

PRAYER

God says, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

The psalmist said, "I called upon the Lord in distress; and the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear..."

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put *confidence* in man ... Ps 118:8

WHEN WE CALL UPON THE LORD THINGS BEGIN TO HAPPEN: GODWARD, INWARD, OUTWARD

GODWARD

1. God loves us. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32)

2. God knows what our needs are. "...your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." (Matthew 6:8)


3. God knows how to bless us. "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13) Matthew 7:11 words it, "...how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

4. God is glorified through answered prayer. As Elijah challenged wicked Ahab and the false prophets he prayed, "...Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou are God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word." (1 Kings 18:36)

5. God has promised to answer prayer. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Psalms 55:22) "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." (Psalms 65:2) "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him." (Psa 91:15) God has bound himself by an oath, by great pledges, to respond to his spiritual children. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom 10:12-13) "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)

In the light of the fact God loves us, knows our needs, knows how to bless, is glorified through answered prayer, and has bound himself by precious promises – it is irrefutably true that our felt need, our weak cry, our humble request moves the arm of God. God may not answer in the way we desire, but in the manner which is best for us.

God may say "no" to our request. He wouldn't allow Moses to enter the promised land (Deut 3:23-26); he wouldn't release Elijah from the responsibilities of this life (1 Kings 17-19); he wouldn't promise the mother of James and John that they would have a favored place in the kingdom (Mt 20:22); he wouldn't

take the thorn in the flesh from Paul (2 Cor 12:8-9); he wouldn't extend the life of David's child (2 Sam 12:16); he wouldn't remove the cup of death from Christ (Lk 22:42). 

God may say "no" because of sin in our lives.

God may answer "no" because he has a larger purpose for us. If God had removed Paul's thorn in the flesh he might not have learned to say, "God's strength is made perfect through my weakness."


Sometimes God answers our prayers with "wait awhile." In John 11 Jesus delayed his coming to the home of Mary and Martha. His delay did not mean he had turned a deaf ear to the request of the sisters to heal their brother. Rather, he got greater glory by raising him from the dead.

INWARD 

God often answers "yes" to our prayers by changing us, by leading us to repentance and confession. 

He may plant a thought in our minds. An old whaling captain tells this story. "A good many years ago I was sailing in the desolate seas off Cape Horn, hunting whales. One day we were bearing directly south in the face of a hard wind. We had been tacking this way and that all the morning, and were making very little headway. About 11 o'clock, as I stood at the wheel, the idea suddenly came into my mind, 'Why batter the ship against these waves? There are probably as many whales to the north as to the south. Suppose we run with the wind instead of against it?' In response to that sudden idea I changed the course of the ship, and began to sail north instead of south. One hour later, at noon, the lookout at the masthead shouted, 'Boats ahead.' Presently we overtook four lifeboats, in which were fourteen sailors, the only survivors of the crew of a ship which had burned to the water's edge ten days before. Those men had been adrift in their boats ever since, praying God frantically for rescue; and we arrived just in time to save them. They could not have survived another day." Then the old whaler added, "I don't know whether you believe in religion or not, but I happen to be a Christian. I have begun every day of my life with prayer that God would use me to help someone else, and I am convinced that God, that day, put the idea into my mind to change the course of my ship. That idea was the means of saving fourteen lives." God has many things to say to us, many thoughts to put into our minds. Ours should be the attitude of Samuel, "Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth."

There is a deep mind, a subconscious mind. While scanning the pages of a newspaper, one may be conscious of thinking of something else. 

A young man worked until midnight on an algebra problem, but to no avail. He went to sleep and the next morning the answer came as clear as could be. His subconscious mind kept working all through his sleeping hours and announced the answer when he awoke. R.G. LeTourneau once spoke to our church group when I was in university. He stated it was his habit to attend prayer meeting on Wednesday night, but on a particular week he worked throughout the day on a design for some new machinery. He was getting nowhere and thought he would skip midweek service in order to continue the frustrating job. His better judgment led him to worship service and immediately upon returning, the pattern came to him in a flash. 

The subconscious mind is something like a dumbwaiter. You send the order down from the second or third floor, and when it is ready, the door opens and the dumbwaiter has conveyed it to you. One needs

to give sustained conscious thought to the matter at hand, and as a second step he needs to forget it for awhile.

The subconscious mind does not work as fast as an automat. A preacher who had been reading material for his next Sunday's sermons on Monday or Tuesday decided to begin a week earlier so the subconscious mind could have all the time it needed. He discovered there are three stages to the proper development of an idea: preparation, incubation and illumination.

When our hearts, our minds, are submitted to God in prayer, God can help us. Paul said, "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." God made us. He understands our mental processes far better than we do. Through prayer he may plant thoughts in our minds, and thus bring about an answer to our requests.

Indeed, we may be part of the answer. It would be easy to ask the minister to visit an unsaved person, or one in need of help, when God is actually prodding us to give a witness to them.

Prayer likewise has an effect on the human body. Many problems in human relations due to tensions are caused by fatigue. Take, for instance, the office workers at the start of the day as compared to the conclusion. The state of mind is echoed in the tissues of the body. A tense mind uses up energy like an automobile when the motor is left running. It burns up gas and goes nowhere. That is one reason we wake up as tired as when we went to bed.

Prayer has a definite effect on our general health because it brings to bear the power of God both on mind and body.

Dr. E. Stanley Jones tells how after eight strenuous years in India he was overcome by exhaustion and brain fatigue. He collapsed several times before leaving on furlough. After a year's furlough he held meetings in the Philippines for a week and his old trouble returned. He thought he was ruined as to future work. But the Lord seemed to ask him, "Will you turn it all over to me?" He continued year after year without ill effect.

A medical journal says, "There is no tissue of the body wholly removed from the influence of the spirit." X
A doctor advanced the theory that all diseases are caused by stress.

There is no way to divide man into separate compartments like body, mind and spirit. All are so closely akin that each catches the diseases of the other. The practice of the quiet mind in religious devotion can eliminate the need for shock treatment in some cases.

God is the Creator and Redeemer, and when we open our hearts in prayer, a window is opened toward heaven that allows him to do his inscrutable work.

All of us have needs. There is a power available to us all, not produced by us, but released in us. A lump of uranium ore contains power if we know how to release it. A tree by chemical processes assimilates food which produces growth. The same is true of the body and spirit of man. The power available to us is through Christ and his Spirit. Electricity existed all the while, but Benjamin Franklin made a discovery with a kite which gave a key for unlocking the energy. Christ teaches that supply equals demand; whatever the Father demanded of Him, he was enabled to do. The disciples at Pentecost tapped the

source of power. Their secret was to wait. Their source was God. Their condition was commitment to his will.

God's power can accomplish things which seem impossible to man. A bridge was under construction over one of New York's tidal rivers. Construction was interrupted by a ship which sank. Chains were tied to the sunken ship and to tug boats which tried to pull it out, but to no avail. A young technical student just out of school asked for the opportunity to try something. They sneered at him, but he tied the chains to flat boats and waited for the tide to rise. The great tides raised the ship. God's power is like that. Emerson once said, "The power of the Gulf Stream will flow through a straw if you turn the straw parallel to the stream."

OUTWARD

God may change the order of nature to accomplish his purpose. He provided a full supply of oil to the widow so she could pay her creditors and sustain her sons. The Lord sent rain after the prayer of Elijah. During Joshua's battle, God made the sun "stand still." When Hezekiah was sick, God moved the sundial backward. Christ was born of a virgin, contrary to the natural process. (2 Ki. 4; 1 Ki. 18; Josh. 10:12; Is. 38; Lk. 1)

God may plant a thought in the mind of someone else. When a pastor preached on the victorious life a lady in the congregation went straight home, and after earnest prayer wrote to her sister, with whom she had previously disagreed. The two sisters had not communicated with each other for twenty years. The next morning, the writer of that note received a letter from her sister asking forgiveness and seeking reconciliation. The two letters crossed in the mail. While the one sister was praying to God for the other, God was speaking to that other sister, putting into her mind the desire for reconciliation.

Time and space would fail us to show how prayer has been God's method to give peace and power and courage.

What we all need is a new perspective.

Have you heard about the golfer who got bifocals? The doctor figured he would return and complain about his golf game. But he returned in a few weeks and said he saw two balls, a big ball and a little ball. He hit the big one down the fairway. Once he got on the green, he saw two balls and two holes. All he had to do was hit the little ball into the big hole.

Once we have opened the window of our hearts toward heaven, God the Father, and Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit begin a powerful work in our behalf.

Howie & Lisa
— landed in Amarillo —
23 yrs ago

— Dan and Jodie
— landed here soon after —

— I landed on planet
— earth 93 yrs ago —