

No concern is too small for prayer.

A reflection by Danny Nelson Schweers for July 7, 2024.

Usually I only pray for the big things. On my prayer list are a colleague with colon cancer, a neighbor with dementia just admitted to a memory-care unit, a neighbor whose wife just died, a friend whose mother just died, a colleague whose nephew is still in a coma, and a young neighbor who had her arm amputated because of her addiction to needles and drugs. God help them! But, really, no concern is too small for prayer.

Yesterday, for example, I was working in the yard, daubing concentrated herbicide onto freshly-cut bamboo shoots, when I lost track of the bright yellow cap to the bottle. Did I pray? No. I did not think I needed God's help. But where had that cap gone?

I turned over leaves and twigs. Nothing! I looked over a wider area near where I last remembered holding that cap. Nothing! Then it occurred to me to pray, to ask God's help in finding it. Immediately after praying, I mean immediately, I caught sight of the cap out of the corner of my eye, several feet from where I thought it had dropped.

Back in the last century, back when I was just becoming a Christian, I was working for a weekly newspaper. One of my jobs was collecting coins from newspaper racks around the city. I had a bag of quarters, perhaps 300 of them, when it went missing.

I searched for that bag of quarters. I retraced my tracks back to the last newspaper rack. Nothing! I retraced my tracks forward. Nothing! The quarters were gone.

That evening, among Christian friends, I shared my story. One friend suggested we pray for the return of the quarters. We did, on the spot. The next day I got a call from my bank. Someone had found my bag of quarters. A deposit slip had been inside the bag, the deposit slip had my account number on it, so people knew how to get the bag back to me.

Once I was with a group of liberal Baptists (yes, they exist) sitting on chairs in a circle. Each of us had been served cake on small china saucers. Mine slipped from my hand and fell. Not wanting it to break on the hardwood floor, I stuck out my foot to soften its landing. It did not break, but bounced. One person immediately announced that they had prayed for the saucer on its way down. "So did I!" said another. Both believed their prayers were answered. Who am I to say otherwise? Somehow I knew to stick out my foot. Somehow they knew to pray. All in the time it takes a saucer to fall from a lap to the floor.

Such answers to prayer are troubling, especially when the concerns are so small. Is God really involved with the minutia of each of our lives? Is the Holy Spirit hovering nearby, just waiting to be involved in each moment? Apparently so!

Although the concerns in these three examples are trifling — a lost cap to a plastic bottle, a lost bag of quarters, a falling piece of china — they all suggest that there is no concern too small for prayer.

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