

“What’s for Dinner?”

How to handle distractions in prayer

Distractions are completely normal.

It happens to all of us as we pray: we are spending time in prayer, enjoying a nice moment with the Lord, when all of a sudden we think, “I wonder what’s for dinner tonight?” These kind of distractions during prayer are normal, even for people who have a deep prayer life. It’s part of being human. So how do we deal with these distractions when they happen?

Ask yourself, “Is this a visit from God?”

As we discussed in previous messages, God will often gently tug at your heart and mind while you pray. For example, he could bring to mind an event from the past so that you can talk to him about it. Or he could bring a coworker to mind so that you can pray for her or be inspired to reach out to her. Rather than being distractions, these sorts of moments could be a “visit” from Jesus, who is knocking on the door of your heart and waiting for you to invite him in.

If it’s a visit from God, enjoy it.

Sometimes what seems like a distraction at first is actually a visit from the Lord. If you think that this might be the case, then don’t rush on to the next part of your prayer. Instead, take some time to further explore how Jesus might be touching your heart. Enjoy being with him. When it seems that the visit has run its course, you can thank Jesus and continue your prayer time.

If it’s a distraction, gently turn back.

Many times we will experience a thought that is clearly an unhelpful distraction, like wondering about dinner. When this happens, don’t get alarmed or beat yourself up. Just try to gently turn your mind back to whatever you were praying about. It is similar to a mother in conversation with another adult. When her children rush up, trying to interrupt, she doesn’t make a big scene. She just gently tells them to run along and play, continuing her conversation with minimal disruption.

Keep being faithful in prayer!

When one first begins to build a daily prayer life, it is easy to get discouraged by distractions. You might assume that you’re not cut out for praying, but this isn’t the case! What pleases God is not that your prayer is perfect, but that you are seeking to draw closer to him. As you keep being faithful to your daily prayer time, distractions will gradually lessen and become easier to handle. Keep at it, God is worth it!