

The Importance Of A Man's Time Alone With God - Part 2

I. **Matthew 12:18-20** - This is a description of whom Jesus would minister to and how He would minister to them.

A. Jesus brings good news to those who are feeble and failing. - That's Me

B. Is there anything more frail than a bruised reed? - Last Week/woman

C. Is there anything closer to death than a smoldering wick? / Fires that the enemy

II. A Man and His Prayer Life - One of the main fires that the enemy is constantly trying to put out is our prayer life. All of us struggle to keep our prayer life from becoming a smoldering wick.

A. The enemy has used late nights, business, laziness, depression, inferiority, guilt, and unbelief to dose my prayer life.

1. Some of us don't pray because our prayer seem so shallow compared to others.

- **I don't do well in prayer meetings**
- I want to take notes or lessons

a. There are those who can pray like a Concorde jet, smooth, sleek, and mighty

- Their words reverberate in the clouds and send sonic booms throughout heaven
- **They are eloquent, knowledgable and passionate.**
- I memorized this one: "O God, stay with me; let no word cross my lips that is not your word, no thoughts enter my mind that are not your thoughts, no deed ever be done or entertained by me that is not your deed. Amen."

b. Others like myself are more like a crop duster.

- We're not flashy, we fly low, and we seem to cover the same ground.
- **Some mornings it's tough to get the old engine cranked up.**

2. Some prayer lives lack consistency.

a. They're either a desert or an oasis.

- Long dry spells are interrupted by brief plunges into the waters of prayer.
- **We go days or weeks without consistent prayer, but then something happens,**
- We hear a sermon, read a book, or experience a tragedy,
- **Something leads us to prayer and we dive in.**

- b. We submerge ourselves in prayer and leave refreshed and new committed to never going into the desert again.

3. Other prayer lives need sincerity.

- a. Their prayers are a bit hollow, memorized, and rigid.

b. More liturgy than life.

- c. And though they may be daily, they are dull.

4. Still others lack honesty.

- a. We honestly wonder if prayer makes a difference.

b. We struggle to believe that God would even want to talk to me.

- c. If God knows all whom am I to tell Him anything.

1) God knows you - Psalm 139:1-6

2) God knows your need - Matthew 6:7-8

3) God has made promise to meet that need - Phil 4:19

4) God has the power to fulfill the promise - Rom 4:18-21

“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, So shall your offspring be. Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead-- since he was about a hundred years old-- and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.” (NIV)

- **Our prayers lay the track down on which God's power can come. Like a mighty locomotive, His power is irresistible, but it cannot reach us without rails.**

B. If you struggle in prayer, I've got just the biblical example for you - Mark 9:14-19

- **He is not a calloused-knee Apostle or a Prophet whose middle name is meditation**
- He is a fellow crop duster - a parent with a sick son in need of a miracle.
- **The father's prayer isn't much - But this prayer will remind us that:**

The power is not in the prayer, it's in the one who hears it.

1. He prayed out of desperation - Imagine the pain of this father
 - a. **He prays the best prayer in verse 22 “help.” - I hear you man**
 - b. It’s a cry for aid to do something or relief from something
 - 1) **Heb 2:18 - For since he himself has now been through suffering and temptation, he knows what it is like when we suffer and are tempted, and he is wonderfully able to help us. (TLB)**
 - 2) John 14:16 - "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever."

2. **He prayed out of unbelief - does this sound courageous, confident, strong?**
 - a. One word would have made a difference, instead of “if” how about “since.”
 - b. **The Greek is even more emphatic, it implies “doubt”**
 - c. God’s response to your doubt isn’t a rebuke, but an encouragement to believe

3. **This is a classic crop-duster appeal.**

- a. More meek than mighty
- b. **More timid that towering**

4. If his prayer sounds like yours than be encouraged, for this is where prayer begins.
 - a. **It begins as a yearning, an honest appeal, an ordinary person dealing with an extraordinary dilemma.**
 - b. No pretense - no posturing - no boasting, just prayer.
 - c. **Feeble prayer, but prayer none-the-less.**

C. We are tempted to wait to pray until we know how to pray.

1. **We’ve heard the prayers of the spiritually matured - and we think ours will never measure up.**
2. Therefore we would rather not pray that pray poorly
 - a. **Ps 138:6 - For though the LORD is exalted, yet He regards the lowly; but the haughty He knows from afar.**
 - b. Luke 18:11-14

3. Good thing this man didn't make this mistake.
 - a. **His wasn't much of a prayer - He says "I do believe, but help me with my unbelief"**
 - b. "Unbelief = weakness of faith" - "help = take me the rest of the way"
 - c. **The Holy Spirit is our "Helper."- He will take you the rest of the way.**

4. Jesus responded to this weak, unbelieving, crop-duster of a prayer.
 - a. **He responded not to the eloquence of the man, but the pain of the man.**
 - b. God is more moved by our hurt than our eloquence - This is what fathers do
 - It was Monday night, August 3, at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain. At the track and field stadium, the gun sounded for the 400-meter semifinals. About 100 meters into the race, Britain's Derek Redmond crumpled to the track with a torn right hamstring. Medical attendants rushed out to assist him, but as they approached Redmond, he waved them all aside, struggled to his feet, and crawled and hopped in a desperate effort to finish the race. Up in the stands, a big guy wearing a T-shirt, tennis shoes, and a Nike cap that said "Just Do It" across the front barreled out of the stands, hurled aside a security guard, ran to Derek Redmond's side, and embraced him. He was Jim Redmond, Derek's father. Now, arm around his son's waist, Derek's arm around his dad's thick shoulders and neck, they continue down the track. There, at the stadium, the crowd is standing, cheering. Derek and his daddy work their way around the track until, finally, arm in arm, they cross the finish line.
 - **What made the father do it? What made the father leave the stands to meet his son on the track**
 - Was it the strength of the child - No it was the pain of the child
 - **His son was hurt and struggling so the father came to help him finish**
 - God does the same. He leaves where He is at and comes to where we are at.
 - **Our prayers may be awkward and feeble.**
 - But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it
 - **Then our prayers make a difference.**
 - When our prayer life is but a smoldering wick
 - **You can be sure that Jesus will not put it out**
 - But what He will do is fan it into flame.