

One of the greatest things (of so many great things) we have from God through the finished work of Jesus is the ability to talk with God in prayer. Not only has Christ purchased this for us through His redemptive work (Hebrews 4:14-16) but He desires us to pray constantly (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Here are a few thoughts toward prayer that can help you have a more meaningful prayer life which leads to a deeper love of the Lord.

1. Have a focused prayer time without distractions.

In our world, it seems everything is go, go, go from the minute we get up until the time we lay down. But no matter how busy we get; we should never be so busy that we can't stop and do nothing else but talk to the Father. Jesus is our example; even with His almost impossible schedule He took time alone to pray (Luke 5:15-16). I agree that all times are good times to pray. You can pray while driving (eyes open please) or while working or doing any activity. But let's set aside some time when nothing else has our focus except the Lord.

2. Remember God already knows everything.

This is a very freeing thing to remember. God already knows everything going on in your life (Psalm 139:1-13). This means we can talk to Him about anything and everything. There is no feeling, desire or fear – nothing at all – we need to try to hide from our loving Father. He already knows and desires to talk to us about it.

3. God wants to talk to you about you.

Many times, we talk to God about everything and everyone but never get to the point of ourselves; that is, the real issues going on in our own lives. We may include ourselves in prayer but avoid talking about ourselves in prayer. Let me give you an (admittedly extreme) example. You find out you have cancer and that you may die. So, you pray to God that he would heal you of the cancer. Why? Why do you want healed? You think it's a dumb question, but you haven't really spoken to God about it. You want to be healed so you don't die. Why? Because you are afraid to die. That's the answer! Your prayer is, God, I have cancer and I desire for you to heal me because I am afraid to die. Now God can respond to your prayer because you shouldn't be afraid (1 John 4:18). Why are you afraid? Why are you mad, why are you sad, why are you convicted? God wants to talk to YOU about YOU. He is a good Father, the best, a perfect Father, and He wants to talk with you and for you to share with Him all that you are going through. He already knows (see #2) and wants to replace your anxiety with His peace.

4. God answers through His Word.

The Word of God is perfect, infallible and all-sufficient. The Word of the Lord is complete and all that is necessary. The more of the Bible we know the more answers we have in our prayer lives. Anytime we pray, God will speak to us through His Holy Spirit by bringing to mind the Word of God. Study the Bible, memorize Scripture, and meditate on its teaching and your prayer life will absolutely become vibrant and alive.

5. God loves you enough to deal with sin.

If there is any unrepentant sin in your life, one of the first things you will see is that your prayer life will begin to suffer. You will either avoid it, which is foolish, because God already knows (see #2 again) or it will seem as if God is not responding to your prayers at all. This isn't true. God does wish to respond to your prayers, but the first thing must be your sin. Sin hurts us, destroys our fellowship and damages our witness. As a loving Father, God will not tolerate this kind of destruction in the lives of His children. God wants to talk about everything in our lives, but some things are of utmost importance and one of those is sin. He desires for us to remove it because it can hurt us so badly. Here is another extreme example, but I think it's necessary to make the point. Suppose you were walking down the hallway of your home and as you walked by your son's room, you realized he is sitting on his bed pointing a gun at himself. You go in and start talking. He is very upset. He may want to talk about the car he wrecked, or the girlfriend that broke up with him. What do you want to talk about? The gun. You want him to give you the gun. Everything else can be dealt with; everything else can be discussed and fixed. But if that gun goes off, he is going to get very, very hurt. We sometimes go to God and want to talk about a crisis, or our work, or our relationships. What does He want to talk about? The sin. He will deal with the rest of the things in our lives, but He wants us to confess and repent of our sin before it hurts us.

Plan

A great plan is to set some time aside every day to confess our sin, pray about everything, and then study His Word. Getting into a regular schedule makes this so much easier. I begin by taking time to really think about my sin and what biblical repentance would be. Then I pray to God and confess my sin knowing He loves me so much He sent His Son Jesus to die for that sin so that we can have this prayer time. I talk to God about what I am truly going through in my life; I pray for others, and I spend time thanking God for all He has done and will do. Then I spend time in Bible study that I may know God better and obey Him more.