

Sunday School Lesson

(Continued from Page 2)
 tax collector had nothing in his favor except the one thing needful namely a penitent heart; and he was justified.

The Christian's Prayer

The tax collector gives us the right lead for prayer. The form of our prayer is not the essential, but whether we have "the faith which lays hold on God and touches the heart of the Father who knew us long before we came to him."

The balance wheel of a Christian's prayer is the Father's will.

"Not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). John Baillie in his devotional classic put it this way: "In the last resort Christian prayer has always left it to God's own wisdom to decide what precisely He is to do about our need." The Christian's true stance in prayer is humility.

Our prayers and our character are directly related. Infrequent and superficial prayers express a shallow character. Selfish prayers reveal that we put ourselves at the center rather than God. We pray best when the Holy Spirit himself is guiding our prayers. He who has learned how to

pray," says William Law, "has earned the greatest secret of a holy and happy life."

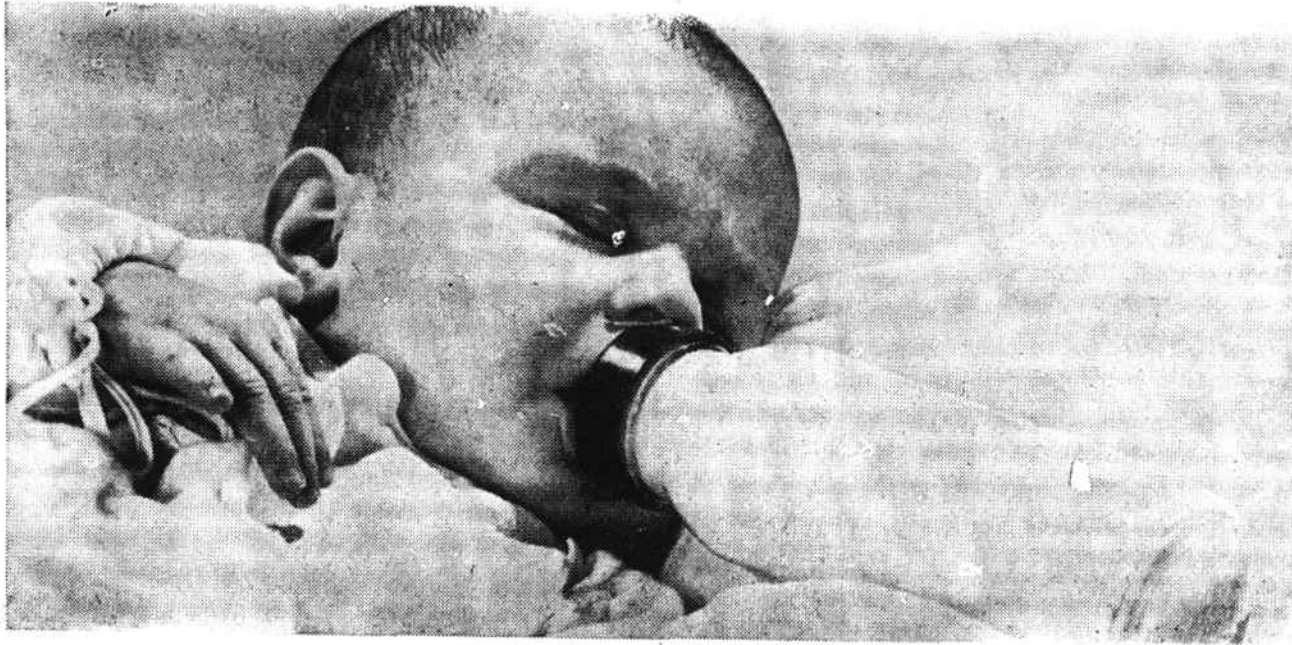
What Do You Think?

How do you reconcile earnest prayer that is unanswered with the idea of a loving God? What prayer habits—such as preparation for prayer, time, place, method and types of prayers—mean most to you? What are some ways in which our prayers reveal self-centeredness? How can we learn to shift the center of our lives from ourselves to God? How does one help answer his own prayers? How could

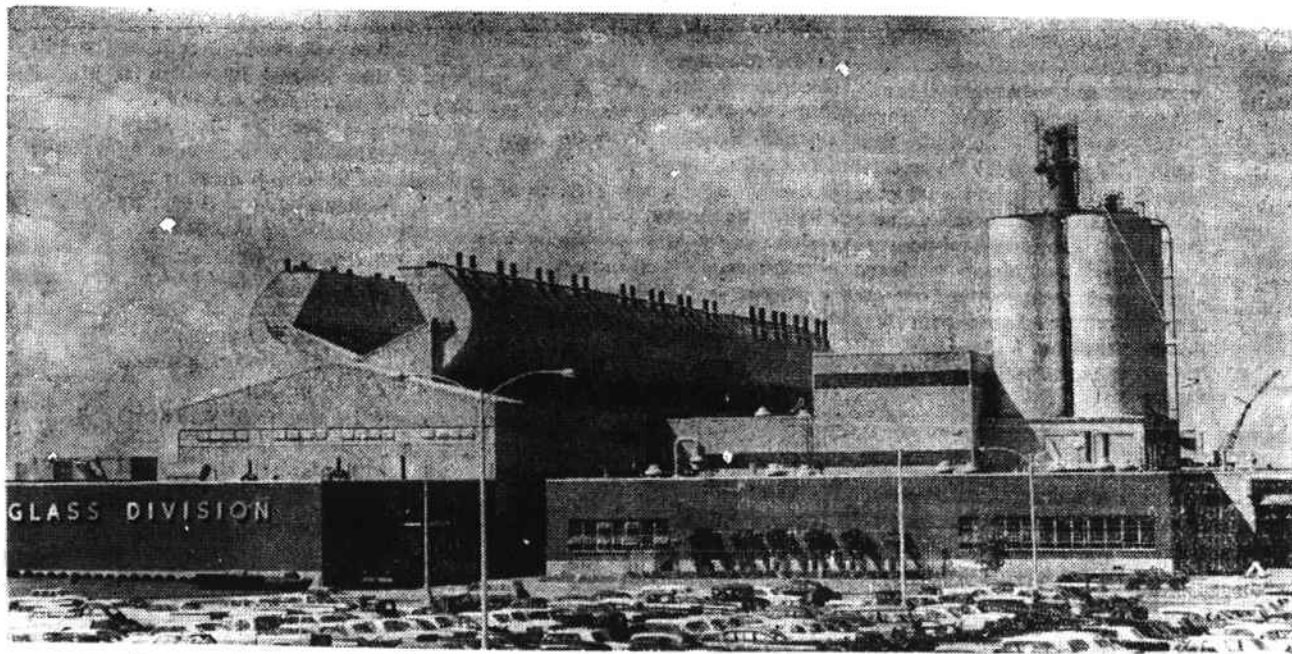
Christians make their prayers more Christlike?

Eternal Father, so possess our hearts by thy Holy Spirit that our prayers may be prompted by thee. Teach us so to love all thy children that we will become faithful intercessors in their behalf and thus become instruments for the advancement of thy Kingdom. Keep us in thy service by thy grace and for thy glory. Amen.

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