

## CRITICAL THOUGHTS ON PRAYING AND WARNINGS

Prayer is raising the heart and mind to God meaning you are trying to let him in to change you into being more like him. Asking him for anything implies asking that you will use it in a worthy manner and grow in doing so.

Religion sometimes says that God does not ask for heroic service of others from us! The New Testament certainly says different! And heroes are really just ordinary scared people who made the decision to go among the dying and the suffering. We cannot tell ourselves that it is not in us to be as good as them for it is. Thus praying for people instead of going among them to suffer with them and die with them if need be is trying to feel you are doing something when you are doing damn all.

Why are religious people always careful to ask for things that will probably happen anyway? This is not right when it involves praying for others. They are trying to convince themselves that they have helped when they have not.

They accidentally pray for things that they thought could happen anyway and which don't happen. If somebody whose recovery they pray for dies they tell themselves that the prayer brought them spiritual healing and that cannot be seen. They excuse failures and twist them into successes. Again it is themselves they are trying to convince. They are using the misfortune and sickness of another to fuel their own faith. Disgraceful!

Prayer does not truly respect God if the backdrop is anything other than the attitude, "God is a noun but also an action verb. You must do what you ask him for. For example, instead of merely asking him to feed the starving, ask him to help you do it and go and do it." Thus those who pray for the poor and keep the money that can help them are hypocrites. That means nearly all Christians. Action should come before prayer or if you like action should be the prayer. If your prayer is not helping the person you are praying for and you cannot help that person, then help somebody else.

Some say that praying for another is a do thing not an ask thing. Or it is more about doing than asking as such. You do the good as a prayer asking for divine help. Religion defines prayer as a relationship with God that need not be expressed by words. So you perform the request by doing what you ask God for. If you want Tony healed then go and attend him on his sickbed. Prayer is action and action is prayer. But then you will think it is the action being prayer that helps not the action itself. In fact it is the action that helps. You are saying it is God that helps not you. It is a denial that doing good is good in itself regardless of whether you care for God or not. Your prayer in action is about intending to do nothing though benefit done.

Prayer is evil for some people would adore and revere an evil God and not even admit it to themselves or see it. Action is needed here to prove the words. That is why it is so important that before you call yourself good and compassionate, you must try to suffer all the suffering that has ever happened or will happen before you can judge that it fits the notion of a loving God who lets it happen. Only a person who experiences all suffering and the good that comes from it has the right to condone or risk condoning the evil that God lets befall the universe. Those who think God is evil might still adore him for they feel he will have them in Heaven forever and they don't care as long as it is to Hell with everybody else.

Condoning evil that is done by a tyrant is motivated by a desire to stop fearing and hating the evil so much. You want to protect yourself from those hideous feelings. You feel a sense of control over the evil when you become complicit in it by silence or however. Prayer facilitates and nurtures your ability to condone the evil you think God lets befall people. There is no difference between the person who condones evil that is allowed to happen by his ruler saying it is for an unknown but good reason and one who says it is allowed by God. Prayer is evil. It is about people condoning the horrendous evil they see in order to delude themselves that they are bigger than the evil. They think that their marriage with God in prayer makes them bigger than the evil so that they do not have to fear it much.

When reality and the rational world get too scary, we can relieve that fear by resorting to something irrational and illogical such as prayer and religion. They make us feel we are overpowering the rational. They make us feel powerful and in cahoots with the supernatural. Prayer relieves the fear of truth and reality. It is embracing irrationality to practice irrationality. It is really trying to feel good about doing nothing except dip into escapism.

Prayer is evil for if God helps a person because he was asked then he did it because he was asked and not merely because it was good. It is evil to pray to such a genie God who is not good at heart. You are not really about helping people if you put them in the hands of such a god.

When you pray for somebody when you cannot help them, you will feel like you did. No honest or fair person takes credit

for helping others or claims they tried to help when there is no evidence that they did. They do not give themselves a pat on the back. They will not use somebody else's torture as an opportunity to feel holy, good and self-righteous. And if you cannot help somebody, then go and find somebody who you can help instead of praying for them.

Why feel that your prayer has helped when you make excuses when you do not get what you asked for? If your father is not healed of cancer, you argue that the prayer did work in some unknown way but not in the way you asked or expected. Why not say, "When I touch wood and make a wish I get it. If I do not get that wish fulfilled it is because the magic has got me something as good or better"? So you reason that without the prayer it would be worse. You believe in the excuses more than in prayer or touching wood. The ancients argued that human sacrifice gave them what they asked for though not always in the expected way. The excuses can justify any superstition. They make one superstition as good as another. Prayer thrives on the superstitious attitude so if you encourage prayer you should encourage other kinds of superstition too. When you like blueberry pie you have to invite others to try pies of different sorts to see what they like. It thrives on your desire to feel that you helped. If you really want to help, you will be careful to avoid excuses and you will ground yourself on evidence.

Prayer is taught in such a way that it cannot be shown useless but that means it cannot be shown useful either. If people suffer, that is too serious of a matter to be trivialised with such nonsense as the alleged power of prayer.

Prayer is based on the notion that God communicates with you just as you are communicating with him by praying. Anyone in any kind of relationship knows how important communication is. Without communication from God and with God, it is hardly a relationship at all. So prayer goes hand in hand with inducing a delusion on yourself and in others through your example. This is enough to risk you getting detached enough from reality and other people that you are of little use to them. And it is arrogant to think God is communicating with you for no two people agree on what he is saying to them. It is their own thoughts they ascribe to God and it is arrogance to imagine you can work out what is from God and what is not.

Some people believe that even the staunchest atheists have a relationship with God without realising it which would mean that everybody prays somehow and that nobody can say, "Those who think prayer doesn't work are not trying it". They say God is bigger than any errors a person makes and if the person has a good heart God is in that person and that person is connected with God. If this argument is true, it disposes of the notion that those who say prayer is no good for it is never answered are guilty of not doing it to try it. They would be praying without realising it. The argument gives more weight to the evidence that prayer is indeed useless. It makes prayer totally non-testable. If prayer is good we cannot know and we cannot blame anybody for giving up on it. It makes religion useless as a genuine spiritual force that betters the heart.

Some people get the same feeling from saying a prayer as they do from having done something good. They may pray a lot because it is this buzz they want. They work for the buzz indirectly but they still work for it. Others will not get that feeling and hardly ever pray. The buzz comes to mothers who give their alcoholic sons a bottle of wine too. The buzz that one gets from praying for another is less impressive when it can come from doing fake good.

Real prayer involves trusting God even if he does something terrible to a child. You must intend that he does his will even if it means that somebody has to be tortured by aliens for all eternity. God's plan lets evil happen which means the plan will not necessarily make anybody happier but works on developing the greatest virtue in the greatest number. The prayers of believers are not motivated by super-sacrifice intention so they are not prayers to God but to the image they have made of God. Prayer is not really about genuinely helping people. How can they be when they are not about connecting to a real God in the first place?

Believers hold that if you pray for something good to happen and for God to give you graces etc that he will reward you for praying even if he didn't answer the prayers. It would be horrendous if people were praying for the sick because they want the reward! It would be horrendous if they were consoled by praying at the thought of the reward. That would be using the thought of a reward to dull the pain that you should feel when you see people suffering.

Rewards mean nothing to us unless they are approval of us. People praying for others to get approved by God is selfish even if they do not care about money or any other reward.

Religion is often vindictive. The believer often feels good about adoring an evil or partly-evil God and sees his evil as good. This believer is happy to see others suffer at the hands of this God for he thinks that they are suffering like him at last. Some think the suffering of others while they enjoy their lives makes them special in the sight of God and are happy that others suffer not them. Prayer urges people to sacrifice themselves on the altar of such religion by being eaten up by hatred.

Prayer can be a way of letting your aggression out. It is an insult to the goodness in you and others to say that this goodness is not yours or theirs in reality but down to prayer/God. People who pray adore a God who supposedly makes sure that bad results are attached to your sins. So the wish to see justice or the come-uppance is there. There is no evidence that bottling

things up is always bad. It depends on the circumstances. Your angry tirade against injustice will make you feel madder. Religion makes anger a sin but it has to get out and it will out. The ban on anger stops religious people from being honest about their anger.

It would be terrible to be at the mercy of our feelings all the time and have to do what they demand. We don't really want to do what we feel all the time. Submission to whatever will be is all we need. We do not need to submit to God. Just submit and forget about God and the manipulative religious baggage that comes with God.

Prayer is bad in principle. It is always bad. Principle means it is bad in itself regardless of how good it makes people feel and how harmless it may appear. All bad things start with bad principles - that is why bad principles need to be nipped in the bud. The person who prays is not an island. God and prayer are not just about you. Other people are into them too. Do not pray and do not share in the culture of prayer. If you do, you share in the evil that will result and are disgracefully behind the risk of other evil coming. Truth is not about you.

## Conclusion

People might think prayer brings relief but it never does. There are better explanations for that feeling of relief. We should go and do all we can for the person in trouble instead of asking God to do something about it. We will do that if we really care. Those who are encouraged to appreciate your prayers for them are being manipulated.