

PRAY NOW

A GUIDE TO A RICHER PRAYER LIFE



KAREN GARDNER

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A Richer Prayer Life*

Karen L. Gardner



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CHAPTER 1

THE STARTING LINE



It's not where you start; it's where you finish.

When I first begin to pray, I would bring my wish list to God like He was a “candy man.” All I knew back then was to cry, whimper and beg God to take care of my family because I felt like a second-class citizen. I knew nothing about ministering to God. I had no revelation of how much He loved me and desired to bless my family. Nor did I understand the authority I had in Jesus’ name to command life’s circumstances to line up with the promises of God. I could only hope that God would answer my prayers because fear, rejection and condemnation had me bound.

When I approached God in prayer, I worried that if I hadn’t performed everything perfectly that day, He would ignore me. I thought you had to earn the right through perfect performance for God to answer your prayers.

My relationship with God was very shallow. I knew nothing about “*koinonia*”, a Greek word meaning “*communion, fellowship, intimacy, partnership, joint participation, social intercourse or communication,*” because I didn’t trust God. This “*koinonia*” would eventually become a new spiritual reality - my secret place with God - as I cautiously let down the walls surrounding my heart.

Back then, I saw myself as a victim that had to perform like a hamster on a wheel to receive God’s love and acceptance. I had a deep sense of inferiority that caused me to feel that I didn’t deserve the best. I was an emotional wreck; consumed by rejection, fear, insecurity, anxiety, shame, and anger; and it all stemmed from having an unhealthy relationship with my earthly father.

Nonetheless, in all my mess, I always loved God. I enjoyed spending time with Him in prayer, mostly interceding for others. I just didn’t know how to connect with Him for myself, even though deep down in my soul, it was something I desired.

It was impossible for me to receive fully inner healing and deliverance because I was projecting the strained relationship I had with my Dad onto God. I thought that if my Dad didn’t love me, surely God couldn’t either. Boy, was I wrong. I would discover just how wrong later in life, as circumstances taught me to trust God.

It took hitting a brick wall in my mid-20’s for me to begin to shake loose from the chains of my childhood. I’ll never forget the day my world changed. I had just been handed a pink slip shortly after returning to work from maternity leave after

having my third child. I was working as a public relations account executive at a top advertising firm in Alaska.

Instantly, my world was shattered. I got into my car with tears streaming down my face as I began to drive away from the office. Stunned and confused, thoughts bombarded my mind. “What am I going to do now to help my husband take care of our family? “We have another mouth to feed.” “Why can’t you ever do anything right?”

I continued sobbing, as I drove nowhere in particular. The rejection, shame, anxiety, fear, anger and hopelessness I felt were unbearable. I couldn’t understand why I had been laid off. I did great work, or at least that’s what my manager had said. Where had I gone wrong?

I would learn later that while my work was usually excellent, my ability to open up and build good relationships with authority figures hampered my success. I was afraid that if they got to know me, or if I made a mistake on a project, they would reject me, just like my Dad. On top of this, I had so much unforgiveness in my heart towards my Dad that it hindered my ability to open up and trust anyone.

As I continued to drive around town with tears streaming down my face, I told God, “I can’t take this anymore!” The shame of losing my job, (which was pride), and the thought of losing our home, (which was fear) caused me to spiral out of control. Then I heard a small voice inside of me say, “Go to church and pray.” I made a beeline to the sanctuary.

As I lay on the floor at the altar crying and asking God to take away the gut-wrenching pain of rejection, I repented for everything under the sun, hoping it would ease the pain.

But my great emotional display didn’t cause God to fall off His throne or to coddle me. He simply said, “Call your Dad and ask Him to forgive you.” “What?!” I erupted at the thought. “Call my Dad and ask him to forgive me?!” I couldn’t believe what God was asking me to do because I hadn’t rejected my Dad, he had rejected me. Or so I thought.

Still upset, I asked, “What does my Dad have to do with my job?” I reminded God, (as if He didn’t already know everything) that it was my Dad who had rejected me as a child. He made promises to me that he didn’t keep; like the time he promised my sister and I that he would buy us a pair of lime-green bicycles for Christmas. Something I had always wanted.

It was my Aunt Sandy, who would step in to fill the gap by buying the bikes. However, I would later learn that like me, my Dad suffered from a spirit of rejection too. It was a generational curse that needed to be broken by taking authority over it!

Still not pleased with what God had told me to do, I asked Him repeatedly, “Why do I have to call and ask my Dad for forgiveness when he rejected me first?”

Pain and anger pulsed through my heart. I thought I was going to explode. I was angry with God, my Dad and the whole world!

But God had spoken. Now I had to choose whether or not I was going to obey Him. The pain in my heart was so excruciating that I decided to call my Dad and ask for his forgiveness. This task was easier said than done. I don't know how many times I picked up the phone that night. I would dial my Dad's number and hang up before he could answer. But by the grace of God, I finally called Dad and waited for him to answer because I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. I wanted freedom!

It seemed like the phone rang forever before my Dad picked up. I braced myself. Then I heard his voice. My heart seemed to skip a beat as I held my breath. I hadn't heard my Dad's voice in years because I had written him off. Speaking as fast as I could, I said, "Hi Randy, this is Karen. I'm calling to ask you to forgive me for being rebellious and disrespectful towards you." At this time, I called my Dad by his first name, Randy.

Asking my Dad to forgive me was the hardest thing I ever had to do. It was also the most liberating. It felt like a ton of bricks that I had been carrying since I was a child slid off my shoulders crashing to the ground. *I was FREE!*

He said, "Hi daughter, you know, I always loved you. I just got stuck on those drugs and alcohol. I want to ask you to forgive me for not being there for you. I love you, daughter."

Oh my gosh! My heart melted with love. I was speechless. My Dad had just said that he loved me! Tears of joy flowed from my eyes. I felt a huge wave of God's healing love penetrate my heart. God had lifted the burden of rejection with its associated negative emotions that I had been carrying for so long. I was free at last! Thank God Almighty!

After we hung up, I began to sing like a little girl "MY DADDY LOVES ME! MY DADDY LOVES ME!" I kept rolling these words over and over in my mind and saying them aloud. I had received a breakthrough because I chose to meet with God in prayer and because I obeyed Him by asking my Dad to forgive me.

As I began to spend time with my earthly father, my trust in him increased. As a result, I experienced a breakthrough in my spiritual relationship with God. I began to trust Him and draw closer because I had released all of the unforgiveness towards my earthly father. As long as I harbored unforgiveness towards my earthly father, it blocked my ability to build a more intimate, personal relationship with God. This unforgiveness also prevented me from building healthy relationships with other authority figures because I was afraid they would hurt or reject me.

A child's relationship with his or her earthly Dad significantly impacts how that child sees and relates to God. I didn't trust my Dad, so with my childlike understanding, I couldn't trust God. I reasoned like a child that if my Dad didn't

love me, God didn't either. Therefore, when I prayed to God, I struggled to receive the grace of His love, acceptance, protection and provision for me. I could pray that others received (intercession), but not for myself.

Even now when I recall this memory, I can still feel God's healing love reminding me that He will never leave me, nor forsake me. Exercising the power of forgiveness revolutionized my walk with God and with others. It opened the door for me to enter into a realm of fellowship and communion with God that is indescribable. I call this realm the glory realm, where all things are possible. And it is available to every child of God that chooses to obey.

You cannot effectively fellowship and commune with God in prayer if you have unforgiveness or sin in your heart because again, sin hinders you from cultivating a deep, rich prayer life with a holy God. Prayer is about a relationship with God. It's not a ritual.

It wasn't until I forgave my Dad (as God commanded) that I experienced a paradigm shift in the way that I saw and related to God. It was a process that didn't happen overnight, so don't despair. Be patient with yourself. The longest journey begins with one small step of obedience.

As a result of forgiving my Dad, prayer is now a joy, not a chore because I know God loves me, and I trust Him with all my heart. (Proverbs 3:5-6) No good thing will He withhold from me. Moreover, in prayer, I encounter Him in all of His glory." God alone is everything you need. He is the object of prayer, not people, positions or things.

Now I eagerly anticipate spending time with God in prayer. I enjoy ministering to Him in thanksgiving, praise and worship. I would never have experienced such freedom had I chosen to harbor unforgiveness towards my earthly Dad. Forgiving my Dad was the best decision I have ever made because it transformed my relationship and prayer life with God, who is my loving, caring, sharing heavenly Father.

I have learned that our parents, in most cases, do the best they can to raise us. However, they are imperfect human beings that make mistakes. If you have unforgiveness in your heart towards your earthly dad or mom, I invite you to forgive them today, right now, so you too can fully experience God's love for you. I have heard it said that unforgiveness is like drinking poison that you intend for the one that hurt you. It is an enemy that hinders your ability to experience God in all of His goodness.

You can never compare our loving, caring, sharing heavenly Father to an earthly dad or mom. He loves you unconditionally because *He is love*. And his love (agape love) is not performance-based. He loves you simply because you are His - fearfully and wonderfully made in His likeness and image. God loves you so much that He promised in His Word that He will never leave you, nor forsake you in Hebrews 13:5-6:

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you. So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me? (KJV)

The Psalmist David also says concerning God's love for you in Psalm 27:10:

Although my father and my mother have forsaken me, yet the Lord will take me up [adopt me as His child]. (AMP)

Not only do these passages in Scripture reveal that your heavenly Father will never abandon you, Hebrews 13:6 also says that the Lord will help you resist the fear of man (fear of rejection).

I was so fearful of my Dad as a little girl that whenever I saw him I ran the other way. This spirit of fear carried over into my early adulthood until I obtained deliverance.

God makes no mistakes when He chooses our parents. However, our parents sometimes make mistakes in their choices because they don't cast their unmet needs and unresolved issues onto God. I can say this because I'm a parent that has also made mistakes.

But God's mercy and grace is always available to turn the situation around for the good of all concerned. No human being is perfect. The only perfect human being that has ever lived was our Lord and Savior Jesus. Parents are human. Therefore, it's inevitable that they will make mistakes, some more costly than others. But God will never fail you. He will heal, deliver and restore you. He is faithful. You can trust Him. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Deut. 7:9, Joel 2:25-27, Heb. 13:8)

The emotional pain and rejection I experienced as a child drew me closer to God. It drew me into His healing, delivering presence. Again, it was after I forgave my Dad that I developed a more intimate relationship with our heavenly Father that continues to grow until this day.

Right now, I want to invite you to experience the same breakthrough that I did so many years ago when I chose to forgive my Dad. I encourage you to choose to forgive your Dad, Mom or anyone who has hurt you.

If you have any unforgiveness towards anyone, forgive him or her right now. Even if they have passed away, you can still forgive them. Just pray "The Prayer of Forgiveness" at the end of this chapter from your heart. Or you can pray your own way. Either way you do it, you will experience healing and freedom in your life that will positively impact your relationship with God causing you to connect with Him more intimately.

Your prayer life will grow leaps and bounds if you choose this day to forgive those who have hurt you. You will unleash your passion to fellowship with God. Most importantly, He will forgive your sins when you ask Him, according to Mark 11:25-26:

And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him and let it drop (leave it, let it go), in order that your Father Who is in heaven may also forgive you your [own] failings and shortcomings and let them drop. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your failings and shortcomings. (AMP)

Jesus tells us in the Bible to bless and not curse our enemies. If Jesus told you to do this, He will give you the grace to do it:

*But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.
Luke 6:27-28*

Also, remember to forgive yourself for the mistakes you have made. Now by faith, if you haven't done so already, pray the "Prayer of Forgiveness" below and experience the burden of unforgiveness as it rolls off your shoulders. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer of Forgiveness:

Dear God,

Thank you for life and health this day. Thank you for bringing me this far by faith and for saving my soul in Jesus' name. Thank you for your protection, mercy and grace. I bless your holy name.

Lord, I've been so hurt in the past by my parents, and/or _____ (name/s) that I trusted. I confess that I have unforgiveness in my heart against them. Right now, in the name of Jesus, I repent of the unforgiveness that I have held in my heart towards _____ (name/s). I choose by faith to forgive my dad, mom and/or _____ (name/s) for hurting me.

I hold nothing against them. I release them right now. They don't owe me a single thing. Father, bless those who have hurt me. And Lord, I forgive myself for the mistakes I have made. And bless me to fulfill my purpose and destiny on earth by the power of Holy Spirit living inside of me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Now write in the space further below the date and time you prayed the "Prayer of Forgiveness" to seal it in your memory that you have forgiven. You can

