

Let Thanksgiving Rekindle Your Prayer Life

A while back I had author Emily Freeman on my show and she said the best thing: Is it more important to please **God** or to trust Him? She went on to say, "If we focus on pleasing God, we'll quickly get into striving; but if we entrust ourselves to Him, and trust Him for all He is, we'll stay in that place of **grace**, and we'll please Him in the process (my paraphrase)."

Using 'TRUST' as an acronym, here are few things I learned about reigniting my **prayer life**:

T- Thanksgiving: Almost always, when I sense that the fire has gone out and my passion has waned, it's because I stopped being grateful, stopped thanking God for all of the **blessings** I enjoy.

When we focus too much on what we don't have and on what God is not giving us as the moment, we lose sight of the fact that God is always wonderfully good, is beautifully for us, and will never forsake us. Start today by thanking Him for everything you'd miss tomorrow if you woke up and it wasn't there.

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

R – Repentance: Another fire-quencher is sin and selfish attitudes. Scripture says that His kindness leads us to repentance. When you've spent some time thanking God, conviction returns to your soul. Take the next step and dare to say, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts; see if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in your everlasting way.' (See Psalm 139) Confession is a cleansing, beautiful thing. God draws

especially near to the humble, repentant heart.

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results (James 5:16).

U – Understand: Oftentimes when we feel our flame flickering and not burning brightly, it's because we've approached God only for what He can do for us and not for who He is. A sure way to fan our spiritual flame is to seek Him for all He is worth! Still bring your requests before Him, but then lay them down at His feet, and seek to know His heart. He is the star-breathing God, the Lord of Lords, the King of kings, and the God of angel armies! He is high and lifted up and yet intimately right here. He loves you. Get to know Him more and you'll have a better understanding of how He is working in your current circumstances. To better know Him is to love Him more; and to know Him is to be filled to the fullness with Him (see Ephesians).

Knowing the Holy One results in understanding (Proverbs 9:10).

S – Stand: When we don't feel God's presence and His promises don't exactly feel true, it's time to stand on the Word of God because it is true. When I find myself feeling more earthbound than heaven-bound, I rise up, walk around my house, and proclaim the promises of God written over my life.

I will not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord! (because I struggle with health issues) God's grace abounds in my life so I can abound in every good work! (because I'm constantly in over my head). When I stand on God's promises, and my ears hear my mouth say what's true, in due time, my heart believes again that His Word is true. I challenge you, walk around, stomp your feet if you have to, and proclaim the promises of God. Take your stand right where you stand!

For your promises are backed by all the honor of your name

(Psalm 138:2).

S – Surrender: Another thing I've noticed is that surrender and spiritual passion are closely linked. When I find myself hanging on to my own understanding, or when I rely more heavily on my fears than I do on God's faithfulness, it's like a throwing a wet blanket on my spiritual flame. What's my answer? I get on my knees, open my hands, and I surrender my everything to the Lord once again.

I give Him my worries, my 'what if's' and the deep desires of my heart. I'm only dealing with partial information. He knows what's best for me (and for you). Try actually getting on your knees, opening your hands, and releasing the things you've been white-knuckling up to this point. Say to the Lord, 'Father, what does obedience look like here? And who do You want to be to me here? My Deliverer? Defender? Strong Tower? I surrender to You. Show me Your greatness in this place.'

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10).

T – Trust: Here we are, back at trust again. When I lose perspective on life, I've somewhere along the line stopped trusting God. Here are a few things that are important to remember:

- He has a plan for your life that is your best case scenario
- He is faithful, true, and made Himself available to you
- He is good and kind and true; you can trust Him to get you safely home
- You can trust Him. If your passion has waned it's time to re-engage your heart, to renew your mind, to humble yourself in His presence, and then to rise up knowing that you are His, and He is yours. You are blessed, indeed.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).

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