

# Dealing with Prayer Struggles

www.catholicprouts.com

*Prayer Struggles*

*Prayer Struggles*

## Common Struggles with Prayer:

- Too Busy
- Too Boring
- Too Distracted
- Too Much Shame (the shadow of sin)
- Suffering
- Progress is too slow

www.catholicprouts.com



*Prayer Struggles*

## Too Busy

- Our culture has waged war on the interior life by keeping us so busy and entertained and distracted that we lose sight of all the deeper things.
- We are attentive to so many things that we ultimately aren't attentive to what really matters.
- **Prayer is useless, wasted time.**
  - We should enter prayer without the hope of getting anything out of it.

www.catholicprouts.com

*Prayer Struggles*

## Too Busy

- We don't want to miss anything, or waste any of our precious time.
  - The voice that tells us we need to do just one more thing first...is the voice of the enemy--and often we let him win.

www.catholicprouts.com

*Prayer Struggles*

## Too Busy

- How can we pray when we are SO BUSY?
  - Simple Prayers--the "Jesus Prayer"
  - Develop an awareness of "solitude."
    - The world does not own me.
  - Create a prayer ritual.
  - Prayer is simply lifting your mind to God. It can take just 2 minutes.

www.catholicprouts.com



## Too Busy

- How can we pray when we are SO BUSY?
  - Come to God as you are, where you are, in your ugliness and sin and disorder. Don't wait for perfection to come to God.
  - Make your EVERY ACTION, EVERY THOUGHT a prayer.
    - Unceasing Prayer from St. Francis de Sales
      - Ask God to be attentive to you (SACRAMENT)
      - Offer Him the moment you are in (SACRIFICE)
      - Accept whatever comes out of the moment (SURRENDER)

[www.catholicprayers.com](http://www.catholicprayers.com)



## Too Busy

- We need to make room for **silence**.
- "God's first language is silence." Pope Benedict.
  - God reveals Himself in silence.
  - God also reveals us to ourselves in silence, which is why we don't like silence.
  - Silence allows us to think our own thoughts and feel our own feelings--something we rarely do due to distraction and noise.
  - Be mindful of falling into "business" even in prayer.
    - Don't tell God the things you think He wants to hear. Don't just blow your way through recited prayers.
    - Enter into silence with God.

[www.catholicprayers.com](http://www.catholicprayers.com)



## Prayer is Boring

- Based on a false notion that prayer should be exciting or emotionally charged
- Prayer is like eating. It is meant to be part of our day. Something we need.
- Prayer is not entertainment.
  - We are so used to being constantly entertained that it might take time and discipline to truly settle into prayer.

[www.catholicprayers.com](http://www.catholicprayers.com)



## Distraction

- We all get distracted. It is normal.
- Don't beat yourself up, just refocus, again and again.
  - Mother Teresa said "God does not demand that we be successful; God demands that we be faithful."

[www.catholicprayers.com](http://www.catholicprayers.com)





### Too Much Shame (distance created by sin)

- There is something in us that fears prayer as a maggot fears light.
  - We must do violence to this voice that tells us to fear prayer, for it is not ourselves. It is the enemy.
- Sin is a separation from God and it can keep us from prayer.



### Too Much Shame (distance created by sin)

- There are 2 parts to forgiveness: God's giving it and our receiving it.
  - Because God offers infinite goodness, He will always give forgiveness, but will we be open to receiving it?
  - Receiving forgiveness is dependent on:
    - Repentance--I want to be forgiven.
    - Confession--I know I need forgiveness, and I am asking for it.
    - Faith--I am open to accepting forgiveness that I know flows generously from God.



### The Distance of Sin

- Sins that have been forgiven are forgotten by God.
- The devil wants to remind us of our sins and he wants them to remain between us and God.
- To overcome the shame of sin, we need to approach God like a child: Trust Recklessly in His Goodness.
- To be perfect, in the Hebrew understanding, is to WALK WITH GOD. It does not mean to never fail. Our lives are "perfect" when we let God touch every part of our lives, even the sinful parts.



### Suffering

- Prayer brings us closer to God. Suffering unites us with Christ on the Cross.
- Suffering comes from sin, our own sins or original sin, not from God. But, God can use suffering for His greater glory, just as you used Christ's suffering on the Cross.
- Suffering trains us to rely on faith, not feelings.
- Christ showed His love through suffering.
- When we suffer, we are often given an opportunity to show our love for God and others.
- God is often nearer to us when we suffer.



### The Slow Progress of Prayer

- Brother Lawrence: "She seems to me full of good will, but she would go faster than grace. One does not become holy all at once."
- There is RARELY instant gratification with prayer. Prayer is not a drug or magic. Problems and pain often remain...and God is not our dog waiting to do whatever we ask.
- We will fail in prayer. Our prayer will be imperfect. Be patient with yourself and get back up.
- Don't become discouraged by your faults.
- Turn your eyes away from yourself and toward God.



### Journaling Questions

Of all the struggles listed in this video, which is my biggest struggle?

What tools do I know have to address this struggle?