



Prayer: Think of God's Point of View. (From: **The All-Time 10 Best Tips on Prayer** by Jim Stephens, www.themariagelibrary.com/Resources/10-Tips-Prayer.pdf)

One of the best pieces of advice that I ever read on prayer was from a famous Chinese Christian, Watchman Nee. He taught that God will not do His Will until we pray and ask Him to do it. Even though God wants to do His Will very much, He will not violate our freedom by interfering before we ask Him to.

If God interfered, then that would violate our freedom and thus destroy our ability to give and receive true love which requires that we be free.

If we don't ask, then God cannot interfere with the workings of our hearts. If He did, then He would be controlling us against our will. This would destroy our freedom and simultaneously destroy true love.

Without freedom there cannot be true love because we would be like robots. God is a parent who truly loves His children but He also respects their creativity and responsibility. He would never choose to force them to love Him. That's a contradiction to the nature of true love. God chooses to wait until His children are ready to respond and then give them what was actually His Will all along.

ASK FOR INSIGHT

So then, just what is God's point of view? I find it very helpful to meditate for a few minutes on this subject - what God must be feeling. I send a silent thought to God, "Help me see from Your point of view, Heavenly Father, and if there is anything that I can pray for that will help You, then send that thought into my mind."

UNDERSTANDING CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

Sometimes I have found myself in deep repentance after better understanding God's perspective. Because of what we humans are doing to each other and to our world, we are giving great pain to our loving parent, God! Often I see more clearly where I have not devoted enough time and thought to God and have allowed worldly concerns to occupy too much of my time.

Through this exercise, I find it much more natural to repent and feel very cleansed. Once you offer to God your apology for not seeing His perspective and understanding His heart better, then you'll receive His deep genuine forgiveness. Then a new closeness comes over you.

Whenever we are building a relationship with another person and we can make a connection to the other person's feelings and perspective, then we feel much closer to that person. It's even nicer when it's with God.

Confession and repentance are sometimes very misunderstood concepts. Their purpose is NOT to paint yourself as a terrible sinner and eternal reprobate. The purpose of repentance is to apologize to God for your mistakes so that you can receive forgiveness and then end up CLOSER to God.

The net result of repentance should be a feeling of joy and forgiveness. If you are repenting and then feeling depressed at the end, you're doing something wrong. God wants you to move forward and move closer to Him. The conclusion of that is a deep inner joy. Be careful to note whether you feel joy after you have confessed or repented. If not, then you must be farther away from God, not closer. Obviously, that's not the desired result that you want and especially not the result that God wanted. Therefore, check up on the results of your prayers. Are they making you happier?



Why Men Don't Listen to Women

From the University of Sheffield, U. K.

He really isn't listening to you! **But you won't believe the reason why.**

When men and women speak, the human brain processes the sounds of those voices differently, Britain's Mirror newspaper and Agence France Presse report of a new study from the U.K.'s University of Sheffield.

While most of us actually hear female voices more clearly, men's brains hear women's voices first as music. But it's not music. It's someone giving them a honey-do list. So his brain has to go into overdrive trying to analyze what is being said.

Bottom line: Men have to work harder deciphering what women are saying because they use the auditory part of the brain that processes music, not human voices.

Men's brains are not designed to listen to women's voices. It's not the pitch of the woman's voice, but rather the vibration and number of sound waves that cause the problem, notes Discovery News.

But guys have no trouble at all hearing each other because men use a much simpler brain mechanism at the back of the brain to decipher another man's voice and recognize it as speech.

"The female voice is actually more complex than the male voice, due to differences in the size and shape of the vocal cords and larynx between men and women, and also due to women having greater natural 'melody' in their voices. This causes a more complex range of sound frequencies than in a male voice," lead researcher Michael Hunter told The Mirror.

"When men hear a male voice they process it in the 'mind's eye.' This is the part of the brain where people compare their experiences to themselves, so the man is comparing his own voice to the new voice."

Here's a really bizarre side effect: These findings help explain why people who suffer hallucinations usually hear male voices. It's just too hard for the brain to create a false feminine voice as accurately as it can create a false masculine voice.

The research findings were published in the journal NeuroImage.

<http://webcenters.netscape.compuserve.com/men/package.jsp?floc=DC-topb&name=fte/womenspeak/womenspeak>

Parenting Tip

Comment:

We highly recommend this book on positive parenting: **Children Are From Heaven**, by John Gray.

Jim & Hiromi Stephens,
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Continuation from last week...
Again here are the 5 key messages:

1. **It's okay to be different.**
2. **It's okay to make mistakes.**
3. **It's okay to have negative emotions.**
4. **It's okay to want more.**
5. **It's okay to say no, but remember mom and dad are the bosses.**

What Makes the Five Messages Work

To apply the five messages of positive parenting, we first have to understand the right conditions for them to work. These new parenting skills will not work if we (1) keep control of our children with threats of spanking, punishment, or guilt. Fear-based parenting numbs our children's ability to respond to positive parenting.

On the other hand, if we (2) don't know how to replace spanking and punishment with more positive ways to create cooperation, the five messages will not work as well.

If parenting is based on fear, children will not respond to the five messages. For this new approach to work, parents must let go of outdated fear-based practices of parenting. To flip back and forth doesn't work.

If we want our children to feel good about themselves, we have to stop

making them feel bad. If we want our children to feel confident, we have to stop controlling them with fear. If we want our children to respect others, we must learn how to show them the respect they deserve.

Giving up spanking, threatening, and punishing may sound like a loving thing to do, but when your child is throwing a tantrum in the check-out line and you just don't know what else to do, threatening or spanking seems to be the only solution. When your child refuses to get dressed in the morning for school or resist brushing his teeth at night, automatically you resort to threats and punishment. Even if you don't want to use threats and punishment, when nothing else works it is all you have. And it is all you have because we haven't yet learned the skills of positive parenting.

New Skills to Create Cooperation

To create cooperation is to instill in children a willingness to listen and to respond to your requests. The first step is to learn how to direct your children most effectively. Consistent ordering does not work. Think about your own experience at work. Would you like someone always telling you what to do?

The positive-parenting alternative skill to ordering, demanding, and nagging is asking or requesting. Wouldn't you rather be asked by your boss (or spouse) rather than be told? Not only do you respond better, but your children will as well.

It is a very simple shift but it takes lots of practice. For example, instead of saying, "Go brush your teeth," say, "Would you go brush your teeth?" Instead of saying, "Don't hit your

brother," say, "Would you please stop hitting him now?"

✓ **Use "would you" and not "could you."** Make sure that, when phrasing your request you use the words "will" or "would" instead of "can" or "could." When you say, "Would you clean up this mess?" you are making a request. When you say, "Could you clean up this mess?" you are posing a question about competence. You are asking, "Do you have the ability to clean up this mess?"

✓ **Give up rhetorical questions.** When a mother wants her child to clean up his room, instead of saying, "Would you please clean up your room?" she throws in a little shame and guilt by using a rhetorical statement first like, "Why is this room still a mess?" By giving up rhetorical questions before making a request, parents increase their chance of creating cooperation; otherwise children just stop listening.

✓ **Give up explanations.** You don't need to say, "It's time to go to bed; you have a big day tomorrow. Would you go brush your teeth?" Just say, "Would you go brush your teeth?" leave out the explanation. When children resist their parents, they are mostly resisting the reasons. When you leave out the reason, they have less to resist.

✓ **Don't use feelings to manipulate.** When parents, who are the bosses, share their negative feelings with children to motivate behavior, it makes children feel overly responsible for the parent. The result is that they feel guilty for upsetting the parent and adjust their behavior, or they feel manipulated and resist cooperating. Negative feelings should

not be shared with children. It is not appropriate for the "boss" to get on equal footing with the child.

✓ **The magic word to create cooperation.** Besides being brief, positive, direct, and using "would you" when making a request, one other skill remains. It is the most important. It is remembering to use the most powerful word for creating cooperation. That word is "let's." Even if you have asked something specific like, "Would you please clean your room?" you could precede this request or follow it with the phrase, "Let's get ready for the party." By including your request in the context of an invitation to join with you, the result is increased cooperation.

When children resist your initial request, then it's time to move on to Step Two. The skills of step two are needed to motivate your children when they resist your initial request. Later on, you will find that most of the time you will only need to ask, and your children or teenagers will cooperate. (Next week...Step Two)

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