

Honest to God Prayers

DAVID BROOKS

HOW TO KNOW A PERSON

The Art of Seeing Others Deeply
and Being Deeply Seen



Howard Schatz

On social media you can have the illusion of social contact without having to perform the gestures that actually build trust, care, and affection. On social media, stimulation replaces intimacy. There is judgment everywhere and understanding nowhere.

- David Brooks

The real act of, say, building a friendship or creating a community involves performing a series of small, concrete social actions well: disagreeing without poisoning the relationship; revealing vulnerability at the appropriate pace; being a good listener; knowing how to end a conversation gracefully; knowing how to ask for and offer forgiveness; knowing how to let someone down without breaking their heart;

knowing how to sit with someone who is suffering; knowing how to host a gathering where everyone feels embraced; knowing how to see things from another's point of view. These are some of the most important skills a human being can possess, and yet we don't teach them in school.

- David Brooks

The Psalms of Lament

My heart is in anguish within me;
the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
Fear and trembling come upon me, and
horror overwhelms me. And I say, “Oh, that I
had wings like a dove! I would fly away and
be at rest;

Psalms 55:4–6, ESV

Too long have I had my dwelling
among those who hate peace.

I am for peace,
but when I speak, they are for war!

Psalms 120:6-7, ESV

¹⁴ O Lord, why do you cast my soul away?
Why do you hide your face from me?

¹⁵ Afflicted and close to death from my
youth up,
I suffer your terrors; I am helpless.

¹⁶ Your wrath has swept over me;
your dreadful assaults destroy me.

Psalm 88:14–16, ESV

¹⁷ They surround me like a flood all day long;
they close in on me together.

¹⁸ You have caused my beloved and my
friend to shun me; my companions have
become darkness.

Psalm 88:17–18, ESV

Blessed shall he be who takes your little
ones and dashes them against the rock!

Psalms 137:9, ESV

Structure of Habakkuk

Habakkuk's First Complaint

God's First Response

Habakkuk's Second Complaint

God's Second Response

Habakkuk's Prayer of Trust in God's Plans

O Lord, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!”
and you will not save? ³ Why do you make me see
iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction
and violence are before me; strife and contention arise.

⁴ So the law is paralyzed,
and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround
the righteous;
so justice goes forth perverted.

Habakkuk 1:2-4, ESV

You who are of purer eyes than to see evil
and cannot look at wrong,
why do you idly look at traitors
and remain silent when the wicked swallows
up the man more righteous than he?

Habakkuk 1:13, ESV

I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

Habakkuk 2:1, ESV

But the point in Habakkuk 2:1 is that while the prophet knew that the invasion was inevitable, he had not accepted its theological coherency or logic. Hence, on the ramparts, Habakkuk was ready for a debate with God – like a lawyer waiting to give his rejoinder. At this point, we see a Job-like Habakkuk.

- Peter C.W. Ho

...but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Habakkuk 2:4b, ESV

¹⁷ Though the fig tree should not blossom,
nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the
olive fail and the fields yield no food, the
flock be cut off from the fold and there be no
herd in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the
Lord; I will take joy in the God of my
salvation.

Habakkuk 3:17–18, ESV

¹⁹ God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments.

Habakkuk 3:19, ESV

He is honest before the Lord

A Trust in God No Matter What

1. Pray with Boldness, Honesty,
Audacity

“Honesty before God is not simply avoiding lies. It is bringing our full self to God. Rather than trying to fix things up before turning to God, genuine prayer is turning to God in the midst of the mess that is the reality of our inner world... There is no cure for that which most deeply ails us unless we come to God with nothing held back.”

- Dr. David Benner (*Opening to God*)

1. Pray with Boldness, Honesty,
Audacity

2. Commit to Living Faithfully for
God, No Matter What

Pray the Psalms

1. Share about a time when you've been honest to God.

2. How do we be both audaciously honest with God, and trust God with whatever comes our way?

3. Share with one another what you need prayer for (write it down and commit to praying for each person who shares)