

Cec says, "When I pray something is altered, even though the change may be within me."



Cec has entered the blogosphere! Check out [Cec Murphey's Writer to Writer blog](#).

"I Stopped Praying"

"I finally stopped praying for my two brothers." Steven explained that he had prayed every day "for at least twelve years and it hasn't made any difference."

I didn't know how to answer so I said, "I'm sorry you're discouraged."

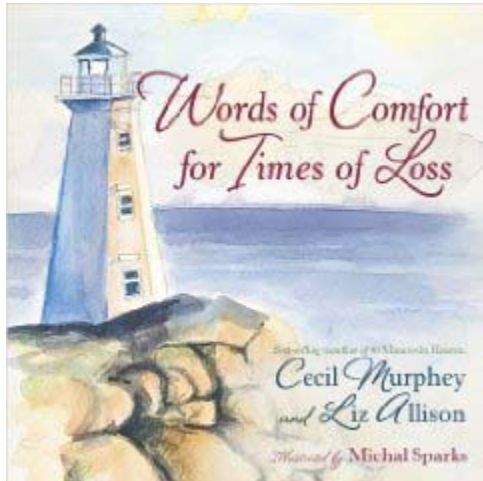
Although Steven said those words weeks ago, his words bothered me. Should I have told him to persist? to trust God to reward his efforts? commend him for stopping?

This morning I figured out what troubled me. Despite his good intentions, Steven prayed for results and quit when he didn't get them. When we petition God, we want to see changes and that's understandable. The Bible tells us to ask as in 1 Peter 5:7: "Give all your worries to God, for he cares about you" (NLT).

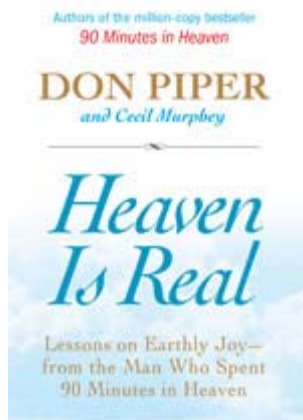
A number of prayer experts would remind us that prayer is more than asking for something. It's also praise and thanksgiving as well as confession. I agree, but it *includes* petitions. And not receiving the answers we want can dishearten us.

Like Steven, I like to do things that bring results. Here's how I see prayer working—and using the word *working* emphasizes my pragmatic side. In the act of praying, something takes place inside me. When my petitions move beyond my immediate needs and desires, I'm in touch with God and I move out of my self-centered world.

That leads me to say that every action causes a reaction. When I pray something is altered, even though the change may be within me. When I pray sincerely for others, I become different. The more I talk to God about situations and people, the more I focus on their plight or need. As I focus outwardly I become more compassionate and understanding. I say more than a perfunctory "God bless James."



Cec's beautiful new gift book, written in his warm style, offers comfort and encouragement for those who grieve.



If you purchase a copy of *Words of Comfort for Times of Loss* through Twila, she'll throw in *Heaven Is Real* for free.

For example, when I begin to pray for someone I don't like, I go beyond "Make her kind" or "Make him stop gossiping." Each time I mention others by name, I feel closer to them and to their problems. The result is that I become kinder or I'm reminded to eliminate loose talk and focus on positive living for myself.

Although it may be only slight, when I pray regularly for others, it is inner growth. And sometimes those individuals also change.

Personal News

I've had a delightful time staying at home in the Atlanta area since late October. I'm ready to go back on the road again.

After months of pressure from Twila, one of the things I did during my travel-free weeks was to start a blog for writers. Click on

www.cecmurpheyswritertowriter.blogspot.com.

In January I did a booksigning for [*Words of Comfort for Times of Loss*](#) at the annual trade show for gift stores.

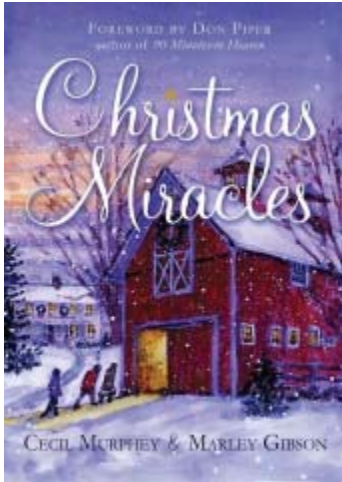
Words of Comfort is a gift book I wrote with Liz Allison. It features gorgeous watercolor drawings by Michal Sparks.

I'm scheduled to speak several times in the San Antonio area the first weekend of February, including a one-day writers conference.

I'll also speak to a writers group in Gainesville, GA, February 3 (an hour's drive for me) as well as speak in the missions series at Clairmont Presbyterian Church, Decatur, GA, and to a breast-cancer survivors' group in Atlanta.

On March 3 and 4, I'll give two key-note messages at the Florida Christian Writers Conference in Titusville, FL, and speak to seniors' groups in Decatur and Atlanta.

I'll be the banquet speaker for the Midwest Writing Center in Davenport, IA, March 20, and teach the next day at Trinity Lutheran Church in Moline, IL.



We're looking for great Christmas stories for the follow-up book to *Christmas Miracles*. Submit your story at www.christmasspiritbook.com.



If you're looking for a warm, welcoming, and caring writers conference, check out www.qccwc.com.

The Twila Zone—Words from my assistant, Twila Belk

Cec has received great feedback about his new blog for writers. (Yes, he's glad that he finally listened to me, but he probably won't admit it.) If you're a writer or interested in writing, you should check it out: www.cecmurpheyswritertowriter.blogspot.com. Cec's twice-a-week posts offer writers the wisdom he's gained from a lifetime of learning. It's like getting an ongoing writers conference delivered to your inbox.

I'm the director of two upcoming conferences. (Long story, but both have ties to Cec. Because of him, I hardly have time to eat my bon-bons.) The 7th annual Quad-Cities Christian Writers Conference will be held in Eldridge, Iowa, on April 9-10. Visit www.qccwc.com for details. The Presbyterian Writers Conference will be held April 28-29 in Nashville. Information can be found at www.presbywriters.org. I'd love to see you at either of the conferences.

Do you have a true story that emphasizes the spirit of the Christmas season? Because of the success of Cec's [Christmas Miracles](#) book, St. Martin's Press has already contracted with Cec and Marley Gibson to do a second book, [The Christmas Spirit](#), which will release in the fall of 2011. They are currently receiving submissions for the book. Visit www.christmasspiritbook.com for guidelines and submission details.

Cec's books are taking over my world! That's good news for you. If you purchase a copy of Cec's newest gift book, [Words of Comfort for Times of Loss](#), for \$11, I will give you a hardback copy of [Heaven Is Real](#) (a \$22 value) free. (The offer is good while supplies last.) You might want to donate these books to your church library, a grief support group, a ministry, or give them to a friend. Contact me at twila@gottatellsomebody.com or 563-332-1622.