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11-2020

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I've Found the Answer, I Learned to Pray

More and more people are people realizing that money is not enough to make them flourish.



▲ Jenifer Daley

For me, to flourish is to wholeheartedly live my God-given purpose — as much as I understand it, always cognizant of God's willing intentions toward my redemption, well-being, fulfillment and abundance. In other words, to flourish is to be who I think God wants me to be and live the way I think God wants me to live. As I try to cooperate with God each day, I have my fair share of challenges. What keeps me going is prayer: constant, unfiltered, desperate prayer.

My life experiences have helped me to come face-to-face with my need to have God direct my life more closely and more constantly. Whether I am experiencing challenging times or tranquil times of obvious success, I need more of God's presence, power and protection. It is through prayer that I access God as and when I need Him. Prayer assures me that I am never alone, encourages me that I am called to participate in a good plan for my life, and is my greatest weapon.

Never Alone — There are days when life feels overwhelming. In these times, God helps me to recall His Word as my prayer in answer to my feeble cry for help. One by one I pray the Word and God's promises return as healing as they strengthen my faith, encourage me to trust, give me courage and hope, energize me to persevere, and motivate me to study the Word even more so that I have greater assurance of His presence (Josh 1:5).

God's Larger Plan — Encouraged by the Word, I find undeniable evidence of God's desires, wills, plans, promises and acts for my flourishing and for the flourishing of the world through me (Gen. 32:9; Matt. 19:29; John 3:16). Being called to participate in a plan bigger than myself reorients my prayer life; my personal

challenges pale in comparison to God's grace and His call to use me to change the world. In the process, I progressively unmask my pretenses of self-sufficiency, and meaningful prayer transforms my experience as I become more honest before God.

Weapon — As I become more transparent, prayer unshackles me from false security, brings peace, and strengthens my commitment to God. Undoubtedly, prayer has been the stabilizing factor in my life although the form, depth and maturity of my prayer have changed over the decades. I am learning to pray offensively (proactively) and not just defensively (reactively), using the Bible as a sword (Eph. 6:17). The fact that I am physically alive today is, without a doubt, an answer to prayer.

A meaningful prayer life has been an absolute essential to my life of flourishing. I find that my prayers are more earnest and meaningful when I sense a greater emptiness and need for God. Prayer is then a pursuit for God, a search with all my heart. I consider it an awesome privilege to be able to be in constant prayer with my God and to be able to call on each member of the Godhead as I am moved by my need whether in bad times or in good times — when I'm anxious and afraid, or when I'm confident and filled with praise. Therefore, I flourish in spite of circumstances. I believe that I've truly found the answer to a flourishing life — I learned to pray. ■

Title of article is a song by Mahalia Jackson

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