

PRAYER AND FASTING LEAGUE

By Mrs. Julia A. Shelhamer

Some years ago we were so swamped with letters requesting prayer for unsaved loved ones that we decided to band together in one grand fasting and prayer service on Fridays, each one in his own home, and great have been the results.

This service has circled the globe. A lady in Africa told me recently that she always gets a great blessing from her Friday's devotion—that she could feel the force of the many prayers uniting with hers on that day. It is a great joy to know that people in various lands are praying for you and yours. Christ said, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:18).

Fasting is beneficial for the soul, mind and body. It is a little self-denial which brings one nearer to God. Christ fasted during His temptation; and when His disciples asked why they could not cast out an evil spirit, the Lord said, "This kind goeth not forth, but by prayer and fasting." In Matt. 6:16, He gives directions as to how to fast. Queen Esther saved the whole Jewish nation by proclaiming a fast, and Nineveh was saved by the same means. After Pentecost the converts and apostles had prayer meetings while fasting, when wonderful things were accomplished. Read Acts 13 and 10:30. Peter received his call to the Gentiles while fasting. Daniel abstained, i. e., he "ate no pleasant bread" for three weeks, at the end of which his prayer was answered (Dan. 10:18). Ezra received Divine guidance through fasting and prayer (Ezra 8:21-23).

A gentleman who was greatly grieved over the waywardness of his son, decided to fast and pray for him every night instead of taking supper. At first the lad was very disdainful, but as time went on and he heard the low, pleading voice of his father his hard heart was softened. At the end of three weeks the son could not eat. He arose from the table, rushed upstairs, fell on his knees by his father, and gave himself to God.

GETTING EVEN

"I'll get even with him. You see if I don't."

Uncle John looked up from the article he was writing. "Who is it you are going to get even with?" He smiled into Fred's frowning face.

"It's Frank Lane. He's always playing some low down trick on us because we won't let him play on our nine. We were playing with my ball today—it was a dollar ball, too—and Harry batted it clear over the fence. Frank got it and threw it as far as he could out into the lake." Fred's eyes were flashing.

"And you want to get even with such a low down trick, as you rightly call it." Uncle John said slowly.

"I will, too. I know what I can do."

Uncle John's pencil had been moving swiftly over the paper as they talked. Now he motioned Fred to step nearer. A few lines had marked out a high road and near it a low, marshy ground. "If a fellow does a low-down trick, he lowers himself. He must be down here," Uncle John explained, making a mark for a figure down on the marshy ground. "Now, if you are up here, what will you have to do to get even with him?"

Fred's face grew thoughtful as he studied the sketch. "I suppose I'd have to get down as low as he is," he said slowly.

"Exactly. Now tell me, wasn't that just what you intended to do—to do something just as mean to him as he had done to you; in other words, to lower yourself to his level?"

"Yes, it was," Fred admitted.

Uncle John said no more. He had a way of leaving a fellow to think things out for himself.

Two days later Fred came in, his eyes dancing. "Well, Uncle John, I got even with Frank," he announced.

Uncle John looked surprised. He turned sharp eyes on a laughing face.

"It was just this way, you see: I got to thinking how I'd feel if the boys wouldn't let me play on the nine, and I made up my mind I'd feel just as Frank did. And, likely as not, I'd throw their old ball away too. So day before yesterday I told Frank he could play in my place. He wasn't going to do it at first; he seemed to think it was some kind of trick. Then he went into it; say, but he can play ball! He made more home runs than anybody else. Frank came and brought me a new ball tonight. He went out into Mr. Nelson's field and pulled mustard in the hot sun to get the money to pay for it with. So, it seems to me, he is up the level again, and we're even up there. And I tell you, it feels better than getting even the other way."—Sel.

A TEST OF FAITH

An exchange tells the story of a man who was invited by an artist to come to his house to see a picture which he had just finished. When the visitor arrived he was shown into a room which was pitch dark, and there he was left for a quarter of an hour alone. He expressed surprise, when the artist came to him, at the reception which had been given him.

"Surprised, were you?" said the artist. "Well, I knew if you came to the studio with the glare of the street in your eyes you would never be able to appreciate the fine coloring of my picture. Therefore I left you in the dark till the glare had worn away from your eyes."

Is not that the secret of many an hour in which God leaves His children in the darkness? When we are dazzled by the pleasures and successes of this present life—though in themselves they may be innocent and happy—we cannot see the things that are unseen, and an interval is necessary in the darkness until the glare has worn away from our eyes.—Alliance Weekly.

PRAYER

Prayer is a small word for a tremendous thing. We often use it carelessly, because it is a familiar word. But the thought of speaking directly to God, Maker of all worlds, Ruler of all the universe, sublime in power and majesty, has awe and terror in it. It is not to be wondered at that in many cases it takes the extreme of sudden need to make a soul desperate enough to cry out to God. How can the mighty Creator listen to man? Yet not only does God listen to prayer but He encourages it and answers it. He gives us this amazing privilege freely for use every day and every hour. The tiniest child may kneel and pray, sure of hearing and of tender love. Prayer is a daily miracle whose wonder is ever renewed. It leads man into the actual presence of God.—Selected.

WAS IT YOU?

The devil held a great anniversary, at which his agents were convened to report the results of their several missions. "I let loose the wild beasts of the desert," said one, "on a caravan of Christians, and their bones are now bleaching on the sands."

"What of it?" said the devil. "Their souls are all saved."

"I drove the East Wind," said another, "against a ship freighted with Christians, and they were all drowned."

"What of it?" said the devil. "Their souls were all saved."

"For ten years I tried to get a single Christian asleep," said a third, "and at last I succeeded, and left him so!"

Then the devil shouted, and the nightstars of hell sang for joy.—Luther.

EXPECTING GOD TO ANSWER

When Hudson Taylor was going out to found the China Inland Mission he went on a sailing vessel. When the party was somewhere in the Straits of Malacca there was a tap at Mr. Taylor's stateroom door one morning, and upon his invitation to come in the door opened and admitted the captain. He said, "Mr. Taylor, we have no wind, but have a strong current, and we are being borne toward an island where the people are heathen."

"Well," replied Hudson Taylor, "I really do not know what I can do for you. I do not know a point of navigation."

"No," answered the captain, "but I am told that God answers your prayers."

"He does," replied Hudson Taylor.

"Then I wish you would pray for wind. It is our only chance."

"Well, I will, provided you get the sails unfurled."

"That would be foolish; and I do not wish to be the laughing-stock of my men."

"Very well, I am not going to pray for wind if you are not ready to receive it."

"Well, then, I will, but there is no sign of it anywhere."

Three-quarters of an hour had not elapsed before another knock came at Hudson Taylor's door, and the captain returned saying his faith had been rewarded.—From 5,000 Best Illustrations, by Hallock.

"MY SUN"

I went one cold, windy day to see a poor young girl, kept at home by a lame hip. Her room was on the north side of a bleak house. "Poor girl," I thought, "what a cheerless life is yours."

"You never have any sun," I said; "not a ray comes in at these windows. Sunshine is everything. I love it!"

"Oh," she answered, with the sweetest of smiles, "my sun pours in at every window and through every crack."

I looked surprised.

"The Sun of Righteousness," she said softly. "Jesus—He shines in here, and makes everything bright to me."—H. W. B.

According to an exchange, Clyde A. Haysmer, M. D., of the medical staff of New England Sanitarium, estimates that of the 20,000 cases of cancer of the mouth in the United States, 5,000 were caused by smoking tobacco.—Selected.