

This Obstacle Keeps Many Women From Asking for Prayer

It was a particularly tough week at the Davis household. I was working on a really tight writing deadline. There was no room in my schedule for unplanned interruptions. Apparently, the nasty staph infection that invaded my husband's hand didn't get the memo.

On Monday, I got a call from my husband that a wound we dismissed as a bug bite was actually an infection caused by a strand of staph that doesn't respond well to medicine. The doctors were considering admitting him. They were almost certain he would permanently lose the use of his hand. They even mentioned a 10 percent mortality rate. Gulp! I wanted to pray, but I couldn't get words past the lump in my throat. I feared for the well-being of my man, I had to care for my two small children and I was anxious about meeting my deadline.

At that moment, a friend called, and I broke down. She prayed with me and asked if she could recruit others to pray. I didn't want to sound rude, so I said okay. She kept her word. Within a few hours, tons of people were praying for our family. They called and texted with encouraging Scripture or by simply saying "we're praying."

Here's the funny thing. All of that prayer didn't make me feel better. At least not at first. The emotion I felt the strongest that afternoon was *embarrassment*. I didn't like everyone knowing that things weren't perfect behind our front door. I didn't like the feeling that I couldn't pray myself out of this mess all on my own. Most of all, I didn't like the harsh reality that I couldn't keep all the plates spinning.

Getting Real About the Broken Places

The Lord tenderly dealt with my heart that day. He reminded me

that He created the church to be a support network, and He called my reluctance to ask for prayer what it really was—pride.

As I gave my husband his pain medicine, tucked him into bed, and sat down to eat the dinner that some praying friends were sweet enough to drop by, I thought about the pride of not sharing how people can pray for me. When people ask, I rarely have a reply, or I go for something safe and surface like “my kids have a cold.” I don’t go deep and open up about the areas of my life where I really need God’s power to create change. I’m realizing that if I want to see the power of prayer in my own life and in the lives of others, I need to get real about the broken places where I need God to work. That means admitting areas where I am weak and cannot do it on my own.

James 5:13–16 says:

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone merry? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your faults to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much.

Why do these verses urge us to get real about our struggles? So we can be healed.

Take Off Your Mask

I’m learning that part of why God has placed me in a church family is so that I have prayer support when I need it most. But in order for it to work that way, I have to take off my mask of perfection and say, “I am struggling. Will you pray for me?” If I keep offering up only trivial prayer requests, I

miss my chance to tap into the true power of prayer.

I can attest that the last part of that passage from James is certainly true. The more people that prayed, the more we saw an improvement in my husband's health. He was released from treatment with full use of his hand. Doctors marveled at the change as they saw his infection healing and his hope remaining steadfast. When people asked him what made the difference, he was quick to point to all the prayers.

Also, in what can only be described as a "loaves and fishes experience," God multiplied my time and energy and I made my writing deadline. I know that if I had refused to ask those around me to pray, this story would have a much different ending.

How about you? Are you willing to get real about areas where you need others to pray for you? Or will you just stick to the surface stuff?

Is there an area of need in your life that you think you could never share with anyone?

I encourage you to find a praying friend, take off your mask of perfection, and ask for help. {eoa}

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