

## Praying With Dirty Hands

*The LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the Israelites to break camp. - Exodus 14:15 HCSB*

Sometimes it is not prayer, but action that is needed. Prayer is an effective tool, but sweat and elbow grease must always accompany it. You've heard the expression that talk is cheap? Prayer can be cheap, too, if we use it as an excuse to get out of work or as a salve for our consciences when we fail to help someone.

How many times have we heard someone intone self-righteously "Father, help all the poor starving people in the world"? How many of them actually do anything about it? When someone comes to us in need of something, do we tell them we'll pray for them, or do we give them what they need and trust God to take care of us?<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes we try to be so spiritual that we are of no earthly good. Our prayers are only as effective as we are personally submissive to God's will. God doesn't want to hear from us when we are not concerned enough to personally do something about it. We must be willing to get our own hands dirty in the harvest fields of the Lord. When we do pray, it should be with a "Here am I, Lord. Send me!" attitude.<sup>2</sup>

I can already hear one of you agreeing by saying, "Sounds good. You take care of the faith department, I'll handle the works department." Not so fast. You can no more show me your works apart from your faith than I can show you my faith apart from my works.<sup>3</sup> Faith and works, works and faith, fit together hand in glove.

We need to be careful about whining to the Lord to solve some of our problems when He has already told us what to do. Maybe we are having interpersonal problems and the Lord has told us to ask the other person's forgiveness. We mustn't ask God "Please solve my problem" when we won't do what He's already told us to do.

We must also be careful of feigning ignorance or lack of understanding, praying "Now, Lord, what is it exactly you want me to do? Spell it out for me, please" when we know in your heart what it is He wants of us.<sup>4</sup> Many children will disobey their parents, then say "I didn't know!" or "I didn't understand!" That tactic occasionally works with human parents because they are always left with the doubt of whether they had made themselves sufficiently clear.

Our heavenly father is not so easily fooled. We thought as children that our mothers had eyes in the back of their heads and could read minds. Our Heavenly Father actually can! So we need to stop whining and start moving!

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<sup>1</sup> James 2:14-16

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 6:8

<sup>3</sup> James 2:18-20

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs 24:12