

Not Saying But Praying

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Lord's prayer is one of the best known prayers in the world. Today there are 500 million people who can say that prayer, but very few ever learn to pray it. It was taught by Jesus to his disciples. It provided the golden key to the powerhouse of God. Learning to pray was the one, the only, secret they needed to know to carry the ministry after Jesus' death.

Lord's Prayer can be said in one quarter of a minute, just fifteen seconds. Even for a large congregation of people to repeat it slowly takes only half a minute. Yet Jesus would spend half the night praying that same prayer. Very few ever learn to pray it. The power comes, not in the saying, but in the praying of the prayer.

Charles Allen, author of 'God's Psychiatry' says, "Praying is not saying words. Words merely form the frame on which the temple of thought is built. The power of the Lord's Prayer is not in the words, but rather in the pattern of thinking in which our minds are formed. When our thoughts begin to flow in the channels of the Lord's Prayer our minds do become new, and we are transformed."

Watchman-Examiner had this to say about Lord's Prayer:

- I cannot say Our if I live in a watertight spiritual compartment.
- I cannot say Father if I do not demonstrate the relationship in daily living.
- I cannot say in heaven if I am so occupied with the earth that I am laying up no treasures there.
- I cannot say hallowed be your name if I, who am called by His name, am not holy.
- I cannot say your kingdom come if I am not doing all in my power to hasten its coming.
- I cannot say your will be done if I am questioning, resentful of, or disobedient to His will for me.
- I cannot say on earth, as it is in heaven if I am not prepared to devote my life here to His service.
- I cannot say give us today our daily bread if I am living on past experience or if I am an under-the-counter shopper.
- I cannot say forgive us our sins, as we forgive those you sin against us if I harbor a grudge against anyone.
- I cannot say save us from the time of trial if I deliberately place myself in a position to be tempted.
- I cannot say deliver us from evil if I am not prepared to fight it in the spiritual realm with the weapon of prayer.
- I cannot say the kingdom is yours if I do not accord the King the disciplined obedience of a loyal subject.
- I cannot say the power is yours if I fear what people may do or what my neighbours may think.
- I cannot say the glory is yours if I am seeking glory for myself.
- I cannot say forever and ever if my horizon is bounded by the things of time.

To the extent that we think the thoughts of Christ, to that same extent do we have the power of Christ. The king in Shakespeare's "Hamlet" miserably fails in prayer. In explanation, he says:

"My words fly up, my thoughts remain below,
Words without thoughts never to heaven go."

We, too, fail because our prayers are "words without thoughts."

One of the reasons Lord's Prayer is so powerful is because it makes us look at our choices, beyond

our goals to the final destination of the road we would travel.

This prayer gives us the inner strength which God gives to all who sincerely desire it. Sometimes, we give up in despair. We throw up our hands. We say, "What's the use? I cannot do better." But when we sincerely desire to rise above our limitations and look to God for deliverance a new inner strength becomes ours, a new spirit of confidence rises within us.

"The biggest lie of the devil is that we have to sin. "After all, you are human," he says, and thereby our high resolves are destroyed. We surrender and quit the struggle. One takes a very different view when he becomes acquainted with a power beyond human power. "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." That is a tremendously powerful truth, once we possess it.

Remember the story of the little engine climbing the hill. As it puffed and struggled it kept saying, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can." Nothing is ever accomplished by the person who says, "I think I cannot," or "It is beyond me." Just to say, "I can," is to gain immediate power. But to add two words and say, "I can in Him," "I can in Him," is to multiply your power many fold.

A psychologist performed an experiment recently to illustrate the power of positive affirmations. Three men tried their grip on a gripping machine that measures their strength of the grip, with no suggestion from the psychologist, and the average grip was 101 pounds. Then the three were hypnotized and the psychologist told each, "You cannot grip, because you are weak." Under the power of that suggestion their average grip fell from 101 pounds to only 29 pounds.

With the three men still under the power of hypnosis, the psychologist told them to grip again, but this time he told them, "Now you can grip." Their strength was five times greater when they said, "I can," than it was when they said, "I cannot."

When you study the lives of those we call saints, those who have attained unusual spiritual power, you will find their secret. They sinned, but they never surrendered to sin. They never accepted failure as final. They never ceased to look forward with confidence. They kept saying, "I can in Him." As a result, the power of the God was added to their power. And what a combination!

The same power is available for any one of us. You may look into a past of shame and defeat, but you can look into a future of peace and victory. "Only believe, only believe all things are possible, only believe." That is more than just a little chorus. It is the Christian faith.

What amazing confidence did our Lord have in us! C. F. Andrews reminds us of an old legend that tells us that when Jesus returned to heaven He was asked by an angel:

"What have you left behind to carry out the work?"

Jesus answered: "A little band of men and women who love me."

"But what if they fail when the trial comes? Will all you have done be defeated?"

"Yes," said Jesus, "if they fail, all I have done will be defeated."

"Is there nothing more?"

"No," said Jesus, "there is nothing more."

"What then?"

Jesus quietly replied "They will not fail."

With a confidence like that as we face tomorrow, we can triumphantly declare: "For the kingdom, and the power, and the glory are yours, forever. Amen."

When we pray the Lord's prayer with meaning, we see the complete victory of God in our own lives and our world.

AMEN