

Prayer Brings Spiritual Eyesight



One of my favorite passages in Scripture is Luke 2:22-31, the account where Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the Temple for circumcision and to offer a sacrifice.

In the account we see a godly priest, Simeon, and an elderly widow, Anna, who came every day to the Temple to worship and pray. Both of these characters recognized who Jesus was the moment they saw him.

What's interesting to me is the fact that lots of people probably saw the infant Jesus during the first eight days of His life. I'm sure well-intentioned women visited Mary to admire her newborn. Perhaps as people passed Mary and Joseph on the street they stopped to look at Jesus. They stroked His chin; cooed at Him; perhaps kissed His forehead. They were that close to Him . . . but none of them recognized who He was!



Think about that. Many of these people were good godly Jews. They worshiped at the Temple, offered the right sacrifices, believed the Christ would come. Many were hoping and praying for the Messiah. But no one—except a few Shepherds, Simeon and Anna—recognized Him.

Why? What made the difference?

The Holy Spirit and prayer. Scripture tells us that because of his devoutness and faithfulness, the Holy Spirit told Simeon that he would see the Christ before he died. And the Holy Spirit moved Simeon out into the courtyard at just the right time on just the right day so he would see Jesus.

Anna had been coming to the Temple for more than 60 years (she was widowed after only seven years of marriage, then came every day after that). She spent so much time in the “prayer closet” fasting and praying that she had quite a connection with God! As soon as she saw the baby Jesus, her spirit was quickened, and she prophesied over Him.

Many of us are deeply religious—good Christians. We are believers who go to church, seek to live holy lives, and try to grow in our knowledge of God. Those are all good things. But like the “believers” in Jesus’ day, we can often miss Him. Now I don’t mean we are not saved; rather, I mean that often we can get caught up in “the right things to do” that we do not experience the living Christ the way we should. We need spiritual glasses to better see Jesus.

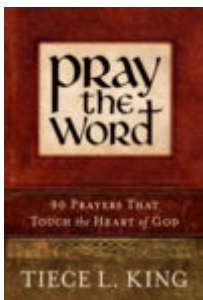
Those glasses come through prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit. The more time we spend in prayer, connecting with God, the more He can and will work in our lives (see Luke 11:13, Acts 4:31, Acts 13:2-3).

—Jonathan Graf is the publisher of *Prayer Connect* magazine and a popular speaker on the subject of prayer.

To deepen your prayer life, Jon recommends:



The Pray! Prayer Journal. This is the finest prayer journal on the market today. Includes many prayer helps, a year-long Bible reading plan, plus 12 prayer guides to enhance your prayers.



Pray the Word: 90 Prayers That Touch the Heart of God. A powerful book of prayers that are directed at your relationship with Jesus. Using this resource will open your heart to all that God has for you!