



WORKTALK WEEKLY

31 MARCH 2009

This is the third piece in a mini series on daily disciplines (DD)

DD3 - Prayer

You will already know, if you have read the beginning of this series, that taking a cross to work with you is mandated as a daily practice for all Christians, everywhere, every day, for life. You may also have numerous ideas as to what that means. Let me remind you of one meaning. It emerges out of asking a question "what did Jesus do when He took up His cross?" When you reflect on that you can consider the fact that the first recorded word He spoke from the cross was part of a prayer. The word is "Father".

Knowing that the cross of Christ was His ultimate place of work you can see that taking a cross daily means practising daily prayer at work. I can now evoke guilt in you very easily by challenging you to pray more. I don't suppose you can overdo prayer but actually I would like to encourage you to pray less - or at least more specifically.

Using the "Father" one word prayer, can have many meanings but can I suggest you try focusing on one as a daily discipline this week?

By praying such a prayer, Jesus was reminding us of our identity. "Father" is a statement of recognition of origin. Every time you pray using that word you are acknowledging your identity as a created being. You are a recipe of dust and breath expertly formed into an exquisite individual. You are an idea whose origin is in the mind of the Father - a dream come true by the energy of His speech.

In addition you can now call God "Father" because He has adopted you into His personal family through the mystical mechanism of the same cross where Jesus spoke the Word.

In case you haven't seen it this means that you have an independent, internal, locus of value built into your real self. You carry with you a permanent intrinsic worth derived from the fact that you are made by the Father and adopted (with full adoption costs covered) by Him. This, then, is the internal well of your self-worth and contributes to your primary identity and value. And nothing can rob you of that wealth.

Take this with you now to work. In the rough and tumble of your daily employment you will experience potential threats to your self-esteem. They will take the form of criticisms, competition, injustice, abuse, bullying, sarcasm, lack of respect, forgetfulness, lack of encouragement, neglect, unfairness, doubt, insecurity, redundancy, pay cuts, and so on and so on. You can add any number of imaginary threats to your sense of self which are simply normal in work culture.

But no one can change your status as a created, adopted person. Nothing and no one can take that away. So much stress is connected to the anger and frustration of feeling devalued, undervalued and worthless. To keep praying "Father" is to re-visit your spiritual gold reserves. It is to return to an inexhaustible source of nourishment and feed on untouchable truths.

Of course it's better when encouragement, justice, fairness and respect are present but these always have to be secondary sources of wealth and worth, kept in the right place as bonuses and top-ups.

When you pray say "Father" and in so doing you will take your cross and your untouchable

value with you every day, all the time, everywhere, permanently. That's a good deal.

Work Well
Geoff Shattock

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BIBLE SECTION

Matthew 6:9-13

9 This, then, is how you should pray:

” ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Luke 23:34

34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

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