

Overcoming Immaturity in Prayer

13. You pray without a revelation of God's heart toward You

Many people are sheepish when making requests. Many Christians are asking what they already have in Christ. You need to have faith that God will hear and respond to your prayer.

1 John 5:14

¹⁴And this is the confidence that we have before Him: If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Jeremiah 29:11-13

¹¹For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

Psalm 18:6

In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.

If God hears our conversations, then surely He hears our prayers.

1 John 5:15

And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask-- we know that we have what we asked of him.

Each of us must believe that our prayers are powerful and actually result in change.

Luke 11:13

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

God is so good not just for someone else out there, or for some future date, but for you now. Every single time, the Lord is good. Sometime ago, I was talking about angels and I wanted to reinforce the reality of angelic protection with my children. They had witnessed an attempted car hijacking and I did not want fear to creep into them. I shared with them a story I had just read where there was a particular girl who was taking an easier

route home. She went through an alley and started feeling scared when she saw a man at the end of the alley staring at her. This young girl prayed for protection and suddenly, she felt peace and a sense of reassurance that God was with her. She walked past the man without any incident. A few days later, she saw in the news that a girl who walked through the same alley a few minutes after her had been attacked. The Christian girl decided to go to the police to provide information about the man that she had seen. She identified the man as he had already been caught. She was curious to know why she was not attacked so she requested to speak to the man. The man said he saw two huge men walking with her; that is why she was not attacked. The huge men were of course the presence of angelic protection.

14. Prayer Is an Optional Extra

Prayer is not something you do after having tried everything else. To the mature praying person, prayer comes first.

Colossians 4:2

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

When a man and a woman join in marriage, they commit to be devoted to each other. You cannot be devoted to an individual if you are flirting with other people. Many people talk about being devoted to prayer, yet they are messing around with other sources. God can use many things such as doctors and teachers but we know that it is Him who is the ultimate source and He is using whomever He chooses to use.

Romans 12:12

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, Faithful in prayer,

The word faithful sounds like something you are married to. We become unfaithful in prayer when we look at other sources. The word faithful here speaks of “attending to constantly.” It is the same word used for endurance and persistence. You endure when you are in pain and cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel. What stops you from being constant in prayer? We make a lot of progress in the spirit realm but often give up because we cannot see the results, yet in the natural. God spoke to me about how He is often looking for someone to stand in the gap but finds no one. This is not because people are not attending prayer meetings or making appointments with God. **Often people are praying but they are not in tune with what was on God’s agenda.**

Ezekiel 22:30

"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one. Maybe the undevoted person still hears what God is saying but doesn't fully pray it through.

Standing in the gap is intercession. Can God find people standing in the gap? God can find numerous people praying but still find no one. Just because you are praying does not mean you are available to stand in the gap. **You can be doing lots of praying but not be available to carry His burden.** In Ezekiel, God was looking for someone to build the wall. Now God is looking for those who are willing to pray what is on His heart and be devoted to Him.

15. Prayers are Not Spirit Led

When you are mature, you partner with the Holy Spirit in prayer. Your prayers are not limited to what you know in the natural. We do not know everything that is on God's agenda right now for the nation. **Have you done a spiritual diagnosis of all the issues affecting your nation?** Have you gone to the root cause? If there is no supernatural insight from the Holy Spirit, we will be limited to the natural. When we pray with our own intellect, it becomes difficult to pray for long. How often do you pray things that were not on your original list or details that emerge that you had not thought of? Let the Holy Spirit pray through you.

Romans 8:26-27

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know how we ought to pray, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans too deep for words. ²⁷And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God....

The Spirit does not help you in your strength but in your weakness. That is why brokenness is important in praying God's will. Too many Christians are coming to God in their own strength and in doing so they short-circuit the power of the Spirit to help them to pray. The moment you enter the throne of grace with the mindset that you deserve it based on your actions, you will not find grace. The Spirit then helps us in our weakness for we do not know how we ought to pray. You only find it when you recognise that what God is giving you is unmerited. When you come in weakness, recognising that you actually do not know how to pray and what to pray for, you shift gears in your prayer and you are flooded by the power of the Spirit enabling you to pray.

The person who is mature in prayer is open with the Holy Spirit interceding in and through them without looking cute. They no longer care about being dignified if it interferes with what the Holy Spirit wants to do. When there is groaning, it does not look nice. Many people struggle with praying God's will. That is why it is useful to pray in the spirit and to also pray Spirit led prayers. One of the keys to this is yielding to Him. Part of yielding to Him is being set apart, which is holiness.

16. You do not come to God with expectation of anything great

This happens in a religious atmosphere void of relationship or in a climate of unbelief. Mature Christians expect to receive more than they can imagine. This is an attitude not just for prayer but a lifestyle of great expectations. Someone once said that what you think about and thank about is what you eventually bring about. One of the strategies of the devil against the church is to rob people of hope. You cannot have faith without hope. Hope is joyful expectation but the spirit of discouragement comes to destroy that hope. In scripture, hope and joy work together. **You cannot be a joyful person without hope.**

Jeremiah 33:3

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'

NLT - *Ask me and I will tell you remarkable secrets you do not know about things to come.*

It does not say *call on Him and He will tell you arbitrary, mediocre information*. Imagine you are about to go to a client and want to know what is going on in an organisation and God tells you to ask whatever you want to know about because He knows all things. Very often, God only speaks in response to a question. God follows his own instructions including that He does not throw pearls to swine (Matthew 7:6).

Ephesians 3:20

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

NLT - *Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. The key is imagine and listen in prayer. What do you expect from God. How big is He? In Hebrews ¹¹ it says He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

The key is to imagine, listen, ask and expect in prayer. In Hebrews 11, it says *He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*. It does not say He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Diligence is key here. How diligent, bold and audacious are your prayers? Use your imagination and stretch yourself in prayer. Some people have a mental block and a fixed view of themselves. Successful people have a growth mindset not a fixed mindset. It does not matter whether you were raised on the wrong side of the railway track with a single mother, you can still become successful. **Is your faith just to survive your marriage or are you believing God for marital bliss?** Do you have the vision to start businesses that are Kingdom financing? Many times people choose to settle and are not audacious in believing great things can and should happen.

17. There is a disconnect between Your praying and watching

The immature person exhibits a disconnect between praying and watching. However, the mature prayer person mixes prayer with watching.

1 Peter 4:7

The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.

Watching involves an awareness of what both God and the enemy are doing or planning. **You cannot pray effectively if you are not watching.** God has an agenda for this season of your life and you must be watching out for this. At the same time the enemy also has a strategy against us and we must be watching. It is like a security guard who is watching and sounding the message to the control centre. There are many Christians today who are praying but are not conscious of their watching. There are different dimensions to watching. There is watching that involves what God is doing. The other watching is to figure out the strategy of the enemy concerning your family, church, business etc. When we are aware of the enemy's strategy, we are able to pray effectively about it. Very often when people see the enemy's strategy, they prophesy the enemy's strategy instead of interceding so that the destruction does not come. There were so many prophecies before 1994, of a bloodbath in South Africa but the saints rose up and prayed. The blood bath did not happen and others said the prophecies were false. The prophecies had not been wrong, but the church rose up and did something about it. Be careful about prophesying and decreeing the enemy's strategy. Ask God to show you the enemy's strategy over your children and the Lord will show you how you can warn and discipline them.

18. Impatient in God's Presence

The immature prayer person has the microwave, fast food and instant mentality. This is expecting everything to happen quickly. Patience is a virtue and when the Bible says be constant in prayer, it is warning us against impatience. Because you cannot see what is happening in the spirit realm, you begin to become bitter and it stops the breakthrough from coming.

Psalms 106:13-15

¹³They quickly forgot what he had done; they did not wait for his instructions. ¹⁴In the wilderness they had an insatiable craving for meat; they challenged God in the desert. ¹⁵He granted their request, then struck them with a disease.

When you do not wait, it is characterized by forgetting (being oblivious to) God's mighty deeds. When you do not wait on the Lord, it causes you to crave other things. Be very careful of what you crave for because you might get it. The next phase when craving is insatiable, you can be desperate and you begin to challenge God in order to have it. God granted the request of the Israelites but the end result was they became diseased. Maybe you have been in need of a spouse but that has not happened yet and now you are challenging God.

The mature prayer person has learnt to wait on the Lord. Waiting involves the passing of time, which we cannot avoid. There is a blessing to waiting - the glory comes. Jesus told the disciples to wait in Galilee for the coming of the Holy Spirit which brought revival (Luke 24:49).

Psalms 130:5-6

⁵I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, And in His Word do I hope. ⁶My soul waits for the Lord More than the watchmen for the morning; Indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning.

This scripture shows that waiting and hope go hand in hand. I have never come across a night guard who enjoys their job. They eagerly wait for the morning. Waiting on the Lord is not passive. It is about pressing into the Lord and eagerly waiting. The Hebrew word for waiting is *qavah* which means to endure, be strong, thread on a rope, twist. This is pressing deeper and intertwining yourself with God. If you are waiting for breakthrough for your marriage, do not be passive.

Lamentations 3:25

The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him.

Psalms 27:13-14

¹³ *I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.* ¹⁴ *Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.*

Psalm 37:9

For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land.

I believe that patience is one of the most powerful spiritual virtues. The Bible says that the promises of the Lord come through faith and patience. They do not just come through faith only because they manifest after a period of waiting.

Acts 1:4

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

The word used for waiting here is "*perimeno*." It means steadiness despite the troubles all around you. Waiting on the Lord is one of the main biblical exhortations but one of the most difficult.

Other words in scripture for wait are *yachal* – wait in hope (eagerness), *chakah* – tarry, long for and *damam* – to be still, silent

Sometimes we talk too much and it short-circuits the breakthrough. We can begin to mumble and fret which are alternatives to fretting. When you wait on the Lord you are reinforcing that He is your source of confidence and all things.