

About four to five years ago I started to write poetry. No, these are nothing that are book worthy or something for which to cross the street. They are simply smatterings that come from my heart. Sometimes the rhyming is a little corny and I probably break all the poetry rules (if there is such a thing). But suffice it to say, I write these poems as an intellectual exercise but mostly as a spiritual discipline. Thinking about word choices in order to communicate a message in a powerful and meaningful way is something that leads me into deeper thought and reflection on the given topic. But sometimes I make things way too difficult (in poetry and in life). At times I get frustrated when I cannot come up with the perfect word(s) to rhyme with other word(s) that I have chosen. Sometimes I can spend days or longer working on a poem. Sometimes I walk away from the poem and thus forget about it; allowing the moment to pass. Sometimes I turn this simple joy into work and thus lose the joy. Sometimes I just need to take a page out of my daughter's book.

One night my wife and I were preparing supper. As we started to put everything on the table, we called to our children to wash their hands and come to the table to eat, but both were preoccupied. Malachi was busy with his Legos and Mayah was downstairs in what we call her art studio. After my wife and I got everything set we called to them again, but still nothing. Frustration arose and we were getting annoyed. My wife and I eventually started dishing up our plates. We were going to eat with or without our children. Eventually Mayah showed up and excitedly asked, "*Can I pray tonight? I wrote a prayer poem. Can I pray? Please!*" I immediately felt guilty for being annoyed and responded, "*Of course you can.*" We stopped dishing up our plates in order to pray. This is what my 8-year-old daughter wrote (I share this with her permission):

God, thank you for this food.
I may or may not be in a good mood.
You comfort my family.
You give us clothes to keep us warmly.
You keep us happy when we may not be.
I love you because you love me.

And yes, I know "warmly" is not a word, and she may have broken every poetry rule in the book, but that's alright, for it came from her tender, loving heart. Sometimes we just need to stop making things so difficult and become like a child. Sometimes we just need to slow down and not take things so seriously.

My daughter's prayer was one of the best prayers I have heard in a very long time; for it spoke to my heart. Thank you,ayah, for your prayer poem. Thank you for making a "difficult" thing look so easy. Thank you for sharing your heart and the joy within. To God be all glory, praise and honor. Amen.