

Pray Your Day

September 14, 2014

You may have heard this before. It is a prayer.

"Lord, so far today, I am doing all right. I have not gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or self indulgent. I have not whined, cursed or eaten any chocolate. However, I am going to get out of bed in a few minutes and I will need a lot more help after that."

I know that you want to be closer to God, to be more aware of His presence with you all during the day. You want to draw strength from God and wisdom. I am going to teach you a way of praying today that will help you draw closer to God. This way of praying is very simple. Anyone can do it. I encourage you to pray your day.

There was a time in my life that I thought prayer needed to be longer than just a sentence or two. I thought prayer always needed to start with praise and thanksgiving before getting to a request. Consequently I would save prayer for when I had more than a moment of time.

I know now that such thinking is a mistake. Let me illustrate with something familiar. You could think about approaching prayer as being like connecting to the internet. In the early days of having internet at my study desk, I had dialup internet access. If I thought of something I wanted to research on the internet, it would take a minute or two to get connected. Then I could begin my search. When I found what I was looking for, I would disconnect from the internet. Then if I needed more information I would have to repeat the connection process of a minute or two before I could search.

For those of you who do not use computers, let me explain that dialup access takes a minute or two to connect. But with broadband there is no access time. You are always connected. So if I think of something I want to research, I can immediately start looking for it. I don't first have to take time to connect to the internet.

I used to think of prayer as being like dial-up, rather involved. It was an involved process to get into the presence of God. Now, I know that prayer is like broadband. By faith in Jesus, I have constant access to God in prayer. There is no preliminary, no warm-up. I can pray as quick as the situation demands. With such a prayer connection, prayer is easier and so I pray more. And so can you.

Prayer, at least prayer that is by faith in Jesus, is not about length. There is no right or wrong length of prayer to be acceptable. Nor is prayer about special words. You don't have to speak to God in theological terms to be acceptable.

Prayer is not about praying at a special time. Sunday prayers are not more effective than Monday prayers. Seven a.m. is not more effective than 3 p.m. There is no wrong time to pray. You can pray anytime. Prayer is not more acceptable if you bow your head, close your eyes, and put your hands together. It doesn't matter if you sit down, stand up, or lay with your face to the ground. Such things do not matter at all.

Prayer needs to be truth from your heart. It needs to be humble. It needs to be by faith in Jesus. But mostly, it just needs to be. Prayer is about praying. **Prayer is about you reaching out to God**. Prayer is about you reaching out to God. God is most concerned with why you pray and the internal how rather than the externals. The internal how that God is looking for is humble faith.

Today's sermon is about how often you pray. I want you to learn to pray all day long. I want you to learn to pray very short prayers. And I want you to pray about many different things. The subject matter can be as varied as your life. School, work, play, study, all are suitable for prayer. Indeed, it may be that you are more in need of praying at such times.

Prayer is about you reaching out to God. Reaching out to God develops your relationship with God like nothing else. Without prayer you can't grow in your relationship with God. In short, I want to teach you to pray your day.

If I never speak to my wife our marriage relationship will deteriorate. If I only speak once or twice a day, and then very formally, our relationship will stagnate. For our relationship to grow deeper we need to spend time with each other, communicating ourselves to each other.

All of your relationships need the same for them to grow and deepen. This includes your relationship with God. Prayer grows us closer to God.

Today, I want to encourage you to grow in prayer by praying shorter prayers and more of them. I want to encourage you to pray your day. I believe this is what Paul the missionary meant when he wrote the following to the Christians living in the city of Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NIV) ... pray continually;...

Jesus too speaks of prayer as more than once or twice a day.

Matthew 26:41 "Keep alert and pray. (NLT)

To keep alert means all the time. If you are only alert 90% of the time, your enemy will attack you during the other 10%. Keep alert means all the time. Keep alert all the time and pray. Prayer is something to do all day long. Pray your day. You do this by praying short prayers all through your day. Don't just live your life today, pray it. Pray your day. Share it with God. Let me suggest the following.

Pray your joys.

My pain was a little less yesterday morning, and It brought me joy. I know it will get better. I also remembered that there are some for whom it never gets better. They deal with chronic pain. Sometimes I sit in my recliner with my Bible open, my hot coffee in my hands, and just savor the quiet, the peace, the presence of God. It is a time of joy. And I thank God for each part of it.

When you see someone in bad shape, you can thank God that you are not in such shape too. There is always someone in worse shape than you are. You can give God thanks that worse things have not happened to you.

Did you ever see the movie titled The Boy with Green Hair? This boy wakes up one morning to find that his hair has turned green and it causes all kinds of trouble for him for awhile as you can well imagine. If you get up tomorrow and your hair is normal, be joyful for that and thank the Lord.

As you look at a beautiful sunset, compliment God on a beautiful natural painting. As you sit in your favorite chair, take joy in the chair. Just snuggle down into it a bit and enjoy how good it feels. And thank the Lord for your chair. Thank the Lord for your coffee, a luxury. Thank Him for the other things you enjoy this day, just as they occur to you.

Whenever you enjoy something, really enjoy it. Relish it. Savor it. And share that joy with God.

"Lord, this sunset is really beautiful."

"Lord, I love riding my bicycle."

"Oh, God, this shower feels so good."

Pray your joys. And when you think about it, there are many.

Pray your worries. When something troubles your mind, disturbs your peace, pray it to the Lord.

"Help me think about something else instead of what could happen."

"Help me think about the good that could happen here."

"Help me focus on this praise song."

Rejoicing should be the normal state of the Christian. When worries hit, pray them into God's hands. This replaces the worries with the joys.

Pray your questions. When something in your Bible reading doesn't make sense to you, even with helps, ask God to reveal the meaning in His time.

"Lord, show me what this means."

Maybe a friend has a question about God or the Bible or spiritual things and you didn't know the answer.

"Lord, I don't have an answer to this question. What do I say now?"

Pray for your family and friends. When you think of someone you know, pray for their need. Pray for their protection in temptation. Pray for their growth.

"Help my son's faith to get stronger through this experience."

"Please encourage my mom today."

"Help my friend to understand that truth that bothered her in the Bible study last week."

"Give me words to say as I call this person tonight."

Pray for strangers.

Pray for the safety of police officers, firemen, other first-responders, and people you see while driving.

"Guard these construction people from the oncoming traffic."

"Get the injured to the hospital in time to save their lives."

"I ask that none of those firemen get hurt in that fire."

Don't just watch people, see their needs and ask God to bless them. Your prayers make a difference. One day you will find out how much of a difference. For now, pray. Pray for others.

Pray your job. If you don't have a job, pray your chores.

Possibly there is nothing new under the sun in your job. You know it backwards and forwards. There are no surprises. Maybe it is boring. Maybe it is dead-end.

"God my job is boring. Help me see something new today."

"Lord, help me have a better attitude about my job."

"I have to face that problem person in this meeting. Give me a patient spirit."

"Help me see the good in that person I don't like much."

Pray your schooling.

Whenever you start a new class, just say a quick, silent prayer for help to stay focused and get the right info in your notes. When you open a book to read for homework, ask God to help you understand it. When you begin a paper, ask God to help you organize the information into a logical sequence. When you are getting ready to take a test, ask for help to stay calm and remember what you have learned.

Pray your free time.

Free time and physical exhaustion are a dangerous combination when it comes to temptation. Don't forget to pray then.

"Lord, help me turn the TV off if there is nothing worth watching."

"Lord, I'm really tired out, keep me from temptation. Help me see it for what it is when it pops up."

Pray your driving.

Don't just drive your car. Pray your trip into the hands of God.

"Lord, this is a dangerous thing I'm getting ready to do. Help me stay safe and careful."

"I know this one place especially I am tempted to speed."

"There comes that blind curve that is so bad."

All day long, pray your day. Whenever something occurs to you to pray, do so, no matter how short the prayer.

*"Thank You, Lord for saving my soul."
"Fill me with Your Spirit."
"Open the Bible up to my understanding."
"Open my heart up to see my sin."*

When you wake up, say a quick prayer - *"Thank you God for the opportunities to serve You today."*

When you wash your face, say a quick prayer - *"Thank You for access to plenty of clean water."*

While cooking or eating thank God for access to so much good food.

Fill your day with prayer as you live the day. As you live the day, pray your day.

*"Thank you for all that has happened today."
"I accept this phone call as an opportunity to serve You, not as an unwelcome interruption."
"Not my will, but Yours."
"Transform me."*

The more you pray in places outside of church or home, the more naturally Christ will come to mind there. You can pray just about anywhere. When you pray in other places, it will seem much less like a separate, Godless world, and more of a spiritual whole in which the Spirit is working everywhere.

If you think about praying, you will pray more. It doesn't have to be long. The more you get into the habit of praying, the more you will accomplish through your prayer and the happier you'll be, because you will have learned the secret of staying in constant, close communication with your loving Savior and Lord.

Never think that anything you are doing is unimportant to God.

Here is a really good prayer, if you can pray it: *"Dear God, Your will, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else. Amen."*