

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Prayer, Praise & Thanksgiving

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

Secrets of Prayer (Part B)

Reading:
John Chapter 9

1. Unanswered Prayer

Good Reasons ... Yahweh's Plan ... Hidden Purposes

Very often the Most High does not seem to answer the prayers of His people. Or there may be an answer; but that answer is **'No.'** The reason could be that Yahweh is working to a plan, unknown to us, which would be frustrated if He answered according to our requests. This idea may seem to be totally inconsistent with a loving Father, but it is a fact: and one day we shall see the whole picture. Paul writes:

1 Corinthians 13: 12: *"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."*

Consider the experiences of the following people and how their prayers seemed to go unanswered: though in reality they were answered to the full in the course of time. In each case Yahweh was demonstrating to succeeding generations of souls His world-encompassing plan of salvation by dramatically illustrating salvation in the lives of certain individuals. Each individual was of course totally unaware of this overall plan and the good that would come of it. He probably prayed fervently for a long time - to no avail. But there was a purpose in what God was doing and all things were working towards good - as we find out in every case.

- **Joseph:** Genesis chapters 39 to 49
- **Job:** The whole book
- **The Blind Man** of John 9: 3: *Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: **but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.***"
- **Paul:** The whole book of Acts
- **Jesus:** The Gospels. The sufferings of our Lord brought the human race salvation. Had his Father answered his prayer in the garden to **"Let this cup pass"** you and I would have been lost forever.

All the souls mentioned above suffered on a scale most people are never called upon to suffer. And yet in every instance Yahweh had a plan, a wonderful hidden purpose which, when understood, put the individual's suffering into perspective and made his suffering tolerable. A believer's constant prayer must, therefore, be: **"Thy will be done."**

This verse must always be kept in mind.

Romans 8: 28: **“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”**

2. Unanswered Prayer

There are many prayers which are not answered because of national, parental or private sin; so it is folly to continue in sin or ignore its results. Yahweh is not mocked. (Galatians 6: 7) He is the Judge of the heavens and the earth and His judgements can be seen all around. The safest and best course is to confess and forsake sin.

Parental Sin

Exodus 20: 5: **“Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, *visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;***
6: **And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.”**

Broken Promises and Agreements

(Read this passage and note the terrifying results of a broken vow.)

2 Samuel 21: 1: **“Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David enquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.**
2: **And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)**
3: **Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD?**
4: **And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you.**
5: **And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel,**
6: **Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, whom the LORD did choose. And the king said, I will give them.**
7: **But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.**
8: **But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite:**
9: **And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest.”**

Personal Sin

Psalm 66: 18: **“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:”**

This means that Yahweh will ignore the prayer of a person who contemptuously continues in sin. But He will always listen to the prayer of a repentant sinner.

Proverbs 15: 29: **“The LORD is far from the wicked: *but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.*”**

Isaiah 1: 15: **“And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.**

16: **Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;**

17: **Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.**

18: **Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”**

John 9:

23: **“Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of**

God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.”

3. Answered Prayer

In addition to the requirement that we give up sin and **do the Almighty's will**, there are other circumstances or conditions which influence the answer to our prayers. We believers ought to keep these points in mind.

Mandatory Parameters

These are compulsory requirements that must be present before divine favour is received. Let no one suppose that good results in prayer will be obtained if these requirements are absent.

Ask, Seek, Knock

Matthew 7: 7: **“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:**

8: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

Right Motives

We humans are virtually incapable of judging our own motives, let alone those of others. But asking with the **wrong motives**, produces no response from the Most High: no matter how sincere we may imagine ourselves to be.

James 4: 3: **“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”**

Default Parameters

This is prayer input which is automatically supplied and evaluated by the Holy Spirit before any action is taken. It provides for a **person's background, limited knowledge, known and unknown needs, present circumstances** etc.

Righteousness

When asking for special favours, other than mercy and forgiveness, supplicants receive from the Most High in direct proportion to their **personal righteousness**. In other words the prayer of the righteous availeth much; we could go on to say that the prayer of the wicked availeth little.

James 5: 16: **“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**

17: Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

18: And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

Knowledge

Though ignorance of God's law is no excuse for sin; the Most High does make allowance for those who do not know His will. This means that everyone is assessed according to his/her understanding of what is right and what is wrong. And not just according to their understanding, but also according to the opportunity they had to obtain **more understanding**. Thus two people at exactly the same level of righteousness, could receive different responses to prayer because Yahweh expects more from the one who knows better, or could have known better. In other words more knowledge paves the way for better results - if you live up to the information gained. But more knowledge could be counter-productive as far as answered prayer is concerned - if that knowledge is not acted upon.

James 4: 17: **“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”**

4. Summary

- Yahweh often allows suffering and trial for good reason.

- Do not forget the text:
“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8: 28)
- Suffering can be the result of:
 - **Ancestral sin.** Not that the Most High punishes children for the **sins of their fathers**. Rather it is purely a case of **cause** and **effect**, with which He doesn't interfere.
 - **Broken agreements.** (Personal or National)
 - **Private sin.** We must forsake sin - even its appearance.

To get the best results from prayer we must ask with the **right motives** bearing in mind the level of our knowledge or opportunity to know. We humans are incapable of rightly assessing our own motives. That is why we should end each request with the words **“Thy will be done.”**

AMEN!

In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.
Elder: *Max W. Mader*

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