

PRAYER, THE BREATH OF THE SOUL!

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Amongst a host of important things to learn in Life, there is one thing I have recently discovered: Success in any line of work be it spiritual, academic or social is not spontaneous! That is, for a person to be successful in any of the various facets of life, there are specific tools or methods he must apply. Go ask the hunter, and he will tell you that in order for him to perform remarkably in his work, he must exercise painstaking precision and patience. The same goes in the Christian arena; there are definite methods which are plainly taught in the Bible, the practise of which will most assuredly lead to spiritual excellence. There is a principle of 'cause and effect'; for every action there is an equal, opposite reaction. What you reap is dependent on what you sow!

Undoubtedly, in order for a Christian to excel and have a deeper, saving relationship with Christ, he ought not to neglect PRAYER. Prayer is the breath of the soul. A soul which does not pray is only meant to live for just a short period of time, and soon it will die out. Yes, the prayers of your friends, relatives and church members will sustain you, but only for a short while. You ought to pray for yourself if you are to flourish in spirituality! To most of us, prayer is a torture, it is boring, and it is tiresome to a point whereby we even sleep praying. It is as if we have been forced to pray.

I am convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that the reason why we neglect to pray is because we do not understand the science and importance of prayer. "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend" – Steps to Christ, p94. Prior to sin, there was no need for prayer because Adam and Eve communed with God face to face. (Genesis 3:8). However, since the inception of sin, the connection between God and man has been tampered with and therefore God does no longer speak with His children face to face. (Isaiah 59:1-2). For us to pour out our hearts to God and tell Him our sorrows, joy, and needs we have to engage in prayer. That is the only time when we have a privilege of talking to God as to a friend. Haven't you felt how awesome it is to talk to a friend? We spend countless hours in telephonic conversations with our friends and loved ones who are in far regions. We buy air tickets just to go see our relatives and spouses leaving overseas. Some people spend money on tours to South Africa, with the sole purpose of having a view of the six metres tall, bronzed Nelson Mandela statue in Sandton City. It took Patrice Motsepe, South African business tycoon to pay R500,000 for him to sit next to President Jacob Zuma, at a gala dinner on the eve of the ANC's national conference in 2012. Yes, we sacrifice for all these because we highly value them.

What about our time with God? Do we value God so much that we would set an appointment with Him? If God had a phone he would send us numerous text messages; "I miss you"! Indeed, He is earnestly craving our prayers, but we neglect to talk to Him. And yet the Bible says, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Prayer is an acknowledgement that we are wholly dependent upon God, and without Him we can do nothing. Richard W. O'Ffill puts it wonderfully, **"Prayer does not so much tell God what we need; He already knows what we need. Prayer is an admission of our need"**. Even Christ, our role model prayed consistently while He was upon this earth; "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He (Christ) went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed". (Mark 1:35). Friend, there is never a time in man's life whereby when he prays, Heaven sends him a whatsapp, "Please call later, we are in a meeting". Like as the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth the Lord for the prayer of a penitent sinner. If there is anything that God longs above others, it is the prayer of a repentant sinner – to Him it is as a sweet fragrance to the nose.

Prayer: the breath of the soul! (Part 1)

Beloved, learn to constantly commune with God in prayer for if you do so, you will obtain strength enough to sustain you in your spiritual life. The Psalmist says, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice". (Psalm 55:17). **Pray while Heaven's ears are still open, for there is coming a perilous time when God will be too busy to listen to your prayers.** And also Remember, success in your spirituality is determined, among other things by your prayers. Make God your friend and take time to talk to Him. Indeed, He covets your prayers!

*Let us meet again on 'Prayer, the breath of the soul (part 2)', whereby we will be digging deeper into the essentials to a successful prayer.

God Bless You!
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