

BREATH PRAYER | *Does Breathing Happen To You?*

Hey everybody. I want you to do nothing but notice your breathing for the next few seconds.

Now I'm going to ask you a weird question... do you think breathing is something that you **do**, or something that happens to you? Breathe again, and just pay attention with that question in mind.

Our first inclination might be to think breathing is something we do, I take a breath in, I push a breath out. But experientially, it doesn't feel quite so cut and dried. For instance, what happens if you try to stop breathing? Try that – without taking a breath in, just stop.

I can't actually stop it for very long! Your body does 'have a mind of its own' here so to speak. Of course this isn't always true, but for the most part it does feel like breathing is as much something that happens **to** me, as something that **I do**. It's a Both/And situation; there is a symbiotic process going on.

So, a second question... is life something that happens **to** you? Or something that you actively **do**? Your daily experience of how work or school, family, health, how relationships go... your spiritual vitality and growth... are these things that happen to you? Or things that you do?

Sometimes a lot of our existence *is* out of our control. Life keeps flinging stuff at us, and we're left just trying to react as best we can. That's hard. But other times it's we who kind of actively bow out of control... slipping into a contentment to simply be passengers in our own lives, like we're in some jumbo jet that's just going wherever it's gonna go, without our putting much intention in at all. Either way, the truth is that in the midst of whatever life throws at us, we do still have a lot of room to choose what kind of person we want to become in the middle of that, what kind of character we're building inside.

In Philippians the Apostle Paul tells us: ***“What I’m getting at, friends, is that you should simply keep on doing what you’ve done from the beginning. When I was living among you, you lived in responsive obedience. Now that I’m separated from you, keep it up. Better yet, redouble your efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is God’s energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give the most pleasure.”*** (Philippians 2:12-13)

Paul tells us that our spiritual life works in that same symbiotic way; it's both work we do, and work that God, in God's Ownself, does in us. It's another one of the wild mysteries of life in Christ: that Christ is the breath in us, and we must breathe.

Our own natural breathing can help remind us of this, helping us lean into the process of transformation. So for the next minute or so, I'm going to invite you into a breath prayer with me. Simple prayer is the best prayer. So with each breath in, I want you to quietly say (or think) the phrase: You living in me. And then with each breath out, the phrase: Me living through you.

So, in: You living in me.

And out: Me living through you.

Keep going on your own.

Pray: God would you continue to bring us more and more and more to life with every breath. May we cooperate with Love, joining our energies with yours. So that no matter what life flings at us, we know deep in our bones the experience of you living in us and us living through you. Would you be the source of all we do and are. In Jesus we pray. Amen.