

Praying in Light of Who Loves You Most

Pastor Peter LaRuffa

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1) Imperfect as we are, there's only one reason we can draw near to God - Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 7:25 "Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost **those who draw near to God through Him**, since He always lives to make intercession for them."

Only Christ qualifies us to come near to God since He provides deliverance from sin - past, present, and future.

- a. Past - we **have been freed** from sin's guilt!
- b. Present - we **are freed** from sin's power!
- c. Future - we **will be freed** from sin's presence!

II. You can't draw near to God and not begin to change. It's gonna happen.

A. Prayer isn't about changing God's mind. **It's about Him changing yours.**

Romans 11:33-36 "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! ³⁴ **For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?**' ³⁵ 'Or who has given a gift to Him that He might be repaid?' ³⁶ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen."

B. Prayer isn't about changing God's plans. **It's about Him shaping yours.**

Romans 1:9-13 "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, **that without ceasing I mention you** ¹⁰ **always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.** ¹¹ **For I long to see you,** that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— ¹² that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. ¹³ **I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented),** in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles."

Paul tried to get to the church in Rome, but was providentially hindered by God. His inability to get there resulted in 16 chapters of Gospel doctrine that the world continues to benefit from today.

Prayer affords you opportunities to see God in the "now," and not just in the "wow."
Even in the seemingly mundane, God is always at work!

Romans 8:28-30 "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be

the firstborn among many brothers.³⁰ And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.”

III. You need to have some amount of unhurried time with God in order to draw closer to Him. All relationships take time to develop.

Psalm 27:4 “One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: **that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord** and to inquire in His temple.”

Psalm 73 is a great example of this.

v. 1-5 - Why do wicked people prosper?!

v. 6-9 - Look at them! They’re so proud!

v. 10-14 - They’re so presumptuous...ugh!

v. 15-17 - Ah...I’m starting to see Your perspective.

v. 18-20 - It’s not gonna be this way forever, is it.

v. 21-22 - Whoa. I was a hot mess before.

v. 23-28 - God, it’s just so good to be with you & near you.

7 Things I’ve Done To Improve My Prayer Life That You Might Try

1. Try reading through the Psalms. (I tend to read 5/day according to the date + 30.)
2. Try praying through your calendar and/or to-do list (and don’t feel like you have to take a long time).
3. Falling asleep? Getting distracted? Try praying with your eyes open.
4. Try an unhurried, consistent prayer time for awhile. You define “unhurried” and “consistent.” Set yourself up to win.
5. God isn’t impressed by consistency. When you miss, just pick it up again. He’ll be glad to have you back. Don’t feel like you have to play catch up. You don’t.
6. Consider writing out a Scripture you’re trying to memorize or meditate on. Consider rewriting it in your own words to gain personal application and understanding. Don’t worry about being right. It’s not a test. It’s prayer.
7. Consider what tools/methods you might employ to help you truly be unhurried during this special time with God.
 - a. For me, journaling has been the single-best way for me to have unhurried time with God.
 - Journaling forces me to slow down. (I will only ever write so fast.)
 - On countless occasions, God has revealed motives, driving factors, fears, and sins I was completely unaware of as I write.
 - I like the record I have of God’s faithfulness in how He answered prayers, but - especially how He changed me.