

## Ask, In Prayer, Believing

Joella Pickup

The scriptures are replete with blessings and human needs that we may pray for and pray about. All the instructions, exhortations, examples, and commands about truth, faith, fidelity, love, patience, humility, sorrow and joy, sin, gratitude and blessings—everything that pertains to human life and death, body, soul and spirit, salvation, and Heaven, all these are subjects that we are exhorted to pray about.

Prayer may or may not be a formally spoken prayer. It may be silent or aloud in your home. It may be short or long. Whatever we think that we cannot put into profound words, God hears and knows and understands. As we pray within our spirits, the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God (Romans 8:16).

When we pray, we must pray to God. We must raise our prayers higher than the earth and sky to whatever plane of life that is God's Heaven. So many times I have prayed and realized that my prayer probably didn't get outside my room or past the ceiling for the attention I was giving it. We often pray self-consciously, or as if it was a performance of some kind that must be done fluently or with ritual correctness. We may snap off a blessing at mealtime, thinking more about how good the food smells than giving heartfelt thanks that we have anything to eat at all! Many people over the world are dying of malnutrition, and we are only intent on feeding our faces. That is a lesson we must teach our children and grandchildren. I read in the newspaper the other day that Americans are getting so fat that funeral directors are worried that normal caskets will not be large enough!

You might set aside a family prayer time when everyone in the family is encouraged to pray aloud in the family gathering. Your husband and your children need to hear you pray for them. When things have not gone well, you need to mention that specifically in your prayer so that your family is aware that God knows about all our flaws and foibles and if we pray for forgiveness, He will bless the

humble heart. When things have gone well, thank God for that—let Bobby hear you tell God how pleased you are with his good grade on that hard math test. Then, too, your prayer may be just a short, heartfelt “Thank God!” upon hearing that a loved one is recovering from a serious illness. Whether you are by yourself, with family, or with friends or in worship services, your steadfast devotion

to God keeps you always on more than just a “speaking acquaintance” with Him.

Romans 12:10-12 says, “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer, etc.” Other translations render “instant in prayer” as “constant in prayer,” or as “devoted to prayer,” or as “faithful in prayer,” or as “steadfastly in prayer.” By keeping this in mind, you may find that throughout the day you have talked to Him, pleaded with Him, praised Him, and thanked Him. And yet, like Jesus, you have humbled your mind before Him with the words, “Thy will be done.”

We have many prayers set to music and printed in our songbook. When we sing them, we need to remember that

*So, let us have more than just a “speaking acquaintance” with God. Know Him, love Him, talk to Him, tell others about Him.*

# Fires

Nicole E. Pickup

If you are walking in darkness,  
without a ray of light  
trust in the Lord  
and rely on your God.

... But watch out, you who live  
in your *own* light  
and warm yourselves by  
your *own* fires. —Isaiah 50:10-11 (NLT)

What kind of fires do you light *yourself*, and warm  
*yourself* by?  
We spend a lot of time stoking fires of self-comfort  
By creature comforts such as shopping, and binging on food,  
and gossiping  
And all the self-pity and nonsense that humans do.

So, Are you walking in your own light?  
Are you warming yourself by your own fire?

All I know is that the temporary comfort that we can make by  
ourselves,  
Is never the kind that lasts  
Or the kind that fills the soul.

What I really like about that kind of verse, is that it doesn't say,  
"Are you walking in darkness, without a ray of light?  
Then watch out because you're headed for hell!"

No, this verse chooses to focus on the *solution* rather than the  
problem:  
"Trust in the Lord and *rely* on your God."  
It says Don't give up. Have faith in God.

And furthermore, [verse 11] it says,  
And to those of you who think you *are* walking in light  
—it may be *your own* light and not God's—  
You are the ones who better watch out.

Reminds me of Jesus warning the Pharisees, and rescuing the  
sinners.

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## Ask, In Prayer, Believing—(Continued From Front Page)

they are prayers. Here are a few titles: "Abide With Me";  
"Be With Me Lord"; "Dear Lord and Father Of Mankind";  
"Father, Hear The Prayer We Offer"; "I Need Thee Every  
Hour"; "In The Hour Of Trial"; "Lead Me Gently Home,  
Father"; "We Bow Down In Reverence"; "Lord, We Come  
Before Thee Now"; "Purer In Heart O God"; "Savior,  
Breathe An Evening Blessing", and so many more.

Something has become a part of my life that strikes me as  
somewhat remarkable. I taught classical music and voice in  
a college setting for twenty-five years. After I retired, I began  
to realize that, seemingly apropos of nothing, I found myself  
many times mentally singing either an old popular ballad or  
a hymn I had grown up with. Often my mind didn't even  
start at the first verse, but I would mentally be singing at  
least part of a song. None of them were songs I had spent  
all those years teaching my students, but songs that really  
must have meant a great deal to me when I was younger.  
This surprised me because each time I did not know that  
song would come to mind until after it had begun to float  
through my brain! I thought, "Where did that come from?"  
Then I began to realize that most of the songs I was mentally  
singing were prayer songs.

The Psalms, especially those by David himself are wonder-  
ful, wonderful prayers. One especially touches me—Psalm  
51. In verse 10, he says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God;

and renew a right spirit within me." If that psalm cannot  
bring you to your knees, nothing can. Jesus touched on  
every element of an acceptable prayer in what many call the  
"Lord's Prayer" (Luke 11:1-4, Matthew 6:9-13).

For the month of September, our church family at  
Temple Terrace is engaged in an effort to focus especially  
on prayer. On our "Thirty Days Of Prayer" agenda, we are  
praying for an attitude of thanksgiving, for God's continued  
grace and mercy, for the success of our meeting, for God's  
providence and care, for those who are sick both physically  
and spiritually, for an open and contrite heart, for willing-  
ness to confess and repent of our shortcomings, for a deeper  
faith and confident hope, for purity of thought, for our en-  
emies, for wisdom, for family harmony, for our nation and  
our governments, for salvation, for those in doubt, for those  
already in the fire, but do not recognize their sins for what  
they are, and for those that are lost without the Word of  
God. We will be making a prayer journal, keeping a prayer  
list, building that oh, so necessary prayer habit, being ver-  
bally specific in our expressions and entreaties to God as we  
make our "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of  
thanks for all men" (1 Timothy 2:1).

Will you help in this effort so that we may each benefit  
and come closer to one another, and to God, the Father of  
all?

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