

IN YOUR CLOSET

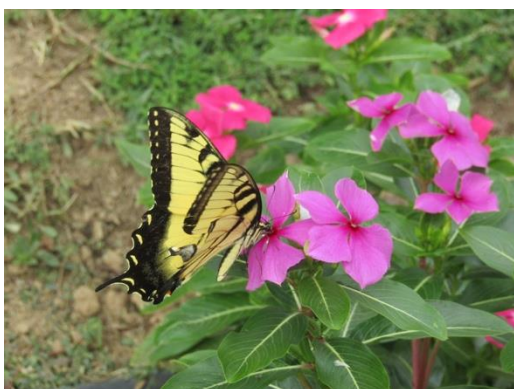
Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

I Thessalonians 5: 16-18 ESV

September, 2020

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer, by definition, is a solemn request for help or an expression of thanks. But how very much we miss if our view of prayer stops there. Imagine if your children only ever communicated with you to make requests (which are plentiful, if your kids are like mine) or to say thanks (which is so often overlooked, even if unintentionally). Wouldn't your heart break? Wouldn't you want more? Even when I am present to see, experience, and know what has gone on in my child's life, I still love for them to talk to me about it. I love to hear their perspectives and plans. I want to know how they feel. And when they don't have the words for what they feel, I want to sit with them or hold them while they try to figure it out. I want my presence to be a comfort.



What if your friends only ever called, sent a text, or showed up when they needed something? Wouldn't you long for so much more? Don't we all want friends who know us well enough that they sense what we need and on occasion send little blessings that communicate that they know and they care

about us? Isn't the greatest kind of friend the one with whom you can sit and say nothing at all?

Prayer is all of that to me. It's how I imagine we can "pray without ceasing." A sort of constant open communication, whether it's with our Father God or our friend God...or with our Savior, Jesus...or with the Spirit in one of His many forms (comforter, conscience, discernment, encourager). I think of all the roles I fill in my children's lives and how my role and our relationship grows and changes with time and stages of life. The same is true with my relationship with God. Sometimes, I cry out to Him as my Father, the One who created my innermost being and knows me better than anyone on this earth ever will. Sometimes I cry out to Him as my Savior, the One who bore my sins and endured all of life's pain and suffering, who can empathize with my hurt but who also conquered all of it and gives me that same victory. Sometimes, I just cry. When my heart is so overwhelmed and broken that words don't come, the Holy Spirit intercedes for me.

And sometimes—most of the time actually, I just talk to God as a friend. Sometimes spoken aloud but typically in my thoughts, I tell him my honest feelings about life - from small things like my parking spot to large and important things like my hopes and dreams for my children. I smile when He sends little blessings to brighten my day. I laugh when life seems to show God's sense of humor. I grumble when life seems to have no humor—when it seems against me and I KNOW that He could have intervened and made things go differently. He knows my every feeling anyway, so I figure it makes no sense to try and hide anything from Him. I even fuss at Him sometimes. But also, I try to be still and hush sometimes. Like with my friends, there

are times to speak, and times to listen. So then, prayer, if you allow it, can be so much more than “a solemn request for help or an expression of thanks.” Prayer can be health and happiness to your relationship with a triune God. It can be your expression of love and the quiet smile in your soul when you feel love returned.

Bonita Gomez

*PRAYER IS NOT A MONOLOGUE,
BUT DIALOGUE;
GOD’S VOICE IS ITS MOST
ESSENTIAL PART.
LISTENING TO GOD’S VOICE
IS THE SECRET OF THE
ASSURANCE THAT HE WILL
LISTEN TO MINE.*

ANDREW MURRAY

HOW DO I PRAY IN THE MIDST OF 2020?

We all laugh at those 2020 jokes. As they say, “It’s better to laugh than to cry.” Just imagine how those jokes will haunt the Class of 2020 as they carry that label for the rest of their lives. Yet we also know as it says in Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” So, how do I pray amid this uncommonly challenging year?”

1. Pray to your Father in Heaven. As you pray, remember to show Him loving, trusting respect. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus He has one and for all proven His love and His power.



2. Be comfortable. Through His Word and His Spirit, He invites you to open up and share with Him your thoughts and feelings. Aim to be as open as David and others in the Psalms. Yes, be quick to praise and thank Him. Also, be open and honest about your questions, your fears, and doubts. You can pray with confidence.
3. Be specific. Name names, needs, challenges, obstacles. Keep a list and watch expectantly to see God’s response. As He does, thank Him for His faithfulness and trust Him for the best as you wait on Him to prove Himself, as He will.
4. Give testimony to others as He answers. The very best that can happen in 2020 is that God is glorified. Researchers are discovering a significant increase in the number of those searching for God amid this chaotic year. God will give you answers to prayer that can point them to Him. Be faithful for His glory. Be faithful in your joy. Be faithful for those who so greatly need to know His Love.