

PRAYER IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES



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by [Kim Butts](#)

A few years ago, a dear friend went through a major health challenge. She walked through a lot of darkness and difficulty. Yet, in the midst of her struggle, she said to me, "I would not have chosen to miss going through every bit of this struggle because of all God did in and through me." Knowing how much she had suffered physically, mentally and financially through an intensely dark time, this gift of grace to her was supernaturally significant! We had been praying together (along with many others), that God would receive

honor and glory in her victory...and indeed He has! She was able to lead two people to the Lord, including a Jewish woman...and helped another person with a personal struggle of his own. Focusing upon the needs of others had pulled her from her anxiety over her own condition towards the kingdom purpose of God – which was to redeem her situation for His own glory.

I share this to say...prayer isn't always about the end result...but also about the journey. It is, as the Apostle Paul says, being able to be content in whatever circumstance we find ourselves in (Philippians 4:11). Author, Jonathan Graf, calls this "praying the process." If we focus on the end result only, we often miss the blessings, lessons, growth that comes from the process of walking through the situation. It is often the process of going through trouble or adversity that strengthens us for kingdom work. As a friend of mine says it, "When you can't see His hand, trust His heart!"

The Apostle Paul said in Romans 5:3-5: "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love" (NLT).

God loves us enough to allow trials in our lives for His purposes. As we "pray the process" we can ask God to work in and through us rather than bemoaning our circumstances. God is a redeemer and will not let anything we walk through be wasted. And, in the midst of our situations, we are always to be thankful: "Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). This is harder than it sounds! How can we be thankful for illness, tragedy, etc.? Go back to Romans 5 – when we run into the tough things of life, God has a purpose to use it for His glory...even if we can't comprehend, imagine or see it. This is where the true prayer of faith takes place.

When we begin to pray through the journey (process) of our situations, God is there, walking with us. He hurts alongside of us, sees and feels our pain, knows our frustrations...none of it is a surprise to Him.

Sometimes we have no idea what or how to pray in the midst of a difficult circumstance. But, Paul gives us this amazing encouragement in Romans 8:26: "And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words" (NLT).

So – in a nutshell, here are some guidelines, based on the Scriptures we just read, to help you pray through the dark, uncertain times in life:

- Pray the process – don't just ask God for the end result you want...trust God's heart even when you don't see Him at work in, through or around you. Know that He is able to overcome and/or redeem whatever you go through.
- Focus on praying for (and with) others who are going through trials as you are. God will use your circumstances to uniquely encourage or strengthen someone else.
- Ask God to give you the spiritual eyes to see His kingdom through your situation.
- Rejoice and give thanks in the midst of trials, knowing that He has a purpose for them that will be for His ultimate glory.
- Pray for greater faith to know that God's hand is at work to develop endurance, strong character and the hope of salvation within you.
- Ask God to help you to be content in the midst of whatever situation or circumstance you find yourself.
- Ultimately, when you don't know what else to do or pray, ask the Holy Spirit to share your heart with the Father.

May God bring your prayer life sharply into focus in the midst

of trials so that God is glorified as His will for His kingdom is fulfilled in and through you.

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