

How God Answers in Your Storm

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by **prayer** and **supplication** with **thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).

Prayer changes things. But what things does it change? Most of us have noted that while, occasionally, the circumstances about which we are praying may change, many times they do not. We may **pray** for a better job, better health or better relationships, but no job comes along, we’re still mostly sick and tired, and we experience new struggles in relationships we already had. But does a lack of circumstantial change mean prayer is ineffective? Not. At. All.

I had a moment of pure panic going into my first C-section, laying flat on my back and having lost complete control of the circumstances around me.

“I can’t do this,” I quietly said to the anesthesiologist who had previously poked me with an epidural in my back. I felt like I was either going to throw up or pass out (or some combination of the two). But in just a few minutes, I could do it.

I don’t know the name of the happy juice he put in my IV, but I asked for it up front when time came for my 2nd C-section. In those few moments between calling for help and feeling the calm come over me, my **circumstances** hadn’t changed one bit, but what previously seemed insurmountable suddenly became doable. I did survive both C-sections without either throwing up or passing out in the middle of them and also sort of enjoyed the delivery of both my boys.

In my mind, this is a bit like prayer. Prayer is a lifeline to God’s happy juice. More accurately, it is our lifeline to God

Himself. And He promises something supernatural through this lifeline: peace. This peace He promises is beyond our ability to comprehend. Like the happy juice in the hospital, I didn't see it enter my blood stream nor could I track its path, but it was real.

Of course, the Bible doesn't use the word *happy* when it talks about this phenomenon. It uses the word *peace*. The idea is that we settle down in a calm state. Sometimes I think of peace as a raging storm that quiets down to calm waters. But the more accurate picture of this peace may be Jesus sleeping on the boat during the raging storm. The storm may rage on, but Jesus experienced supernatural peace in the midst of it—because He was connected to the Father. Similarly, the storm around us may rage on, but our lifeline to God gifts us with a supernatural peace in the midst of it, one beyond our ability to fully comprehend or explain.

This peace, like so much of God's blessing, seems to be doled out like manna. There's no value in attempting to store up a surplus, because this peace is based on a daily relationship with God. Instead of being disconcerted that the peace I felt yesterday didn't last into today, I remember that, like manna, it is the nature of relationships to communicate daily with God about this need.

I have felt on many, many days like I did in that hospital—that I can't do this. I cry out to God and also solicit prayers from trusted friends. And though I don't know when or how it happens, I wake up the next morning and realize that I did indeed make it through something that seemed overwhelming.

God provides us with something in those moments of crying out to Him that's impossible to quantify, but it is real.

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous

person is powerful and effective" (James 5:16).

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