

[Day #26] Part 2: Prayer – Worship in Reverent Submission

Read: Hebrews 5:7

Hebrews 5:7 says that Jesus' prayer during His greatest time of crisis was heard "because of His reverent submission." Reverent submission is critical, not just in prayer, but for our daily lives. Without it, faith in our always-good, all-powerful, all-knowing God is impossible. The opposite of reverent submission is the spirit seen in the pathetic story of author Charles Templeton.

In his earliest ministry, Templeton traveled and preached with Billy Graham. Of the two, Templeton was said to have the stronger gifts, but he also had something Billy Graham didn't: growing doubts. Lee Strobel's interview with Templeton for his book, *The Case for Faith*, provides insight into this man's fall into agnosticism. This fall can be traced back to Templeton's disagreement with how God was running the planet. Safe to say, Templeton definitely lacked reverent submission.

According to Templeton, his faith finally broke under the weight of a picture in a *Life* magazine article on a devastating drought in Africa. In the picture, an African woman holds her dead baby, her face looking in agony toward heaven. Templeton says, "I thought, 'Is it possible to believe that there is a loving or caring Creator when all this woman needed was *rain*?''" (*The Case for Faith* p. 14) Templeton cites other reasons it was impossible for him to believe in the God of the Bible, such as the Bible's teaching on hell and the existence of evil and disease.

Nearing the end of his life in 1999, Templeton published, *Farewell to God: My Reasons for Rejecting the Christian Faith*, in which he explains why he abandoned his faith. One of those reasons, which he describes in especially horrific detail, is Alzheimer's disease. As it turns out, he had recently been diagnosed with the disease, which would take his life two years after his book was published.

Templeton's arrogance is slightly reminiscent of what Job was starting to sound like, but with one important difference: Job was humble and quickly repented of "darkening" God's character, while Templeton dug in his heels in human reasoning.

Prideful arrogance, the opposite of reverent submission, describes Templeton's error, and explains why his story ended very differently from Job's, and for that matter, Billy Graham's. Is there any more poignant way to illustrate the importance of reverent submission than the divergent trajectories of the lives of Templeton and Graham?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What are some common issues debated today that can make believers struggle with doubt similar to how Templeton struggled?

How could a person facing genuine doubt respond with *reverent submission* as Billy Graham did in stark contrast to Templeton? What does it look like?

What can a believer do to avoid the error that Charles Templeton fell into?