

## PRAYER

MY LORD, TEACH ME HOW TO PRAY.  
LET ME LEARN HOW TO STEAL AWAY DEEP WITHIN MYSELF  
AND SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD.  
SILENCE MY PLEAS AND REPLACE MY CRIES FOR RELIEF  
WITH THE STEADY REASSURANCE OF YOUR LOVING PROTECTION.  
WALK WITH ME THROUGH THE VALLEY OF MY SHADOWS.  
AMEN.

*reassuring*

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## 2. THE SECOND STEP: HOPE

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After you begin to pray, you must not lose hope. Focus all your thoughts on the Almighty, and have hope.

The scriptures tell us:

**Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not upon your own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. PROVERBS 3:5-6**

In 1980, as I got on that plane to leave California I prayed, "God, please do not let my heart become hardened. Please do not let me become bitter. For I know that you are a good God, and only goodness can come from You. I may not know what tomorrow may bring, but this I know, that with You at my side, we will claim the victory."

On that plane, I held unto the gold-plated chain on which hung a small glass bulb containing a mustard seed that my mother gave me when I first began my graduate studies. Over the next months and years, there were days and nights that I rubbed on that glass bulb, crying out in the darkness of the night for the faith of a mustard seed. But I never lost hope.

I *NEVER* lost hope. I knew the importance of looking beyond my present circumstances and having hope. I knew to look beyond my own understanding. I did not dwell in the appearance of my today. I focused on the promise of my tomorrow.

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