

## Unanswered Prayers, Thanks for Nothing

"It's big alright," my wife gulped, in her weak attempt to find common ground with the real estate lady. But I knew all too well Angie didn't really want to be wearing that smile. Sure enough, as soon as the agent turned her back, that smile molded into a glare directed at me. I guess I deserved it. Even the real estate lady didn't seem too thrilled about driving way out here at my behest just to view this eye sore. Next the agent led us out onto the back deck where she tried to spin a dilapidated pier on a dried up lake into a stunning view.

"Be careful near that rail," she warned, "Wouldn't want you to fall over." She stomped her high heel. "The flooring still seems good though."

Unfortunately, the stomp awakened a nest of wasps, and we all had to make a mad dash back inside. The lady's same heel caught on some peeling linoleum as we did and it sent her sprawling across the floor, most unlady like. Scrambling to her feet she quickly gathered her books and what was left of her composure. "Well," she managed, "I think I'll give you two a chance to look around. I'll be in my car."

As she wobbled off I shrugged, "Now Angie, this house has more square feet for the money than any other house in the listings. It's just a fixer upper."

She cocked her head, "A fixer upper? The grass is four feet tall out there." She inched into the living room like she might be expecting to find a family of bears hibernating. "I do like this crown molding though," She admitted, "and that rock fireplace."

It was crazy. For every negative the old place did offer some hint of redemption. It was huge, and the expandable area upstairs was large enough to land a crop duster. The lot itself might've been beautiful before the lake dried up and they started dumping old tires in it.

Finding our original trail through the front yard we came out at the road, where the agent lady rolled down her window about an inch. "What'd you think?" she asked. "It's big," Angie smiled.

But anyway- It's always been hard for me to walk away from a scrap heap. Growing up monetarily challenged, you just sort of become conditioned to the fact any diamonds you find will probably need a little polishing. I reckon I cut my teeth pestering pawn shops, fleecing flea markets, and grazing garage sales. Even as we drove back towards the paved roads I couldn't help picturing the possibilities for that old house. It was within our budget, and all I'd have to do is learn some light carpentry, roofing, dry wall, and electrical skills and we'd be ready to move in within a couple of months.

The next day I began to pray earnestly God would give us the place. I even tried to persuade Angie to stay with me if I made an offer on it. When I was convinced she might, I called the real estate lady. No answer. I called again, no answer. None of my messages were being returned. I was getting really upset, until I ran into an old friend and told him about the place. He looked at me like I was stupid. "Dude," he said, "That's like the worst drug neighborhood in the state. They call it crack alley." He went on to describe it with a little too much detail. "Wow," I admitted, "I was about to move my family there."

You know sometimes I hear people complaining they think their prayers weren't answered. Then I hear others gossiping about how it was because they didn't have enough faith. I think it can all get a little silly. What if their prayers just got answered according to Romans 8:28? (*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 8:28** KJV)

I don't know about you, but the more I grow in the Lord, the more I'm glad that sometimes my prayers don't get answered. If they did I would've gotten divorced and re-married at least ten times in the sixth grade alone! How would you like to live in 'The World According to Guy'? I don't even think I would. Besides, when my children gripe about my answer to a request it really doesn't lead me to think they are having faith in me as a dad. I can imagine how our heavenly Father must feel. Of all people, shouldn't we trust He knows best?

Don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying don't pray. I'm saying pray harder, and listen longer. Determine to study the Bible and learn how to pray according to God's will for your situation. Jesus prayed, (*"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will, not mine."* **Luke 22:42** NLT)

If you're that real estate lady, I'd just like to say it was very rude of you not to return my calls. Oh, and thanks!

-Guy Sheffield 9-15-06