

TRANSFORMED: THE RHYTHMS OF LIFE

Feb 5, 2017 | Pastor Randy Remington

This is part 4 of our study on transformation; God's transformation in our lives by his Spirit, through his Word, and today we see this transformation through prayer. Before you check out and find another study, understand we won't beat you up over how much you pray but we desire to see what prayer really is and why it transforms us.

It's obviously an important subject; there are hundreds prayers in the bible and over 450 recorded answered prayers. Today we will focus on the prayer life of Jesus. But, before you think "wait he is the Son of God how can we relate to him", remember he was human in every way we are yet he didn't sin. We can learn so much from what he modeled... let's look.

SCRIPTURE

"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: "'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."

5 Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; 6 a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' 7 And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' 8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:1-13)

The disciples watched Jesus very closely and the only thing recorded that they asked him to teach and mentor them was when they said: "Lord, teach us to pray". They saw something in Jesus in relation to prayer, it was meaningful, it was powerful and relevant and things happened. One of the most important things he modeled for them was:

PRAYER IS ABOUT RELATIONSHIP

"And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." (Matthew 6:7-8)

Religious People use prayer:

To use God

To impress God

Jesus' Followers use prayer:

To Know God

To trust God as a loving Father

We struggle to learn how to pray because we focus on praying and not on God. From the beginning of the model for prayer that he gave them pointed to who they were talking to..." Our Father"

At the heart of it, Prayer is relational. Many times when we pray, we focus on the prayer. In reality, lack of payer shows we are trusting ourselves. Prayer is inviting God into our lives, it reflects a dependency on Him. "I need you" is good, healthy language that shows our need for God.

"A day without prayer is a boast against God."

Ask yourself, can I hear God say "I love my (fill in your name) time! Can you hear him say that he enjoys talking and walking with you? It is not earned, but because of Jesus' work we can enter his presence anytime.

There was no one in history that was busier and had more demands on him than Jesus, yet he always made time for the times with his Father.

- **Prayer is a preoccupation with God.** It's a focus on him, not distracted by anything or anyone, including the prayer itself.
- **Prayer is time exposure to God.** God loves that time together, because anytime we are with him we have exposure to him. Just being with God and having an open heart will change you.

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. 36 Simon and his companions went to look for him, 37 and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Every-one is looking for you!" 38 Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." (Mark 1:35-38)

PRAYER IS ABOUT PARTNERSHIP

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9-10)

Some people think of heaven as sitting around eating grapes. In reality just like here on earth, he is calling us to partner with him. Again Jesus modeled this for us, he was about the "Fathers business" he was doing. But in the midst of doing we see him walking, talking connecting with the father.

For most of us the "working" or doing part will come easy. But we must have both sides of this working in our lives, it can't be a trying to earn something, but a result of the walking side.

So Jesus words show us something important. We see a contrast between helping this "pain in the neck" guy late at night, and getting something for our child in the middle of the night...it's a "father" thing.

The truth of the matter is, is that God really doesn't need us to partner with him. If it was about "efficiency" he would do it himself. But he does want to partner with us, because of the fatherly relationship, because of the exposure to him, because he loves us and wants to transform us.

"I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shame-less audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need. 9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:8-13)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In our study series on "Transformation" we look at prayer. In the introduction, I alluded to the fact that some believers will avoid studies like this because of perceived failures in the area or the don't want to get beat up over it. What is your initial response to a study on prayer and why?
2. What did the disciples see in Jesus prayer life that caused them to want to be taught and mentored in this area? As you glance at our passage in Luke 11, what did you learn about prayer and what was Jesus teaching us?
3. Review your notes on page 2 and discuss "prayer is about relationship".
4. Also discuss how "prayer is about preoccupation with God", and "prayer is time exposure to God".
5. Lastly, starting at the bottom of page 3 of your notes, as overwhelming as it may seem, what do you see about "prayer being about partnership" (with God)!