



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Transforming Lives Through Intercessory
Prayer And Fasting

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THE HUMDRUM PRAYER LIFE

Has prayer become an empty routine for you? You see the importance of prayer. You pray daily. You are committed to prayer. Yet, you seem to be in a rut. Your praying seems lifeless, maybe even monotonous and boring. You just don't seem to have any joy or power in prayer. You continue to pray because you know that is what you are supposed to do. Yet, you feel as if your soul is parched and empty.

This is what I call the "humdrum prayer life." It seems that your prayer life is dry as dust. You continue to pray. You continue to seek God. But, your prayer life has become uneventful and routine.

One of the significant dangers that you will face in your prayer life is forgetting that prayer is an encounter with the true and living God. Prayer becomes a routine when you neglect the truth that you are entering the presence of the Almighty God of time and eternity. When you realize that you are entering the presence of God, it transforms your praying. It brings new life, joy, and power to your praying.

I am sure that you know and believe that prayer is entering the presence of God. Yet, the problem is that we have the tendency to neglect this truth. Often we simply do not take seriously the fact that we are encountering the living God. We overlook the fact that we are entering into a conversation with the eternal God who reigns forever and ever.

The main theme of *The Prayer Closet* this month is renewing your prayer life. It will focus on

dealing with the humdrum prayer life. First, we will be looking at how to renew your passion for prayer. The most crucial step to this is gaining a fresh understanding of prayer. It is an encounter with the living God. It is entering His presence and having the opportunity to speak to Him and listen to Him. When you lose sight of this, prayer turns into a humdrum routine, an empty ritual that lacks life, power, and joy. Following this, we will examine some practical steps that you can take to experience a personal prayer revival.

In order to help gain a fresh understanding of encountering God through prayer, we will examine Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush. In **Exodus 3**, Moses experiences a life-changing encounter with God. In this text, there are three basic truths about encountering God. It is my hope and prayer that the Holy Spirit will use these truths to fan the flames of your prayer life. These truths can bring genuine renewal to a prayer life that is lifeless and characterized by empty routine.

Encountering God means understanding God's purpose for prayer

(Exodus 3:1-4)

Moses' encounter with God was not His plan. Moses did not expect this life-changing encounter with God. Yet, God purposed to meet with Him. He not only purposed to meet with Him but also to change his life.

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After 40 years of training in the courts of Pharaoh, Moses now neared the end of another 40 years of his life as a shepherd (**Exodus 3:1**). In this text, Moses approached Mount Horeb (another name for Mount Sinai), searching for grassland for the flock. Suddenly the Angel of the LORD appeared in a flame of fire in the midst of a burning bush (**Exodus 3:2**). When Moses saw the burning bush, he was curious why the bush burned but was not consumed by the fire. He then went to investigate (**Exodus 3:3**).

When Moses went to investigate, God spoke to him, "So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called him from the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses!'" (**Exodus 3:4**). Aware that it was God calling him, he responded with the only correct response, "Here I am!"

God purposed to meet with Moses in order to fulfill His will for him. God had chosen Moses to lead the people out of Israel. At the burning bush, God determined to encounter Him and change him so that he could do His will. This encounter was God's plan not Moses. God's love and grace led to this meeting between God and Moses.

Prayer is an encounter with God. It is entering His presence in order to communicate with Him and be changed by Him. It is an encounter that God has determined to have with you. Prayer is not a good idea that we devised. It is God's plan. It is a loving invitation from your Father who sacrificed His Son and gave you the Holy Spirit in order to allow you to have this privilege.

The Word of God declares in **Psalm 4:3**, "But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly; the LORD will hear when I call to Him." God has saved you so that you can have daily encounters with Him. He has called you to Himself through Jesus so that you can have the privilege of communicating with Him. When you enter His presence, He listens to you. When you enter His presence, He longs to speak to you. Every time you come before Him, He desires to touch you and change you. Just as Moses' encounter with God, God wants to communicate with you and change your life.

How should this truth affect your prayer life? It should cause you to realize that entering God's presence is an event. It is not ordinary or humdrum. It is going before the God who has given

you the privilege of prayer. Every time you pray, you are encountering the living God who longs to communicate with you and change you. A believer gets into a "prayer rut" when he or she loses sight of this awesome encounter. Prayer becomes ordinary and humdrum when you neglect the fact that you are entering the presence of God.

Too many times the familiarity of prayer dulls the believer's senses. We take for granted that we are entering God's presence. We go so quickly into His presence that we fail to remember that we are encountering the living and almighty God. We forget that God has given us the majestic and supernatural privilege of spending time with Him—talking to Him, listening to Him, and being changed by Him.

In order to deal with the humdrum prayer life, you must have a fresh realization that you are encountering God. You are entering the presence of the God who has called you into relationship with Himself. You, yes you, have the privilege of entering the presence of the living God of time and eternity! He desires to hear from you, speak to you, and change your life. Your Father lovingly invites you into His presence to meet with Him. He has determined to meet with you through prayer. He is determined to change you. This is His purpose for your life! This is His plan for you!

Encountering God means honoring His holiness (Exodus 3:5)

After Moses answered the Lord, He speaks to him again, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off of your feet; for the place where you stand is holy ground" (**Exodus 3:5**). The ground was not holy because of where it was but because of God's presence. Moses was to honor God's holiness by removing his sandals. He showed great reverence for God during this encounter, "And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God" (**Exodus 3:6**).

Moses' encounter with God reveals that God is holy. It shows that he must be revered as the holy God. This was a valuable object lesson for Moses. He was to honor God as holy in private and

in public. God wanted him to understand that He is holy and that holiness must be honored.

The same is true in our encounters with God. When we pray, we are entering the presence of the holy God. He is utterly opposed to sin. He cannot tempt anyone to sin nor can He be tempted to sin. Our response must be to reverence Him. We must enter His presence with a trembling awe.

Your prayer life will become humdrum if you do not honor God's holiness. When you pray, you are entering into the Holy of Holies, the very presence of God. You are going before the God who is called the consuming fire, the jealous God (**Deuteronomy 4:24**). You are entering the presence of the One of whom the angels cry out continually, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory" (**Isaiah 6:3**).

Honor His Holiness Through Reverence

How do you honor God's holiness in prayer? When you pray, enter His presence with a humble heart. Come before Him with a spirit of reverence and awe. Let the truth of His holiness cause you to come before Him with a sober sincerity. One of the burdens of my heart is how this generation has lessened the holiness of God. In many prayer meetings, it sounds as if God is our "little cosmic Buddy". People treat God as if He is their pal in the way that they enter His presence and speak to Him while in His presence.

Now I would never want to demean or lessen that truth that God is personal. He is a God who loves and cares about His people. He longs to have an intense and abiding relationship with His people. We are to strive for this intimate friendship with Him. Yet, at the same time, we must maintain a balance. We must realize that He is the holy God. He is the Holy One whom the angels worship day and night. He is absolute purity. We must rid ourselves of a flippant, irreverent spirit before God.

Honor His Holiness Through Repentance

Honoring God's holiness also means coming before Him with a heart ready to confess and repent of sin. We must enter His presence with reverence

and repentance. God is holy. He hates sin. It is an insult to Him. To enter God's presence with a heart that is complacent about sin is dishonoring to Him. To enter His presence without a willingness to confess and repent of sin is offensive to God.

Why are you able to enter the presence of God? It is only because of the blood of Jesus Christ, "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by *the blood of Jesus*, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is His flesh . . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (**Hebrews 10:19-22**). You have access into the presence of God because of the blood of Jesus. Because of His death, you have received the forgiveness of sins. Through His blood, you have the privilege to enter His presence.

Entering His presence should cause you to seek the cleansing power of Christ's blood, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all righteousness (**1 John 1:9**). You were given access to God's presence through His blood. The only way to continue coming into His presence is through cleansing from your sin through His blood. It is an insult to God to be given the privilege to enter His presence through the blood of Jesus and then ignore or neglect dealing with sin. To enter God's presence with a hardened heart toward one's sin is a slap in the face of the merciful and gracious God.

This attitude will also lead to a humdrum prayer life. Our problems with prayer often lie in our complacency to deal with our personal sin. The Bible is clear—a complacent attitude toward sin will drain life and power from our praying. Failing to deal with your personal sin hinders your communication with God. It will turn prayer from a dynamic encounter with God to an empty ritual with no meaning. Listen to the Word of God: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me" (**Psalms 66:18**).

"Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (**Isaiah 59:1-2**).