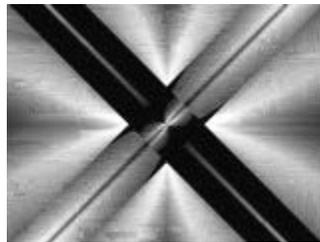


THE COST OF ANSWERED PRAYER

AND

FOLLOWING THE HOLY SPIRIT WHILE GOING THROUGH A TRIAL



Unless the Lord builds the house...

Paul La Capria

The Rock House Church

A Christian Fellowship

P.O. Box 792

Placentia, CA 92871

(714) 745-9600

Paul@The-Rock-House.org

(email address)

The-Rock-House.org

(church web page)



The Cost of Answered Prayer

Henry Blackaby • Experiencing Prayer with Jesus:

*“Your **answered** prayer life should be such as to draw people into the kingdom of God.”*

Can any of you profess that your answered prayer life is so visible that it is drawing people into a relationship with Christ?

The discouraging prayer cycle.

The church at large tells us that when we pray, God will give us one of three answers: **Yes, No or Wait.**

I would challenge the whole of this idea, as being wrong, because it takes one of the most important equations out of the mix and lays all outcomes (or lack thereof) on God. We play an important role in this prayer process and we should not be removed from the equation of answered prayer.

We have been given the greatest gift from God as one of His most prized and loved creations. The gift of free will. We can choose God or choose otherwise.

Perhaps our prayers are not being answered because we are choosing “otherwise”.

Is your mind preoccupied with sinful desires instead of Godly things? Have you allowed these heart issues to become an idol that has erected a wall between you and God? Are we longing each day for the things of God or are we longing for our fleshly desires. What occupies your mind throughout the day?

Isaiah 59 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

(Isaiah explains how God’s people sink to a low condition) The process of God’s people falling away – which results in God hiding His face from you so that He does not hear your prayers.

Separation from God

59 Behold, the Lord’s hand is not so short

That it cannot save;

Nor is His ear so dull

That it cannot hear.

² But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God,

And your sins have hidden *His* face from you so that He does not hear.

³ For your hands are defiled with blood

And your fingers with iniquity;

Your lips have spoken falsehood,

Your tongue mutters wickedness.

⁴No one sues righteously and no one pleads honestly.
They trust in confusion and speak lies;
They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity.
⁵They hatch adders' eggs and weave the spider's web;
He who eats of their eggs dies,
And *from* that which is crushed a snake breaks forth.
⁶Their webs will not become clothing,
Nor will they cover themselves with their works;
Their works are works of iniquity,
And an act of violence is in their hands.
⁷Their feet run to evil,
And they hasten to shed innocent blood;
Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity,
Devastation and destruction are in their highways.
⁸They do not know the way of peace,
And there is no justice in their tracks;
They have made their paths crooked,
Whoever treads on them does not know peace.

A Confession of Wickedness (*Isaiah now includes Himself*)

⁹Therefore justice is far from us,
And righteousness does not overtake us;
We hope for light, but behold, darkness,
For brightness, but we walk in gloom.
¹⁰We grope along the wall like blind men,
We grope like those who have no eyes;
We stumble at midday as in the twilight,
Among those who are vigorous *we are* like dead men.
¹¹All of us growl like bears,
And moan sadly like doves;
We hope for justice, but there is none,
For salvation, *but* it is far from us.
¹²For our transgressions are multiplied before You,
And our sins testify against us;
For our transgressions are with us,
And we know our iniquities:
¹³Transgressing and denying the Lord,
And turning away from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt,
Conceiving *in* and uttering from the heart lying words.
¹⁴Justice is turned back,

And righteousness stands far away;
For truth has stumbled in the street,
And uprightness cannot enter.

¹⁵ **Yes, truth is lacking;**

And he who turns aside from evil makes himself a prey.

Now the Lord saw,

And it was displeasing in His sight that there was no justice.

¹⁶ And He saw that there was no man,

And was astonished that there was no one to intercede;

Then His own arm brought salvation to Him,

And His righteousness upheld Him.

¹⁷ He put on righteousness like a breastplate,

And a helmet of salvation on His head;

And He put on garments of vengeance for clothing

And wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle.

¹⁸ According to *their* deeds, so He will repay,

Wrath to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies;

To the coastlands He will make recompense.

¹⁹ So they will fear the name of the Lord from the west

And His glory from the rising of the sun,

For He will come like a rushing stream

Which the wind of the Lord drives.

²⁰ “A Redeemer will come to Zion,

And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,” declares the Lord.

²¹ “As for Me, this is My covenant with them,” says the Lord: “My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring’s offspring,” says the Lord, “from now and forever.”

But doing the right thing and taking a stand for Christ will come with a cost!

Speaking the truth of Christ into people’s lives will come with a cost!

Are you prepared to pay that cost? Perhaps you’re not.

Let us weigh that cost...not only in the world’s economy, but also in God’s economy.

Let’s talk about the cost in the world’s economy first, and then we’ll look at it from God’s perspective.

The world's economy:

Loss of provision • (as in your job — see 1st Corinthians 7:23)

1 Corinthians 7:23 New American Standard Bible (NASB) (The Apostle Paul tells us)

²³ You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

Men, when do you tell your boss no? (Enough is enough! • Stop asking for more!)

Loss of relationships • (friends and family — see Matthew 10:34-39).

Matthew 10:34-39 New American Standard Bible (NASB) (Jesus Himself tells us)

³⁴ “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶ and a man's enemies will be the members of his household.

³⁷ “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹ He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

Our response to these losses is to “let go and let God”.

Do you trust God enough, to let go and let God?

Now let's look at things from God's perspective:

God's economy: Trials will come your way due to spiritual warfare.

Ephesians 6:12 New American Standard Bible (NASB) (The Apostle Paul tells us...)

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

Daniel 10:12-14 New American Standard Bible (NASB) (Daniel's Spiritual warfare story)

¹² Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding *this* and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. ¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet *future*.”

Following the Holy Spirit while going through a trial.

(The Apostle Peter tells us in...)

1st Peter 4:12-19 New American Standard Bible (NASB) (Share the Sufferings of Christ)

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; ¹⁶ but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. ¹⁷ For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? ¹⁹ Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

Why is it our nature to complain when a trial besets us?

The consequences of continuous complaining can be severe.

Joshua 5:6 New American Standard Bible (NASB) (Joshua tells us)

⁶ For the sons of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, *that is*, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished because they did not listen to the voice of the Lord, to whom the Lord had sworn that He would not let them see the land which the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Numbers 14:20-25 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

The Lord Pardons and Rebukes

²⁰ So the Lord said, “I have pardoned *them* according to your word; ²¹ but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord. ²² Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, ²³ shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. ²⁴ But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it. ²⁵ Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valleys; turn tomorrow and set out to the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.”

Why do we complain during a trial?

Is it because we fail to understand God's plan for us?

Do we have a hard time trusting God to do what is best for our lives?

What is God's perspective when His children are going through a trial?

Deuteronomy 31:19 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

“Now therefore, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the sons of Israel; put it on their lips, so that this song may be a witness for Me against the sons of Israel.”

Deuteronomy 32:1-12

New American Standard Bible (NASB) The Song of Moses

32 “Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak;
And let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

²“Let my teaching drop as the rain,
My speech distill as the dew,

As the droplets on the fresh grass
And as the showers on the herb.

³“For I proclaim the name of the Lord;
Ascribe greatness to our God!

⁴“The Rock! His work is perfect,
For all His ways are just;
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,
Righteous and upright is He.

⁵“They have acted corruptly toward Him,
They are not His children, because of their defect;
But are a perverse and crooked generation.

⁶“Do you thus repay the Lord,
O foolish and unwise people?
Is not He your Father who has bought you?
He has made you and established you.

⁷“Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of all generations.
Ask your father, and he will inform you,
Your elders, and they will tell you.

⁸“When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance,
When He separated the sons of man,
He set the boundaries of the peoples
According to the number of the sons of Israel.

⁹“For the Lord’s portion is His people;
Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance.

¹⁰“He found him in a desert land,
And in the howling waste of a wilderness;
He encircled him, He cared for him,
He guarded him as the pupil of His eye.

¹¹“Like an eagle that stirs up its nest,
That hovers over its young,
He spread His wings and caught them,
He carried them on His pinions.

¹²“The Lord alone guided him,
And there was no foreign god with him.

Explain verse 11

“Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, That hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions.” Explain the lifelong mating of an Eagle pair and the raising of their offspring.

Matthew 23:37 New American Standard Bible (NASB) (Jesus Laments)

Lament over Jerusalem

³⁷“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.

Now, knowing that God has our best interest at heart, how should we respond to Him in a trial?

What examples does scripture give us?

Job 1:22 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

“Through all of this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.”

Psalm 66:1-15 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Praise for God's Mighty Deeds and for His Answer to Prayer. God brings us to a better place. For the choir director. A Song. A Psalm.

66 Shout joyfully to God, all the earth;

² Sing the glory of His name;

Make His praise glorious.

³ Say to God, "How awesome are Your works!

Because of the greatness of Your power Your enemies will give feigned obedience to You.

⁴ "All the earth will worship You,

And will sing praises to You;

They will sing praises to Your name." Selah.

⁵ Come and see the works of God,

Who is awesome in *His* deeds toward the sons of men.

⁶ He turned the sea into dry land;

They passed through the river on foot;

There let us rejoice in Him!

⁷ He rules by His might forever;

His eyes keep watch on the nations;

Let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

⁸ Bless our God, O peoples,

And sound His praise abroad,

⁹ Who keeps us in life

And does not allow our feet to slip.

¹⁰ For You have tried us, O God;

You have refined us as silver is refined.

¹¹ You brought us into the net;

You laid an oppressive burden upon our loins.

¹² You made men ride over our heads;

We went through fire and through water,

Yet You brought us out into *a place of* abundance.

¹³ I shall come into Your house with burnt offerings;

I shall pay You my vows,

¹⁴ Which my lips uttered

And my mouth spoke when I was in distress.

¹⁵ I shall offer to You burnt offerings of fat beasts,

With the smoke of rams;

I shall make *an offering of* bulls with male goats. Selah.

2 Corinthians 1:8-11 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

(Burdened excessively beyond our strength.) Paul despairs, even to life!

⁸ For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; ⁹ indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; ¹⁰ who delivered us from so great a *peril of death*, and will deliver *us*, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, ¹¹ you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through *the prayers of many*.

1 Peter 1:3-9 New American Standard Bible (NASB) (The Apostle Peter tells us)

The joy of trials revealed! (The payoff)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷ so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ⁸ and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

Now let's go back to: 1st Peter 4:12-19 and read it again.

1st Peter 4:12-19 New American Standard Bible (NASB) (Share the Sufferings of Christ)

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵ Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; ¹⁶ but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. ¹⁷ For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? ¹⁹ Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

Final Thoughts

Are you standing as blameless before God as you can today?

If you are, then rejoice and be at peace.

God is in control. He is on the throne!

James 1 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Testing Your Faith • (James the Just, brother of Jesus, leader of the Jerusalem Church)

1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

⁵ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

⁹ But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; ¹⁰ and the rich man *is to glory* in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. ¹¹ For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷ Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. ¹⁸ In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

¹⁹ *This* you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. ²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵ But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

²⁶ If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his *own* heart, this man's religion is worthless. ²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.