

THE BLESSING OF PRAYER

One of the greatest of blessings that is bestowed upon man is the blessing of prayer. In prayer man is allowed to pour out his heart's desires to the creator of the world. Not only does man have the opportunity to pour out his prayers to God, he can have the assurance that God will hear and answer his prayers. Many are the passages of scripture that assure us of the power of prayer. Jesus once said, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:6). Later in the same gospel account we read where Jesus said, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:22).

BUT, it must be understood that God does not hear and answer the prayers of just anyone! Many are the prayers that are uttered to God each and every day that never reach His ears. One need not call upon God the Father if God is not their Father. John wrote, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..." (I John 3:1). Not everyone is a son (child) of God. John records, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11-12). Though he was not an inspired speaker, the man that had been blind from birth and then healed by Jesus told the unbelieving Jews, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31). Notice that it is one who does the will of God whose prayers will be heard by God. Though this man was not inspired, he spoke the truth of the Law of Moses. Isaiah said, Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2). David, the sweet psalmist of Israel said, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth" (Psalm 34:15-16). Centuries later Peter wrote, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (I Pet. 3:12). Prayer is indeed a blessing. Don't miss out on it!

Robert

A FAILURE AS A WIFE

A couple once got married. They had no children, the husband worked hard each day providing for the needs of himself and his new bride. The wife did not work outside of the home which was just fine with the new bridegroom, for he wanted her to be free from that burden. After all, he provided for all that they needed anyway. However, it was not long before he saw that his lovely bride was not all that he had envisioned her to be. When he came in from a hard day at work, she had no meal prepared for him, no time to devote to helping him relax from his day at work and certainly no time for any intimacy. In fact, she left sometimes before he even got home and stayed out all night with her friends and often with lovers. She expected to be helped by her husband whenever she had a need of any kind, especially for money. However, she paid little or no attention to the needs of her husband. Now, I know that by now everyone agrees that this woman is an utter failure at being a wife. There is little or no doubt that in just about every case that something like this happened, the husband would get rid of that wife immediately. Now, I don't know of a specific situation just like the one above and something somewhat the same could be written about one being a failure as a husband.

The purpose of this story is seen when we come to realize that when we become Christians, we are married to Christ (Rom. 7:4). He is the bridegroom and we (the church) are His bride. Each child of God should examine themselves, in light of the picture of the one who was a failure as a wife, and determine if we too are failures when it comes to being the bride of Christ. Recognizing that we are to work to provide for our physical needs (I Thess. 3:10), yet there are responsibilities that we have as the bride of Christ. When there are "needs" (any work for the Lord that needs to be done), are we quick to fulfill our responsibilities or are we instead leaving it for others to do? All too often, members of the church expect the church to jump in when they are sick, in financial need or any of a host of other needs, but yet they feel no obligation to help when others are in need. All too often, when Christians are supposed to be assembling with the saints, they like the "failure wife" are "out with the guys where they have no business being. Even if it be some innocent excursion, forsaking the one to whom we are married equates one being a failure. Now, think about it a little and decide if you are a good and faithful wife! *Tillis*