

How You Were Created for a Life of Prayer

Living a life of prayer means actively and intentionally opening ourselves to God's Spirit every day and cooperating with his will.

Most of us categorize our lives in segments: home life, work life, leisure life and even prayer life. Years ago God began to show me that I didn't have to settle for just "having a prayer life." Instead, I could live a **praying** life.

What is a praying life? It is a dimension of living in which you experience minute-by-minute the flow of God's provision.

You are met at every step with the progressive unfolding of His tailor-made plan for your life (see Eph. 2:10). You cease your struggle to find the will of God because the **will of God** has found you.

Prayer is no longer the means by which you attempt to get God to perform for you. Instead, it becomes the means by which you assimilate His heart and mind.

Living life open to the **Spirit**—actively and intentionally cooperating with God on an everyday basis—is possible. Jesus showed the way. In fact, He is the way.

Jesus' disciples had an opportunity to observe the Master's habits firsthand. These 12 men witnessed the depths of the Man who didn't just set aside time for prayer. He lived prayer. But one of the disciples still asked Him: "'Lord, teach us to pray'" (Luke 11:1, NIV).

When Jesus outlined what we now call the Lord's Prayer, His were not merely a set of words sandwiched between "Our Father" and "Amen." They were the dynamic of His daily living. The

settled peace in which He lived and the power with which He operated both had their roots in Jesus' ongoing prayer relationship with His Father.

As we examine the **Lord's Prayer** in that light, we will learn from Him the secret to living in supernatural power and provision with a soul at rest.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name (Matt. 6:9). When Jesus responded to the request "'Lord, teach us to pray,'" He first taught the disciples to acknowledge God's holiness. Later, as His crucifixion drew near, Jesus continued the praying life. While He struggled with His emotions, He admitted to His disciples, "'Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'?" (John 12:27).

Jesus' true heart's cry was revealed as He hallowed God's name. "'No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name!'" (v. 28).

In His humanity, Jesus longed for an easier way. But His struggle was put to rest as He subjugated His agitated emotions to the purpose of the Father. Because He wanted to see the Father's name glorified, His emotions did not rule His actions.

As Christ in us molds us into His image, He fashions a heart that desires the Father's glory. Underneath all our swirling emotions and the pull of our human nature is the Spirit of the Son, sent into our hearts.

We find a settled peace as we surrender to our true heart's cry: "Whatever path You set me on; whatever flesh pattern must go to the cross; Father, glorify Your name!"

Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10). With these few words, the Prayer Teacher shows us an astounding truth about the role of prayer. Prayer

is the conduit that brings the direct, intervening, specific power and provision of God into the circumstances of the earth.

In the hours before His arrest, Jesus endured deep agony over the will of God. "He began to be sorrowful and troubled." Then He told His disciples, "'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death'" (Matt. 26:37-38).

His agonizing **prayer** continued throughout the night as His human emotions lined up with God's plan. "'My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may Your will be done'" (v. 42).

When the time came for His arrest, Jesus declared, "'Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go! Here comes My betrayer!'" (vv. 45-46). His soul had found such rest in God's will that He could meet that which He so dreaded head-on.

Just as it did for Jesus, the praying life gives God access to our hearts and minds, helping us accept the realities of God's will:

****He is in control.** No one else has power over us or our circumstances (see John 19:11).

****His plan has been in place since before the world began** (see John 12:27; Acts 2:22-24).

****We can look forward to the results** (see Heb. 12:2).

****Our **obedience** will give God the opportunity to glorify Himself** (see John 12:28).

Though we may never come close to Jesus' experience, the foundation of a praying life brings us the same peace and courage to say, "'Your will be done'" (Matt. 26:42).

Give us today our daily bread (Matt. 6:11). God could have

created us to be self-contained, but instead, He created us with daily physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs. "Meet today's needs," Jesus taught us to pray.

I hear the Father whisper: "Jennifer, nothing will come into your life today for which I have not already put provision in place. Just be alert and watchful. Look to Me first; I will point you to the supply." He takes great pleasure in providing us with everything we require.

Jesus tells the **parable** of the prodigal son which is, among other things, a story of the Father's provision. We know well His stunning display of lavish love as He welcomed home the prodigal son. My heart is captured, though, by the words He spoke to the elder son: "'My son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours"'" (Luke 15:31).

Do you see that? "Everything I have is yours." Any time the elder brother wanted a robe on his shoulders or a ring on his finger or sandals on his feet—any time he wanted to celebrate and eat a fattened calf—it was his for the asking. He just never asked.

Everything the Father has is ours. "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God" (1 Cor. 3:21-23). Just ask.

We see Jesus, when He had needs either big or small, simply reaching out and taking hold of the Father's provision. Did He need money to pay His taxes? Did He need a donkey on which to ride into Jerusalem? Did He need a room in which to observe the Passover with His disciples? The **provision** was always waiting.

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors (Matt. 6:12). When Jesus took on the weight of our sin and carried it to the cross, at the same time, He carried the sins

committed against us. When we insist on holding on to the hurts inflicted by others, we are denying the power of His crucifixion.

He died for sinners, for the ungodly. "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:6,8).

Is your offender a sinner? Christ died for his sins. Is your offender ungodly? Christ died for her ungodliness. The praying life extends grace—the same grace that was extended to us.

There is more good news. Not only did He carry our sin but He also bore the weight of our grief and sorrows. He bore the hurt of the sins committed against us.

By bearing the weight of our own hurt, we are allowing the offense to continue and to multiply its effect on us. "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many" (Heb. 12:15).

As we pass the hurt along to others in our life, the offense grows and spreads. If bitterness is allowed to take root, it will begin to grow fruit. It will create bitterness in those who are exposed to it.

As you live the praying life, let the Spirit of the Son in you cry out: "'Father, **forgive them**, for they do not know what they are doing'" (Luke 23:34).

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (Matt. 6:13). During the emotionally charged hours before His arrest, Jesus urgently reminded His disciples to strengthen themselves—through prayer—against the onslaught of testing headed their way. At least twice during His prayer vigil Jesus admonished His disciples with these words: "'Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation'" (Luke 22:46).

The Greek word for “temptation” also means “testing, trial, proving.” A fierce **spiritual battle** was taking place in which Jesus’ mission was tested and proven. As Jesus agonized in prayer, He received from the Father the strength, assurance, endurance, courage and confidence to successfully face not only the temptation but also the trial.

Jesus’ mental, emotional, and spiritual serenity throughout His crucifixion experience was birthed in the hours of prayer and the life of prayer that led up to these events. It was that openness to the flow of God’s power and provision that would provide the victory in the moment of testing for Jesus.

His example shows us that, in a praying life, the battle is won before the attack even occurs. In the moment of battle, the praying person simply stands his ground and enforces the victory.

In his book *The Secret of Believing Prayer* evangelist Andrew Murray’s words echo why and how the praying life takes place in the believer: “We do this because we are partakers of His life—‘Christ is our life’; ‘No longer I, but Christ liveth in me.’ The life in Him and in us is one and the same. His life in heaven is an ever-praying life. When it descends and takes possession of us, in us, too, it is an ever-praying life—a life that without ceasing asks and receives from God.”

We can live the power- and peace-filled praying life because it isn’t a thing; it’s a Person. Jesus lives in us—and is longing to express His praying life through us.

Read a companion devotional.

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