

# PRAYER

What if God answered every prayer?

From *Prayer* by Philip Yancey. Page 228

“By answering every possible prayer, God would in effect abdicate, turning the world over to us to run. History shows how we have handled the limited power granted us: we have fought wars, committed genocide, fouled the air and water, destroyed forests, established unjust political systems, concentrated pockets of superfluous wealth and grinding poverty. What if God gave us automatic access to supernatural power? What further havoc might we wreak?”

ibid. Page 230

“Between the two questions ‘Does God answer prayer?’ and ‘Will God grant my specific prayer for this sick child or this particular injustice?’ lies a great pool of mystery.”

In all our prayers, we can count on one fact. Whether God answers our prayers or not, he can make use of whatever happens.

- Can you think of a time when your prayers were not answered – when you suffered – yet something good came out of it?

“Teach me, O God, so to use all the circumstances of my life today that they may bring forth in me the fruits of holiness rather than the fruits of sin,” prayed the British author John Baillie:

Let me use disappointment as material for patience.  
Let me use success as material for thankfulness.  
Let me use trouble as material for perseverance.  
Let me use danger as material for courage.  
Let me use reproach as material for long suffering.  
Let me use praise as material for humility.  
Let me use pleasures as material for temperance.  
Let me use pain as material for endurance.

## PRAYING FOR HEALING

### WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?

Though we can't count on God to supply us with a miracle cure for an illness like bipolar disorder, there are things we *can* count on, things we can pray for with confidence.

Praying with a sincere belief that God is a source of comfort and love:

- Pray for healing. Tell God your heart's desire. Faith works. Studies have shown that faith "aligns body, mind, and spirit, and galvanizes the healing processes built into our bodies." (Yancey)
- Tell God how you feel. Pray prayers of lament. Eugene Peterson calculated that two-thirds of the psalms are laments.
- Confess your sins and ask people for forgiveness. This clears away self-absorption and clears obstructions in your relationship with God. It will give you a sense of freedom in your prayers.
- God is always with us, whether we feel his presence or not. Pray that God will help you feel his presence.
- Pray with compassion for others who are suffering. It will help take the focus off yourself.
- Express gratitude. It helps relieve stress. "Medical research is discovering that gratitude is one emotional trait most likely to benefit physical health and recovery." (Yancey)
- Ask for the strength to accept and endure. Pray that you'll find meaning in the suffering.
- Ask for the grace to live out of a spirit of love.