

Saying Goodbye to the Kitchen Island

Learning to pray through adversity,
Trusting the One while waiting or grieving,
Persevering in prayer is how God changes us.

Initially it seemed odd saying goodbye to our kitchen island. On moving day in 2017 I glanced over the kitchen, tears stung my eyes. My heart stopped at the kitchen island and the tears flowed. As I recalled almost two decades of sitting there early in the mornings, it hit me hard. I would never *sit there again* pouring out my heart and praying to the Creator of the Universe. Never again.

In the 17 years we spent at 5984 Downingtown Point, the kitchen island was the very spot where God did His most transforming work within me through my prayer life. Countless times He heard me cry out and often amazed me with His presence. There I searched to see His faithfulness. I prayed for wisdom, help with decisions, confessed sin, shortcomings and failures. More than once I asked God to revoke my spiritual gift of discernment. Later that prayer changed as I asked Him to help me live out that gift by cooperating with His Holy Spirit.

The trials of life can break our hearts or lead us into deeper intimacy with God. The choice to turn away or turn to God in prayer brings about an extreme contrast in your life journey: the destination as well as the trip. James 4:8 tells us “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” I found this true through prayer and being in HIS word daily, despite my circumstances.

I choose to pray and seek God's presence through seasons of brokenness and difficulty. Prayer is where God changed my perspective, granted me wisdom and most of all allowed me to realize just how much He loves me. Prayer became my lifeline but more, it has become my JOY. Prayer is where I find the Lord and where the beauty takes shape in my spiritual life. It is where I am inspired to follow where He is leading me.

Others now call me a prayer warrior. Sometimes others look upon my prayer life with admiration and this almost causes me to chuckle. You see, my prayer life was birthed from a place of desperation because of a thorn in my life. The thorn is named mental illness. In 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 Paul talks about his thorn. It was chronic and debilitating even though the Bible doesn't tell us the nature of his thorn. I relate to Paul as a caregiver for family members diagnosed with mental illness. We have experienced a mental health crisis, more than once. Paul's words inspire me to believe the words of Jesus "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2nd Corinthians 12:8a).

When mental illness knocked on our family door, over 20 years ago, I tried not to open the door. The years following that diagnosis were stormy and they took a toll on our family. I chose and still choose to turn to God through prayer and time alone with Him. Time when I pour out my heart, fears, anguish and seek His comfort and wisdom.

Praying over any circumstances gives me assurance

Whatever the outcome, I am confident it is God's will.

Today, I can say for certain, I am grateful for the suffering through this journey within our family. I don't like it, but I am grateful. The result of my prayer life is strength in my faith. Assurance of God's presence and real intimacy with the Lord is remarkable because of our family's suffering! My awareness of God's care for us has been made possible only through this

suffering. The price is worth it. I have experienced the goodness, mercy and love of the Father in ways hard to describe. I am now at a place in life where I can “rejoice in our sufferings” (Romans 5:3a ESV) because the result is courageous faith and knowing God intimately. His glory and power have been revealed in ways impossible without our thorn. This is a result of me running to the Lord of Heaven's Armies when the thorn begins to fester under my skin.

“Dear Lord,

Thank you good and gracious Father for pursuing me through prayer.

I am thankful for the difficulties, each and every one

Thank you for teaching me through prayer that You can be trusted.

AMEN”

Sometimes it is almost impossible to find the words to pray for a loved one or yourself when in the midst of a deep valley. During these times we can use scripture and pray the Word of God. I hope the following prayer gives you words you may be seeking, whether walking through mental illness, betrayal, deep disappointment, addiction, infertility or some other one of life’s many trials. It may be a good reminder of God’s faithfulness for you to date the prayer and write a loved one's name alongside it.

Dear Father God,

You alone are holy, the most high. Your love for me is so great as evidenced by the cross of Jesus Christ. Thank You for sending us Jesus and providing a way for Your love and grace to anchor me on this earth. Now in the name of Jesus Christ, I lift up to you () and ask for Your blessings over () life.

Lord, I come humbly before you to pray for (), may you find my heart pure and motives honoring You alone. Hear my cry, Oh Lord.

“Oh Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love Him and obey His commands, let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer Your servant is praying before You day and night.” Nehemiah 2:5-6a (NIV)

“I ask whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable and if anything is excellent or praiseworthy I ask that You would help () think about such things so that Your peace will overflow and overwhelm ().” Philippians 4:8-9 (NIV)

“Lord, I ask You to fill () with the knowledge of Your will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. I pray this in order that () may live a life worthy of You and please You in every way, bearing fruit in every good work. Please grow () in the knowledge of Christ, that () will be strengthened with all power according to Your glorious might so that () may have great endurance and patience and joyfully give thanks to You.” Colossians 1:9-12 a (NIV)

“Father, may Your help be ever present with () and help () forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead, help () press on towards the goal to win the prize for which YOU have called () heavenward in Jesus Christ.” Philippians 3:13-14.

“Father, I ask that Your hope will fill () heart. The hope that does not disappoint (), because Your love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” Romans 5:5 (NIV). Your Holy Spirit is a great gift and I pray that () heart will be open to Your Holy Spirit and that all wisdom and peace will fill () heart and remove anything from () heart that is not of You.

“You alone are the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, for this reason I kneel before You Father and I pray that out of Your glorious riches that You may strengthen () with power

through Your Spirit in () inner being, so that Christ may dwell in () heart through faith. And I pray that (), being rooted and established in love will have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know that this love surpasses knowledge that () may be filled to the measure of the fullness of God. Now to God who is able to do immeasurably more than I can ask or imagine, according to Your power that is at work within (), to You be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever!" Ephesians 3:14-21 (NIV)

"Lord, it is my prayer that Your love may abound more and more in knowledge and in depth of insight for (), so that () may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ." Philippians 1:9-10

I pray for () to know You through the salvation of Jesus Christ. I ask that you pursue () for Your goodness and Your glory. I ask that You make Yourself known to () in an amazing way, this day. In Jesus Name, Amen.