



The Flame

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from GCCN Prayer Ministries

The Relation Sensation

Learning a second language can be a real adventure. My first wife served with me in Mexico, and while not particularly gifted in language acquisition, she never quit trying, even when she made mistakes.

She once was with some Christian women in Nuevo Laredo who were talking about their husbands' hobbies. She wanted to tell them that I enjoyed fishing, so with her yet limited vocabulary, she told them that I was "un buen pecador." What she meant to say was "pescador" or fisherman, but what she actually told them was that I was a good sinner!"

She became fluent from the sheer force of her will, but nobody learns a language unless they deliberately and consistently keep learning.

Learning to pray requires the same commitment. You nor I will ever become proficient in prayer if we pray only when we feel like it. In my writing ministry, I cannot write only when I feel "inspired." Like writing, prayer requires discipline and consistency.

In my book *Connected! Unlocking the DNA of Authentic Prayer*, prayer is defined as the expression and evidence of our relationship with God.

My relationship with God is much like my relationship with my wife. My love for her is a choice. I don't always feel amorous. Neither of us live in a constant state of newly wedded blissful euphoria. We love each other deliberately, even when we don't have bubbly motivations.

Expressing our love to each other is seldom generated by how we feel, but how we feel quite often is generated by expressing our love to each other. I hug her on purpose, but I hold the hug longer than expected because my choice to show my love with a hug allows me to feel the joy of the moment.

I choose to set aside moments in my day when I focus on God, not because I have been prompted by how I feel, but because He is worthy of my honor. Those deliberate moments more often than not give rise to a fresh infusion of what I call the *relation sensation*.

I do not choose to spend time in His presence because I am filled with wonder and warmth. I am filled with wonder and warmth because I choose to spend time in His presence.

Taking Your Next Step

Pray today. Pray tomorrow. And pray especially when you are not particularly inspired to pray. Prayer is a choice to spend time, worshipful time in God's presence.

You will discover that His embrace of grace is the stuff that sustains you. It may not always make you tingle with some sort of noticeable emotional response, nor make you feel lifted into the heavenlies with some lofty spiritual awareness. But choosing to acknowledge His Otherness and submit to His Lordship with regularity begins to retrain our hearts and minds.