

Since our prayer life is pretty much an individual thing, I thought that I might share the progression of mine. Not that mine is an outstanding example but some parts may resonate with you.

So the progression of my Prayer Life began with my mother teaching us a bedtime prayer.

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my Soul to keep
If I should die before I 'wake,
I pray the Lord my Soul to take.

I prayed this prayer for many years, never letting it sink in that I might die in my sleep. If my mother had known of other versions of this, it might have been better to use one of the others that didn't deal with death.

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
His Love to guard me through the night,
And wake me in the morning's light.

I'm not sure when I started to form my own prayers but it was probably when my Sunday School teacher taught us that we could pray for things and God would give them to us. The verse was probably John 14:14 KJV (King James Version was the only version we had then) *If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

That was pretty cool, I could ask for anything and God would give it to me. So I asked for a lot of things and soon learned that the "vending machine" was not reliable – possibly broken or maybe my prayers were not making it to heaven.

Prayers went from there to a time when I didn't pray very much only on special occasions and when my Sunday School teacher would make one of us pray in class. That exercise has made it difficult to pray in front of a group even to this day, but I may be getting a little better at it. But still, I am not as good at it as many of you are.

Fortunately, the fact that the "vending machine" was unreliable, I didn't give up on God. He was still out there but often hard to reach.

Probably the next step in my prayer progression was to learn that the "vending machine" had a caveat. I needed to pray in the name of Jesus. So I added the magic line to each prayer – **in Jesus name, Amen**

Like all magic incantations it didn't make any difference.

It wasn't till I learn that to pray in Jesus name was to pray in His character i.e. to pray the way He would and for the things He would be praying for in order to glorify the Father. My wants were superfluous; it was for the things that would ultimately bring glory to the Father and not me.

The next epiphany was to learn that God knew everything before it happened. I reasoned that if He knew, then I didn't really need to pray about it. And so it went for many years. He knew so I didn't need to bother Him about things. He would see to it that everything would go down as He designed it.

*Remember the former things, those of long ago;
I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me.
I make known the end from the beginning,
from ancient times, what is still to come.
I say, 'My purpose will stand,
and I will do all that I please.'
From the east I summon a bird of prey;
from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose.
What I have said, that I will bring about;
what I have planned, that I will do.*

Isaiah 46:9-11 (NIV)

My latest understanding is that while the above is definitely true, it is for me to pray for others in a way that is in line with what He has planned. The only way for me to know what that is, is to be in communication with Him through the Holy Spirit. That communication is an ongoing process and is not on our physical plane (and is the subject for another study). So I have added another line to my prayers – **Your will be done.** Jesus prayed that way, why wouldn't I do the same.

*He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, **may your will be done.**"*

Matthew 26:42 (NIV)