

Sunday Celebration (May 17, 2009)
"Prayer Changes Things"

"The Prayer Catalyst" (Pt. 2)

"... If we were really convinced that prayer changes the way God acts, and that God does bring about remarkable changes in the world in response to prayer, as Scripture repeatedly teaches that he does, then we would pray much more than we do. If we pray little, it is probably because we do not really believe that prayer accomplishes much at all." Wayne Grudem, "Systematic Theology", p. 377

Does Prayer Change Things?

Biblical Observations

James 5:16-18 ... The Reason Given for Prayer (in this passage) is BECAUSE prayer is EFFECTIVE—it accomplishes something!!

ELIJAH

- Elijah's Prayer and the Drought ... **1Kings 17-18**
 - 500 Yrs After Settling in Canaan—Deut is Coming to Pass ... 1Ki 16:29-33

Deut 6:10ff ... God WARNS about His people GUARDING their hearts from the Idolatry of the LAND... Lessons in WORLDLINESS that went UNHEEDED!

Deut 28:15, 23-24 ... The curse of disobedience
 - Consider the "REACTANTS": (The Sinful Idolatry of God's People) + (The Covenant Curse of God—Deut 28) + HEAT (Prayer) => CHANGE ... *It's Not Until the MAN OF PRAYER appears that change occurs!*

"Prayer, then, is the prelude of mercy, for very often it is the cause of the blessing; that is to say, it is a part cause; the mercy of God being the great first cause, prayer is often the secondary agency whereby the blessing is brought down." Charles Spurgeon, "Prayer—the Forerunner of Mercy", The Park Street Pulpit, vol 3, p. 421

THE CONSISTENT TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE – PRAYER IS A CATALYST THAT CHANGES THINGS

MOSES intercession at Sinai ... Ex 32:7-14

- Consider the "REACTANTS": (The Mercy of God) + (The Testimony of God's Great Name) + HEAT (Prayer) => CHANGE

JEHOSHOPHAT's Prayer Meeting ... 2Chr 20:3-4

DANIEL'S Prayer ... Dan 9:1-19

- Consider the "REACTANTS": (The Revealed Will of God) + (The Testimony of God's Great Name) + HEAT (Prayer) => CHANGE

EZRA'S Prayer Meeting ... Ezra 8:21-23

It is This Way! - Whether or not we grasp the reasoning of WHY it is this way!

"Therefore we see that to us nothing is promised to be expected from the Lord, which we are not also bidden to ask of him in prayers. ... Words fail to explain how necessary prayer is, and in how many ways the exercise of prayer is profitable." John Calvin, "Institutes of the Christian Religion", vol 3, p. 335

Ezek 36:37 "Thus says the Lord GOD: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their people like a flock.

... The INDICATIVES of God have NOT made optional the IMPERATIVES of Man!!
God has planned and ordained our prayers to be joined to His doing.

Elijah praying for rain – 7 times he is enquiring and looking!

"...mark the fact, the torrents of rain were the offspring of Elijah's faith and prayer. Wherever in Holy Writ you shall find the blessing you shall find the prayer that went before it." Charles Spurgeon, "Prayer—the Forerunner of Mercy", The Park Street Pulpit, vol 3, p. 416

NEGATIVE OBSERVATIONS – WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DON'T PRAY?

Jam 4:2 "...you do not have because you do not ask"

Mk 9:28-29 "And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, 'Why could we not cast it out?' 29 And he said to them, 'This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.'

*"By this expression Christ reproved the negligence of certain persons, in order to inform them that it was not an ordinary **faith** which was required; for otherwise they might have replied that they were not altogether destitute of **faith**. The meaning therefore is, that it is not every kind of **faith** that will suffice, when we have to enter into a serious conflict with Satan, but that vigorous efforts are indispensably necessary. For the weakness of **faith** he prescribes **prayer** as a remedy, to which he adds fasting by way of an auxiliary. "You are effeminate exorcist," said he, "and seem as if you were engaged in a mockbattle got up for amusement; but you have to deal with a powerful adversary, who will not yield till the battle has been fought out. Your **faith** must therefore be excited by **prayer**, and as you are slow and languid in **prayer**, you must resort to **fasting** as an assistance." John Calvin, "Commentary on the Harmony of the Gospels", vol 2, p. 243*

Ezek 22:30-31 "And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. 31 Therefore I have poured out my indignation upon them. I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. I have returned their way upon their heads, declares the Lord GOD."

1 Sam 12:23 "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you"

"Therefore they act with excessive foolishness who, to call men's minds away from prayer, babble that God's providence, standing guard over all things, is vainly importuned with our entreaties... That memorable saying of the psalm attests this, and to it many similar passages correspond: 'For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears toward their prayers.' This sentence commends the providence of God as yet not to omit the exercise of faith. ... And so both are true: 'that the keeper of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps', and yet that he is inactive, as if forgetting us, when he sees us idle and mute." John Calvin, "Institutes of the Christian Religion", vol 3, p. 337

**Are There Positive Achievements that are Linked to Prayer?
Are There Negative Consequences that are Linked to Prayer?**

Historic Observations

"When God has something very great to accomplish for his church it is his will that there should precede it, the extraordinary prayer of his people." Jonathan Edwards

"Prayer, we assert, is the prelude of all mercies. ...Great prayer is the preface of great mercy, and in proportion to our prayer is the blessing that we may expect....In proportion to the prayerfulness of the Church shall be its present success, though its ultimate success is beyond the reach of hazard." Charles Spurgeon, "Prayer—the Forerunner of Mercy", The Park Street Pulpit, vol 3, p. 415, 416, 418

"There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer." A.T. Pierson (quoted by J. Edwin Orr in "Prayer and Revival")

"God does nothing, except in answer to believing prayer." John Wesley