

This Is Why Your Prayers Seem Ineffective

In 1984, Sue and I were moving from Canada to Texas. Just before we left Canada, our vehicle began leaking steering fluid. We kept close watch on it, and during the first day on the road I had to fill the steering canister once.

The second day, the leak increased and, at about 10 pm near Memphis, Tennessee, I had to fill it a second time. We crossed the Mississippi River into Arkansas and decided to turn into a service station that, although closed, had vending machines from which we could get a drink and snack. It was now about 11 pm.

As I turned into the station, the steering wheel would only move with the greatest effort, and all the while making a loud grinding noise. With much effort and noise, I got it off the road. I popped the hood, removed the steering fluid cap and the smoke and steam literally boiled out. It was bone dry even though I had filled it only an hour before.

I thought, "Oh no! It is ruined!" I had enough fluid to fill it one more time. We then got in the car with our drink and snack and prayed a desperate prayer of faith before pulling back onto the interstate. It went something like this: "Oh God, help!"

Both Sue and God are my witness, we continued our journey and the steering fluid never leaked again and there was never another problem with the steering.

There is an expression used often by David in the Psalms and repeated in the New Testament of "crying" to the Lord. For example, Psalm 34:6 says, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard, and saved him out of all his troubles." Psalm 34:15, which is alluded to in 1 Peter 3:12, says, "The eyes of the

Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their cry.”

The Hebrew word for cry means to shriek or cry out in desperation or even fear. It is like a person who is drowning, and they see someone standing on the shore. They do not speak in a calm voice, “Excuse me, sir, I am in the process of drowning. Could I intrude upon you to help me?”

No! They shriek and cry out, “Help! Help!” They are desperate. Their life is at stake and they cry out for assistance and help.

There are numerous examples of such desperate prayers in the New Testament. I immediately think of Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52) who cried out in such desperation that those around him told him to be quiet. He ignored their demands and continued to cry out until Jesus stopped, called him forth and healed his blindness. Jesus then said to him, “Your faith has made you well.”

The Great Awakening that transformed colonial America and gave birth to the nation was birthed out of desperate cries of faith. Before presenting his sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” Jonathan Edwards had spent 18 hours in desperate prayer. His cry was, “Give New England or let me die.”

He then stood behind the pulpit and without moving or making any gestures, read his sermon in a monotone voice. Although his style was not attractive, the Holy Spirit fell like rain and His voice was drowned out by the cries of the people. New England was transformed by a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Yes, there is a quiet, confident faith that obtains its object from God. There is also the desperate cry of faith that is the appropriate prayer at certain times in our lives and in history.

So, don't hold back. Go ahead and cry out to Him today. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ears are open to their cry. {eoa}

Dr. Eddie Hyatt *is an author, historian and Bible teacher with a passion to see another Great Awakening that will renew the churches of America and alter the course of the nation. His books on prayer and revival are available from Amazon and his website at .*