

Training in Prayer

And then training in prayer.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Php 4:6-7).

Once there were two little boys, brothers, who were playing outside with their friends. Some other friends came from across the road, up the short street there, telling them, "We've lost our puppy." Being lovers of puppies, they went looking for it.

They looked around the yard of their friends. They moved on to the house next door, looking under bushes, between houses. They walked further on down the street, searching, searching. Away down the street there was a large opening between houses that led to a bridge that crossed a creek. They went over it, into the fields; up the hill; across rail road tracks; beside a quarry; up another hill. By this time they were far, far from home, yet it was there that their big brother found them. "Where have you been?" he demanded. "We've been looking all over the place for your! Go home. Mom and Dad are worried about where you are!"

Some people believe that in order to find God, you have to go a long, long way away. In fact, though, God is not far away at all (Acts 17:27). He is right here beside us, and when we call out to him he will hear us. For believers in Jesus, though, God is even closer than that. The reason he can hear us when we pray is because Christ is in us. Prayer is nothing less than searching for Christ who is already inside of us, and "living indoors" with him.

In the reading I'm doing for this series I keep bumping up against a particular word. It's not a psychological word, as it is used nowadays. It's a spiritual word. The word is "abandonment." Jeanne Guyon reflects on the word: "You must come to the Lord and there engage in giving up *all* your concerns. All your concerns go into the hand of God. You forget yourself, and from that moment on you think *only of Him.*" Abandonment is simply surrendering everything we are to God, bringing all our concerns to him – **and leaving them there.** Tough to do!

This is not something we can just make up our mind to do. This takes training. We will make mistakes, but that is all right because God has placed us into Christ Jesus! It'll take training to learn to truly come to God no matter what the circumstances and know that he knows, know that he cares, know that he and he alone has a way through it as we draw near to him. The key to any of the disciplines is to take hold of Christ. He already has a hold of us! He won't let go of us! But if we're to become like him, we must turn to him, trusting him no matter what.