

SOMETIMES GOD ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS, “NO. I HAVE A BETTER IDEA.”**Lesson Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 12:7-10**Bible Memory Verse:** 2 Corinthians 12:9a

And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”
 2 Corinthians 12:9a

Lesson Aim:

At the conclusion of this lesson, my students will know that God answers our prayers in ways He knows best. Often He says “Yes.” Sometimes “Wait.” Sometimes “No. I have a better idea.”

Introduction: In a skit, show someone who has been praying and has not seen the answer that was hoped for. The person is beginning to question whether God cares, whether He is faithful, and whether He is even real.

Main Ideas & Participation Ideas:**Background setting 2 Cor. 12:1-6**

- The Apostle Paul was writing to the believers at Corinth, telling them about some of the unusual ways God had made Himself known to him. (Background setting given in 2 Cor. 12:1-6.)

The “thorn in the flesh” 2 Cor 12:7

- He told them that a “thorn in the flesh” had been given to him (2 Cor. 12:7). This seems to have been some kind of sickness or physical problem that made his life difficult & uncomfortable. Some people think it was poor eyesight, but no one really knows exactly what it was.

Participation: Teacher, if possible, bring a branch with thorns on it. If the real thing is not possible, draw a picture. Ask if it hurts when your flesh is torn by a thorn. Does anybody like it?

Rhythmic repetition: When I am hurting, I will pray.

- Paul said God had a purpose in giving this problem to him. Paul said it was so that he “might not be exalted above due measure” (2 Cor. 12:7). In other words, God knew that since Paul received many unusual revelations, he could easily have become too proud. God gave him some kind of troublesome health problem in order to keep him humble.

Participation: Rhythmic repetition: Let students put on a skit in which a man is tempted to be proud, but he is humbled by some kind of a physical problem or pain.

- Paul called this problem “a messenger of Satan.” Satan sent the problem, but God allowed it to come for a good purpose in Paul’s life.

Rhythmic repetition: What Satan sends for evil, God turns into good.

Paul’s repeated prayers about this problem 2 Cor. 12:8

- Paul prayed about this problem. He pleaded with the Lord, begging him to make it go away. (2 Cor. 12:8)

Participation: Let the children all together act out the Apostle Paul praying that God will take the problem away.

- Paul did not pray once & stop praying. He prayed three times about this problem. (2 Cor 12:8)

Participation: Let the children repeat this three times, showing how Paul prayed.

God’s answer to Paul’s prayer: No. 2 Cor. 12:9

- God answered Paul’s prayer by telling him “No.” God did not remove the problem. Rather He told Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor. 12:9).

Participation: Sometimes “No” is the very best answer.

Skit: Let two students act out Paul praying & God answering, “No, Paul. My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

Paul understands that God’s answer is for his good. 2 Cor. 12:10

- Paul realized that he could experience God’s strength even in his weakness. He said he would glory in his weaknesses so he could know God more.

Skit: Let a student act out Paul accepting God’s answer.

- Paul went on to have a very effective ministry. God greatly used his life, even though God never removed Paul’s troublesome problem. Paul never became proud, and God was able to continue using him mightily.

Participation, rhythmic repetition: Thank You God, for all Your answers. Thank You God, when you say Yes. Thank You, God for all Your answers. Thank You, God, when You say No.

Conclusion:

Who knows best what is good for us—God, or ourselves? Why or how does God know what is best better than we know ourselves? (Students may bring up ideas like God knows everything, He knows the future, He knows our hearts, He knows our weaknesses. Of course, we don't know those things like God does.) He knows what would help us and what would ruin us. He will never give us things that would ruin us or hurt us. He shows love when He says "No" to those kind of prayers.

Application for the saved child:

As you pray this week, will you remember that God knows best how to answer your prayers? Will you tell Him that you trust Him to give you the best answer? Will you tell Him that you trust Him, whether He says "Yes," "Wait awhile," or even, "No."?

Invitation for the unsaved child:

There is on prayer to which God will always answer "Yes," because it is always good for us. That is when an unsaved person realizes He needs a Savior, and calls on Jesus to be saved. Romans 10:13 says "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." If you have not turned away from your sin, if you have not turned away from all other gods and put your trust completely in Jesus, why not do that today? His answer to you will always be "yes"! If you need help in making this decision, please stay after Sunday school and sit here. (Teacher, indicate where seekers should sit.) I will know you want help, and I will come and pray with you.