

Author: Miles Creasman

Scripture: Philippians 4:6 (NIV)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Insight/Story:

I love those words in every situation. That means there is nothing too small to bring to God. Someone might ask, "Is it alright to bring such small things before the Lord?" "Is He concerned about the small things in our lives?" The answer is: is there anything that looks big to God? Everything is small to Him so take everything to Him in prayer. Prayer is the expression of our dependence upon His promises. It isn't always necessary to be on your knees, or in the closet, but it can be simply that quiet prayer of the heart, recognizing that you need to lean on His grace and strength in everything, constantly depending on the indwelling life of God the Son in you. Isn't it awesome that we have a Heavenly Father that cares so much for us?

Prayer:

Dear God, please help us to trust you in every situation...even the small things. Help us to realize that in every situation You care and want to walk with us. Show us how You want to grow us. Even though we might think it's such a small insignificant matter...it means a great deal to You. Thank you for being such a loving Father. In Jesus Name, Amen!

Author: Carl Hesselbach

Scripture: John 3:30 (NASB)

He must increase, but I must decrease.

Insight/Story:

"If I appear great in their eyes, the Lord is most graciously helping me to see how absolutely nothing I am without Him, and helping me to keep little in my own eyes. He does use me. But I am so concerned that He uses me and that it is not of me the work is done. The axe cannot boast of the trees it has cut down. It could do nothing but for the woodsman. He made it, he sharpened it, and he used it. The moment he throws it aside; it becomes only old iron. O that I may never lose sight of this." **

Humility can be difficult to embrace. As we grow in wisdom & knowledge, grow in our gifts & talents, and grow successful in our area of ministry, we should be careful to ensure that we are also growing in humility.

Prayer:

Father God, thank you. Thank you for Your goodness. Thank you for including us in Your work. You could do all this without us, and yet You choose to include us and to use us in Your work. What a tremendous honor and privilege that is. We pray that we would always give you the praise, the glory, and the honor that You are so richly due. May we never steal that from You. May we never become so casual about our relationship with You that we forget or we overlook the fact that it is only through Your grace, the talents and gifts that You have given us, and the work of Your Holy Spirit in us that are able to make a contribution to Your work. We pray that we would always freely and readily give you the praise, the glory, and the honor that is Yours and Yours alone. We love You and give You thanks for who You are in our lives and we want others to experience you in that same way.

** *From the diary of Dr Samuel Brengle as noted in Spiritual Leadership by J. Oswald Sanders*

Author: David Breaux

Scripture: Luke 22:44 (NIV)

And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

Insight/Story:

It was a warm afternoon in Haiti, and our mission team was meeting with the local leadership council to talk about our afternoon activities. The president of the council explained to us that one person would pray for us, then another person would follow that and ask God to bless that prayer. As we listened, even though we did not understand all of the words, we could feel the power in those words. One of the greatest lessons I learned on that trip was the value that they place on prayer. You can feel the passion in their requests. There is a lot to learn from a culture that reveres and cherishes prayer that much, that seeks God earnestly with every word.

The Bible says Jesus prayed so earnestly that his sweat fell like drops of blood. If our Savior places that much value on prayer, then shouldn't we?

Prayer:

Increase our passion for prayer, God. Teach us to value prayer like Your Son valued prayer. Father, all across the church today, prayers are being lifted up to You. We ask a special blessing over the prayers of our church today. We pray that as our prayers reach you, that they are pleasing to You, and that You will be glorified through these requests. Hear our prayers, Lord, and bless those who are reaching out to you today.

Author: Dustin Scott

Scripture: John 19:30 (ESV)

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Insight/Story:

A few months ago we received a life changing phone call. For almost two years our family had been preparing to become full time missionaries. Then there was a bump in the road. The voice on the other end of that call essentially said, "It is finished." That path was closed because of something that was wholly beyond our control. We felt defeated, hopeless, and lost.

I imagine the disciples felt something similar that day on Calvary. When Jesus said it is finished they must have felt defeated, hopeless, and lost. Thankfully, Jesus transformed that hopeless phrase into a cry of victory. Sin and death had been defeated. We serve a God who transforms weakness, pain, and failure into victory and triumph. Maybe right now you feel defeated and lost. Hold onto hope. God has already given you the ultimate victory. Your sins are forgiven. It is finished.

Prayer:

Father, You are victorious. You take the broken things of this world and create beautiful stories for Your glory. We need You to transform our broken lives into something beautiful. Help us recognize that victory is already ours. Let us walk in hope and victory. Our sins have been forgiven. It is finished. Amen.

Author: Kerri Karel

Scripture: **Isaiah 6:8 (NASB)**

Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Insight/Story:

This can be a frightening declaration. It means you are willing to go where *He* sends you – not where YOU want Him to send you. I declared this for the first time while living in Las Vegas. I had been a Christ-follower for 3 years and was leading a small group. My regular prayer was “Lord, use me. Whatever you want me to do, wherever you want me to go I will do it.” I really meant in the ways I wanted Him to use me, but God had other plans – He moved me to Knoxville. He wanted my obedience to go where *He* wanted to send me.

Today I serve as a pastor and ministry leader. My life and relationship with God would be different if I had not been obedient.

What is God calling you to do? Are you ready to say “Here am I, Send me!”?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, use us as your instruments. Use us not in the way we think You should use us, but in the way You want to use us to reach the lost and the broken. We are your willing vessels. We are ready to say “Here am I. Send me!” so that Knoxville and the surrounding counties will never be the same. In the name of Jesus, Amen!

Author: Kelsey Arnold

Scripture: Galatians 6:9 (ISV)

Let's not get tired of doing what is good, for at the right time we will reap a harvest—if we do not give up.

Insight/Story:

From time to time I seem to find myself in the same season of what can easily be summed up in one word ... “funk.” It's like life is going along just fine and suddenly I feel like I can't breathe and I simply want to give up and quit everything. There is no happy medium either. It's I'm all in or I'm all out, out of everything. I find myself withdrawing from friends, from activities, and even time with my own family. Thankfully, God has placed people in my life who have been around long enough to notice when this trend starts happening and they help pray me back to life. If you find yourself experiencing something similar, stop. No seriously, stop, take a deep breath and get back at it. I might fail fifty times, but you better believe I'll get back up for fifty one.

Prayer:

Dear most precious, Heavenly Father, today we come before you tired and weak asking for a sense of renewed strength that only You can provide. Please help us to keep our focus on You, and You alone, Lord. For You are the lamp unto our path and Your joy oh Lord, is our strength. May we find rest, comfort, and peace in Your most Holy name. Amen.

Author: Kyle Wall

Scripture: Ephesians 3:16 (ESV)

that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

Insight/Story:

For three decades I have had the privilege of serving in churches as a pastor/shepherd. In every setting, I have known that I was in over my head. Every situation was beyond my ability and skill set. Without a doubt, God knew that I needed it to be that way, in order to force me to be dependent upon Him. And in every situation, God has been faithful to strengthen me with power “according to the riches of his glory.” Today, I may come across as a confident leader to you; just know, that is the result of the Holy Spirit strengthening my inner being with power. Will you ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen your inner being according to the riches of God’s glory? He desires to do that for you, today!

Prayer:

Father, we need you! Life can be overwhelming, stretching and difficult. And yet, the riches of your glory are unending. According to your riches, strengthen each of us through your Spirit! Whatever we are facing today, we turn to you for strength. Thank you that you never fail. In the name of Jesus, Amen!