

Basic Equipment for the Christian Life

(Routines that Lead to Risking More for Christ)

4 - "Praying with the Heart of a Child"

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / May 10, 2015

I. You can't read your Bible without seeing the repeated call to change, to grow, and to mature as Christians.

The Bible has much to say about growing strong in our walks with the Lord, and not being like children.

- 2 Pet. 3:18 ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.
- Eph. 6:10 ¹⁰ Finally, **be strong in the Lord** and in the strength of his might.
- Eph. 4:14 ¹⁴ so that we may **no longer be children**, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.
- Heb. 5:12-14 ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, ¹³ for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

II. Although we're called to grow beyond our *childish* ways, God also calls us to remain childlike in our hearts when it comes to how we relate to Him.

- Mark 10:14-16 ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. ¹⁵ Truly, I say to you, **whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.**"
- Matt. 18:3,4 ³ ... "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and **become like children**, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whoever **humbles himself like this child** is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

FOUR CHILDLIKE WAYS TO RETURN TO FOR YOUR PRAYER LIFE

1. Come to God **MESSY**, just as you are!

- Matt. 11:28 ²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
- Luke 5:31,32 ³¹ And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

What about you? Do you find yourself praying less because you're trying so hard to just get it right? Or you feel the need to clean up your act before you pray?

2. Come to God **REPEATEDLY**, as often as you want!

- Matt. 7:11 ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

"Let's do a quick analysis on how little children ask. What do they ask for? Everything & anything. If they hear about Disneyland, they want to go there tomorrow. How often do little children ask? Repeatedly. Over and over

again. They wear us out. Sometimes we give in just to shut them up. How do little children ask? Without guile. They just say what is on their minds. They have no awareness of what is appropriate or inappropriate.” Miller, Paul E. *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2009. 37. Print.

Luke 18:7,8 ⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

In this parable, the persistent widow presents her request to the judge over and over again. She’s an example to us of praying with *importunity*.

importunate: (*adj*) persistent, especially to the point of annoyance or irritation

“The really vital question is not whether God will respond to prayer, but whether there will be faithful people who have persisted in prayer and not lost hope when the Son of Man comes. The parable is essentially an encouragement to continue in prayer without losing heart right through the difficult times of waiting before the Son of Man comes.” Carson, D. A., France, R. T., Motyer, J. A., & Wenham, G. J. (Eds.). (1994). *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 1008). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

What about you? Is your prayer life marked with importunity? Will you persist in prayer to God like a child persists with his/her parents? Do you have faith that the prayers of God’s children can move their heavenly Father’s heart, so much so that you ask again, and again, and again?

3. Come to God **CONFIDENTLY**, knowing He’s for us, and He has means!

Rom. 8:31,32 ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us**, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, **how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**

Psa. 56:9 ⁹ Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. **This I know, that God is for me.**

Two things drive children to ask: they know their parents are *for* them, and they know their parents have the *means* to grant their request.

What about you? Do you find yourself thinking twice whether or not to pray for someone or something? Is it not enough to know that God is for us and has the means to answer our prayers?

4. Come to God with **EVERYTHING**—great and small—simply because we know He hears.

Psa. 65:2 ² **O you who hear prayer**, to you shall all flesh come.

Psa. 34:15 ¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous **and his ears toward their cry.**

Prov. 15:29 ²⁹ The LORD is far from the wicked, **but he hears the prayer of the righteous.**

Psa. 66:19,20 ¹⁹ But truly **God has listened**; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. ²⁰ Blessed be God, because **he has not rejected my prayer** or removed his steadfast love from me!

1 John 5:14,15 ¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will **he hears us.** ¹⁵ **And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask**, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

What about you? Oftentimes, little children don’t think twice about saying what’s on their minds. Are you like that when it comes to prayer? Do you choose to not pray for certain things because they seem silly, or too big, or too hard, or mundane, or undeserved? What is something you should pray for, but don’t pray for, and can start praying for?