

# One of the Most Common Ways to Block Your Answer to Prayer

The easiest way to get a messed-up journal entry, and an improper answer back from the Lord in your journaling, is to pray with an idol in your heart (Ezek. 14:4).

Praying with an idol in your heart is defined as having my eyes fixed on something other than the Lord as I pray. The Bible tells me to fix my eyes on Jesus, which allows me to do what I see Him doing (Heb. 12:1-2). King David did this (Acts 2:25). David said, "I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be moved" (Ps. 16:8).

So I want to see what Jesus is doing about the situation I am praying about. When I do this I am praying properly, and should get a pure answer. On the other hand, if I dismiss Jesus out of the picture, and gaze instead only at the thing I am praying about, then I am praying with an idol in my heart, and I will get a wrong answer (Ezek. 14:4). The answer is distorted by passing through the idol.

For example, Balaam prayed once and got a pure answer, "Don't go" (Num. 22:13). He then prayed a second time with the idol of money before his eyes (Num. 22:18-20), and got a different answer: "Go" (Num. 22:15-35). The New Testament clearly says his idol was the money he was gazing at (2 Pet. 2:15). So two consecutive answers from God in his journal, and they contradicted each other. Hmm ... talk about confusing.

Another example of praying with an idol in your heart is when the Israelites wanted a king, and God said, "No." However, they begged for a king and God gave them what they begged for, even though it was not in their best interest. He warned them

of the consequences, and yet they said they wanted a king, so they got a king, Saul. This was not good for them. Read this story in 1 Samuel 8:5-22 and 1 Samuel 15:10-11.

We can see the same principle again when God gave the Israelites manna in the wilderness. Then they begged for meat, so He sent that. But with it came sickness and death (Num. 11).

So yes, I can get things from God which are not in my best interest if I fix my eyes on things (rather than on Jesus), and beg for that thing.

Therefore I am always careful to begin prayer by coming into His presence with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise (Ps. 100:4). By beginning my prayer time with thanksgiving and praise, and lifting my eyes up to behold Him, idols are automatically dispelled, as only one thing can be in the center of my visionary capacity at one time. By putting Jesus there, He becomes central in my vision, and everything else moves out to the periphery, which is where it is supposed to be.

Plus, as long as I am submitting my journaling to my three spiritual advisers (2 Cor. 13:1), they will catch it if I am praying with an idol in my heart, so I am always safe and protected.

I choose to love truth, and this keeps me from deceiving spirits (1 Kings 22:22; 2 Chron. 18:21) and deluding influences (2 Thess. 2:11), and I get to enjoy the path of life. Thank You, Lord! {eoa}

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