

What to do when not motivated to pray



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All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.

KEY WORDS: PRAYER, praying, hard to pray, hindered prayer, formal prayer, spontaneous prayer, love God. Seek first.

Summary: *NOTHING is more vital than daily frequent fervent prayer. But what do you do when you don't feel like praying as much as you know you should; you aren't motivated? Why does that even happen? How do we turn prayer into an effective joyful experience? How does this reflect on your love relationship with God? We can't afford to be lukewarm in prayer in these last days. Find out how to get more motivated to pray.*

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I've got a question: How's your "prayer life" been in the last 5-6 days? Have you prayed every single day and how much prayer did you invest in your **relationship** with God? Or, if you're honest, have you at times found it **either hard to pray**, or if you're honest – **not motivated** to spend time in prayer? Some days you just don't feel like it.

I recently posted on my Facebook page that very question about PRAYER – about when you find it hard to pray. I posted and asked: "Do you ever find it hard to pray? Why does that happen to most of us sooner or later? What do you do in those times?"

The feedback was remarkably interesting. Quite a few admitted they have those times of finding it hard to pray. But wow, in the times we now live, prayer will become more and more vital. The year 2020 was particularly wild and it should wake us up to pray even more.

Welcome to Light on the Rock, dear friends around the world. I'm Philip Shields, host and founder of this website where my focus is to always help us all find a closer, loving, obedient and worshipful walk with our Father in heaven and our Savior Yeshua/Jesus – AND a warmer, closer relationship with one another, with people, no matter their race, nationality, tribe, ethnic group, or political affiliation... love everyone, be kind to everyone. I have to keep reminding myself of all that as well. Those are the 2 greatest commandments.

Please also read the BLOGS on the website and feel free to give me a 5 star or 4 star or whatever you feel how the blog has benefited you. Tell others about us. Check out the video sermons too, as well as the audio ones.

Back to my Facebook question and some of the answers I received:

Common themes that came up in the thread was that they found it hard to pray:

- It was hard to pray when people felt they had sinned and disappointed God

- Or if they felt God was angry with them and what right did they have to come before the holy perfect presence of holy God.
- Some admitted they can do a ton of Bible study – even all day - - but skip prayer. They said they find Bible study much easier than praying.
- Some admitted that other things just got in the way and prayer doesn't happen.
- Some will admit that at times they wonder – ‘WHY BOTHER’ – because, honestly, they aren't seeing their prayers answered anyway! Their terribly ill son or daughter died anyway. Their husband or wife lost their job anyway. The pain that wracks their body is getting worse... so why bother? And so they don't find it easy to pray.
- Several mentioned that they're not sure what to SAY... and are afraid they might be saying something wrong or that doesn't measure up. Don't get too hung up on “rules” that people give you when you pray. Certainly when I do formal praying – on my knees in my bedroom, I do like to come to God very respectfully and reverent.

What could be more important than PRAYER?

Before I address those points and others, I must ask: **Can there be anything more important to us than staying in prayer contact, frequently, with our Father and Savior? Anything?** Yeshua and Paul and others admonish us to “pray ALWAYS” and never give up in praying (**Luke 18:1-2**). Let's read a few scriptures from Yeshua and the apostles and prophets about WHY prayer is A MUST.

But again, remember the theme and focus of today's discussion is not on prayer itself so much, or the mechanics of it, but on being motivated to want to pray. SO what makes some people motivated to pray and others NOT motivated? What's missing?

Right after speaking of the very end times and the dangerous world we'll be living in – at **the end of Luke 17:21-37** – Yeshua talks about a widow who wouldn't give up asking for her desire from a judge –and likening that to us, how WE must never give up on prayer with God, but need to keep at it.

Luke 18:1-2

Then He spoke a parable to them, **that men always ought to pray and not lose heart**, 2 saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.

Here's another. After spending much time in the verses before this about how rough the end of the end times will be... Yeshua says this:

Luke 21:36 – “WATCH and PRAY ALWAYS ... why... “that you may be accounted worthy to escape these things....”

Our very lives and end-time protection from the Great Tribulation and day of wrath, depend on us having this close praying relationship with God!

You see, prayer is a relationship. It's conversation with the Almighty! So once in a while be sure to sometimes stop in your prayer and ask God to speak to YOU as well.

OUR OWN HOTLINE with our Creator

Imagine having your own HOT LINE to the most important, most loving, most powerful Being in the universe! And you're given this phone-like connection to have access to this Person and to Christ, **and your "phone" has unlimited time, from anywhere in the world, at any time of your choosing 24/7.**

Imagine that. I wonder how many of you young people would try to TEXT God instead?! But imagine what we have – and we're being told USE that connection daily, throughout the day, many times. It's your direct line to the heavenly mercy seat in heaven.

Let your prayers be a 2-WAY conversation. From time to time just stop and listen as you pray. I have a journal with me as I pray. It won't happen at once, but sooner or later you'll start feeling and receiving thoughts you know weren't of your own making. LET God speak to you. So don't let your prayers just be you talking non-stop.

Those who do NOT have that close-knit relationship will NOT escape these things about to happen (Luke 21:36). WHY? WHY?

Because God is all about RELATIONSHIPS – loving him and loving one another. That's what true LIFE is all about: the kind of relationships we have.

When you had fallen in love with your future wife or husband, weren't you motivated to talk to him/her? Somehow you MADE time, you FOUND time, because you LOVED her or him and you were inseparable. Prayer's the same.

If we have formed the right relationship and are deeply in LOVE with our Savior and LOVE our Father, we will pray and want to pray. We will be like we were when we fell in love: inseparable from the one we loved.

A lack of motivation tells us something is amiss in our relationship. More on this later. Romans 8:35 asks "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" And the answer is "nothing".

I think God sometimes lets us have hard times and painful experiences - why?—because hard time tend to sooner or later drive us to pray more. It's in our best interest to keep in touch with Him.

But we Americans especially are so into DIY ("Do it yourself") projects because we don't like relying on someone else, not even God. Ask yourself if that could possibly be part of the problem... we don't like admitting even to God that we need him. We don't like "opening up" and asking for help. So – God LETS US have some time doing it ourselves, figuring things out by ourselves – and painful and hard times come. Then finally, when it hurts enough, we start to pray again.

Example of Israel forsaking then seeking God – all through the book of JUDGES – in cycles of oppression, they prayed, God heard and then the cycle repeats.

Think of the example of David and his son (2 Samuel 12:13-18) born from the adultery with Bathsheba. The child (not just a baby anymore) was SICK for 7 days before he died. WHY did the child remain sick for 7 days before dying? For David's sake!

Elohim was telling King David... “David, you NEED me, you need to stay TRUE to me! Repent.” ALL during that time David was fasting and praying non-stop. This was good and necessary for David. **Suffering makes us PRAY more.** GOOD times tend to make us pray *less*. It had been a while since David had been honest with God about the boy and what had happened with Uriah and Bathsheba. David needed the 7 days of fasting that he did to get him back on a right spiritual track with GOD! **That's why God let the child suffer** – for David's sake, as David was slated to fill a key position in the coming government of God.

So as **Luke 21:36** says, if you want a better likelihood of staying out of the Great Tribulation – stay close to God. God often uses pain and suffering to wake us up. And then even if God allows you to go through serious pain and hardship, even though you're praying, at least you're in communion with God and you'll get through the hardship better.

So whatever your reasons are so you're not praying “as much as you should”, YOU need to figure out what's keeping you from prayer. Your life and your family depend on you being a child of God who prays; who is inseparable from God.

Remember God is preparing – through the coming Elijah or 2 witnesses – “A PEOPLE PREPARED for the Lord.” John 1:17 – as was said about John the Baptist, a type of Elijah.

You and I could be part of that group “prepared for the Lord” if we are a praying people. **Remember YOU are the “House of God” today; YOU are the Temple of God today, and God's house was known as His “House of PRAYER”. (Read Isaiah 56;7; Matthew 21:13).**

Are YOU and I praying enough that YOU and I could be called “**God's House of Prayer for all nations**”? **Hmm....**

One of the biggest reasons for having hindered prayer or unanswered prayer is – the UNPRAYED PRAYER. We're not praying at all or not enough.

If it were a crime to be a fervently praying person, would there be enough evidence to convict you? So please, let's get back to praying.

WE'RE NOTHING apart from GOD

Another point: Yeshua made it clear how important prayer is. **Yeshua says without the Father's presence in him, HE – Yeshua - could do nothing! The son of GOD said HE could do NOTHING apart from God!** So he prayed a lot, even all night before selecting his 12 disciples who would be THE 12 for eternity (after Judas was replaced). **See Luke 6:12-16.**

If Yeshua says this – *how much more should WE realize we MUST be praying!*

John 5:19

“then Yeshua answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the **Son can do NOTHING of Himself**, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.”

John 15:5

"I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do NOTHING".

As we abide in Yeshua in prayer—John 15:8 says we start to bear much fruit, and this is part of proving we are true disciples.

Prayer reminds us of our PLACE. SURE, we're the SONS of God... sure. But HE is supreme. We BOW head, get on knees, we HUMBLE ourselves as we speak to Someone we can't see or hear, but believe he's there. It's GOOD FOR US to pray.

I see prayer as 2 main types – **the formal prayers on our knees**, or head on the carpet bowed way down as we seek God, in a private area, not so much out in public. Yeshua said to get into your "closet" or small private place (**Matthew 6:5-7**). **These formal prayers can be several minutes or hours. But here we worship with heads bowed.**

And then there's another type of prayer: the **SPONTANEOUS prayers**, where we talk with our Father many times a day. One of my relatives asked me how many times a day I pray, and I typically reply "2-3x a day on my knees and probably 20-30 times **spontaneously**, throughout the day". The spontaneous prayers can be a few seconds long or a few minutes, but typically you may be in your office, or out on a walk, or weeding the garden.

Formal prayer puts us in the right perspective as we bow our hearts and bodies, kneel, and acknowledge his holiness, greatness, his love, his power, his incredible mercies. It helps us keep humble and recognize how important our relationship is with God. K

David and Daniel prayed 3x a day and probably many did (Psalm 55:17). There were "hours/times of prayer" -- morning, noon and night. When Daniel heard the king's proclamation that no prayers for the next 30 days should be made any longer except to him the king – Daniel 6 – what did Daniel do? He went to pray about it AND thanked God! The penalty for praying to the true Living God: thrown alive into lions' den.

Daniel 6:10

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days."

Notice he **knelt down** on his knees. **Three times** that day – as was his custom since he was a boy. And he gave THANKS even in and for the trial. **You may want to check out my sermon on that – "Thankful all the time, IN a for all things" – Nov 28, 2019.**

<https://lightontherock.org/message/thankful-all-the-time-in-and-for-all-things?highlight=WyJmb3IiLCInZm9yIiwYXsliwidGhpbmdzliwiZm9yIGFsbCIsImZvcjBhbGwgdGhpbmdzliwiYWxsIHRoaW5ncyJd>

Besides those formal prayer times, we can also have "spontaneous prayer" – like when you think of someone needing help or needs healing, you pray right then and there in a quick fervent prayer. Or praying as you begin Bible study. Or you hear an

ambulance go by and the sirens going – pray for them. You have a temptation beginning— nip it in the bud and pray for strength and the right view of this temptation. Include numerous prayers of gratitude for everything you see around you and your family and your job and most of all, for God's son and His Spirit. Thank God many times for his high calling he's given you. This puts everything into perspective. We can have 20-30+ spontaneous prayers a day.

And don't just "say your prayers" but pray. Avoid vain repetitious prayers. We can keep asking for the same thing as the persistent widow, or as Christ did in Gethsemane – but let it be from your heart.

And on the days I don't do all that, on the days I get too busy, disaster strikes
Disastrous sins lie in wait! Satan knows I'll be weak on those days I'm NOT praying at all or even as much as I should, and he strikes! He will strike you as well. Your spirit is eager and willing -- but our human nature ("flesh") is weak without prayer (Mark 14:38)

Matthew 26:41 Our Yeshua said:

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation [or testing]. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Prayer must become the FIRST THING we do each day – maybe after going to the bathroom and letting the dog out – we pray! Yeshua said to "seek FIRST the Kingdom of God and HIS righteousness and all these things" we seek will be added unto us – **Matthew 6:33**. Seek FIRST. God won't just slide into first base... we have to seek him, make it our GOAL, FIRST thing and last thing, and ideally throughout the day.

*OK, there's a LOT more I want to say about prayer – but right now, be reminded that **prayer is THE MOST IMPORTANT thing you can do each day**. NOTHING beats it. There's NOTHING more urgent. Nothing more pressing.*

Let's get back to the topic at end – how about when we are finding it hard to pray? One person said that especially if they have done wrong/sinned – they feel unworthy to come before God. They're not in the mood for prayer. They said they feel God is angry at them, or not in a good mood to receive or hear their prayer. Do you relate to that at all?

We have HELP FROM Holy Spirit

Let me address that very last one first – when you're not sure what to say or worry that you may not be saying things right. Or perhaps you've sinned badly and feel so unworthy of coming before your holy father. You're certainly not in "the mood" for prayer if you're hurting psychologically, if you've had a big fight with your wife or your boss, or nothing's going right... but folks, THAT'S exactly WHEN we should be praying.

Remember Peter tells us to take care of our marital relationship – "so your prayers are not hindered." (1 Peter 3:7). I have a teaching on that. Just search "hindered prayer".

Romans 8:14-15

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

So when we pray, we're praying to our Abba – which actually has more of a meaning of “dear Daddy”. And prayer is about living in the spirit instead of in the flesh! Are YOU living in the spirit and focusing on what is spiritual and eternal (Col. 3:1-3)?

Romans 8:16-17, 26-27

“The Spirit Himself bears witness *with our spirit* that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

We have a “spirit in man” and it couples with God's spirit. **1 Cor. 6:16-17** makes it clear that our spirit becomes one spirit with God's spirit. Please read it. We're part of Christ now.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

God's spirit – his presence in us – intercedes and gets involved with us when we pray. Don't worry if you don't know exactly what to say or how to say it. That's fine. But kneel and pray – and trust that God's presence makes intercession for you and speaks for you.

In a heartfelt prayer, we are opening up our souls, our hearts – to Someone Greater than we are. Some have a hard time with that. **PRAY ESPECIALLY in those times. If all you can do is weep or sob, then weep or sob.** But do so with a bowed heart and a bowed head and admit your weaknesses, your needs, your longings and cry out to God, even if words don't quite come out right. Don't worry. *God hears those prayers, probably especially those prayers. Whenever I, as an abba to my children, heard them sobbing, I especially listened and turned my heart and ears to them.*

So the good news is – GOD UNDERSTANDS we find it hard at times to express our heart very well, and so He sends us some help – His very own nature and holy spirit to “translate” what we're feeling so it all makes sense. Our Spirit-in-man is joined with God's spirit – making us one spirit with the Lord (**1 Cor. 6:16-17**), just the same way that a man and woman become one flesh; but we become *ONE SPIRIT* with God.

Prayer gets our attitude back to where it should be. Some of the Psalms start off negatively and remember these are David's *prayers*. But, as he goes deeper into his prayer, they end up very, very positively, in faith, in hope, in praise. Some examples: Psalm 13. I like to read a psalm or two before praying sometimes.

In fact, if you're having trouble praying, and feeling God's not hearing you, start reading a psalm or two as you begin to pray. I see it as a way to “prime the pump” – if you're familiar with that term.

Unworthy to return to Father?

The other thing that pops up a lot about why it's hard for some people to pray is ... is when we feel unworthy to be called a child of God due to our repeated sins or falling short of the mark, the goal. We feel unworthy and that perhaps God's not so happy to hear from us at

times like this. Like Paul himself admitted (**Romans 7:14-20**), **our fleshly nature still sins too often. Our spirit, our heart, doesn't want to – but the flesh is weak and so we still sin from time to time**, and sometimes profoundly serious, grievous sins. SO... it's easier (we wrongly reason) to give prayer a pass for a while. (WRONG!)

So – especially after super-serious sins – we are reluctant to even come to our Abba, to God Most High. But if we really understand what God is genuinely like, even after we've SINNED – IF...IF we humble ourselves and cry out to him in repentance, admit and confess what we did or said, and ask for his strength to help us RETURN to him and CHANGE our direction to one of more obedience – he will hear you.

I said one of “*more* obedience” because we ALL – all of us – even after we've repented, still sometimes lapse back into the sins we thought we had repented of! That includes gossip,* alcohol abuse, sex sins of all kinds – fornication, adultery, flirting, porn, mental lust – we can easily slip back.

Other people will accuse you of never having repented – as if THEY never lapse back into sins. NONE of us can say that after we repented, we never sinned again. So let's stop those judgmental statements. Our lives MUST change. But perfect constant obedience takes time. We still will stumble from time to time. But the goal is to let Christ be more and more evident in our lives.

So we still sin with our **tongue** too – for if we never did, James 3 says we could consider ourselves perfect. We still **covet**. We still break the **sabbath** in one way or another by conducting business on the sabbath, for example. Some of you are getting comfortable using **profanity**. If you do – and I have too, in the past – then repent and stop doing it.

But this point – when it's hard to pray because we've failed so much – we need to go back and re-read the story of **the prodigal/wasteful son in Luke 15:11-32**.

He was terrible. This son defamed the family name by his consorting with whores, gambling, drunken orgies—, but eventually at an exceptionally low point, he realized his mess, his sin and wanted to go back home, back to his abba, his daddy. He felt totally unworthy to be called the son of that wonderful family. He prepared his speech.... I recommend you go back and read the whole story.

I am that prodigal son. So are you. YOU are that story. But what was the point? The Father – picturing God the Father – was longing for his son, wayward as he was. Remember there's great JOY in heaven over one sinner who repents (turns from his evil ways and turns back to God, walking obediently) **Luke 15:7** – that was in context of a shepherd finding his lost sheep and how joyful he was. ***This reflects God's heart for YOU.*** (Check out the song “When God ran!”) This is MY story.

Anyway, let's read it and please PASTE THIS ON YOUR HEART – GOD longs for YOU to return to him like that wasteful/sinful son and come be with him, and pray to him. Our father wants to celebrate your repentance.

Luke 15:17-24

"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19

and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."

20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. [Restoring his position as his son!]

23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' **And they began to be merry.**

When you have failed God terribly – this story should remind you that He WANTS YOU back with him, and loves you, and will RUN to you to welcome you back! This parable and the parable of the lost sheep that was found should remind us how JOYFULLY and welcoming our father is.

Peter's LESSON: Remember Peter denying Christ 3x – even with strong assertions – and then their eyes locked... and Peter left, weeping bitterly.

(**Matthew 26:73-75**). How did Peter feel? But what happened? Did Yeshua just cast him off? But no – **in Mark 16:5-7**, Mary Magdalene saw an angel at the tomb of resurrection, and the angel told her to tell the other “disciples – **and Peter** – that he was going ahead of them into Galilee. DO you think Peter was looking forward to that? How would YOU feel?

Notice the order in which Yeshua appeared to various ones. We all the know the first was Mary Magdalene (John 20). Then Paul says in **1 Cor. 15:5** that he appeared then to Peter. The 2 men on the road to Emmaus confirm this (Luke 24:33-35), then those 2 men joined the other 10 disciples (**Luke 24:36; John 20:36**) when Yeshua appeared again (10 disciples as Thomas and Judas weren't there plus the 2 men who had seen him on the road)

We're told nothing about the interaction and re-connection between Yeshua and Peter, by themselves. It must have been very heart-warming. But apparently, Christ was reassuring enough, that the next time he appeared to them all, was when they had gone fishing and Yeshua calls to them from the shore. Peter didn't wait. He jumped in the lake and swam in his rush to want to be with his Friend and Master. Obviously Peter and Yeshua had reconciled in a loving embrace or else Peter would not have been so eager to be with Him.

John 21:7

“Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it) and plunged into the sea.”

My point in telling this is to assure us, God and Yeshua WANT you near them and WANT to forgive you and be close to you. Let the Spirit pray with and for you. Pray in the spirit, for that matter.

So surely there are days YOU find it hard to pray to God your father or even to Yeshua/Jesus. I want to talk about that today and hope that we can all start praying more than ever. Much, much more!

OTHER REASONS some find it hard to pray – and suggestions

A HUGE REASON we aren't motivated: If you find it hard to pray, I hate to say this, but that means you have not fallen in love – or stayed in love – enough with the One you hope to marry: YESHUA. When you first fell in love and planned to marry, NOTHING could keep you apart. You were so in love that you were inseparable.

A lack of prayer life is a SURE indication this is a HUGE missing component of your life with God, and that is: Loving God with all your heart. It's not something you have to try to make yourself do, but time you love doing with your Maker and Savior. It's a 2-way conversation.

Prayer – when we are in love with our Savior and adore our Father – becomes a very ENJOYABLE time with the One we love.

Prayer is spending wonderful time together, when we get it right. Prayer is a 2-way wonderful time of conversation with someone you want to be with. Stop once in a while when you pray and ask Abba and Yeshua to tell you what they want you to know; Say “I'm listening. Please speak to me.” Strong thoughts and feelings, not voices. These come especially when I ask for God's help with my sermons. Sometimes the thoughts say to start over; that I'm missing the main point.

*So I keep a prayer journal. Some days, nothing happens. Other days, strong **thoughts** come into my mind and I can't write fast enough. I don't hear a voice, but just strong thoughts. So try it, even if for the first month or more nothing much comes to you. When you diligently seek God, you will find him (Hebrews 11:6). Lots of verses promise that.*

Jeremiah 29:12-13

“Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

Hebrews 11:6

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that **he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him.**”

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Other times we don't pray because we claim to be TOO BUSY doing things we want to do like Facebook, or watch TV, or go out with friends – but not as important to us as prayer obviously. You don't have time? Give me a break!

Whatever we place ahead of God – IS our god. It's idolatry. But really it goes back to the previous point: If you are deeply in love with someone, spending time together becomes a fun **priority** – and nothing keeps us apart.

Matthew 22 –read the first 11 verses or so. The Great King (God) puts on a wedding for his Son (Christ). He invites special guests, but all of them came up with a reason they couldn't come. What a shame. Read it. So the King invited everyone they could find who were willing to come.

Solution: remind yourself of the purpose and necessity of prayer. Ask YHVH to restore or give you a deep love for Him and Christ. And make prayer a DAILY HABIT – make it the first thing soon after you get up, last thing at night and many times during the day of lots of spontaneous short prayers. Matthew 6:33.

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“I don't get my prayers answered anyway... so I get discouraged and give up”. They prayed, but their extremely ill son or daughter died anyway. Their husband lost his job anyway. The pain that wracks their body is getting worse... so why bother? And so they don't find it easy to pray.

This goes back to not understanding prayer as a relationship, or that we are to TRUST God even when he gives – what we think is – the “wrong” answer. In fact we are to THANK God for these times as they are developing and maturing us.

Please hear my sermon on thanking God IN all things and FOR all things. We find throughout the Bible that it was when people began to praise and thank God IN their trials that God answered powerfully. I realize it's hard.

I speak from experience on this. I've had my share of serious trials and pains. I've had persistent persecutors who keep attacking me. We've been through typhoons in Philippines and hurricanes in Florida -- and seen God's protection. I've had **cancer** twice – and healed twice of it, Praise Yah! I've had kidney stone writhing pain 3 times. I've lost my sister, a brother who just disappeared, both parents when I was still a young man. And **most of all, we lost our first baby boy** – and that was after 2 miscarriages. I know pain. Losing our young child was the most painful of all. I remember praying and even saying “I know I should thank you for this, so I praise you father in this and for this... but Father, it's so hard.... But thank you, for I know you are with us even in this.”

PRAY *especially* when you feel he's not answering your prayers. SO MANY of David's prayers and psalms express initial frustration with God! But he works through it.

God's word teaches us to praise him BEFORE we see His answers. (more on the audio). We learn to trust God in the pain and in the death of loved ones.

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ANOTHER big factor in being motivated: if you still don't understand the GRACE of God deeply – you'll have more times of not being motivated to pray. If you understand the GRACE of God, his unmerited FAVOR he feels towards you, you'll WANT to get back to him. You'll understand His mercy triumphs over **judgment (James 2:13)** especially when you call out to Him in repentance and turn from our evil ways.

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ARE YOU IN Christ?

And another huge one – worth a full sermon or two – is understanding what it means to be “IN Christ”. DO your own study, though I have several sermons on this vital point. I am and you are – if you have God's spirit – a PART OF the body of Christ. I don't mean just that you're a church member, that body – I mean HIS body. You might be a finger, or a cell, but you're a part of his holy body. NO part of his holy body can be unholy. If you're in him, you are HOLY – set apart by God for his use. HOLY doesn't mean you're perfect. It means you're set apart.

We have a spirit component in us, and we have a fleshly carnal component. More on that in a minute. **In Romans 7, Paul** admits that in his flesh dwells nothing good. But he also had God's spirit. In Romans 8:1 he says there's now NO condemnation for us who are in Christ. That applies to you too.

If you're in Christ, we will be letting Christ's life live more and more in us. u. As John the Baptist said, “HE must increase, and I must decrease.” (**John 3:30**). If we are in Christ, we will still sometimes stumble in sin as Paul says – but we won't be making certain sins a way of life anymore.

Those who continue to live a life of adultery, lying, stealing, idolatry, etc. – won't be in the kingdom! (**See 1 Cor. 6:9-11**). So we need to repent, turn away from those behaviors. I've had to repent of them too and walk a new walk in Christ Well, let's read it. So YES, we DO have to be growing and changing. The old you and me should have died – Galatians 2:20.

But my point is, when our Father sees you, he now sees you as being one spirit with Christ (1 Cor. 6:17). When you really, really see what it means to be A NEW CREATION in Christ, part of HIM (2 Cor. 5:17), part of HIS holy body, you will want as much time with Christ and Father as you can!

Romans 8:7-9 Are you “in the flesh?”

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, **those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

9 But YOU are NOT in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Keep that thought and let's read 2-3 more scriptures first and then let's talk: Several things in the verse we're about to read. Paul PERSONALIZES HIS RELATIONSHIP with God and Christ.

Galatians 2:20-21

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is **no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved ME and gave Himself for ME.

21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

Once you're baptized and have received God's spirit, the old you is GONE. **Romans 6:3-6** is all about that. Now the old you no longer lives, in God's eyes.

Colossians 3:1-4

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For YOU died, and YOUR life is hidden with Christ in God.

4 When CHRIST WHO IS OUR LIFE appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

Treasure that. Love him for that. Christ is now your life. Accept that.

So HOW does YHVH Elohim, the Set-apart HOLY God Most High, see you and me now? And WHO is he seeing? Not the old you, but the new you. That should allow us to pray with JOY knowing our Father sees Christ in us, at least in the spirit part of our lives. We still stumble in sins from time to time, but our overall lives are changing, must be changing.

Colossians 1:13

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

Ephesians 1:3-6

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame (Romans 8:1) before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, **by which He made us accepted (HOW?) in the Beloved.”**

Ephesians 2:6

“and raised us up together, and **made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,**

You're HOLY now in God's eyes. “Holy” doesn't mean we're perfect ourselves, but “holy” means “set apart for God's use”. In Christ we're new, cleansed, and we bring joy to our Abba.

Colossians 1:28

“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, **that we may present every man PERFECT (mature, fully grown, complete) in Christ Jesus.”**

Until you come to understand what it means to be “in Christ” – we will have difficulty approaching God's holy of holies throne. I have many sermons about being “in Christ.”

Question: Would Abba ever say of you “This is my beloved Don – or Jan – or Agnes – or Suzanne – in whom I am WELL PLEASED.” Would he? Like the voice in **Matthew 3:17?** “This is my beloved SON in whom I am WELL pleased.” Yes, he should, about you, because YOUR life now is Christ. If you don't believe God would say that about you – then you still don't understand what it means to be “IN Christ.”

This should make it easier for you to PRAY and pray often. IN HIS love, we can even have boldness in the day of judgment! (**1 John 4:17**). Being new IN Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) means I CAN please him, and I CAN come pray before him. Hebrews 11:6. If we have faith, we CAN please God.

So don't let Satan distract you from praying or make you feel like God's angry at you. His goal is to keep us apart from the 24/7 open lines, unlimited time God has given us. Even if your prayers are just 1-2 minutes or 10 or 30 minutes... just DO IT.

DO you SEE God this way as He is depicted in Zephaniah?

Zephaniah 3:17 NKJV

"YHVH YOUR Elohim is in your midst, The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over YOU *with gladness*, He will quiet you with His love,
He will rejoice over YOU with singing."

So do you ever think of God rejoicing over you and singing over you?

Anyway, time's up.... And there's so much more we can say about prayer. Just do it. Just do it.

- So remember to pray – that you be counted worthy to escape.
- Seek FIRST God and His righteousness. FIRST. Root out whatever is taking your focus away from time to prayer.
- PRAY, to establish the loving relationship you need with Abba and Yeshua. **If you have learned to genuinely love Yeshua and Our Father – prayer becomes easier.**
- Pray so Yeshua KNOWS you and we won't hear those awful words, "I never knew you"...(Matthew 7:23).
- Pray especially when you've been disobedient... quickly re-establish the relationship and accept his gracious love and warm embrace like the Father of the Prodigal son
- Make prayer a HABIT... both the longer formal prayers and the many spontaneous ones throughout the day.
- Seek FIRST the kingdom of God. Don't let any idol, anything else, come in between.

Will you commit with me now... your prayers will now start to happen regularly, daily, many times a day – including formal and spontaneous praying times. Will you commit to reigniting the fire of your LOVE for Yeshua and adoration for God Most High? Will you commit to asking God to speak to you while you pray, to give you HIS thoughts, HIS will? Will you commit to prayer as a daily habit, first thing and last thing every day?

If you want more sermons on prayer – go to the search bar on the first page right side of our home page – type in "Hindered prayer". Another one "Fervent prayer". Please feel free to encourage me with positive comments or the star-rating. For written comments, you'll need to register with us first.

I hope this has helped. And I hope you'll be able to tell me soon that you're praying a lot, lot more and have made changes in your life so you can. Your life will change for eternity if you do.

Til next time, Philip Shields signing off....