Like an Old Married Couple

There is a quirky television evangelist that caught my curiosity many years ago that claimed he spent three hours in prayer every morning and that the Holy Spirit empowered him and his ministry through these prayer times. Wonderful and powerful moves of God were the result. Well, I wanted some of that, so early the next morning I drove my pickup to a secluded place next to an orange grove near my house and started reading my Bible and praying for several hours like the evangelist was suggesting. After I ran out of things to pray about, I waited, but for what, I didn’t know. After a week of this routine, all I had gained was sleep deprivation and a rap on the window from the local sheriff questioning me as to why I was there. I received no particular empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Why? I believe it was because my motivation to pray was prompted by a TV evangelist for my own personal gain and not the prompting of the Holy Spirit for His purposes.

Not all was lost, however. The one thing I did learn through that experience was the need to fervently pray and this lines up perfectly with what the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 6:18, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people” (NIV). As the Lord prompts us to pray we get a chance to participate in an intimate opportunity to watch God manifest Himself in our lives and the lives of others. And, as He answers the prayers we are intimately involved with, our faith grows as a result.

Sometimes I feel like my relationship with God is like that of an old married couple. I know He’s across the room sitting in the overstuffed easy-chair. Sometimes the words between us are few, but the few are so meaningful in the context of the relationship. Then He sits up and gently prompts me to pray about something or someone. It might happen while driving to work or sometimes in bed at three o’clock in the morning. He has shown me the desperation in the lives of others and this has moved me to look beyond myself. He has helped me shift my prayers from what I need to be happy, to being happy with what He gives and trusting Him for the rest. But, the best part of prayer is that I get to spend time with Him and He takes the time to include me in the mystery of who He is.

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