

KIRBSTONES

ALONG THE NARROW WAY

curb-stone (kürb'stön') - *noun* - one of the stones or a range of stones forming a curb, as along a sidewalk or roadway. Historically, the curbstones were placed vertically along the edges of the roadbed and the paving material was backfilled against the row of curbstones. The curbstones served ⁽¹⁾to hold the material in the roadbed, ⁽²⁾to prevent the scattering of the material along the edges, and ⁽³⁾to define the road itself from all the adjoining areas.

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT.

¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT." - MATTHEW 7:13-14 - NIV

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As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to grow in every aspect of our faith, and one of the most important ways for us to grow in faith is in the area of prayer. Prayer is not simply a religious duty or an occasional conversation, when life presents us with difficult circumstances.

Prayer is the ongoing, living relationship we have with God, who created us, loves us, and redeems us in Christ. Just as we nurture human relationships through intentional time and presence, so we must develop our prayer lives as a response to God's love.

It is through prayer that we open ourselves to the presence of God. During prayer we listen for his voice, we align our hearts with his purposes, and we experience the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. A healthy, vibrant prayer life does not come by accident. It requires discipline, practice, and commitment from us. Just as an athlete builds muscle through training, so we strengthen our spiritual lives by exercising our prayer muscles.

When we neglect our prayer time, our prayer muscles atrophy, and our faith becomes shallow, weak, and easily shaken. By praying consistently, we are drawn into deeper fellowship with God. We begin to see life from his perspective, and we discover a peace that carries us through challenges in our lives.

Paul wrote to the church in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 urging the believers to *pray without ceasing*. That command does not mean we are on our knees every waking moment; rather, it points to a posture of continual openness and dependence on God, a rhythm of turning to him in every circumstance of our lives.

Consider the words of Jesus in Luke 18:1, where he told his disciples *they should always pray and not give up*. Prayer equips us to persevere, even when life's struggles threaten to overwhelm us. It is in prayer that we draw strength, wisdom, and hope.

While it may not remove our burdens, prayer gives us the assurance that we do not carry our burdens alone.

One of the most beautiful promises of Scripture is found in Philippians 4:6-7: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

When we take everything to God in prayer, anxiety loses its grip, and peace takes its place. Notice that Paul links prayer with thanksgiving—*reminding us that gratitude opens the heart to God's presence in powerful ways.*

Prayer is not just about asking for what we want. It is about praising God for who he is, confessing our sins honestly, interceding for others faithfully, and listening quietly for his direction.

A vibrant prayer life balances all these very different expressions, weaving all these together as we grow closer to God.

So how do we develop a healthy, vibrant prayer life? We can set aside a regular time for prayer each day. We can pray Scripture. We can keep a journal. We can pray with others. We can listen.

When we commit ourselves to these practices, we will find that our prayers become less task and more joy. Our relationships with God deepen, our life's perspective changes, and our capacity to love others grows.

Ultimately, prayer is about trust. It is entrusting ourselves fully to the God who knows us, cares for us, and calls us his children. When we exercise our prayer muscles, we draw nearer to him, and we discover that in his strength, we can prevail over everything.

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Philippians 4:6b—NIV