

# Six things faith and prayer can't do alone

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- I. Introduction
    - a. Faith and prayer are powerful things
      - i. ILLUSTRATION: After we moved to Bedford county, I was able to go deer hunting for the first time in several years. We see deer on our property fairly frequently.
        - 1. Got nothing the first week, but I spent a lot of time out in the woods, freezing, thinking about how great it would be to have some venison in our freezer.
        - 2. About half-way through the second week, I still hadn't shot anything
        - 3. I prayed that God would help me feed my family by bringing a deer within range of my rifle
          - a. A few minutes later a small deer came walking across the pasture.
          - b. Just as I was about to take a shot a decent-sized buck showed up behind the first deer. I thanked God that He had so quickly answered my prayers.
          - c. He stopped where some brush was blocking my view; I waited for awhile for him to step clear, but after he stood there for so long, I thought, well I know where his head is, and I know where his body is, so I'm going to take this shot. When I did, I saw him go down.
      - ii. This lesson is about what faith and prayer can't do. But I don't want to imply that faith and prayer are not powerful things. They most certainly are
      - iii. I can testify to that from personal experience
      - iv. I also know this from the Scriptures
        - 1. Faith – 1 Jn. 5:4
        - 2. Prayer – James 5:16
        - 3. Faith and Prayer together – Matt. 21:21-22
    - b. But they cannot accomplish everything by themselves
      - i. If we count on faith and prayer alone to accomplish these things we will be disappointed.
      - ii. So we are going to examine six things that faith and prayer cannot do by themselves.
- II. Faith and Prayer Alone ....
  - a. Can't feed my family
    - i. When I got down out of the deer stand I went to where the deer had been standing, and the little deer had run off. And so had the deer I'd shot!

1. There was some fur there where it had fallen down, and some drops of blood, but no deer!
  2. I spent hours fanning out across the pasture and through the woods looking for that deer, or any sign of him.
  3. Apparently I hadn't shot him good enough. Must have just winged him.
  4. While I was looking, do you know what I was doing? "Lord help us find this deer."
    - a. Hate to wound an animal and have it die in the woods
  5. I finally had to give up. But it gave me a lot of time to think about faith and prayer
- ii. You know what would be really nice? If a deer would run up into my back yard, and jump in the air, and while it was in the air, if the skin, bones and entrails would dissolve into mist, and rest would disassemble itself into chops and roasts and ground sausage, and land in my freezer!
    1. I think it would take a miracle for that to happen, wouldn't it?
    2. But you know that the things that are impossible with men are possible with God.
    3. If God wanted to, He could do that! I have no doubt.
  - iii. "You shall not test the LORD your God."
    1. I did not seriously ask My Heavenly Father to bring a deer and throw it in the freezer for me
    2. Because I understand that there is a principle in Scripture, that in order to feed my family, I'm expected to DO something
  - iv. 2 Th. 3:10 – Feeding my family
    1. Depends on faith? YES
    2. Depends on prayer? YES
    3. But it also depends on me working to feed my family
      - a. I need to do something by which I can reasonably expect to provide for my family's and also have something left over to help those who are in need
      - b. Based on my track record, I need to find something to do besides deer hunting to feed my family!
    4. If I'm depending on faith and prayer alone, I'm in trouble
      - a. Am I denegrating faith?
      - b. Am I selling short prayer?
      - c. No
- b. Help those who are in need
    - i. James 2:14-17 –
      1. I really hope you're taken care
      2. "I'm going to say a prayer that God will provide every need you have!"
      3. That's good
        - a. But there is one more thing that needs done

4. But I also need to take the action that will provide the help
- ii. All of these are indispensable:
  1. Faith
  2. Prayer
  3. Positive action!
- iii. If we have faith without the willingness to do what we can, what is the value of that faith?
  1. It's of no value to the hungry, freezing person who needs help
- c. Save the lost
  - i. We know those who are far from God and have no hope of heaven
  - ii. Rom. 10:14-17
    1. They need faith, but it comes from hearing the word of God
    2. Should we have faith?
    3. Should we pray that they come to the knowledge of the truth
    4. What else should we do?
      - a. Share the word with them that produces faith
  - iii. God has decided that through the foolishness of preaching men will hear and obey the gospel
  - iv. We are saved because some other human being told us about Christ
  - v. When Jesus his disciples out he told them to go everywhere
    1. But he didn't say, "Go everywhere and pray that the lost will be saved"
    2. He said, "Go everywhere and preach the gospel. He who believes and is baptized will be saved."
  - vi. It is not sufficient
    1. For God's people to trust that God wants the lost to be save
    2. And for God's people to pray that the lost will be saved
    3. SOME of God's people have to share the word of God with others
  - vii. Will it be you?
    1. If SOME share the word of God with others, SOME of the lost will be saved
    2. If MANY share the word of God with others, MANY will be saved
    3. It's as simple as that
  - viii. Do not depend on faith and prayer alone to save the lost
- d. Make us effective in wielding the armor of God
  - i. God has given us a powerful suit of armor – Eph. 6:13-18
    1. Faith and prayer are part but not all of that armor
    2. We won't look at the pieces of armor in detail
    3. There is a parallel b/w this armor and the weapons that soldiers use in combat
    4. The shepherd boy David – 1 Sam. 17:38-39
      - a. When Saul discovered he could not prevent David from going to face Goliath

- b. He tried to equip David to face Goliath by giving him Saul's own armor
  - c. David couldn't use it because he wasn't used to them
  - d. Do you think he could have defeated Goliath with Saul's armor on?
  - e. He was wise to meet Goliath in battle with the weapons and equipment that he was already trained to use!
- 5. It is the same for us
  - a. We need to train with the armor of God BEFORE we are in battle
  - b. We are not going to be equipped and effective in spiritual battle if our only preparation is putting it on for the first time
  - c. We better have some practice using the sword of Spirit which is the word of God
    - i. It is full of riches of understand and instruction to help us be successful in every area of life
    - ii. It is capable of resolving problems that are overwhelmingly perplexing
    - iii. It is sharper than any two edged sword piercing to the division of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
    - iv. Those riches are totally unavailable to those who are unfamiliar with them.
  - d. PRACTICE!!!!
  - e. Make the use of the armor of God habitual, 2<sup>nd</sup> nature
- e. Accomplish some great things for God's people
  - i. Some not all
  - ii. Faith and prayer alone have done some amazing things
    - 1. Hezekiah and Sennacherib
  - iii. Some great things need faith, prayer, AND ACTION
  - iv. Fall of Jericho
  - v. James 2:20-23
  - vi.
- f. Save me
  - i. That is the point of James 2
  - ii. he asks the question in v. 14 The answer is NO
  - iii. He gives some examples that we have looked at already
    - 1. Helping the needing
    - 2. Abraham offering Isaac
  - iv. In these cases, faith by itself was, useless, vain or dead
  - v. His conclusion, We are justified by works and not by faith alone
  - vi. Acts 2:36-38

1. They did not say have faith alone
  2. They did not say “Pray the sinner’s prayer” or any other prayer
  3. That’s because faith and prayer alone cannot save. We are not justified by faith alone
- vii. They told them to repent and be baptized
1. The same thing Jesus told them to preach before he left the earth
  2. That’s what you should do if you want to be saved
- viii. Don’t leave this world depending on faith and prayer alone to save you

III. Faith healing parents: Herbert and Catherine Schaible

- a. Members of Philadelphia’s First Century Gospel Church
- b. This past April they lost their 8-month-old son, Brandon, after he suffered from diarrhea and breathing problems for at least a week, and stopped eating.
- c. Four years ago, their then two-year-old son Kent died of bacterial pneumonia.
- d. In both cases, the parents refused medical treatment and relied on “faith and prayer” to heal their children.
- e. After Kent died, they were placed 10 years probation. And now they are in jail for child neglect.
- f. <http://news.discovery.com/human/psychology/faith-healing-parents-arrested-over-death-of-second-child-130424.htm>
- g. What would you tell these parents if you could talk to them right now?

IV. Invitation – Faith and Pray by themselves cannot...

- a. Feed my family
- b. Help the needy
- c. Save the lost
- d. Make me effective in wielding the armor of God
- e. Accomplish some great things for God and His people
- f. Save me