

DANGEROUS PRAYERS 2

'Lord, change me'

CHANGE implies at least a degree of DISCOMFORT, largely because PRIDE is often at stake.

→ *How do you feel about change? Are there things that the Lord is gently nagging you about changing? What in your character would you love to see changed?*

→ *Why can 'Lord change me' be a scary prayer? Have you ever prayed it? If so, how has God answered it?*

→ *'Change is good, if God is doing the changing. Change is good, if becoming more like Jesus is the result.' Discuss!*

CHANGE is necessary for HOLINESS → Call it REFINING.

CHANGE is necessary for FRUITFULNESS → Call it PRUNING.

CHANGE is necessary for the fulfilment of PURPOSE & DESTINY → Think of the POTTER & the CLAY.

CHANGE is necessary for your WITNESS → Because to be successful people need to see JESUS and not simply YOU.

→ *If you could experience change in one of these four areas (personal holiness, kingdom fruitfulness, purpose & destiny, witness), which would you choose?*

4 BIBLICAL METAPHORS FOR TRANSFORMATION

1. Ore REFINED in the fire (Proverbs 17:3).

2. A vine PRUNED to produce fruit (John 15:1-2).

3. CLAY shaped and crafted by the POTTER (Isaiah 64:8).

4. METAMORPHOSIS (2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 12:2)

... God wants to TRANSFORM you, little by little, into the IMAGE of JESUS.

→ *Would you say you've ever experienced refining or pruning? How does God go about working those processes? What did refining or pruning look or feel like for you?*

→ *What 'metamorphosis' have you experienced in your Christian journey? What have been the greatest areas of transformation?*

A. MATURE me (2 Peter 2:1-3, Psalm 139:23-24)

* Part of the expectation of discipleship is GROWTH into MATURITY.

* Just as NATURAL babies grow up, so SPIRITUAL babies should grow up.

→ *What do the stages of spiritual growth look like? For example, what does it mean to be a spiritual baby or toddler or teenager or to be mature?*

* Maturity is not necessarily a consequence of AGE or KNOWLEDGE or POSITION.

* Maturity is a consequence of the extent to which we've allowed GOD'S WORD to change our lives.

* Maturity is a reflection of how much of the CHARACTER of JESUS has been ingrafted into our hearts.

→ *What are the signs of Christian maturity? What attributes sometimes get mistaken for signs of maturity, but really aren't?*

* The prayer 'God LEAD me' is a DP, because in saying those words you're RELINQUISHING CONTROL.

* The prayer 'Lord SEARCH my heart' is a DP, because it's an invitation for Him to DEAL with whatever He FINDS.

→ *How do we grow as Christians? What are the things that help us to grow? What part does prayer play in that?*

B. SOFTEN me (Ezekiel 36:24-28)

* The DANGER is that, over time, parts of our hearts grow HARD, COLD & CALLOUSED.

* This is the desire to FEEL what He FEELS, SEE what He SEES & VALUE what He VALUES.

* NLT: I will take out your STONY, STUBBORN heart and give you a TENDER, RESPONSIVE heart.

* The cost is that PAIN can get in; the upside is that GOD can get in.

→ *Are you softer or harder than you were, say, a year ago ... or maybe ten? Has your Covid experience hardened or softened your heart? Explain.*

→ *Why do people build walls to protect their hearts? Why is it tempting to do so? Do you? What are the dangers of those walls? How might God break them down?*

→ *What are the consequences of having a stony, stubborn heart? What might you miss out on? What does a tender, responsive heart look like? What does that kind of heart open the door to?*

C. EMBOLDEN me (2 Timothy 1:7, Acts 4:29-31)

* 'Lord, fill me with tenacious FAITH, strong CONVICTION & lion-hearted COURAGE.'

DOESN'T MEAN:

* Make us BRASH, LOUD & OPINIONATED.

* RUSHING AHEAD without thought & prayer.

* Becoming a SLEDGEHAMMER & using the Word like a CLUB.

DOES MEAN:

* Led by FAITH in God rather than FEAR of man

* Radically OBEDIENT to the Holy Spirit

* STANDING UP rather than BACKING DOWN.

→ *Are you bolder or more timid than you were, say, a year ago ... or maybe ten? Has your Covid experience emboldened your heart or made you back off a little?*

→ *What counterfeits or imposters do some Christians mistake for boldness and what damage can they cause? What does true boldness look like? If you were to describe a bold you, what would it look like? How might you get there?*

RESPONSE

Which of the 3 prayers most resonates with you? Is it Lord, mature me? Lord, soften me? Or Lord, embolden me?

→ *Please pray for one another for change, growth or increase in that specific area.*