

Prayer “Rests”

"Your name will no longer be Jacob," He said. "It will be Israel because you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed." – Genesis 32:28 HCSB

In our attempts to understand the freedom of grace and the benefits of free access to God, we sometimes get unbalanced our view. We must keep in mind that sometimes prayer is a battle. Sure, there are sweet moments of serenity and peace. There are times when the answer comes almost before your lips can form the request. But as often as not, we struggle to make contact with heaven. Why is that? Is God at times deaf? Certainly not. The problem usually lies within ourselves and our treacherous hearts. It is difficult to put down the old fleshly desires and truly pray God's will. It is almost impossible to look into our hearts and determine what our true motives are. We are distracted from our focus by a million petty things.

Sometimes, though, every thing can be right and yet, the struggle remains. We must be aware of the spiritual Armageddon that surrounds us as we kneel or prostrate ourselves before the Master. Angels and demons clash in fury over the actions of a lowly human. Messages are delayed and the confusion of battle sets in. Why doesn't God simply set the demons aside and allow the messages to come clearly and immediately?

When you train in sports, you will generally hear a good coach discuss a graduated resistance program. Simply put, you start with a little resistance and gradually increase it as your strength increases. It is because of the resistance, the strain that the muscles develop and health is achieved. A dove flying through the sky may feel the resistance of the air and think that he could fly higher and faster if only it weren't for that resistance. He doesn't realize that it is that resistance that is actually keeping him up in the air. As his wings push down, they push against the air and cause lift. If there were nothing to push against, he would make no headway. Our prayer battles are increasing our faith, improving our patience, and causing us to rely more and more on the Father.

Besides, the pleasure can be more in the anticipation than the actual completion. When you listen to music, there are sometimes dissonant chords that cause a certain tension in anyone with a musical ear. When those chords are resolved ... ah, the sweetness! A good composer will know how to balance moments of silence with moments of grandeur, dissonance with resolution. Put it all together and you have a moving piece. But you have to trust the Composer of life to bring it to that point. If you get up and walk out too soon, you'll miss the climax.