

PRAYER EMPOWERED PURSUIT (A PEP TALK)

Imagine that you've taken a shower, you're all clean. But then you have to leave the house. You slip into your flip-flops by the door and head out. Your errands take you on a path that is a little muddy, a little sandy, a little wet. Arriving back home, you see that your trek has not ruined your perfectly washed hair, and you still have that "freshly showered" feel. But looking down, you see that your feet are covered in dirt and dust. What is the natural thing to do? Wash 'em.

There are 3 big words that explain the process of the Christian journey: **Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification**. Justification is like washing your whole body clean with a shower. In the same way, we become clean from the penalty of sin (which is death) when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, receiving an undeserved and liberating Salvation. The muddy road that we walk on after the shower represents our faith journey here on earth. We're still clean, but our feet will get dirty on the way. As we continue along this road, we will need to clean our feet again and again. Similarly, sanctification is an **ongoing process where we strive to be more like Jesus**. Because we aren't perfect we will inevitably stumble, so we need to go to God in repentance again and again. Glorification is our hope in Jesus' return when we will receive new perfect, heavenly bodies that will never be dirty again and be able to be with God in Heaven.

We know sanctification is a big word, but this year we wanted to try to understand it more. Hebrews 12:14 says that sanctification is a process that we must actively pursue. But is this really what we're doing? Maybe we're too comfortable with our current states and don't feel the need to do more. In CCF, we find ourselves being content, satisfied and ultimately stagnant, taking the grace and mercy we've been given for granted. We see our community with more desire to gather and talk about school than about what God has been teaching us.

What do we hope to see in CCF?

"Pray without ceasing" —1 Thessalonians 5:17

This year, we hope to see CCF praying without ceasing in the active pursuit of knowing and becoming more like Christ.

And why should we pray?

Prayer is relational; by talking and listening to God we come to know Him better. Prayer is an act of humility; it is a way we admit our powerlessness and admit God's power, surrendering our control and encouraging dependence on him. Prayer gives us the same Kingdom mindset Jesus had. This means that while we wait for His return, we must look heavenward and do God's work urgently. In prayer, the Holy Spirit helps us realize who God really is and that we are so far from perfect, encouraging us to pursue sanctification to be more like Him. Through this verse we can see that praying without ceasing leads us to constantly pursue a deeper relationship with God, to live with more humility and dependence, and to keep Him and His Kingdom work in our thoughts unceasingly.

“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.”

—Philippians 2:12-13

From this verse we see that God works in us and desires for us to be active in our faith as we work out our salvation. We take steps of obedience and ask Him for strength to do so. Prayer is a way in which we come to understand and fear God, and it helps us actively seek God’s purpose for us. Ultimately, it is in this prayerful pursuit that we discover more about what it means to be saved and live as a Christian.

As we pursue God, we pursue Him together as a witnessing community with genuity, honesty and vulnerability. We hope to find ourselves sharing our doubts and struggles with Him and each other, turning to Him in prayer, listening to Him and building a community hungry for more of Him in our lives.