



Refreshing Times

ACTS 3 : 19

APRIL - JUNE 2025 EDITION



Praying TO THE Father

Article by Abia Shoko

But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Matthew 6:6

The way we approach God determines the effectiveness of our prayers. Do we approach God as his sons or as the heathens? The Bible says to many that received Him, to them He gave power to become sons of God, even to them that believe in him (John 1:12). Our faith when we pray should be based on our relationship to the One we are praying to. It is not about where we are praying from or who we are praying with. The woman of Samaria thought that it was 'about the place' but the Lord Jesus told her it's 'about the truth and the spirit.' It is more about your spiritual connection to God.

And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Matthew 6:7

The Bible says the heathens think they are heard for their much speaking and hence they use vain repetitions. As the sons of God, we are not heard because of the noise, shouting, strong vocabulary or long prayers but because of our relationship with the Father. When we approach God we do it with boldness knowing there is a relationship between us. We are no longer strangers nor foreigners to Him, but members of His household (Eph 2:19). There is nothing new we can bring before God that He doesn't know about us. Why should we spend more time explaining our needs and our situations to Him as if we are talking to a stranger?

In our prayers we should spend more time adoring Him, telling Him how great He is, how loving He is, how caring He is. His promises to us His sons are 'yes and amen' unto His glory by us. (2 Cor 1:20). The Word of God also says, *His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue.* We can receive all things from our Father when we have a deeper knowledge and understanding of Him that called us and made us His sons.

The Lord Jesus taught the disciples to pray and the first thing He stated was that they should say "Our Father which art in heaven." In your prayers you must never forget that you are talking to your Father too. He is not a Father to pastors, prophets, elders only, but He is also a Father to you and you have direct access to Him. Christ gave us access according to Ephesians 2:18 "*For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*" We have an advantage that we have a 'Father which art in heaven.' This means He is in control of everything that is happening there and here. When we pray lets confidently declare that our Father is in charge. Matthew 6:26 "*Behold the fowls of the air, they sow not yet your heavenly Father feeds them, Are you not much better than they?*"

I am much better because I am His son. "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*" Eph 1:3

In the Bible we have a story of a prodigal Son who went out and did all the bad one could possibly imagine and when things got tough, he decided to go back to his father. When he came back home, he tried to approach his father as a servant, but the father refused and said you are my son and I am going to treat you as such. The father asked his servants to bring him the best robe, to put a ring on his hand, shoes on his feet and kill the fatted cow. Child of God know that you have a loving Father. You can make mistakes but know that the Father still loves you. As you repent, know that you are forgiven and the relationship is restored. You have access, deserve the best and the fatted from your Father. Continue to approach Him as your Father and never as stranger. Let us hallow His name because He is a great and powerful Father. Remember all the power and glory belongs to Him and we do not fear anything. (Matt. 6:13). Our Father never slumbers but watches over us day and night. Don't harm yourself in trying to get access to your Father like the prophets of Baal. No physical actions will convince God to do it for you without faith in Him as your Father.

If you then, being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your father which is in heaven give good gifts to them that ask him. (Matt. 7:11)



Facing Challenges

Part 2

Article by Elton Tofa

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.; (1Co 10:13).

The word temptation means trial, adversity, trouble or affliction. The scripture is assuring us that temptations are common to men. The ISV puts it this way, "No temptation has overtaken you that is unusual for human beings." The challenges we face are common to men; we are not the first and we are definitely not the last to go through these challenges.

This is one of the reasons why God has given us the Scriptures. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. (Rom 15:4). He says the reason why things were recorded in the Scriptures was so that we might learn. We have a record of men and women who faced the same diverse kinds of challenges we face today and overcame through faith. So, these were recorded so that we might learn. They were written for our learning.

The Scriptures impart patience and comfort so that we might have hope. A template on how to face challenges has already been provided for us in the scriptures. It is for this reason that James says, Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. (Jas 5:10-11). When we see the faithfulness and mercy of God through these men and women, we will have patience and hope.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (Heb 12:1). The writer of Hebrews says we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. Who are these witnesses? These are men and women of faith who have gone before us. They were given to us as examples. Their lives are a testimony that no matter the challenges, temptations and trials we face we will always come out victorious.

The apostle Paul sums this up by saying, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (Rom 8:35-37).

In all these things, we win! Amen.

What are you feeding your soul?

Article by Washington Tsinga

What are you feeding your soul? Why 'the soul,' you may ask? In Christian life, the soul is particularly important to one's existence; hence it must be nourished to be able to live a life of purpose, experience love, joy, peace and make a positive impact in the body of Christ.



Most of the time we find ourselves engaging in actions that go against the very things we stand for as believers. Some Christians harbor feelings and actions which create a sense of guilt, and spiritual disconnection. We just really can't spend most of our time living with unresolved emotions like anger, bitterness, or resentment, for these can weigh heavily on our souls. They create a sense of spiritual heaviness. We should learn to rely and depend on the Holy Spirit who was given to us. We should learn to be led by Him and not feel like He is there to limit us. When we are yielded to Him, we find rest for our soul. However, when we put more focus on material possession and worldly desires, it leads to spiritual emptiness and disconnection from what God desires in our lives.

We have to feed our soul with the Word of God and realize the benefits that that are ours. Feeding ourselves with the Word of God leads to spiritual growth. 1 Peter 2:1-3 says, *As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* There are certain signs that we all expect to see as a baby growing, things like weight and height change and other developmental milestones, its the same with Christian life. In the process of growth challenges come but we have to be aware and be able to get strength from God and overcome them. When a baby is growing, the baby has to get all the required nutrients from both the mother and other supplements. When that does not happen, the baby is bound to develop malnutrition and the immune system becomes weak, exposing the child to a lot of diseases. That is why the Word of God is very important in Christian life so that we do not get malnourished and weak. As a result of this malnutrition, we will believe in anything that we hear. We are tossed to and from. Joshua was told by God to meditate upon the Word of God in Joshua 1:8 which says, *"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."* As a Christian what are you feeding your soul with? The Word of God renews the mind, gives guidance and wisdom, hope to the hopeless and encouragement.

Psalms 119:9-11 says, *"How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. Seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."* Once the Word of God is hidden in our heart, we are able to walk in a manner that pleases Him. The soul needs nourishment and the Word of God is that source. Read and study the Scripture, pray without ceasing, meditate upon the Word, allow the Word to shape, and guide your daily actions.





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