

As Natural as Breathing

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Many of us have physical habits that are so ingrained we do not even think about them. We just do them. They are “as natural as breathing.”

At the National Day of Prayer gathering in Washington, D.C., I heard Senate Chaplain Barry Black talk about prayer needing to be “as natural as breathing.” He used as his text 1 Thessalonians 5:17: “Pray continually.” And he explained that prayer should be such an integral part of our lives as believers that we just do it—all the time.

Over the years, the admonition to pray continually has been a guide for what I desire in my life. I am not remotely there yet, but I am improving. My desire is that prayer will be something that comes naturally to me throughout the day. I want my mind to automatically go to the throne room at any given moment—as natural as breathing. I want prayer to be the first thing I think about and do in any situation that comes my way.

First and foremost, that kind of prayer lifestyle certainly comes through developing an intimate relationship with Jesus. I need to strive to be ever growing in my walk with Him. I need to spend time in His Word. I need to discipline myself to spend regular time seeking His presence.

But I have found, too, that there are things I can do to remind myself to pray continually. My plan is to do these things until prayer becomes as natural as breathing.

What do I do? I use reminders in my path to pray. I have consciously made the connection between an item I see regularly and the need to pray for something.

One visual reminder is my daughter's bedroom door. Even though she is grown and out of the house, I see the door to her bedroom as a reminder to pray for her. I pray a blessing over her when I pass by, or I pray for an ongoing challenge in her life.

Another reminder is a specific traffic light. Whenever I drive under that light, it triggers my mind to pray for my pastor.

And of course we all have several passwords we use to access computers, websites, accounts, etc. I make some of my passwords relate to people I know. Then using those passwords reminds me to pray for them.

I also use the natural things I encounter on a regular basis to remember to pray: a screen saver with a picture of my grandkids or a photo of missionaries stuck to the fridge or file cabinet. And one of my favorite reminders is a card with a photo of a four-year-old child named Jonathan. This card has been in my Bible for 12 years. I got it when a church I was attending gave intercessors prayer cards with photos of the kids in the church. I have since moved away—and Jonathan is now 16—but I still pray for him when I see that card.

The reminders are working. They trigger prayer throughout the day. I am more likely to naturally pray in a variety of situations—as a first response.

My point is that sometimes we need to take steps to help ourselves develop a habit. Being intentional, looking for reminders, and making conscious connections, we can eventually make prayer “as natural as breathing.”

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