

Calling Home

A quick internet search says that currently twenty-seven percent of the homes in the United States of America have a landline. Twenty years ago, that number was ninety percent. If you are under the age of twenty, you may not be familiar with collect calling. When calling collect, you dial the operator, they make the call and ask the person you are calling if they will accept the charges of a collect call. Collect calls were not cheap, and used only when necessary.

In nineteen forty-nine, Billy Graham had an experience which had a life-long impact on his ministry. By that time, he had been doing his evangelical crusades for a couple of years, together with his good friend and colleague, Charles Templeton. Charles began to seriously question his own belief in the word of God, which in time caused him to forsake Christianity altogether. This came as a shock to Billy and severely tested his own faith, especially when at a meeting in California, Charles challenged Billy to his face. That night, out of desperation for his own soul's salvation, he placed a collect call to his parents back east, three hours later than California time. His mother accepted the collect call, wondering what could have happened to her son for him to call at such a late hour. He then shared the burden of his heart with his mother, while she shushed his father who complained in the background about the cost of the collect call. After the call ended, his parents fell to their knees in prayer, petitioning God for their son. Meanwhile Billy placed another collect call home to his wife and family. His dear wife lovingly told him it was not her voice he needed to hear, but the voice of his heavenly Father. Not long afterwards he had that conversation with his Lord, alone in the dark, with his Bible on a tree stump. God answered his prayer and restored his faith. This experience proved to be a turning point in his faith and evangelical ministry.

Occasionally, I also face obstacles in life that have me calling home. Not a literal collect call, but a call to my heavenly Father who has already paid the price for those calls. I placed one today, and the Lord accepted it, and we had a good talk. I told him what was bothering me, while he listened. Then he reminded me of an earlier talk we had a few days ago. In that conversation, he told me to leave everything to him, to be quiet and trust. I so much appreciated talking with him. It was so worth it, so uplifting and encouraging. Now that I think of it, I am not sure if I called first or if he called me. I think he must have placed a desire in my heart to talk to him, because I felt it. I felt uncertain, troubled, and fearful. I know he already knew how I was feeling and knew that I needed him. He placed that longing in my heart, and I answered the call to prayer. Strange how that works. God allows us to feel lonely, so we turn to him. He never forces us, but he stands and waits to answer our call.

Perhaps you are feeling overwhelmed and needing more than you have. Maybe even now the Lord is waiting for your call for help or whatever else you need. Maybe he would like a call of thankfulness and praise. I am sure he would like to hear you tell him how much you love and need him.

The good news is that it is better than a collect call from a landline phone. It is even better than a cellphone. You need no money or even a phone to reach him, all that is needed is a humble, needy heart. I am afraid if we had to call him on a phone, there would not be many conversations. Can you imagine picking up the receiver and dialing God's number and waiting for him to pick up on the other end? What if he was too busy answering other calls to talk to you? "Oh, hello God, how are you today? Do you remember me? You got a minute; I need to talk to you a bit." Then God would answer, "Oh, hello. Yes, I am fine. Who did you say this is? You say it is who? Ah, yes, yes, I remember you. It is good to hear your voice! No, I am not too busy at the moment. What can I do for you?" God would then tell us what we needed to know and hang up until we needed him again. A call like that would take a lot of courage. We would always be thinking that we hoped we were not bothering him or taking him away from more important things.

I am so thankful that God and prayer are nothing like that. We can reach him anytime, anywhere, and under any circumstance. This is nothing new, the technology of prayer has been around for thousands of years. A whisper, a sigh, a closet, a cry, any place, any time. It only takes a minute, and his line is never busy, and he never sleeps. Prayer is more than words, it is our heart communicating with our maker, even when words fail.
See Romans 8:26-28.

When that call to prayer comes, do not neglect it. You may never know the power and courage that God is just waiting to give you unless you ask him. He is only a prayer away.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:26-28 KJV

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Luke 11:9-10 KJV

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Isaiah 65:24 KJV

The Unlikely Writer - Jeff Goertzen

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