

Prayer Changes

“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,
By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus”
(Acts 4:29-30).

It is often said that “Prayer Changes Things!” We should also add, “Prayer Changes Us!” It is true that your prayers will change things around you but sometimes your prayers change you. To make it more personal, “Prayer Changes Me!” At times our situation even remains the same; but we are different.

Prayer Changes Things

The Book of Acts, and the Bible in general shows many examples of circumstances and situations that were totally changed as a direct result of prayer. Peter and John prayed in Acts 3 and the lame man was healed. In Acts 12, Peter is delivered from prison and possibly death as a direct result of a prayer meeting in session at Mary’s house. Paul and Silas prayed at midnight and a miracle immediately took place in their prison prayer room (Acts 16). Paul and others prayed on the ship in the midst of a long storm, and their lives were spared (Acts 27).

In Isaiah 38 Hezekiah received a shocking message, “...Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live” (Isaiah 38:1). The situation was desperate and the prophecy spelled certain doom. The situation was changed as Hezekiah turned to the wall and began to weep and pray. God said, “I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years” (Isaiah 38:5). Our prayers have a positive effect on God and the future can even be changed through prayer. It is a Scriptural principle that “Prayer Changes Things!”

Elijah prayed and it did not rain for three and one half years. He prayed again and the circumstances changed again; it rained (James 5:17-18). Many other examples could be given of how “Prayer Changes Things!” However, we need to look at how “Prayer Changes Us!” How does “Prayer Change Me?”

Prayer Changes Us

The disciples in Acts 4 were threatened and warned not to speak or preach in the name of Jesus. They did not react by going to God in prayer pleading, “Lord change things! Lord, change our circumstances.” They rather asked that the Lord would “...grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word...” (Acts 4:29). They believed that through boldness, speaking the word, and dependence on Jesus Christ other notable miracles would be

done. They understood that more miracles would result in more trouble for them. It did not matter. The attitude was, “Do not change our circumstances, change us!”

**“For things to get better, sometimes
you must get better.”**

We may change our circumstances and even seek for a more favorable location or environment but we will take ourselves with us wherever we go. Jesus asked us to “consider the lilies” in Matthew 6:28. These flowers grow where they are planted. Many of us refuse to grow where we are placed and because of that we never take root anywhere. Instead we want to be planted in a better set of circumstances. One man said, “I have found the problem and it is I.”

There are things in all of our lives that must die through prayer, fasting, and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul prayed three times for his circumstances with a “thorn in the flesh” to change. God finally said, “My grace is sufficient” (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Paul concluded that God had refused his prayer so that he would not be “exalted above measure” (2 Corinthians 12:7). Paul’s “thorn” kept him from becoming proud and exalting himself because of the many revelations that God had given to him. Paul’s “thorn” was not specifically described so that all of us who have “thorns in the flesh” will be able to identify with Paul.

*“It is not so important what happens to us;
It is more important what happens in us.”*

**He’s still working on me;
To make me what I ought to be!**

The Psalmist David wrote “The Penitent’s Psalm” of Psalm 51. This Psalm was written after Nathan, the prophet, had come to David revealing his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, and the murder of her husband (2 Samuel 12:1-13). David did not ask for a change in his circumstances but cried out “Lord, Change Me!” You can read about this in Psalm 51:1-19. He prays for a clean heart, and a right spirit. He knew that “a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart...” (51:17) were necessary for the Lord to make a change in him. David basically prayed, “Lord, I have sinned against you. Clean me up! Change me so that I can be a blessing to your people.” This attitude was quite different from that expressed by Saul. When he sinned, he said, “...I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel...” (1 Samuel 15:30). He was not interested in a real change in his life through repentance. He was more interested in how he appeared before the people.

To Be Like Jesus

Prayer allows us to become like Jesus. It is said, “You show me your friends and I will tell you who you are.” The type of friends that we have serves as a good indicator of who we are. Jesus has promised to be our friend that “...sticketh closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24). In prayer we are trying to not only know Him; but become more like Him. Have you ever noticed that when a husband and wife are married for a long period of time that they start acting like each other? We start taking on the personality of the person that we spend a lot of time with. The Bible teaches, “everything reproduces after its own kind” (See Genesis 1:24).

The Apostle Paul said that he came “declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2). He was able to declare the testimony of God because he spent time with Him. Our greatest desire should be to live a life that is pleasing and acceptable to God.

Our Prayer and Sacrifice

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12: 1-2).

When we, in prayer, present ourselves as a living sacrifice and refuse to be conformed to this world; we become transformed.

To be “transformed” means that we will be “changed.” This comes about by the “renewing of your mind.”

Our mind is renewed and our life changed through:

- ✓ Prayer
- ✓ Fasting
- ✓ Bible Study and Bible Reading
- ✓ Reading Christian books
- ✓ Listening to the Word of God
- ✓ Submitting to the work of God in our lives

God expects us “...to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Romans 8:29). He accepts you as you are but will not leave you there. He wants you to be changed.

Max DePree in *Leadership is an Art* says, “it is important to remember that we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.”

The whole salvation experience begins with making a change (*called repentance*). God changes us through the born again experience and transforms (*changes*) our destiny.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

**Prayer Changes Things!
Prayer Changes Us!
Lord, Let Prayer Change Me!**

Study Questions

1. Explain how prayer changed things for Hezekiah in Isaiah 38. _____

2. The disciples in Acts 4 did not ask God to change their circumstances but what? _____

3. For things to get better sometimes _____ must get _____.

4. Why was Paul given a “thorn in the flesh”? _____

5. What was the difference between the reaction of David and Saul (when they had sinned)? _____

6. Where is the Penitent’s Psalm located? _____

7. What should be our greatest desire? _____

8. What does “transformed” mean? _____

9. How do we renew our minds? _____

10. What did Max Deprey say was important to remember? _____

11. The whole salvation experience begins with making a change. This is called what? _____

12. What does 2 Corinthians 5:17 promise to those that are in Christ? _____

Additional Notes
