

This Daily Prayer Strategy Hurts at First—but Bears Incredible Fruit

Every morning, I try to pray, “Father, show me how to be more like Jesus Christ today so that You will be glorified!”

Knowing that every day I will fall short of this goal, I take joy in the smallest victories to this end.

My flesh loves to be in control and clings to anxiety with stubborn pride. However, God’s Word faithfully restores my confidence in His ability to transform my heart and life.

Andrew Murray said, “When God gives the Holy Spirit, His great object is the formation of a holy character. It is a gift of a holy mind and spiritual disposition, and what we need above everything else is to say: ‘I must have the Holy Spirit sanctifying my whole inner life if I am really to live for God’s glory.’”

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the voice of Christ within me speaks. Moment by moment I must bring my sinful thoughts, actions and words to Him as quickly as they arise so that gradually they will give way to His thoughts, actions and words. I pray to be less, even though everything prideful in me seeks attention and recognition.

This is not an easy struggle, but growing up in Christ is a narrow path burdened with worldly distractions and insidious idolatry that sets itself up against the transformational work of God. It is a battle that can only be won in the spiritual realm—not by my own determination and desire.

Without dying to my flesh, the formation of this holy character cannot be evident in me. Paul recognized that God’s

children are susceptible to the deception of darkness without complete faith and trust in the One who created us and knows us best. Therefore, in his letter to “God’s holy people” in the city of Colosse, he shares a powerful prayer that, prayed for our lives and the lives of others, will transform us more and more into the image of Jesus Christ:

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, pleasing to all, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, enduring everything with perseverance and patience joyfully, giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled us to be partakers in the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1:9-12).

There is much to be gleaned for our everyday lives from the purposes of Paul’s prayer. How we, God’s people, need to be filled with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. So often we struggle in the flesh to know the will of God, yet do we ever ask to be filled with the knowledge of His will? What a powerful prayer request! “Father, fill me with the knowledge of Your will for my life through all wisdom and spiritual understanding!”

Still, it is important to recognize that the term “spiritual understanding” in our culture has been horribly abused. Not everything with this label is Christian in nature. We must be vigilant to ask the Father to fill us, and those for whom we are interceding, with Holy Spirit wisdom through the very mind of Christ so that we may have a clear and perfect understanding of His will for us.

The result? Those for whom we pray will begin to live lives worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him in every way by bearing fruit

in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God and being strengthened with all power according to the glorious might of God. Here, we will begin to see the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit moving within and throughout our day to day lives. Is there anyone who would not want such a prayer of blessing and power?

Paul prays for the believers to be strengthened so that they might have great endurance and patience to withstand whatever struggles, trials or persecutions might come. Why? So that they might be able joyfully to give thanks to God in the midst of their day-to-day lives—no matter what happens.

I am eager to give thanks to the Father when I am comfortable and life is going well; however, only His supernatural strength upholds my joy when that is not the case. How many believers do you know who need the courage of God in their lives right now to endure a trial? Isn't it a powerful encouragement to see those saints who are able to live in full joy and confidence in the midst of pain or difficulty? Pray that God will give you and other believers such strength, so that we may joyfully give thanks to God, who has qualified us "to be partakers in the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12b).

The way of holiness is to walk in the way of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we pray the powerful Word of God into our everyday lives and crucify our fleshly desires to lean into the desires of our Father, we will live more fully within the kingdom of His light. We will know the will of God for our lives and please Him in every way. We will be given His strength and be sustained by joy and thanksgiving. May the formation of a holy character continue in us all for the glory of God. {eoa}

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