Prayers for a Woman's Soul

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Acknowledgments

“For a dream comes with much business and painful effort.”
—Ecclesiastes 5:3 AMP

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And to the Lord, who unearths buried dreams, brushes them off, and hands them back to us. Your power truly works best in weakness.
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Introduction

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

—Romans 12:12

I settled into seat 10-A, flipped open a magazine, and unwrapped a piece of chocolate. My annual October flight from Florida to Michigan started out like any other. In a few hours I would arrive at my sister’s house in a charming small town and our indulgent girlfriend weekend would begin. Facials, mani-pedis, high tea, and afternoon naps beckoned.

This time, however, as the flight attendant began speaking, I felt the God-nudge. You know, the one that compels you to stop what you’re doing and pay attention. I looked up from the article I’d been skimming and listened intently to the woman in the navy blazer.

“In the event of the loss of cabin pressure, oxygen masks will descend.” The petite brunette stood at the front of our cabin, demonstrating how to attach a small, yellow, Tupperware-type bowl over her nose and mouth with an elastic band. “Place the mask on yourself first, and then help those around you.”
I shook my head. *Hmmmm. I would have automatically slapped those masks on my kids first.*

Suddenly, God spoke. *You need to begin to pray for yourself. Regularly.*

I shook my head. *Really?*

As the plane ascended over Tampa, I thought about all of the people and situations for which I regularly prayed: my husband, children, and grandchildren, daughter-in-law, friends, our neighborhood situations, church issues, the military, world events…the list went on. But when I thought about it, I realized there was no time set apart for me to just pray for *me.* It actually never occurred to me to pray for myself on a regular basis. I was in the habit of placing the oxygen mask on those around me first, and in so doing, neglecting my own lifeline.

That was about to change.

And God knew it was a change I desperately needed. My marriage was sinking like a brick in the Gulf of Mexico. I struggled to balance women’s ministry obligations and homeschooling, but most days I felt like I was about thirty seconds away from total collapse.

As women we are nurturers and caretakers. We’re wives, mothers, friends, sisters, and daughters who work at home or hurry out to get to the office. We
homeschool or we help with homework. Our lives are busy, full. We give out until there is nothing left.

We’re front-burner prayer women, praying for whatever is boiling over at that moment (and there’s always something boiling over!). We can’t afford not to cover ourselves with prayer on a regular basis. Like an oxygen mask in an airplane cabin that’s lost its pressure, praying for ourselves fortifies and equips us so we can soar.

When the Holy Spirit spoke to me that day on the airplane, it was as if I’d been handed vanilla-scented oxygen and a free trip to a luxury spa, all at once. I began to understand that regularly praying for myself would somehow begin to change me…and maybe even my circumstances.

Initially the only uninterrupted time I could find to pray for myself was in the shower, so that’s where I started. That was many years ago, and it’s still how I begin my day: immersed in prayer and effectively equipped by God.

Praying for myself has enabled me to persevere when I wanted to quit, to forgive when I wanted to hold a grudge, to hope when reality screamed “Impossible!” and to remain close to God when I ached so badly I wanted to run and never look back. In essence, praying for myself not only helped me, it transformed me.
This is not a suggestion to neglect praying for others, or to pray exclusively (and selfishly) for ourselves only. It’s the recognition that if Jesus needed to pray for Himself, then so should we. It’s the humble acknowledgement that we cannot give away what we do not have; that we need a divine download of peace, joy, forgiveness, wisdom, and strength to get through our day. Praying for ourselves is not selfish—it’s absolutely necessary. Scripture says we have not because we ask not (James 4:2). So let’s ask God to refresh and infuse us with life-giving strength through prayer for ourselves every day.

Step out in expectation; stir up your faith and ask God to meet you as you make time to regularly pray for yourself. Take time to breathe in—and truly take to heart—the personalized Scriptures. Though not rewriting Scripture, these verses appear in a fresh, new light, and will help you see God’s word in a surprisingly intimate way—straight from God’s heart to yours. You may just find that meditating on Scriptures is much more meaningful when they’re personalized. So relax, grab a hot beverage, get comfy, and prepare to soak…in extravagant prayer.
My Mind

Confession: For years I walked around with a destructive, negative, and critical mindset without recognizing it. Raised in a tumultuous home that simmered with anger, fear, and resentment, I picked up these deadly thought processes that grew like kudzu over my mind and threatened to choke out every positive thought.

Years later, enduring a miserable marriage, I regularly cried myself to sleep, still unaware that negative mindsets poisoned my thoughts. I’d wake up in the morning and rehash my husband’s harsh words of the night before, tell myself that things were never going to change, and give in to every negative, critical thought that happened to float by the rest of the day. I was miserable.

It wasn’t until a time of prayer at a weekend women’s retreat that I suddenly became aware of my critical mindset. Even so, over the following years it remained a real effort not to give in to the negative thoughts I had regularly entertained most of my life. It took time and concerted effort, but as I prayed and spent time
reading my Bible, wrong mindsets were replaced with healthy, godly thoughts.

You may not fight a negative or critical attitude like I did. Maybe worry, fear, or insecurity bombard your mind regularly. That’s the enemy’s plan: to consistently assault our minds until we surrender.

We must fight him every step of the way. As busy women, we don’t have one brain cell to spare. And as godly women, we cannot yield any mind-turf to the enemy. The first goal when praying for our minds is the ability to recognize when we’re under attack. God’s word tell us, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

The number-one way to resist the enemy is through prayer. Though the attacks against our mind can be subtle, God grants discernment when we ask Him. He will reveal to us what we are not always capable of discerning apart from the Holy Spirit: erroneous, potentially destructive thoughts and mindsets. Whether the intrusions in our minds are vestiges from the distant past or yesterday’s hurts and disappointments, we can face every day with clear minds and godly mindsets.
Daily Prayer

Father,

Thank You for the blood of Jesus, which cleanses my mind. Give me a sharp, clear mind and enable me to grasp and understand the truth of Your word, which has power to transform my mind. Where I unknowingly possess wrong mindsets, please change them and give me a healthy, accurate mind. Where the enemy has made inroads in my mind, I ask You to make me aware and help me to cooperate with the workings of Your Holy Spirit. Repave those paths and bring freedom to every area of my mind.

Grant me discernment to recognize when my mind is being attacked by the enemy. Enable me to stand against the schemes of the enemy and the daily bombardments that come against my mind. Thank You for freedom from every wrong mindset, including: (List thoughts and mindsets from which you desire freedom).

Equip my mind with Your helmet of salvation. Protect my mind from every evil influence. I submit my mind to You and thank You for granting me ever-increasing
discernment, wisdom, and an understanding mind. Thank You that I have the mind of Christ, and I hold the thoughts, feelings and purposes of His heart. Renew my mind and grant me a fresh mental and spiritual attitude. In Jesus’s wonderful name, amen.

God’s Word for Me

I will not conform to the pattern of this world, but will be transformed by the renewing of my mind (Romans 12:2).

For God has not given me a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given me a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and of well-balanced mind and of discipline and self-control (2 Timothy 1:7 AMP).

I have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16).

The LORD listens to my cry and will give me the discerning mind he promised (Psalm 119:169 NLT).
My heart is at peace, and it gives life to my body (Proverbs 14:30).

I have a wise mind and wise speech, My words are wise and persuasive (Proverbs 16:23 AMP).

The Holy Spirit controls my mind, which leads to life and peace (Romans 8:6 NLT).