

Unceasing Prayer: God's Method of Getting Things Done

SOMETIME IN THE BEGINNING YEARS of Youth for Christ, when giving more than one invitation or taking more than one offering were not yet regarded as cardinal sins, and when regular meetings and business sessions alike crackled with excitement, Armin Gesswein told me something I have never forgotten.

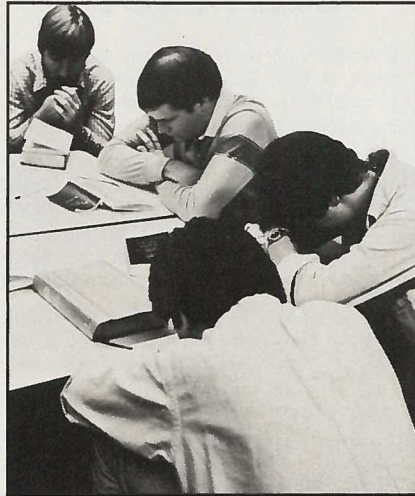
"Bob," he said, "you fellows are very busy promoting a program and an organization, and you are doing a pretty fair job of it. You will never achieve what God has in mind for you, however, unless you make prayer frontal, instead of an afterthought."

I greeted this statement with less than enthusiasm. "Brother," I said, "we are doing more praying than any group I know! We have at least one all-night prayer meeting each week of our conference, and there is an early morning prayer session every day. It is well attended, too. I know, because I am there oftener than not."

"That is not what I am talking about," he explained. "Prayer must be frontal—essential as a critical method—instead of an occasionally scheduled activity. Prayer brings revival [2 Chron. 7:14]. Prayer produces Holy Spirit-guided vision [Acts 13:1-4]. Prayer opens the prison doors and defeats the enemy [Acts 16]. Prayer must become your method, Bob, not just a good activity in which you engage from time to time!"

That conversation gave me an insight that has become a guiding principle of my life. Prayer is God's method of getting things done. Paul says "everything by prayer" (Phil. 4:6-7).

Prayer must become frontal in your personal life. I tell my students at The King's College, "Pray your way through the day!" This means, pray when you first awaken in the morning. Pray before you greet other members of the family, or your fellow students in the dorm. Pray before you enter a class (something, that is, other than, "Don't let him call on me today, Lord.") Pray before you answer the telephone. You don't know who is on the line. Why not be poised and ready to represent your Lord no matter who is



David Singer

calling? Pray before you go out on a date. You will have no regrets afterward if you pray before starting out. Pray before you start any given assignment, study, or business. Your mind will work better if you have prayed first. Pray before you open your mouth to give someone "a piece of your mind." God will help you keep your temper in check. And when the day is finished, turn out the pocketful of memories before your Lord and place them all under his matchless grace by faith, and drift off to sleep, secure in the knowledge that you have brought God into the business of living during the entire day.

Make prayer frontal in your planning for the future. One of the saddest tasks confronting the minister or Christian counselor is that of counseling a person who has made a mistake in his or her choice of life work or life companion. Life—and people—look different at 30 than they do at 18 or 20. Many a person, blithely sure that he knows all the answers, goes ahead with a lifetime decision without ever seeking the face of God for guidance. God, who alone knows the future, is willing to guide you according to his perfect plan. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Prayer must become frontal in organizational and business life. I used to tell our young men in Youth for Christ, "Don't call a committee meeting—call a

prayer meeting!" Form the habit of praying through the agenda before the business of the day begins. You will be delighted to see that meetings and speeches are shorter—and a lot sweeter. Pray about business decisions. Shall we buy this property, or not? Would we be well advised to take on a mortgage to finance this step of advancement, or not? Consensus is great, but oneness of heart growing out of prayer is wonderful!

Take God into your business plans by praying over them before you make a move. A businessman of my acquaintance did his expanding first, and his praying second, after he began to experience severe cash flow problems. He went broke. Sometimes, in his infinite grace, God will bail you out of an impossible situation in answer to your earnest prayers. Other times, however, it seems that he allows us to experience the natural result of our decisions, but goes with us through it all. Evelyn Christiansen says it succinctly: "First pray, then plan."

A friend of mine explained his evident success in the insurance business as follows: "Every morning," he said, "I lay out all my prospect cards on the floor of my office in a semicircle. Then I pray and ask Jesus which prospects he wants me to see today. When I get the answer, I go see them—that's it!"

Prayer becomes frontal when it affects every part of one's life. Look again at Paul's words: "Everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving." Everything, that is.

*O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!*

ROBERT A. COOK

Dr. Cook has served as president of The King's College, Briarcliffe Manor, New York, for 21 years. Author of the long-selling *Now That I Believe* (Moody, 1956), he is a former president of Youth for Christ International and a former vice-president of Scripture Press.

