



"I Emailed God This Morning"

By Roger Shantz

HERE'S A SUGGESTION FOR DEVELOPING A DAILY PRAYER LIFE

Recently I was thinking about my prayer life. While I try to spend a good bit of time each day praying, I realized that in the midst of prayer a random thought would come into my mind. These thoughts, I'm speaking of, are like subversive pirates that force their way onto your ship and before you know it your mind has been "sea-jacked". A while back I decided to do something about that and this is what I've found helpful...at least in part.

I've found it to be really helpful, in terms of getting ready for the divine appointments and ministry opportunities, as well as for the battles and challenges of the day, to intentionally write out my morning prayer. Some of you just checked out and said: "No way can I do that!" Listen, it's not that hard and the return on the investment of time is wonderful. What I'm talking about doesn't constitute your entire daily prayer regimen but it does do a couple of things.

1) **It JUMPSTARTS MY PRAYER LIFE for the day.** I don't try to pray for everyone I know during this time of writing but simply communicate my love to God, my dependence on Him; my desire to live for Him and glorify his name. I dedicate my life to him anew every morning and tell him how much I want my life to count for His purposes on this earth.

2) **It helps me to DEFINE THE INTENTIONS OF MY HEART.** Often when I pray I'm in a place where I can't do it out loud so I "pray in my mind". Because God knows everything, the thoughts and intentions of our hearts he hears my prayers (and yours too). By writing my prayers down I find that I'm much more focused. I don't ramble because I'm disciplining my thoughts as I establish them on paper. This time of writing has helped me be more intentional in what commitments I make to God.

3) **It ESTABLISHES MY PERSONAL COMMITMENTS FOR THE DAY.** That is to say, I am finding that when I write down (actually type my prayer on a word document) the things that I'm committing to before the Lord, that it sort of sets the bar for the day in my life. For example here are a few lines out of a prayer I wrote just a few days ago: "This is the day that you my Lord has made. Thank you for it. I

choose to rejoice and be glad in it. Father it is the desire of my heart to set myself apart from the things of the world, the flesh and the devil and be wholly yielded to you. I offer anew my life to you. Use me in the way that you choose....the way that will be most glorifying to your Name. You are my God and I am choosing now to please you; bless you; exalt you and be one who reflects the goodness, gentleness, kindness, love, grace, and mercy of the LORD. You are my God and King...rule and reign in my life this day.”

What I have discovered is that as I go through my day I'm reminded of what I intentionally wrote down before God. I am one who like to fulfill his commitments and so when I write it down I have something to review at the end of the day and I can so... "Father, I blew it! Please forgive me" or I can say "Thank you Father for giving me the grace to walk faithfully in the commitments I have made to you."

4) It DEVELOPS PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY. I personally have found that when I "say my prayers" vs. "writing my prayers" I tend to forget what I have said to God. I don't remember that I cried out in desperation for more of Him so when I get to the end of the day and he has met me in that desperate place I fail to thank Him and acknowledge his goodness to me. Writing commitments, desires, longings and requests for more of Him helps fortify my resolve to see those things happen. For example, I wrote these words the other day:

"I ask today for Divine Appointments to come into my life...opportunities to share the love of Christ. May I be loving yet bold for the cause of Christ. I ask for "sozo" to come to those I meet. As I speak may it be laced with love, mercy, and grace. Open my eyes that I will see those around me, as you see them. For your glory".

When I wrote those words I became accountable before God. So, as I walked through my day I was always checking my words, my attitude, my responses, etc against the words I told God earlier in the day, words that I wanted to be reflected in my life. While the concepts I express are not different from what I've prayed many times before, my awareness of their importance and the weight of accountability has been present. All that to say this, I am checking my behavior against my words more now than I ever have. Sometimes I'm successful and other times I fail miserably. Either way God loves me and he knows that thoughts and the intentions of my heart and he says repeated to me: "I understand you when you're successful and when you fail and neither result alters my love for you.

5) It CREATES SPONTANEITY in my prayers. While you may think that writing your prayers may make your prayer life stiff and repetitive, I believe just the opposite has taken place in my life. I'm more thoughtful and less repetitious. I consider the words I say to God. I am always changing it up and thinking, "this is a new day...what's on my heart as I'm before God". Obviously there are some themes that are always woven through my prayers, but I seldom express those themes in the same way.

Habakkuk 2:2,3 though out of context, seem to be applicable here:

And then GOD answered: "Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. This vision-message is a witness pointing to what's coming. It aches for the coming--it can hardly wait! And it doesn't lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It's on its way. It will come right on time." (The MESSAGE)

What is it that's in your heart every morning? Do you express it to God in a vain and repetitious way? Do you think, "I wish I could remember what I said to Him?"

Perhaps writing down your prayers, as I have outlined, may help you more intentional in what you say to Him. This won't negate the need and desire you have to pray throughout the day...in the Spirit or in English...but it will focus your mind on God as you write him. Remember, emails are new to Him.