

**General Topics :: Are we truly seeing changes occur in response to our prayers?**

**Are we truly seeing changes occur in response to our prayers? - posted by intrcssr83 (), on: 2008/4/2 20:11**

I've been going through a rough season at the moment. I've been going through own my weblog archives as well as the prayer journals I've kept over the years, and I have to say that after three years since God laid a burden on my heart, I can't help but feel frustrated that such prayers are not being answered.

I visit the local christian bookstores in my city, and the bestseller lists are filled with entered self-help nonsense, seeker-sensitive church growth strategies and the postmodern heresy that is the Emergent Church.

I look at the websites of churches to see being preached and taught. Usually it's some series that promises to bring out "encouraging and relevant life principles." Whatever happened to holiness? Where's the call to repentance? Why are preachers ashamed to speak of the sinfulness of man in contrast to the perfection of God?

I see the young people that visit these churches and see that when it comes to the Bible, they are practically illiterate. There is no desire for holy living, no desire to see others saved; and when asked to define the gospel, most of them prove to be inarticulate. Tragically, the majority of these kids come from pentacostal and charismatic churches, places where the holy Spirit is supposed to be active in the lives of believers, but instead all there is is excess and emotionalism.

I try to sit down and have a good theological discussion with someone yet am asked to keep it down, to keep it private out of fear of stumbling someone. But whenever obvious that after months of bible study and prayer you have decided to take a stand on an issue, no one wants to talk anymore.

Whenever I approach church leaders to express my anguish, the response I'm given is "You're too negative"; "You're too critical"; "You're being methodical and legalistic". Sometimes I honestly think that if an elder were to be exposed on the charge of gross personal sin, he/she would probably receive more sympathy than the one who comes forward in humility and brokenness, crying out "We need revival!"

To those whose hearts are not truly set on God, such cries are answered with the thought "who are you to criticize us and say that all the hard work we've put into this has been a waste?"

I try to be patient and gracious, but at times I feel tempted to simply give up and ask myself "Is this really worth it? Or am I just being preferential? What if this isn't really a burden from God, but just my own flesh crying out for appeasement?"

I know that I'm not alone in this. So I ask: if anyone can testify of change in their church where there is resurgence in prayer, in discipleship, in people getting saved? Where the Pastor steps up to the pulpit and begins his sermon with a heartfelt "I'm sorry... but this is what I should have done from the beginning and I confess to the sin of omission?"

**Re: Are we truly seeing changes occur in response to our prayers? - posted by Corneliu (), on: 2008/4/2 21:02**

Quote:

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I feel the same way. And I do not want anything for myself. I don't want God to use me (to be seen), I just want to see that the Church displays God's glory, mainly Christ's character and humble attitude in service, and the power to raise the weak and free those captivated by the world's values and sins.

But I feel like we live in the fulfillment of Malachi's words :

Quote:

-----"So now we call the proud blessed, For those who do wickedness are raised up; They even tempt God and go free"

Many weak people just go with the flow.  
May God have mercy on His Church!!!

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/4/2 21:53**

I can really feel the sadness here. All that I can offer to this thread is that it seems to me that both your grief and your expression of weary but determined hope is an encouragement to those of us here on the forum. Regarding your question as to whether you are simply wanting yourself to be appeased, it is a blessing to me that your post resisted indulging in bitter sarcasm and cynicism towards the church. That would certainly be a form of self satisfaction.

Many of our own churches do seem to fulfill Philippians 3:19. ... whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. Yet, brethren somehow we must encourage each other to remain pure without becoming hardhearted, and hopeful without becoming complacent. I have to admit that I often walk the line of fellowship by means of a zig zag back and forth trying to avoid either resentment or apathy.

In the end I reason I've not resisted enough to write these people off. I'm just getting started to really intercede for the churches in my area. I haven't earned the right to 'give up'. I'm not sure even Paul ever gave himself that luxury...so who am I to even contemplate it?

Blessings,

MC

**Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2008/4/2 22:57**

Quote:

-----Many of our own churches do seem to fulfill Philippians 3:19. ... whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things

We must take care that we do not do the same as they - set our mind on earthly things. For while we see the surface of the water being influenced by the air above and the currents below, we must be ever mindful of which is the cause and which is the effect . . .

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/4/3 0:35**

That is an excellent observation Heartsong.

Often what we see as a lack of 'effect' may only be a misguided expectation of how long something will take to happen or where to look for it.

I was thinking a few minutes ago, that I can answer most definitely YES to the original question. My own dad a few years ago brought hundreds of men together from several different churches for weekends of fervent prayer which resulted in an outreach to our city of Lancaster. So noticeable was the stirring that the religious community had mixed feelings about my dad...some pastors welcomed him and others shunned him. One morning he was praying so fervently at a Christian campground tabernacle that the church people complained that he was disturbing their morning quiet. I'm a little embarrassed to admit that in the past few years I've forgotten those days. But the men with him loved him...and there was revival in their hearts.

My problem is that I have an extremely short memory.

Perhaps another problem we have to overcome is looking for an event that is so conclusive and sensational that it releases us from the need for further prayer. For instance, it is a common enough, if unfair complaint that revivals don't last. Per

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haps this is because we often view prayer as a means to an end and not a fulltime spiritual calling. When we see some kind of arrival of the Spirit, we celebrate and relax.

And perhaps another challenge for us is our own schemes on what we want God to do...and of course if we are looking at one door when he is coming in the other so to speak we might just become discouraged before due season.

I have another answer to prayer to share here...my own son. In the past few weeks his 'Christian conscience' has been so aroused as to cause me to change from being just the disciplining father to the convicted brother in some of our conversations. By the grace of the life that lives in him, he is showing depth, wisdom, and strength that I certainly can't take credit for. The spirit of God is moving on him. Indeed, to Heartsong's point, I might have been looking for some 'ripple' or 'wave' in the church congregation and been missing it when it comes in my own household!

In the end think I often imagine that my prayers are only like a little penny, and I need to pray over and over again with the hopes of saving up enough to buy a tiny expensive morsel of God's favor. This, I believe, is a very misguided picture. Instead, God attends to every prayer of the righteous mightily, but when I pray I am not always privy to see what is happening beneath the waters in his economy.

Blessings,

MC

**Re: Are we truly seeing changes occur in response to our prayers?, on: 2008/4/3 11:07**

Quote:  
-----I know that I'm not alone in this. So I ask: if anyone can testify of change in their church where there is resurgence in prayer, in discipleship, in people getting saved?  
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Most likely you won't find it.

Salvation is not the most important thing on God's agenda. The most important thing is that you and I become one in Christ Jesus. Remember Jesus said in John 17:9 "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."

If we are not one, then we are divided, thus bringing in new people into a divided entity will only make their journey even more difficult. I would rather have suffered for his name sake than to suffer as a Saint with sin in my life the way I did when I was first born again. And if we don't have answers for the new convert in how to overcome sin, and telling them they are no longer under condemnation then they will float around until someone wise will give them food that a unified body was supposed to do when the poor soul was brought in.

Prayer is not the answer, prayer is just the vehicle used to express our true desire to know the LORD. Knowing the LORD is the answer. Spending time with Him and Him alone will bring about all the revivals that one could ever need in a lifetime.

My friend you shouldn't be impatient, you need to be patient on the LORD. He is not in a hurry like we are. We are busy praying and hurrying around like Martha getting things done, souls souls souls. But Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to His words. When we find ourselves there listening to Jesus we find that it's not all that important to be rushing around getting souls saved, rather waiting on the LORD and obeying His voice is.

Change our prayer and pray according to His will. Pray that our hands be clean and that we have a pure heart (pure motives and intents). Pray that we don't lift our minds up to vanity, nor swear deceitfully (promise one thing and do another). This is far more important than saving souls, because we know that a man who obtains favour from the LORD with such anointing souls are saved, healings and miracles occur.

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**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/4/3 20:43**

Compliments, I've tried today to wrap my head around some of the things you stated.

Quote:

-----Most likely you won't find it.  
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Being inconsolable is certainly one way of avoiding the burden of hope. I think this comment may be unintentionally misleading. Certainly we aren't saying it's somehow immature or earthly minded to look for tangible and meaningful answers to prayers. Jesus' parable involving the persistent widow who exhausted the judge is a clear encouragement to keep praying for answers.

now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18

I'm sure we all agree on this perspective in this bible context, but sometimes it is just helpful to affirm this verse in our own context. God is faithful to prayer.

There is this account from EM Bounds regarding a man named Payson; "His continuing instant in prayer, be his circumstances what they might, is the most noticeable fact in his history, and points out the duty of all who would rival his eminency. To his ardent and persevering prayers must no doubt be ascribed in a great measure his distinguished and almost uninterrupted success."

We may have different ideas over the matter of how long we should pray, or how fervent, or the role of holiness in prayer ...but one thing we shouldn't ever need to debate is whether God answers prayer resoundingly and manifestly in both our inner man and our fellow brethren. In fact, prayer is the vehicle for the entire inner life with Christ, so much so that if God does not answer prayer then we would effectively be confessing we have no relationship with him, and as a result have no communion with one another. If we ask him for the bread of life will he give us a stone of silence or a serpent of death?

Not in my experience, which is admittedly quite limited. So, the question is never whether we will find answers to prayer from God while on Earth but rather the question is will He find faith on the earth?"

Just seeking to keep clarification on this important issue brother! Blessings,

MC

**Re: Are we truly seeing changes occur in response to our prayers? - posted by running2win (), on: 2008/4/4 8:44**

Grace to you intrcssr83!

I know, oh so well, your feelings as I've been there myself. As far as words of encouragement I guess I don't have much to say but just somewhat of a praise to God for something I see Him doing amongst a small group of young people (most of which are my closest friends). Starting in mid-December two friends of mine and I started getting together every Monday night to pray for revival. Just three of us. Now, the interest in this little Monday evening prayer meeting has gained such interest that we're getting too big for the living room we've been meeting in and we're even seeing whole families gaining interest in joining us as we seek God to send a revival to our area. It's something I've longed to see and be a part of for years, and I'm so over-joyed I can't express it! God is putting a burden on our hearts corporately and I believe God will move in our area in the future. How soon I don't know. But I know that He will. Keep praying! Even if God hasn't answered yet it's because He has a reason for it. Trust HIM! God is faithful.

**Re: - posted by whyme, on: 2008/4/4 9:02**

Sometimes the act of praying is the success. The Holy Spirit loves to proclaim the glory and excellencies of Christ. If that is His primary purpose then all I do that is in line with that purpose and that is Scriptural is glorifying and that is enough really. I understand the frustrations expressed in "lack of results" but I question the premise. There are different measures of success that have very little to do with changes to a fallen world.

**Re: Revival - posted by manners, on: 2008/4/4 10:05**

I would just like to encourage you by letting you know that A group of my brothers and myself have experienced by the grace of God personal revival in our own lives which has led us to meet on Monday evenings at a house to pray for revival in our local community. Slowly but surely God is moving we are witnessing a lot of prodigals returning to church and our whole lives have changed not by anything that we have mustered up but by the grace of God. Praise the Lord.

**Re:, on: 2008/4/7 10:36**

Quote:

-----Salvation is not the most important thing on God's agenda. The most important thing is that you and I become one in Christ Jesus. Remember Jesus said in John 17:9 "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."  
-----

I think if we take a closer look at John 17, we will see Jesus praying for the 12 disciples God gave to Jesus here on earth AKA the 12 Apostles.

I believe this is clarified in verse 12. Who was the one lost....the son of perdition....it was Judas.

If we read further in Jesus prayer here we read in verse 20 the Great commission of preaching the Gospel ....reconciling sinners to God through Jesus Christ.

John 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word:

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

We are ambassadors for Christ....be ye reconciled to God. REPENT!

The wrath of God is coming on those who have rejected the Love of the Gospel that they might be saved.

Katy

**Re:, on: 2008/4/7 12:08**

We still need to cry louder, louder and louder! yes, Still!

THis isn't the mall! This is the Holy One of Israel! He doesn't just want prayers and give answers and good gifts, but he wants true worship from our beings/lives.

In Christ

**Re: - posted by Onesimus4God (), on: 2008/4/7 13:16**

Ejg,

Amen and amen. Your statement encopasses all others on this subject. He alone deserves all the glory, and He alone should be the object of our worship. He inhabits the praises of His people. Personal praises, the kind in the closet. In His presence there is fullness of joy. Stand in the pulpit and look as I have for joy among church people. Their faces look like they are at a wake! They are dead because they have no personal relationship with God. They are there only to attempt to fulfill religious obligation. It is not worship. They are worn out from trying to manipulate God into being their servant and exalting themselves instead of exalting Him. They have not strength because they have no joy, for the joy of the Lord is our strenght. They know about Homer Simpson. They know about Family Guy. But they know not the living God.

Jesus died that we might have fellowship with the Father once again. We, as His children have that right and privilege. Yet we would rather discuss "it" with our neighbor, than with the Father.

Jesus said that He did not do or say anything without first talking it over with the Father, and receiving His Father's instructions so that He could obey them. His miracles were not of His own choosing. He was following orders from Heaven. He had the power of the throne of God supporting His every move, because He was obedient even unto death, death on the cross. Who among you is like Him? Surely not I. God forgive us all. Far too often I give up and rely on my own under standing, instead of trusting my God who cannot do else but love and have my best interest at heart. Oh God, forgive me. I seek the wisdom of other men, instead of the wisdom of God. I resort to short cuts to accomplish my goals, instead of patiently waiting for the leading of the Holy Spirit as our Jesus did.

Jesus was the center of attention everywhere He went. There was no CNN, no Fox News. Just word of mouth, and He had them all talking. Why? Because a city set upon a hill could not be hidden. He told His disciples, "so let your light shine before me, that they may see your good works, and glorify God".

The good works are not good preaching, not good singing, not good videos, not good books. It is charity.

See, in modern times here, we have become dupped by deceivers to believing that 1 Cor 13 is the "love" chapter. It's not the love chapter, it's the works chapter. Love is not patient, charity is patient. Love is not kind, charity is kind. Love does not endure all things, charity endures all things. Charity has a benevolent "work" attached to it. Not works of salvation, but works of love. Charity is agape, non conditional. When we start to do the works of the Father, you wont' have to advertise. You won't have to hold conferences. You won't have to by TV and radio time. It will all be provided, because we will be so different, they will be crowding us as people were in Jesus' crowding Him. Yes, the religious will be out to kill us too.

Love is not something we have, but something we do. It is the demonstration of self sacrifice, our "reasonable service" unto God. It begins with the lowly, the down and out, not the Country Club or the pot luck hall of fame.

Oh, faith and worship are so different than what is portrayed in so called "churches" today. We have slipped a long, long way from Christ. The horror is that so few see it and understand it. Most think all is well. The great deception, and the great falling away is not coming. It is here and now.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

"O"

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**Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2008/4/7 13:46**

Quote:

-----Love is not something we have, but something we do.  
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Yes, not as a means to God's love, but as a result of God's Love - His love flowing through us unto others - drawing them to Himself - that He may also fill them with His Love - Himself.