

SOUL TRAINING

Prayer

Based on James Bryan Smith's "The Good and Beautiful Life"

Paul makes a direct connection between prayer and worry: *Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 4:6-7) Once we have done all we can do in a given situation, we simply turn the matter over to God and thus prevent worry from taking over. For example, C. S. Lewis once said that a person who has weeds in his or her garden should not pray about the weeds but pull them up. But when we face situations we cannot change by direct effort, such as a loved one who is ill or a financial problem that extends beyond our resources, then we turn the matter over to God. Here are some practical guidelines to help you turn your cares into prayers this week: Each morning set aside ten to fifteen minutes. Think about all of the things you might be anxious about. Write them down in your journal or a notebook. Ask what you can do to remedy each of these situations. Make a note to yourself to do the things you can do. Turn everything else over to God. Write your request to God, and be specific. Be very specific in your prayers. Why? Most of our prayers are so vague that we would not even know if God had answered them. God can handle your specificity. If God has a better way of answering your prayers or dealing with your problems, you can be sure he will. Let him know what you need and desire. Cast your cares on God. Then wait and see what God does.