



Prayer Produces

Let us consider one primary reason for prayer. In his book, *The Necessity of Prayer*, E. M. Bounds says, “**The more we pray, the better we are, and the purer and better our lives become.**”

Prayer governs conduct, and conduct makes character.

Character is what we are. Conduct is the outward life. Character is the unseen life, hidden within, yet is evidence by that which is seen. Conduct is external, seen from without. Character is internal, operating within.

Prayer is related to all the gifts of grace. Its relationship to character and conduct is that of a helper. **Prayer helps to establish character and to fashion conduct.**

In Christ’s teaching, it is not simply works of charity and deeds of mercy that He insists upon, but **inward spiritual character. This much is demanded, and nothing short of it will suffice.**

In the study of Paul’s epistles, there is one thing that stands out clearly and unmistakably – the **insistence on holiness of heart and righteousness of life.** Paul does not seek to promote what is termed “personal work.” The leading theme of his letters is not deeds of charity. Rather, it is the condition of the human heart and blamelessness of the personal life that form the burden of Paul’s writings.

Here is where prayer enters and demonstrates its wonderful ability and fruit. Prayer drives toward this specific end. In fact, **without prayer, no such supernatural change in moral character can ever be effected.** The change from badness to goodness is not brought about “*by works of righteousness which we have done,*” but according to God’s mercy, which saves us “*by the washing of regeneration*” (Titus 3:5). **This marvelous change is brought to pass through earnest, persistent, faithful prayer. Any assumed form of Christianity that does not effect this change in the hearts of men is a delusion and a snare.**

The church is God’s factory on earth. **Its primary duty is to create and foster righteous character.** This is its very first business. Primarily, its work is not to acquire members or amass numbers. Its aim is not to get money or engage in deeds of character and works of mercy. **Its work is to produce righteousness of character and purity of the outward life.**

Unrighteous conduct is born in prayerlessness. The two go hand in hand. Prayer and sinning cannot keep company with each other. One or the other must, of necessity, stop. Get men to pray, and they will quit sinning, because prayer creates a distaste for sinning.

Prayer is based on character. What we are with God determines our influence with Him. At the same time, character affects conduct to a far greater extent and has superior influence over prayer. Our inner life gives color to our praying.

Bad living means bad praying and, in the end, no praying at all. We pray feebly because we live feebly.

The prayer closet cannot become sanctified to God when the life is alien to His laws and purpose. We must learn this lesson well. Righteous character and Christlike conduct give us a peculiar and preferential standing in prayer before God.

“And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood” Isaiah 1:15

“Therefore pray thou not for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble” Jeremiah 11:14

Here, **it is plainly stated that unholy conduct is a hindrance to successful praying.** It is clearly suggested that, in order to have full access to God in prayer, **there must be a total abandonment of conscious and premeditated sin.** Christians everywhere ought to be reminded to pray by their lives or not pray at all.

Of course, the prayer of repentance is acceptable to God. He delights in hearing the cries of penitent sinners. But **repentance involves not only sorrow for sin but turning away from wrongdoing and learning to do well.** A repentance that does not produce a change in character and conduct is a mere sham that should deceive no one. Old things *must* pass away. All things *must* become new. (See 2 Corinthians 5:17). In the very nature of things, **we must either quit praying or quit our bad conduct.** Cold, formal praying may exist side by side with bad conduct, but such praying, in God’s estimation, **is no praying at all.**

Always, it is ***the prayer of the righteous man that avails much.*** (See James 5:16) Indeed, one may go further and say that **it is only the prayer of the righteous that avails anything at all, all the time.**

Praying sets him who prays to the great business of ***working out his salvation with fear and trembling.*** (See Philippians 2:12) It causes him to **watch his temper, conversation, and conduct.** It leads him to **walk circumspectly** and **redeem the time.** (See Ephesians 5:15-16) It enables him to **walk worthy of the vocation where he is called, with all lowliness and meekness.** (See Ephesians 4:1-2) It gives him a high incentive to pursue his pilgrimage consistently by **shunning every evil way and to walk in the good.** (See Psalm 119:101)

This blog taken entirely from quotes obtained from *The Necessity of Prayer*, by E. M. Bounds, Chapter 8, Prayer and Christian Conduct.