

REMINDER

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Andrew Murray
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THE PRAYER LIFE

by Andrew Murray
(continued from last week)

The Cause of Prayerlessness.

In an elder's prayer meeting, a brother put the question: "What, then, is the cause of so much prayerlessness? Is it not unbelief?"

The answer was: "Certainly; but then comes the question what is the cause of that unbelief?" When the disciples asked the Lord Jesus: "Why could not we cast the devil out?" His answer was: "***Because of your unbelief.***" He went further and said: "***Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting***" (Matt. 17.19-21). If the life is not one of self-denial - of fasting - that is, letting the world go; of prayer - that is, laying hold of heaven, faith cannot be exercised. A life lived according to the flesh and not according to the Spirit - it is in this that we find the origin of the prayerlessness of which we complain. As we came out of the meeting a brother said to me: "That is the whole difficulty; we wish to pray in the Spirit and at the same time walk after the flesh, and this is impossible."

If one is sick and desires healing, it is of prime importance that the true cause of the sickness be discovered. This is always the first step toward recovery. If the particular cause is not recognized, and attention is directed to subordinate causes, or to supposed but not real causes, healing is out of the question. In like manner, it is of the utmost importance for us to obtain a correct insight into the cause of the sad condition of deadness and failure in prayer in the inner chamber, which should be such a blessed place for us. Let us seek to realize fully what is the root of this evil.

Scripture teaches us that there are but two conditions possible for the Christian. One is a walk according to the Spirit, the other a walk according to "the flesh". These two powers are in irreconcilable conflict with each other. So it comes to pass, in the case of the majority of Christians, that, while we thank God that they are born again through the Spirit and have received the life of God - yet their ordinary daily life is not lived according to the Spirit but according to "the flesh". Paul writes to the Galatians: "***Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?***" (Gal. 3.3). Their service lay in fleshly outward performances. They did not understand that where "the flesh" is permitted to influence their service of God, it soon results in open sin.

So he mentions not only grave sins as the work of "the flesh", such as adultery, murder, drunkenness; but also the more ordinary sins of daily life - wrath, strife, variance; and he gives the exhortation: "***Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh... If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit***" (Gal. 5.16, 25). The Spirit must be honoured not only as the author of a new life but also as the leader and director of our entire walk. Otherwise we are what the apostle calls "carnal".

The majority of Christians have little understanding of this matter. They have no real knowledge of the deep sinfulness and godlessness of that carnal nature which belongs to them and to which unconsciously they yield. "***God... condemned sin in the flesh***" (Rom. 8.3) - in the cross of Christ. "***They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts***" (Gal. 5.24). "The flesh" cannot be improved or sanctified. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be' (Rom. 8.7). There is no means of dealing with 'the flesh' save as Christ dealt with it, bearing it to the cross. "***Our old man is crucified with him***" (Rom. 6.6); so we by faith also crucify it, and regard and treat it daily as an accursed thing that finds its rightful place on the accursed cross.

It is saddening to consider how many Christians there are who seldom think or speak earnestly about the deep and immeasurable sinfulness of "the flesh" - "***In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing***" (Rom. 7.18). The man who truly believes this may

(continued inside)

well cry out: ***“I see another law in my members ... bringing me into captivity to the law of sin... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7.23, 24).*** Happy is he who can go further and say: ***“I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord... For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 7.25; 8.2).***

Would that we might understand God's counsels of grace for us! “the flesh” on the cross - the Spirit in the heart and controlling the life.

This spiritual life is too little understood or sought after; yet it is literally what God has promised and will accomplish in those who unconditionally surrender themselves to him for this purpose.

Here then we have the deep root of evil as the cause of a prayerless life. “The flesh” can say prayers well enough, calling itself religious for so doing and thus satisfying conscience. But “the flesh” has no desire or strength for the prayer that strives after an intimate knowledge of God; that rejoices in fellowship with him; and that continues to lay hold of his strength. So, finally, it comes to this, “the flesh” must be denied and crucified.

The Christian who is still carnal has neither disposition nor strength to follow after God. He rests satisfied with the prayer of habit or custom; but the glory, the blessedness of secret prayer is a hidden thing to him, till some day his eyes are opened, and he begins to see that “the flesh”, in its disposition to turn away from God, is the archenemy which makes powerful prayer impossible for him.

I had once, at a conference, spoken on the subject of prayer and made use of strong expressions about the enmity of “the flesh” as a cause of prayerlessness. After the address, the minister's wife said that she thought I had spoken too strongly. She also had to mourn over too little desire for prayer, but she knew her heart was sincerely set on seeking God. I showed her what the word of God said about 'the flesh', and that everything which prevents the reception of the Spirit is nothing else than a secret work of “the flesh”. Adam was created to have fellowship with God and enjoyed it before his fall. After the fall, however, there came immediately, a deep-seated aversion to God, and he fled from him. This incurable aversion is the characteristic of the unregenerate nature and the chief cause of our unwillingness to surrender ourselves to fellowship with God in prayer. The following day she told me that God had opened her eyes; she confessed that the enmity and unwillingness of “the flesh” was the hidden hindrance in her defective prayer life.

O my brethren, do not seek to find in circumstances the explanation of this prayerlessness over which we mourn; seek it where God's word declares it to be, in the hidden aversion of the heart to a holy God.

When a Christian does not yield entirely to the leading of the Spirit - and this is certainly the will of God and the work of his grace - he lives, without knowing it, under the power of “the

flesh”. This life of “the flesh” manifests itself in many different ways. It appears in the hastiness of spirit, or the anger which so unexpectedly arises in you, in the lack of love for which you have so often blamed yourself; in the pleasure found in eating and drinking, about which at times your conscience has chidden you; in that seeking for your own will and honor, that confidence in your own wisdom and power, that pleasure in the world, of which you are sometimes ashamed before God. All this is life “after the flesh”. “Ye are yet carnal” (I Con 3.3) that text, perhaps, disturbs you at times; you have not full peace and joy in God.

I pray you take time and give an answer to the question:

Have I not found here the cause of my prayerlessness, of my powerlessness to effect any change in the matter?

I live in the Spirit, I have been born again, but I do not walk after the Spirit - “the flesh” lords it over me. The carnal life cannot possibly pray in the spirit and power. God forgive me. The carnal life is evidently the cause of my sad and shameful prayerlessness.

The Storm Center on the Battlefield

Mention was made in conference of the expression “strategic position” used so often in reference to the great strife between the kingdom of heaven and the powers of darkness.

When a general chooses the place from which he intends to strike the enemy, he pays most attention to those points which he thinks most important in the fight. Thus there was on the battlefield of Waterloo a farmhouse which Wellington immediately saw was the key to the situation. He did not spare his troops in his endeavours to hold that point: the victory depended on it. So it actually happened. It is the same in the conflict between the believer and the powers of darkness. The inner chamber is the place where the decisive victory is obtained.

The enemy uses all his power to lead the Christian and above all the minister, to neglect prayer. He knows that however admirable the sermon may be, however attractive the service, however faithful the pastoral visitation, none of these things can damage him or his kingdom if prayer is neglected. When the Church shuts herself up to the power of the inner chamber, and the soldiers of the Lord have received on their knees 'power from on high', then the powers of darkness will be shaken and souls will be delivered. In the Church, on the mission field, with the minister and his congregation, everything depends on the faithful exercise of the power of prayer.

In the week of conference I found the following in *The Christian*:

Two persons quarrel over a certain point. We call them Christian and Apollyon. Apollyon notices that Christian has a certain weapon which would give him a sure victory. They meet in deadly strife, and Apollyon resolves to take away the weapon from his opponent and destroy it. For the moment the main cause of the strife has become subordinate; the great point now is who shall get possession of the weapon on which everything depends? It is of vital importance to get hold of that.

So it is in the conflict between Satan and the believer. God's child can conquer everything by prayer. Is it any wonder that Satan does his utmost to snatch that weapon from the Christian, or to hinder him in the use of it?

How now does Satan hinder prayer? By temptation to postpone or curtail it, by bringing in wandering thoughts and all sorts of distractions; through unbelief and hopelessness.

Happy is the prayer hero who, through it all, takes care to hold fast and use his weapon. Like our Lord in Gethsemane, the more violently the enemy attacked the more earnestly he prayed and ceased not till he had obtained the victory. After all the other parts of the armour had been named, Paul adds: "**with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit**" (Eph. 6.18). Without prayer, the helmet of salvation, and the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit which is God's word, have no power. All depends on prayer. God teach us to believe and hold this fast!

- more next week

NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

❑ **CHARLES STANLEY PROMOTING CONTEMPLATIVE MYSTICISM** - In the October 2011 issue of *In Touch* magazine, Charles Stanley promotes blatant contemplative mysticism. Note the following (emphasis added to assist you to see what he's really saying):

"... solitude is a deliberate choice to spend time with God and give Him your undivided attention. ... My first suggestion is to find a silent place that's free from distractions. Once you're there, the next step is to DO NOTHING but make yourself available to the Lord. In that moment, God is not necessarily expecting you to read through a prayer list or study a devotional. Simply invite Him to meet with you in the stillness and speak to you through His Word, however He chooses. Depending on your point of need, He may speak words of encouragement or instruction, or simply surround you with His love. Don't be discouraged if SENSING HIS PRESENCE doesn't happen right away. With time you'll EXPERIENCE IT in ways that are transforming and unforgettable. ... through solitude we become intimate with God, and nothing in this world compares with knowing Him deeply" ("Ask Dr. Stanley," *In Touch*, Oct. 2011).

What Stanley is recommending is **not** biblical meditation; it is blind mysticism that is borrowed from Rome's dark monastic past. Stanley is not explaining how to get alone with God without distractions and study and meditate on Scripture and pray. He is explaining how to sit in silence and DO NOTHING and expect God to meet me in that context. When he mentions God speaking through "His Word," he is not referring necessarily to Scripture but through an **experience**, a feeling, an intuition. To seek an "experience" with God is the opposite of walking by faith C(which comes only through God's Word the Bible, Romans 10:17) and is a recipe for spiritual delusion. If I were to follow Charles Stanley's recommendation to seek God in "the silence" and expect Him to reveal Himself to me in some experiential way apart from Scripture, how would I know that it is God that is

speaking? The Bible warns repeatedly about the danger of being deceived by the devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light (e.g., II Corinthians 11; I Peter 5:8). God's Word instructs the believer to be sober and vigilant against spiritual deception at all times. Every thought and experience must be carefully tested by Holy Scripture. Contemplative mysticism was also promoted in the January 2011 and the January 2010 issues of *In Touch* magazine. Charles Stanley is another "conservative evangelical" who is a bridge to the treacherous waters of ancient and end-time apostasy.

❑ **TELEVISION SERIES EXPANDS LIQUOR SALES**: The *Mad Men* television series is credited by researchers for a significant growth in whisky sales in England. Sale of malt whiskey has expanded by 13.4 percent in one year, and market research analysts Kantar Worldpanel believe this is "thanks to its image as aspirational and stylish boosted by *Mad Men* stars like Jon Hamm and Christina Hendricks" ("Mad Men Effect Sees Whiskey Sales Soar," *The Telegraph*, Sept. 21, 2011). Hollywood has always tried to make sin look cool and desirable. We are told by the movie/music "artists," that this is just "entertainment," but they know better and so do we. A program like *Mad Men* isn't innocent entertainment; it is the devil's brainwashing tool. For a born-again child of God to separate from the wicked things of the world is not vain Phariseism; it is spiritual protection. It is the path of wisdom. Proverbs, the book of practical wisdom, enjoins the strictest separatism. "**Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away**" (Proverbs 4:14-15). The Psalmist said, "**I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me**" (Psalms 101:3).

❑ **APPEALS COURT RULES THAT UNBORN IS "LIVING HUMAN BEING"** - (from "A Whole, Separate, Unique, Living Human Being," *Live Action*, Sept. 9, 2011):

"**Abortion will terminate the life of a whole, separate, unique, living human being.**" With such a powerful and explicit stance on the sanctity of life in the womb, one would think these words would have come from a religious figure, a social leader in the pro-life movement, or some other position of prominence that is associated with the pro-life movement. These words came from no such person. **These words came from our government.** On 9/2/11, a victory was once again claimed for the unborn when the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals handed down a monumental decision. In this decision the three judge panel finally put to rest the legal controversy surrounding a 2005 provision of a South Dakotan law. The provision in question would have required abortion doctors to inform their patients of the before mentioned quote, that the mother has an "existing relationship with that unborn human being," as well as the known medical causes of an abortion, which the law explicitly stated includes suicide. ... In its decision, the appeals court upheld that the clause which stated that an abortion killed a separate and unique human being, as well as the clause which stated the mother had an existing relationship with the baby. In the decision it partly upheld the medical risks

clause, but the judges determined that, among the known risks, suicide was not medically proven to have an explicit connection with abortion but all the other unspecified risks should be conveyed from the doctor to the patient. The decision was clear and decided; the unborn baby is a living human being. ■

NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Vicki Martin
 Cradle Roll 2: Lou Martin
 6:30 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Rebekah White
 Cradle Roll 2: Nathaniel White
 Wed. Evening Service ---- Cradle Roll 1: LeAnna White
 Cradle Roll 2: Seth White

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of September 25, 2011

Sunday School ----- 25
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 41
 Sunday Evening Service ----- 31
 Wed. Eve., 09/28/11 Service ----- 23

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of September 25, 2010

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 613.00
 Total Received for Week of 09/25/11: \$ 613.00

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed to operate the church EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00

INSURANCE FUND REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER:

Monthly Requirement ----- \$ 273.08
 Amount Received during September thusfar ----- \$ 14.00
 Amount still needed by Oct. 5, 2011: - \$ 259.08

DEREK QUINNELLY'S ADDRESS -

All of our members are encouraged to write Derek Quinnelly, who is in Basic Training right now in the National Guard. Letters, pictures, newspaper clippings, etc., are allowed, but NO food or drink :



Pvt Quinnelly, Derek L.
1 Plt., A Company, 1st Bn, 13th Inf Regt
193rd BDE
Building 11000 Dixie Road
Fort Jackson, SC 29207-5020

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. *Admit that you are a sinner.*
2. *Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.*
3. *Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.*
4. *You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).*
5. *By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.*



Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!

As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go **up**. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start **today** - **OK?** Thank you.

Church Directory

Todd W. White ----- Pastor
 Mickie Shatwell, Janell Diehl ----- Pianists
 Dickie Eberle ----- Greeter, Custodian
 Larry Mathews, Caryn Quinnelly, Todd W. White ----- S.S. Teachers
 Larry & Mary Byars, Brian & Charity Crawford,
 Dwayne English, Lou & Vicki Martin, Don Diehl ----- Outreach
 Flowers ----- Hannah and Shirley White