

STARTING RIGHT

*I pray that out of his glorious riches
he may strengthen you with power
through his Spirit in your inner being
Ephesians 3:16*

REFLECTION

As we struggle to understand how to live with COVID-19 and adjust our lifestyles to restrictions that seem to be always changing, can we describe how we feel? A journalist thought that we have already "lost some practice in verbalizing mental and emotional clarity...a little unsettled with our thoughts clouded in a psychological fog". Meanwhile, the organizational psychologist Adam Grant described our feelings as: "less joy, more aimlessness...life feels a little hollow..." In a word: "languishing".

How shall we pray while in this prevailing state of mind and spirit? Do we continue with the constant refrain of asking God for protection from the fallout of the pandemic, allay our anxieties from infection or remove the virus altogether? I suggest that we look to the Apostle Paul for the right starting point. In his letter to the Christian community at Ephesus, he prays that God will strengthen their "inner being".

The "inner being" is our emotional and spiritual part that dwells in our physical bodies. It is "the real me": carrying our motivations, life vision, goals, passion and fears, the place where we can be truly honest with ourselves regardless of what others and the world are trying to impress on us. This will be the place where God starts His work to refresh, renew and rejuvenate. What do we pray for? Power through God's Spirit: that divine inner fortitude and strengthening from His glorious riches to forge ahead in life, that working ability to deal effectively with our circumstances, keeping fears and anxieties in check. And how would this power be channeled into our "inner being" as we pray? As regular and nutritious food is to our physical bodies, it will be through our regular and nutritious intake of God's Word. Not just reading, but meditating, studying and engaging.

PRAYER

Almighty God, my Heavenly Father, I thank You for designing me with an "inner being", where I can be real and honest with myself. I am so fearful. I am so anxious of the days ahead. I am not happy of who I am and what I don't have. I know that I am fearfully and wonderfully made, but help me to accept what that means for me. And by Your Spirit, fill me with strength to work with my circumstances

*and forge ahead on the path that You have set out for me.
In Jesus' Name, I pray, AMEN.*

SUPPLICATION

- Have you been in touch with your "inner being"? It's worth the effort to be still, tune in and pay attention to your feelings, your aspirations and your frustrations. As a start, set aside some time each day to be by yourself. Write down what you honestly feel you are in need of and why. You may want to repeat this several times to be sure before you pray for courage to present them to God and ask Him to address them.
- Is there someone you know (perhaps in the small group or in your social bubble) who is "languishing"? Would you go beyond the occasional "hello" and "see you" and offer to spend time to pray, affirm and encourage? The journeying may first be over occasional text messages. But as linkages and familiarities build up, be ready to go into regular conversations and even expand your social bubble to include this person.
- In spite of the pandemic and its restrictions to gather on site, the PRAYER MINISTRY at BRMC continues to organize large group gatherings to pray: ASK (1st Mondays, even number calendar months) and ABLAZE (1st Mondays, odd number calendar months). There is also the dissemination of prayer requests and testimonies and prayer chat groups on various platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram. Would you consider joining this Ministry and their activities and be part of a community who prays for others?
- As we move into ways to live with the pandemic, let's take time to pray for those who are yet to be fully vaccinated or who have chosen not to be vaccinated. Now finding themselves and their routine movements severely curtailed, some may be languishing in their feelings of isolation and aimlessness. Although we may not agree with their reasons for not choosing to be vaccinated, let us still try to befriend them and show them God's love in whatever ways still available.

"The inner being needs to be strengthened...so that we can boldly and confidently do what is right and acceptable in the sight of God and refuse to do evil which the world presents us."

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If you need any prayer or pastoral care support, kindly

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