

Confidence in Prayer



Christopher News Notes

“The spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.”—Romans 8:26

GOD LOVES US WITH AN UNCHANGING LOVE, AND THE LOVE WE RETURN TO HIM IS WHAT PRAYER IS ALL ABOUT. Sometimes prayer is not so much what we do or say; it’s stopping everything else long enough to be in His presence, whether that be in church or elsewhere.

The hard part is making the effort to settle down and open yourself to Him, putting your entire life in His care. He wants you to trust Him in good times and bad.

"Where have you been?" the friendly woman asked the little girl on seeing the child leaving church alone. "In there," said the girl, pointing to the church.

"And what were you doing in church on such a nice day?" the woman asked. The child replied: "Praying."

The woman questioned her further, asking, "What were you praying for?"

"Nothing," said the girl. "I was just loving God."

Good Prayer is Joyful

"Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart."
—Psalm 37:4

The purpose of prayer is not to experience joy, but to praise God. The quality of your prayer does not depend on good feelings. Many people pray in darkness for a long time before they know real joy. But God by His very nature is pure happiness. The closer we come to Him, the more we participate in His eternal joy. Take the time to put yourself in His Presence and enter His love.

"In my 55 years of life I have found delight in the Lord for I always have Him beside me," wrote a supporter of The Christophers. "Early in life I learned to love Him and make a friend of Him. He has been my confidant, my companion, my support through all the happiness and sadness that has been a part of my life."

Good Prayer Builds on Human Weakness

"My grace is sufficient for you for power is made perfect in weakness."
—2 Corinthians 12:9

"God gave to some animals the speed of flight; to others, claws or wings; but He has so disposed man that He, God Himself, is his strength," St. John Chrysostom wrote. God allows us to remain weak to teach us how much we need Him. Never be discouraged. Many saints have been humiliated by their weakness, but they were among God's choicest instruments.

A recovering alcoholic shared this story: "I had my first drink at the age of 18...By age 60, I had no will to live...I was denying everything, admitting nothing. I believed God had given up on me, and so I used to ask Him to let me die in my misery. While I had a devoted family, I was a very lonely person. Not until I turned my will and my life over to God's care did things change for me."

Good Prayer Promotes Self-Respect

Prayer can help you to realize that you have dignity and worth. Even though you may feel unworthy, God is blessing you because God is Unchanging Love. His love never fails whether you feel it or not.

Self-confidence comes when you make the leap of faith and begin to believe that God really does love you, even though you are imperfect. Stay humble, but believe in His love with all your heart.

A letter to The Christophers shared this message: "For years I have been praying that I could rise from a destroyed self-image due to earlier training, despite the fact that I grew up in a loving, devoted family of which I was the youngest child...I had no self-confidence, had been told so by professional people, and came to realize that prayer was the only source I could use to conquer this problem.

"I attended a liturgy one day and heard our bishop say, 'I hope you will always remember how good you are!' These words had an electric influence on me. All my life I have tried to be good, to obey God. Why should I question my self-worth? Thanks to the inspired words of our good bishop, I am now on the way to becoming a whole person, with God's help."

Good Prayer Produces a Loving Spirit

"Come to Me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."
—Matthew 11:28

As we yield more and more to God's will, we become more loving. Ever so subtly, we find ourselves uncomfortable with feelings of bitterness,

A Prayerful Life

"To live a prayerful life we cannot do without specific prayers. We need to say them in such a way that we can listen better to the Spirit praying in us. We need to continue to include all people..."

"Through our prayers we can carry in our heart all human pain and sorrow, all conflicts and agonies, all torture and war, all hunger, loneliness, and misery, not because of some great psychological or emotional capacity, but because God's heart has become one with ours."

—Henri Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*

resentment and hatred. We see that they are not from God. We learn to forgive and overcome our hurts.

Pray for a gentle, loving heart. Put away the unforgiving spirit and call frequently on the name of Jesus. Believe that you are solely responsible for your thoughts and actions and blame no one else for your present state—not your parents, not your superiors or your environment. Admit your errors, correct them, promptly forgive yourself, and then begin again.

This is the story of one man's struggle: "Two years ago I came very close to a nervous breakdown... Why was this agony happening to me? I've tried to please God in every way I knew. And now He has abandoned me. This was causing me my greatest suffering. I went to an all-day seminar on bringing Christ closer to our lives. The idea of yielding ourselves to God's plan for us was central to the day...I suddenly realized that I was not guiltless as I thought I was. Pride, the slayer of angels and of men, has permeated my whole life and being. I have spent my life trying to appear as the world dictates...God had to break me down to the ground to make my stubborn will conform to His."

Good Prayer is Patient

“Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”—Romans 5:3-5

Try to remember that the key to prayer is in knowing that the Lord wants to work in and through you just as you are. Full healing takes time, so be patient. You can’t plant an acorn one day and expect to go out and sit in the shade of an oak tree the next.

As a letter we received said, “When I was younger, surely like most of us, I used to pray for a boyfriend, to pass a test, for a good job, money, a house, etc., and to tell you the truth I was tempted to believe that I never got my heart’s desire. But, in looking back...He granted me everything I need to give Him thanks and adoration: my faith, my health and well-being, my children, a beautiful roof over my head and food on the table.

“I used to be afraid that it was my fault for some of the events that happened in my life...my father committing suicide, my daughter leaving the church...By God’s grace I didn’t have a breakdown. I didn’t stop believing. I can feel His help in my life and His love and know someday I’ll understand His will.”

Listen...

The following words by an unknown writer imag-

ine God speaking to someone who needs advice on how to pray:

“You do not have to be clever to please Me; all you have to do is want to love Me. Just speak to Me as you would to anyone of whom you are very fond. Are there any people you want to pray for? Say their names to Me, and ask Me as much as you like. I am generous, but trust Me to do what I know is best...

“Tell Me about your pride, your touchiness, self-centeredness, meanness and laziness. I still love you in spite of these. Do not be ashamed; there are many saints in heaven who had these same faults as you; they prayed to me and little by little, their faults were corrected.

“Do not hesitate to ask Me for blessings for the body and mind; for health, memory, success. I can give everything...Tell Me about your failures, and I will show you the cause of them. What are your worries? Who has caused you pain? Tell Me about it. Forgive them, and I will bless you.

“Are you afraid of anything? Have you any tormenting, unreasonable fears? Trust yourself to Me. I am here. I will not leave you.

“Have you no joys to tell Me about? Why do you not share your happiness with Me? Tell Me what has happened since yesterday to cheer and comfort you. Whatever it was, however big, however small, I prepared it. Show Me your gratitude and thank Me.

“Are temptations bearing heavily on you? Yielding to temptations always disturbs the peace of your soul. Ask Me and I will help you overcome them.

“Well, go along now. Get on with your work or play. Try to be humbler, more submissive, kinder; and come back soon and bring Me a more devoted heart. Tomorrow I shall have more blessings for you.”


“It’s better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.”

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