



2GetHelp Wellness Center

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INSIGHTS THAT MY CLIENTS HAVE TAUGHT ME

ON PRAYER

M. K. Doc Downing Ph.D., LMFT

My client sat in his chair, telling me how his mother had physically and mentally abused him. As he shared his life, he broke down in heart rending sobs. “She would yell and scream at me. She would hit me with anything that was close. I remember being taken to church by a neighbor and week after week praying, ‘God, please change my mother. Stop her from hitting and yelling at me.’ God never answered my prayer. I finally gave up listening to the people at church who told me I should turn it over to the Lord. Eventually, I stopped going altogether.”

At fifty-eight, he believes that life has no meaning or purpose. He has trouble accepting the concept of God’s love; now, he even has trouble accepting his wife’s love. He feels like a failure at parenting and at many of the jobs he has held, even though he is making good money.

Here is a man that believes that God has abandoned him. He can see no use from what he learned at church. “Is it God’s will that I should have been beaten by my Mother? If not, then why didn’t God answer this child’s prayer?”

Maybe you were praying the wrong prayer, I suggested. I believe that God will not change someone who does not want to change! He will not change you, your mother or anyone else unless the person wants to be changed.

I believe that God is looking for people who want to change. It sounds like your mother did not want to change. God has given us free will; your Mother would rather blame you for her unhappiness, in that way she does not have to change. The end result is that she gets to stay stuck doing what does not work.

May I suggest a prayer that might work better? **“GOD, WHATEVER IT IS THAT I’M SUPPOSED TO LEARN, WOULD I HURRY UP AND LEARN IT SO I CAN STOP HURTING.”**

This prayer focuses on you and what you need to learn. If you are focused on how the other person *should* change; you will not seek out teachers who can show you what you can do differently. There is an old saying, **“When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.”** A victim is someone who blames others and expects others to make him feel loved, and/or to rescue him.

Do not look for someone to make you happy, for they cannot make you happy. Nor, can you make someone happy who does not want to be happy. The only person who can make you happy is yourself and you can not make someone happy who does not want to be happy!

Do not make yourself into a victim by praying for God to rescue or fix you by changing others. If you do, you will certainly be disillusioned. Be honest and look to God to lead you to the areas that need to be changed in yourself. God is looking for you so He can empower you, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”** Phil. 4:31

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