

The Prayer God Cannot Answer

Psalm 66:18 contains an important principle in the science of answered prayer. Here the Psalmist acknowledges that "if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Notice, the focus is not on my husband or wife, mother, brother, sister, neighbor or stranger but on me. David says "if I regard, (cherish, harbor) iniquity (crookedness, perverseness), in my heart," I can be assured that my prayers will go unanswered.

John 9:31; James 4:3; Proverbs 15: 8,29; Proverbs 28:9; Isaiah 1:19 all confirm that one important condition to answered prayer is a willing obedience to the requirements of God. If any should complain that humanity after the fall is too weak and helpless to obey these high commands of God, the answer is that through the atonement of Christ, humanity is made able to obey. The atonement is "God's Enabling Act". In regeneration and through the agency of the Holy Spirit, God works in us and bestows sufficient enabling grace for all that is required of us under the atonement. This grace is furnished without measure in answer to prayer. So at the same time that God commands, He stands pledged to give us all the necessary strength of will and grace of soul to meet His demands. His biddings (COL, p. 331), are His enablings and since this is true, we are without excuse for our disobedience. We stand therefore at fault for refusing or failing to obtain the necessary grace by which we may serve the Lord and intercede in behalf of His people.

Prayer focus:

For submission to allow "God's Enabling Act" of atonement to bring us into obedience to His perfect will.

Honesty and Integrity Before God and Man

Joshua 7: 10-11

And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.



For one man's sin the displeasure of God will rest upon His church till the transgression is searched out and put away. The influence most to be feared by the church is not that of open opposers, infidels, and blasphemers, but of inconsistent ones that keep back the blessing of the God of Israel and bring weakness upon His people.

Achan had seen the armies of Israel return from Ai defeated and disheartened, yet he did not come forward and confess his sin. He had seen Joshua and the elders bowed to the earth in grief too great for words. But he still kept silence. He had listened to the proclamation that a great crime had been committed, and had even heard its character definitely stated. But his lips were sealed. His soul thrilled with terror as he saw his tribe pointed out, then his family and his household! But still he uttered no confession, until the finger of God was placed upon him. Then, when his sin could no longer be concealed, he admitted the truth. . . . But such confessions cannot save the sinner. Ellen G. White, From Eternity Past, 354.2

A Heart Attuned to God

C.S Lewis, famous essayist, lay theologian and Christian apologist once said "When I have learnt to love God better than my earthly dearest, I shall love my earthly dearest better than I do now. In so far as I learn to love my earthly dearest at the expense of God and instead of God, I shall be moving toward the state in which I shall not love my earthly dearest at all. When first things are put first, second things are not suppressed but increased."

This quote is striking because it serves as a reminder to us that although we find our time taken up in ministering to our "better halves" or even our "better three-quarters," we should not allow our faith to fall by the wayside. Even though we may not have an abundance of free time, it is more important than ever to remember to pray throughout our day and to offer up in service to God every seemingly mundane task done in service to our "earthly dearest"—our husbands, wives and children.

Our prayer must be, "Lord, teach me how to love you better so that I can become the very best wife or husband and the very best mother or father that I can be."

The songwriter reminds us "Jesus, make me wholly Thine, Then there's love at home; May Thy sacrifice be mine, Then there's love at home. Safely from all harm I'll rest, With no sinful care distress'd, Thro' Thy tender mercy blessed, When there's love at home." NH, 654

Prayer focus: For the unifying Spirit of Christ dwelling in each heart.

Sabbath Prayer Focus:

The Greatest Love Story

John 15: 13-15a

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends.



How did Christ manifest His love for poor mortals? By the sacrifice of His own glory, His own riches, and even His most precious life. Christ consented to a life of humiliation and great suffering. He submitted to the cruel mockings of an infuriated, murderous multitude, and to the most agonizing death upon the cross. 1T, 690.2

In His parting conversation with His disciples on the night before the crucifixion the Saviour made no reference to the suffering that He had endured and must yet endure. He did not speak of the humiliation that was before Him, but sought to bring to their minds that which would strengthen their faith, leading them to look forward to the joys that await the overcomer. He rejoiced in the consciousness that He could and would do more for His followers than He had promised; that from Him would flow forth love and compassion, cleansing the soul temple, and making men like Him in character; that His truth, armed with the power of the Spirit, would go forth conquering and to conquer. Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, 23.1



He's Looking for You

In the battle between good and evil God has chosen to be responsive to the prayers of His people. The record is clear. When God's people pray the sun is stopped in its tracks (Joshua 10), walls fall down (Joshua 6), sinners become saints (Acts 9), and enemies are put to flight (2 Kings 7). Today's answers to prayers are no less specific. Families are put back together, and worries are put under His banner of healing.

Granted, sometimes God works more subtly. Not all prayers are answered as we want or at the time we want. We may wish that God would grab a loved one and *make* them do what is right, but God never violates our freedom to choose. We want a prayer answered *now*, but God knows that in the long run that would be a mistake. His timing may seem slow to us, but He is always right on time.

God isn't like a candy machine - put two quarters in and candy drops out. Pray today, "candy" tomorrow - God doesn't work like that. But God is a friend. Your friend. And when you talk with Him, when you listen for His voice, you are changed. You are empowered and ennobled. You will grow in ways that you never thought possible. Also, God has infinite patience. He works with our limitations, yours and mine. And as time passes, we often know. *I asked for this, but God gave me that. And He was right!*

Prayer focus:

Pray for the willingness to cry to God for help and the patience to wait on Him for the answer.

Ruthie Jacobsen and Penny Estes Wheeler: *Because You Prayed*, p.42

Sabbath Prayer Focus:

Personalizing Prayer

Psalm 145:18

The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance. Ellen G. White, *Prayer*, 10.

Every morning take time to begin your work with prayer. Do not think this wasted time; it is time that will live through eternal ages. By this means success and spiritual victory will be brought in. The machinery will respond to the touch of the Master's hand. God's blessing is certainly worth asking for, and the work cannot be done aright unless the beginning is right. The hands of every worker must be strengthened, his heart must be purified, before the Lord can use him effectively. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, 194.



Through daily prayer to God, [we] will have wisdom and grace from Him to bear the conflicts and stern realities of life, and come off victorious. Fidelity, and serenity of mind, can only be retained by watchfulness and prayer. Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People*, 80.

I Will Die Free!

On March 20, 1962, after preaching a sermon on the origin of sin, Noble Alexander was ambushed and taken to prison where he was tried and convicted of conspiracy to assassinate Cuban leader, Fidel Castro. Cuban security forces interpreted Noble's sermon, which described Lucifer's struggle for supremacy, as a veiled reference to Castro's regime. Noble was therefore sentenced and served over 22 years in prison where he endured hard labour and torture. During this time, his wife, Yraida, divorced him and married a Communist leader.

While in prison, Noble continued to do the work of an evangelist by establishing and pastoring underground churches within the confines of prison. These included prisons at the Isle of Pines, Las Villas, Boniato and the Havana prison Combinado del Este. These secret churches experienced phenomenal growth but not without a heavy price. Pastor Noble experienced brutal beatings, starvation and repeated and lengthy times in solitary confinement. He was secretly ordained in prison in 1979 by Pastor Pedro de Armas who was also a prisoner. Noble's spirit was braced during those torturous times by his indomitable will and commitment to God and the persistent thought, "I will die free!" which became the title of his book recounting his experiences in prison.

Prayer focus: Pray for our pastors and laymen and women who are serving in areas that are opposed to religious liberty, pray also for those who are currently in prison.

Sabbath Prayer Focus:

Trial of Faith

Luke 12: 11-12

And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.



Pr. Noble Alexander

Our people have been regarded as too insignificant to be worthy of notice; but a change will come. The Christian world is now making movements which will necessarily bring commandment-keeping people into prominence. There is a constant supplanting of God's truth by the theories and false doctrines of human origin. Movements are being set on foot to enslave the consciences of those who would be loyal to God. The law-making powers will be against God's people. Every soul will be tested. 5T, 546.

Men will exalt and rigidly enforce laws that are in direct opposition to the law of God. Though zealous in enforcing their own commandments, they will turn away from a plain "Thus saith the Lord. . . . Though innocent of wrong-doing, the servants of God will be given over to suffer humiliation and abuse at the hands of those who, inspired by Satan, are filled with envy and religious bigotry. E.G. White, 9T, 229



Pr. Antonio Montiero and family in the Prayer Room, NEC Campmeeting 2014