

The Sin of Prayerlessness

by Peter Taylor Forsyth

The worst sin is prayerlessness, which leads to overt sin and punishment, and results in spiritual dumbness and starvation.

Scripture: Psalm 145:18, Isaiah 64:7, Matthew 6:6, Luke 18:1, Philippians 4:6, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 4:2

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Spiritual Decay"

Description

Peter Taylor Forsyth emphasizes the critical importance of prayer in the Christian life, highlighting that prayerlessness is the worst sin that can lead to overt sins and spiritual inconsistencies. He explains that the lack of seeking God through prayer can result in being left by God and experiencing spiritual solitude. Forsyth stresses that living prayer is essential for maintaining humane relationships and producing sympathy towards others, as it connects us with God and fellow human beings. He warns that the sin of not desiring to pray can lead to spiritual deafness and starvation, ultimately causing spiritual decay and death.

Transcript

"There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee..."

(Isa. 64:7).

The worst sin is prayerlessness. Overt sin, or crime, or the glaring inconsistencies which often surprise us in Christian people are the effect of this, or its punishment. We are left by God for lack of seeking Him. The history of the saints shows often that their lapses were the fruit and nemesis of slackness or neglect in prayer. Their life, at seasons, also tended to become inhuman by their spiritual solitude. They left men, and were left by men, because they did not in their contemplation find God; they found but the thought or the atmosphere of God. Only living prayer keeps loneliness humane. It is the great producer of sympathy. Trusting the God of Christ, and transacting with Him, we come into tune with men. Our egoism retires before the coming of God, and into the clearance there comes with our Father our brother. We realize man as he is in God and for God, his Lover. When God fills our heart He makes more room for man than the humanist heart can find. Prayer is an act, indeed the act, of fellowship. We cannot truly pray even for ourselves without passing beyond ourselves and our individual experience. If we should begin with these the nature of prayer carries us beyond them, both to God and to man. Even private prayer is common prayer the more so, possibly as it retires from being public prayer.

Not to want to pray, then, is the sin behind sin. And it ends in not being able to pray. That is its punishment--spiritual dumbness, or at least aphasia, and starvation. We do not take our spiritual food, and so we falter, dwindle, and die. 'In the sweat of your brow ye shall eat your bread.' That has been said to be true both of physical and spiritual labor. It is true both of the life of bread and of the bread of life.

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