

## **STAYING CALM: WEEK FOUR**

**WHERE WE LEARN CALM...the best way to deal with anxiety: we leave it with God. We stop carrying burdens God never meant us to carry. We learn the ESSENCE OF CALM, not by trying to find quick fixes, but only in prayer. We learn to center ourselves in God's love. Many people find prayer frustrating. They pray only when it is convenient, or as a last resort. They just barge in on God, unload their load and give God seconds. Prayer isn't a vital part of their lives. People cope best with anxiety, not by reaching for pills, but by kneeling in prayer. Paul says:**

**Be anxious for nothing but in everything, but prayer/supplication let your requests be made known to God".**

**BE REAL WITH GOD...we aren't telling God what we want to happen or reminding God of anything. God doesn't need instructions. He isn't waiting for us to pray before getting involved. We put ourselves at his disposal. Prayer lifts us above our worries. We start with honesty; pray what is in your heart! Nothing is too small. It is critical to be SPECIFIC. Without focus, our prayers get offered "cafeteria-style": just some of this or that, a loved one's health, our worries/stated problems. It may begin with REQUESTS, but it shouldn't END THERE. Prayer has many sides:**

**We come as we are, make requests, try to be centered, petition God's help. Over time, our prayers deepen. We let our hearts break for the things that break his heart. We start to give God time not just to work for us, but to work on us.**

**PRACTICE...we are often available to everyone but God. We take any call but never have time to pray. He accepts our irregular visits/roaming minds. God wants relationship, not our passing words. Prayer requires practice. True prayer is born in PRAISE, celebrating GOD'S GOODNESS, and not just asking for HIS GOODIES.**

**IN NEED OF CORRECTION...prayer involves correction. We need correction. We need it because we waste opportunities and think too highly of ourselves. We need God as the hungry need food; as a blocked artery needs surgery. In prayer, we clear the air for what has happened in the past. Paul urges, "Cast your anxiety on God" Casting is an intentional act. Casting anxieties on God, we remove them from us. We fret less/trust more. Only in prayer do we learn what CALM MEANS. In the end, no prayer goes unanswered. Answers are revealed in our lives, and not in sudden reversals of fortune. Instead of asking God to free us tough situations, we start asking WHAT HE WANTS US TO GET OUT of them.**