

## Asleep At The Wheel

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According to Mark chapter 9, Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration glowing from the encounter with Moses and Elijah. But as He descended He came upon a scene of turmoil and conflict. A man had brought his child to the disciples to be healed of a spirit, and the disciples were unable to drive the spirit out of the boy. After Jesus had driven the spirit out, the disciples asked Jesus, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” Jesus indicated that this kind of spirit could only come out by prayer.



When I read that passage recently I was struck by that last phrase, “only by prayer.” Had the disciples been trying to cast out a spirit without praying? Were they attempting to deal with this demoniac agent without pleading with God for help? I am not sure what they attempted to do or how they attempted to do it, but they obviously were not spending much time in prayer. The disciples had this problem on other occasions as well. A few hours before the crucifixion of the Saviour, when Jesus was stumbling from the burden placed upon Him, when His face was distorted and His sweat was like blood, when the very climax of the plan of salvation was being reached, the disciples slept. Jesus had begged them to pray for Him, he had warned them of their great need, and still they slept. Three times Jesus returned to His closest friends, James, John, and Peter, and each time He found them sleeping.

How often do we fall asleep at the wheel? We realize the significance of falling asleep when we are driving, but do we still struggle to stay awake as we dash down the highway at speeds in excess of 110 km/hr.? We work in a pressure-packed environment, we encounter a continuous stream of problems, we are constantly trying to motivate students, mitigate conflicts, maintain order, and be calm, cool, and collected in the process. Yet, how often do we fail to take time to offer up a prayer? How often do we attempt to cast out demons depending on our own power? My role as administrator means that I face a constant barrage of challenges, all the way from plunging toilets to dealing with difficult discipline issues. As I deal with each issue, it seems easy to develop a habit of independence, rather than developing a habit of prayer. We need to be constantly “watching and praying” for help in all the situations that we find ourselves in. As Ellen White indicates:

You need not go to the ends of the earth for wisdom, for God is near. It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you. (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 141)”

I have a vision of a school where each staff member is like Epaphras. Paul mentions this person at the end of Colossians and indicates he was “always wrestling in prayer” (Colossians 4:12). I believe that if we could follow this example, our schools would flourish under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I imagine that there are schools where administration and staff are “always wrestling in prayer.” Unfortunately, I also imagine many of our schools where we go about our business and forget the divine help that is offered us. What would a school be like that was constantly praying together? What if each staff member devoted significant time praying for God to fulfill the promises of the Bible? What if we followed the counsel found in *Education*: “For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received” (p. 258). If there is one message that is repeated over and over in the Bible it is that found in 1 Chronicles 7:14: “... if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” Such a simple formula, but sometimes easily forgotten.