

## Prayer for guidance: God's will

Strange paradox within evangelicalism (particularly strong among Charismatics) concerning free will and decision making:

**James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom he should ask God who gives generously without finding fault.**

True! But biblical wisdom is not synonymous with step-by-step directions.

*What is "wisdom" in the Bible? The word usually refers less to factual knowledge and more to skill. It is more "know how" than "know that." Particularly, biblical wisdom deals with knowing how to live. As such, it is similar to the Greek literary form of paraenesis, or ethical instruction...Biblical wisdom is never intellectual attainment alone; it is a way of living in harmony with God and others.*

Gary Holloway

### Acts 13:1-3

**Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.<sup>2</sup> While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."<sup>3</sup> Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.**

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## Prayer: Richard Foster

*...healthy prayer necessitates frequent experiences of the common, earthy, run-of-the-mill variety. Like walks, and talks, and good wholesome laughter. Like work in the yard, and chitchat with neighbors, and washing windows. Like loving our spouse, and playing with our kids, and working with our colleagues. To be spiritually fit to scale the Himalayas of the spirit, we need regular exercise in the hills and valleys of ordinary life. P. xii*

## Part 1: Moving inward

### Chapter 1: Simple prayer

*The best thing, where it is possible, is to keep the patient from the serious intention of praying altogether... If this fails, you must fall back on a subtler misdirection of his intention. Whenever they are attending to the Enemy Himself we are defeated, but there are ways of preventing them from doing so. The simplest is to turn their gaze away from Him towards themselves. Keep them watching their own minds and trying to produce feelings there by the action of their own wills. When they meant to ask Him for charity, let them, instead, start trying to manufacture charitable feelings for themselves and not notice that this is what they are doing. When they meant to pray for courage, let them really be trying to feel brave. When they say they are praying for forgiveness, let them be trying to feel forgiven. Teach them to estimate the value of each prayer by their success in producing the desired feeling; and never let them suspect how much success or failure of that kind depends on whether they are well or ill, fresh or tired, at the moment.*

C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters. Chpt 4

If faith = relationship, prayer = communication. So then, there should be focused times devoted to prolonged conversation. But there should also be a large amount of in-the-moment communication.

*It is not necessarily invoking God as much as including God, which sometimes looks like invoking him.*

*In the most natural and simple way possible we learn to pray our experiences by taking up the ordinary events of everyday life and giving them to God.*

“We must lay before him what is in us; not what ought to be in us.” CS Lewis

## **Chapter 2: Prayer of the Forsaken**

Psalm 22. Remez. Hinting.

### **Psalm 44: Deus Absconditus**

How is God's hidden-ness actually a grace?

Prayer of complaint?

Two caves: Psalms 57 & 142

Caves, though uncomfortable, or even miserable, can function as cathedrals and universities when it comes to where we meet God and how we learn about prayer and trusting God.

Maskil: Instruction requiring meditation.

Miktam: Possibly cover

In both Psalms David:

- David is forced to be alone in a cave
- Calls God his refuge
- Acknowledges God's strength/ability to rescue
- Puts his hope in God.
- Acknowledges God's goodness

But the two Psalms read very differently from each other.

Psalm 142

- A maskil (a meditation)
- Complaint, trouble, faint, prison
- Pleading: Hear my cry,  
Deliver me, Help me
- Needs deliverance in order to praise
- Emotion: loneliness

Psalm 57

- A miktam (a song)
- Fulfilled, steadfast, faithfulness, praise
- Proclaiming: He will deliver, he will send from  
heaven, God will fulfill his purpose for me
- Praises while waiting for future deliverance
- Emotion: hopefulness