

Growth in Three Prayers

Bob Boardman

I. Introduction.

A. Churchill's counsel: in war, resolution. In defeat, defiance. In victory, magnanimity. In peace, goodwill.

B. We need to redeem the time.

C. Growth happens in phases for the disciple. (Mark 4:28)

D. Christ's threefold objective as we live our lives.

1. Intense cultivation.

2. Prayerful pruning.

3. Abounding fruitfulness. (Ephesians 3:18-19)

II. Pray that...

A. God would enlarge your heart.

1. Augustine prayed this knowing the cavern of his heart was small.

2. When given an opportunity to receive what Solomon wanted he asked for wisdom. God began the work of the enlargement of his heart. (1 Kings 3:5-15, 4:29-30)

3. God wants us to make our heart larger than normal as the great heart-dilator for our obedience. (Psalm 119:42)

4. We need to trust God even when we do not understand.

5. Why God wants to do this.

a. His heart embraces the whole world, and as He loves so we must learn to love. (John 3:16)

b. All human needs are met in Jesus Christ.

c. There are many more things that God wants to put in one's heart. (John 16:12)

d. God wants the double hearted man to be single-minded for his glory and honor. (James 1:6-8)

6. How God enlarges one's heart.

a. Through daily growth in necessary spiritual elements such as the Scripture and prayer—praise and thanksgiving, confession, supplication (pleading the promises of God) and intercession. (2 Timothy 2:8)

1). Suggestions.

a) Use a prayer journal.

b) Study and mark prayers in the Bible.

c) Pray while walking.

d) Have a prayer partner. (Matthew 18)

e) Pray over a world atlas.

f) Pray while fasting.

b. Fasting.

1) Fasting is to afflict and discipline the soul, and to sacrifice the personal will.

2) It is a profound humbling before God, a practical confession of misery, an act of humiliation before the Lord, it is to bring into subjection the waywardness of the body, and it is the source of power for an effective Spirit controlled ministry.

c. Through suffering—that which comes upon us which we have no control. (Psalm 119:67)

d. Through our mistakes and failures.(James 3:2, Proverbs 24:16)

1) The disciples failed over thirty times throughout the Gospel of Mark.

2) These are opportunities to enlarge the heart.

B. God would sharpen your relationships. (Proverbs 27:17)

1. Involvement with people taxes us to the limit but also sharpens us.

2. Paul was involved with all kinds of people. (2 Corinthians 6:11-12)

3. Three relationships God uses to sharpen us.

a. Faithful Christian men and women. Find a spiritual mentor.

b. Enemies. David is an example of one who allowed his enemies to sharpen him and not embitter him. (2 Samuel 16:5-14, Romans 12:19-21, Psalm 38)

c. Friends who become adversaries. We should also learn lessons from those who have braced themselves against us. (Psalm 141:5, 55:15-14, 2 Corinthians 7:2, 12:15)

C. God would deep your vision.

1. American Christians are over-occupied with busy-ness. It is too easy to miss the important things. (1 Kings 20:40)

2. We have the privilege of turning the world upside down through the vision Jesus has given us.

III. Conclusion.

Application questions.

1. What are the three elements of the prayer that the speaker suggests? Explain the reasoning behind each.

2. What is your role in God's enlargement of the heart? Explain.

3. What suggestions for praying stood out to you in the speaker's message? Which two principles will you practice in your own prayer life this week?
