


 "I used to be a Bible teacher."

TC's Thoughts for Discussion

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"...The **effectual fervent** prayer of a righteous man availeth much." You're likely familiar with that scripture. It's at James 5:16. But does it mean what you've always been told it means? Can't recall what it was that piqued my curiosity, but I went to the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible to find out what it meant...in the New Testament Greek language. It's *Strong's* reference G-1756, and the Greek word for the KJV phrase, "effectual fervent" is transliterated, *energeō*:

1. to be operative, be at work, put forth power
2. to effect
3. to display one's activity, show one's self operative

Surely enough, its meaning is not a good match for what I had always been taught. And then I remembered this verse: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." —Paul, at Ephesians 6:13

Perhaps you can see why my perspective on prayers of petition started evolving. I began to contemplate the notion that "effectual fervent" petitions might actually include observable goal-oriented action and prayer. Then I remembered this profound observation: "When the Holy Spirit enables a person to achieve a goal that he'd normally NOT be able to achieve, it's a lot like driving a car with power steering and power brakes. That person must go through the exact same physical motions as *with* manual steering and brakes, but the task becomes a lot easier."

For some reason, then, this verse came to mind: "And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take [it], and likewise [his] scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." —Jesus, at Luke 22:35,36

> A purse is a money bag; but I had to look up that word, "scrip." Strong's reference for it is G-4082.

The transliterated Greek word is *pēra*—"a leathern sack, in which travelers and shepherds carried their provisions."

From that point forward, Jesus clearly expected his followers to do a lot more than JUST PRAY for protection and safe passages throughout their lives and ministries. For their journeys they were to take extra pairs of shoes, changes of clothing, food and water. But wait! He also told them to carry swords! Why? Some may naïvely argue that the swords were only for killing animals for food. You may suspect another important application—self protection. That's why large numbers of practical realists in the U.S. keep firearms...for self protection. Plenty of intelligent (and now scriptural) rationale to support that practice and the mindset.

All that's in the New Testament. Are there Old Testament parallels? Consider this: God fought many of the Hebrews' battles for them, but He still expected them to maintain well-trained standing armies that were able and ready to do battle on a moment's notice. Sounds like God's M.O. is unchanging; doesn't it? "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." —Paul, at Hebrews 13:8

Given all that, why are so many Christian believers NOT involved in the critical battle to salvage the once-Christian U.S.A.? Some may be of this mindset: "I hate my government and the anti-Christian curriculum in our public schools, but I live too comfortably to get motivated enough to do something about it." Millions of others, though, fully trust in preachers who keep telling them, "**Just pray!**"

Just pray? Really? Is that scriptural? "But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand." --Ezekiel 33:6

After reading the 3rd chapter of Ecclesiastes just before the Revolutionary War a preacher named Peter Muhlenberg declared, "There is a time to preach and a time to pray but there is also a time to fight, and that time has now come!" When the smoke cleared, America had won. Please make a note and spread the word!

—T. C. Newsome 

PS: Post a comment or question or just read what others are saying: www.DYPK.org/apps/blog.

I was a successful Bible teacher for a LOT of years—big sanctuary classes.

I knew what my denomination believed and that's what I taught.

Yes, I should've checked it out to make sure it was true.

So why didn't I do that? Well, maybe I didn't do that for the same reason that you haven't really checked out what your denomination teaches. "In religion and politics, people's beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten at second hand, and without examination." —Mark Twain

