

If I Regard Iniquity in my Heart

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Sovereign will not hear.” (Ps 66:18)

Ps 66:18 is one of the places in the Psalms that goes along with 1 Jn 3:22 and 5:14-15. If I *regard*, whatever that word means, iniquity or sin in my heart, then He doesn't hear my prayers. We weren't regarding iniquity in our heart when we were praying for our Father's will to be done, to bring about an environment for you children who weren't even born then, to bring about an environment of eternal life, a separated life, a holy life, a place that was sanctified or set apart for you. It just says, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, YHWH will not hear.”

Then David said,

But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer. (Ps 66:19)

What does that word *regard* mean? If we *regard* iniquity, then it nullifies our prayers. If a man doesn't love his wife it nullifies his prayers (1 Pet 3:7). And then, 1 Jn 3:22 says He hears us if we are doing what is pleasing to Him. Then 1 Jn 5:14-15 says if we pray according to His will then we know He hears us and we have what we ask for. *We know.*

So, if we regard iniquity in our hearts, then we *know* He doesn't hear us. We really know it, for we don't have faith. There is a blockage there. The word *regard* is the secret, whatever *regard* means. What does it mean, to regard iniquity?

It means to *consider* something in a favorable way, to take something into consideration in making your plans. You have something in the back of your mind that you are planning that is sin. “If you regard iniquity...” whatever *iniquity* means. It can mean a lot — wickedness, lawlessness, sin. You make a provision for it, make room for it. In French *regarder* means to look at. One version says, “If I cherish iniquity in my heart.” If you know you are doing wrong, that what you are doing is not pleasing, and then you pray, you *know* He won't hear you.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 Jn 5:14-15)

If we know He hears us, that is the confidence. And what does 1 Jn 3:22 say?

And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. (1 Jn 3:22)

That is the opposite of regarding or cherishing iniquity, something you are planning on doing. A lot of people have done that. We know that our Father has eliminated a lot of people from the Body who planned evil. You can't think, plan, or regard evil and be heard by our Father. It can be subtle. It might be more subtle than you think. Do you know what *subtle* means? Do you ever regard iniquity in your heart? You could be entertaining a thought — entertaining iniquity in your mind, things that are not pleasing, thinking about yourself in certain ways, thinking about getting this, or getting that.

We have to hear from the Holy Spirit. A lot of things are a mystery until the Holy Spirit reveals what it actually means.

Chets Barur — When you have regard for someone, you look out for the desires or interests of that person. If I have regard for my wife, then I try to see through her eyes, or pander to what she likes. If you regard iniquity you are looking out for the wants and desires of your iniquity, a bent way of your flesh. You are pandering to a bent way or iniquity instead of overcoming iniquity and being covered by the blood of our Master and doing the things that are pleasing to our Father.

It could be regarding, entertaining, or cherishing accusations against a brother. There is something in your heart and you don't really judge it. You try to put it aside and you don't really judge it, so eventually something comes out of your mouth to destroy someone. You are regarding, holding on to something about someone — a thought, an accusation, an offended heart.

I think it is so good for us to be able to judge ourselves on this, but also to help other people. If we know we are not regarding any sin or evil we have confidence, it says. Then we see another person and we can help him. We can set him free by saying,

“Do you think you are regarding evil? Our Father is not hearing you. You are not progressing. There is no joy or peace coming from you. Therefore, you are seemingly cut off from love, cut off from communion with God, who is love.”

If we don't love our wives, the spirit in us is regarding iniquity, as 1 Pet 3:7 says, and heaven is shut off from us. So you had better not get married, for heaven will be shut off from you if you don't love your wife as you are commanded to.

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Pet 3:7)

If your prayers are hindered, it is just like our Master experienced, “Father, why have You forsaken Me?” when He was on the cross. That was the worst thing that could happen to Him, that He became sin on our behalf. That shut the Father off from Him.

We are to judge ourselves now so that others can come in and we can help them. We can show them where they may be regarding evil in their heart so that there is no communion; it cuts off that fellowship from the spirit on through to your bodily actions.

That is what we said at Jeremiah's Groom's Breakfast: love your wife.¹ Love your brothers and sisters — that is how we know we have passed out of death and into life. That is the confidence we have. We have to pray for our brothers and sisters. We do not really love one another if we are not praying for one another. You see something in your brother or sister and you pray for them.

The Mystery of Salvation

When Ishâh Ruth and Hananyah sang to us this morning, it brought tears to my eyes. It was so beautiful. They are beautiful, wonderful servants. Our Father is blessing them. Hananyah is making it. He is coming up close to the top. We didn't know if he was going to make it for a long time. We would pray for him, “Father, save Hananyah.”

¹ See the notes, “Jeremiah's Groom's Breakfast” [2003.12.27-R01]

You can tell a father by his children. In Hakam's children that are still loyal and faithful you can see *him* there. Even though two have fallen away, the others are standing in their place and upholding Hakam, the goodness in Hakam's heart. A lot of Benyaminites have lost their children, but they still have their firstborns and they still have the ones our Father keeps in some way. He keeps them. It is according to that decision you make. Our Father is working in your heart to make you into the great man He wants you to be, a servant, a disciple.

It is a mystery, an absolute mystery who is going to choose to follow our Master. I guess that is why He has to say, "Well done, My good and faithful servant" (Mt 25:21). It is not just Him bending our will and making us do what we don't want to do. We have to have a willingness to do His will. We have a will. Salvation is a great, great mystery — who He would choose and who would follow Him, and who will become rulers of the universe. They are the ones worthy of Him.

Our Father has Attended to the Voice of my Prayer

I just thought it would be good if we could help other people who come in not to regard iniquity in their hearts, so that our Father will hear them. "Certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer." (Ps 66:19)

What does that mean that our Father has *attended*? What does *attend* mean? You have to look at these words. They hold a great mystery. He has *attended*. Look it up — what does it mean? He has *attended* to something. What does that mean?

Yedidyah — To carry out the will of another, like an attendant carries out the will of the master.

He considers our prayers. He regards our prayers. It is amazing, isn't it? What does your version say?

"God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer." (NIV)

Chets Barur — *Attend* is to give one's attention, and then, using that attention, to take action and do something. If you were an attendant to someone and he told you, "Go get this," you'd give attention to his

command and carry it out. It is amazing that He would actually give attention to our voice, our prayers, and want to carry them out.

You have to know His will, though, for it is according to His will (1 Jn 5:14-15). If we pray according to His will, He hears us. That means that we are in communion with Him somehow. The Holy Spirit has given us understanding of what He wants, what His desires are. It is not just a whim that we want, but also His will that we are carrying out. We pray for our café. Why are you praying for it? The only thing you have on your mind is making disciples, not making money: bringing people in and making it the greatest place on earth.

Our Cafés

The café is a place that is perfectly clean, a perfect environment for people to come into. They can't accuse us of anything because whoever works there is attending to all of its needs. It is like Ishâh Ruth who worked at the café in Boston for years. She *lived* at the café. She is *Miss Common Ground*. She is the greatest. If only Ithaca could have her, they could get off the ground. She has devoted her life to the Common Ground Cafés. Our Father has something great for her. He loves her so much.

That is why we say, "We can't be open unless it is perfect" — as perfect as we can possibly make it. The bathrooms stay perfectly clean, so that no one could ever have anything to say about us. In Nova Scotia we used to have the *Old Schoolhouse*. We used to have a guest book they could write in after they visited us. They would say the most wonderful things about us. They would say, "I went to your bathroom first, before I ate here, to inspect it. When I saw it was perfectly clean, I sat down and ordered my food."

Let's not even think about opening our café unless we are devoted to making it a wonderful place where everything we serve is good. We don't serve anything that is inferior. We just have to sit down and think about what will draw people to us. Of course, our love, but also our smoothies, juices, and wheat grass — all these things that

the yoga people next door are going to love. They won't be able to help it. They will not be able to *not* come because that is what they love.

Those yoga people are looking for things. They are looking for the truth. They know Christianity hasn't got it. ha-êmeq was in Zen Buddhism or something like that.

ha-êmeq — It was popular among all the hippies.

Yochanan ben Ra'am — People go over there and try to stand on their heads to have peace. Then they can come over and get a cup of Common Ground at our café and have a lot more peace.

Then we can have a mezzanine or balcony. It will be our territory, where we can invite people up — *The Maté Attic*. We are maté addicts. It is good to be addicted to something good.