to get the help they need. Look for ways to help others in the group get to know each other better. And be proactive to notice and inquire appropriately when others are struggling.