

## “God Wants to Be Found”

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My friends, I've been looking forward to this moment and the chance to share the feelings in my heart about you! I am so grateful for your desire to be a part of the BYU-Pathway family. It might feel overwhelming at times or if you're just getting started. But I can testify that your potential is far beyond what you can imagine, and you do not make this journey alone.

Do you remember when the Lord invited Enoch saying, “Walk with me”?<sup>1</sup> You have a Heavenly Father who is really there, and He wants to hear from you. So let's talk about prayer and how it can make all the difference.

Years ago, when our son was in ninth grade, he texted me from school and asked, “Mom, what are you doing for lunch?”

I answered back, “I'm getting my hair cut right now. I'm sorry, did you want to have lunch together?”

He wrote, “Well, I'm just by myself and don't have anyone to eat with.”

I quickly responded, “Oh son, I am so sorry, but I know your heart! Try and look for others who may be alone too. I just know, at your school, a boy woke up this morning and said a prayer that he wouldn't have to eat lunch all by himself.”

He jokingly texted back, “Yeah, that boy was me!”

When our two youngest children, Pater and Berkeley, came with us on our mission to Australia, we thought they would finish high school there. But after six months, they returned to Utah so they could graduate on time. We had fasted and prayed a long time about this decision, and while it was the harder choice, we all felt that it was the right choice.

Pater graduated on schedule and left on his mission, and Berkeley was about to start year 12 back in Utah. Before she left Australia, we sat down together on her bed and said, “We're going to miss each other so much!”

Then I said, “Let's set an alarm on our phones to remind us to connect every day. I will set my alarm for 7:30 a.m. Australia Time, and you set yours for 3:30 p.m. Utah Time after you come home from school.”

I told her that since her afternoons were probably going to be busier than my early mornings, I would wait for her to call me. It was a good plan!

One morning as I was waiting for her to call, I remember thinking, *What if, when each of us left our heavenly home, we made a similar agreement with our Father in Heaven?* And imagine if we said, “We're going to miss each other so much! Let's set this up. We'll talk every morning and evening through prayer so we can connect every day.”

And what if God said to us, “Because your planet will be bound by time, you'll be busier than I will be, so I will wait for you to reach out to me.”

Just like the story about my daughter, are we connecting to our Father in Heaven every day? In my experience, there are three things I have found to be true about prayer:

### 1. “Prayer is a form of work.”<sup>2</sup>

I read this in the Bible Dictionary years ago, but what does that look like? Does it look like Enos who prayed all day and into the night?<sup>3</sup>

I believe it may look like this: Staying on our knees until our casual prayer turns into “mighty prayer.”<sup>4</sup> If I’m honest, this transformation happens when I’m about to finish and say “amen;” but then I pause, and I think of the things that I don’t want to say. I think of the heavy things I’m carrying, and the fear I don’t even want to admit to myself.

Then my heart softens, and it breaks wide open, and I talk with my Heavenly Father who listens as if I’m the only one. When I pray with my *whole* heart, *that* becomes “mighty prayer.”

Growing up, I was taught that, after my prayer ends, I should stay on my knees and listen, which makes sense. I mean, can you imagine if Berkeley’s alarm went off, she called me and shared the feelings of her heart, even pleading for help, and then hung up — not even waiting for my answer?

But let me share what my prayers are like now. It’s not just me talking, ending my prayer, and then listening. It’s more like a real conversation of talking *and* listening, back and forth, as I share what I’m struggling with or worried about. Then as impressions or names come to my mind, I pause and write these thoughts on a piece of paper next to my bed or on my phone and then I continue.

As I get up off my knees and begin my day, revelation continues to happen on the move, as I keep a prayer in my freshly broken, soft heart.

### 2. I have discovered that God wants to be found.

Jeremiah 29:13 says, “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”<sup>5</sup> It’s the practice of *seeking* that matters to Him.

In the spring, we have a tradition of hiding bright, colorful eggs for our children and grandchildren to find outside of our house, and everybody enjoys it. But we do not hide these Easter eggs to keep them away from our children. We want them to be found!

Could you imagine Dad saying, “Kids, this year I’ve hidden the eggs in places you’re never going to find them, and even if you did, you’ll never be able to reach them.”

No, a good father would never do that. And our loving Heavenly Father truly desires for us to seek and find Him, but one thing is clear: He preserves our agency. He wants to help us, with blessings He is already willing and wanting to give, but that are conditional on our asking for them.<sup>6</sup>

He’s inviting you and me to search, to come and know Him through this process of prayer. That’s the deal. I believe He also wants our prayers to be a mirror through which we see ourselves as He sees us, as well as a window to see others as His children who need our help each day.

### 3. Prayer changes us.

The Book of Mormon shares the history of how Nephi and his family were guided by the Lord to the Americas. Nephi became a prophet and a great leader over the Nephites, referring to them as “my people.” At one point, he tenderly shares, “I pray continually for them by day and mine eyes water my pillow by night.”<sup>7</sup>

I'd always thought what a great leader Nephi was to care so deeply for his people. But the last time I read this account, it struck me that his people could also mean his family: his wife, his sons and daughters, his brothers and sisters, and all his extended family.

I too have prayed for "my people" by day, and my eyes have watered my pillow by night.

I have prayed for specific outcomes, and easier circumstances, with some petitions on repeat for weeks, months, and even years.

And I have seen miracles. Not that all those circumstances or outcomes have changed, but I have changed and so has my relationship with my Father in Heaven.

There's a story of a man whose wife had cancer. At one point, after her cancer went into remission, his friends asked, "You must be so happy now. God is finally hearing your prayers."

And the man answered, "That is not why I pray. I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me."

For me, prayer has become like a reset button. Every morning, I can step out of my time-bound world and see the big picture, becoming a faith-filled person again. It helps the universe fall back into place for me, especially when life seems so random and full of suffering.

And sometimes, when there is no reprieve from my pain, and the only answer has been these two words: "I know" — which isn't so much an answer as it is a guarantee from a loving God that I am not alone.

My friends, if you're struggling with prayer, keep praying. When it feels like heaven is silent, keep praying. And on those days when you wonder out loud, "Why even pray?" may I offer this one reply: because Jesus Christ did! When He lived on this earth and returned as a resurrected being, He prayed to the Father as if it made all the difference. And it did. And it can for you and me. Let's keep praying. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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<sup>1</sup> [Moses 6:34](#)

<sup>2</sup> Bible Dictionary, "[Prayer](#)"

<sup>3</sup> See [Enos 1:4](#)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> [Jeremiah 29:13](#)

<sup>6</sup> See also Bible Dictionary, "[Prayer](#)": "The object of prayer is not to change the will of God but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant but that are made conditional on our asking for them. Blessings require some work or effort on our part before we can obtain them."

<sup>7</sup> [2 Nephi 33:3](#)