

Foreword to
A Guide for Listening and Inner-Healing Prayer: Meeting God in the Broken Places

Every growing Christian has had some major and many minor “aha” moments in their journeys toward Christ. It is part of the process of being transformed by the renewing of our minds. For me, discovering who I am in Christ on an intimate level was one of those transforming moments. Another was a life-changing breakthrough on prayer.

As a new believer nothing was more frustrating to me than prayer. I believed in the power of prayer and the necessity of it, which I learned from Scripture. But I was defeated by meaningless prayer on the personal level. I would try to pray during my quiet times, but they really weren’t quiet. My mind was distracted by tempting thoughts, concerns for the day, doubts about God’s presence, and almost everything else that wasn’t on my prayer list. I read accounts of people praying for hours and sometimes all night, and I could barely get through three minutes.

That all changed one Saturday night.

I was supposed to give a talk to a bunch of college students the next day on how to pray by the Spirit. But I didn’t have a clue how to do it myself. Two passages came to my mind that evening:

The first was Romans 8:26-27: “In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” In the original language, the idea that the Holy Spirit “helps” comes from two prepositions added to the Greek word for take. Together, they convey that the Holy Spirit comes alongside, bears us up, and takes us to the other side. Any prayer that God the Holy Spirit prompts us to pray is a prayer that God the Father answers, because it actually originates from Him. Notice also that He is the One who searches our hearts and knows our inner nature far better than we can ever fathom.

The second passage was Psalm 95:7-8: “For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.” I thought that evening, Lord, I would love to hear Your voice. But my prayers were like that old country song, “Hello, wall!” Then I thought, According to Scripture, I have the mind of Christ, and the Holy Spirit has been sent to lead me into all truth.

With all that going for me, why is prayer so hard?

So I made an assumption. I decided to just sit still, listen to God, and assume that whatever came to my mind was either from Him or allowed by Him for some special purpose that I was probably not aware of. If the thoughts that came to me were tempting, I would assume they reflected an area of weakness that God wanted me to be honest about with Him. I didn’t approach this passively. I took every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and dealt with everything that came to my mind. To my surprise I spent an hour in prayer for the first time in my life, and it was refreshing. I discovered that prayer is more about listening than talking to God. I also discovered how personal God is. He wants an intimate relationship with all His children, and if we let Him prioritize our prayer time, it will likely be quite different from the petitions most believers offer.

If you are a parent and know there are unresolved conflicts between you and one of your children, what is on your mind when that child comes to you with all his or her petitions? If you love your children and want what is best for them, would you just give in to all their requests? If you know that your children are hurting because of all the lies they are believing, wouldn’t you like to expose those lies and share the truth? Don’t you believe that God would be willing to do that for you if you asked Him? That is what healing prayer is all about. I was hearing from God. It wasn’t what I wanted to talk about, but it was what I needed to hear and it wasn’t condemning. It was actually freeing, and it helped to know that I really was His child and that He really did love me

unconditionally as He does all His children. That is why we need to come to Him as a child would. That night was very pivotal in my Christian life as well as my ministry.

Christianity is a relationship, and our ministry is reconciliation, which is the process of removing the barriers to our intimacy with God. Truth will set us free, but we need to know that truth in the inner person. We also need to realize that truth is a larger concept than written revelation. Jesus is the truth and He is the Word of God. Ultimately He is the One who sets us free. Intellectual knowledge of the Bible is a foundation but never an end in itself. Such knowledge will only make us arrogant, which the apostle Paul warned us about. He wrote that “the goal of our instruction is love” (1 Timothy 1:5), which is the character of God (see 1 John 4:8).

You can know theology and be arrogant, but you can’t know God and be arrogant. Westerners want to expand the mind, but God wants to enlarge the heart where the mind, emotions, and will all converge.

This book is about listening to God in prayer and by so doing, healing the wounds of the heart. It is very likely your theology will be challenged by this book, but try thinking with your heart and try not to harden it. You just may be hearing from God, who wants to bind up all those wounds and set you free.

DR. NEIL T. ANDERSON

founder and president emeritus of Freedom in Christ Ministries;
author of Victory over the Darkness, The Bondage Breaker,
Praying by the Power of the Spirit, and many more

Rustenbach, Rusty. *A Guide for Listening and Inner-Healing Prayer: Meeting God in the Broken Places*
NavPress. Kindle Edition.