

Ch 1 — Part 2

THERE IS PEACE IN PRAYER

Certain things in life bring out the best in us...or the worst in us. To maintain balance, we turn to so many earthly things — but these things don't establish true balance, they only numb the pain. Power. Money. Material bliss. Sex. All these things serve as temporary escapism to help us avoid facing the truth.

So what can help? Prayer.

Philippians 4:6 encourages us to reach out to God in prayer, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Sometimes prayer gets a bad rap. Even among believers, there are individuals more concerned with what they can get out of prayer — and if they don't get what they want, they tend to discredit the power of prayer. For years, I was one of those people. Despite growing up in the church, I found myself turning to prayer in certain situations, only to get what I expected to get. After many failed attempts of asking and not getting, I read the passage above and took a new approach. I realized I needed to dedicate my prayer life to God, and commit my heart to pleasing Him, rather than seeking selfish ends.

God answers prayers that come from a place of surrender, inviting the truth, and the Spirit of God to flow in and through that truth. The expectation of prayer should be placed not on the external — but on internal richness.

Psalms 62:5 says, “Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him.”

Anything that happens in our lives has potential to blossom — or become corrupted — based on our personal relationship with God, established

through prayer. There is no relationship, friendship, or marriage that I know that can remain strong without studying each other, and without communication. So our relationship with God cannot be strong without studying His word, the Bible, and praying to our Father.

Prayer brings peace, when our hearts are set on God and we allow the Spirit to lead us in the path of righteousness. We cannot convince God of the merit of our selfish desires through prayer or otherwise. It is a joy to let go of our egotistical reasoning, to set aside pride and vanity, and to ask God to move and work in our lives on His timeline, and according to His good plan.

Prayer is a place where we can lay down all that has been keeping us from being the child of God that Jesus died for. We can bring it all to Him in prayer with a heart turned toward pleasing God — not ourselves. Prayer is the communication line that allows the Spirit of God to make requests for us, so we can let God in and let Him save us from ourselves.

Through prayer, God can reveal what we need to build a more Godly character. When we discredit prayer, we are denying God the open and loving communication He wants with us, and turning to prayer only in times of crisis causes us to lose out on so much of what God has to offer. But even then — God is gracious enough to allow us to feel the peace of prayer — even when we're stuck in our messes; He wants us to see that His peace is more powerful and more important than all our selfish wants.

Stop. Think. Erase all the things that are superficial. Allow the Spirit of God to awaken you through daily prayer that erases YOU and focuses on God. It is not what prayer can get you physically, but what God can make of you spiritually.

ASK YOURSELF...

1. When is the last time you prayed?
2. Do you consider yourself a faithful Prayer Warrior, or more of a Prayer EMT?
3. Are you willing to surrender all to God?
4. If you've fallen out of the habit of prayer, or have been focused on self-serving prayer, it can be helpful to add regular prayer-sessions to your schedule. What time of day can you add prayer to your to-do list? Set a reminder on your phone, or write it into your daily agenda.