

BACK TO THE BASICS OF FAITH

7/19/2010

Three Keys to Help Keep Your Prayer Life "ON LOCK"

Sometimes you take a good long look at your life and with all the pitfall, shortfalls, problems, and gaps you see, you wonder if God will really take care of it all. The answer is a resounding "YES", He sure will! And there are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. God always hears our prayers, and He is always willing and able to bless us, but sometimes we forget that our Heavenly Father is a God of order. He doesn't skimp on the details, but He makes sure that all our systems are "GO" in the blessing department.

If we would include *a check up from the neck up* as a routine part of our prayer lives, we'd find ourselves making substantial progress and succeeding in areas we never thought possible. Sometimes we forget to do that. We forget and neglect the details that will keep our minds, hearts, and souls in good working condition. With that being said, I'd like to take this opportunity to lay out for you a little something I call the "*system check*". I'm not talking about God's system, because His business is always tight; He's always on time and always on point. But when it comes to our side of the deal, we don't always keep things in running order. So here's a checklist that will help you keep your prayer life, as my son says, "*on lock*". Here we go:

#1: God is not holding your blessings hostage.

Encouragement for Christian Women in this area is vital, because we often feel as though God is withholding our blessings for some reason. Our Heavenly Father tells us in Psalms 84:11 that He will not withhold any good thing from us. We can see evidence of this as we look at all the extraordinary blessings we enjoy on a daily basis—things that we often overlook and take for granted, like the sun shining every day, our soundness of mind, the mobility of which we carry forth our daily lives. These are tremendous blessings, and we must not neglect to be incredibly thankful for them.

God is not in the business of withholding blessings from us. You are not being punished for any reason. The truth of the matter is that sometimes we get in our own way. We clog up the line of communication with Heavenly Father with our doubt, insecurity, and fear. We become stuck in neutral because there are areas where we simply cannot perceive what the Spirit is saying or where it is leading us.

Commit to a new agenda in your prayer life, one where you back away from concentrating so much on what you want and desire. Focus on acquiring another notch in your spiritual belt by praying for a greater connection with God through Christ, so that you can hear His directive clearly and follow His guidance to your treasures.

#2: To unlock the treasures, you must face the truth

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God has given us a little piece of Himself, a spiritual gift that abides within us. John 16:13-15 says that this gift is the spirit of truth and he is our friend. This friend, the spiritual gift that is on the inside of us, will take us by the hand and guide us into all truth. He won't be telling us about himself, but he will be communicating the truth about the things of God.

If we'll be honest with ourselves, we'll admit that sometimes we don't want to hear the truth. We don't want to face the fact that we've got some funkiness going on that needs to be addressed. We don't want to see the truth about our baggage because we don't want to change.

God promises in Isaiah 45:3 that He will give us treasures that are hidden in the dark and riches that are in secret places, but if you are blind and refuse to see the stuff that is holding you back, then you will be blind to the good stuff that has your name on it as well. You won't be able to see the forest for the trees.

The Father knows where your future husband is right this very moment. He knows exactly where there's an exciting, fulfilling job opportunity that has your name on it. God is constantly telling us through the spirit where to go, what to do, and how to do it. He isn't clandestine, but we need to understand that His ways are not our ways. In order to hear Him, we have to get on board with the truth—the truth about where we are in our own commitment to Christ.

You have a responsibility to put yourself in check and deal honestly with your stuff. Listen to what God is saying about the attitudes, behaviors, and emotions that you need to address within your own inner being.

As Christian Women, we need encouragement in this area because we often translate God's correction into self-condemnation. We begin to feel unworthy and depressed because we think that God is angry with us. Heavenly Father doesn't want you to feel bad about yourself. He wants to correct you, because correction leads to power! Combing through to do a little tweaking is a process of life and growth.

So don't resist the process. Listen to the spirit within, and yes, listen to others who speak the truth and sometimes tell you what you don't want to hear. Your willingness to look in the mirror is the kind of eye-opening awareness that leads to spiritual growth. It sends the message that you are prepared and willing to hear what God wants you to hear, to see what He wants you to see, and to do what He wants you to do.

#3 Remember, He heard you the first time

Matthew 6:7-13 (The Message) says *"The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply."*

Rest assured that God knows what you need before you ask. He has a heavenly perspective because He sits high and looks low. He can see all the details that you cannot see, and even though it may not look like it from your point of view, He has everything under control.

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Don't waste your precious prayer time with Him repeating the same prayer requests over and over again. You don't need to do that. There isn't a request under the sun that He hasn't heard, and nothing is too big for Him to handle. Understand that the issue isn't about hearing your prayer request, it's about your trust in Him. You must trust that God can work through you. If you will allow Him, He will prove to you that the gifts you have received are more than adequate to propel you forward.

2Corinthians 2:9-11 (The Message) says *"God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways so that you're ready for anything and everything, more than just ready to do what needs to be done. As one psalmist puts it,*

*He throws caution to the winds,
giving to the needy in reckless abandon.
His right-living, right-giving ways
never run out, never wear out.*

This most generous God who gives seed to the farmer that becomes bread for your meals is more than extravagant with you. He gives you something you can then give away, which grows into full-formed lives, robust in God, wealthy in every way, so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God.

You have to understand that the fruition of what you desire is dependent upon your preparation through Jesus Christ. The kinks in your system need to be ironed out, and God will help you. You may think that He hasn't heard you or that He said "NO", but in fact it is YOUR hearing that needs to be checked. He is telling you *"Listen, I'll take care of the need, but you've got some stuff you need to be working on as well."* Be sure to keep that in mind, because often when we see past the forest of our own insecurities, fears, and doubts, our treasure is there waiting on the other side...where it has always been...behind the trees.

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