

When Someone Says ‘No Thanks’ to Your Offer for Prayer

Healing testimonies are great, but what happens when you step out into active obedience, and things don’t go according to plan... well *your* plan anyway?

A few weeks ago I visited a local beautician to have my eyebrows sculpted. So fancy! In reality, you hand over \$10, and in return, a beauty technician or beauty therapist uses scalding hot wax to rip out your delicate eyebrow hairs, and you walk out of the salon with fantastically shaped eyebrows surrounded by red and swollen skin. Smokin’!

Excited about my impending ability to post ‘Eyebrows On Fleek’ social media statuses and selfies (if you’re missing the context, don’t worry, you’re probably over 30! As am I, but currently spend too much time with teenagers... and on the Internet) I laid down and made small talk with my beauty technician.

She started telling me about how she’d woken up with terrible back pain and was feeling rather unwell.

“Oh, that’s not good at all, I’m sorry to hear you’re in pain” , I said.

Immediately, I hear God speak into my heart, in the unique way that only He can. Although, this time it was so ‘loud’ it was almost audible (and indeed ’twas needed, in order that it be heard over my screaming hair follicles as they were ripped from their cosy homes)!

‘Why is that your first response? Why is your first response not: “can I pray for you?”

Ouch- and this time it wasn’t the waxing!

'Okay God', I reply, 'I get it. BUT, if you want me to do this, YOU have to provide me with the opportunity. You have to open her heart!'

Ya know, 'cause suddenly I'm in an authoritative position to tell God what must be done! Ha!

We come to the end of our sculpting session, and the beauty therapist says again: *'Oh I'm in so much pain, I just don't understand it, I was fine yesterday'*.

Fine, God, fine, (because all life-changing acts of obedience begin with a heart attitude of 'fine') here goes...

"I'd love to pray for your back to be healed, may I pray for you?" I ask, feeling no courage at all.

'Oh yes, I'd love you to pray! Thank you so much. You must be an angel!' I then prayed, she was healed, the room filled with glorious light, the real Angels appeared, plucking their harps as we danced the dance of happy-healed-back-beauty-technicians and saintly clients.

Wouldn't that have been great? This is, however, the complete opposite of what actually transpired!

Instead, she said:

"NO! No, no!" And physically backed away from me, 'I took medicine. I'll be fine!'"

She then walked straight out of the room, over to her colleague and whispered something to her, in one of the many languages I do not speak.

Now look, I'll be the first to admit that my paranoia is heightened at the best of times, and this was not the best of times. So what ensued only added explosive fuel to my situational paranoia fire...

The colleague looks at me, then back to my beautician and cracks up laughing! Not a giggle, not a chuckle, actual proper

laughing!

Sigh.

I pretend I'm not completely mortified, I pay my \$10 and walk out thanking my beautician for her work.

Then God and I had a serious chat!

"WHAT. WAS. THAT!?! Why did you ask me to do that? You were so clear. Your voice was so clear! There is not a doubt in my mind that this was you and not my kooky head! (I understand that at this point some readers may disagree) Seriously, why did you ask me to do that!?!"

And then I hear His response, and it's not at all what I expect...

'Would you vouch for her?'

"Sorry? What do you mean?" I ask.

'Would you vouch for her. If she stood before me, would you step forward for her? Would you plead her case? In spite of your humiliation, would you beg me to love her and forgive her because she was unaware of who she was rejecting?'

"course I would. It was embarrassing, but it's only my ego that hurts."

I'd been given my answer.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts..." (?Isaiah? ?55?:?8-9? NKJV)

Although this humbling took place a few weeks ago, I've continued to ponder it.

We live in the new age of instant gratification. Almost every

whim, or desired knowledge is accessible at the push of a button. Fast food, fast cars, fast 'love'. Why wait?

We surf and swipe our way through life, rarely learning what it is to wait. We rarely know what it is to desire something but never see the fruit of our labour in this lifetime. For most of us, fruitless labor, fruitless humiliation seems pointless. And while reaping the fruit of our labor is Godly principle, sometimes, because His ways are higher than ours, His understanding far greater, He chooses to shroud some fruit in mystery.

And so, over these weeks, God has spoken to me again and again, stirring me, challenging me...

'Are you willing to look like a fool a thousand times over, with no reward, no instant fruit? Will you be prepared to be a fool for me, even if it means you never see the fruit from the seed you have planted?'

My answer, in spite of my aching pride, is yes. May my pride never win, never stand in the way, when the opportunity to love another stands present before me.

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