

SSP

The Church of Jesus Christ



Rescue Me!

What to do when God just isn't answering your urgent prayer

You need God's help *now*, but He remains mysteriously silent...

By Sis. Christine Maddox

It is 7 a.m. on Friday morning. I don't actually have to be up until 8:30 this morning, and yet, here I sit, unable to sleep. I've been awake for over an hour now – and I'm very, very tired. So, why am I awake? Well, I have a severe pain in my neck that makes it extremely difficult for me to lie down and relax (which is typically a prerequisite for sleeping).

I've been dealing with this pain for over a week now. Sometimes it gets so bad it extends into the back of my head and down into my shoulders. At first, I was really irritated about the timing of the whole thing. You see, this week isn't just an average week for me; no, this is the

week I begin a graduate program at Florida State University. This week, I've had to attend several meetings and orientations, meet many faculty members and other students, socialize at department gatherings, and generally put my best foot forward. (By the way, putting your best foot forward is a difficult task when it is painful to stand, sit, and walk.)

In efforts to alleviate the pain, I saw a doctor, tried stretches, applied heat and ice, and continued to take pain medicine. I've been anointed, and I've continued to pray to God for relief. Sounds good, right? Well, I'll admit to you that my prayers

have verged on pleading, demanding, and complaining. This morning, as I lay in bed struggling to sit up, I asked in frustration, "Dear God, why aren't you healing me?!"

Why, God, Why?

Maybe you can relate. Perhaps you've never experienced neck pain like I've described, but chances are you've questioned God's timing. You've been frustrated that God doesn't seem to be listening to what you're asking – you didn't make the Varsity team, the relationship you're in just isn't working out like you'd planned, you didn't get the part in the school play, you don't look the exact way you wish you looked – why isn't God providing?

Although this type of questioning may be a natural, human tendency, it's important for us to remember what

Scripture tells us: “Not that I speak in respect for want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11). How can we find contentment in the middle of turmoil? How can we find contentment in situations we wouldn’t choose for ourselves? Can I really be content when I’m in constant discomfort and pain?

He Knows, We Don’t

Contentment comes when we recognize God’s omnipotent wisdom in all situations. Contentment comes when we trust God to answer our prayers in His time. That doesn’t mean we stop praying for things we want and need. Matthew 21:22 instructs, “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” Clearly, God wants us to pray to Him! But there is a simple word in that verse that instructs us how to pray: *believing*.

Our prayers must be backed by belief in God’s greatness, wisdom, and timing. We must believe He *can* and *will* provide for us according to His great plan. Remember, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Trust His Timing

While the healing, miracle, change, job, money, relationship, or whatever we ask for may not come right when *we think* it should come, it will come when God *knows* it should come. Ecclesiastes 3 tells us there is a time for everything – a time to be born, to die, to plant, to gather, to cry, to laugh, to mourn, to lose, and to heal.

Who am I to lie in bed, expressing frustration because God isn’t healing my neck when I want? God – the same one who created the heavens and earth – sees a bigger picture of our lives than we are capable of seeing ourselves.

When we don’t understand God’s timing, instead of growing frustrated

with God, we should ask Him to enlighten our minds: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering” (James 1:5-6).

The condition for prayer in this verse? “But let him ask in faith...” We should continue to pray to God and ask Him for what we *think* we need; however, we should never lose the belief and faith that God *knows* what we need, when we need it.

The mission of the **Student Support Program** is to create and uphold a support network among the high school and college students in the church, uplift and send words of encouragement to young people. Promote youth involvement in the works of the church.

Behind the 8 Ball

So is God going to leave you hanging when you need him most? Of course not. But it might feel that way to you. Think of Job. When the boils started to burst and the dogs started to lick them, I’m sure he thought, “OK, God. This has gone far enough. Save me from this *now!*” But God didn’t provide relief at that moment. He let Job suffer for a while. When things seem like they’re unbearable, I Cor. 10:13 says

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able

God won’t give you more than you can handle. He knows what you’re capable of bearing. Even if it seems too heavy, and it often does, remember that it won’t break you.

Questions to Ask Yourself

What are the unanswered prayers in your life?

Has anything good come from having to wait for the answer?

Do you have feelings of resentment or betrayal toward God because of these unanswered prayers? If so, confess it so you can let go of it.

Are you regularly praising God for the things He *has* given you? (Why would He give you more if you aren’t thankful for what you have? Matt 25:29)