



Links Players

Getting A Grip On Prayer

Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. (Romans 8:26)

Over the years, I have been accused of changing my putting grip as often as most people change their clothes.

The conventional, “reverse overlap” grip used by Tiger and Rory was where I started. Then I tried the “left hand low” grip, used by Jordan Spieth. Next was the “claw grip” used by Justin Rose and Tommy Fleetwood. I even bought a “broomstick” putter years ago because I admire Bernhard Langer.

This golf season, I’m switching to the “arm lock” grip used by Bryson DeChambeau. In discussing my putting woes with a teaching pro at my club, she suggested I use the “prayer” grip.

I laughed, thinking she was implying that my only hope was prayer. It is also called the “two-thumb” grip. This method levels the shoulders, creating a simple start position for turning the upper body. Of course, I tried it.

There is another type of grip in our prayer lives. I’ve tried so many different prayer methods in my lifetime, but I’m banking on today’s verse as my ultimate “prayer” grip... the Spirit interceding for me.

A friend clipped a comic strip I wasn’t familiar with called “One Big Happy.” The first panel shows a little girl kneeling by her bed to pray. She begins: “I’m so very tired tonight that I can’t even remember the words to my prayers.”

In the next panel, she folds her hands on the bed and adds, “But since you already know what I’m going to say ...” She then begins to recite the whole alphabet: A, B, C, etc. In the final panel, she looks up toward the ceiling and says, “Maybe you could put the letters together in the right way. Thanks and Amen.”

Oh boy, do I feel like that sometimes! Prayer is easy until it isn’t. Skipping the details, I’ve had some crushing news about several people that I care about and, frankly, I’m having trouble praying.

I guess “trouble” isn’t exactly the right word. I mean that I feel distracted and unable to concentrate. I attribute it to several things: emotion, weariness, starting my annual Spring get-in-shape workouts, my revived “eat healthy” diet, and yes, even unanswered prayers.

Perhaps you’re like me, for whatever reason, when you’ve faced similar situations, where prayer has been challenging and comes in spurts... if it comes at all.

The pressures of life sometimes make prayer difficult. It is precisely at this point that I take comfort from that little girl’s prayer. Paul reminds us in Romans 8:26 that often we do not know how to pray. We don’t know the words; we aren’t sure what to say; our minds can’t focus; and the strength isn’t there.

In those moments, we have the encouragement that the Holy Spirit prays for us when we can't pray for ourselves. He speaks to the Father with groans that cannot be expressed in human words.

This means we don't need to feel guilty when we can't pray. When you come to the moment of complete exhaustion and can no longer frame the words, you don't have to worry. The Holy Spirit will pray for you.

In your weakness, He is strong. When you cannot speak, He speaks for you. So, take heart if you feel overwhelmed today. The Holy Spirit can "put the letters together" when you can't find the words to say. I'm counting on that for me.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for the comfort and assurance that in our inability to express in words any grief or pain we feel, your Spirit becomes our prayer partner.

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The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.