

Prayer and wishes  
Chapter five: Wishes

*You are never given a wish without also being given the power to make it come true. You may have to work for it, however-* Richard Bach

I could quote a hundred other wily lines about wishes. Each one would take a different slant on what a wish is. Some writers use the word “wish” to get their point across. Tony Robbins is a prolific life coach. He says *“We can change our lives. We can do, have, and be exactly what we wish.”* Oh, as if it’s that simple. Just wish upon a star and life will change. Just Descartes yourself (I think; therefore, I am) and come up with great thoughts and then become those thoughts. Is it as easy as making a wish?

Jesus is the first life coach. His bio might have been riddled with books and speaking seminars. Jesus would be listed on Forbs top twenty. He is quoted in Matthew 17 saying boldly:

*“Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”*

I’m kidding, but am I? I doubt Jesus would intentionally try and make Forbes. Yet, quotes like the ones above are what drives book sales in North America. Witty men and woman using carefully thought-out words to make a point. Ironically Richard Bach (above) says you have to work for it. Jesus says just have faith and you could go all Yoda on a mountain. Just wave a hand and some magical force will move things. So, who is right?

I think it’s not as easy as saying Jesus or Tony have cornered the market on the power of positive thinking. Wishes do that don’t they? Making a wish is a positive thing isn’t it? In the last chapter I said C.R.Snyder wrote books on the positive power of hope. If you’re willing to wish or

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pray then your pointed in the right direction. Pointed towards hope. If your hope meter is low then you might be mired in depression. Positive thinking is good, but is a wish or a prayer something that raises our self-esteem?

I look at a wish in two ways. One is we use it as a way to express ourselves. We wish for health. We wish for someone to disappear. It's used in daily conversation. *I wish it was Friday*. We use that word a lot. Sometimes I wonder if we use certain words too much. I have often wondered if the words *sexual harassment* and *inappropriate behavior* have watered down horrific rape cases. I have met rape victims and they are forever changed by the events forced upon them. These victims are vastly different than misconduct victims.

Several groups have used the word rape and genocide to claim injustice. The plight of the French in Canada is not a Jewish or Armenian claim. Yet, people use words like genocide and rape to be heard. To be called victims. Words are used to express ourselves. Sometimes those words water down the true meaning. They have become far too common words like "wish".

It seems odd I would put the words genocide and a wish together. Yet, we use words to further a cause. To get a point across. The word "wish" is one we use often. People say I am ill and wish for sympathy. We might say we wish for help. I wish people would care more. Other times we say things like "Oh God, I wish you would leave." I wonder if the word "wish" has been diluted as much as the words genocide, rape and love has.

Some people seriously need a wish to come true. Times can be tough. There looks like no way through life sometimes. Wishing for help on a rock cliff makes sense. Yet, on Facebook, a wish might look like white noise. We see it so much as we scan or scroll past honest pleas for help. I think wishing has become a common word. Just white noise in the back ground. The

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magical aura of a wish is not what it was. I don't think we associate a wish with prince charming half as much as winning the lottery.

I believe we have accepted "wish" into our common words. How often do you hear of someone saying "did you wish for that." We could probably use that word five times in a conversation and nobody would think twice about it. I have wondered if we have lost the art of the mystical. A wish was hope in days gone by. Today it is different. We say it without even knowing we did. The spiritual element of a wish is gone because we use it too much.

Maybe, years ago, a wish had a deeper meaning than it does today. There are stories written that tell of wishes gone badly like the three wishes written by Charles Perrault in 1697. A man wished to a tree spirit for help. This spirit granted him three wishes. His wife asked him to sleep on it. In the morning he was hungry and wished-for sausages. His wife was very mad he made that wish. So, he wished her nose was a sausage. Afterwards they agreed to use the last wish to bring back her nose. Be really careful what you wish for.

There are ways we use the word wish. Ancient people used it with a different meaning. A wish could be used to summon the spiritual. A fairy god mother might appear. Maybe it was a wood nymph. How about the lady of the lake? In the movie *The Ring*, a well was a place of evil spirits. In Jesus day, the wilderness was a place full of bad spirits. People wished or called on spirits like those in a well. Do you know who your wish is calling on?

I feel today, that mindset on wishing has disappeared. A wish is even not used to intentionally win a lottery, it's become just a common word. We don't wish for money by summoning someone. We don't make a wish for our dreams come true. I bet I use the word wish 10 times a day. Every year Webster's dictionary retires words. That surprised me. It's when

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words lose their meaning in time. I wonder if the word wish has lost it's meaning. It's just become slang.

Another way to express a wish is to project hope. *I wish I could win that house. I wish for good health. We go to a wishing well with intent.* At the well, there is no positive outcome if the wish goes unanswered? Yet, making the trip to the well is far better than sitting there moping about our situation. Mr. Bach would say you have to get off your donkey to make hope work. An effort to wish is positive in essence. We hope our wish is answered. Having hope is a good thing. *When you wish upon a star makes no difference who you are. Anything your heart desires will come to you-* Leigh Harline, Ned Washington

I could go on and on quoting these wish statements. Even Disney used the one above to make his movie Pinocchio a classic. However, at it's core, our hearts desire drives the power of positive thinking. We believe in our heart that a wish would work. Then we go to a well or pause upon a shooting star. I'm not so sure, in making a wish, we need to believe in ourselves. Yet, to make a wish means we do. Deep down inside we want to succeed. So, we wish for good things. Why not just make the wish come true ourselves? Somewhere in our hearts caverns we feel the need for help. All things are possible if...

If what? If we try; wish or pray. Some feel we should pray more or pray harder. How do you pray harder? Should we wish more or wish harder? A wish does not seem to work that way. I doubt prayer does too. I do feel that our intent helps. The wish seems a long shot. In our heart we feel we have to try. Jesus said all things are possible for those with strong faith. Maybe it begins within us. That's the place to start a wish.

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God mentions the heart in the Bible hundreds of times. What is in the heart seems to affect our prayer life and possibly our wish life. A pessimistic person probably balks at wishing or even praying. Yet, dropping to our knees is a powerful act of humility or surrender. Is dropping a coin the same thing? There is something powerful in intentionally trying. They say getting on our knees is hard because it's humbling. Is wishing for a better life hard too? Some hurt people believe they don't deserve a good life. It's my wish they don't feel that way.

I feel that a wish is totally different than prayer. I wonder if I was wrong in mocking a wish. I have sarcastically said that wishes are useless because they are being said to no one. I'm sure many people would argue that. To whom are we wishing? Then it hit me. A wish is a private or outspoken desire to have something happen. *I wish I was fishing right now. I wish I had a wife.* They are outward expressions of the heart.

Yes, I think I got it all wrong. A wish is not to a spirit or all-powerful God. Our heart desires love. We need food to eat. Most of us would love to turn back time. Some of us would wish to live life on a tropical beach. I think a wish might be an outpouring of a dream. Maybe that's why we don't usually travel to a well. It's why we don't sit out all night waiting for a shooting star. In movies, we see characters encountering a magical well. They are stunned by a celestial event. In those moments it seems special. It seems mystical. Why not wish? A wish usually happens in spiritual moments. It's not like at lunch time we suddenly think, gee, maybe it's a good time to wish. A wish is usually in a magical moment or in a special place.

I wonder if our hearts are yearning for a miracle. John:8 *"Unless you people see signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe."* Then Jesus would only offer them the sign of Jonah. Dang, that is terrible. Jesus was offering the impossible. People don't get

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swallowed by fish and survive. We don't believe in those things. Yet, miracles and wishes seem less impossible? How could that be?

Of course, we desire change if it's good change. People are always looking for hope. Yet, is it really within us? I feel Jesus get's it. A wish and hope are easy to seek. Yet, finding a miracle or answer just might be hard or even impossible. It's fine to seek help but don't waste your whole life waiting and looking. Jesus laid it out but the people were not really listening. Matthew 19:26 *"Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."* Saying "I wish" or looking for miracles are like leaves in the wind. I think Jesus was talking about seeking something solid, something greater. Maybe a wish is only something that the powerful could do, something greater than ourselves.

The answers to wishes and hope might be found in the near impossible. We love that in movies. The people in Jesus day were no different. God boasts that he is the God of the impossible. In a way I think we don't like that. Maybe we like fate or randomness shining on us. Possibly we like to be blessed more than helped. I know that sounds weird, but maybe that's it. If life shined it's face on me that would be cool and special. If the impossible happened to me, then maybe I'm singled out. I'm the special one. If God blesses all. If God answers many prayers, then were no more special than your neighbor. Maybe being special is why we wish for the impossible?

It reminds me of randomness. That seems special. Think of the Gods holding stars. If one falls through, was it a random or intentional act by God? Maybe the one that got away is special. So, we wish on it because it's not common. Maybe wells are far and few between. We just

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happen to see a well and just happen to have a coin. If a wish could come true, then maybe it needs to be random and special. They don't happen to just anyone.

Are we using wishes to find answers? I have said that sometimes there are no answers. Maybe an answer is there but it's just not visible or viable at this time. Maybe a flat earth had to come first. Possibly, we saw a globe more clearly once flat seemed odd. We noticed a ball and round spheres in space more clearly for what they really are. What if the earth is like that too? If we took the time to look, really look. Is a wish more like a miracle?

A wish most certainly is like a miracle. We love it when it happens. We yearn for the miracles. We wish and hope but miracles seem so far and few between. How do we contend with the seemingly impossible? Maybe we wish to unhide answers or solve the impossible? Is a wish for what we don't have? Is it for what we can't have. Should we look at a wish as it really is? A chance to make the impossible; possible.

Generally, we pray to someone or something. Maybe a wish is supposed to be for us. It's like good luck. My number 17 is lucky. What is your number? Is the number 7 really luckier? It's just a number. A wish could be just a saying. Yet, people wish all the time. It can't be random or just a coincidence can it? A wish means something more to so many people. Some of the greatest songs and one liners have the word "wish" in it. They have the meaning of a wish in it too.

*"I wish you a merry Christmas"* is a happy tune.

*"I wish I was blind"* by Bruce Springsteen adds agony to the wish.

*"What then is freedom? The power to live as one wishes"*-Marcus Tullius Cicero.

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*“Our blunders mostly come from letting our wishes interpret our duties”*-Alexander MacLaren.

So many uses of the word wish. We use it, need it, and love what it does to explain our heart.

*Wish- Feel or express a strong desire or hope for something that is not easily attainable; want something that cannot or probably will not happen* -Webster’s Dictionary

The explanation of a wish stuns me. I never looked at it that way. Sure, the first part makes sense. We wish because whatever it is we want, it’s not easily attainable. If it was easy then why wish? *Just do it* as Nike says. It’s what Bach and Robbins said too. Why drive to a well? Why bother wishing on a star. Just do it. yet, the things we ask for are not easy. In-fact they may be downright impossible.

*Star light, star bright, the first star I see tonight. I wish I may, I wish I might, have the wish I wish tonight.*

Do you want that man? Maybe you want to win that lottery? Will wishing get it? As if it’s that easy. Just wish upon a star. Wish at a well. Call on a fairy god mother. It’s the last part of that dictionary description that nailed it. *Something that cannot or probably will not happen.* Wishing seems ridiculous. Why would I say that? Who cares what the dictionary says. It’s because the nature of a wish that is hard to pin down. We want a million dollars. We would love to travel back in time. We could wish for anything. Yet, many of those things can’t happen. I can’t wish for money without buying a ticket. I can’t wish for a wife without dating. How could I wish for more time if I’m dying?

Wishing is tough business. We are asking for tall order things in a wish. Prince charming’s don’t grow on trees. In the Disney Movie *Sleeping Beauty* the lovers crossed paths by chance. The Movie *Serendipity* is not a classic wish movie. Yet, placing luck in the hands of



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fate is like a wish. We wish, hope, and dream of a better life. It reminds me of a man eating his way to 400 pounds. They had to knock out a wall to remove him when he died. Maybe he waited for his wishes to come true. In the mean time he ate depression most likely.

Sure, a wish could happen. List all the people you can think of that wished and received that wish? I can't think of one. I know three people who said that's enough, I'm going to live my life with or without getting married. Each one found someone in an amazing way. I don't think they wished. Instead I believe they decided to live beyond wishing. A good life could be had beyond hoping, wishing, and waiting.

Here is a great example. I had a friend who went to Bible school. It's custom at a bible college to get a degree. It's an unofficial custom to find a spouse. The problem is that the chase of both can conflict a person. My friend decided to skip the rat race and concentrate on school. There was a girl he liked but enough was enough. He joined a singing tour that traveled in the off season. On the bus he sat down and let out a sigh. He had wished and prayed but each date was just not right. It was time to let girls go for now and concentrate on his degree. This tour was a good distraction.

The girl he liked had decided to skip the rat race too. She joined the same group unbeknown to him. She sat down beside him and let out a sigh too. I can't imagine the look on his face when he realized who was with him on the bus. Of course, they talked. Of course, they became friends. The rest is history. They have been married for many years now and yes, he finished his degree. Action is always the best policy but it begins with a wish or a prayer.

I am not against wishing. A wish is a hope in my mind. Hope is always a good thing. It comes back to the canoe. A man is on the third floor of an apartment building. It begins to rain.

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In fact, it rains so much that the water rises beyond the third floor. The man rushes up two floors and prays to God for help. A man in a dingy comes by and offers to rescue him. This man turns him down saying God will save me. I have faith. The water continues to rise, the man panics, and retreats to the roof. A woman comes by in a canoe to save him. The man sits down confidently saying God will save me. He has to have faith in the miraculous. They found the man drown the next day. In heaven, he asks God why he did not save him. God said I did twice but you refused my help.

That's it in a nut shell. We wish and we pray, yet when help arrives, we expect miracles. The answer to a wish could not possibly be to exit the rat race and sit on a tour bus? It could not possibly be pursuing life in the meantime could it? Maybe the answer to your wish is no. Maybe money would change you for the worse. Maybe, being single is the best thing for you. They do say be careful what you wish for. Some people say that if you tell someone your wish it won't come true. Maybe wishes are not that reliable. Why? It's because we expect them to be miraculous and those are far and few between.

Ronnie Music Jr Won 3 million dollars in a lottery. He was busted in a meth ring and is serving life in prison. Arthur Neal, Jr. of Detroit won 20 thousand on a scratch ticket. Robbers ransacked his place in order to steal the money. They killed him. He had never cashed the ticket yet. This is the best. Marie Holmes of North Carolina won 188 million in a power ball lottery. She lost a bunch of it trying to bail her boyfriend out of jail. Then she made a commitment to her local church to buy land for them. She gave them seven hundred thousand dollars. The Pastor sued her, expecting more. Wishing to win a lottery might be a bad thing to some.

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I am amazed at how far we will go with a wish. We tend to ask the impossible. I love the movie *Freaky Friday*. The Mom has had it with life. The daughter sees how the mom is living and thinks life would be easier in her shoes. They both wish to trade places at the same time. It happens. Then they realize that the other side is not that great. I think it's impossible to switch bodies. It's impossible for me to meet Michael Jackson. I wish I could. Well, he's dead, so you can't. If there was a wish God, we ask tough wishes.

We certainly will dig for a coin to wish. Funny though, if we only had a two-dollar coin, would we still throw it in. How high a price will you pay? I know places that promote magical areas. On the way through the Rocky Mountains in Canada, is a place called Three Valley Gap. Near there is a magical forest called *The Enchanted forest*. As a family, we drove past that place many times in my childhood. I bet every time we pleaded with my parents to stop. I am not sure they ever did. When I became old enough to drive, I did stop. It's not free. You pay money to enter. Then you pay money to wish. Maybe that's why my parents never stopped?

What is your limit? I have seen lucky rabbits foot for sale. Would you buy one? Dark movies show people saved by their cross. A cross may have helped people in movies, but in real life people die on crosses. So, should we own a good luck cross? Should you buy one just in case it's lucky? People wear lucky colors. I know people who cross themselves after a prayer. Should we do something similar with a wish? Wish me luck?

I know you could wish using the wish bone in a turkey. It's a two-pronged bone connected together. Two people make a wish and then you each curl your pinky around the two connected bones. Now you both pull at the same time. When it snaps, who got the bigger half? The winner is supposed to get their wish granted. Whoever finds the magic lamp gets three

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wishes. Unfortunately, finding a lamp might be tough. In the actual Aladdin story, it's really about a magic wishing ring. I have seen wishing stones and necklaces. Are you into that stuff? Does it work? Or, is there a curator that is raking in your money just to give you hope?

There are good stories about wishes. Brett Marie Christian was a 15-year-old girl dying of cancer. She had wished to dance one more time. Her homecoming dance was moved to the hospital to fill her wish. Colby Curtin was also dying of cancer. She wanted to see the latest Pixar movie "Up." The company gave her an advanced screening in the hospital. Amazingly she died 7 hours later. Sports stars visit the sick. Wishes are met.

*Matthew 6:2 "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full."*

People do love to fulfill other people's wishes. We have a special spot in our hearts for the dying or less fortunate. I wish it was done in a more private way. I think Taylor Swift looks for wishes to fill. Yet, posting it all over social media is not great. Make the wish happen, but don't benefit from it. Help those in need but don't look good. Jesus said give when you can but don't let the left hand know what the right is doing. He also said pray in private. Maybe that's why we are not to tell about our wishes too?

There is a bed commercial in my city. The lady says that if they sell 25 beds then they will give to charity. I hate that. I know that conglomerates discovered that they could ask for donations for a charity. Many of them have saved millions in taxes by claiming those donations. In both cases, should they advertise their good will? I say no. I like to give on my own. I like to give in private to places I think need help. Certainly, I have noticed the cashier frowning at me

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for being stingy when I say no to their donation offer. The company is probably frowning too.

Filling someone's wish should not benefit you. It should benefit them.

To fill a wish is nice. To benefit from filling a wish is a black hole. I don't like it. Benefiting off the sick or needy is awful. Yet, the wish is filled. Who cares how? I do! I will admit that we look for wishes to fill all year. I used to give to a local church. In Christian tradition, we are asked to tithe 10% to God (the church). When we left the question became: what to do with the money? I still wanted to give 10%. So, we started listening and looking for ways to give.

This is not a boast. We have been amazed at the ways God has offered us to give to people. We have rules. We don't tell them it was us. We don't advertise. Sometimes we don't even want to know who got the money. It's our way of doing as Jesus asked. I want to fill wishes. I want to help those in need. To make hope hopeful. Yet, it cannot be about me. Filling a wish should never be about me.

I suppose it's like telling a wish. They are spoiled when the blessing turns into a brag. Whose heart are we trying to make happy? I think God tells us to make wishes come true in private because; maybe, God just wanted to humble us. To make us less rich so that we could see the needy clearer. I feel I do see them clearer. Have I been blessed because I blessed first? I hope not. Fulfilling a wish is an honor, not a pathway to a reward. Tithing is hard. When people buy nice stuff we can't afford, it is a little tough. Yet, those we help are getting more than they had. That is the fun part. Was it their wish? Was it their prayer? Maybe? Giving to the less fortunate could make us wish helpers.

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Here are my final thoughts on wishes. Keep them in perspective. Wish because wishing is fun. Yet, wish to dream. How about, live to live. Dream because dreaming is fun. To hang your life on wishes and hope is not a good way to live. I wish to meet Taylor Swift, yet it's probably improbable. Yet, I'd wish to meet the Queen too. Wishing is fun.

Wishes are important. I feel that the greatest inventions came from wishes and dreams. We hoped for a better world. We need the dreamers. Wishing is a conduit to clarity. I think it's that simple. *I think therefore I am* could also become *I think therefore it becomes possible*. We could not fly or go to the moon. I bet the wright boys in the 1800's wished they could. In 1903 these same boys made it a reality. A wish points to hope and hope points to action.

Walt Disney is the best wisher, in my mind. He was a kid inside. He loved to draw and dream. He wished for a place we could always be a kid. That wish became reality in 1955. Disneyland is a place that many dreams and wishes do come true. The sick feel happy there. Old people relive their childhood. A smile is required in Disneyland. He made a wish something tangible.

We wish. We hope. We dream. These are good things. They keep us moving forward. People have regret, remorse, and starve themselves on depression. We believe in depression. We also believe in wishes. Maybe working on another's wish could add relief to their and our depression. Maybe that's why we are so happy when wishes come true. I wonder if it's not all about equivalency exchange. We give with our hearts and our heart is given too. We help make a wish come true and amazingly our wishes are granted. Robert Bach said at the beginning of this chapter that *you may have to work for it, however*. Maybe I wish we all could see that.