

Daily Devotional, November 13, 2020 Breathing the Breath of God

“The Spirit of God has made me, the breath of the Almighty gives me life. Job 33:4 (NIV)

We are all being asked to change course, then change again, and then change course again with no definite end in sight. A remedy seems to be on the horizon, but not today or tomorrow. Soon—but not yet. And most likely, this new normal we have been living will be here for yet a while longer. A month or two? Longer? How much longer? The old adage, “Change is the only constant” seems to be ever present in our current state of affairs. Why do we fear change so much? I am guessing that the cause of that fear is because we don’t know what the future holds.

In my case, change has often led to some very challenging times. And yet other times, change has led to a brighter reality. While I have genuinely had many good occurrences of change in my life, I find it interesting how my mind dredges up the challenging times or even creates future scenarios with terrible outcomes. If I let my mind whirl out of control, I can easily feel overwhelmed and stressed. Yet, I believe God’s unfailing grace encourages us to step back and determine our observation point. Am I letting my mind run wild with the worst possible “what if” scenarios, and then reacting out of panic? Or am I allowing myself to be centered and grounded, and able to respond with a calm mind and gentle spirit?

Our breathing happens involuntarily every moment of every day and every night. In fact, as I am writing this, I feel certain you are breathing right now. Some years ago, I took my first meditation class. I had a few friends that had begun meditation as a form of deep relaxation, and it seemed to make a difference for them, so I decided to give it a try. What I didn’t realize at the time was that meditation is a breathing practice. I had sought a new way of relaxation and instead, here we were talking about breathing! Honestly, I thought this was now going to be a complete waste of my time. Instead, I learned that the art of meditation means concentrated breathing. Over the years, I’ve come to know we can use our breath as a tool to calm our nerves, relieve our stress, manage our pain and maybe even bring more happiness into my life. And the best part is, our breath is free and available to us any moment of any day.

Can you breathe slowly and deeply just one time? Now, try that again; inhale deeply and as you exhale slowly, let your shoulders relax and slump down like weights at your side. In that moment, you offered your mind a break from the constant barrage of harsh news and became aware of your breath. This is commonly known as mindfulness. When we take these moments of replenishment, we are stronger and more resilient for whatever lies ahead. Now take it a step farther and offer a deep thoughtful prayer. Not a prayer of demands and requests, but words of thanks and blessings and thoughts of compassion for others. This is known as meditative prayer. As we get deeper into the practice, we become less concerned about our own needs and more sympathetic towards the needs of others. Looking out for the needs of others can often bring us peace of mind and a deeper understanding of how to meet those needs..

Our fear doesn’t play fair, but God does. Lean on Him in prayer. Keep breathing—slowly and deeply. You will remind your heart that this too shall pass, and you will be in a better place to face the unknown future.

Prayer: “Speak Lord, for your servant hears...” (Insert your own reflection.)