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Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

How many Christians there are who seldom get any real, definite, and remarkable answers to their prayers! How many, if they were frank, would have to acknowledge, "For some reason or other God does not answer my prayers." This ought to occasion much concern, exercise of conscience, and searching of heart before Him. God is more willing to give, than His people are to receive: He is their Father, and delights to make them happy: "Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). But God is holy and will not compromise with our sins, nor condone that which is evil; and He requires us to be holy too: 1 Peter 1:15,16.

Yes, the sad fact remains that many Christians do not have the ear of God. Where this is the case, something is wrong in their lives, something which has "grieved the Spirit," and choked the channel of blessing. To them it has to be said, "Your sins have withheld good things from you" (Jer. 5:25). Nor is that word to be restricted to the present. I may be walking in the path of obedience today, and yet there may be something in the past which is hindering my entering into God's best for me now. It behooves every Christian who is not regularly receiving striking and blessed answers to his or her prayers, to diligently review their past lives, in connection with their conduct both toward God and toward their fellow-men; earnestly begging the Holy Spirit to bring to their remembrance anything which is grievous in His sight. When He does so, it is not sufficient to repent and merely confess the sin unto God! but where that sin has been against a fellow-creature, it must be confessed to him or to her (Matt. 5:23, 24; James 5:16), and everything in my power must be done to right the wrong, and make full restitution (Luke 19:8).

Alas that there is so very little teaching along this line today. Alas that so many of God's dear children have rather been instructed to puzzle their brains over whether the parable of the ten virgins treats of "Christendom" or the Jews in the "Tribulation period," or whether the battle of "Armageddon" is to be fought in a valley or on a mountain—occupation with such questions in these days makes us think of Nero fiddling while Rome was burning! It is the practical side of Christianity, that which pertains to our present welfare, both spiritually and temporally which need to be chiefly pondered. But these popular teachers cannot give out what they do not have in their own hearts; and the daily lives of most of them make it only too evident that they are strangers to an experimental and practical knowledge of God in their souls. Give such men a wide berth, my reader, for neither their lectures nor their writings can do you any real good.

Not long ago the editor was speaking on this subject, and the Lord revealed to him that the message was specially designed for one Sister who was present about whose life he knew nothing what ever. After the meeting she requested a private interview, and confessed to him a terrible sin (not immorality), which she had committed years ago, known to no human being. To right that wrong meant deep humiliation and self-abasement before cherished friends. She told us she had been praying long and earnestly for the salvation of her husband. We told her that until that sin in her past life was put right, she might as well pray to the stove, as to an holy God. She slept little that night, fighting her battle alone before God. Grace gave her the victory. The next morning she assured us that she was fully willing to do all in her power to right the wrong, no matter what the cost to her. And now for the sequel. When the above-mentioned Sister arrived home, some days later, God had unmistakably and gloriously saved her husband. She found him on his knees! He now conducts their family worship. It is a new home! Much more might be added by way of amplification, but sufficient has been said for our present purpose.

Reader, what is hindering your getting wondrous answers to prayer? What sin, what wrong is there in your past life, which needs be righted, not only before God but with your fellow-man? O allow the Devil no longer to cheat you out of God's best for this life. Prayerfully re-read the above and act upon it.