

Tilling the Soil of the Heart #5

- Ron Stullenbarger -

God makes an amazing promise to us in Philippians 4:6-7. Scripture says, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* (ESV) How incredible! If we will make our requests known to God in prayer, giving our burdens and anxieties over to Him, then He will swap those burdens for a guarding peace that surpasses all understanding. How much do you need His peace today? What areas of your life feel burdened? What do you feel anxious about?

God has an endless reservoir of peace that's available to you when you place your trust in Him through prayer. As we open our hearts to God in prayer, the Spirit produces the fruit of peace. When you lay your burdens at God's feet, trusting that He will take care of you as He promised, peace overflows as a fruit of the Spirit's work in your life. That's the assurance of your Father and the power of prayer.

For most of us, something like trusting God and handing over all our burdens is much easier said than done. How can you pray effectively? How can you have communication with God? E.M. Bounds said, *"The goal of prayer is the ear of God, a goal that can only be reached by patient and continued and continuous waiting upon Him, pouring out our heart to Him and permitting Him to speak to us. Only by so doing can we expect to know Him, and as we come to know Him better we shall spend more time in His presence and find that presence a constant and ever-increasing delight."* Effective prayer is a process, but it is a process completely worthy of your efforts. Corrie ten Boom said, *"Don't pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it. A man is powerful on his knees."* Make a daily time to set aside for prayer. Fight to keep it at all costs. Connecting to God through prayer, hearing His voice, and experiencing His presence will lead you to a satisfied life. The Christian life without prayer is no different than a relationship with a person without communication. While your God will never fail you as people do, abundant relationship with Him requires constant communication.

Prayer is as much about making time and space to commune with God as it is about what you do or say. God can guide, speak, and give you His presence if you simply make space for Him to do so. Don't let a feeling of insecurity, doubt, or lack of knowledge keep you from talking with God. He delights in the simplicity, vulnerability, and honesty of you just wanting to talk with Him.

Open your heart to God as you enter into a time of prayer. Make space to listen to the voice of your Helper, the Holy Spirit. And receive the wonder and peace that comes from casting your burdens on a loving Father who is waiting right now to spend time with you.