

Prayer Challenge: Week 2

Do you ever take a moment to pray but feel like you stumble out of the gate? Do you have trouble finding the words when it comes time to bow your head? Remember, the One who hears your prayers is your Daddy. You don't need to wow him with eloquence.

Jesus downplayed the importance of words in prayers. We tend to do the opposite. The more words the better. The better words the better. We focus on the appropriate prayer language, the latest prayer trend, the holiest prayer terminology. Against this emphasis on syllables and rituals, Jesus says, "Don't ramble like heathens who . . . talk a lot" (Matt. 6:7 God's Word).

Vocabulary and geography might impress people but not God. There is no panel of angelic judges with numbered cards. "Wow, Lucado, that prayer was a ten. God will certainly hear you!" "Oh, Lucado, you scored a two this morning. Go home and practice." Prayers aren't graded according to style.

Just as a happy child cannot mis-hug, the sincere heart cannot mis-pray. Heaven knows, life has enough burdens without the burden of praying correctly. If prayer depends on how I pray, I'm sunk. But if the power of prayer depends on the One who hears the prayer, and if the One who hears the prayer is my Daddy, then I have hope.

Prayer really is that simple. Resist the urge to complicate it. Don't take pride in well-crafted prayers. Don't apologize for incoherent prayers. No games. No cover-ups. Just be honest—honest to God. Climb into his lap. Tell him everything that is on your heart. Or tell him nothing at all.

Sometimes "Daddy" is all we can muster. Stress. Fear. Guilt. Grief. Demands on all sides. All we can summon is a plaintive "Oh, Father." If so, that's enough.