

The File-Card Mentality

by A.W. Tozer

The file-card mentality turns prayer into a duty, leading to a loss of spontaneity and effectiveness, and we must seek freedom in prayer to avoid this trap.

Scripture: Psalm 42:1

Topics: "Relationship with God", "Prayer"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the danger of the 'file-card mentality' in prayer, where religious practices become rigid and formulaic, stripping away the spontaneity and freedom that should characterize a relationship with God. He warns that this mentality leads to a focus on performance rather than genuine connection, causing prayers to feel like a duty rather than a delight. Tozer calls for believers to seek a vibrant, living relationship with God, where communication flows freely and joyfully, rather than being constrained by schedules and lists. He prays for a return to the freedom of prayer that reflects a true love relationship with the Father.

Transcript

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? --Psalm 42:1-2

When religion loses its sovereign character and becomes mere form this spontaneity is lost also, and in its place come precedent, propriety, system--and the file-card mentality....

The slave to the file card soon finds that his prayers lose their freedom and become less spontaneous, less effective. He finds himself concerned over matters that should give him no concern whatever--how much time he spent in prayer yesterday, whether he did or did not cover his prayer list for the day, whether he gets up as early as he used to do or stays up in prayer as late at night. Inevitably the calendar crowds out the Spirit and the face of the clock hides the face of God. Prayer ceases to be the free breath of a ransomed soul and becomes a duty to be fulfilled. And even if under such circumstances he succeeds in making his prayer amount to something, still he is suffering tragic losses and binding upon his soul a yoke from which Christ died to set him free. Of God and Men, pp. 79,81

"Oh, Father, I pray that prayer might never become for me 'a duty to be fulfilled.' In a real love relationship communication is a delight, never a duty. Fill me with that freedom in my times with You. Amen."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/the-file-card-mentality/>

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