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YOUR GRADUATION PYRAMID ?

Are YOU graduating this month? Maybe not from high school or college or confirmation class, but from your current "life level" of learning. Someone, maybe it was Red Green, once said, "*Education is what you get when you read the fine print. Experience is what you get when you don't.*"

Our culture makes a big deal out of graduating, to celebrate hard work and accomplishment, and looking ahead to bright possibilities for your future. But then what? Maybe you should think about "graduating" as more of an **on-going process** - reaching a series of goals rather than a one-time high-five celebration. Because you certainly don't stop learning after any graduation. In many ways, it's only just begun. Because life seems like a series of tests. Setting a goal. Working hard to reach it. Perhaps failing a few times along the way - unless you adopt the Red Green approach of "*just setting the bar a little lower.*"

Maybe you're "graduating" from some life lessons this month? The test of accomplishment - will pride cause you to stumble? The test of failure - will you give up before you work harder and dig deeper to reach that goal? The test of adjustment - realizing your goal is unrealistic, because you simply can't control enough variables to make it happen. The test of illness - making you rest before going on. The list goes on - and you know, and God knows, what you're going through right now.

The poll "www.TheStateOfTheology.com" says 20% of Americans believe "God is unconcerned with my daily decisions" while 9% are unsure and 23% disagree somewhat. But, Hebrews 4:12 says "***the Word of God is living and active, discerning even the thoughts and intents of the heart.***" God sees all and knows all - and every person will one day answer to Him. Yet, our Savior knows our weakness. Hebrews 4:16 says "***Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in every time of need.***"

Prayer is one of the best tools for coping with this graduating process - even when it seems like two steps forward and one back. *How would you pray?* Here's a good acrostic for prayer: P for praise, R for repent, A for ask, Y for yield. Let's add some words. Because a good prayer isn't just "*Dear God, I pray for such-and-such, Amen!*" It needs to be specific. So here's a sample prayer for graduates of every age, as we continue our journey of faith to accomplish God's divine design for our lives.

P = PRAISE: Heavenly Father, we thank You for being our Creator, making us in Your own image, with unique abilities and divinely designed purpose for our lives. Thank You for being our Redeemer, through the life and death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You that all who believe in Him are set free from the penalty of sin by His blood, and have Your indwelling Holy Spirit for power against sin in this life, and have Your promise of living eternally with you in Heaven. Thank You for the goals that have been reached in our lives - by Your grace and strength, and for Your purpose.

R = REPENT: We acknowledge the sin in our lives, especially our independence and rebellion against Your truth and divine design for us. We repent, turning away from those sins, and turning to Your truth.

A = ASK: We ask that we be obedient to You, as You have revealed Yourself and Your truth in the Bible, the holy Word of God. Thank you for Your promise to lead Your people. May we hear your Word and follow You, and may You glorify Yourself through us - as we trust and obey You, stepping out in faith.

Y = YIELD: We declare our dependence upon You, Lord God, for Your protection, Your provision, Your purpose, Your power in us. May we take the lead, showing children, graduates and others in our lives what it means to yield, trust and obey the Lord. Not just words, but deeds too. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Remember as you pray, God's will for your life is like a pyramid. The base is all the Scripture which tells what God commands ALL people: to believe in Him, to trust Christ for salvation, to live by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, according to God's Word, etc. The middle part is God's instruction for various groups of people: men, women, husbands, wives, children, employers, employees, rich, or poor, etc.

The peak is God's specific will for your life - which you will come to know after you've graduated the first levels. So if you're praying for God's will for your own life, first pray about trusting and obeying Him in all that He's already commanded you, as written in His Word. Then you can move on to fulfill His specific and unique purposes for your life - praying for His mercy and grace to help in every time of need.

So, let's pray P-R-A-Y!