

My Bible School

Lesson # 14

Pathway to God's Throne



“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” Matthew 21:22

Napoleon once asked, “Do you wish to find out the really sublime?” He answered his own question by saying, “Repeat the Lord's Prayer.” And apparently repeating it was all he did. But those who live that prayer have spiritual power.

It would be well for all of us to memorize the Lord's prayer and pray this prayer from the heart every day.

All our prayers need not be memorized, however. Prayer is really communion with God and therefore a personal and intimate experience with the Lord. Let us see if we cannot find the secret to this great power.



1: WHAT IS PRAYER?



Think of it in two ways:

1. The cry of a soul in need.

“Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.” Psalm 31:9.

**“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”
Psalm 46:1.**





A lifeguard on a bathing beach was asked how he could determine the cry of one really in distress, when there was so much babble and confusion. He said, "I can always tell that distinctive cry of real distress." God can also.

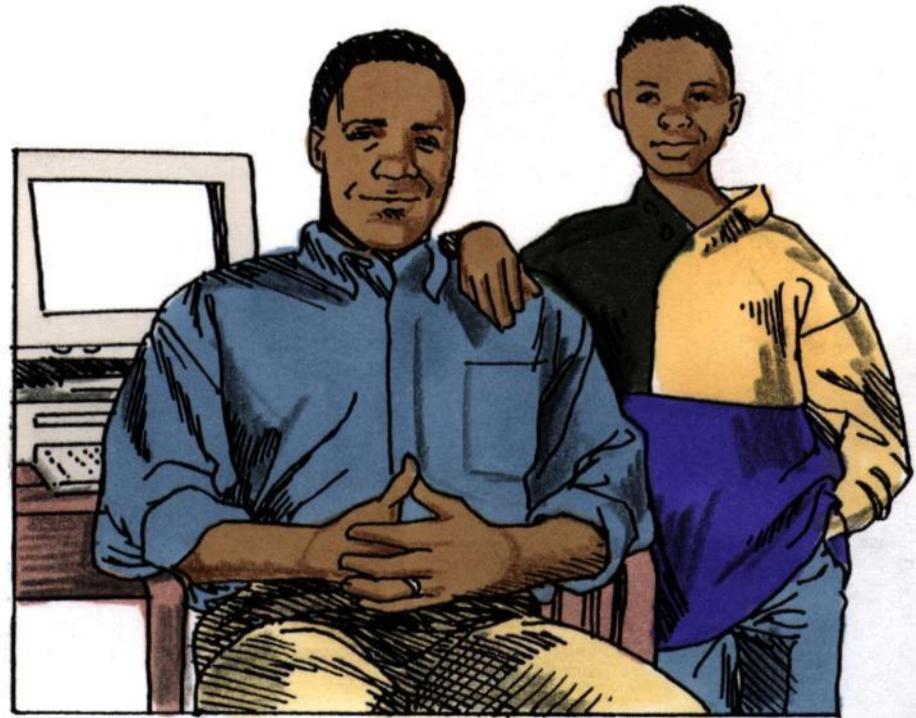
Many years ago, Sir John Gayre, Lord Mayor of London, was shipwrecked. Finding himself on a dangerous shore, he knelt in prayer. Then a lion approached him. Fervently the Christian prayed for help. The lion sniffed at him and then walked off. God had saved the mayor. However, such prayers, after the danger passes, generally fade away, and men forget God. Prayer is the cry of a soul in need, but it is much more than that.

2. The opening of the heart to God.

Real prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. It is not just asking for things. It isn't all talking on man's part or on God's part. It is some of each, and more. It may be communion in utter silence at times-just a sacred sense of His holy, presence. **“Be still, and know that I am God.”**
Psalm 46:10.



"As a boy," relates a minister, "I worked side by side with my father, my friend. I used to walk long distances with him. There were no words, but just the silent symphony of the souls of a man and a boy. timed by the tramp of feet and the kindly swish of trouser legs. The man, mayhap, was thinking of what the boy one day might be; the boy was holding the man a hero for what he already was. Silent prayer, I think, is something like that." God asks us to call Him Father; therefore we may freely come to Him with our problems and our joys.



“He said unto them. When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven.” Luke 11:2.

And since Jesus is the friend of sinners, He invites the most sinful to come to God through Him.

“The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say. Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.” Matthew 11:19.

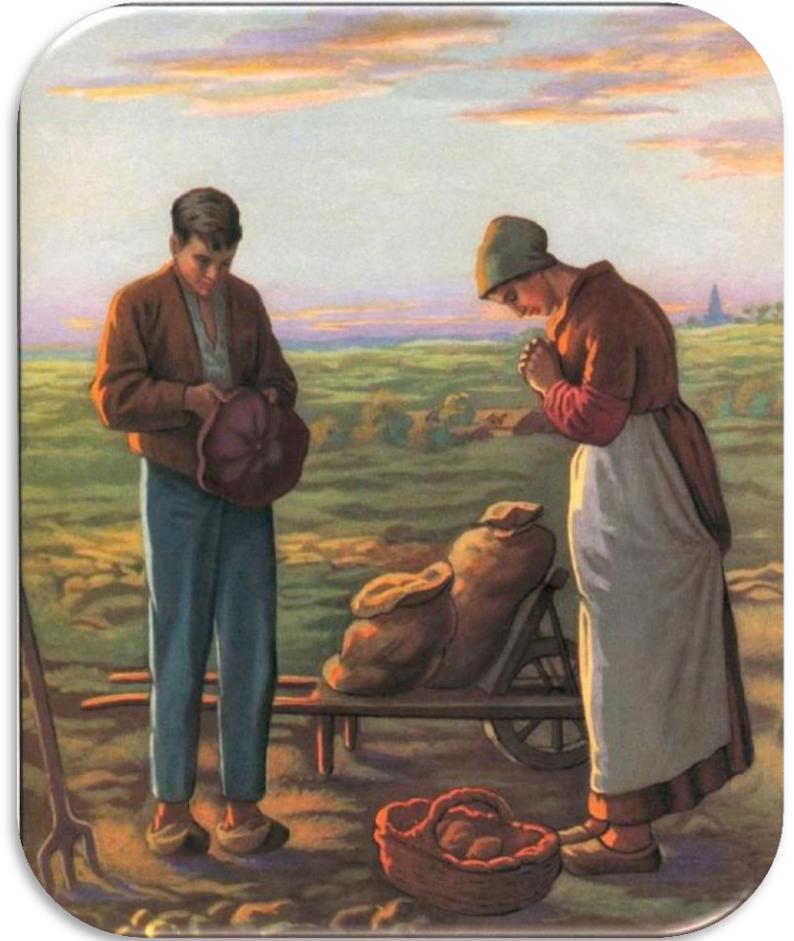
“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:15-16.

2: WHAT PRAYER IS NOT

Prayer is not an act of merit that earns God's favour. Jesus said:

“He . . . sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Matthew 5:45.

Prayer is not ostentation and show. It is not a set form of words for a set occasion recited to the accompaniment of spinning prayer wheels or moving beads. Prayer is communion with God, and may take place whenever and wherever the soul of man reaches out sincerely for his Creator.



3: WHY DO WE PRAY?

Four questions will help to find the answer:

1. Is it to give God information?

“O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.”

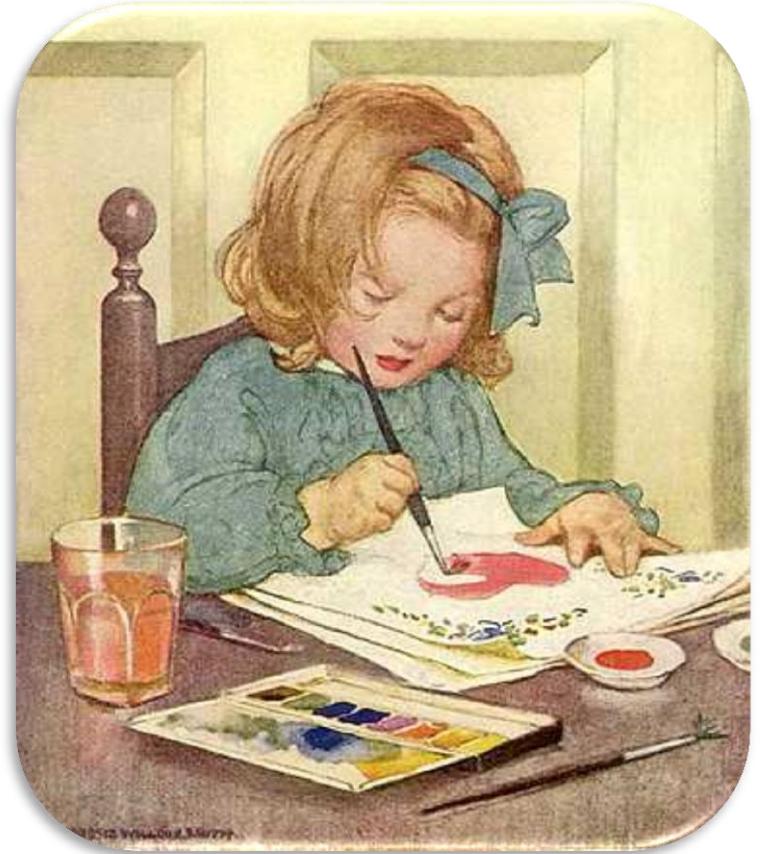
Psalm 139:1-4.

Does God need information? No! **“Your Father knowest what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him.” Matthew 6:8.** Still He never wearies of our coming to Him in sincere prayer. Unburden your heart. Take all the time you need. Don't rush. Think when you pray. If you were talking to the president of the United States, you would be alert, wouldn't you? Be alert and reverent when you talk to God, and your prayers will be heard in heaven.

2. Is it to make God willing?

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” Luke 11:13.

Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is taking hold of God's willingness: Prayer does not make Him willing, for He is always willing to help us.



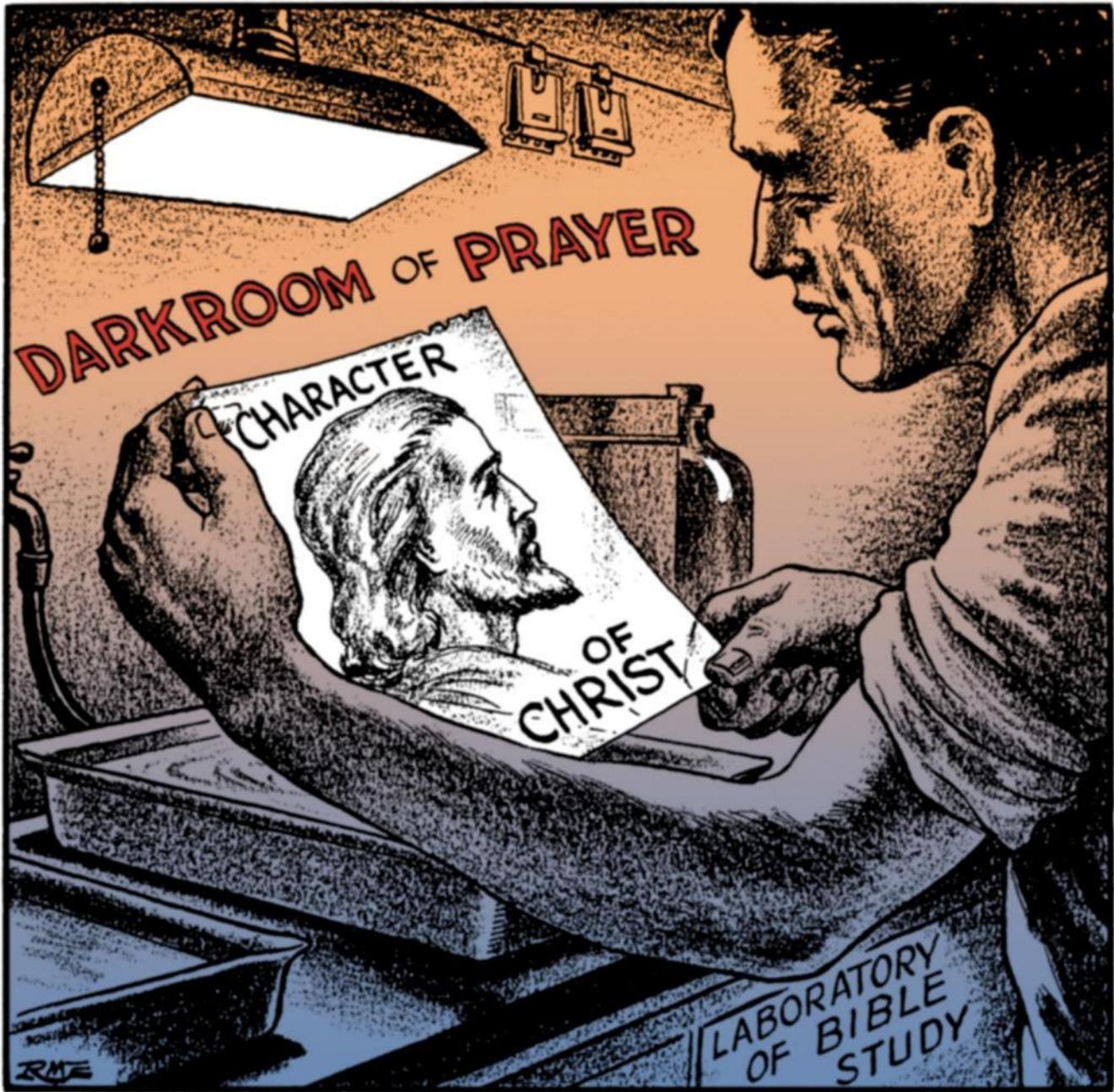
3. Is it to change God?

“I am the Lord, I change not.” Malachi 3:6.

Do we pray to change God? No! With Him **“is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” James 1:17.** God's promises are conditional; therefore answers vary. But God never changes. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. His invitation is, **“Come now, and let us reason together.” Isaiah 1:18.**

4. Is it to change us?

Prayer is the greatest unused force in the universe to change what most needs to be changed; men. We pray in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.



DARKROOM OF PRAYER

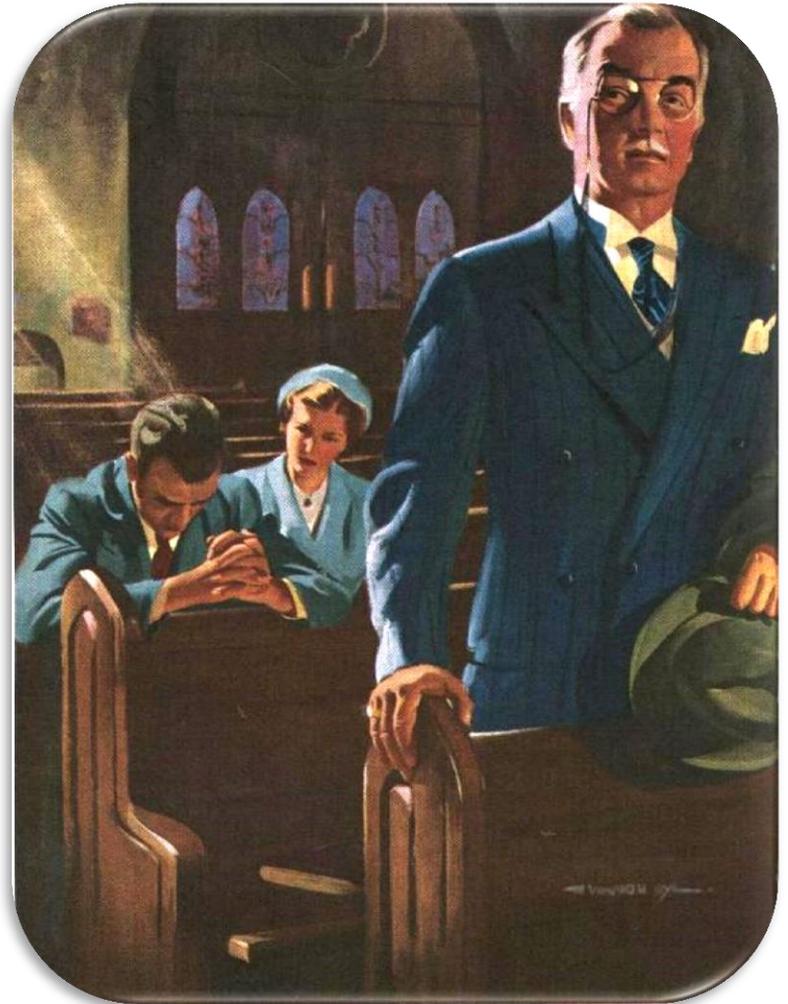
CHARACTER OF CHRIST

LABORATORY OF BIBLE STUDY

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4: WHAT IS OUR PART IN GETTING OUR PRAYERS ANSWERED?

Before you go one step further, read the story of the Pharisee and the publican in the Temple. (*Luke 18:10-14*). This will help you to see that sincerity of purpose means much with God. Now go and note carefully these eight points:

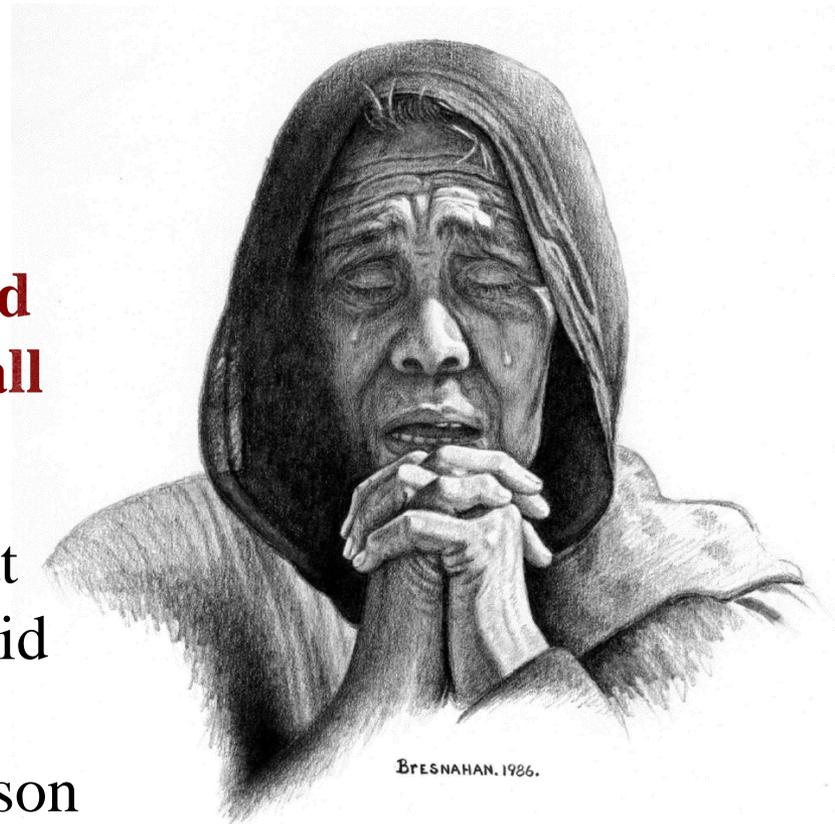


1. Recognize your need of God.

“I will pour water upon him that is thirsty.” Isaiah 44:3.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” Matthew 5:6.

We must recognize our need. That's what the publican did and what the pharisee did not do. A French nobleman said, “God would think twice before damning a person of my quality.” Such conceit short-circuits prayer.



SOME ARE IN TOUCH WITH JESUS -
OTHERS **THINK** THEY ARE.

"AS HE WENT
THE PEOPLE THROGDED
HIM" LUKE 8:42

FAITH AND HUMILITY
MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

SEE LUKE 8:44



2. Recognize God as your indispensable helper.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.” John 15:5.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” James 1:17.

As a man sentenced to death by the highest court looks to the governor as his only hope, so should we in all things look to God. It is only at the altar of God that we can kindle our tapers with divine fire.

A GOOD TIME FOR PRAYER

STORMS OF LIFE

GOD'S SUSTAINING GRACE

BUFFETING OF SATAN

"CALL UPON ME IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE: I WILL DELIVER THEE, AND THOU SHALT GLORIFY ME"

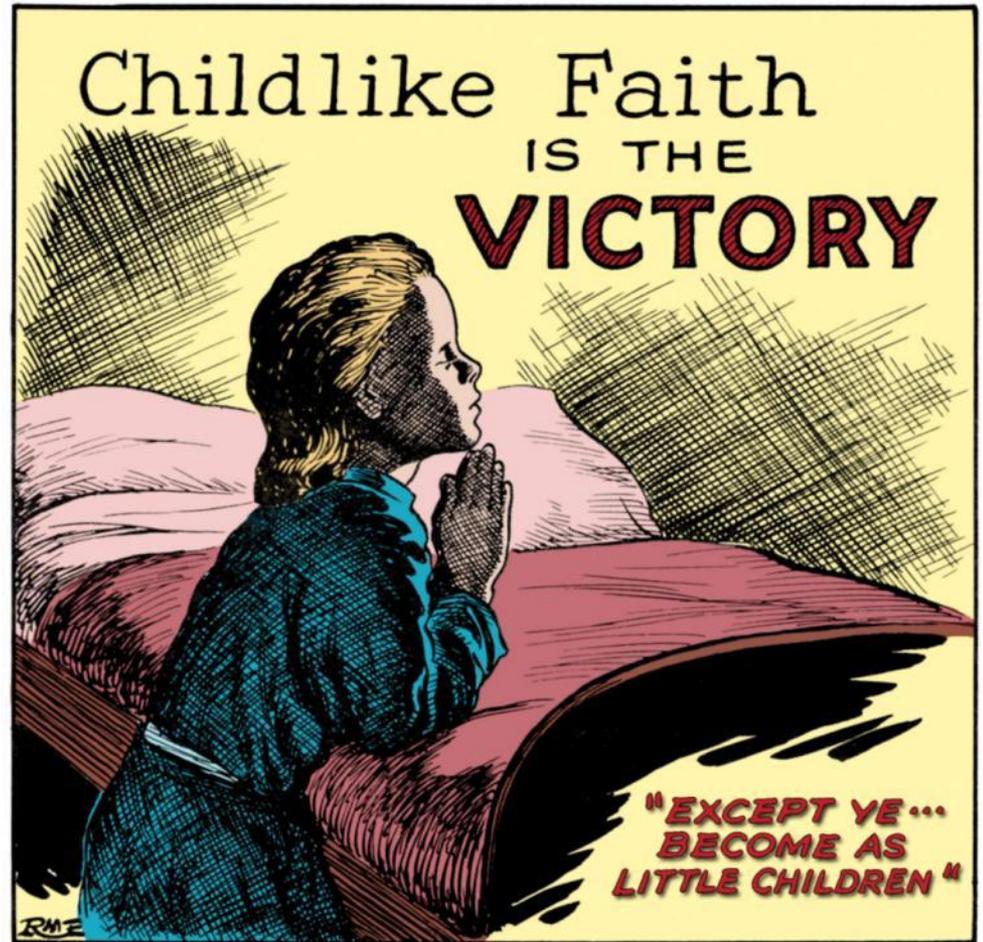
Ps. 50:15

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3. Pray in faith.

“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. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.” James 1:5-6.

To pray without faith is like plugging up a water pipe and then opening up the faucet. Nothing happens. Prayer without faith is like a key with no hand to turn it in the lock. Ask in faith.



4. Confess and forsake all your sins.

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

Proverbs 28:13.

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

Psalm 66:18.

Confess and forsake. We must not wait for feeling. We must act. Be specific with God. Israel found peace only when they said: **“We have added unto all our sins this evil. to ask us a king.”** 1

Samuel 12:19.

“Sin is the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:4. We must forsake sin, which is lawlessness. Obedience must be the rule of our lives. It is the fruit of true faith.

“Faith without works is dead.” James 2:20.

COMMUNION
WITH GOD

SPEAKING OF
IRON CURTAINS

INIQUITY



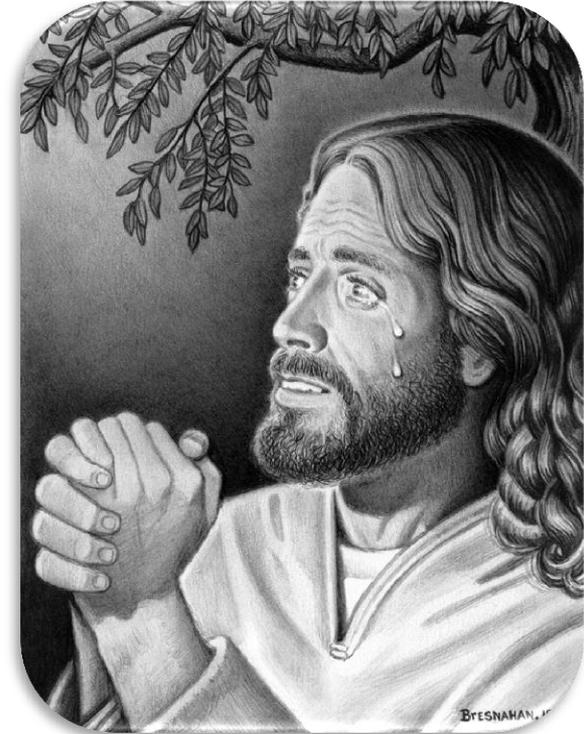
SEE ISA. 59:2

5. Pray according to God's will.

**“He went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”
Matthew 26:39.**

“We know not what we should pray for as we ought.” Romans 8:26.

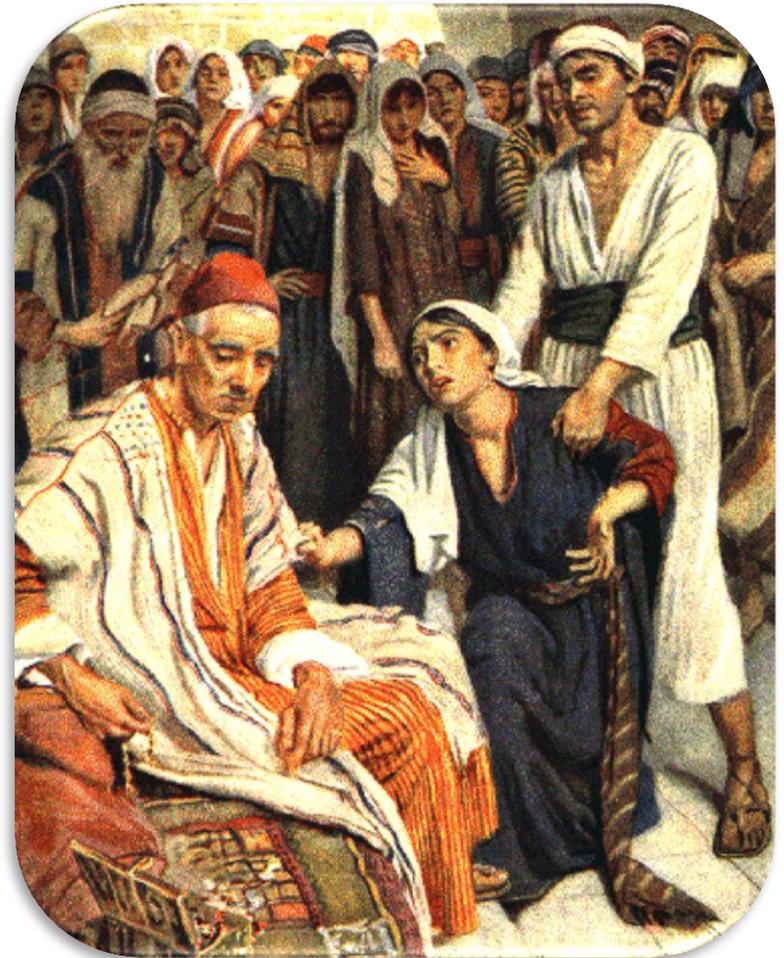
If it was fitting for Jesus to pray, Thy will be done," how much more appropriate for us. No wise parent will give a child everything he asks for. The answer sometimes is No; sometimes it is a substitute, as a rubber ball instead of scissors. And sometimes the answer may be, Not now; this is a postponement. Thus we must trust God.



6. Persevere with God.

Read Luke 18:1-8, the story of the importunate widow.

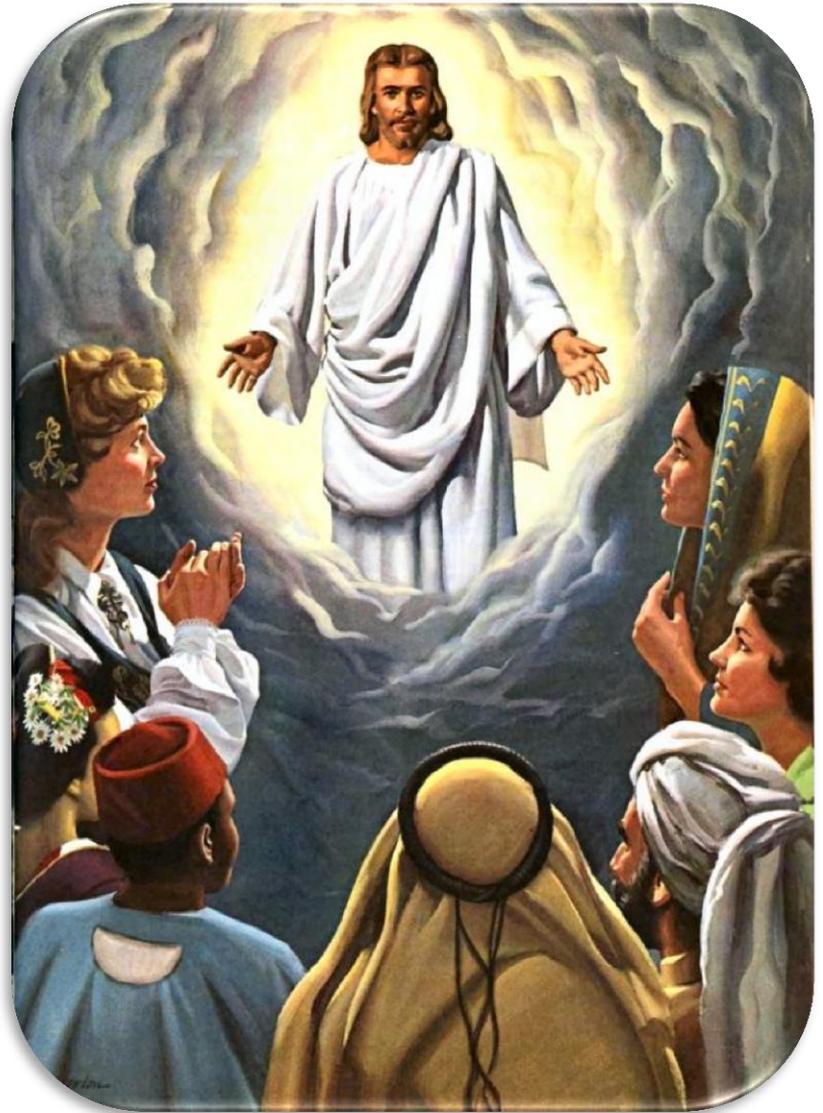
So many times we rush through the circle of prayer and scarcely remember what we prayed for. Perseverance in prayer is not so much urging our wills upon God as it is being “instant in prayer” keeping an attitude of prayer. Yet it does mean earnestness, as in the case of Elijah's praying for rain and sending his servant seven times to the hilltop to look for signs of rain.



7. Pray in Jesus' name.

“Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” John 14:13.

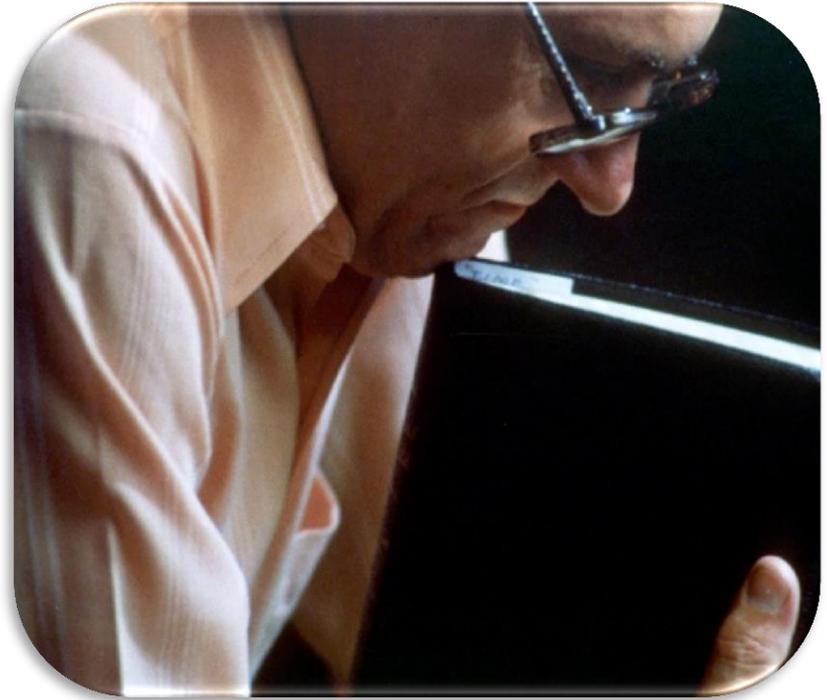
To pray in the name of Jesus is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works.



8. Listen as well as talk.

“I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.” Habakkuk 2:1.

Some preacher has said, “The prayer room is not so much the oratory room as the observatory room. Waiting for God to speak in prayer sometimes provides the only answer we need to our petitions.”



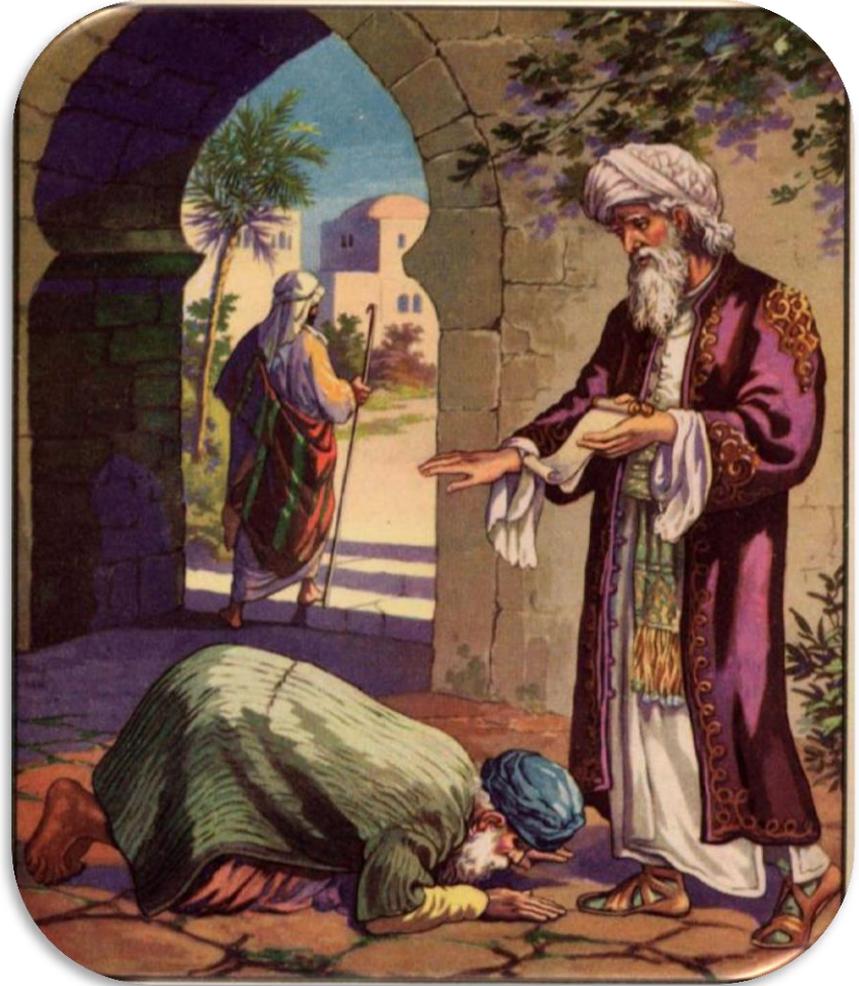
5: WHY ARE SOME PRAYERS NOT ANSWERED?

In order to have our prayers answered, we should remove all the obstacles that block the prayer channel. Think of these four things:

1. We must forgive others.

“If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Matthew 6:14-15.



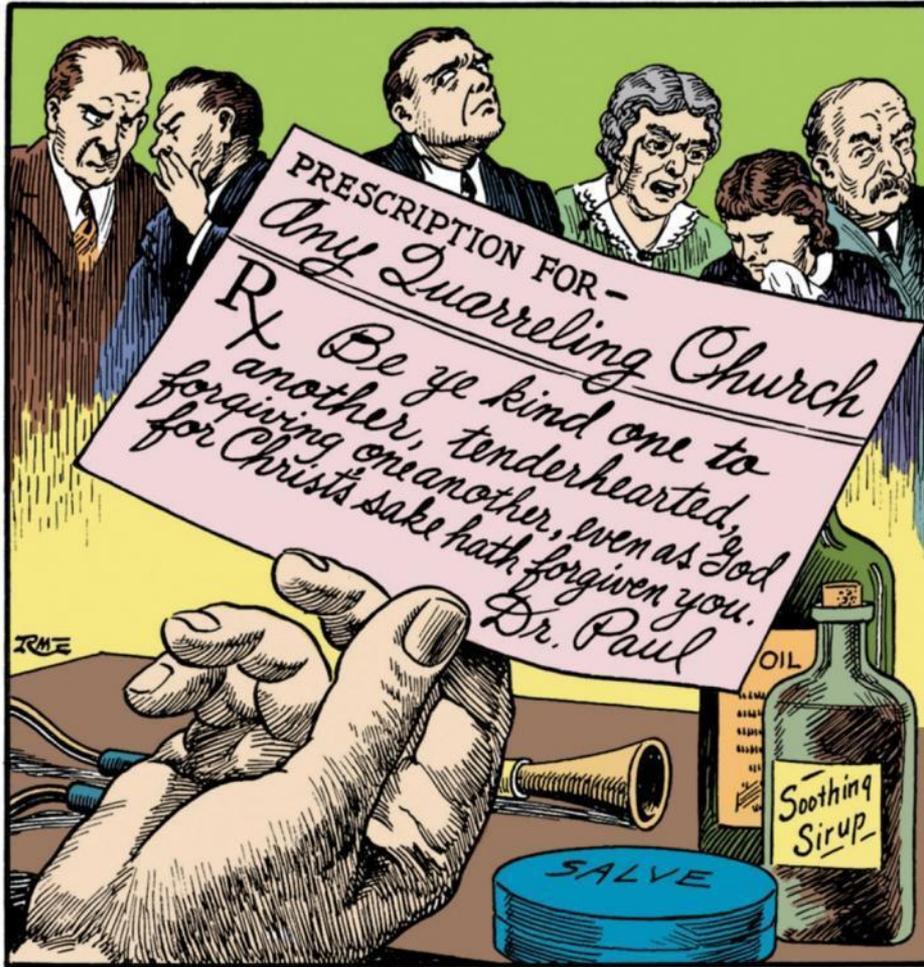
2. We must pray for others.

“The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.” Job 42:10.

A man whose prayer is always, “O Lord bless me,” can never become like God in character. We must have not only the inward look, but the outlook. John Knox prayed, “Lord, give me Scotland or I die.” He prayed for his enemies.

If we do not pray for those who despitefully use us, we shall surely despise them. Sincere prayer for them is essential for our own sakes.





3. We must confess our faults one to another.

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed.” James 5:16.

We must confess faults to others we have injured. This is simple decency. If you break a man's leg, do your best to fix it. If you break his heart, you are the only human being who can help patch it up. Do this now with kindness and words of sincerity.



4. We must restore anything taken by fraud or robbery.

“If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.” Ezekiel 33:15.

6: WHAT EXAMPLE OF PRAYER DID JESUS GIVE?

“In the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.”

Mark 1:35.

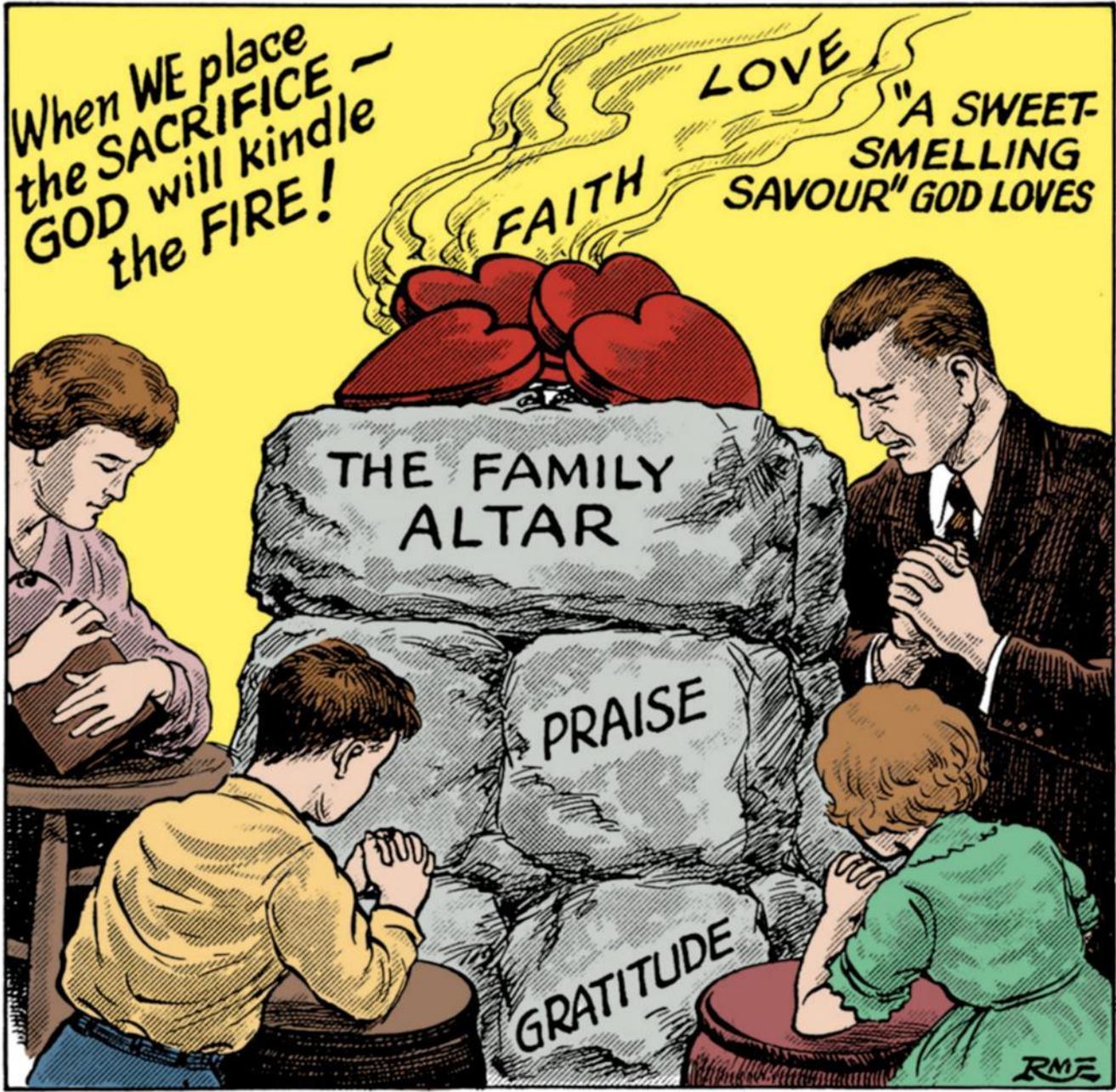
Jesus prayed early in the morning. He prayed in the evening and, at times, all night. He doubtless prayed almost incessantly during the forty days in the wilderness of temptation. He prayed in public; He prayed in private, mostly the latter. He prayed for Peter. He prayed for His disciples. He prayed for His enemies. He prayed for all who would ever believe. He prayed for you and me. He prayed through to victory in Gethsemane; and, in heaven, He “ever liveth to make intercession” for us. Shall weak mortals neglect to pray when we have available to us, through Christ, our divine Mediator, all power in heaven and earth?

7: WHY ARE WE ESPECIALLY ADMONISHED TO PRAY NOW?

“The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” 1 Peter 4:7.

If we are to stand in the time of trouble that is just ahead, we must get the daily prayer habit, and pray always. Morning, noon, and night we should lift our souls to God. Jesus said:

“Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares . . . Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye, may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” Luke 21:34, 36.



When WE place
the SACRIFICE —
GOD will kindle
the FIRE!

LOVE
"A SWEET-
SMELLING
SAVOUR" GOD LOVES

THE FAMILY
ALTAR

PRAISE

GRATITUDE

RME