

# *Intercession or Intervention?*

by

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*“Whenever we step back from identification with God’s interest in others into sympathy with them, the vital connection with God has gone, we have put our sympathy, our consideration for them in the way, and this is a deliberate rebuke to God.” Oswald Chambers*

It's hard to believe that our intercession in prayer for someone might either be expressed to God inappropriately, or we are seeing things in their life inaccurately. This would apply to our own perceived needs as well. Don't get me wrong, for I think any intercession in prayer on behalf of someone else's needs over our own self-centered prayers is likely appreciated by the Father. After all, it takes quite a bit of effort to consider someone else's needs before our own, doesn't it? But, can we really know the depth of what is needed for someone, or even our self? Is it possible that our request, if granted, could actually create more harm than good, especially if that person's spiritual development is at stake? We can never know those hidden needs, but God does know them, and this is why we must entrust someone to God and what He is doing in their life, rather than *intervene* for them. Note I said “*intervene*” and not “*intercede*.” There is a reason. If in our perspective we feel that we need to give *intervening* prayer, we are in essence saying to God that we know better than He. As humans we can never see into a life like God can, and He alone can know what is best for this person. He knows how a particular answered prayer might help or hurt someone far better than we could ever know. Sure, we need to go to the Father and ask for the obvious needs to be met for the person. This is indeed a faith building process for us, as we might see those particular prayers answered. But, don't limit your faith in God only to seeing an obvious need being met, for other needs might need to be met first. Therefore, I believe in our intercession it is far more beneficial for the person that we ask God to bless that person by doing whatever is necessary to bring him or her into a special closeness to Him. This close proximity with Him will create a condition that causes all other needs to be addressed by God, for through this closeness with Him flows His power and presence that helps us conform to His image. In this place with Him, we are able to commune with Him and know His heart and perspective. We begin to see things and needs as He does, and then joy and peace takes us from being propped up, to being overwhelmed with His goodness and the security we have in Him, which is a blessed place to be. So my question is do we want to take this opportunity from someone, because we are short-sighted in our prayer by asking only for obvious needs?

Meeting obvious needs might in fact only prop up a loved one, friend, or someone we are concerned for, much like co-dependency does. Co-dependency is a condition we will never escape until we bottom out and find a way other than what we get from those who help us maintain our negative condition. We will never grow out of it unless someone helps us break our dependency, by ceasing to support our poor choices and the consequences that come from those choices. It is the same dynamic with our effort to use God as our bailout

plan to maintain a bad condition we keep returning to. God the Father wants better than this for His child, and it is His work to address deeper needs that need to be worked on for escape, and overcoming a repetitive, serious condition. Therefore, some prayer requests will not be granted for this reason.

We never know what God sees in us that prevent us from being formed into godly people. Because of a limited perspective, we only know that our need or a person's condition is painful, and we want out of it ASAP. But there is a big question we need to ask and get an answer to. What if the challenge in our life or someone else's life is permitted by God to open up a person's heart and eyes to things that have hindered their walk with Him? What if giving a person what they desire hurts them in the long term? Can it be better for a person that we seek our solutions over God's plan and that we *intervene* rather than *intercede*? Do we need to *intervene* with a loving, caring Father who loves His children beyond our understanding, because we think we know better than He?

I'm reminded of one of my children when she was sixteen years old. Now I do not have to tell many of you that this age represents bazaar behavior, defiance and a little temporary insanity for all of us. This condition typifies teenage years, and it is nothing new. For example, the following words were penned over one hundred years ago, and we see it hasn't changed much today:

*“When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years.” Mark Twain*

Now if the truth is that we lack the maturity or insight to see how getting our way will hurt us as teenagers, how much more so is our ignorance compared to God's insight into our true needs? My daughter didn't see it clearly at first. But she did when I withheld a blessing that I wanted to give her until her heart was right. Let me explain and hopefully you will get the point I am making.

She was at that age when having a car was needed for the family, and not only for her needs. It represented a little more transportation help for my wife with picking up the other children, and giving the busyness of a cheerleader a little help in getting to practices, school and such. When buying her that first car, I remembered my own lack of driving skill at her age, and I knew she didn't need a nice looking car for the first one. She needed a safe, reliable, ugly practice car. I allowed her to be part of the selection process and discovered in a hurry that ugly wasn't an option, and it became a struggle for her to see it. I tried to convince her I was right and to trust me, for better would come. It was a battle to help her understand that a reliable car was more important than outside looks. But it became apparent that she needed to learn another lesson and therefore she got what she wanted. She got a pretty on the outside, piece of junk on the inside car that would prove to be a problem and embarrassment for her, and one she would regret. But, it was cheap and she needed her first lesson with trusting her dad much more than anything, much like we need to trust our heavenly DAD when He wants something else for us other than our perceived need. After a few weeks of breakdowns, and the most embarrassing noises a car could make when a popular teenage girl drove it into a parking lot, she had had enough. This came to a head when her own friends told her she was driving a piece of junk, and it embarrassed her. She stormed in one day and demanded that she deserved a better car. Even though I agreed with her and knew it to be a piece of junk, I saw a terrible attitude that concerned me most. I thanked her for her insight and asked for the keys to her piece of junk car. The next day I sold this car and got my money back, and then informed her that she would now be able to ride a new school bus over an hour

to school, for I felt the bus was a much better match up for her lifestyle and perspective. Well this didn't go down very well in the house for a while, for it was inconvenient for all. But it had to be done. This went on for a few weeks and I watched an unrelenting attitude in her. My wife was asking me when I would relent and my response was that I wanted to give her a better car. I had always had it in mind to do so. But, with her attitude as it was I couldn't do it for fear of rewarding bad behavior. This is similar to why God often waits to answer our prayers for His help. He does not want to reward bad behavior. Therefore delays with prayers being answered are often because God is waiting for our attitude to change, and that is essential for helping us progress into better people.

Finally the day arrived that my daughter connected the dots and came to me repentant for her attitude. She recognized her lack of trust in me, and her spoiled attitude. She regretted it, and said that she would trust me with whatever decision I would make about a car for her. I could see her remorse and that truth had made its way to her heart. It was what I was waiting for. The next day she was seen driving a nice looking, reliable car, for I gave to her what I had always wanted to give her. But, until she got to the point that she could handle the gift with humility and trust, I was prevented from giving to her what we desired for her. By the way, this daughter has emerged as a godly woman who is a real hero to me. She has become all I could ever have hoped for. But it might not have turned out that way if she had maintained her perspective. Now, if I a mere man could see this hidden need, and wait to act on my own desire to bless her with that which I had been wanting to give her all along, could it be the same with God? He sees needs in us far greater than we can ever see, and those hidden needs may very well take on greater importance in His eyes than ours.

If you are asking God for His help, whether it is for yourself or someone else, you need to understand that like my desire to bless my daughter, much greater is our Father's desire to bless us. He has something in mind for us that is far greater than the "pretty junk" we want for ourselves. But, we must trust Him and wait Him out to give us what He wants. Sure, we need to make needs known to God, whether they are our own or for someone else. I'm sure He already knows those needs, but He still invites us to ask His help. Therefore we should do so. But, why not ask for God's insight into what He sees is needed most, instead of using your own insight? Why not instead ask for the blessing of coming close to Him and to allow Him to reveal what the real need in your heart is, rather than the obvious? You might discover that you have been asking for the wrong things. Many times we are making *intervention* rather than *intercession* for others and our self, and like Chambers said, "***we have put our sympathy, our consideration for them in the way, and this is a deliberate rebuke to God.***" Make sure you understand and state it clearly that you know God knows what is best, and you will trust Him for the answer He gives. Then you are depending on His wisdom and not your own for the answer.