

Prayer Brings Inner Strength by Melanie Imel

When we make Jesus Christ the Lord of our life, something wonderful happens! We are no longer limited to living this life out of our own strength, but God promises to infuse inner strength within us. Jesus compares this infusion of strength in John 15:5 to a branch receiving life giving nutrients from the vine "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever lives in me and I in him bears much abundant fruit. However, apart from Me (cut off from vital union with me) you can do nothing." If we are going to be fruit bearing Christians, we must live in Christ, vitally united with Him. Prayer is one of the main ways that this inner strength is imparted to us. As we pray and fellowship with God, our inner man is renewed day by day and infused with strength. Psalm 16:11 tells us that "in His presence is fullness of Joy". When we spend time in God's presence, we will have Joy. Nehemiah 8:10 says that "the joy of the Lord is our strength". The supernatural joy that we receive from the presence of God produces great strength in our inner man. Daniel 11:32 tells us that "those that do know their God will be strong and do exploits". Now we see why it is so important to spend time with our heavenly Father. Prayer brings joy, strength and the ability to do great exploits for God. Prayer actually allows us to live from the inside out and experience a whole new way of living.

I remember a time in my life that I was super busy for God. I was not praying and seeking the Lord. I did not have the revelation of being vitally united to the Vine. I got so busy for God; I began to reduce my Christianity down to merely doing work *for* God. Eventually, I started losing my spiritual strength and I had to make some major life changes. I had to make the decision that EVERYDAY I would seek the face of God, thereby receiving this wonderful inner strength that only Christ can give. It was a life changing revelation for me.

So many times, we are experiencing what I call "symptoms of prayerlessness". We start feeling sad, mad, touchy and hopeless and things begin to affect us negatively. We are not receiving the inner strength we need from the vine. We could also compare this to the gas gauge on our car. When we allow the gas level to get to empty, we are risking running out of gas. It's the same thing with our prayer life. If we go days without seeking the face of God, our strength level begins to drain out until finally we find ourselves stuck somewhere with all sorts of symptoms that we really don't need to have in our lives. When you make seeking God your top priority, Psalm 34:10 tells us that "you will not want (*lack*) any good thing"! God will work things out for you, far more easily than what we could do ourselves.

Prayer must be a priority in our life. James 5:15 tells us that "the earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available (dynamic in its working). Another benefit of prayer is that it brings the supernatural power and intervention of God into our life. If you live on this earth for very long, you will find yourself needing a miracle. Matthew 19:26 says that "with God all things are possible" and Mark 9:23 tells us that "all things are possible to him that believeth". The church in the book of Acts knew the power of prayer. We see in Acts 12:5 that the church was praying for a miraculous intervention from the hand of God. Peter had been placed in prison for preaching the Gospel, but the church fervently and persistently prayed on his behalf. Later in this chapter we see God answering this prayer in a miraculous way by sending an angel to free Peter. Not only does prayer give us the inward strength to live

each day, but prayer also changes our outward circumstances. We see the impossible become possible because we decide to believe God. Let's determine to take time each and every day to receive this wonderful deposit of strength from the presence of the Lord. It is this strength that will bring us joy and equip us to do wonderful exploits for the Kingdom.