

“Our faith is not in vain!”

I surely can't speak for everyone, but I think I can speak for the majority of us when I say there have been numerous times when I prayed for someone or something (often along with a multitude of others), and it didn't turn out the way I (we) hoped it would - sometimes I felt like my faith and my prayers were in vain. My most recent disappointment would have to be when we were all fervently praying, asking God to heal my wife, and He did...just not the way we hoped for. Was our faith in vain? NO! Jesus set her free from her cancer and made her whole - in Glory!

Several years ago I learned a lesson when praying with a friend of mine and a member of our church, Chuck Everett. Chuck was the caregiver for his wife Jan who had advanced Parkinson's disease, and relied on Chuck's assistance in various ways. On his way to the mailbox early one morning, Chuck had a very serious stroke on his left side which was instantly debilitating; he fell to the ground and lay there nearly six hours before being found.

I went to the hospital the next day to see Chuck, and before I left, asked if I could pray for him; things looked really bad for the Everetts - there was no way Chuck could care for Jan, let alone himself. Jan would by necessity need to enter a nursing facility and Chuck's only hope (apart from a divine healing) was months of aggressive physical therapy followed by him needing to move to Tennessee to live with his daughter, leaving his precious wife behind.

As I prayed over Chuck and his dire situation, I asked for the obvious, that our faithful, loving God would miraculously heal my friend Chuck and make him good as new. I was also led to pray that God would work in Chuck and Jan, and in this very uncertain situation to *work everything out to bring about the very best possible outcome from this mess for everyone involved*. Did God miraculously heal my friend? No, but he did give him the grace to push through therapy and make it to Tennessee.

In addition, God granted him favor as Chuck worked diligently to get Jan moved up to a facility in Tennessee - she ended up about two miles from where Chuck and his daughter live. In addition, Chuck was able to drive his car again in less than a year, and in so doing was able to take Jan out for meals and movies on a regular basis! That to me was the best possible scenario for them in a potentially bad situation; once again, our faith and our prayers were not in vain!

The enemy wants us to think that if our prayers aren't answered exactly as we think they should be, then we are praying in vain. I will repeat again what I said last week - we **must not** put our faith in what God does or doesn't do for us! Our faith **must** be in Who He is, and in **His plan** for our lives and the lives of those we love and are praying for! Amen!

