

First Light

I had total confidence that my daughter would be okay. I did not know how and when, but I knew God had heard my prayer, and that I was no longer the being that was responsible for what would take place from this point forward.

Early the next morning I returned to the hospital and my daughter's room. My wife had slept next to Whitney on a chair that could be made into a small bed. She and Whitney were already awake when I entered the room. My wife had a stack of brochures and papers on her lap that looked to provide information about braille, helping the blind, seeing-eye-dogs and care that would be needed for my daughter's future. My wife turned her head to look up at me then said, "Good morning, there's something different about you, what is it?" I paused for a moment then said, "Everything will be okay." It was then that Brad Farris, MD, entered the room. Brad was the neuro ophthalmologist from Dean McGee Eye Institute who had originally worked on Whitney's medical team. I invited Brad to sit but he continued to stand, while asking my wife and I to join him in the hallway. Once we entered the hallway, he led us down the hall to a child's play area filled with kid's toys and games. No children were in this area, nor anywhere on the floor where my daughter's room was located. The hospital had decided to stop admitting children weeks earlier. For some reason, Whitney was admitted to this floor, but we never knew why. Then, Dr. Farris stepped between Lauren and I, and reached out to hold both of our hands. He immediately began to pray. My wife looked at me, then we bowed our heads and listened closely to Brad's prayer. He prayed for a short time, but it was so moving that both my wife and I began to weep.

A few days later: My wife and I were sitting next to Whitney as she sat up in her bed. I was reading to her from a children's book entitled, 'The Ugly Duckling.' It was then that Whitney said, "What's that on the wall." I looked at my wife with a baffled, wide-eyed expression, and she asked Whitney to explain what she meant by 'something on the wall.' Whitney said, "is that a clock?" In unison, we both replied, "Yes." Whitney had regained her eyesight. Over the next few days her vision returned completely. Today, she has 20/20 vision and is employed as a pharmaceutical representative for a large drug company headquartered in Japan. She is married with two children and most likely cannot remember much about the time she was diagnosed to be blind for the rest of her life. (All of her doctors were astonished by her total recovery.)

First Light

Since that time, I have thought extensively about how, when and why God answers prayer. I have wondered why he does or does not answer prayer. To this day, I am not exactly sure how God works his miracles. I don't think anyone is for sure. Perhaps it is one of the greatest questions of all time. I do, however, purpose to know (Perhaps) how our God answers prayers. His Word reads:

"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6. Many people say that they believe in God, but if they have seen Jesus, yet reject him, then they don't know the Father, and they cannot get to him in their sin. Jesus' death on the cross made a way through the curtain to the holy of holy places. Now, because of Christ, we can enter boldly into the glorious presence of the Father (Heb 10:19). Therefore, before we can petition the Father, in my supposition, one must first pray in the name and acknowledgement of Christ, the Son.

I believe God is ready and waiting to hear all prayers through Christ but only as the prayers do not interfere with His Will. When Jesus was asked by his disciples how to pray, he demonstrated how to talk to God by what we refer to as, 'The Lord's Prayer.' "Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your Will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors; lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.'" Matthew 6: 9-13

So, we know that all things that occur here on earth relative to the goal of every Christian is to allow God to fulfill his Will so the Kingdom can come to fruition. He will not answer a prayer with 'Yes' if the petition goes against His Plan, Word and Will. In believing this we kind of understand how God hears our prayers but are still left with the question: how does God answer prayer? Perhaps the answer is all around us. Perhaps God uses humans who are a part of His Will, and who are in sync with His voice. In other words: some Christians can hear Him when he communicates the needs and prayers of those family members, friends, co-workers and others. I

have no idea how many Christians are blessed with a heart and proclivity that connects to the Father and his instruction; I suspect, not as many as we might think.

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In the story about my daughter and her loss of eyesight which had a very positive conclusion, Dr. Brad Farris was one of these Christians. If you ask Dr. Farris, I am sure he would not say he has some special connection to our God. Despite his modesty, I believe he probably does, or at least did at the time he prayed with us while Whitney was in the hospital.

It may very well have gone like this.

- First there was a need: Whitney's encephalitis, seizures, and loss of eyesight. (Unfortunately, many of us stop here, and do not pray.)
- Next, there was someone who made a petition to God, through Christ, that did not alter His Will.
- Then, God connected with the heart of a believer who was the perfect person to intercede with the needed talents and experience to address the needs of the person (Whitney) who had a crisis/horrendous situation.
- The result is a prayer that is answered.

This article, and story, is based on my own experiences with prayer and our God. Maybe it is not necessary to know how God answers prayer. However, it may be useful for those who feel their prayers are not answered. It may help them realize that what seems to be an unanswered prayer may be one that is in the process of being answered within a timeline that is much different than anticipated. It may help some understand that God will not answer a prayer if it is contrary to His Will. In addition, this information may help some realize that they have been hearing God's voice for a very long time but needed a little encouragement to act on what He is telling their heart to do relative to the many needs of those they are in contact each day. Prayer is more than extremely powerful. It has turned the worst of times to exceptional days in history, It, has taken men and women who have given up on all of life's comforts, joy and desire for good health and contentment, to hope and renewed life and celebration. I pray we each learn to use it more with expectations that God can do anything in love and respect of his Will.