ESSAY · OCTOBER 12, 2017

The day I learned my son had cancer

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In each instance when Jesus prayed alone, he faced a different kind of need that would require the wisdom and strength of his Father. I'm convinced that explains why Jesus not only prayed alone, but uttered short prayers throughout the day. He lived with an ongoing awareness of his need for the Father's wisdom and strength.

A Fire-Breathing Dragon

I have to confess I seldom feel such a need unless I'm faced with a serious problem. In times of crisis, I pray more because I know the challenge hovers over me like a fire-breathing dragon. Because I know I need God's help, I cry out to him. Just let me, or a family member or friend, encounter a financial setback, a relational breakdown, physical pain, or a life-threatening diagnosis, and I'm compelled to pray.

"Dad, I've Got Bad News"

When my oldest son, Ryan, called and said, "Dad, I've got bad news," I inhaled deeply. "What's wrong?" "I've got testicular cancer." "You're sure?" "I'm sure," he said.

Practical Atheism

When I got off the phone, I felt a need to talk with God. Too often, it takes a crisis to make us realize life is as fragile as a spider's web. Such a realization drives us to our knees because we know we desperately need God. The truth is, we need his help all the time, just as we need air and water. But somehow we live most days as if we don't, carrying on in a state of practical atheism.

By Myself I Can Do Nothing

Amazingly, Jesus lived every moment in complete dependence on the Father. He always felt a need for his Father's wisdom. Those feelings were shaped by his awareness of his human need for divine guidance and strength. That's why Jesus said, "By myself I can do nothing." The more we embrace the reality that without God we are spiritually empty, the more we'll seek to talk to him in solitude and silence so he can fill us with his wisdom and strength.

And God answered my desperate prayers. Ryan is cancer-free and has fathered two children. I hope I can be a man who prayers with desperation, not because of a crisis, but because I know I desperately need God.