

“Beginning 2021...On Our Knees”



“The Simplicity of Prayer”

*“What do you want me to do for you?’ Jesus asked him.”
(Mark 10:51)*

Although I did not grow up in a Christian home, I can still remember saying my prayers each night before bed, *“Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord, my soul to take. God Bless, Mommy, Daddy, Leslie, Steve, Andy and...Brutus (our dog). Amen.”* For the first six years of my life, that simple little prayer was the extent of my relationship with God. During my elementary school years, I abandoned the prayer all together as a silly, meaningless jingle for children. Or so I thought...

Ten years later, I was involved in a small group Bible Study with a few of my high school friends through the ministry of *Young Life*. Following one meeting, I bowed my head, closed my eyes and whispered, *“Lord, I don’t know if you are real, but if you are, would you come into my life and take over?”* When I looked up, my friends were in tears. I wondered why. Later, I found out that they had been praying for me the entire year. Did God actually honor my simple rhyming prayer ten years before as I asked the Lord to keep watch over my soul? I am convinced that our Heavenly Father was deeply engaged in the simple nightly prayer of a six-year-old boy.

The Prologue in Catherine Marshall’s classic book, *Adventures in Prayer: How to Reach for God’s Helping Hand* opens with statement regarding the simplicity of prayer, *“Admittance to the School of Prayer is by an entrance exam with only two questions. The first one is; **Are you in real need?** The second is; **Do you admit that you are helpless to handle that need?**”* Prayer is that simple...and powerful.

I love the story of the encounter between Jesus and a blind man sitting by the side of the road begging (Mark 10:46-52). When Jesus heard the man’s cry for help, he stopped and asked him a question, *“What do you want me to do for you?”* The man had real physical and financial needs. He was helpless to handle his needs on his own. His request was a simple and heartfelt prayer for help. His request stopped Jesus in his tracks. His need mattered to Jesus. So does yours. What do you want Jesus to do for you at this time in your life?

During the first week of the New Year, I have been starting and ending each day with Martin Luther’s Morning and Evening Prayers. Before I head to bed this evening, I think I will do something a little different...

“Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep....”