

Classic Christian Writings:

Just before a large evangelistic campaign, I was asked by a number of Christian leaders to address a meeting for Christian workers. The object of the meeting was to awaken a sense of our responsibility toward those around us who are unsaved. I felt impelled to use an allegory showing the sinfulness of prayerlessness. And I know that the Holy Spirit spoke to many because of the response following the special service. The story follows:

In one of our munition plants employing 500 men, there was an excellent canteen and lounging room. After the men had lunched each day, they developed an informal open forum where, for the balance of their lunch period, they discussed topics of general interest. One day their discussion centered on Christianity and hypocrisy. Some very harsh and cruel things were said about Christians. In the company was a Christian fellow named William James.

When Bill could stand it no longer, he rose to his feet and said, "Men, you have been saying some very hard things about Christians. Now I admit that there are hypocrites in the church, but I also want you to know that there are quite a lot of sincere Christians, and I myself very humbly claim to sincerely believe in Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior."

He was about to sit down when a man said, "Just a minute, Bill. I would like you to answer some questions. I take it from what you have said that you believe the Bible to be the Word of God?"

"I certainly do," said Bill. "I believe it from cover to cover."

"Then, do you believe that all men out of Christ are lost and on their way to outer darkness?"

"Yes, I do." And so the dialogue proceeded:

Question: "Do you think most of us men are out of Christ and therefore lost?"

Bill: "Yes, boys, I am very sorry indeed to say I do believe that."

Question: "Do you believe in the efficacy of prayer?"

Bill: "Yes, I have had many answers to my prayers in the past."

Question: "How long have you worked here with us?"

Bill: "Four years."

Question: "How often in that period have you spent a night in prayer for our lost souls?"

Bill's head doesn't seem quite so high as he says, "I am sorry boys, but I cannot say I ever spent a night in prayer for you."

Question: "Well, Bill, how often have you spent half a night in prayer for us, say from 8:00 to 12:00?"

Bill (whose head is going lower): "I am sorry, but I cannot say I ever spent half a night in prayer for you."

Question: "Well, Bill, we'll take your word for it—quickly add together all the time you've spent in prayer for us during the last week; how much would it be all told?"

Bill: "I am sorry, fellows, but I cannot say that I have spent any time in prayer for you this last week."

Questioner: "Well, Bill, that is just the kind of hypocrisy we've been talking about."

Could this have happened to you? Are you guilty of the sin of prayerlessness? Do you lightly promise to others that you will pray for them and about their circumstances and forget as soon as the words have left your lips?

The Sinfulness Of Prayerlessness By Robert A. Laidlaw

Well, this is the kind of hypocrisy that the world charges to Christians. Oh, that the sinfulness of prayerlessness may grip the heart and conscience of each Christian and bring him humbly in confession before our risen Lord! Then let us remember what James wrote: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). When we come to grips with God, without hypocrisy of any kind, then a loving Heavenly Father can truly work in and through the believer.