



Prayer — Futile or Fruitful?

My rational mind plays tricks on my victimized spirit. My mind challenges everything my spirit values and holds to be true. While my spirit is nourished by God's Holy Spirit, my mind consistently raises the ominous question of how could all of this God stuff be true?

How can there be a God-being who could possibly even hear, let alone answer, the billions of prayers that are offered each day? To the rational mind this is incomprehensible. So why pray if it makes no sense or if it not the reasonable thing to do?

Is prayer nothing but an exercise in futility—the final surrender of a defeated creature who has nowhere else to go? Is it not only a child-like fantasy that takes one into a make-believe world? Should not we be more realistic and face the somber news that it is all a dream—an unfounded hope?

These are all familiar paths down which many of us have walked. Our minds should hold our spirits accountable for what is true. That is a worthy function and assignment for the mind. Unfortunately, our spirits are frequently overly vetted and held hostage by our ever cautious minds. Therein lies the crux of the problem we have with our faith. *Our spirits are held hostage by our minds.*

Does all of this struggle in the search for truth dead end? Or, does it lead us to a source that is founded upon spiritual reality—a reality the mind cannot fathom, but which the Spirit reveals as the ultimate truth?

It reminds one of the temptation of Jesus by the devil who sought to trap Jesus. Of course, Jesus wasn't to be caught in those traps and revealed the falseness of the devil's position and argument. We can gain some support and insight from this Biblical story in which Jesus held fast to his spiritual base, holding the devil at bay.

The way out of the trap that threatens us with its logic and rational character is to put into motion our spiritual gifts and see if they are valid, functional and worthy of our ownership.

How does one do that? In essence: *pray!* Spend more time with God—not thinking about how God might be, but simply be with the Holy One. It is not enough that we merely *think* about the one we love. What matters is *being with* the one we love. In that same way *be with God.*

Talk things over, then turn things over—let them go—release them to God and see what happens.

Whenever I have done this I have always come away with the gift of quickened faith. I learn once again that the Spirit of God ultimately reigns. The Holy One clearly

functions in my behalf although mostly in ways 90 degrees different from what I initially envisioned and requested.

Mysteriously and without fail something comes my way that convinces me that God's person, presence, promise and persistence constitute life's ultimate reality and truth.



Prayer is not futile but abundantly fruitful.