



WOW: Word Of the Week

Reluctance

June 8, 2022

“Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance. It is laying hold of His willingness.” — Martin Luther

We struggle, at times we struggle mightily, in our Christian faith, in our Christian walk, in our prayer life, in our understanding.

We hesitate, we wait, we are afraid to move ahead, in our uncertainty we justify our waiting and inaction. We say we are waiting on God; we are waiting on the Spirit.

Grasp this! Do not miss it! **Prayer is not convincing a reluctant God, but is conversation with One who is eager, generous, willing, longing, and pursuing us.** We must believe, pray into, and live into God’s nature.

We do not pray to convince God. We share our hurts, our hopes, our hearts. We struggle, we weep, but God does not need convincing. He has already been in the middle of whatever you are praying about. He is ahead of us. Prayer is not getting him onboard with us, it is getting us onboard with him.

- Prayer is catching up with God who eagerly, generously, willingly runs ahead of us, anticipates our needs and clears the way.
- Prayer is tuning my heart to live into God’s longing for me, for others, for the world.
- Prayer is hoping to grasp and understand God’s intense, unswerving pursuit of human beings.
- May our prayers never be centered on self, our blessings, our needs, our desires. May our prayers rather be self-abnegating, self-denying. May our prayers seek God, his will, his way.

Three suggestions.

Spend more time contemplating God’s nature, what the Bible says. Be ready to fully believe that God is who He says He is, that Jesus is who He says He is.

Pray into God’s nature, confident that God is God. Do not belittle or quench God’s spiritual presence in our lives through His Spirit. Do quench any idea that God or the Spirit are reluctant, delaying, withholding needed resources or insights.

Live into God’s nature so you can live out God’s nature. Develop the spiritual muscles necessary to be like God and do His will.

I close with a few verses from Romans 8. I seldom cite *The Message*. It is a paraphrase and often inserts new ideas in the search for clarity. I do not share it as Scripture from God; I share it because here is both a clarification and a challenge.

⁵⁻⁸ Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle but never get around to exercising it in real life. Those who trust God’s action in them find that God’s Spirit is in them—living and breathing God! Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing. And God isn’t pleased at being ignored.