

Attitude Prayers

Philippians 2:12-13: "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-- not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-- continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."

Warning! These prayers are only as effective as our willingness to understand and courage to cooperate with God in four important ways:

- A. Trusting God to *mend, append or upend* our current attitude;
- B. Asking God how our attitude can be more Christ-like (Phil 2.5);
- C. Slowing down and listening instead of jumping to the answer we think we already know!
- D. Committing to, with God's help, make a change in your faith practice.

Relating to People

1. It's good to pray for God to intervene or act in the lives of others. We even have a name for it: Intercessory Prayer. We may genuinely desire blessing for them, or they may threaten or anger us, or just make us uncomfortable. Are we asking God to change them so we don't have to? Are we open to being changed, learning to love, or risking caring?

Courageous Prayer: "Jesus, what do you think about my attitude here?"

Courageous Prayer: "Help me see them as you see them, with compassion not condemnation."

Overbooked, Overwhelmed, Over The Edge

2. Yes! It's good to ask God to give you strength to persevere when facing challenges. Serving others is an important part of a healthy faith. But we face burnout when we've said "yes" to everything. And seldom, if ever, said "no." (Jesus said "Let your yes be yes AND your no be no." [Mat 5.37]

Courageous Prayer: "Jesus, help me let go of what you aren't calling me to do."

Courageous Prayer: "Jesus, show me where what I'm doing is about my own pride, ego or fear."

Courageous Prayer: "Jesus, show me a Sabbath rest and give me the Courageous to take it."

It's I've Got to be Perfect

3. God deserves our best, right? The Church is the Body of Christ, and Jesus deserves the best, right? I just want to do my best—what's wrong with that? Nothing. Or everything. It depends...is your personal soundtrack characterized by endless self-recriminations for not "doing better"? If you are critical of yourself, you are also critical of others (usually without being aware that you are.)

Courageous Truth: If you have trouble loving others, you also have trouble loving yourself.

Courageous Prayer: “Jesus, help me love myself as you love me.”

Courageous Prayer: “Jesus, do you agree with my opinion of myself?”

Courageous Prayer: “Jesus, help me see and be grateful for what is; keep me from worrying about what isn’t.”

Procrastinators

4. Christ-followers are entrusted with carrying the Gospel “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8) through our individual and collective witness—our personal experience which develops as we *“work out our salvation” in real time*. If we aren’t striving to live our faith, we have little to witness about. We need to be taking the step of faith in front of us, not promising to start as soon as _____ is over/changes/arrives. There’s a reason Jesus told the disciples to pray “give us this day our daily bread.”

Courageous Prayer: “Jesus, show me where I need to grow in my faith and help me get or keep moving.”

Courageous Prayer: “Jesus, guide me to opportunities to witness and let my witness be nothing more or less than sincere.”

Control Freaks (aka “My Way” Moments)

5. Individual faith preferences are great—but not all the same.

There was a guy who never believed any of this “god stuff.” Walking through a field one day, he fell into a deep hole and no matter what he tried, he could not get out. He yelled until his voice was too weak to yell anymore, and night was falling. In despair, he cried out “God, if you are real, rescue me and I will spend the rest of my life leading people to you.” Immediately, someone appeared with a rope and helped him out. Praise God! Being true to his word, the man spent the rest of his life digging holes in fields so people could fall in and find God like he did.

What’s a bit askew in this tale is that the man wasn’t rescued because he was in a hole and desperate, nor is it because he finally called out to God (but that is a key factor). The man was rescued because that’s why Jesus came. In the Zacchaeus story Jesus says “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Lk. 19:10 NIV) We need to be careful not to view our faith experience as the only path to living and growing faith.

Courageous Prayer: “Jesus, help me accept that my way isn’t the only way.”

Courageous Prayer: “Jesus, show me those you want me to reach who are lost.”