

# Knowing God in Prayer - Part 3

by A.W. Tozer

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*God answers prayer that is in line with His will and is made by obedient and trustful Christians.*

**Scripture:** 1 John 3:21

**Topics:** "Obedience in Prayer", "The Nature of Prayer"

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## Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the importance of understanding prayer in the context of God's will and obedience. He challenges the notion that God always answers prayer in the way we expect, asserting that true prayer requires a clear request and a life aligned with God's commandments. Tozer argues that prayer is not merely about asking for things but about cultivating a relationship with God, where our desires align with His will. He encourages believers to engage in prayer as a means of transformation, both personally and in their circumstances, while recognizing that prayer must be coupled with obedience to be effective.

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## Transcript

Contents

6. Does God Always Answer Prayer?

7. Prayer's From The Pursuit of God

8. What Profit In Prayer?

9. In Everything By Prayer

Appendix I: Various Quotes on Prayer

Chapter six

Does God Always Answer Prayer?

"Sometimes I go to God and say, 'God, if Thou dost never answer another prayer while I live on this earth, I will still worship Thee as long as I live and in the ages to come for what Thou hast done already.'" - A.W. Tozer

Contrary to popular opinion, the cultivation of a psychology of uncritical belief is not an unqualified good, and if carried too far it may be a positive evil. The whole world has been booby-trapped by the devil, and the deadliest trap of all is the religious one. Error never looks so innocent as when it is found in the sanctuary.

One field where harmless-looking but deadly traps appear in great profusion is the field of prayer. There are more sweet notions about prayer than could be contained in a large book, all of them wrong and all highly injurious to the souls of men.

I think of one such false notion that is found often in pleasant places consorting smilingly with other notions of unquestionable orthodoxy. It is that God always answers prayer.

This error appears among the saints as a kind of all-purpose philosophic therapy to prevent any disappointed Christian from suffering too great a shock when it becomes evident to him that his prayer expectations are not being fulfilled. It is explained that God always answers prayer, either by saying Yes or by saying No, or by substituting something else for the desired favor.

### The Problem of Non-Obedience

Now, it would be hard to invent a neater trick than this to save face for the petitioner whose requests have been rejected for non-obedience. Thus when a prayer is not answered he has but to smile brightly and explain, "God said No." It is all so very comfortable. His wobbly faith is saved from confusion and his conscience is permitted to lie undisturbed. But I wonder if it is honest.

To receive an answer to prayer as the Bible uses the term and as Christians have understood it historically, two elements must be present: (1) A clear-cut request made to God for a specific favor. (2) A clear-cut granting of that favor by God in answer to the request. There must be no semantic twisting, no changing of labels, no altering of the map during the journey to help the embarrassed tourist to find himself.

When we go to God with a request that He modify the existing situation for us, that is, that He answer prayer, there are two conditions that we must meet: (1) We must pray in the will of God and (2) we must be on what old-fashioned Christians often call "praying ground"; that is, we must be living lives pleasing to God.

It is futile to beg God to act contrary to His revealed purposes. To pray with confidence the petitioner must be certain that his request falls within the broad will of God for His people.

The second condition is also vitally important. God has not placed Himself under obligation to honor the requests of worldly, carnal or disobedient Christians. He hears and answers the prayers only of those who walk in His way. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight . . . . If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (I John 3:21, 22; John 15:7).

### God Wants To Answer

God wants us to pray and He wants to answer our prayers, but He makes our use of prayer as a privilege to commingle with His use of prayer as a discipline. To receive answers to prayer we must meet God's

terms. If we neglect His commandments our petitions will not be honored. He will alter situations only at the request of obedient and humble souls.

The God-always-answers-prayer sophistry leaves the praying man without discipline. By the exercise of this bit of smooth casuistry he ignores the necessity to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, and actually takes God's flat refusal to answer his prayer as the very answer itself. Of course such a man will not grow in holiness; he will never learn how to wrestle and wait; he will never know correction; he will not hear the voice of God calling him forward; he will never arrive at the place where he is morally and spiritually fit to have his prayers answered. His wrong philosophy has ruined him.

That is why I turn aside to expose the bit of bad theology upon which his bad philosophy is founded. The man who accepts it never knows where he stands; he never knows whether or not he has true faith, for if his request is not granted he avoids the implication by the simple dodge of declaring that God switched the whole thing around and gave him something else. He will not allow himself to shoot at a target, so he cannot tell how good or how bad a marksman he is.

Of certain persons James says plainly: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." From that brief sentence we may learn that God refuses some requests because they who make them are not morally worthy to receive the answer. But this means nothing to the one who has been seduced into the belief that God always answers prayer. When such a man asks and receives not he passes his hand over the hat and comes up with the answer in some other form. One thing he clings to with great tenacity: God never turns anyone away, but invariably grants every request.

The truth is that God always answers the prayer that accords with His will as revealed in the Scriptures, provided the one who prays is obedient and trustful. Further than this we dare not go.

## Chapter seven

### Prayer's From The Pursuit of God

"Be Thou exalted over my reputation. Make me ambitious to please Thee even if as a result I must sink into obscurity and my name be forgotten as a dream." - A.W. Tozer

"O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty still. Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, that so I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, 'Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.' Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long. In Jesus' name, Amen."

"Father, I want to know Thee, but my coward heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding, and I do not try to hide from Thee the terror of the parting. I come trembling, but I do come. Please root from my heart all Those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self, so that Thou mayest enter and dwell there without a rival. Then shalt Thou make the place of Thy feet glorious. Then shall my heart have no need of the sun to shine in it, for Thyself wilt be the light of it, and there shall be no night there. In Jesus' name, Amen."

"Lord, how excellent are Thy ways, and how devious and dark are the ways of man. Show us how to die, that we may rise again to newness of life. Rend the veil of our self-life from the top down as Thou didst

rend the veil of the Temple. We would draw near in full assurance of faith. We would dwell with Thee in daily experience here on this earth so that we may be accustomed to the glory when we enter Thy heaven to dwell with Thee there. In Jesus' name, Amen."

"O God, quicken to life every power within me, that I may lay hold on eternal things. Open my eyes that I may see; give me acute spiritual perception; enable me to taste Thee and know that Thou art good. Make heaven more real to me than any earthly thing has ever been. Amen."

"O God and Father, I repent of my sinful preoccupation with visible things. The world has been too much with me. Thou hast been here and I knew it not. I have been blind to Thy Presence. Open my eyes that I may behold Thee in and around me. For Christ's sake. Amen."

"Lord, teach me to listen. The times are noisy and my ears are weary with the thousand raucous sounds which continuously assault them. Give me the spirit of the boy Samuel when he said to Thee, 'Speak, for thy servant heareth.' Let me hear Thee speaking in my heart. Let me get used to the sound of Thy Voice, that its tones may be familiar when the sounds of earth die away and the only sound will be the music of Thy speaking Voice. Amen."

"(The Vision of God) O Lord, I have heard a good word inviting me to look away to Thee and be satisfied. My heart longs to respond, but sin has clouded my vision till I see Thee but dimly. Be pleased to cleanse me in Thine own precious blood, and make me inwardly pure, so that I may with unveiled eyes gaze upon Thee all the days of my earthly pilgrimage. Then shall I be prepared to behold Thee in full splendor in the day when Thou shalt appear to be glorified in Thy saints and admired in all them that believe. Amen."

"O God, be thou exalted over my possessions. Nothing of earth's treasures shall seem dear unto me if only Thou art glorified in my life. Be Thou exalted over my friendships. I am determined that Thou shalt be above all, though I must stand deserted and alone in the midst of the earth. Be Thou exalted above my comforts. Though it mean the loss of bodily comforts and the carrying of heavy crosses I shall keep my vow made this day before Thee. Be Thou exalted over my reputation. Make me ambitious to please Thee even if as a result I must sink into obscurity and my name be forgotten as a dream. Rise, O Lord, into Thy proper place of honor, above my ambitions, above my likes and dislikes, above my family, my health and even my life itself. Let me decrease that Thou mayest increase, let me sink that Thou mayest rise above. Ride forth upon me as Thou didst ride into Jerusalem mounted upon the humble little beast, a colt, the foal of an ass, and let me hear the children cry to Thee, 'Hosanna in the highest.'"

"Lord, make me childlike. Deliver me from the urge to compete with another for place or prestige or position. I would be simple and artless as a little child. Deliver me from pose and pretense. Forgive me for thinking of myself. Help me to forget myself and find my true peace in beholding Thee. That Thou mayest answer this prayer I humble myself before Thee. Lay upon me Thy easy yoke of self-forgetfulness that through it I may find rest. Amen."

"I beseech Thee so for to cleanse the intent of mine heart with the unspeakable gift of Thy grace, that I may perfectly love Thee and worthily praise Thee.' And all this I confidently believe Thou wilt grant me through the merits of Jesus Christ Thy Son. Amen."

Chapter eight

What Profit In Prayer?

"Wherever faith has eyes to see, there is a smiling presence of the Son of God." - A.W. Tozer

The skeptic in the book of Job asked the disdainful question, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him, and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"

The whole tone of the remark shows that it is meant to be rhetorical. The doubter, believing the question could have no answer, tossed it off contemptuously and turned away, like Pilate, without waiting for a reply. But we have an answer. God Himself has supplied it, and the universal consensus of the ages has added an Amen.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews we have a long list of benefits which faith brings to its possessors: justification, deliverance, fruitfulness, endurance, victory over enemies, courage, strength and even resurrection from the dead. And everything that is attributed to faith might with equal truth be attributed to prayer, for faith and true prayer are like two sides of the same coin. They are inseparable.

Men may, and often do, pray without faith (though this is not true prayer), but it is not thinkable that men should have faith and not pray. The biblical formula is "The prayer of faith." Prayer and faith are here bound together by the little preposition of, and what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Faith is only genuine as it eventuates into prayer.

#### Prayer Changes Things

When Tennyson wrote "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," he probably uttered a truth of vaster significance than even he understood. While it is not always possible to trace an act of God to its prayer-cause, it is yet safe to say that prayer is back of everything that God does for the sons of men here upon earth. One would gather as much from a simple reading of the Scriptures.

What profit is there in prayer? "Much every way." Whatever God can do faith can do, and whatever faith can do prayer can do when it is offered in faith. An invitation to prayer is, therefore, an invitation to omnipotence, for prayer engages the Omnipotent God and brings Him into our human affairs. Nothing is impossible to the man who prays in faith, just as nothing is impossible with God. This generation has yet to prove all that prayer can do for believing men and women.

#### Faith Grows With Use

It was a saying of George Mueller that faith grows with use. If we would have great faith we must begin to use the little faith we already have. Put it to work by reverent and faithful praying, and it will grow and become stronger day by day. Dare today to trust God for something small and ordinary and next week or next year you may be able to trust Him for answers bordering on the miraculous. Everyone has some faith, said Mueller; the difference among us is one of degree only, and the man of small faith may be simply the one who has not dared to exercise the little faith he has.

According to the Bible, we have because we ask, or we have not because we ask not. It does not take much wisdom to discover our next move. Is it not to pray, and pray again and again till the answer comes? God waits to be invited to display His power in behalf of His people. The world situation is such that nothing less than God can straighten it out. Let us not fail the world and disappoint God by failing to pray.

#### Prayer and Faith

It is critically important that the Christian take full advantage of every provision God has made to save him from delusion. These are prayer, faith, constant meditation on the Scriptures, obedience, humility, hard, serious thought and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. 1. Prayer is not a sure fire protection against error for the reason that there are many kinds of prayer and some of them are worse than useless. The prophets of Baal leaped upon the altar in a frenzy of prayer, but their cries went unregarded because they prayed to a god that did not exist. The God the Pharisees prayed to did exist, but He refused to listen to them because of their self-righteousness and pride.

From them we may well learn a profitable lesson in reverse. In spite of the difficulties we encounter when we pray, prayer is a powerful and effective way to get right, stay right and stay free from error. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). All things else being equal, the praying man is less likely to think wrong than the man who neglects to pray. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

The apostle Paul calls faith a shield. The man of faith can walk at ease, protected by his simple confidence in God. God loves to be trusted, and He puts all heaven at the disposal of the trusting soul. But when we talk of faith let us know what we mean. Faith is not optimism, though it may breed optimism; it is not cheerfulness, though the man of faith is likely to be reasonably cheerful; it is not a vague sense of well-being or a tender appreciation for the beauty of human togetherness. Faith is confidence in God's self-revelation as found in the Holy Scriptures.

#### A Silent Heart

"My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned. Then I spoke with my tongue." - Psalm 39:3

Prayer among evangelical Christians is always in danger of degenerating into a glorified gold rush. Almost every book on prayer deals with the "get" element mainly. How to get things we want from God occupies most of the space. Now, we gladly admit that we may ask for and receive specific gifts and benefits in answer to prayer, but we must never forget that the highest kind of prayer is never the making of requests. Prayer at its holiest moment is the entering into God to a place of such blessed union as makes miracles seem tame and remarkable answers to prayer appear something very far short of wonderful by comparison.

Holy men of soberer and quieter times than ours knew well the power of silence. David said, "I was dumb with silence. I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue." There is a tip here for God's modern prophets. The heart seldom gets hot while the mouth is open. A closed mouth before God and silent heart are indispensable for the reception of certain kinds of truth. No man is qualified to speak who has not first listened.

#### At Home in the Prayer Chamber

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days." - Daniel 6:10

Thomas a' Kempis wrote that the man of God ought to be more at home in his prayer chamber than before the public.

No man should stand before an audience who has not first stood before God. Many hours of communion should precede one hour in the pulpit. The prayer chamber should be more familiar than the public platform. Prayer should be continuous, preaching but intermittent.

It is significant that the schools teach everything about preaching except the important part, praying. For this weakness the schools are not to be blamed, for the reason that prayer cannot be taught; it can only be done. The best any school or any book (or any article) can do is to recommend prayer and exhort to its practice. Praying itself must be the work of the individual. That it is the one religious work which gets done with the least enthusiasm cannot but be one of the tragedies of our times.

### Not Asking for Anything

"I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live." - Psalm 116:1-2

I think that some of the greatest prayer is prayer where you don't say one single word or ask for anything. Now God does answer and He does give us what we ask for. That's plain; nobody can deny that unless he denies the Scriptures. But that's only one aspect of prayer, and it's not even the important aspect. Sometimes I go to God and say, "God, if Thou dost never answer another prayer while I live on this earth I will still worship Thee as long as I live and in the ages to come for what Thou hast done already." God's already put me so far in debt that if I were to live one million millenniums I couldn't pay Him for what He's done for me.

We go to God as we send a boy to a grocery store with a long written list, "God, give me this, give me this, and give me this," and our gracious God often does give us what we want. But I think God is disappointed because we make Him to be no more than a source of what we want. Even our Lord Jesus is presented too often much as "Someone who will meet your need." That's the throbbing heart of modern evangelism. You're in need and Jesus will meet your need. He's the Need-meeter. Well, He is that indeed; but, ah, He's infinitely more than that.

### Our First Responsibility

"I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help; I hope in Your word. My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word." - Psalm 119:147-148

Briefly, the way to escape religion as a front is to make it a fount. See to it that we pray more than we preach and we will never preach ourselves out. Stay with God in the secret place longer than we are with men in the public place and the fountain of our wisdom will never dry up. Keep our hearts open to the inflowing Spirit and we will not become exhausted by the outflow. Cultivate the acquaintance of God more than the friendship of men and we will always have abundance of bread to give to the hungry.

Our first responsibility is not to the public but to God and our own souls.

### Overcome Distractions

"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." - Matthew 6:6

Among the enemies to devotion none is so harmful as distractions.

Whatever excites the curiosity, scatters the thoughts, disquiets the heart, absorbs the interests or shifts our life focus from the kingdom of God within us to the world around us--that is a distraction; and the world is full of them. Our science-based civilization has given us many benefits but it has multiplied our distractions and so taken away far more than it has given.

The remedy for distractions is the same now as it was in earlier and simpler times, viz., prayer, meditation and the cultivation of the inner life. The psalmist said "Be still, and know," and Christ told us to enter into our closet, shut the door and pray unto the Father. It still works.

Distractions must be conquered or they will conquer us. So let us cultivate simplicity; let us want fewer things; let us walk in the Spirit; let us fill our minds with the Word of God and our hearts with praise. In that way we can live in peace even in such a distraught world as this. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.

#### Prayer Changes the Man

"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it." - John 14:13-14

In all our praying, however, it is important that we keep in mind that God will not alter His eternal purposes at the word of a man.

We do not pray in order to persuade God to change His mind. Prayer is not an assault upon the reluctance of God, nor an effort to secure a suspension of His will for us or for those for whom we pray. Prayer is not intended to overcome God and "move His arm."

God will never be other than Himself, no matter how many people pray, nor how long nor how earnestly.

God's love desires the best for all of us, and He desires to give us the best at any cost. He will open rivers in desert places, still turbulent waves, quiet the wind, bring water from the rock, send an angel to release an apostle from prison, feed an orphanage, open a land long closed to the gospel. All these things and a thousand others He has done and will do in answer to prayer, but only because it had been His will to do it from the beginning. No one persuades Him.

What the praying man does is to bring his will into line with the will of God so God can do what He has all along been willing to do. Thus prayer changes the man and enables God to change things in answer to man's prayer.

#### Take Time to Listen

"The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for Your commandments." - Psalm 119:130-131

The Quakers had many fine ideas about life, and there is a story from them that illustrates the point I am trying to make. It concerns a conversation between Samuel Taylor Coleridge and a Quaker woman he had

met. Maybe Coleridge was boasting a bit, but he told the woman how he had arranged the use of time so he would have no wasted hours. He said he memorized Greek while dressing and during breakfast. He went on with his list of other mental activities--making notes, reading, writing, formulating thoughts and ideas--until bedtime.

The Quaker listened unimpressed. When Coleridge was finished with his explanation, she asked him a simple, searching question: "My friend, when dost thee think?"

God is having a difficult time getting through to us because we are a fast-paced generation. We seem to have no time for contemplation. We have no time to answer God when He calls.

### Believing Prayer

Men may, and often do, pray without faith (though this is not true prayer), but it is not thinkable that men should have faith and not pray. The biblical formula is The prayer of faith. Prayer and faith are here bound together by the little preposition of, and what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Faith is only genuine as it eventuates into prayer. When Tennyson wrote 'More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of,' he probably uttered a truth of vaster significance than even he understood.

While it is not always possible to trace an act of God to its prayer-cause, it is yet safe to say that prayer is back of everything that God does for the sons of men here upon earth. One would gather as much from a simple reading of the Scriptures. What profit is there in prayer? Much every way. Whatever God can do faith can do, and whatever faith can do prayer can do when it is offered in faith. An invitation to prayer is, therefore, an invitation to omnipotence, for prayer engages the Omnipotent God and brings Him into our human affairs. Nothing is impossible to the man who prays in faith, just as nothing is impossible with God. This generation has yet to prove all that prayer can do for believing men and women.

### Teach Me to Listen

Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears." - 1 Samuel 3:10

Lord, teach me to listen. The times are noisy and my ears are weary with the thousand raucous sounds which continuously assault them. Give me the spirit of the boy Samuel when he said to Thee, "Speak, for thy servant heareth." Let me hear Thee speaking in my heart. Let me get used to the sound of Thy voice, that its tones may be familiar when the sounds of earth die away and the only sound will be the music of Thy speaking voice. Amen.

### The First Lesson to Learn

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." - Matthew 26:41

To pray successfully is the first lesson the preacher must learn if he is to preach fruitfully; yet prayer is the hardest thing he will ever be called upon to do and, being human, it is the one act he will be tempted to do less frequently than any other. He must set his heart to conquer by prayer, and that will mean that he must first conquer his own flesh, for it is the flesh that hinders prayer always.

Almost anything associated with the ministry may be learned with an average amount of intelligent application. It is not hard to preach or manage church affairs or pay a social call; weddings and funerals may be conducted smoothly with a little help from Emily Post and the Minister's Manual. Sermon making can be learned as easily as shoemaking--introduction, conclusion and all. And so with the whole work of the ministry as it is carried on in the average church today.

But prayer--that is another matter. There Mrs. Post is helpless and the Minister's Manual can offer no assistance. There the lonely man of God must wrestle it out alone, sometimes in fasting and tears and weariness untold. There every man must be an original, for true prayer cannot be imitated nor can it be learned from someone else.

Revival: Don't Substitute Praying for Obeying

So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams." - 1 Samuel 15:22

Have you noticed how much praying for revival has been going on of late-and how little revival has resulted?

Considering the volume of prayer that is ascending these days, rivers of revival should be flowing in blessing throughout the land. That no such results are in evidence should not discourage us; rather it should stir us to find out why our prayers are not answered.

I believe our problem is that we have been trying to substitute praying for obeying; and it simply will not work.

Prayer is never an acceptable substitute for obedience. The sovereign Lord accepts no offering from His creatures that is not accompanied by obedience. To pray for revival while ignoring or actually flouting the plain precept laid down in the Scriptures is to waste a lot of words and get nothing for our trouble.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; show me any wicked way that needs to be corrected in my own life before revival can come. I'm praying for revival; help me to also be obeying. Amen.

Praying Woman

It might be a humbling experience for some of us men to be allowed to see just how much of lasting spiritual value is being done by the women of the churches. As in the days of His flesh, Christ still has devout women who follow Him gladly and minister unto Him. The masculine tendency to discount these "elect ladies" does not speak too well for the male members of the spiritual community. A little humility might better become us, and a bit of plain gratitude as well. If prayer is (as we believe it is) an integral part of the total divine scheme of things and must be done if the will of God is to be done, then the prayers of the thousands of women who meet each week in our churches is of inestimable value to the kingdom of God. More power to them, and may their number increase tenfold.

Let us beware, as men, however, that we do not fall into the weak habit of depending upon the women of the church to do our praying for us. If our work prevents us, as it normally does, from having prayer meetings during the day, let us make up for it in some way and see to it that we pray as much as we should.

## Chapter nine

### In Everything by Prayer

"O Lord God, Thy wisdom has been poured into my heart, creating such a longing for Thee that nothing in this world can satisfy." - A.W. Tozer

I want to talk about prayer and in the 4th chapter of Philippians, the sixth verse. "Be careful for nothing," that is, have no care about anything, "but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." So I'm going to show this phrase in everything by prayer, and in doing it, I will not be doing violence to the scriptures because what it actually says is, "in everything by prayer and supplication," the supplication is a form of prayer, "with thanksgiving," the thanksgiving is a form of prayer, "let your request be made known," and letting your request be made known is a form of prayer.

So in everything by prayer is what the Holy Spirit said. Now this is a remarkable phrase and it is a key to the treasure house of God and all that God has is ours, but we are not enjoying all that God has either because we don't know it's ours or because we have not practiced in everything by prayer. Now we all have an unailing technique for spiritual success and this motto, "in everything by prayer," is one that might well be on the cornerstone of every church building, and it ought to be in every pulpit, and it ought to be in every boardroom.

In fact, for the average boardroom, I would suggest four of them, one for each wall, large enough so that no matter which way a board member was looking, he'd see it, "in everything by prayer." Now I don't know whether my method is a good one or not, but the brother is going to speak on absolutely nothing and I whispered to somebody that I do that myself frequently, but I don't know whether the getting into the philosophy of things, but I like to do it that way, and so I want to show you why this morning everything we do in God's church has to be done by prayer.

I want to show you why. Now it isn't simply that the Lord said it and now you believe it, but there's a reason why he said it. There's a reason for it being true. The reason is that there coexist two kingdoms: there is the kingdom of man and the kingdom of God. And these coexist and to some measure they mingle, but not too much. They touch, at any rate, and they live side by side with each other. And it's the kingdom of man into which we are born. When we're born and the doctor said it's a boy, it's a girl, we are born into the kingdom of man.

That's the exiled man who is in rebellion against God. That's fallen man. We were all born to fallen parents into a fallen society and became members of a fallen race by nature. And this, this fallen race, this, this race of man, they disagree an awful lot, but they're in agreement on certain things. You remember how Herod and Pilate had been enemies and then when they came to judging Jesus, they made themselves friends again. They were apart on certain political things, but they were together on this that they weren't going to have anything to do with Jesus.

And so in the world out there, we have the West against the East, and we have race against race, and we have political party against political party and all this kind of division, but those are local things. Actually, the human race agrees on one thing, the human race agrees on the basic principle that we call human self-sufficiency. We believe that we are sufficient under ourselves. People believe that. Oh, you occasionally will find the poor little chap with no chin, henpecked and distressed who goes about not

thinking much of himself, but if you'll press him and press him, you will learn after a while that he has quite a high opinion of himself and his ability, and if he doesn't have it himself, he does have of humanity and he believes in what they call the instinctive wisdom of the race.

Now, it's a strange thing that the great philosophers, I'm thinking particularly now of Emerson, talk about the instinctive wisdom of the race whereas God talks about the folly of the human race. God says that we are fools and where men say we're wise men. God says that we act like foolish children and know not as much as an ox knows, for he knows his home and knows how to come back, and a bird knows its nest and knows how to fly home, but we don't know our spiritual home and we don't know the hand that feeds us and we're not sufficient unto ourselves.

And then we believe in the soundness of moral judgments. We believe the human race believes that there, there may be a little mistake here and there, and maybe a juvenile delinquent and a beatnik occasionally show up, but that for the most part, we know what is right and we believe in the soundness of our moral judgments. And then they believe in human righteousness, allowing for a few flaws. We believe in that human beings are right and good. I wrote something one time to the effect that, what did I say?

I don't remember how I worded it, but to the effect that people were bad, the world was bad, and a woman, a very intelligent woman, obviously from a letter, wrote me a very sharp letter and wanted to know what was the matter with me that I would make such a statement that the human race was bad. Didn't I know that they were conquering cancer? Didn't I know that they were conquering polio? Didn't I know that men were becoming brothers? Didn't I know that there were hospitals everywhere that we were taking care of the insane?

Didn't I know that we had children's asylums where children went and were cared for? Didn't I know that insane people were not driven out into the bushes as it used to be that were cared for? Didn't I know these things? Well, I don't know whether she was asking me merely rhetorical questions or whether she thought that I just had never been to school, but I did know those things but I still believe in the basic madness of the human race. I do know those things but I believe in the basic evil of the human race.

I came up from New York Friday night and sitting by to my left was a man who told me, a middle-aged man who said he'd been 30 years a newspaper editor in the city in Canada. And we, I, you know, when you're up against a man like that, you're careful what you say but pretty soon I forgot that I was talking to a man that knew the world pretty well and we got the discussing politics and communism and religion. And I told him, he was very much distressed, he's a very fine gentleman who was very much distressed over world conditions, particularly over the breakdown of the home.

And I said to him, "Well, don't you know, don't you know that this is simply a proof of John Calvin's belief that in the total depravity of the human race?" And he said that he did. Now his name was Pat Kelly and he was an Anglican. He was an Anglican and I believe he said, if I recall, that he was the Chairman of the Red Cross, either Red Cross or Hatcher or Cancer Society of Canada. Anyway, he believed in that. He said, "I hope you won't think that I am too, that I'm too pessimistic."

And I said, "No, I've just written a book that's worse than that. It's just about as bad because I don't believe in humanity. I don't believe in the goodness of people unless God helps us and that God gets into us, or unless we get into the kingdom of God, people are not good by nature, they're bad." But we don't believe that. Humanity doesn't believe that. People don't believe it. And there's man's kingdom filled with the subjects of Satan and it's organized and it's implemented by science, and it has in its favor history and

familiarity and visible success, and it is all the flesh, and it's from the flesh, and it's for the flesh, and it's dedicated to the flesh and to the passing world.

Now that's the kingdom of man into which you and I are born regardless of our race. That's the kingdom into which we're born, a fallen, hostile, alienated race. Then there's another kingdom and that is the kingdom of God, and that kingdom consists of recreated persons; persons who have been born again anew; persons who have made Christ their Lord and in whom Christ is honored; persons who have no confidence in fallen humanity; persons who have no confidence in the soundness of man's moral judgment but believe that left to himself man will always go wrong; persons who know that they can do nothing in themselves and have no confidence in the flesh or in their own strength; persons who trust in God alone to do any mortal work in them and through them.

These are called Christians, and they make up the true church of Christ of whatever denomination, but it's a different kingdom altogether. There's the kingdom of man and there is the kingdom of God and those two kingdoms coexist, and sometimes they spill over into each other as water spills over into the boat and has to be bailed out. They get together and I suppose there isn't any church anywhere that is totally, totally, totally committed to the kingdom of God to a point where everything is done by God.

I suppose there will be a little bit of inflation, a little bit of old Adam, and a little bit of the kingdom of this world get into all churches. I've never heard of one that didn't have a little of it. Then there are churches that have almost totally given themselves over to the kingdom of man, and their philosophy is man's philosophy, their beliefs are man beliefs, and their viewpoint is man's viewpoint, and they go the way man goes, and they live the way man lives, and yet they call themselves churches.

Then there are such churches as this where an effort at least is made, that the majority of what we do should be divine, and the majority should be on the side of the kingdom of God but where undoubtedly around the edges there are things that God is not in. And the business of a minister, and the business of elders and deacons and church members and Christians everywhere, is to keep the church and make the church just as pure as she can be and to keep all the kingdom of man out of her, and to keep her so replete with the kingdom of God that when you step into the fellowship of the saints, you step into a divine fellowship, a fellowship dedicated to the proposition that all men are bad until they are made good by the blood of the Lamb, dedicated to the proposition that we're on the wrong road until we find the road home to God through the cross, dedicated to the belief that it's only God in us that can do any mortal work.

And so we in the kingdom of God have for our motto, "in everything by prayer," because, you see, we've already admitted we can't do anything. We've already admitted there's nothing in human muscle that can do the work of God. We've already admitted there's nothing in the human brain that can think the word of God. We're all a work of God. We've already admitted that there's nothing in human nature good enough to build into the temple of holiness which God is raising in his universe.

We already have admitted that, how then can we do? What shall we do? Find a monastery somewhere and hide ourselves away? No. We're to be an active work but we're to do it by prayer, in everything by prayer. Now let me show you the contrast between the kingdom of man and the kingdom of the world, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man, and then you see how, locate yourself, locate this church, locate me, locate us. We'll locate ourselves in this. Now the world says in everything by money.

Just have money enough, you can do anything, everything. Money talks and money opens doors, and money, money, always money. The more money the better we get on. Always money. Christ hadn't a

dime but we say money, if we had more money, but the church says in everything by prayer. The church says we're wise enough to know that money is needed in the kingdom of God and that God uses it and says let everybody lay up in store on the first day of the week. We know that and we know that when we give, God takes it and blesses it.

He has spread abroad, he has given to the poor, scattered abroad. He's given to the poor. He's righteousness remaineth forever. We know that. We know that in the kingdom of God, God uses money but he uses it only because everything is done by prayer. But if you have money without prayer, you have a great curse on you. I believe the greatest curse could happen to your own church would be for somebody to will us \$100,000 and the Lord not to raise up praying people commensurate with it.

If God will raise up men and women commensurate with the gift, and I wouldn't hesitate to accept \$100,000 and put it to work, but to get money without prayer and you have a curse. Yet prayer without money, it's amazing what God can do in where you'll find money, amazing where you'll find money. So the world says in everything by money, and then churches rise up and they're dedicated to the kingdom of this world without knowing it, the kingdom of man and so they crowd around the church the way man runs the church.

One man said, he said, "I'm a such and such," that is, he was a certain denomination which I'll try not to divulge, but he said, "There hasn't been anybody interested in my soul in all these years." He said, "Nobody." He said, "I make my pledge yearly and I send in my check monthly and nobody has bothered me in years and I never go to church." Why don't you go to church? "I never go to church because nobody is interested in me." He said, "they're only interested in my pledge and my check."

And he said, "I see to it that I get my pledge and my check in and that takes care of my religious responsibility." Now he was sarcastic in that. He didn't believe it but he knew the church believed it. Church God, he checked, and that's what they wanted and he could stay home. The pastor could preach to his empty seat because the check was in. I'll take the people, you can have the checks. I'll take the people, God's people, God's good, loving people. I love the people. But you know, I find that if you get the fish, you get the coin and you get the fish and there will be a coin in his mouth.

And if you get the sheep, he'll have wool on his back. So it isn't a choice between getting the people and getting the money because if you get people you get the money. The point is if you go after the money and don't care about the people, we're hirelings and not shepherds. And the church that only wants somebody's money is no church at all. It's running after the principles of the kingdom of man. And then the world says in everything by social prestige. I flipped the radio on last night after I'd gone to bed.

I have little radio. I don't listen in the daytime to it, but at night I sometimes do, often do. And somebody was being interviewed. Zsa Zsa Gabor was her name. I don't know whether you know Zsa Zsa or not, but she was being interviewed and I listened awhile to what Zsa Zsa had to say and everything by social prestige. Get up there, get up there and get to know somebody and they say it's not what you know but who you know. Get to know people, big shots. Well, I have always felt that social prestige won't do it.

Christ was born in a manger and Peter was a fisherman and John was a fisherman, and Levi was a despised tax collector, and the early church came up out of people that didn't amount to very much. Not many, not many are wise, not many are learned, not many are rich. Not many. Few, but not many. The early church was born up out of the lower stratum of the strata of society and not out of the higher strata. She came up from the common people and the people who did miracles and went about everywhere

doing miracles were common people.

And some of our modern critics, our modern scholars shake their heads over Peter's Greek and they'd say Peter's Greek wasn't so good. They say it wasn't anything like Paul's Greek. No, it wasn't so good Greek, but he managed to write some epistles that have blessed a few million people down the centuries and he managed to preach a sermon that converted 3,000, and he managed to do a few other things and yet his Greek wasn't so good. I suppose that if he had been more proficient in the Greek, he would not have had one ounce of power more than he had because everything was done by prayer.

It was not by social prestige but by prayer. And then in everything by publicity. I sometimes tremble to think that my son is now head of a publicity, a public relations society. Public relations. Well, they're talking about getting a Bureau of Public Relations in the Christian Missionary Alliance. Pure public relations. I don't even think I know what that means. I don't really know. You go out and stand on the street corner and preach Christ to the passing crowd, you have public relations.

You preach Christ to the people you work with and that's public relations. Be decent to your neighbor and that's public relations. Behave yourself and obey the law and that's public relations. Live as a Christian should and that's public relations. But I don't think we need a Bureau of Public Relations. I don't think we need somebody who's sitting back at the desk deciding how he can make everybody like him and win friends and influence people for the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Now brethren, what we need is the power of God and let the public think what they will and if we have the power of God on us and live like Christians regardless of what the world says. I don't care what the world thinks of me. I want to stand well with God, but I stand well with God, I'm likely to stand well with his best people, and after that I'm not much concerned. But the world says public relations, we ought to have a Bureau of Public Relations. I went to a church when like my wife and I went there before we were married, went there, continued there after we were married for awhile until I began to pray, and it was a great church, really great church.

Oh, they used to pray and then testify, and sing, and the power of God was there, and would come a Communion service, kneel down to take Communion, and I've seen them break into tears and break into laughter along the altar and the joy of God was on the place and the little church was packed full and we were having great times. Then something happened and they had a tremendous church row and the pastor was thrown out and the devil was voted in. And then do you know what they did next?

They established a Bureau for Public Relations, and we used to get literature from them, the Such-and-such Bureau of Public Relations. Imagine it when they grieve the Holy Ghost so he couldn't bless them, then they felt they should do something to keep themselves in good with the public. Scripture says in everything by prayer not in everything by money, and everything by prayer not in everything by social prestige, in everything by prayer not in everything by publicity, and everything by committees.

Hey, nowadays I claim that there's never one hour of the day or night from the beginning of spring to the last of winter of next year that there isn't some committee, alliance committee up in the air somewhere floating around. You know, we just try to do everything by committees. Something goes wrong, we get a committee together. The committee, said Vance Havner, is a company of the incompetent chosen by the unwilling to do the unnecessary. And we have these expensive committees floating around, you know, and just one fella, the Holy Ghost had come on one man, he could make a decision and say, "Do it this way."

Bang, and it's done, you know, and he can go about his business, that they have to sit around and talk for hours about trifles. Proper half an hour about whether to take a 15- or 17-minute coffee break in a religious office. They say they have to have it to relax and everybody knows coffee doesn't relax you. It does exactly the opposite. I drink it, but I know it doesn't relax me. Everything by committees. I am for one more committee. I would like to see a committee form for the abolition of all committees, or at least a little while.

Now you've gotta have my suppose there. You're like cleaning house and scrubbing the dog and doing things you get gotta do, you don't like it but it's necessary, and I suppose there's got to be committees to the end of time. They had them in the Bible all down the years and we've got them now, but the point is if we realize that a committee could cut its time down one-half if it prayed more. Moody said that a man prayed in public, the length of time a man prayed in public was sure to be in inverse proportion to the length of time he prayed in private.

If he prayed a long time in private, he made his public prayer short, but if he was short in private, he was long in public, and I believe that the committee meetings that run endlessly are simply indicating that they haven't prayed enough, and we pray more, we can talk less. And then in everything by business methods. We do trying to do the work of the Holy Ghost after the technique of modern businessmen. Won't work. In everything by prayer. Everything by education, they say now.

What we need is a more educated clergy, more educated ministry. Well, I believe in education. I have said that many times. I believe in education and if you don't get it in school, you ought to get it in some way or other. There are books everywhere. You can go down here and \$25 you can buy yourself enough good books to get yourself an education in some fields, and you can get it in a year's time if you'll read. But I have noticed that when a denomination starts to backslide, they always start to elevate their standards academically and the less we have of the Holy Ghost, the more we have to know about Plato and Aristotle, call that being acquainted with contemporary theology.

I think that we ought to be acquainted with the ancient theology of Moses, Isaiah, David, Daniel, Paul, Peter, John and the rest, and let the contemporary fellas kick, kick, kick the football around because always there is a bunch of self-conscious intellectuals who are busy kicking around a current football having to do with theology. Nowadays, you know, with neo-orthodoxy and neo-evangelicalism, those are big, long words that don't mean very much really. But in everything by prayer says the Holy Ghost, says Paul.

In everything by prayer and he made good on it. And then the world says in everything by compromise. I met a man not long ago, a Canadian man who says that he is a goodwill ambassador for industry between the United States and Canada. I pressed him to know what he did. Well, he said, "I go from the United States to Canada, back and forth all the time, from city to city, representing Canadian industry in the United States to keep us in harmony. I'd like that job. At least it's a nice job, it's trying to get harmony between the two.

He said this odd little thing. He said, "The difficulty is to make the two countries see that they're foreign to each other." He said, "They don't act as if they were foreign countries." He said, "They want to act alike." And he said, "You can't do that under law." And I said, "Pretty nice way to be, though, yes?" And he said, "It's a nice way to be socially," but he says, "under law they've got their two countries but they're one socially in friendships." Well, that's a good thing, I suppose, to make compromises where you can but in the kingdom of God compromising is a pretty deadly business.

And the church, as long as the church goes out to the world and follows the world's ways, the church says compromise where you can, compromise everywhere and take in anybody. I don't think there's a gangster anywhere from San Francisco to Long Island but what could join some church in the United States. I don't know about Canada, but I suppose they're about the same. They could get in somehow or other, you know. If you smile and give them a check and dress well, comb your hair nicely if you have any, they'll take you in.

They'll take you in. Nobody asks any questions. Compromise is a curse and everything by compromise. Try to get along with people. Let the church get along with the world. The church in the days of her power never got along with the world and the world never got along with the church. In the days of her weakness, she gets along with the church and the church uses her like a cat's paw. A politician wants to get elected, so it makes love to the pastors hoping the pastor will be silly enough to tell his congregations that they ought to vote for the big lug.

I wouldn't vote for him if he wrote me a letter. Just the fact he wrote me a letter I wouldn't vote for him. Trying to use the church. The church. Isn't to be. Used rather than the church is to serve her generation by. The will of God that. She'll decide how she's to serve her generation. The world was decided for her. Well, the truth is you can't delegate prayer. Now there's some things you can delegate. I can delegate my singing. For instance, I can have man Maccracken seeing my photos for me because I can't sing solo.

But I can't delegate my prayer. Nobody else can do my praying for me and if I'm unconscious. Then you know your life. Then for somebody come grateful if you can't pray for. Yourself, but normally. But then you play and will do the practical thing. You pray and I'll, I'll sing. You pray, and I'll give you play, and I'll entertain missionaries. You play and I'll teach or so or serve. You pay and I'll do the practical things. That is a that is a deadly smear. If you cannot and will not play, God will accept your sewing.

If you can and will not play, God won't accept your son. If you cannot and will not play, God won't accept your. Entertaining people. Garland accept your money if you can order. Will not pray. It is prayer that gives power to all these other things. Singing, giving, entertaining, teaching, sewing, working, serving, those are all good things. Means if we set them aflame by prayer. But if they try to do them without pain, with hands stumbling, the. Day of Jesus Christ. Now the prefix test of any church is going to be prayer.

We can easily deceive ourselves. But our purity and our power and our spirituality and our Holiness will parallel our prayer. If you want to have a graph that businessmen love so well, and politicians if you were to take a graph and put it up here and have two lines across cossett zigzag lines, one new mark. The other one? Newmark spirituality, including purity. And power and holiness. Little alley prayer. You find those two graphs, those two lines on the. Graph they did back a little but.

They parallel each other almost perfectly. Because Melody will be dependent upon the right, do everything by prayer or whether I think. I can do it. I'd like to say this and I hope it'll be taken right. But what it is? Or? Not I'm going to say it. That no one had any scriptural right. That each. A Sunday school class. Who doesn't do it by prayer? He is in the poem. And he ought. To be a teaching man. Because no man can teach anything that he isn't. He may try to teach some truth.

But it won't do him any good, and it may not do anybody else any good. The teacher ought to be a praying person. No, not at the head. Of department in Sunday school unless. He's a praying person. No, not to seek the comfort others unless they're praying person. No, not to serve, even in the humblest capacity in any church, unless they're praying person. No one ever ought to serve on the board. And there's the

praying person. Nobody who doesn't practice prayer, at least. In some degree of regularity.

Ever should accept the job in any churches, Deacon or elder. Even then, he'll either pick because they're spiritual people, and if they're not paying, people are. Not spiritual people. I think it is a privacy and a tragedy. That in some of our. Alliance churches, the women do the praying and the. Men do the bossing. And then we sit around the boardroom and decide how the church is to go, and the women kneel in the prayer room. And ask God Almighty, bless, it won't work. Normally I never should sit and discuss the affairs of the church, a whole body.

Unless he's a praying man. If he hasn't prayed, he has no right. To make decisions. For us, man, I'd like to say this. In our favor. The women have the power bands. But there are a. Lot of men who? Pray, and we don't know they're praying because they. Don't belong to prayer banners. So let's not divide between the two sexes and say the women do all the. Praying they don't go at all. I know some godly men who do some praying too, and I have no doubt. That we have prayed, meaning plenty of them in our on our boards, in this church.

But I merely lay down over here, which is good, not only there, but it's good all. Over the world. Wherever the Church of Christ is found. That if you're. Going to serve your house? The prayer at your service will be with hands double. Everything you do must be done by prayer. I'm not a praying man. My preaching won't do much good. I'm not a praying man. My writing won't do much good, they said about pair grew the great feet. Google said about him. For the leading pair of glues, ratings are so consistently and habitually present and help so many people is.

The pair glue refuses, absolutely refuses to write anything. Until he's blessed himself, so he wants the oil God on his flowing or even touch a pen. I think that's beautiful. They said the by Andrew Murray was. It or George. One of the two. I forgotten which. One of them said, I will not enter the pulpit. I will not enter the public drive. Said if I. Am to speak anywhere I wait on. And see Philip at the Grace of God. Flowing in my. Solo, before I dare to address anybody. Old friends.

If we want this church to be. A rich, fruitful. Gone church. We're going to have to accept the Holy Ghost. Philosophy in everything by prayer we're. Going to have to accept the Holy Ghost. Techniques in everything by prayer. We're going to have to accept it as. A rule for us from everybody. From the newest convert to the oldest St in the church in everything by prayer. I promise you. My friend, your friend and our brother Robert Gray and I will take this as our motto. And will never.

Try to throw in a wait around. But will in everything. Pray, pray, pray. With the power of God and the grace of God and the Holy Spirit of God, maybe upon what we're trying. To do will. You go along with this in there.

Appendix I:

Various Quotes on Prayer

"Some churches now advertise courses on how to pray. How ridiculous! That is like giving a course in how to fall in love." - A.W. Tozer

[Tozer was known for his quotable sermons and articles. He wrote with a punch and at times each line of his writing contained something important though at times expressed in pithy statements. Below is a collection of some quotes on the subject of prayer I have run across that will encourage and challenge

you.]

"Sometimes I go to God and say, 'God, if Thou dost never answer another prayer while I live on this earth, I will still worship Thee as long as I live and in the ages to come for what Thou hast done already.'"

"When we try to focus our thought upon One who is pure uncreated being we may see nothing at all, for He dwelleth in light that no man can approach unto. Only by faith and love are we able to glimpse Him as He passes by our shelter in the cleft of the rock."

"God answers our prayers not because we are good, but because He is good."

"[In our fast-paced life] we have no time for contemplation. We have no time to answer God when He calls."

"Distractions must be conquered or they will conquer us. So let us cultivate simplicity."

"I think that some of the greatest prayer is prayer where you don't say one single word or ask for anything."

"True prayer cannot be imitated nor can it be learned from someone else."

"Prayer at its holiest moment is the entering into God [where] miracles seem tame ... by comparison."

"Prayer is always in danger of degenerating into a glorified gold rush. How to get things from God occupies most [books]."

"God's loving motive is to bring us into total harmony with Himself so moral power & holy usefulness become ours."

"Nothing is complete in itself but requires something outside itself in order to exist."

"God formed us for His pleasure. He meant for us to see Him and live with Him and draw our life from His smile."

"We please God most, not by frantically trying to make ourselves good, but by throwing ourselves into His arms."

"God cannot be persuaded to alter His Word nor talked into answering selfish prayer."

"Prayer will become effective when we stop using it as a substitute for obedience."

"Acquaint thyself with God."

"Constantly practice the habit of gazing inwardly upon God."

"Wherever faith has eyes to see, there is a smiling presence of the Son of God."

"We are called to an everlasting preoccupation with God."

"God answers prayer for the same reason He saves people, goodness shown in grace."

"God's looking for people through whom He can do the impossible; what a pity we plan only things we can do ourselves."

"You can see God from anywhere if your mind is set to love and obey Him."

"The key to prayer is simply praying."

"Faith is not a once-done act, but a continuous gaze of the heart at the Triune God."

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/knowning-god-in-prayer-part-3/>

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