

How to Develop Strong Prayer Habits

Elusive. That one word succinctly describes, for many, their experience regarding the attainment of an effective prayer life.

Many legitimate theories explain the root cause behind weak prayer habits. They run the gamut from spiritual warfare, with Satan throwing various roadblocks up, thus foiling the effects of prayer, to un-repent sin, to overly busy lifestyles — and on it goes. All of these represent valid explanations concerning ineffective prayer.

However, I believe the answer to this problem can be refined down to one fundamental concept: Relationship.

When relationship is the foundation of our prayer life, something that once seemed so elusive is suddenly within our grasp. In a real sense, prayer is more about *being* than about *doing*. It is more about *embracing* Jesus than attempting to obtain the answers that we desire.

In balance, a biblical discussion of prayer must include the concept of believers bringing their petitions before Christ. But the biblical pattern of gaining access to the voice of God always points back to relationship; it always favors the one who humbly embraces God and, in the act of embracing, brings his or her heart's cry before Him.

The book of Habakkuk begins with the prophet screaming out to God, "How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen?" (1:2, NIV). The reason Habakkuk could speak to God with such abandon, such emotion, is simple: relationship.

Interestingly, Habakkuk's name means "strong embrace." The text makes it clear that he is less than pleased with the

answer God provides, yet he acknowledges God as his Rock, who is “from everlasting” (1:12, NIV).

In the process of questioning God, he worships God. Why? Relationship! A vital pointer we gain from Habakkuk is the importance of hanging in there. Although he accepted God’s harsh answer in Chapter 1, the prophet still wanted to hear more from his God.

In Chapter 2, Habakkuk makes it clear he is willing to climb the tower, to watch and wait on God. He was willing to do whatever it took to hear from God. He watched, he waited, he continued to embrace, and God spoke.

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