



As I write this article on prayer, let me state that I am no “expert”. All I can do is share my experience from my earliest memory till now.

Questions in my mind include: what is prayer? How do we pray? How should we approach a perfect God when we are imperfect? What posture is best: kneeling, standing, prostrate in reverence or submission, head bowed, head raised? Do we pray out loud, or offer a silent prayer? I think of a snowflake, said to form when extremely cold water freezes over a particle of dirt/dust. Each is unmatched in its design and makeup, no two identical. So it is with us – a Masterpiece, a Designer’s Original, uniquely crafted by the Creator, the Giver of life and of all that is good. I reiterate: no two of us are alike. Each has an unparalleled personality, distinct in our approach to life, to God and to others. It is like being in a family and each child approaches each parent differently. One child noisily wakes up in the morning with “hello world”, jumping unabashedly into his parents’ bed flinging himself joyfully into his father’s arms. In the same family, another child wakes up and quietly approaches her parent, content with sitting at her parents’ feet. Still, there is the third child who wakes up, not sure who he is in the family or how he fits in, so he keeps a distance, peeks in the door and timidly waits. After all, his parent is busy with the others. He patiently waits, even in an emergency, waiting to be noticed and acknowledged that it is okay to approach boldly to make his requests known. As it is in the family, so it is in our prayer life with our Heavenly Father. There’s no such thing as “one size fits all” and that we should be identical in our approaches. Some of

us will never be silent in our prayers while others of us will always be loud.

Yet we are all prayer warriors, growing daily in our relationship with a loving God who loves us with an everlasting and perfect love. Let us not offend another who is more sensitive and who will be discouraged to pursue Christ because we want them to approach God like we do. Isn’t it good to know that “we are accept-

You Are Safe In God’s Hands, So Go Ahead and Pray

ed in the beloved,” that we can “come without money and without price,” that “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”. So, “come all you who are wary/weary and heavy laden” and Jesus will give you rest.

Learn of Him and experience that His yoke is indeed easy and His burden light. Because we shaped by our personalities (introvert or extrovert) families, culture, social environment, and even gender, we bring that baggage with us when we come to God. These are not bad, but often hinder us in our expectations on who God is and who we are in HIM. Simply put, we judge and limit God by our past experiences, often from loved ones who did not know any better, and even by others from houses of worships. We are easily offended even if it a word of encouragement, a compliment, but especially if it comes in form of correction. As my oldest daughter Deborah would put it, we are so “into our feelings” that we miss out on the love that is being poured out on us. But, you’ll be all right. Hence, my

first challenge to each of you is this: take off the mask. Yes, I said it. Take off the mask and stop pretending that you are not offended. Admit you are hurt by past hurts and misunderstandings. Now *breathe*. Stop holding your breath. *Breathe!* That’s better. Now: *let go of all the hurt and forgive them and forgive yourself. That’s it. Now let go...* The most important thing I have learned about prayer is that my attitude of the heart must be one of humility. The proud person says “I don’t need prayer”. Worse still is to give God outward service but our hearts are far from him. In the public eye, we give lip service but inside we are much like a tomb, full of dead bones. Guess what? There is still hope. The Spirit of the Living God breathes on us and those things that are dead or are dying in us; He causes life to stir up and that more abundantly.

So, in my first of more articles to come, prayer is communicating with God, with someone greater than us who we believe has the power to answer prayer. We acknowledge our inadequacies and approach God with “Daddy, I can’t do this; I can’t fix this.” You remember when you were a child and ran to mom or dad or an older sibling with: *Can you please help me? Can you do this for me?* In much the same way, we can go to God and ask for healing, deliverance, forgiveness, provision.

Ask. What a small word with big results. The disciples noticed that things happened when Jesus prayed: stormy seas were stilled; demons were cast out; the lame walked, the blind saw; the dumb spoke. More importantly, sin was forgiven and lives made new. With that came the edict to go and make fishers of men, spreading the good news.

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