

Using Prayer for Effective Living (reasons to pray)

by Craig Rusbult, for West Anaheim United Methodist Church, May 20, 2018

Exodus 17:11, "As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning,
but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning."

Human Actions + Divine Actions: in Exodus 17:11, God shows us that "what happens" depends on what humans do (with Moses praying + Joshua fighting) plus what God does.

Divine Actions: effects can be *internal* (affecting how you think-feel-do)* and *external* (affecting other people, and situations); both can improve thru prayer, —> **better results**.

* What? e.g. God commands you to fully love God (with your whole heart & mind) and fully love people (as you love yourself). How? God knows you cannot do these on your own, so God helps you love more fully, with a process-of-transforming that includes prayer.

Your worldview is: **your view of the world, used for living in the world.**

A Christian has a *theistic worldview*, believing (*unlike an atheist*) that **God exists** and (*unlike a deist*) that **God actively "does things" in the world** — as in Exodus 17:11.

In your thinking-and-actions, when you live as if God is not active in the world (as when you don't pray) you are not living your worldview, are not using it "for living in the world."

justifiable humility: Here, "**you**" is "you and other Christians, including **me**," so...

This talk is not me thinking "I'm holier than thou" so "let me show you how." Instead, I'm motivated by mistakes, by the many times I've thought "**oops**" because my actions were not effective, and when I asked "**why?**" to learn from experience, often my answers were... not enough attention to my process of thinking (get info, generate/evaluate ideas, decide, do) and not enough prayer for my *process of thinking* and for the people & situations involved.

During times of not-enough-prayer, usually I'm feeling overly busy with "too much to do and not enough time," so to "get more time" I just **DO** instead of **PRAY-and-DO**.

To change these decisions, I need faith that results (of Human Actions + Divine Actions) will be better when I pray-and-do. How to change? I do self-persuasion (reasons to pray) and put prayers on my daily to-do list for exercises, with more praying —> more enjoying, thankfully realizing "what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer."

Better Results: Thru prayer & in other ways, God helps you improve who you ARE and what you DO so He-and-you(-and-we) will produce better results because you have better... **character** by growing Spirit-fruit (Gal 5:22), **understandings** (of God, other people, you), **empathy & self-empathy** for them & you, **love** for God & people (actualized in attitudes, actions), **wisdom** in action-decisions, **quality of actions** now and (with learning) later, **action-results** for life-situations of me & others, **use of time** (re: what to do now & later).

But... Using Prayer is not Using God: You should use prayer so you can be used by God, to more effectively **BE & DO** what He wants, cooperating with Him to pursue **His goals** that usually (but not always) also are your goals. This is *Effective Living (as defined by God)* that is *winning with better results*. In prayer, what should you be asking? "Christian prayer invites Jesus Christ into a situation to do what He wants to do. (Rich Nathan)"

Process of Praying: Basically, it's being with God (to enjoy, talk, listen) and it varies with each person and their situation: it can be short or long (short is often useful when responding to daily life-situations, if you're aware of need and are ready-to-pray), based on Bible, ...

(for more ideas with more depth, designprocessineducation.com/design-thinking/mc-pr.htm)