

Morning Thoughts: Transforming Prayer

There are countless benefits to prayer: connecting with God, our creator, King, and heavenly Father; casting our anxieties on Him; interceding for others; praise and worship, etc... However, one of those great benefits and blessings is the idea that we can be changed and transformed through prayer. Before becoming a Christian, one of the most depressing and hopeless things I felt was the fact that I felt powerless to ever change and become the person I truly wanted to be. Through prayer we can become the man/woman that not only God wants us to be, but that we ourselves really want to become.

Genesis 32:1-21

As Jacob prepares to pass through Edom, he knows he will have to face his brother Esau. They have not seen each other in years and the last time they did Esau threatened to kill Jacob. See, there's quite a history between them; among other things, Jacob cheated Esau out of his birthright (Esau being the oldest son) and later, with the help of their mother, cheated him out of their dying father Isaac's blessing. And you thought your family was dysfunctional!

At this point in the story, the reason Jacob is preparing to go through Edom (named after Esau) is because he is running away from his father-in-law Laban. The reason? He cheated or manipulated him out of some of his herds and left. Even though both Esau and Laban were no saints, Jacob had serious character flaws of his own that contributed to the strife with both of these family members. See, the name Jacob actually means deceiver. Talk about fulfilling your destiny!

So now you can see why he is so nervous about seeing Esau and why he prays to God for help. However, he really has no choice because behind him is Laban trying to chase him down also. There comes a point in time in all of our lives that we can no longer run away and have to face who we are before God.

Q: Is there something in your character you've avoided addressing?

Q: Maybe you have not avoided it, but simply like Jacob being named deceiver, you too feel destined to be a certain way because of mistakes you've made or things you were told by people in your life. Do you feel labeled or "cursed"? (liar; loser; lazy, underachiever, addict, etc...) If so, what is it you feel trapped by?

Genesis 32:22-32

Q: Can you think of a time when you too pushed through emotional and/or spiritual pain and were blessed by God?

Its helpful to think of victories we've had to remind us we can do it.

In verse 28 something amazing happens; God changes Jacob's name to Israel. He is transformed from "deceiver" to "one who wrestles with God". From that point forward he was no longer Jacob, but Israel. You too can experience that kind of transformation through prayer. Your "name" can be changed by God!

Q: What "name" (character flaw) do you want God to change? And what "name" do you want him to give you?

Romans 12:2

The pattern of this world, among other things, is that we can never truly change who we are. Our minds can be filled with negative, faithless, and sinful thoughts. Through prayer we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Our minds need renewing every single day through scripture and prayer

Focus for the Day:

Pray through Psalms for you prayer time today
(here are some examples: Psalm 1, 91, 121)