



The Serenity Prayer

The Serenity Prayer (believed to have been written and delivered in a sermon in 1943 by Reinhold Niebuhr, an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Church) offers a simple solution for whatever difficult situations you are dealing with in your life and relationships. Secular and Christian recovery groups use the Serenity Prayer; however, most use the short version.

Here is the entire Serenity Prayer:

**God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.**

**Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;**

**Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;**

**Trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;**

**That I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
forever in the next.**

Amen.

Let's break down the Serenity Prayer to see what it is saying:

You are asking God to grant you serenity. Getting a grant requires action on your part. You need to do something to become "serene." One of the definitions of "serene" is to be marked by utter calm and tranquility. Another is to be free of storms or unpleasant change. So the key is learning how to be serene.

How do you become serene? Simply by accepting the things you cannot change. Acceptance brings instant calmness into your life. You prevent the storms and turmoil that are the result of trying to force change or from trying to fight reality. When you are not accepting the things you cannot change and instead wanting them to be different, you have the opposite of peace and tranquility; you have volatility, dysfunction, impulsivity, unrest, anger, and all kinds of troublesome emotions.

You also need the courage to change the things you can. This gives you power over your life, rather than keeping you feeling victimized by others. When you take the initiative to make the changes you can, it will give you peace.

Why does it take wisdom to know the difference between the things you cannot change and the things you can? Because people, relationships, and situations are complicated and get even more complicated with addictions, dysfunction, divorce, step-families, financial problems, mental illness, and other problems. “Wisdom” is the ability to discern what is right. God grants you wisdom when you ask for it.

Life is overwhelming when you take all your problems on at once. Instead, living one day at a time allows you to deal with life in manageable amounts. Enjoying one moment at a time reminds you that you need to live in the present and not to project into the future. Hardships are never pleasant, but they do provide an opportunity to grow and mature. Keeping this truth in mind during difficult times brings you a new perspective and peace with your circumstances.

Jesus understood the world and people. You need to be wise about human nature and adjust your expectations to reality. You also need to face the truth about people and circumstances and use that knowledge to make wise decisions.

Your ultimate test in life is whether or not you trust God no matter what happens. Things may not make sense nor may they appear to be just; regardless, you must choose to trust that God will make all things work for good and that somehow he will work them into his divine plan for your life.

Applying the principles in The Serenity Prayer allows you to be happier. You are not happy when you are refusing to accept reality, attempting to change other people, ignoring the things you can change, worrying about the future, unable to enjoy what you have now, expecting things that are not reasonable, and doubting God. You will never be perfectly happy in this life, as you will have troubles; however, you will be supremely happy in the next. Amen.