

Prayer and Deeper Life Workbook

PRAYER AND DEEPER LIFE CONFERENCE WORKBOOK INDEX

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Faith & Worship

Section 1

INTRODUCTION TO PRAYER

Psalm 27:8 – When thou sadist, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. K.J.V.

Psalm 27:8 – My heart has heard you say, “Come talk with me.” And my heart responds, “Lord I am coming.” N.L.T.

Finding God’s voice in the midst of this noisy world is not easy. So many voices clamor for our attention, and so much noise tends to shield us from the voice of the One, who as Evelyn Underhill said, “has everything to tell us and nothing to learn from us.”¹

Calvin Miller, None of us are exempt from our own Gethsemane. Praying – really praying – is the hardest work I know, the most important work I do. I must confess that my real praying is usually done when I’m unsure God is listening or when I feel as though He has abandoned me. The words of Psalm 22:1 are often my first words to God when the crises of life are splitting me apart and I can’t be certain that God is anywhere near me.²

Oswald Chambers, Remember, what makes prayer easy is not our wits or our understanding, but the tremendous agony of God in redemption. A thing is worth just what it costs. Prayer is not what it cost us, but what it cost God to enable us to pray. The only way to be saved from the lure of the wrong roads is by doing what our Master tells us, that is, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.” The whole meaning of taking the armor of God is for prayer. Prayer is the position the devil is struggling for.³

¹ A Guide To Prayer For All Who Seek God, Upper Room Books

² Tilling the Soul, Denise George

³ If You Will Ask, Oswald Chambers

INTRODUCTION

Why I Don't Pray

I received a phone call that was to change my life drastically. The leaders of a prayer ministry in Dallas TX wanted me to speak at a prayer banquet on Friday night and teach classes on prayer Saturday. I told them I was not a man of prayer, only a man that prays, and gave them names of men that I knew where men of prayer but they had use these men already, but I declined the invitation. But they kept calling and I finally accepted. I told my wife I was going to speak at this prayer gathering, and she thought they must be hard up for speakers. I was inclined to agree with her. I had about a year and a half to prepare for these meetings.

I had to ask myself a soul searching question, why didn't I pray more I began to look back over my life how God had sprinkled it with men of prayer. My first exposure to a man of prayer was Phil Garbutt one of the deacons of the first church I pastor high in the mountains of northern California. Phil had a way of conversing with God as if he was sitting in a chair across from Him. Then there was Alan George who was the president of Child Evangelism Fellowship, who systematically prayed for the C. E. F. staff worldwide, quiet an undertaking for one of the largest missions in the world. Reece Kaufman the present president of C. E. F. designed a special prayer system for men, to motivate them into a deeper prayer life. When I think of men of prayer another man will always be among them all. To pray just once with this man will touch you so significantly you will never see prayer as something you do but a life to be lived. Mark Bubeck touch my life in ways I know he is not aware. When I was asked to be the first counselor for the International Center For Biblical Counseling, Mark Bubeck was president. Once every week the board and staff met for prayer. It was at this prayer meeting that I first was exposed to Scriptural Praying. Mark would pray by heart a different chapter of Scripture back to God that would fit the present need for prayer. I will never forget those prayer meetings as Mark prayed and the room filled with God's presence.

I knew God had brought these man and many more into my life to motivate me into a man of prayer life, why didn't I pray more?

What was the main hindrance?

What have I learned about prayer?

This book is the story of how God has started me on a journey to become a man of prayer.

SPIRITUAL RETREAT

This prayer, for those going on retreat.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who said to thy apostles, 'Come ye apart into a desert place and rest awhile,' for there were many coming and going: grant, we pray, to thy servants when they gather together in retreat, that they may rest awhile with thee. May they so seek thee, whom their souls desire to love, that they may both find thee and be found by thee. And grant such love and such wisdom to accompany the words which shall be spoken in thy name, that they may not fall to the ground, but may be helpful in leading us onward through the toils of our pilgrimage to that rest, which remaineth to the people of God; where, nevertheless, they rest not day and night from thy perfect service; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit art alive and reignest, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.¹

¹ Richard Meux Benson, Intercessory Manual

THE PRACTICE OF THE LIFE OF PRAYER

OBSTACLES TO PRAYER

Prayer is the fundamental relationship of humanity to God, a state of attention to God, involving the whole personality. 'In prayer', wrote the nineteenth-century Bishop Theophan, 'the principal thing is to stand before God with the mind in the heart, and to go on standing before him unceasingly day and night until the end of life.'

FIRST, refusal to forgive. Forgiveness in prayer is not possible if there is a refusal to forgive others (Matt. 6:15).

SECOND, anger and quarrelsome thoughts (1Tim. 2:8).

THIRD, refusal to be reconciled (Matt. 5:23,24).

FOURTH, distorted sexuality and lust. There is certainly the sense that disorder in sexuality is related to disorder in the spiritual life (1Pet. 3:7, 4:7).

FIFTH, involvement in the occult and in magical rites is seen in the Old Testament as an impediment to spirituality (Deut. 18:10-12).

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE MIND

The distinction between meditation and prayer goes back to the earliest Christian periods. When ancient writers speak of prayer they are careful to distinguish it from meditation which they consider to be the normal preparation for prayer. So meditation and mental discipline are preludes to prayer. As Anthony Bloom points out, 'Meditation and prayer are often confused, but there is no danger in this confusion if meditation develops into prayer; only when prayer degenerates into meditation.' Progress in prayer always and inevitably brings with it a deepening awareness of one's own depths, pleasant and unpleasant, and a deeper sensitivity to others.¹

¹ Kenneth Leech, Soul Friend

FAITH A Holy Walk

The way some people talk, you could get the idea that faith is nothing more than a spiritualized form of wishful thinking.

Contrary to much of what we hear today, faith is not convincing ourselves that we have God's stamp of approval on our plans; it's believing that God's plans are better than ours.

Biblical faith is not about taking risks; it's about taking on the identity of Jesus. It's not about having the courage to do what is difficult. It's not about running in the dark; it's about walking in the light. It's not about believing what people say about God; it's simply believing what God says.

When I am surrounded by darkness, do I see nothing or do I see God? Do I consider darkness an opportunity to rest or a reason to become restless? What good reason might God have for keeping me in the dark?

Faith is praying with our eyes on God, not on difficulties.

Some of us are no good unless we are kept in circumstances in which our convictions were formed, but God is constantly stirring up our nest so we may learn that a relationship with Christ is not altered in any circumstance. Logic or a vivid past experience can never take the place of personal faith in a personal God. It is easier to be true to a conviction formed in a vivid religious experience than to be true to Christ, because if I am true to Christ, my convictions will have to be altered.

Do I consider experience to be a reward for faith or a means to faith? Do I consider behavior to be proof of faith or an expression of faith? Do I do good things to get God to Love me or to show that I love Him? Which are more pleasing to God?

What aspect of God's character is He proving to me in ways I cannot see? What is the invisible evidence of God's work in my life?

We have no faith at all until it is proved through conflict. There are things in life that come out against our faith in God's goodness and justice. Are we going to remain steadfast in our faith in God until we see all that contradicts our common sense transfigured into exactly what our faith believes it should be?

Do I claim to have faith in areas where I've never had reason to doubt? Do I claim to be victorious in areas where I've never been tempted to sin? Is this righteousness or arrogance?

Am I a channel of God's blessing to others or only a consumer? Is God's goodness being multiplied and magnified in my life or hidden, hoarded and devoured?

Spiritual famine and dearth, if it does not start from sin, starts from dwelling entirely on the experience God gave me instead of on God who gave me the experience. When I plant my faith on the Lord Jesus my experiences don't make me conscious of them, they produce in me the life of a child.

Is it my habit to continue doing what I know is right even when I see no results from my efforts? Am I more likely to criticize or encourage others who are doing right but not yet reaping righteousness?

Every time you venture out in the life of faith you will find something in your common-sense circumstances that flatly contradicts your faith. Common sense is not faith, and faith is not common sense; they stand in the relation of the natural and the spiritual. Can you trust Jesus Christ where your common sense contradicts Him?

How often do I stop to think that what seems normal is not necessarily good? How often do I consider that the "sensible" thing to do is not always the right thing?

Whenever you meet with difficulties, whether they are intellectual, circumstantial, or physical, remain loyal to God. Don't compromise. If you do, everyone around you will suffer

from your faithlessness, because you are disloyal to Jesus Christ and His way of looking at things.

Darkness comes by the sovereignty of God. Are we prepared to let God do as He likes with us – prepared to be separated from conscious blessing? Until Jesus Christ is Lord, we all have ends of our own to serve. Our faith is real, but it is not yet permanent. God is never in a hurry; if we wait, we shall see that God is pointing out that we have not been interested in Himself, but only in His blessing.

Am I more interested in what God can do for me than what He wants to do in me? Do I believe that God can change bitter circumstances into sweet blessing? Am I willing to Let Him?

In times of trouble do I open my mouth to complain or keep it shut to express my confidence in God? Do I trust God to sustain me through times of trouble or do I only expect Him to get me out of trouble.

Experience is never the ground of my faith; experience is the evidence of my faith.

If our faith is not living and active it is because we need reviving; we have a faith that is limited by certain doctrines instead of being “the faith of God.”

When my circumstances contradict my understanding of God do I pull away from Him in anger or move toward Him in eagerness to learn something new?

How much of our security and peace is the outcome of the civilized life we live, and how much is built up in faith in God.

In the early days of spiritual experience we walk more by sight and feelings than by faith. The comforts, the delights, the joys of contact are so exquisite that the very flesh itself tingles with the leadings of the cloudy pillar by day and the fiery pillar by night; but there comes a day when all that ceases.

What am I doing today, while it is light, to prepare myself for future times of darkness? Do I know God well enough to follow Him even when my senses are unable to perceive Him?

What is the foundation on which my faith stands? What pieces are missing? What places are weak? Where is it uneven or unbalanced? What repairs do I need to make?

Does my faith depend on my feelings or on God's truth? On the blessings I receive from God or on His character being formed in my life?

Is my faith so strong that it protects me from the challenges of the world or so weak that I protect it from all worldly challenges?

Is my faith good for all circumstances, or do I turn it off and on for my own convenience? Does my faith make me more conscious of my own failures or only the failures of others? Does it cause me to witness about how God has changed me or to whine that He hasn't changed someone else?

How well am I learning to identify with Jesus and how to view my problems from His perspective? What ideas, attitudes, or behaviors are clouding my vision of God?

Am I an easy target for the devil's lies or do I know enough about what God says so that Satan can't deceive me by twisting the truth?

In what way has Satan crept into my convictions? Which of my beliefs about God are more important to me than God? Which of my religious convictions does Satan want me to keep in place of God?

Would I welcome or resist an encounter with God that led to an ecstatic emotional experience? Would I rather have an ecstatic experience with my own emotions, than a genuine encounter with God?

Ecstasy is a state of mind that is marked by mental alienation from our surroundings, and our very consciousness is altered into excessive joy. These states are open gateways for God or for the devil. If they are worked up by thrills of our own seeking, they are of the devil, but when they come unsought in faithful performance of duties, they are the gateway into direct communication with God.

Certain phases of the life of faith look so much like humbug that we are apt to grieve God's Spirit by our religious respectability in regard to them, and ecstasy is just one of those phases.

Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One Who is leading. It is a life of faith, not of intellect and reason, but a life of knowing Who makes us "go." The root of faith is the knowledge of a Person, and one of the biggest snares is the idea that God is sure to lead us to success.

In what ways has Satan deceived me into thinking God's ways are better than His presence? In what areas of life do I have more faith in common sense than I do in God? Have I learned anything from Eve or do I too believe that the knowledge of good and evil is better than innocence?

Peter does not say "give an explanation," but "a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). Be ready to say what you base your hope on. Faith is deliberate confidence in the character of God Whose ways you cannot understand at the time. Faith is not a conscious thing, it springs from a personal relationship and is the unconscious result of believing someone.

Do I have confidence in God's character to believe what He says even when it seems to contradict what I see?

We are called not only to be right in heart, but to be right in thinking. When we have become personally related to Jesus Christ we have to do the thing that is in our power to do, that is, think aright.

Faith is not an action of the mind, nor of the heart, nor of the will, nor of sentiment, It is the centering of the entire man in God.

It is righteous behavior that brings blessing on others, and the heart of faith sees that God is working things out well.

It is not faith to believe that God is making things work for good unless we are up against things that are ostensibly working for bad.

The nature of faith is that it must be tested; and the trial of faith does not come in fits and starts, it goes on all the time. The one thing that keeps us right with God is the great work of His grace in our hearts. All the prophets had to take part in something they did not understand, and the Christian has to do the same.

Despair is always the gateway of faith. So many of us get depressed about ourselves, but when we get to the point where we are not only sick of ourselves, but sick to death, then we shall understand what the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ means. It will mean that we come to Him without any hypocrisy, and say, "Lord, if You can make anything of me, do it," and He will do it.

Faith is not that I see God, but that I know God sees me; that is good enough for me, I will run out and play – a life of absolute freedom.

God does not give faith in answer to prayer: He reveals Himself in answer to prayer, and faith is exercised spontaneously.

By the preaching of the Gospel God creates what was never there before – faith in Himself on the ground of the Redemption.

The time of stress when there is no vision, no insight, no sensing of the presence of God is the time to stand firm in faith in God, and God will do all the rest. Keep true to God and your development in God's plan is certain.

When God calls us He does not tell us along the line of our natural senses what to expect; God's call is a command that asks us, that means there is always a possibility of refusal on our part. Faith never knows where it is being led, it knows and loves the One Who is leading.

The impossible is exactly what God does. The sure sign that we have no faith in God is that we have no faith in the supernatural. No man can believe God unless God is in him. The promises to Abraham are God all over from beginning to end. Don't only make room for God, but believe that God has room enough for you.

Faith is not the means whereby we take God to ourselves; faith is the gift of God whereby He expresses His purpose through us.

Hebrews 11 impresses the life of faith over the life of human perfection. The first thing faith in God does is to remove all thought of relevant perfection. Some lives may seem humanly perfect and yet not be relevant to God and His purpose.

Most of us are pagans in a crisis; only one out of a hundred is daring enough to bank his faith in the character of God.

Beware of making a fetish of consistency to convictions instead of developing your faith in God. Whenever we take what God has done and put it in the place of Himself, we instantly become idolaters.

We say many things which we believe, but they have never been tested. Discipline has come through all the things we believe in order to turn them into real spiritual possession. It is the trial of our faith that is precious. It is heroism to believe in God.

The thing that is precious in the sight of God is faith that has been tried. Tried faith is spendable; it is so much wealth stored up in heaven, and the more we go through the trial of our faith, the wealthier we become in heavenly regions.

Faith is the whole man rightly related to God by the power of the Spirit of Jesus.

Until we know Jesus, God is mere abstraction, and we cannot have faith in Him; but immediately upon hearing Jesus say, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father," we have something that is real, and faith is boundless. Faith is the whole man rightly related to God by the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

We are only what we are in the dark; all the rest is reputation. What God looks at is what we are in the dark – the imaginations of our minds, the thoughts of our hearts, the habits of our bodies; these are the things that mark us in God's sight.

The holiness of Jesus is imparted as a sovereign gift of God's grace. We cannot earn it, we cannot pray it down, but thank God, we can take it by faith, "through faith in his blood" (Romans 3:25 KJV).

Our Lord did not rebuke His disciples for making mistakes, but for not having faith. The two things that astonished Him were "little faith" and "great faith." Faith is not in what Jesus Christ can do, but in Himself.

In the Bible, clouds are always connected with God. Clouds are those sorrows or sufferings without or within our personal lives which seem to dispute the empire of God. Seen apart from God, the clouds or difficulties are accidents, but when seen as from the Spirit of God they become our teachers which show us how to walk by faith.

Until we know God we have no faith.

Sometimes we crave something less than the best. Beware! We ought to love the most what is best. We must keep in touch with God by faith, and see that we give others the same freedom and liberty that God gives us.¹

¹ Oswald Chambers, Faith A Holy Walk

FAITH

Dietrich Bonhoeffer BELIEF AND OBEDIENCE

Only the believer obeys and only the obedient believe.

It is really unfaithfulness to the Bible to have the first statement without the second. . .

First there is faith, than obedience.

If this meant only that faith alone justifies us and not deeds of obedience, then it is a true and necessary precondition for every thing else.

But if it meant a chronological sequence, that faith would have to come first, to be followed by obedience, then faith and obedience are torn apart, and the very practical question remains open: when does obedience start.

Obedience remains separated from faith. . .

The Statement "only the believer obeys" has to be paired with the other one: "only the obedient believe.

In the first, faith is the precondition of obedience, in the second, obedience is the precondition of faith. . .

Only the obedient believe.

A concrete commandment has to be obeyed, in order to have faith.

A step of obedience has to be taken, so that faith does not become pious self-deception, cheap grace.

The first step is crucial.

It is qualitatively different from all others that follow.

The first step of obedience has to lead Peter away from his nets and out of the boat. . .

Faith is possible only in this new state of existence created by obedience.

COMMENT

The point is that in genuine faith a first step of obedience has to be taken, so that faith does not become pious self-deception, cheap grace. It's actually very simply told the call, the following-after. Faith is possible only in this new state of existence created by obedience. Whether we walk on the water or sink, the first step is crucial.

Andrew Murray The power of prayer rests in the faith that God hears prayer. In ore than one sense this is true. This faith gives us courage to pray. This faith gives us power to prevail with God. The moment I am assured that God hears me too, I feel drawn to pray and to persevere in prayer. I feel strong to claim and to take in faith the answer God gives.

When you say in faith “God will hear me!” nothing can keep you from prayer. You know that what you cannot do on earth can and will be done for you from heaven. Let each one of us bow in stillness before God and wait on Him to reveal Himself as the prayer-hearing God. In His presence the windows of thoughts gathering round the central truth will unfold themselves to us.

Faith in God

James said to the disciples, “Have faith in God.”

Mark 11:22

Andrew Murray As the eye is the organ by which we see, so faith is the power by which we see the light of God and walk in it.

We were made for God, to see Him, to find Him, to grow up into His likeness and show forth His glory – in the fullest sense to be His dwelling. And faith is the eye which, turning away from the world and self, looks up to God and sees God reveal Himself.

Without faith it is impossible to please God or to know him.

“Abraham never wavered in believing God’s promise . . . He was absolutely convinced that God was able to do anything he promised” (Romans 4:20-21).

Let our one desire be to take time and be still before God, believing with an unbounded faith in His longing to make Himself known to us. Let us feed on God’s Word to make us strong in faith. Let that faith have large thoughts of what God’s glory is and of what His power is.

Such faith, exercised and strengthened day by day in secret fellowship with God, will become the habit of our life. It will keep us ever in the enjoyment of His presence and in the experience of Hid saving power.¹

¹ The Best Of Andrew Murray

Andrew Murray It is only the fully surrendered heart that can fully rust God for all he has promised.

Wholly for God! What blessedness as the soul learns what it means and what God gives with it.

Martin Luther In supplication we strengthen prayer and make it effective by a certain form of persuasion. Prayer is a special exercise of faith. Faith makes the prayer acceptable because it believes that something better will be given instead. When we pray we must hold fast and believe that God has heard our prayer.

Andrew Murray What faith in the power of prayer Paul had! He expected a few feeble and despised Christians to influence the mighty Roman emperors, and help secure peace and order! (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Today we can pray with the same conviction that gripped Paul – that prayer is a powerful influence in how God rules the world.

Confidence In God, It is confidence in God the leads us to pray in the first place. Confidence involves both faith and trust. For the believer, these qualities come by way of the Holy Scriptures. Paul wrote, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17, NKJV).

Ask According To His Will, God’s will is revealed to us in His Word. He wants us to pray without ceasing, for clearly this is His will for us. He also wants us to rejoice always and to give thanks, because these elements of prayer are crucial in the believer’s life.

E. M. Bounds wrote, “To know God’s will in prayer, we must be filled with God’s Spirit, who makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. To be filled with God’s Word is to know God’s will.” (From The Necessity of Prayer By E. M. Bounds.)²

Prayer and Faith, the first tool is actually a question I ask my self, Who do I trust? Often we transfer faith tour own ability to pray. This process removes trust from the primary object of

² Prayer Keys, Clift & Kathleen Richards

prayer – God Himself. The Bible teaches that we must have faith and that it should be directed toward the person and faithfulness of God. As the writer of Hebrews tells us:

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that he exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him (Heb. 11:6,NIV).

Notice the sequence. We who come to God must first believe that God exists. After that, we believe that He is the one doing the work whenever we pray. I too often get caught up trying to measure the strength of my faith. Whenever I do that, I end up with myself, rather than God at the center of the process.

You may have distorted this truth as well. Sometimes I meet people who seem to chant, rather than pray. They seem to think that by saying something is going to happen, they can make it happen. These people actually diminish their faith by placing the weight of responsibility on themselves, rather than on God.

But God does exist, and He is the one who rewards everyone who calls out to Him for help. Ultimately, it is our job to place our faith in Him, rather than in the prayer process or our feelings of faith.³

³ Dare To Ask, Ralph Moore

Prayer And Faith

[Abraham] is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed – the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. Romans 4:17

When we believe for a blessing, we must take the attitude of faith, and begin to act and pray as if we had the blessing. We must treat God as if He had given us our request. We must lean our weight over upon Him for the thing that we have claimed, and just take it for granted that He gives it, and is going to give it. That is the attitude of trust. A. B. Simpson

Pray About It

Is there something for which you're praying that God would have you simply begin to accept by faith? Can you begin to live as if you have that which you're praying? Do so, but don't broadcast it to others. Simply live the answer to your prayers. Put your weight on Him as you do. This is trust.

Praying with a believing heart is more important than anything else that has to do with prayer. Madame Guyon¹

¹ Magnificent Prayer, Nick Harrison

FAITH

Kathleen Norris I had thought that my doubts were spectacular obstacles to my faith and was confused but intrigued when an old monk **blithely stated that doubt is merely the seed of faith, a sign that faith is alive and ready to grow.**

Norris learned that in its Greek root *belief* means simply “to give one’s heart to,” and she found that the act of worship can constitute a concrete form of belief. Gradually it dawned on her that to have a relationship with God, like any relationship, she must plunge into it without knowing where it might take her. She began with trust, and from there a mature faith developed.

I BELIEVE

- ❖ **God is trustworthy – Psa.19:7; Deut. 9:23; 1 Cor.10:13; 1 Pet. 4:17-19; Isa. 41:1-4.**
- ❖ **God's Word is True – Prov. 30:5-6; Psa. 12:6. 18:30, 19:8.**
- ❖ **God does not change – Mal. 3:1-6; Jas. 1:17-18; Heb. 13:5-8, 1:10-12; Psa. 102:25-27.**
- ❖ **God's thoughts and ways are different than mine – Isa. 55:8-9.**
- ❖ **God will never leave me or forsake me – Jos. 1:5; Mat. 28:20.**
- ❖ **Nothing can happen to me except God permits – Job. 1:6-12; 2:1-7.**
- ❖ **God can protect me / family – 2Kings 6:11-18; Dan. 3:7-18; 6:19-22; Acts. 16:19-26.**
- ❖ **God's reputation is at stake – Psa. 23:1-6; Deut. 9:27-29; Ex. 32:11-14.**
- ❖ **Satan can influence my thinking – Mat. 16:21-23.**
- ❖ **Satan has no power over me except what I give him – Eph. 1:15-23.**
- ❖ **The truth will set me free – Jn. 8:32; Mat. 1:25.**

Worship

William Temple, To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.¹

Richard Foster, Worship is the human response to the divine initiative.

Oswald Chambers, The lasting value of what we do for God is measured by the depth of the intimacy of our private times of fellowship and oneness with Him. Rushing in and out of worship is wrong every time – there is always plenty of time to worship God. The hidden, personal worshipping life of a saint is the most essential element on the Christian journey.

¹ The Formation Bible

KNOWING GOD THROUGH WORSHIP AND PRAISE

Often the words “praise” and “worship” are used interchangeably. Many dictionaries even denote these two terms as being synonymous. However, Scriptures make a clear distinction between these two avenues to knowing God.

Praise is associated with exuberant joy and thanksgiving. It is our response to all that God has done for us. Worship, on the other hand, is the expression of reverential awe in the presence of God’s glory and holiness. It is our response to the recognition of who God is.

Worship recognizes the awesome beauty of God’s holiness, but it also recognizes that true worship flows from the beauty of holiness within the worshiper. Our holiness is a product of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and God finds our holiness to be absolutely beautiful.

Richard Foster, in his excellent book, Celebration of Discipline, writes, “God is actively seeking worshipers. . . Worship is our response to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father, . . . but we have not worshiped the Lord until the Spirit touches spirit. . . Our spirit must be ignited by divine fire.”

Worship is a main avenue to intimacy with God. It is one of the most important activities for a believer to engage in. Jesus teaches that the father seeks us to worship Him. The love in the heart of God is seeking after you. God wants you to worship Him. God wants you to fellowship with Him. He wants you to come into His presence and enjoy Him. That’s what is in the heart of God.

True worship, therefore is conducted in an attitude of humility before the Father. God wants us to worship Him; in fact, He seeks those who will learn to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

He is our awesome God, and worshiping Him leads us into realms of awe and wonder over His divine attributes. As we

adore our heavenly Father, our spirit is renewed in the same way sleep renews our bodies.

The angels are continually worshiping God, and their example is worthy to follow because it shows us the vital importance of worship. God speaks to us through worship. He gives us direction, and He gives us insight into His very nature. He also enjoys being with us and expressing His love to us.

Worship is waiting in God, hoping in God, and loving Him. God seeks worshipers who will include these qualities when they are worshiping Him. The result will be an immeasurable increase in our knowledge of God, because worship is enjoying the presence of God. Ps. 24:3-4.

How we perceive God determines the kind of relationship we will have with Him.

Dwight L. Moody wrote, "We are constantly limiting God's power by our own ideas. Let us get our eyes off one another and fix them on God. Nothing is too hard for Him."

Hal Lindsay wrote, "We should make it our aim to trust Christ to work in us a life of righteousness. We all grow in this, so don't get discouraged or forget that God accepts us as we are. He wants our hearts to be constantly set toward pleasing Him and have faith to trust Him to help us."¹

¹ Cliff and Kathleen Richards, *Knowing God Intimately*

TRUE WORSHIP

In beginning this book, I am haunted with a new perplexity. How could the hopes for better church music – which have sustained me for more than fifty years – suddenly be threatened with extinction? Church music and worship have been dynamic arts during those years, with regular challenges and change that I believe were healthy for the church. How is it then that many congregations are tending to reject much of their central heritage of music – hymns and gospel songs, and organ and choral music? And how could this insistence on iconoclastic change sweep across the country and around the world almost overnight?

I notice also that I am not alone in my confusion. Though changes in culture call for *proper* changes in worship and its arts, the rationale underlying today's new forms and practices often are faulty. Church growth specialists give advice about worship planning without considering biblical teachings or liturgical principles; church leaders follow their advice for purely pragmatic reasons.

Without a doubt, each time we encounter God in worship should be a vital, fresh, life-changing experience. However, I believe we must question today's preoccupation with novelty.

The Christian church expresses its historicity, its continuity, and consequently its *authority*, partly by repeating the same actions and words from one generation to another... Many of the "new" forms are as rigidly stylized (only in a deceptive way) as any liturgy.

An ancient Latin motto, *lex orandi, lex credendi* ("the rule of prayer is the rule of faith"), says that the way we worship determines what we believe. Consequently, while we all may agree that the radical changes in modern culture call for changes in the church response to culture, we must guard the God-truth that is inherent in the church's two-thousand-year, Scripture-based tradition of worship. Dare we allow "seekers" for God and truth to choose the new paradigm for their (and our) worship of God?

It seems to me that following the advice of the church growth leaders will sacrifice basic principles that give the church its

character and strength and eventually produce the following negative results:

- 1. Music and other worship arts will be determined on the basis of popular preferences and their superficial emotional appeal, not because of their true worth and their deeper cognitive and emotional meaning.**
- 2. Denominational identities, and the theologies on which they are based, will be forgotten. The full ecumenical creed may be reduced to “Jesus is Lord” or even “I love Jesus.”**
- 3. The church’s memory will be lost, especially as it is recorded in songs and in art symbols. Loss of memory means the loss of identity.**
- 4. The idea of a local church united in self-sacrificing love will be a thing of the past because individuals will continue to divide into worship groups according to age and aesthetic preference.**
- 5. Arts in worship will be reduced to the least common denominator of congregational taste – determined mostly by commercial interests.**
- 6. Preaching will be brief and simplistic, avoiding the challenge to respond in commitment, or even to think deeply about Christian faith.**
- 7. Worship will be hardly distinguishable from “religious entertainment.”**

If, for the moment, these characteristics attract attention in the media and encourage some individuals to transfer membership to the “most successful” local megachurch, in the long term I believe they will hasten the demise of the institutional church. Marva Dawn argues that such an approach is “dumbing down” in order to reach out to the unchurched. Instead of countering the evil of today’s postmodern culture, it aids and abets it.¹

¹ True Worship, Donald P. Hustad

DICK EASTMAN

The bigger we see God through our worship, the smaller Satan becomes in his capacity to defeat us. Further, the more we understand Satan's diminished capacity, the more powerful our prayers of intercession become. And worship makes all this happen, allowing us to expand and increase our knowledge of God, thus providing us with a path to much greater power in our praying.

Joy Dawson attended a prayer meeting where the participants filled their prayers with too much of the negative. Nothing of God's power was voiced. "I'm truly sorry, but I've been here only a short while and it's already evident you're more impressed with the power of Satan than you are with the awesomeness of God. So I need to ask if I may be excused!"

The bigger we see God, the bigger we pray. And the bigger we pray, the greater our answers.¹

¹ Heights of Delights, Dick Eastman

Great Worship

**Worship God.
Revelation 22:9**

Andrew Murray Why is it that prayer and intercession with God are not a greater joy and delight? One answer to this question undoubtedly is: We know God too little. In our prayer His presence is not the chief thing our heart is seeking. And yet it should be. Often when we pray, we think mostly of ourselves, our needs, our desires. But we forget that in every prayer, God must be first, must be all.

So how is one to attain this nearness to God and fellowship with Him? The answer is simple: We must give God time to make Himself known to us. Believe with your whole heart, that just as you present yourself to God as a supplicant, so God presents Himself to you as the hearer of prayer. But you cannot realize this unless you give Him time and quiet. It is not in the multitude of the earnestness of your words in which prayer has its power. Your prayer has its power in the living faith that God Himself is taking you and your prayer into His loving heart. He himself will give the assurance that in His time your prayer will be heard.

Begin your day with these words: "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul" (Psalm 25:1). "I thirst for God, the living God"(Psalm 42:2).

Andrew Murray God is a Spirit; and He gave us a spirit with the one object of having fellowship with Himself. Deeper than our thoughts and feelings, God will, in our inmost being, in our spirits within us, teach us to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The clearer the insight into this great purpose of God, the more we will sense the need to enter into God's presence in the spirit of humble worship and holy adoration. The more we take time to abide in God's presence – to enter fully into His mind and will, to get our whole soul possessed by the thought of His glorious purpose – the stronger our faith will become that God Himself

will work out all the good pleasure of His will through our prayers.

Thus, the secret of true adoration can only be known by the soul that gives time to tarry in God's presence and that yields itself to God for Him to reveal Himself. Adoration will indeed fit us for the great work of making God's glory known.

The Desire For God

**All night long I search for you.
Isaiah 26:9**

Andrew Murray What is the best and most glorious thing that a man needs every day and can do every day? Nothing less than to seek, to know, to love, and to praise God Himself. As glorious as God is, so is the glory which begins to work in the hearts and lives of people who give themselves to live for God.

Have you learned to seek this God, to meet Him, to worship Him, to live for Him and for His glory? It is a great step forward in the life of a Christian when we truly see this and consider fellowship with God every day as the chief end of our lives.

Take the time to ask yourself whether knowing your God and loving Him with your whole heart is the utmost desire of your heart. You can be certain that God greatly desires that you should live in this intimate fellowship with Him. He will, in answer to your prayer, enable you to do so.

Begin today by speaking these words to God in the stillness of your soul: "O God you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you . . . I follow close behind you" (Psalm 63:1,8). "[I] search for Him with all [my] heart" (Psalm 119:2).

Take time to meditate, to pray, to expect all from God the Father who sits upon the throne and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb in the midst of the throne. Then you will learn truly to worship God.

Brother Lawrence I worshipped him as often as I could, keeping my mind in his holy presence and recalling it back to God as often as I found it had wandered from him, This will bring a holy

freedom. (He took his work and turned it into) the sacrament of the present moment.

Andrew Murray Praise will ever be a part of adoration. Adoration, when it has entered God's presence and has had fellowship with Him, will lead to the praise of His name.

In the Psalms we see what a large place praise ought to have in the spiritual life. Let us take time to study this until our whole heart and life be one continual song of praise: "I will praise the Lord at all times, I will constantly speak his praise (Psalm 34:1).

"Let the godly sing with joy to the Lord for it is fitting to praise Him" (Psalm 33:1).

From 'Holy Communion' It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord. Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God.

Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord most High. Amen¹

Michael Klassen To worship means to attribute worth. When we worship, we attribute to God His "worth-ship." In other words, we tell Him how much He means to us. Worship focuses on who God is – His inherent attributes and Character. Worship ascribes to God His power to intervene on our behalf, His love for us by sending Jesus, or His wisdom in determining the course of our lives.

Tozer To regain her lost power the Church must see heaven opened and have a transforming vision of God.

But the God we must see is not the utilitarian God who is having such a run of popularity today, whose chief claim to man's attention is his ability to bring them success in their various undertakings and who for that reason is being cajoled and flattered by everyone who wants a favor. The God we must learn to know is the Majesty in heavens, God Almighty, Maker of

¹ The Daily Book Of Common Prayer

heaven and earth, the only wise God our Savior. He it is that sitteth upon the upon the circle of the earth, who stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in, who bringeth out his starry host by number and calleth them all by name through the greatness of his power, who seeth the works of man as vanity, who putteth no confidence in princes and asks no counsel of kings.²

Lord, as we see you as you are, we marvel that you are interested in us at all. We are overwhelmed by your glory. We can only say, Worthy are you, O Lord, to receive honor, praise, dominion, and power. We fall on our faces before you and are delighted to know that we are creatures of your creating, slaves by you redeemed. Your love is incomparable, and we have no words to magnify it enough.³

Patrick Kavanaugh The reason that God desires our Worship is because He desires a personal relationship with each of his children.⁴

² Tozer Seniors' Devotional Bible p2

³ Daring to Draw Near, John White

⁴ Worship A Way Of Life

HOLINESS

Calvin Miller Holiness is the word that defines purity of heart. We do not attain purity of life. Instead, it is God's gift issuing from our yearning to know Him. He gives us this gift not because He is impressed with our efforts but because he is impressed with our hunger. Cleansing and purity came not because we crave being clean but because we crave being together with God. Gazing on God is a pursuit of quietness seen through the eyes of the soul. In this silence we come to know that he is God (PS. 46:10). The sins hidden in our heart are hidden from all but God and ourselves. The silencing the mind this silence which gains the mind of Christ is imperative (1Cor. 2:16).

Andrew Murray Oh that we understood the blessedness of saying "Be holy because I am holy." For this purpose the triune God has revealed Himself to us through the Son and the Holy Spirit. Let us use the word "holy" with great reverence of God, and then with Holy desire, for ourselves.

Bow before God in holy fear, and then in complete faith, pray this prayer of promise: "The God of peace make you holy in every way . . . God, who calls you, is faithful; he will do this" (1 Thess. 5:23-24). What a privilege to speak these words to God. Wait upon Him until, through the working of the Holy Spirit these words live in your heart. Then you will begin to know something of the holiness of God.¹

SIN

I was the worst of them all [sinners]. Oh, how kind and gracious
The Lord was! He filled me completely with faith
And love of Christ Jesus
1 Timothy 1:14-15

Andrew Murray Never forget for a moment that your whole relationship to God depends on what you think of sin and of yourself as a redeemed sinner. It is sin that makes God's

¹ The Best Of Andrew Murray On Prayer

holiness so awful. It is sin that makes God's holiness so glorious, because He has said: "So set yourselves apart to be holy, for I, the Lord, am your God. . . I am the Lord, who makes you holy" (Lev. 20:7-8).

It is sin that called forth the wonderful love of God in not sparing His Son.

It was sin that nailed Jesus to the cross and revealed the depth and the power of the love with which He loved.

It is the thought of sin, ever surrounding you and seeking to tempt you, that will give fervency to your prayer and urgency to the faith that hides itself in Christ.

It is the thought of sin that makes Christ so unspeakably precious. It keeps you every moment dependent on His grace and gives you the claim to be more than a conqueror through Him that loves us.

It is the thought of sin that calls to us to thank God with the broken and contrite heart, which God will not despise.

As you fellowship with God in prayer, His one aim is to deliver and keep you fully from sin's power and to lift you up into His likeness and His infinite love.

Oswald Chambers We cannot grow into holiness but we must grow in it.

William Law As a good Christian should consider every place as holy because God is there, so he should look upon every part of his life as a matter of holiness because it is to be offered unto God.²

Morton Kelsey We seldom find the Holy is in a hurry. Dr. Jung "hurry is not of the devil; It is the devil. The best way not to have intimacy with God is to have no time for it.

² A Serious Call to a Devoted and Holy Life

HOLINESS

Holiness – is not a lengthy list of negatives.

Holiness – is simply living near the heart of God.

Holiness – creates an inner craving for more of God.

Holiness – is something shared. Those walking close to God affect others.

Holiness – is the soil nourishing roots of prayer.

It is said of Horose Bushnell – when he buried his face in his hands and prayed, I was afraid to stretch out my hand in the darkness, lest I should touch God.

A praying man must be a holy man.

Holy living is essential preparation for prayer.

*Take time to be holy;
The world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret
With Jesus alone;
By looking to Jesus
Like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct
His likeness shall see.
W. D. Longstaff*

As a man is, so he prays.

To pray in a practical, systematic manner, the prayer warrior needs two things.

1 Something to pray about during prayer time.

2 A quiet place to pray, a place where uninterrupted intercession can be offered for needs of the world.

Personal integrity and character are sure foundations for a life of prayer.

Worldly weights hinder more prayers than one realizes.

The root of prayer is holiness.

A praying man must be a holy man.

To learn prayer men must pray.

The only place to learn prayer is in prayer, bent and broken on our knees.

THANKSGIVING PRAISE WORSHIP

Thanksgiving we give glory to God for what He has done for us.

Praise we give glory to God for who He is in Himself.

Worship of God is nowhere defined in scripture, a consideration of the above verbs show that it is not confined to praise; broadly it may be regarded as the direct acknowledgement to God, of His nature, attributes, ways and claims, whether by the outgoing of the heart in praise and thanksgiving or deed done in such acknowledgement.

Vine an Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words

Worship used to designate the custom of prostrating oneself before a person and kissing his feet, the hem of his garment, the ground etc. Also used of a slave prostrating himself before his master.

Worship to honor God with our prayers Gen. 22:5; 1Sam. 1:3; Zodhiates (Strong's 7812)

Worship and Praise Ps. 95:1-2; Praise Ps. 95:6; Worship, Praise first, Worship second Ps. 96:4,7-8,9. Worship may be dependent upon Praise, Praise is not a substitute for Worship; it is however, a blessed supplement to it.

Praise tends to be more concerned with God's presents than with God's presence.

Praise is very vocal, while, Worship is often void of much speaking.

Praise is often physically demonstrated or demonstrative with great action, while deep Worship is far more likely to be physically submissive than physically active.

Praise tends to be emotional.

Worship is devotional.

Praise is often loudly exuberant.

Worship is more apt to be quietly exultant. We cannot bypass Praise or negate it, for it is the route into Worship. The musical channel for the release of Praise is perhaps the most gentle route into Worship that God has given us. But we do not desire to remain in Praise when God's presence makes Worship a distinct possibility.

Worship Vol. 3. Pages 121,122 Judson Cornwell

Worship is an active response to God whereby we declare His worth.

Ronald Allen

Worship One basic principle to be learned from the Old Testament is that Worship implies the presence of God among his assembled people.

Paul Engle

Worship In Worship we magnify God. The easiest way to begin magnifying God is to use the Psalms. In nearly any Psalm, we can find a passage that will aid us in Praise and Worshiping God. "O magnify the Lord with me", says the Psalmist, "and let us exalt His name together. Join the Angels in the Angelic work of Worship."

PRAISE

The Act Of Divine Adoration

- 1. Sanctify, or set aside, a period of time specifically to praise God at the beginning of your prayer.**
- 2. Select a specific theme for praise such as God's righteousness, His Word, or His creative acts.**
- 3. Drawing on your selected theme, declare vocally all that God is.**
- 4. Expand your theme as much as possible. Allow God to reveal new themes for worship as your time of praise develops.**

What is praise? Praise is the vocal adoration of God. Only praise puts God in His rightful position at the very outset of our praying.

Harold Lindsell Since adoration brings man into immediate and direct contact with God, in the role of servant Master, or the created to the Creator, it is foundational to all other kinds of prayer.

Paul Billheimer Here is one of the greatest values of praise; it decentralizes self. The worship and praise of God demands a shift of center from self to God. One cannot praise God without relinquishing occupation with self. Praise produces forgetfulness of self – and forgetfulness of self is health.

LORD, TEACH ME TO ADORE YOU!

THANKSGIVING

The Act Of Expressed Appreciation

- 1. Begin thanksgiving by thinking about all God has given you in recent days.**
- 2. Use these moments of reflection as a basis for offering specific thanksgiving for spiritual, material, physical, and external blessings.**
- 3. Frequently thank God in advance for blessings you expect Him to bestow on you in the future.**
- 4. Thank God for at least one particular blessing you have not thanked Him for previously.**

Basically, thanksgiving is the act of expressing specific gratitude to God for blessings He has bestowed upon us. These expressions may be mental or vocal.

Thanksgiving differs from praise in that praise focuses on who God is, whereas thanksgiving focuses on what God has specifically done for us. When we give thanks we give God the glory for what He has done for us: and when we worship or give praise, we give God glory for what He is in Himself.

Thanksgiving helps us focus on God's faithfulness.

Thanksgiving might well be labeled "a confession of blessing". The Psalmist declared, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" (Ps. 116:12). Later, he answers, "I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord" (Ps. 116:17).

Four ideas for a thank offering.

- 1. Confess spiritual blessings**
- 2. Confess material blessings**
- 3. Confess physical blessings**
- 4. Confess external blessings (blessings not directly related to us).**

Giving thanks for past blessings will require a moment of quiet contemplation concerning God's goodness.

Eph. 5:18,20 "Be filled with the Spirit . . . Giving thanks always for all things unto God."

1 Thess. 5:18,19 "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit."

LORD TEACH ME TO GIVE THANKS!

CLOSING PRAISE

The Act Of Divine Magnification

1. End your prayer with specific praise concerning God's greatness. Focus your praise on His omnipotence (power), His omniscience (knowledge), and His omnipresence (presence).
2. With the Psalmist let us praise God because He has done it. Look back at the devotional hour and praise God for hearing each of your requests.
3. Let your spirit rejoice for a few moments at the close of prayer. Repeat the universal word for praise, Hallelujah!
4. As Martin Luther suggested, when your devotional hour concludes make your amen strong. Confess with authority that you believe God is trustworthy.

When Mary received word she would give birth to the Son of God, divine worship exploded from her lips: My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. . . For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and Holy is His name (Luke 1:46-49).

As we come to these final moments of prayer, the soul pauses to contemplate the awesome wonder of God's being. We vocally magnify the nature of God.

Praise in the closet also prepares us to conquer our foes outside the closet.

Perhaps the greatest secret to learn about prayer is how to maintain a devotional attitude after the devotional hour concludes. We must learn to take the spirit of praise with us from the prayer closet.

Andrew Murray Let us be careful to consider not only the length of the time we spend with God in prayer, but the power with which our prayer takes possession of our whole life.

Spiritual power is not the power of prayer, but is the power of God realized in action through a man in the attitude of prayer.

Martin Luther Mark this! Make your amen strong, never doubting that God is surely listening to you. This is what amen means: That I know with certainty that this prayer has been heard by God.

Our goal beyond the closet is to magnify God's name in all we do.

LORD, TEACH ME TO MAGNIFY YOU!

Lord, Teach Me To Recognize The Worth Of My Prayers!¹

¹ The Hour That Changes the World, Dick Eastman

For Your Greatness O God, I Exalt You

Oh, praise the greatness of our God! Deuteronomy 32:3.

Consider what great things he has done for you. 1 Samuel 12:24.

How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you. All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing praise to your name. Psalm 66:3-4.

God Plays For Keeps

O mighty God, my loving Father, I praise and thank you for acting so strongly on my behalf bold to save me and to transform me.

This I know: "that God is for me"; since You are for me, who can be against me? Therefore, "in God I trust; I will not be afraid."

You have commanded me to trust you with all my heart and to lean not on my own understanding. You have promised that "in quietness and trust" is my strength and that you will keep me in perfect peace as I steadfastly trust in you.

So I bring to you my faith: "in you I trust, O my God." "I trust in you, O Lord; I say, ' You are my God'." "I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust'."

"O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you." I praise and thank you for those words of promise, for by Your grace I believe that this very blessing shall also be mine.

To Fear Him Is To Trust Him

The eyes of my heart are on You, O Lord, as I celebrate Your mighty power displayed in creation and Your absolute sovereignty over the nations.

Convinced of Your greatness, I fear You and stand in awe of You. Because I fear You, I trust You; and because I trust You, I worship You. "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive

glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Fearing You is "the beginning of wisdom," and the beginning as well of my worship. "Who is like you . . . awesome in glory?" No one is! "You alone are to be feared." "You alone are God." So You alone I worship.

Let my worship be acceptable to You today, O living God.

He Is Infinitely Great

"How great you are, O Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you." How awesome You are! How mighty and powerful You are! I glorify You as God and give thanks to You. You are worthy of all my praise forever.

Almighty and awesome God, reveal to me more and more of Your greatness, so that today and for all my days I may grow in fearing You and trusting You.

"I will exalt You, my God the King; I will praise Your name forever and ever."

And thank You, mighty Lord, for being just as much at work today on behalf of Your people as You were in Old Testament times. You have all the power necessary, and infinitely more, to accomplish everything You have planned for us and promised us. "My times are in your hands." "Praise the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great."

Infinitely Greater Than Nature

Today, O Lord, I worship you with gladness. I exalt You as the One who owns and controls all the immeasurable universe. This wonderful earth is Yours, "and everything in it, the world and all who live in it." I worship You, O Lord, "the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land." I worship You as the Master Designer of the day and night skies, "who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name."

"Let the heavens rejoice, that the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it." "Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy."

And yet all this vastness of all that You've created is as nothing in the light of all that You really are. It is only a tiny glimpse of Your greatness, a whisper of Your awesomeness. In comparison to You, how small the universe is, and how small we are.

O Lord, my God, how great Thou art!

Praise be to You, O Lord. "From everlasting to everlasting you are God." "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is Yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; You are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from You; You are the ruler of all things. In Your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all."

Now, my God I give You thanks, and praise Your glorious name.

Infinitely Greater Than The Nations

I praise you, O Most High. I honor and glorify You as the eternal God who lives forever. Your dominion is an eternal dominion; Your Kingdom endures from generation to generation. You do as You please with the powers of heaven and the peoples and rulers of the earth; ultimately no one has justification to doubt the wisdom of Your actions.

"Therefore I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing praise to Your name."

I worship You as the Judge of all the earth. You are coming to judge the world in righteousness and the people in truth. And although as history progresses, the nations in their pride and prosperity continue to "rage like the raging sea" and to "roar like the roaring of great waters," the day is coming when they will finally be still and know that You are God; You will be exalted among the nations, You will be exalted in the earth.

I worship you, O God, "The blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords," who in Your own time will bring about the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank You for exalting Your Son, Jesus, to the highest place and giving Him the name that is above every name, that at His name every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that He is Lord.

"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

To You, O God my Father and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen."

"How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great King over all the earth!"

To Trust Him More

Infinite God, eternal God, unchangeable God, I worship You in amazement.

With You, nothing is ever impossible.

With You, there are never any limits. In all things, You are "able to do immeasurably more than all we asked or imagined."

"From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised." So I praised Your name today, heavenly Father.

And I trust in You. I put my hope in You. O God of hope, fill me with all joy and peace as I trust in You, so that I might overflow with hope by the power of Your Holy Spirit. "Guard my life, for I am devoted to you. You are my God."

An Awesomeness To Cherish

Awesome God, I worship you.

With the eyes of my heart I can see You "robed in splendor; striding forward in the greatness" of Your strength. With the ears of my heart I hear you say, "it is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save."

I praise You, O Lord, and I testify, "Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation."

"O Sovereign Lord, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand." Upon Your awesome strength I lean and depend and rely. "You are a shield around me, O Lord." "You are my hiding place; You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance." "Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me."

Lord God, infinite in power and might, "You are my God, and I will give You thanks; You are my God, and I will exalt you."

I Exalt You, O God

O glorious God; the vast oceans You hold in Your hand and the billions of stars You hold in their courses are but faint pictures of Your infinite greatness. Indeed You spoke the universe into existence in the beginning and now by Your mighty power You hold it all together from hour to hour.

Fill our minds with awe and adoration as we think upon Your greatness. Fill our hearts with gratitude and gladness as we realize that with all Your infinite power and sovereignty, You have condescended to be our God.

Through Jesus Your Son We Praise You.

Amen.

For Your Holiness, O God, I Exalt You

You are enthroned as the Holy One; You are the praise of Israel.

Psalm 22:3

Worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness; tremble before Him, all the earth. Psalm 96:9

Totally Set Apart

This day, my song rises to Thee: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. . . Only Thou art Holy; there is none beside Thee."

I praise You, Holy God, for Your divine and pre-eminent perfection that sets You so totally apart from everything and everyone else in all creation.

"The Lord is in His Holy Temple; the Lord is on His heavenly throne."

I praise and thank You that Your grace and mercy are Holy, Your might and power are Holy, Your justice and righteousness are Holy, Your purity is Holy, Your wisdom is Holy, and even Your wrath is Holy.

All that You are is Holy, Holy, Holy. Therefore let all that I am praise You in this moment. "Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my innermost being, praise His Holy name."

Loving Father, thank You for teaching us in Your Word about Your wonderful holiness. Teach me more and more to respond to Your holiness in the same way that the Angels and saints do in the Scriptures. For you are eternally the Holy One, and "knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

Glorious Perfection

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name." May Your name be recognized and set apart as Holy in my life today. I praise You, Holy God, for Your beautiful and eternal perfection. "Holiness adorns your house for endless days, O Lord. In Your Scriptures we read Your question, "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy one." The answer is that You, O Lord, are infinitely beyond compare! "Who is like You - majestic in holiness, awesome in glory?" Who is like You? No one is! Only Thou art Holy. "Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to Your name? For You alone are Holy." Yes, I glory in Your Holy name as I come before You, and my heart rejoices.

More Than Moral Purity

"Holy, Holy, Holy . . . Lord God Almighty." I praise You for Your incomprehensible glory, Your transcendent majesty. I praise You for being infinitely exalted above and beyond all mankind, above and beyond all angels, and above and beyond everything else in all creation. "Praise the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty. Upon Your throne You shine forth, "perfect in beauty." "You have set Your glory above the heavens." Glorious God, "how majestic is Your name in all the earth!" "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name." "My mouth is filled with Your praise, declaring Your splendor all the day long. You have said, "I am the Lord, that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols." Therefore You have chosen "to bring low the pride of all glory and to humble all who

are renowned on the earth." Yes, Holy God, You alone are worthy of all glory forever!
I worship You, and praise Your holy name.

Luster And Brilliance

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.
You have testified that You are zealous for Your holy name.
You are entirely right to be this way, and therefore You are infinitely worthy of all my worship. For from You and through You and to You are all things. To You "be the glory forever!
Amen."

In Your Word You say to me, "The Lord Almighty is the one you are to regard as Holy. He is the one you are to fear. He is the one you are to dread." Yes, You alone are entirely pure and Holy. You alone are worthy of my total reverence and awe.

I praise You that in Your complete holiness You are infinitely separate from any and all sin. "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; You cannot tolerate wrong." "You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with You the wicked cannot dwell.

The arrogant cannot stand in Your presence. You hate all who do wrong. You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the Lord abhors." You indeed, O God, are "a consuming fire."

"I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Oh, praise the greatness of our God!" You are "a faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just.

Holy and awesome is Your name.

No Darkness At All

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. I worship You today as I enter Your holy presence by the body and blood of Your Holy Son, Jesus Christ.

"The Lord is in His Holy Temple." "And in His temple all cry, 'Glory!'"

"Glory to God in the highest." "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and let Your glory be over all the earth."

"Your ways, O God, are holy." Father of light, in whom "there is no darkness at all," I praise You for Your infinite holiness. You

live "in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see."

Thank You, Father of light, for sending into my life "the light of the world" - Your Son, Jesus, who is "The true light that gives light to every man." "You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.

"In your light we see light." Loving Father, thank You for the light You give to me through the Bible and through Your Holy Spirit. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Your commands "are radiant, giving light to the eyes." Because You are Holy, Your words "are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times." And in Your Word I see this wonderful promise: "the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be Your glory."

Thank You, my God and Father, my Light and my Glory! You, O Lord, are my Holy One, my Creator, and my King.

The Only Appropriate Response

Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

"You are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel." You formed Your people for Yourself that they may proclaim Your praise. Therefore I worship and praise you.

"Great is the Holy One of Israel."

"The Lord is in his holy temple." "Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy." Yes, "exalt the Lord our God and worship at his holy mountain for the Lord our God is holy."

"My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name forever and ever.

Almighty God, as I praise Your holiness, Your blazing moral purity, I cannot help being aware of my own sinfulness and impurity. Holy Father, I ask for Your help and power in my pursuit of holiness, for only by Your help can I make progress in obeying Your command to be holy as You are holy. "Look down from heaven and see from your lofty throne, holy and glorious." I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God.

Holy Justice, Holy Mercy

Holy Father, I come now before You to worship You. “Exalted be God my Savior!

Thank you for making known to Your people and to all the world both Your holy justice and Your holy mercy.

I praise You for Your justice and Your Righteousness. “Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. “the Lord is righteous, he loves justice.” You are indeed “a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.” “Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you” – and the fear that is due You is infinite.

I praise You for the righteousness and holiness of Your Son, Jesus, “whose eyes are like blazing fire” and who bears “the sharp, double-edged sword.” Like Simon Peter in Galilee long ago, I have come to “believe and know” that Jesus is indeed “the Holy One of God.”

Almighty Father, I also praise and thank You for Your holy mercy, Your “tender mercy,” Your “great mercy” by which You have saved me and given me new birth. You are “full of compassion and mercy and find grace to help in my time of need.

Thank You for the amazing truth that by Your mercy, as well as by Your fatherly discipline, I can actually come to share in Your Holiness. I “have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” You chose me in Christ “before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless” in Your sight.

You have done great things for me, and I am filled with joy.

“I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart.”

His Holiness And Mine

In the splendor of Your holiness I worship You, O God Most High. You live forever, Your name is holy and You dwell in a high and holy place.

“How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty!” “You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary.” Yes, how infinitely high and lofty You are in heaven. Yet You promise to come down and dwell in the heart of one “who is contrite and lowly in spirit.”

Lord, Your Word reminds me that I am only dust, only a vanishing mist. In humility I acknowledge that this is true. So I ask You. "Part your heavens, O Lord, and come down . . . Reach down your hand from on high." Come down and deliver me in this moment from any pride, from any coldness toward You, and from any treasured sin.

"Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me, let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell." I approach Your altar to encounter You. O God, "my joy and my delight." "I will praise you . . . O God my God.

"Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you." Let me share in that blessing today.

In Your Word, I read Your promise: "I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations." You have promised a coming day when "men will look to their Maker and turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel." You have promised, "The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations." You have promised that "once more the humble will rejoice in the Lord; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." You have promised that your people "will keep my name holy; they will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.

O faithful God, I believe and eagerly await Your fulfillment of all these promises. How I look forward to the glorious day, when we will shout, "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

While I wait for that day, I ask You to keep giving me Your strength and guidance and wisdom to daily pursue holiness, for You "did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life." Help me heed your good command to purify myself "from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

And I will praise You and glorify You with thanksgiving.

Only By His Blood

“I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.”

I praise you, Lord Most High, for Your infinite holiness. As I better understand it. I must thank You all the more for Your unexplainable mercy to me. I have continually sinned against Your perfect moral purity, and my sin is aggravated by the greatness of Your transcendent majesty. I have committed high treason against You, the supreme, exalted Ruler, of the universe. I have done this again and again and again.

And yet you have shown me mercy! You have not treated me as my sins deserve or repaid me according to my iniquities. You are “rich in mercy,” and in Christ, through His blood, You have lavished upon me the riches of Your amazing grace. Thank you, loving Father! “The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him.”

Now by the blood of Jesus, my “merciful and faithful high priest,” I have confidence to enter Your Most Holy Place. Therefore by His precious blood I now draw near to You, O God, “with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.

Lord Jesus, I give praise to You as my Holy Saviour and the perfect High Priest who meets my deepest need. You indeed are “holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

I have been redeemed from an empty life “not with perishable things such as silver or gold,” but with Your own precious blood, Lord Jesus! You are the Lamb without blemish or defect! You are the Lamb of God who takes away my sins!

Thank You, Holy Jesus.

My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name forever and ever.

O holy God! The sinless seraphs cover their faces in Your presence. How much more should we who are but sinful creatures bow in reverence before Your throne. You alone are holy. You alone are the transcendent, majestic God. You alone are morally pure.

You are perfect light; in You there is no darkness at all. And yet, through Your Son You came to us as our savior. You came not to pronounce woe but blessing to those who trust in Jesus. Fill our hearts with awe because of Your holiness and with amazement because of your love.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord we praise You.

Amen

PRAYER

LESSON 1.

What is required to experience God's power in our lives?

2 Chron 7:11-15

PSALM 24:3-5

Verse 3. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?

Or who shall stand in his holy place?

- 1. It is uphill work for the creature to reach the creator.
(Ponder the path of thy feet)**
- 2. Where is the mighty climber who can scale the towering heights?
(Look carefully how you walk)**
- 3. Nor is it heights alone, it is glory, too.
(Examine the ground)**
- 4. Whose eye shall see the King in His beauty and dwell in His palace?
(Read Isa. 6:1-8 and Rev. Ch. 4 and 5)**

Verse 4. He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;

Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,

Nor sworn deceitfully.

- 1. Clean hands has to do with righteous actions.**
- 2. Pure heart has to do with righteous thoughts and motives.**
- 3. Vanity has to do with all that the human heart puts in the place of God.**

4. Sworn deceitfully has to do with never telling lies.

Verse 5. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,

And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

1. Blessings a gift from God ie. Benefit, Favor, Peace.

2. Righteousness, having a right standing with God.

These alone may enter God's presence and worship the God of Israel.

Lesson

1. Divine help is necessary to worship God acceptably.

2. Acceptable worship is productive of the greatest blessings.

3. The outward life should be in harmony with the deepest experiences of the heart. The preachers Homiletic Comentary

Why Pray & Prayer Hindrance

Section 2

PRAYER DEFINED

Prayer. Communication with God through thoughts, words, and gestures whereby we express what we believe about God and our relationship to God and to one another. God intends and initiates this relationship and we accept it. In prayer we express God's activity in and presence to us. In faith we pray believing that God is concerned about and responsive to human need.

There are two basic kinds of prayer.

- 1. In adoration and thanksgiving we respond in awe to God's abundant providence. Psalms of praise acknowledge God's goodness and greatness in creation (Ps.6) and guiding the events of history (Ps. 30).**
- 2. In petition and intercession we respond to human weakness and need by asking for God's help (Ps. 33).**

No one style of prayer suits all people. Because cultures, individual personality types, needs differ, prayers also differ. Even when we choose a certain method of prayer, we will often make it uniquely our own.

Prayer is life with a living God, life wholly attentive to the sober truth and reality of God. Our mind and heart open to God so that we may grow in holiness and so give God glory. It is face-to-face encounter with the God who loves us with the unflinching mercy and self-offering that is grace. We give ourselves to God in return. As our trust in and dependence on God as Father deepen and intensify, we pray for growth in our as sons and daughters to God and as brothers and sisters to one another. Prayer teaches us patience, compassion, awareness, and simplicity, leading us to an understanding of our selves as a part of the greater community and connected to all of life.¹

¹ The Upper Room Dictionary Of Christian Spiritual Formation

WHY PRAY

William Barkley The Lord's Prayer

Prayer is not so much an emergency appeal in need as it is a continuing and unbroken conversation and fellowship with God. We may well remember that the words I, me, my, and mine never appear in the Lord's Prayer.

The Jews describe the first necessity of prayer by an almost untranslatable word 'Prayer' they said, 'needs *kawannab*.' *Kawannab* is concentrated intention and devotion; it is the attitude in which eyes and mind and heart are fixed on God.

Dick Eastman The Hour That Changed The World

Prayer is the simplest act a creature of God can perform.

Prayer is the vision of the believer. It gives eyes to our faith. In prayer we see beyond ourselves and focus spiritual eyes on God's infinite power.

Prayer is also man's ultimate indication of trust in his heavenly Father.

Prayer is not optional.

Be careful not to become a slave to "any prayer system".

Why pray?

- 1. Because Jesus calls us to prayer.**
- 2. Because prayer works.**

Nothing is beyond the reach of prayer because God Himself is the focus of prayer.

But when we neglect the closet of prayer we remove ourselves from the focus of God's power.

E. M. Bounds Prayer is the contract of a living soul with God. In prayer, God stoops to kiss man, to bless man, and to aid in everything that God can devise or man can need.

Charles Spurgeon Prayer is the slender nerve that moveth the muscles of omnipotence.

Dr. E. Stanley Jones In prayer you align yourselves to the purpose and power of God and He is able to do things through you that He couldn't do otherwise. For this is an open universe, where some things are left open, contingent upon our doing them. If we do not do them, they will never be done. For God has left certain things open to prayer – things which will never be done except as we pray.

Adam Clarke Warns. Apostasy begins in the closet. No man ever backslid from the life and power of Christianity who continued constant and fervent in private prayer. He who prays without ceasing is likely to rejoice evermore.

Rosalind Goforth Prayer has been hedged about with too many man-made rules. I am convinced that God has intended prayer to be as simple and natural, and as constant a part of our spiritual life as the intercourse between a child and his parent in the home.

Whether it be so heavy that others cannot bear
To know the heavy burden they come and share;
Whether it be so tiny that others cannot see
Why it should be a burden, and seem so real to me,
Either and both I lay them down at the Master's feet
And find them alone with Jesus mysteriously sweet.

Andrew Murray Prayer is indispensable to what God in heaven desires to do on earth. Intercession is the main element in the conversion of souls. All efforts are in vain without the power of the Holy Spirit given in answer prayer.

Christ lives in heaven to pray – asking the fullness of the Spirit for His people. God delights in nothing as much as in prayer. Believe that the highest blessing of heaven will be given to us as we pray more.

C. H. Spurgeon Whenever God determines to do a great work, He first sets His people to pray.

John C. Maxwell Prayer changes us by drawing us closer to God, changing and molding us into His likeness in the process. David understood prayer's power as a personal change agent. His prayer in Psalm 25:4-5 describes the process that prayer takes a person through:
*Show me your ways, O Lord,
Teach me your paths;
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
For you are God my savior, and my hope is in you all day long.*

When God *shows us* His standards and His will for our lives, it isn't always easy on us. It almost always requires us to grow and change. But once we accept what God shows us, He is able to *teach us*. And when we are teachable and growing, He is finally able to *guide us*, and lead us into His plan and purpose.
When God shows me, He has my heart.
When God teaches me, He has my mind.
When God guides me, He has my hand.

Becky Triabassi Prayer allows God's presence into all areas and aspects of one's life, beginning with simple, daily decisions and culminating with one's life's purpose.

- Prayer fuels faith to dream and hope and risk.
- Prayer woos us to the Word by our need to hear God's response to our requests.
- Prayer teaches trust in God through waiting upon His timing.
- Prayer reveals God's plan and our purpose in opening up to us detailed directions for both the present and the future.
- Prayer releases God's power to live and walk in the supernatural realm of the Holy Spirit.
- Prayer unleashes love for God – emotional, real, and all consuming.

Bruce Wilkinson Simply put, God favors those who ask. He holds back nothing from those who want and earnestly long for what He wants.

**Andrew Murray God will hear me. What a wonderful certainty!
We have God's Word for it. God delights in hearing our prayer.**

Andrew Murray A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

As you pray for God's great mercies to be granted, take with you these thoughts:

- 1. The infinite willingness of God to bless. His very nature is a pledge of it. He delights in mercy. He waits to be gracious. His promises and the experience of His saints assure us of it.**
- 2. Why then is the blessing delayed? In creating man with a free will and making him a partner in the rule of the earth, God limited Himself. He made Himself dependent on what man would do. Man by his prayer would hold the measure of what God could do in blessing.**
- 3. Think of how God is hindered and disappointed when His Children seldom pray. The weak Church, the lack of the power of the Holy Spirit, is all because of the lack of prayer. How different would be the state of the Church and of the world if God's people were to unceasingly call on Him!**
- 4. Yet God has blessed – just up to the measure of the faith and the zeal of His people. If He has thus blessed our weak prayers, what will He do if we yield ourselves wholly to a life of intercession?**
- 5. This call to repentance and confession! Our lack of conversation has held back God's blessing from the world. He was ready to save, but we were not willing for the sacrifice of a whole-hearted devotion to Christ and His service.**

John Bunyan Prayer is a sincere, sensible affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God, through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the holy Spirit, for such things as God has promised, as according to the word of God, for the good of the church, with submission in faith to the will of God.

God commands us to pray.

He commands us to pray in public and private.

Prayer brings those who have the spirit of supplication into a wonderful communion and fellowship with God; therefore, God has ordained prayer as a means for us to grow in a personal relationship with Him.

Prayer opens our hearts to God.

Our prayers are the means by which our souls, though empty, are filled by God to overflowing.

In our prayers, we Christians can open our hearts to God as to a friend, and obtain a fresh confirmation of His friendship with us.

I might also distinguish between prayer in the heart and prayer that is spoken aloud.

Can you pray these psalms from your heart?

Psalm 42:1, As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.

Psalm 119:40 How I long for your precepts! Preserve my life in your righteousness.

Psalm 119:174 I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight.

Psalm 84:2 My soul yearns, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

Psalm 119:20 My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times.

When your affections are indeed engaged, and engaged in such urgency that your soul will spend itself to nothing, as it were, rather than go without the good desired, you will have communion and solace with Christ.

When you pray, you pour out your heart or soul to God. Prayer is an unbosoming of yourself, an opening of your heart to God, an affectionate pouring out of your soul in requests, sighs, and groans.

Prayer must be a pouring out of the heart or spirit to God. This shows the excellency of the spirit of prayer.

So also, if your prayers are not in the strength and assistance of the Holy Spirit, you can be like the sons of Aaron, offering with strange fire.

True prayer submits to the will of God and says “your will be done” matt. 6:10.

While you’re praying, God is searching your heart to see from what root and spirit your prayer arises.

God answers only those requests that are according to His will, and nothing else.

Only the Spirit can teach us to pray according to His will.

He is the only Being able to search out all things, even the deep things of God.

Without the Holy Spirit, though we had a thousand common prayer books, we would not know what we ought to pray for, especially since we have infirmities which make us absolutely incapable of praying according to His will.

Unless the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness, we cannot conceive rightly of God to Whom we pray, of Christ through Whom we pray, of the things for which we should pray, nor how we shall address God.

Right prayer must be made both in the outward expression and the inward intention: it must come from what the soul apprehends in the light of the Holy Spirit.

No one can know how to come to God the right way unless he learns how to pray in or with the Holy Spirit.

Your heart must be lifted up by the Holy Spirit, if you are to pray rightly. And when it is up, if you are to continue to pray rightly, your heart must be held up by the Holy Spirit.

And indeed, here is the life of prayer: to have your heart kept with God in the duty of prayer. If it was a great matter for Moses to keep his hands lifted up to God in prayer, how much more then for us to keep our hearts lifted up to God.

For as my heart, when I go to pray, I find it is disinclined to go to God; and when it is with Him, so disinclined to stay with Him, that many times I am forced in my prayers; first, to beg God to take my heart and set it upon Himself in Christ; and second, when it is there, that He would keep it there.

Our heart faces many difficulties in the time of prayer. No one knows how many by-ways and back-lanes our heart may use to slip away from the presence of God. How much pride the heart has, if enabled with expressive language to pray with Him. How much hypocrisy, if praying before others. And how little conscience is there made of prayer between God and the soul in secret, unless the Spirit of supplication is there to help. When the Holy Spirit gets into the heart, then there is prayer indeed, and not until then.

To pray with understanding is to pray while being instructed by the Holy Spirit in the Understanding regarding those things for which you are to pray.

Andrew Murray The Power of prayer rests in the faith that God hears prayer.

Kenneth Boa The concept of communicating with God, talking directly and openly with Him just as we would talk with an intimate friend, is one of the greatest truths of Scripture. As John Piper observed in *The Pleasures of God*, "Prayer is God's delight because it shows the reaches of our poverty and the riches of His grace." When prayer is overlooked or appended as an afterthought to service, the power of God is often absent. It is dangerously easy to move away from dependence upon God and to slip into the trap of self-reliance. But prayer and action are complementary, not contradictory, and it is wise to overlap them as much as possible. Christian service is most effective when prayer not only precedes it but also flows together with it.

WHY SHOULD WE PRAY

There are many reasons for making this discipline the centerpiece of your spiritual journey. Here are ten:

- ❖ Prayer enhances our fellowship and intimacy with God (Ps. 116:1-2; Jer. 33:2-3).
- ❖ The Scriptures command us to pray (Lk. 18:1; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; 1 Tim. 2:1).
- ❖ When we pray, we follow the example of Christ and other great people in Scripture like Moses and Elijah (Mk. 1:35; Num. 11:2; 1 Kings 18:36-37).
- ❖ Prayer appropriates God's power for our lives (Jn. 15:5; Acts 4:31; Eph. 3:16; Col.4:2-4).
- ❖ We receive special help from God when we pray (Heb 4:16).
- ❖ Prayer makes a genuine difference (Lk. 11:9-10; Jas. 5:16-18). As William Temple observed, "When I pray, coincidences happen; when I don't, they don't."
- ❖ Prayer develops our understanding and knowledge of God (Ps. 37:3-6; 63:1-8; Eph 1:16-19).

- ❖ Our prayers and God's answers give us joy and peace in our hearts (Jn. 16:23-24; Phil. 4:6-7). Our problems may not disappear, but in prayer we gain a new perspective on our problems along with the peace and patience to stand firm.
- ❖ Prayer helps us understand and accomplish God's purpose for our lives (Col. 1:9-11).
- ❖ Prayer changes our attitudes and desires (2 Cor, 12:7-9).

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCING YOUR PRACTICE OF PRAYER

Choose the best time.

Select a particular time of the day and dedicate it to personal prayer only. For most of us, the morning is best because we have been refreshed by the previous night's rest, and we are not yet absorbed in the demands of the day. This is often the time we can keep most consistently, and during morning prayers we can dedicate the day to the Lord. It is extremely wise to bring Him into our decision-making process by thinking through and planning the day's activities in prayer. "If God is not first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, he will be in last place the remainder of the day" (E. M. Bounds).

Choose the best place.

Select a place where there will be a minimum of interruptions and distractions. If possible, pray away from your phone and your desk. When the weather and your schedule permit, you may want to try praying during a walk.

Set a minimum time for daily prayer.

Try to be realistic – don't attempt too much at first or your prayer life will become mechanical and discouraging. Start with a few minutes and gradually build from there. Faithfulness on this level will lead to an increased appetite and you will actually look forward to the times you spend with God. "In prayer, quality is always better than quantity" (Robert Coleman). Nevertheless, quality should not become a substitute for quantity. "Surely the experience of all good men confirms the proposition that without a due measure of private devotions the soul will grow lean (William Wilberforce).

Be Consistent.

Regard your prayer time as a daily appointment you have made with God and respect it as such. If the discipline of regular time with God is not a matter of the highest priority, your spiritual life will suffer, and this will ultimately affect every other aspect of your life. Set your heart to pursue the person, knowledge, and ways of God by spending regular time with Him.

Focus on the person of God

Prepare your heart and mind for prayer by releasing all stresses and concerns and giving them to the Lord. It is a good practice to read or meditate upon a passage of Scripture and then to concentrate your attention on the presence of Christ in your life. Rest in His presence, "casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.

Come before Him in humility.

You are in the unmediated presence of the holy God who is like a blazing light and a consuming fire, before whom all things are manifest. Judge yourself to be sure that you are approaching Him in honesty and openness, with no barriers of unconfessed sin, because He hates sin and cover-ups. Sometimes we get too casual before the One who spoke the hundreds of billions of galaxies into existence.

Come expectantly to the throne.

The significance of prayer is not what we are asking, but the person we are addressing. Come in simplicity and trust like a child to a father. Expect the supernatural – ask Him for something only He can do ("Is anything too difficult for the LORD?" Gen 18:14) and watch what happens.

Pray at all times in the Spirit.

"We do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26). Our prayers should be initiated and energized by the Holy Spirit who "intercedes for the saints according to the will of God"(Rom. 8:27).

Strive for a balance.

Our prayers should incorporate all the elements of confession, adoration, supplication (intercession and petition), and thanksgiving. We are usually short on adoration and thanksgiving.

Pray scripture back to God.

By personalizing passages of Scripture and offering them back to the Lord, you integrate them in your own life and experience and think God's thoughts after Him.

Do not do all the talking.

Practice times of silence before the Lord so that you can be sensitive to the promptings of His Spirit. Be responsive to Him by confessing any areas of exposed sin, interceding for others, praying for wisdom, and submitting to His desires.

Make prayer a part of your relationship with people.

Personal prayer is crucial, but it must not crowd out corporate prayer. Prayer should be a part of the home and part of Christian friendship. Great benefit can be derived from setting up a prayer partnership with another person, a prayer cell with a few people, or a prayer fellowship with several people.

Plan special times of prayer during the year.

You may want to consider setting aside one or more special times (a morning or evening or a whole day) for a personal or small group prayer retreat. This can be especially meaningful when done in context of planning ahead for the next several months or when a critical decision must be made.

Practice the presence of God.

Helmut Thielicke noted that "prayer is no longer the active soil of our life, our home, the air we breathe." When ministry becomes a substitute for prayer, it becomes self-dependent and ineffective. We should desire not only to have one or more times that are formally dedicated to prayer during the day, but also to be conscious of the presence of God throughout the day. In this way, each task is rendered in His name and done in conscious dependence upon Him. Another desirable habit we should seek

to cultivate is to pray for others as we see them and talk with them. This can radically affect our attitudes and behavior. A third beneficial habit is to begin to associate our work with prayer. "it is not prayer in addition to work, but prayer simultaneous with work. We precede, enfold, and follow all our work with prayer. Prayer and action become wedded" (Richard Foster).

A DEEP MYSTERY

***I AM PRAYING TO YOU BECAUSE I KNOW
YOU WILL ANSWER, O GOD.***

Psalm 17:6

God will hear me. What a deep mystery! There are difficulties that arise and perplex the heart. There is the question of God's sovereign will. How can our wishes change His perfect will? He knows what is best and lives to give us the very best. How can our prayer change what He has ordained?

What is the need of persevering in prayer? If God is infinite love, delighting to give, why is there need for pleading, for urgency and long delay in answering our prayers?

What of the multitude of apparently unanswered prayers? Many have pleaded for loved ones and they die unsaved. Many cry for physical healing without results. This tries our faith and makes us hesitate when we say, "God will hear me."

Prayer is a deep spiritual mystery. Answers can be given that remove some of the difficulty from our questions but, as little as we can comprehend of God, we can comprehend one of the most wonderful of His attributes – He hears prayer. It is a spiritual mystery.

God hears because we pray in His Son and because the Holy Spirit prays in us. If we have believed in Christ and the Holy Spirit, we should not hesitate to believe in the power of our prayer too. We can believe and rejoice in it, even when every question is not yet answered. We need to surrender our questions to God's love, trust His faithfulness and obey His command to pray without ceasing. Andrew Murray

Richard Foster We never have pure enough motives, or are good enough, or know enough in order to pray rightly. We simply must set all these things aside and begin praying. In fact, it is in the very act of prayer itself – the intimate, ongoing interaction with God – that these matters are cared for in due time.

Paul Wallis The incredible fact is *God wants to meet me!* It is because God has reconciled us to himself that we are able to meet him in prayer – not because of how we are or the way we feel. This means, then, that I don't have to wait until I'm feeling 'good enough' or 'spiritual enough' to pray.

Carlo Carretto Prayer is the sum of our relationship with God. We are what we pray. The degree of our faith is the degree of our prayer. The strength of our hope is the strength of our prayer. The warmth of our charity is the warmth of our prayer. No more nor less. Our prayer has had a beginning because we have had a beginning. But it will have no end. It will accompany us into eternity and will be completed in our contemplation of God, when we join in the harmony of heaven and are 'filled with the flood of God's delights'. The story of our earthly-heavenly life will be the story of our prayer.

Andrew Murray God is a Spirit; and He gave us a spirit with the object of having fellowship Himself. Deeper than our thoughts and feelings, God will, in our inmost being, in our spirits within us, teach us to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Henri Nouwen¹ In Nouwen's thought, prayer was not an activity of the mind alone, but was primarily an activity of the heart. He perceived it as the "most human of all human acts."

Prayer is creating room. Prayer is a spiritual discipline as a practice that creates room in which God can transform a person. "God dwells only where man steps back to give him room." Nouwen counters this idea (that prayer is basically a place to

¹ Deirdre La Noue The Spiritual Legacy of Henri Nouwen

talk to God for things or intercede), by saying that prayer is about human transformation, not God persuasion.

Prayer is listening, being obedient. Prayer is “being all ear before God.” Without prayer, without listening to God, believers will remain deaf and their lives will grow absurd. Jesus often spoke of his prayer life in the sense of listening to his Father and doing what he commanded. He does mention the discipline of reading the Bible as a means of knowing God and hearing instruction.

Prayer is the most basic movement. Prayer is not one of the many things that Christians do but “the basic receptive attitude out of which all of life can receive new vitality. The question of when or how to pray is not really the most important one. The crucial question is whether you should pray always and whether your prayer is necessary . . . Whenever you feel that a little praying can’t do any harm, you will find it can’t do much good either . . . Prayer is only prayer when we can say that without it a man could not live.

Prayer is the breath of life. “Praying is living.” It is true that prayer is not about what those praying can cause to happen, but about what happens in those who pray as the Spirit, or breath of God, is set free to transform them. Therefore prayer is affective more than effective. For him prayer was the means through which the Spirit of God shaped the heart and mind of the believer.

Prayer is unceasing and all-pervasive. Just as a person does not cease to breathe, so, in Nouwen’s thought prayer should not cease. Unceasing prayer for Nouwen, in keeping with Paul’s admonition to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17), was to think and live in the presence of God. It is giving every part of life to God. It is bringing all of one’s thoughts into a loving conversation with God. Such a discipline is indeed difficult, because human beings resist submitting all that they are to God. “Unceasing prayer is indeed an ongoing struggle against idolatry,” but bringing the dark as well as the light in our lives to God in an encompassing act of prayer is to be truly obedient.

Prayer is being dependent on God. Prayer involves going to God for everything.

Prayer requires that we stand in God's presence with open hands, naked and vulnerable, proclaiming to ourselves and to others that without God we can do nothing. This is difficult in a climate where the predominant counsel is, "Do your best and God will do the rest." When life is divided into "our best" and "God's rest" we have turned prayer into a last resort to be used only when all our own resources are depleted. Then even the Lord has become the victim of our impatience. Discipleship does not mean to use God when we can no longer function ourselves. On the contrary, it means to recognize that we can do nothing at all, but that God can do everything through us. As disciples, we find not some but all our strength, hope, courage, and confidence in God. Therefore, prayer must be our first concern.

Prayer is being useless. In our utilitarian culture, in which we suffer from a collective compulsion to do something practical, helpful, or useful, and to make a contribution that can give us a sense of worth, contemplative prayer is a form of radical criticism. It is not useful or practical but a way of wasting time for God. It cuts a hole in our busyness and reminds us and others that it is God and not we who creates and sustains the world.

Prayer is hospitality. The Spirit of God through prayer shapes the character of a person so that he or she exemplifies those characteristics that are holy and pleasing to God and to others. Our inner life is like a holy space that needs to be kept in good order and well decorated. Prayer, in whatever form, is the way to make our inner room a place where we can welcome those people who search for God. . . Without prayer and contemplation the walls of our inner room will remain barren, and few will be inspired.

The main purpose of prayer, for Nouwen, was intimate communion with God. Prayer invites us to live in ever closer communion with the one who loves us more than any human being ever can.

To the degree that our prayer has become the prayer of our heart we will love more and suffer more, we will see more light and more darkness, more grace and more sin, more of God and more of humanity. To the degree that we have descended into our heart and reached out to God from there, solitude can speak unto solitude, deep to deep and heart to heart. It is there where love and pain are found together.

When we are thrown up and down by the little waves on the surface of our existence, we become easy victims of our manipulative world, but, when we continue to hear the deep gentle voice that blesses us, we can walk through life with a stable sense of well-being and true belonging.

Nouwen's honesty here has to be appreciated. I have lived with the expectation that prayer would become easier as I grew older and closer to death. But the opposite seems to be happening.

The year ahead on me must be a year of prayer . . . Maybe the time has come to let go of my prayer, my effort to be close to God, my way of being in communion with the Divine, and allow the Spirit of God to blow freely in me.

Listening was, for Nouwen, the more important aspect of prayer, especially during the time that is set aside to be still and to be quiet. He suggested a simple prayer such as the Jesus prayer or a simple phrase from Scripture to repeat over and over in a contemplative fashion. Such the 'mind to descend into the heart in order to stand in the presence of God.' Nouwen called this kind of prayer "prayer of the heart" or "simple prayer" in keeping with the desert tradition. Prayer was indeed the essential thing in Nouwen's mind.

Theophan the Recluse said, if prayer is right, everything is right."

Andrew Murray Remember that one of the Holy Spirit's objectives is to teach us to pray. He makes fellowship with the Father and the Son a wonderful reality. As you pray, give yourself wholly to His guidance as your Teacher in all your intercession and adoration.

FIRST – pray in the confidence that the Holy Spirit lives in us, and yield ourselves to His leading.

SECOND – believe that the “greater works” of the Spirit for the enlightening and strengthening of the spiritual life will be given in answer to prayer.

THIRD – believe that through the Spirit, in unity with all God’s children, we may ask and expect the mighty working of that Spirit on His Church and people.

Obstacles to a Relationship with God

Henri Nouwen One such obstacle is the modern plague of business. Solitude and silence, the environs of prayer do not come easily in a world that is noisy and bustling. Even when Christians believe God desires a relationship with them and they know that all the spiritual disciplines are the means to create space for God, they are often overcome by a life that is too busy for God. Nouwen struggled in this battle with time. He knew his life was not focused enough on the one thing that mattered most, his intimacy with the Father, and yet he filled his life with many activities and commitments, and felt the demands of many obligations. Nouwen mentioned this dilemma throughout his journals and referred to the struggle when writing about priority of seeking first the Kingdom through prayer and other disciplines.

Another obstacle to a relationship with God is fear. Nouwen acknowledged that many people live in a constant mode of fear to the point that, whether they are aware of it or not, they make their decisions based on fear and accept this as what has to be. The voice they most need to hear is God’s voice, which says, ‘Do not be afraid.’ Yet many people are afraid of God, and Nouwen saw this as the greatest block in the spiritual life.

As long as we are afraid of God, we cannot love God. Love, means intimacy, closeness, mutual vulnerability, and a deep sense of safety. But all of those are impossible as long as there is fear. Fear creates suspicion, distance, defensiveness, and insecurity.

An obstacle that is related to fear of God is the idea of doubting God’s love. Nouwen struggled with this obstacle as well. Nouwen believed self-acceptance was integrally related to faith in God’s acceptance. As people struggle with their own failures

and difficulties, low self-esteem causes a spiraling downward that is debilitating.

My only real temptation is to doubt in your love, to think myself as beyond the reach of your love, to remove myself from the healing radiance of your love. To do these things is to move into darkness of despair.

Ludovico Barbo Without mental prayer it would be virtually impossible for frail humanity to bear the fierce struggles of religious life. You can inebriate with sweetness your dryness of heart, making use of water of prayer drawn from the fountain of the Savior. As a tree experiencing drought sheds its unripened fruit and leaves, so the soul that is deprived of the dew of prayer brings forth incomplete works infected with distaste.

Three ways of praying

A. The first Vocal

Great contemplative saints make it their custom to always start from this form of prayer before ascending to the other, higher ways of prayer.

B. The Second stage Meditation

Meditation happens this way: it prays not with words, but in the heart, understanding, and affectivity.

C. The third stage Contemplation

Contemplating God prepares the soul, for divine contemplation.

Evelyn Underhill Prayer says Walter Hilton is nothing else but ascending or getting up of the desire of the heart into God by withdrawing it from earthly thoughts. William Law defines prayer as the rising of the soul out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity. Prayer will include many different kinds of spiritual work; and also the priceless gift of spiritual rest. Prayer as a rule, should begin with something we usually call intellectual act. Meditation comes before oration (spoken prayer). Meditation is simply the art of thinking steadily and methodically about spiritual things. Prayer then begins by an intellectual adjustment. By thinking of God to the exclusion of other objects of thought, by deliberately surrendering the consciousness for the inflow of new life.

Jean Nicholas Grou If we only approach him with confidence, asking him to teach us himself and desiring to be taught by his grace how to converse with God, how soon we should be skilled in it and how many of its secrets we should discover! We know in general prayer is a religious act, but when it comes to praying we easily forget that it is a supernatural act which is therefore not done in our own strength and can only be performed by inspiration and help of grace. Why do we lay open our hearts to God and beg him to put into it whatever is most pleasing to him? For God reads the secrets of the heart. God reads its most intimate feelings, even those which we are not aware of. Imagine a soul so closely united to God that it has no need of outward acts to remain attentive to the inward prayer.

St. Teresa of Avila The whole foundation of prayer must be laid in humility, and the more a soul humbles itself in prayer, the more God lifts it up. The most elegant prayer is unacceptable to God unless it is accompanied by humility. For prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God. It is frequently conversing in secret with Him who loves us. For many years before I went to sleep at night. I used to meditate a little upon the mystery of this scene of Christ's prayer in the Garden while I said my prayers. A very learned man once told me that souls without the exercise of prayer are like a body that is paralyzed or crippled.

St. Augustine Once said Love God and then do as you please. Dying to your self-nature is a command from God. Once you have made a decision to know God, you will find that God has placed a desire in your heart to continually draw near to Him. The closer you grow to God the stronger the desire becomes. It becomes natural, almost habitual, to place God at the center of your life. You must simply follow the desire of your life. You must simply follow the desire of your heart to know God and turn from wickedness. Because you should soon enjoy a continual sense of God's presence which will become natural for you. His presence as well as prayer should soon become almost habitual to you. You have a need to enter God's presence and there remain quiet. When distracted don't struggle with your

temptations or distractions. It only seems to increase their intensity and draw you away from your sole purpose of seeking God. Prayer is an incense that ascends to God. It is simply pouring out the contents of one's heart in the presence of God. Place yourself in quietness to receive from God. Cease from laboring in prayer as soon as you sense the prompting of the Holy Spirit of God to pray through you. There is no better way to learn to love God than to simply love Him. Nothing opposes God more than self.

Frances Fenelon Teach me to pray: may you yourself pray in me and through me. Let us begin by placing ourselves in God's hands. As we serve him, let us never become anxious and troubled about what he will do for us. Life is short – if we suffer a little less or a little more, that is no great thing, when we keep our sight on the kingdom that will last forever. As long as God does not hide himself from my heart, I will always be rich; I will not have lost anything at all. I will have held onto the One who is everything. Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.

Henry Van Dyke Prayer is the believer's comfort and support, weapon of defense, light in darkness, companionship in solitude, fountain in the desert, the believer's hope and deliverance.

Samuel Chadwick The one concern of the Devil is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless study, prayerless work, prayerless religion – but trembles when we pray.

Henri Nouwen All our lives may be freed of fear if we are content to glory in His presence.

Brother Lawrence Prayer itself is the link between all of life and Him who is the life. And the "little way" is the way of those whose career is but an occupation and whose calling is knowing God. But the prayer of the "little way" is never grand.

F. B. Meyer Certainly His sifted Simons would drift beyond hope, if He did not pray for them. Every sinner has been prayed for to the end of time by Him who said, "Father forgive."

Dr. Jowett Can I by the passion of my prayer pierce the darkness of a soul and give the Holy Ghost a chance to work, or do I sit mourning on the outskirts as though God had no more power than I have, to lift that life?²

Ruth Burroughs Prayer must be understood as a state of being, not just a particular activity. Our prayer is precisely our relation to God, what we are face to face with him. It is our stage of growth as a person. God is always calling, always summoning us into being; he never inactive, never uninvolved, but the capacity to receive him is of varying depths.³

Henri Nouwen Because we do not stay in touch with that center of our spiritual life called prayer, we loose touch with all that grows from it.

Julian of Norwich The whole reason why we pray is to be united into the vision and contemplation of him to which we pray.

Adam Clark Apostasy begins in the closet; no man ever backslid from the life and power of Christianity who continued constant and fervent in private prayer. He who prays without ceasing is likely to rejoice evermore.

J. C. Rule What is the reason that some believers are so much brighter and holier than others? I believe the difference, in nineteen cases out of twenty, arises from different habits about private prayer. I believe that those who are not entirely holy pray little, and those who are holy pray much.

Abraham Lincoln I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My

² Isobel Kuhn Nest Above The Abyss

³ John Skinner Wisdom Of The Cloister

own wisdom, and that of all about me seemed insufficient for the day.

George Mueller I live in the spirit of prayer. I pray as I walk about, when I lie down and when I rise up, and answers are always coming.

Terry Glaspey True prayer is the greatest act of intimacy we have with a loving God.

Frances De Sales He who prays well is so absorbed with God that he does not know he is praying.

R. A. Torrey The chief purpose of prayer is that God may be glorified in the answer.⁴

John Bunyan Prayer opens the heart to God.⁴

Charles Spurgeon Effective prayers are God's promises breathed out of human hearts.⁴

R. A. Torrey Prayer is the key that opens the storehouse of God's infinite grace and power.⁴

Flossie Mc Neil Prayer brings us to the holy Throne Room of God, where we join all those who are there to worship and adore Him.⁴

Paul Martin The true prayer of faith is hammered out on the anvil of experience.⁴

David Benson Prayer is the one mission to the world all Christians can share.⁴

⁴ Ken Anderson Bible – Based Prayer Power

Charles Finney Prayer is not to change God but to change us.⁴

Archbishop Trench Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance. It is laying hold on His willingness.⁵

P. T. Forsyth Prayer should not be our last resort but our first. Prayer is the highest use of human speech.⁵

Ruth Paxson The place you give Jesus Christ in your life determines the place you give prayer.⁶

Andrew Murray Prayer is dialogue, not monologue.

John Bunyan Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer.

Billy Sunday If you are a stranger to prayer, you are a stranger to the greatest power known to humanity.

J. Hudson Taylor Could you be content to meet a loved one only in public.

Leonard Ravenhill The self-sufficient do not pray, the self-satisfied will not pray, the self-righteous cannot pray.

Oswald Chambers We cannot talk to God unless we walk with Him when we are not talking.

E. M. Bounds Our estimation of prayer is shown by how much time we give to it.

Matthew Henry If you love God, you cannot be at a loss for something to say to Him.

Andrew Murray Nothing lies outside the reach of prayer except that which lies outside the will of God.⁷

⁵ Ken Anderson Bible – Based Prayer Power

⁶ Magnificent Prayer – Nick Harrison

William Carey Prayer lies at the root of all personal godliness.

Jim Elliot God is still on the throne, we're still on his footstool and there is only knees distance between.

A.W. Tozer Praying in the will of God is to want what He wants.

Martin Luther When it is hardest to pray, pray harder.

Thomas Fuller Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night.

Barclay Oliver Know the difference between praying and begging. Waiting for the answer to a prayer is also part of the answer.

Sir Isaac Newton All my discoveries have been made in answer to prayer.

Samuel M. Zwemmer Prayer is God, the Holy Spirit, talking to God, the Father, in the name of God, the Son, and the believer's heart is the prayer room.

Matthew Henery If you cannot go to the house of the Lord, we can go by faith to the Lord of the house.

Kerry Walters So why deny ourselves any opportunity to come aside awhile and rest on holy ground? Why not withdraw from the daily web that keeps us muddled and wounded? ⁸

Anthony Bloom First of all, it is very important to remember that prayer is an encounter and a relationship, a relationship which is deep, and this relationship cannot be forced either on us or on God.

The second very important thing is that a meeting face to face with God is always a moment of judgment for us. To meet God

⁷ Ken Anderson Bible – Based Prayer Power

⁸ Kerry Walters

face to face in prayer is a critical moment in our lives, and thanks be to Him that He does not always present Himself to us when we wish to meet Him, because we might not be able to endure such a meeting.

We cannot live a life of prayer, we cannot go ahead Godwards, unless we are free from possession in order to have two hands to offer and a heart absolutely open-not like a purse which we are afraid of keeping open because the money will drop out of it, but like an open and empty purse – and an intelligence completely open to the unknown and the unexpected. This is the way in which we are rich and yet totally free from richness. And this is the point at which we can speak of being outside the Kingdom and yet be so rich inside and yet also so free.

Without attempting to cover all the ground, I would just like to give you an image of the worthiness of an act of worship or words of worship. In the life of Moses, in Hebrew folklore, there is a remarkable passage. Moses finds a shepherd in the desert. He spends the day with the shepherd and helps him milk the ewes, and at the end of the day he sees that shepherd put the best milk he has in a wooden bowl, which he places on a flat stone some distance away. So Moses asks him what is it for, and the shepherd replies, “this is God’s milk.” Moses is puzzled and ask him what he means. The shepherd says ‘I always take the best milk I possess, and bring it as an offering to God.’ Moses, who is far more sophisticated than the shepherd with his naïve faith, asks, ‘and does God drink it?’ ‘Yes’ replies the shepherd, ‘He does.’ Then Moses feels compelled to enlighten the poor shepherd and explains that God, being pure spirit, does not drink milk. Yet the shepherd is sure that He does, and so they have a short argument, which ends with Moses telling the shepherd to hide behind some bushes to find out whether in fact God does come to drink the milk. Moses then goes out to pray in the desert. The shepherd hides, the night comes, and in the moonlight the shepherd sees a little fox that comes trotting from the desert, looks right, looks left and heads straight towards the milk, which he laps up, and disappears into the desert again. The next morning Moses finds the shepherd quite depressed and downcast. ‘What’s the matter?’ he asks.

The shepherd says ‘You were right, God is pure spirit and He doesn’t want my milk.’ Moses is surprised. He says ‘You should

be happy. You know more about God than you did before.' 'Yes I do' says the shepherd, 'but the only thing I could do to express my love for Him has been taken away from me.' Moses sees the point. He retires into the desert and prays hard. In the night in a vision, God speaks to him and says 'Moses, you were wrong. It is true that I am pure spirit. Nevertheless I always accepted with gratitude the milk which the shepherd offered me, as the expression of his love, but since, being a pure spirit, I do not need the milk, I shared it with this fox, who is very fond of milk.'

I have tried to point out, first of all your prayer must be turned inwards, not towards a God of Heaven nor a God far off, but towards God who is closer to you than you are aware; and secondly, that the first act of prayer is to choose such words of prayer as are completely true to what you are, words which you are not ashamed of, which express you adequately and are worthy of you – and then offer them to God with all the intelligence of which you are capable.

And then if you learn to use a prayer you have chosen at moments when you can give all your attention to the divine presence and offer God this prayer, gradually what happens is that the awareness of God grows within you to such an extent that whether you are with people, listening, speaking or whether you are alone working, this awareness is so strong that even if you are with people you will still be able to pray.

A prayer makes sense only if it is lived. Unless they are "lived", unless life and prayer become completely interwoven, prayers become a sort of polite madrigal which you offer to God at moments when you are giving time to Him.

It is essential to be alert and alive, and at the same time still and relaxed, and this is contemplative preparation for contemplative silence; this very difficult balance between the kind alertness that allows you with a completely open mind, completely free from prejudice, from expectation, to receive the impact of anything that will come your way, and at the same time this stillness that will allow you to receive the impact without dreaming into it the picture of your own presence that will be destructive of it.

Prayer begins the moment when, instead of thinking of a remote God, 'He', 'The Almighty', and so forth, one can think in terms of

'Thou', when it is no longer a relationship in the third person but in the first and second person.

If in the process of discovering where you stand in relation to God – how far you are an outsider – you come to the point of knocking, of going deeper and deeper into yourself, turning your prayer on yourself, bringing yourself to the point where there is a door to knock on, the point where it can be opened – there will come a moment when the door will open, but then you must have a name for God. You must be able to say a word that shows that it is you who have been in search of Him, and not just an interchangeable human being in quest of an anonymous God.

Contemplative prayer, compassion, active prayer is an effort and a struggle, because it is not just saying 'Remember, O Lord him, him, and him.' It was hours and hours spent just praying with compassion, praying with love, both blending together.⁹

The purpose of prayer is to accomplish the will of God, for us to become like Jesus.¹⁰

⁹ Anthony Bloom, *Beginning To Pray*

¹⁰ Warren Wiersbe, *Prayer Praise and Promises*

PRAYER RETREAT STUDY ONE

Job 42:10 Read

Captivity – Misery, Affliction, was turned when he prayed for his friends.

Captivity – Restoration = Blessings, Joy.

A way to miss God's blessing on our lives, is to focus on our personal situations, problems etc. rather than the needs of others.

Let us follow Job's example and make a list of others that we can intercede for. Family, friends, work, church, neighbors, Government etc.

1Pet. 2:9 Read

We are a chosen generation. Why did God choose you?

A Royal Priesthood

Royal – clothed with royal dignity

Priesthood – to officiate as a priest

A. A priest went into God's presence on behalf of others.

B. On whose behalf should you go before God this week?

What else are my duties as a Royal Priest?

1Pet. 2:5b Read

To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

To offer up – to carry up

Spiritual Sacrifices – activities of the human spirit energized by the Holy Spirit.

What a blessing it is to think that God is pleased with spirituality He finds in the life of a Christian. He was pleased with the sacrifice offered in the Old Testament times in that they spoke of the Lord Jesus.

He is pleased with spiritual sacrifices of the believer because He sees in them a reflection of the Lord Jesus.¹

¹ Kenneth Wuest, Word Studies from the Greek New Testament.

Spiritual Sacrifices – understood as the grateful response of a redeemed people.

These sacrifices are in contrast to all the material sacrifices prescribed in the Old Testament sacrificial system. Such sacrifices are seen in the Christian worship and pattern of living.²

A holy priesthood, Old Testament priests and New Testament believer-priests share a number of characteristics:

- A. Priesthood is an elect privilege Ex.28:1; John 15:16.**
- B. Priests are cleansed of sin Lev. 8:6-36; Titus 2:14.**
- C. Priests are clothed for service Ex.28:42; Ps.132:9,16;**
- D. Priests are anointed for service Lev.8:12,30; 1John 2:20,27.**
- E. Priests are prepared for service Lev.8:33;9:4,23; Gal.1:16; 1Tim.3:6.**
- F. Priests are ordained to obedience Lev.10:1ff; 1Pet. 2:4.**
- G. Priests are to honor the Word of God Mal.2:7; 1Pet. 2:2.**
- H. Priests are to walk with God Mal.2:6; Gal.5:16,25.**
- I. Priests are to impact sinners Mal.2:6; Gal.6:1.**
- J. Priests are messengers of God Mal.2:7; Matt. 28:19,20.³**

What are included in these spiritual sacrifices we are to offer up?

- A. Offering the strength of one's body to God Rom.12:1,2.**
- B. Praising God. Heb.13:15.**
- C. Doing good Heb.13:16.**
- D. Bring people to Christ Rom.15:16.**
- E. Sacrificing one's desire for the good of others Eph.5:2.**
- F. Prayers Rev. 8:3.**
- G. Broken and contrite spirit Ps.15:16,17.**
- H. Sacrifice of righteousness Ps.4:5; 51:19.**
 - I. Sacrifice of joy Ps.27:6.**
- J. Sacrifice of Praise Jer.17:26; 33:11; Heb.13:15.**
- K. Sacrifice of thanksgiving Ps.69:30; 107:22; 116:17.**

² The New Geneva Study Bible

³ The John MacArthur Study Bible

“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” K.J.V.

2 Samuel 2: 24, David said “neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing.” K.J.V.

What might it mean for me to give to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving? Let us take a long look at 1 Thessalonians 5:18,19.

Verse 19 How do we quench the Spirit?

Verse 18 In every thing give thanks

What is an every thing for you?

Give thanks

Being thankful

We thank God For

For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

**Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened,
that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy,
that it cannot hear:**

**But your iniquities have separated between you
and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you,
that He will not hear.**

Isaiah 59:1-2

Here are some specific spiritual problems that will hinder our prayers:

- **A hardened heart (Hebrews 4:7).**
- **Asking for selfish purposes (James 4:3).**
- **Gossip and tale bearing (Proverbs 18:8).**
- **Holding on to anger and grudges (1Timothy 2:8).**
- **Ingratitude (Colossians 4:2).**
- **Insincerity (Matthew 6:5).**
- **Lack of domestic tranquility (1Peter 3:7).**
- **Lack of faith or doubting God's Word (James 1:5-7).**
- **Lack of love (1John 4:20).**
- **Being lukewarm (Revelation 3:16).**
- **Not asking according to His will (1John 5:14-15).**
- **Not being submissive to His will (1Samuel 15:22).**
- **Not caring about the needs of others (Proverbs 21:13).**
- **Not forgiving others (Matthew 6:14-15).**
- **Not having a right heart (Psalm 19:14).**
- **Not praying in Jesus' name (John 15:16).**
- **Putting other things before God (Ezekiel 14:3).**
- **Self-will (Matthew 26:39).**
- **Sin (Isaiah 59:1-2).**

Constantly seek to avoid these hindrances to keep your prayer life healthy and stay close to God!¹

¹ A Heart For Prayer, Gert McIntosh

What Kinds Of Things Could Hinder My Prayer Life?

10 Common Prayer Killers

The best way to keep from having spiritual junk hinder your prayer life is to avoid it. But when you haven't, the best thing to do is clean it up as soon as possible.

Prayer Killer #1: UNCONFESSED SIN

Unconfessed sin is probably the most common prayer killer. Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity (wickedness) in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:"

Prayer Killer #2: LACK OF FAITH

Without faith, prayer has no power. Even Jesus was powerless to perform any miracles in Nazareth because of the people's lack of faith (Mark 6:1-6). See also James 1:5-8, double minded, speaks of a condition where a person is emotionally divided, almost as if he had two souls.

Prayer Killer #3: DISOBEDIENCE

Keeping free from sin is not enough. Neither is faith. If our mouths say that we believe, but our actions don't back up that belief with a strong display of obedience, it shows the weakness of our belief. He that obeys God, trusts Him; he that trusts Him, obeys Him. . .

Prayer Killer #4 LACK OF TRANSPARENCY WITH GOD AND WITH OTHERS.

James 5:6 says, when we confess our sins to one another, which requires us to be absolutely transparent, God is able to heal and cleanse us. Transparency with God when you pray puts you on His agenda instead of your own. And it releases other believers to pray for you strategically and specifically.

Prayer Killer #5 UNFORGIVENESS

In Matt 18:22, Jesus was trying to teach Peter that forgiveness is not a matter of mathematics. Nor is it a choice of words. It is an attitude of the heart, and it is the Holy Spirit who empowers us to forgive. But if you do not forgive men their sin, your Father will not forgive your sins, Matt. 6:14-15.

Prayer Killer #6: WRONG MOTIVE

God makes no mistakes about our motives. When they're not right, our prayers have no power. James 4:3 says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lust (wrong motives)". Sometimes even knowing our own motives can be difficult. In my experience, I've observed two things that quickly expose wrong motives:

- 1. A project greater than ourselves: Big projects – ones that put us in way over our heads – force us to examine why we are doing them. And that process exposes our motives. . .**
- 2. Prayer: When we pray, God speaks to us and shows us our motives. God will show it to us, if only we are willing to listen. And if we are willing, He will change those motives. .**

Prayer Killer #7 IDOLS IN OUR LIVES

Ezekiel 14:3 clearly shows the negative effect of anything that comes between a person and God. Take a look at your own life. Is there anything that you're putting ahead of God? Sometimes it's hard to tell. One of the ways to know that something in your life is an idol is to ask yourself, "Would I be willing to give this thing up if God asked me to?"

Prayer Killer #8 DISREGARD FOR OTHERS

Psalm 33:13 says, "The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men (mankind)." God's perspective is expansive. He loves everyone, and His desire is that we care for others in the same way. When we disregard others, it grieves Him.

Prayer Killer #9 DISREGARD FOR GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

When Jesus showed the disciples how to pray, the first thing He did was teach them to honor God for who He is, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:9-10). That is a clear acknowledgement that God is in charge, that He is sovereign. And it establishes our relationship to Him: that of a child under authority of his Father. Any time we disregard the divine order of things, we're out-of-bounds, and we hinder our relationship with our heavenly Father.

Prayer Killer #10 UNSURRENDERED WILL

The ultimate purpose of prayer is not to get what we want, but to learn to want what God gives. But that will never happen if we don't surrender our will and put ourselves on God's agenda instead of our own. . .

Developing an effective prayer life depends on keeping your relationship with God strong and uncluttered by sin and disobedience.

A Christian can't simply pray once through a list like these ten prayer killers and expect to be done with it. Every day we need to go to God and ask Him to reveal anything that may be hindering our progress.

Charles Spurgeon . . . "Effective prayers are God's promises breathed out of human hearts." Partners in Prayer¹

¹ Nelson's Personal Handbook On Prayer, Dr. James Wilhoit

A RECIPE FOR PRAYER

O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon His name:
make known His deeds among the people.

Psalm 105:1

The “recipe” in the first five verses of Psalm 105 shows us ten ingredients for prayers that please God.

“GIVE THANKS.” Before you sleep each night, remember to thank God for the many mercies He has shown you that day. Often we are so busy that we forget His multitudes of blessings.

“CALL UPON HIS NAME.” The power of Jesus’ name is more than we can imagine. Jesus is the way to reach the Father, and there is no other way given under heaven.

“MAKE KNOWN His DEEDS AMONG THE PEOPLE.” Share the wonderful things God has done for you and for others. It will strengthen their faith and yours, too.

“SING UNTO HIM, SING PSALMS UNTO HIM.” Sing the old hymns with their great theology and joyful praise choruses in your heart when you are in the spirit of prayer. It may be in a special prayer time, or it may be as you work. Also, get into the habit of reading the Psalms. They make your heart sing and help you feel close to God as you pray.

“TALK YE OF ALL HIS WONDROUS WORKS.” Meditate on the things He has done, how fearfully and wonderfully we are made, how everything in nature fits together, how He has provided for us physically and spiritually, and the miracle of God in Christ.

“GLORY YE IN HIS HOLY NAME.” We glory in things that delight us. God delights us!

“LET THE HEART OF THEM REJOICE THAT SEEK THE LORD.” Sometimes our prayers are heavy because our burdens (or the burdens of others) are heavy. Leave your prayer time with

rejoicing in good things, and the burdens will lift and joy will return.

“SEEK THE LORD.” Seeking God is as vital to our spiritual life as air and water are to our physical life. Seek Him often. He will always be there waiting.

“SEEK HIS FACE EVERMORE.” To know and observe a person’s face is to know the person. You can know God well by reading His Word.

“REMEMBER HIS MARVELLOUS WORKS THAT HE HATH DONE.” Remember is one of the most important words in the Bible. We should never forget all God has done for us.¹

¹ A Heart Of Prayer, Gert McIntosh

WHAT ROLE DO ANGELS HAVE WHEN WE PRAY?

Asking Our Lord To Provide Angels To Watch Over Us

Another wonderful means of protection is the ministry of the Lord's angels. The psalmist wrote that He commissions angels to watch over us. "Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation: There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Psalm 91:9-12).

Prayer unleashes the ministry of guardian angels in ways we perhaps never fully comprehend. Frequently we are like Elisha's servant; he could see clearly the large Aramean army surrounding the city but could not see the Lord's horses and chariots of fire (2 Kings 6:17). Similarly perhaps we too fail to realize how often the Lord has commanded His angels to guard us. Sometimes, however, He gives us a glimpse of His protection. I give thanks to God for the many times His angels have protected us from harm, whether we were aware or unaware of their presence or involvement. Only eternity will reveal fully just how many times our Lord has protected us from harm and even death.

Our Lord's Protection "Silent Sentinels"

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High will abide under the protective shadows of the Almighty. This is not "pie-in-the-sky" theology. This is practical Christianity.

We need to ask our Lord to lead us each day as we commit ourselves to follow Him. He will guide us in the paths of righteousness if we but ask Him to do so. And we need to ask Him not to allow us to be led into temptation, and deliver us from the evil one. Our Lord wants to protect us from harm.

We are wise to follow His instruction to "put on the whole armor" of God as we begin each day, and to use the word of the Spirit as our offensive weapon. To triumph over the devil we must use the shield of faith to extinguish his fiery arrows, that is, his repeated temptations.

And let us not forget to take advantage of the protection our loving God gives us under the shelter of His wings, and to thank our Lord for the angels He lovingly and quietly provides to watch over us as silent sentinels. Paul Cedar¹

Angels Protectors Of God's People

Angels minister to God by protecting His people. Their object is to glorify God's name.

They may harass our enemies (Ps. 35:4-5) and deliver us from their wicked works (Ps. 34:7; Is. 63:9).

They are probably involved in physically preserving God's own for their future inheritance in His presence and kingdom (Heb. 1:14).

We can appreciate their ministries. Angels do us good for God. They are His ministers to us and are involved much more in our earthly welfare than we may dare to think (Heb. 1:14). Their incessant worship, their unswerving allegiance, and their urgent obedience challenge us.²

¹ Nelson's Personal Handbook on Prayer, Dr. James Wilhoit

² Angels Elect and Evil, C. Fred Dickason

Be completely honest with God when you pray.

But, O Lord of host, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause. Jer. 20:12

There is a vital element of true prayer which is likely to be overlooked in our artificial age.

That vital element is just plain honesty!

The saintly David M'Intyre once wrote: "honest dealings become us when we kneel in His pure presence."

Then he continued: on one occasion Jeremiah failed to interpret God aright. He cried as if in anger, "O Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived."

These are terrible words to utter before Him who is changeless truth. But the prophet spoke as he felt, and the Lord not only pardoned Him, but met Him and blessed Him there.

I recall another spiritual writer of unusual penetration has advised frankness in prayer even to a degree that might appear to be downright rudeness. When you come to prayer, he says, and mind that you have no taste for it, tell God so without mincing words. If God and spiritual things bore you, admit it frankly.

This advice will shock some squeamish saints, but it is altogether sound nevertheless. God loves the guileless soul even when in his ignorance he is actually guilty of rashness in prayer. The Lord can soon cure his ignorance, but for insincerity no cure is known.

We can learn something at this point if we will.

The Cross We Bear Must Be Assumed Voluntarily

Philippians 1:29

**For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ,
not only to believe on Him,
but also to suffer for his sake.**

In the Christian faith there is a real sense in which the cross of Christ embraces all crosses and the death of Christ encompasses all deaths: "if one died for all, then were all dead."

This is in the judicial working of God in redemption. The Christian as a member of the body of Christ is crucified along with his divine Head. Before God every true believer is reckoned to have died when Christ died. All subsequent experience of personal crucifixion is based upon this identification with Christ on the Cross.

But in the practical, everyday working of the believer's crucifixion his own Cross is brought into play. "Let him. . . take up his Cross." That is obviously not the cross of Christ. Rather, it is the believer's own personal Cross by means of which the cross of Christ is made effective in slaying his evil nature and setting him free from its power.

The believer's own Cross is one he has assumed voluntarily. Therein lies the difference between his Cross and the cross on which Roman convicts died. They went to the cross against their will; He, because He chose to do so. No Roman officer ever pointed to a Cross and said, "If any man will, let him!" Only Christ said that, and by so saying he placed the whole matter in the hands of the Christian believer. Each of us, then, should count himself dead indeed with Christ and accept willingly whatever of self denial, repentance, humility and humble sacrifice may be found in the path of obedient daily living.¹

God Never Violates our freedom Of Choice

"So highly does God regard His handiwork that He will not for any reason violate it. He will take nine steps toward us but He will not take the tenth. He will incline us to repent, but He cannot do our repenting for us. It is of the essence of repentance that it can only be done by the one who committed the act to be repented of. God can wait on sinning man, He can withhold judgment, He can exercise long-suffering to the point where He appears lax in His judicial administration, but He cannot force a man to repent. To do this would be to violate the man's freedom and avoid the gift of God originally bestowed upon him. The believer knows he is free to choose – and with that knowledge he chooses forever the blessed will of God!"²

¹ Renewed Day By Day

² Renewed Day By Day

Faith: Our Minds Brought into Accord with Truth

"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." 2 Thess. 3:5

This we must remember: faith is not a noble quality found only in superior men. It is not a virtue attainable by a limited few. It is not the quality to persuade ourselves that black is white or that something we desire will come to pass if only we wish hard enough.

Faith is simply the bringing of our minds into accord with the truth. It is adjusting our expectations to the promises of God in complete assurance that the God of the whole earth cannot lie!

As long as we question the wisdom of any of God's ways our faith is still tentative and uncertain. While we are able to understand, we are not quite believing. Faith enters when there is no supporting evidence to corroborate God's Word of promise and we must put our confidence blindly in the character of the one who made the promise.

A man looks at a mountain and affirms, "That is a mountain." There is no particular virtue in the affirmation. It is simply accepting the fact that stands before Him and bringing his belief into accord with the fact. The man does not create the mountain by believing, nor could he annihilate it by denying.

And so with the truth of God! The believing man accepts a promise of God as a fact as solid as a mountain and vastly more enduring. His faith changes nothing except his own personal relation to the Word of promise. God's Word is true whether we believe it or not. Human unbelief cannot alter the character of God!

The Devil Never Forgets Those Who Escape Bondage

But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Acts 5:3

As we move farther along in the Christian life we may expect to encounter increased hostility from the enemy of our souls. Although this is seldom presented to the Christian as a fact of life it is a very solid fact indeed as every experienced Christian

knows, and one we shall learn how to handle or stumble over our own undoing.

If Satan opposes the new convert he opposes still more bitterly the Christian who is pressing on towards a higher life in Christ. The Spirit-filled life is not, as many suppose, a life of peace and quiet pleasure. It is likely to be something quite the opposite.

Satan hates the true Christian for several reasons. One is that God loves him, and whatever God loves is sure to be hated by the devil. Another is that the Christian, being a child of God, bears a family resemblance to the Father and to the household of faith.

A third reason is that a true Christian is a former slave who has escaped from the galley, and Satan cannot forgive him for this affront. A fourth reason is that a praying Christian is a constant threat to the stability of Satan's government. The Christian is a holy rebel loose in the world with access to the throne of God.

Satan never knows from what direction his danger will come. Who knows when another Elijah will arise, or another Daniel? or a Luther, a Finney or a Booth?

PRAYER – AND GOD'S SPIRIT

We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit maketh intercession for us. (Romans 8:26)

Probably none of us really know as much about prayer as we should – but as students of the Word of God we may agree that only the Spirit can pray effectively.

The idea has been expressed that “wrestling in prayer” is always a good thing, but that is by no means true. Extreme religious “exercises” may be undergone with no higher motive than to get our own way!

The spiritual quality of a prayer is determined not by its intensity but by its origin. In evaluating prayer we should inquire who is doing the praying – our determined hearts, or the Holy Spirit? If the prayer originates with the Spirit, then the wrestling can be beautiful and wonderful; but if we are the victims of our own overheated desires, our praying can be as carnal as any other act.

Consider Jacob's wrestling: "a man wrestled with him till daybreak." But when Jacob had been beaten upon he cried, "I will not let you go unless you bless me!" That wrestling was of divine origin, and the blessed results are known to every Bible student!

Effective Prayer

Every effective prayer you will ever pray must be based on your faith in the Word of God. The more you meditate on the Word, the stronger your faith becomes. You are praying effective prayers because you have an inner image of that Word coming to pass in your situation.

Fear will strangle your faith.

When you understand that devilish progression, you will see why Jesus so strongly admonished us not to worry. He didn't make it a suggestion. He made it a command, because when you worry, you're giving the Devil the place in your life that the Word is supposed to have. You are meditating on his power to hurt you instead of meditating on God's power to deliver you.

Matthew 6:25-34 we are told five times, "And do not worry." Not only is worry absolutely useless, it does harm to your prayer life and your physical well-being. Satan understands his principle so he purposely creates situations to make you worry. For Him, it's an easy and effective way to neutralize your prayers. But you can defeat that strategy by learning to take those worries to God in prayer and cast them over on to Him.

Hebrews 13:5, Rom. 4:21, Psalm 34:19, It's important that you meditate on such Scriptures before you pray the prayer of casting your cares because you don't want this prayer to be just a form. You want to pray it from your heart.

When someone comes to you in distress and needs prayer, give them some promises from the Word of God that will inspire faith in them. Faith is a real substance. It will strengthen them and comfort them.

A Four-Part Prayer Philippians 4:6-8

The first word I want you to notice there is the word *supplication*. To supplicate means more than just to ask someone for something. It implies that you are pouring your heart out about something that you need. Tell the Lord exactly what cares you're asking him to take, and tell Him everything that has been bothering you about them. Once you've done that, make a definite request. Ask Him to meet your need, give you wisdom or simply handle the problem.

Whenever I am having trouble with worry, I set aside a specific time and a place to get it all out. When the devil comes back to me and tries to get me all upset about the situation again. I can refuse Him. I'll say, "no, I won't take that back. I remember exactly when and where I was when I gave that to God. I told Him everything that was bothering me about this situation. Now it belongs to Him, and I won't touch it with worry."

1 John 5:14-15, According to this passage, if we ask knowing that God hears us, we can have the absolute confidence that we have our answer. That is reason enough to give thanks!

After you thank God for taking care of your situation, if you've really prayed from your heart, you'll notice a supernatural peace begin to settle over you. That's the divine order of things: prayer first, thanksgiving second and peace third. You can never rearrange or change that progression.

Once we find that peace, we maintain it by obeying the fourth part of that passage in Philipians 4. We fix our minds on what the Word of God says is true about our situation. We think good and praiseworthy things.

It's important that you understand I'm not suggesting you just suppress your fears by refusing to think about them. No, you've gotten rid of those fears by casting them over on God and replacing them with faith. You are simply refusing to allow these fears to come back by shutting the door on them. You continue to keep them out by keeping your mind and your heart full of the Word of God.¹

¹ Secrets to powerful Prayers, adapted by Jim Logan

LORD, AM I ASKING TOO MUCH?

We can pray about anything and everything- lost items, bad attitudes, safety in travel, enlightenment in God's Word, unsaved friends and loved ones, help for ailing bodies, personal feelings that need to be fixed, family, jobs, sick people, witnessing, difficult situations, and anything else that life hands out on a daily basis. Do we ask God for too much? Do we ask too often? Is that acceptable to Him? Are we bothering Him? Look at what the Bible says about asking:

- **"Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him" (1 John 3:22).**
- **"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14).**
- **"And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desires of Him" (1 John 5:15).**
- **"Ye have not because ye ask not" (James 4:2).**
- **"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God" (James 1:5).**
- **"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).**
- **"That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you" (John 15:16).**
- **"Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matthew 7:7).**
- **"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him. (Matthew 7:11).**
- **"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22).**

Do you have a particular need that you hesitate to ask God about? Don't be afraid to ask. He wants us to, and He has told us to, for He is "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20).¹

¹ Gert McIntosh, A Heart For Prayer

OF WEAVERS AND RUG-MAKERS

In the outskirts of Beni Suef I came to a village that was entirely Coptic. I was given a tour of the church in that town, and I visited some of the homes and shops. In one of the shops I stood watching a number of rug-makers at their trade. They sped a shuttle back and forth on a Coptic loom, built like those that were used in Pharaonic times. It was fascinating; it was amazing.

I said to one of the rug-makers, "What if you make a mistake with the shuttle? You are going so fast that you will not see the error in the design until you have woven several layers over it. What will you do then? Will you unwind the carpet and remove the layers of thread that you have added?"

"No," said the rug-maker, "we would never do that; that would take far too much time. I'll tell you a secret. The most beautiful rugs with the most elaborate designs, the most expensive weavings, are the ones with mistakes hidden inside."

"How's that?" I asked. "Well, once we notice the mistake, we have to integrate it into the pattern. We have to change the pattern to include the mistake and make it part of a new design. Sometimes the new design is far more complex, far more embellished than anything we could have created ourselves. That's why the most beautiful rugs are the ones with mistakes hidden deep inside."

A great deal of wisdom in this Oriental art! Perhaps it's like the Providence of God, for sometimes the people with the deepest wounds or the most serious flaws exhibit the greatest glory of "God".

By Mark Gruber

8 STEPS TO MEANINGFUL PRAYER

“Only as we nurture a growing relationship with the Lord can our prayer life thrive.”
...Warren Myers

1. Cultivate faith through pursuing God.

Faith is trusting God – counting on Him to be who He says He is and to do what He says He will do. As we study the Scriptures day by day with the earnest prayer, “Lord, show me what You are like. By Your Spirit impress truths about You on my heart. Use Your Word to clear out my wrong ideas and to plant deep in my heart a true knowledge of You”, your faith will flourish as you focus on God and praise Him for how awesome and wonderful He is. Ask God for a growing thirst for Him.

“O God, I have tasted your goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more...O God, the Triune God, I want to want you; I long to be filled with longing...Show me Your glory, I pray, so that I may know you indeed...Give me grace to rise and follow you up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long.
In Jesus' Name, Amen.” ...The Pursuit of God, A.W. Tozer

2. Count on the truth of instant forgiveness.

When we sense we are living in obedience to God, it's easier to pray with confidence. He longs for you to confess your sins, including your lack of trust, and to reaffirm your commitment to Christ as your Lord. Think of confession as part of maintaining a healthy relationship with God and an essential part of your obedience. Immediately after you confess, you can pray with boldness before God.

“Well, my poor soul, here we are in the ditch again, in spite of our earnest resolve to stay out of it. Ah well, let us get out and go on our way. We'll do well enough, God helping us.”...Frances De Sales,
Bishop of Geneva

Don't let vague guilt hinder your prayers (vague guilt and condemnation). That's the devil's business. Thank the Father that Satan is a defeated enemy, that Jesus is Victor over him. Thank the father that His Son bore all your guilt on the cross and that now your true self is clean and righteous. Praise Him that He does not treat you as your sins deserve for His love and mercy are as high as the heavens are above the earth. After we confess our sins, we should resist the urge to scold or punish ourselves.

3. Abide in Christ.

Hudson Taylor, a great missionary to China during the 1800s, had been groping through a period of dense darkness. He felt overwhelmed by his failures and inadequacy and lack of power. He knew that all he needed was in Christ, but the big question he wrestled with was how to get it out of Christ and into himself. Then through a letter from a coworker, the Lord opened Taylor's eyes to see that he was so united to Christ that he shared His life. He was simply to accept Christ's invitation to "abide in me" and not try to get anything out of Him. He wrote to his sister:

"How great seemed my mistake in wishing to get the sop, the fullness out of Him!...The vine is not the root merely, but all -- root, stem, branches, twigs...and Jesus is not that alone -- He is oil and sunshine, air and showers, and ten thousand times more than we have ever desired, wished for, or needed. Oh, the joy of seeing this truth! Can Christ be rich and I poor? Can your head be well fed while your body starves?"

Abiding in Christ means to depend on Him, enjoying our spiritual union with Him and allowing Him to meet our needs. Abiding is a basic preparation for praying the way God wants us to pray. It is a life that is wrapped up in the desires that are on God's heart. (John 15:7) Then when you pray, you express His longings, you want what He wants, and so He does what you ask.

Abiding is not complicated or strenuous, but to turn and trust Him, as we did when we were saved. Abiding in Christ requires God's continual working. We are "in Christ" -- we don't have to try to get there. "In Christ" could be translated "in union with Christ". We simply agree to a constant dependence on Him. We turn time and again from our own abilities, our own sufficiency, and our own pride that wants to do it on our own. We accept His word, "Without Me you can do nothing" -- that is, nothing significant in God's eyes. We turn, and we trust.

We choose to depend on Christ as our constant source of life, our constant source of all we need for living and growing, for bearing spiritual fruit, for praying. Then we trust Him to keep us trusting and ask Him to help us turn back quickly whenever we slip into going our own way, doing our own thing, or depending on our own resources. We can keep our trust more constant by saying often, "Thank you that you are my life". Eph. 3:16-17; Jn. 15:1-3; Jas. 27:3

Andrew Murray..."Abiding in Jesus is nothing but giving up of oneself to be ruled and taught and led, and so resting in the arms of everlasting love."

Years after Hudson Taylor learned the secret of abiding in Christ, someone asked him if he was always conscious of abiding in Christ. He replied, "While sleeping last night, did I cease to abide in your home because I was unconscious of the fact? We should never be conscious of not abiding in Christ." What a difference in our praying when we abide in Christ.

4. Walk humbly with your God.

What is true humility? One said, "Without me you can do nothing". The other, "I have strength for all things in Christ who empowers me". John 15:5; Phil. 4:13 As we humble ourselves and honor God, we qualify for the promise in I Sam. 2:30. He will honor us, and He will also honor our prayers.

5. Depend on the Word, not feelings.

We get into trouble when we depend on feelings in prayer. We start thinking we have to be in a praying mood to pray, so we call our petitions "good prayers" if they give us a certain feeling. It's much better to just decide to pray as God commands -- regardless of how we feel.

Charles Spurgeon..."We should pray when we are in a praying mood, for it would be sinful to neglect so fair an opportunity. We should pray when we are not in a — — praying mood because it would be dangerous to remain in so unhealthy a condition." It's not that feelings are out of place. If He makes us particularly conscious of His presence, let's enjoy it. And if the Spirit carries us along in prayer, let's be grateful. Ps. 102; Ps. 62:8 Leaving our feelings in God's hands helps us to be more consistent in prayer.

A heart checkup:

1. Am I yielding to Christ's lordship and abiding in Him?
2. Have I confessed every known sin?
3. Am I praying in Jesus' name, in His merits and not my own?
4. Am I praying in agreement with what I understand to be God's will and purposes?
5. Am I praying in faith based on God's Word?

We can pray "in the Spirit", directed and helped by Him, and depending on the Word He inspired no matter how we feel. If you are troubled about an overall lack of positive emotions during prayer, bring your concerns to God. Ask Him to overcome any patterns of living or thinking that may be hindering you. Hudson Taylor received amazing answers to prayer. Someone asked him late in life if he always felt joyful when he prayed. He replied that his heart usually felt like wood when he prayed and that most of his major victories came through "emotionless prayers". Choose to bring God joy by letting Him, not your feelings, govern your prayer choices.

6. Learn to be still before God.

How can we prepare our hearts for prayer? By cultivating a quiet heart before the Lord, both in our times alone with Him and throughout our days. By letting Him lead us beside still waters. We can let our thoughts about His greatness lead us to an inner stillness that absorbs His reality and responds to Him with relaxed confidence. Waiting on God and resting in Him have much in common. Both result in absorbing His strength; both involve truly tuning in to God and His Word. Prayer is conversation, not just monologue. We're to listen as well as speak. God's voice is often "still" and "small", and we can drown it out. By waiting in quietness before Him, we express our respect and adoration, and we let Him speak to our hearts. He may speak through a sense of nearness, His love, His welcome, His power, His guidance. He may bring to mind Scriptures that speak to our need. The strength we absorb from the Lord and the quietness of heart He gives prepare us to pray effectively.

7. Pray with a non-judgmental attitude.

John Hyde started to pray negatively for a pastor who was cold towards God. God stopped him. Hyde cried out for God to forgive him for being, like Satan, an accuser of a believer -- even in prayer. Hyde decided to turn his thoughts from the negatives that were temporarily true in his fellow servant to the things that were true and admirable. He asked God to show him all that deserved praise in the pastor's life. Shortly afterward he learned that, at the very time he was praising and giving thanks, his brother in Christ experienced spiritual renewal.

8. View prayer as a way of life.

I Thess. 5:17 How can we pray all the time when so many things demand our attention? Pray now and often that the Lord will help you turn your heart to Him more frequently throughout the day and that this will develop into praying continually. Also pray that you will turn to God more often with short arrow prayers -- prayers that rise to God throughout your waking hours for people you see, people you relate to, and people who come to mind.

"I cannot tell why there should come to me a thought of someone miles and years away, in swift insistence on the memory, unless there is a need that I should pray. Perhaps just then my friend has fiercer fight, a more appalling weakness, a decay of courage, darkness, some lost sense of right; and so, in case he needs my prayers, I pray."...Rosalind Goforth

A STRUCTURE OR PATTERN FOR OUR PRAYERS

Gordon T. Smith

1. Begin the hour through a conscious centering of your thoughts. Our busy minds need to be stilled; the turmoil of our hearts needs to be quieted so that we can pray. A favorite psalm or a well-known hymn is helpful for centering; for some, a brief prayer of submission to the Spirit of God brings their thoughts in focus and opens the mind to hear God's Word.
2. The hour could include a time of meditation on the text of Scripture.
3. Time in prayer needs to include the element of communion, preferably found in a time of extended silence in the presence of the Lord. An hour of solitude in our prayer closet (Matt. 6:6) is more than anything else a time of fellowship with God Himself, very simply, a time of encounter with God. In knowing God and hearing His Word, we choose then out of silence to respond.
 - a. We can respond to God with adoration. If He revealed something about Himself that deeply impresses us, we allow our hearts to burst forth in response.
 - b. Self-knowledge is enhanced through the spiritual exercise of thanksgiving. Praise is most meaningful when it arises in response to God's goodness to us.
 - c. Self-knowledge includes confession of sin.
 - d. Finally, a time of prayer can include the spiritual exercise of care-casting.
 - e. Our time should include intercession.
 - f. Our prayers should conclude with a fresh commitment to the Lord.

Douglas Steere ... "Few go far into prayer before they discover that the work that goes on in prayer may, during at least part of the period, go on best of all in silence, and yet to get to this silence we have to cross a ditch that separates it from the rest of our lives."

PRAYER NOTEBOOK OUTLINE

1. READ GOD'S WORD

2. PRAY

- a. Confession I John 1:9
- b. Praise Use praise Scriptures
- c. Thanksgiving Express gratitude to God
- d. Petition Personal need
- e. Intercession Prayer for others

3. URGENT REQUEST - NEEDS THAT COME UP

4. FOCUS DAY REQUESTS

- a. Sunday - World missions and missionaries
- b. Monday - Lost and unchurched
- c. Tuesday - United States of America
- d. Wednesday - Friends
- e. Thursday - Christian leaders
- f. Friday - Local church
- g. Saturday - Relatives

5. JOURNAL - keep touch on how God answers.

by Ronnie Floyd

Prayer Quotes

Section 3

GENERAL PRAYER QUOTES

Evagrius Ponticus...."Resentment casts a cloud over your prayers."
"Learn patience, and your prayers will be joyful."

Rosalind Goforth...."There is nothing too great for His power and nothing too small for His love."

C.H. Spurgeon...."To believe that the Lord will hear my prayer honors His truthfulness. His power, His love and generosity, His wisdom. If you wish to dishonor every attribute of God, pray with unbelief. But if you want to put a crown on the head of Him who has saved you, believe that if you ask, He will give."

A.W. Tozer suggested once that we are as spiritual as we wish to be -- implying it is merely a matter of our willingness.

Richard J. Foster..."Prayer is a way of loving others."

Gordon T. Smith..."Prayer is the single most convincing evidence that the Christian life has a mystical dimension. Not all prayer is good or true prayer. There are two simple criteria of authentic prayer: faith and humility. The Scriptures affirm that true prayer is prayer in confidence in the fact that Jesus is the ascended Lord, capable of understanding our needs and responding with wisdom and power (Heb. 4:14-16). But faith without humility is presumption. Prayer is the cry of a dependent child on a heavenly Father."

The evidence is clear. Jesus' strength of ministry and depth of compassion are both directly related to the consistency and vitality of His personal prayer life. Jesus led a life that routinely included encounters with His heavenly Father. Formal prayer and worship were well established habits in the life of our Lord.

Nothing guarantees a personal encounter with God. An intimate and profound sense of the presence of God is sheer gift.

Prayer is a time to reflect upon the will of God.

Ronnie Floyd...Effective prayer occurs when you talk to God and listen to what God is saying to you. Prayer involves listening to God as much as it involves talking to God. Prayer is a relationship; a

fellowship that occurs between you and God. Prayer is the vehicle that takes you into the privilege of experiencing fellowship with God.

Talking Principles

Confession -1. I am nothing without the Lord.
2. Confession of sin is seeing your sin in view of God's holiness and being as offended by and grieved by your sin as God is.

Praise - is expressing your love and adoration for who God is.
Focus on these attributes of God's character, such as His holiness, His mercy, His grace.

Thanksgiving - expressing gratefulness for what He has done, providing our every need - spiritual blessings, physical blessings, the people He has brought into your life.

Petition - Offering to God personal requests, life needs, ministry etc.

Intercession - Standing in the gap between the God of heaven and the person I am praying for at the time.

Listening Principles

Be still and quiet before God.

An open Bible should always accompany a bended knee. Meditate upon scriptures; think deeply upon His Word. Ask the question, "What is God saying to me?"

Do not be in a hurry in your time with God.

God wants us to learn to wait before Him.

He wants to still our spirits.

He wants us to learn not to hurry.

In His time He will make Himself known to you. Learn the power of waiting before Him.

Spend various seasons of your life with God.

It can be a period of days with a selected number of hours, to wait before the Lord. It can be an entire day to draw aside with God. It can be two or three days just to listen to what God is saying to you.

When you listen to God as well as talk to Him, you gain a whole new perspective on God, and you also are able to maintain balance in your life. What you say to God will be greatly affected by what God says to you in your life.

Ronnie W. Floyd... "One of the areas of poor performance in the Christian life is in the area of prayer.

1. Prayer occurs when you depend on God.
2. Prayerlessness occurs when you depend on yourself.

People give thousands of excuses as to why they do not pray. No matter what the excuse, the underlying reason is that they love to depend upon themselves. Prayerlessness is always a result of selfishness. Your greatest need and only hope to make a long lasting difference for God is to learn to pray. Prayer is not an option; it is essential. If you are going to be serious about your faith, then it is imperative that prayer becomes a major part of your Christian experience.

The Four Reasons Christians Do Not Pray

Pride - It keeps us from prayer because it overestimates the power of self.

Unbelief - It underestimates the power of God.

Ignorance - It overestimates the difficulty in talking to God. Real prayer occurs when you share your heart with God.

Time - It underestimates the value of being with God. Rushing your time with God is never advantageous to your spiritual health. You will spend time with whomever you value in your life.

Brother Lawrence on the eternality of God... He contrasted our understanding with the act of our will. "Understanding, he said, is of little benefit, but the commitment of our will is of immense value. I

don't have to understand the Eternal One. I need only commit myself."

Guides for a meaningful time with God

Special Time - to meet with God shows your dependence upon Him.

Special Place - somewhere you enjoy that is private.

Special Plan - if you don't plan to pray, you will not pray.

Special Book - include daily Bible reading.

Special Letter - write down things I have prayed for and what God has given me during this specific time.

Special Goal - set aside a specific amount of time.

This spiritual discipline can give you:

Spiritual Power - God will use this time to fill you with His Spirit and power.

Spiritual Devotion - sensitivity to God's guidance for your life.

Spiritual Purpose - His heart will become your heart, and His Purpose your purpose.

Andrew Murray ... "Your prayers are important don't think that you have no influence or that your prayers are not important. Your prayers and faith will make a difference."

George Mueller... "The great point is never to give up until the answer comes. I have been praying for 52 years, every day, for two men, sons of a friend of my youth. They are not converted yet, but they will be.... The great fault of the children of God is they do not continue in prayer; they do not go on praying; they do not persevere. If they desire anything for God's glory, they should pray until they get it."

Cecil Murphy... "We can pray to our True Father who loves us, cares about every need in our lives, and provides a place of safety. That is the True Father.

Ronnie Floyd... "What you say to God in prayer will be determined by what God says to you in His Word."

What it means to pray in the Spirit

1. Pray according to the leadership of the Spirit

- a. You begin with moments of not saying anything.
 - b. Meditate on the things of God.
 - c. The Holy Spirit will lead you to pray by the Word of God and with the Word.
2. Pray with assistance from the Holy Spirit.
 - a. The Holy Spirit pulls you toward God and to spiritual victory. Rom. 8:26
 - b. Ask the Holy Spirit to assist you in your time of prayer.
3. Pray with power from the Spirit.
 - a. You will experience boldness, courage, and faith like never before.

Andrew Murray...”Pray with the simplicity of a child. Pray with the holy awe and reverence of one in whom God’s Spirit always dwells and prays.”

Warren Myers...”Strength is needed for prayer. Intercession is not easy. It requires supernatural strength. So our praying must not be by our own might or power but by the Lord’s Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). Offer praise that the Spirit of the all powerful God who raised Christ from the dead lives in you. What vast resources of strength you have for all God wants you to do!

What does it mean to call upon the Lord?

1. The Word “call” in the Old Testament means “to summon His aid.” When you call upon the Lord, you are summoning, or inviting, God’s aid to come into your life.
2. This word “call” also means to cry out loudly in order to get someone’s attention. This indicates that God wants you to call out loudly to Him like you really need His help. Pride will not permit you to call upon the Lord, but humility opens the door for you to move to a new level in your prayer life. When you call upon the Lord, you are inviting His activity into your life.
3. The word “call” also means “to shout”. This principle calls for us to shout to God in prayer.

4. Another word "call" refers to calling upon the Lord in a public worship setting on the Sabbath Day. When you are willing to call out loudly to the Lord, summoning His aid into your life, God will do great and mighty things. Jer. 33:3

When should we call upon the Lord?

1. All the time.
2. In a time of need.
3. In a time of pursuing the future.
4. In a time of worship.

Andrew Murray... "To a healthy man, work that interests him is a pleasure; he brings enormous energy to it. In the same way, the believer who is in full spiritual health will pray diligently."

George Mueller... "Let no man think he can have any measure of victory over his inner corruption without taking it to the Lord again and again in prayer."

Charles Wesley... "I want a principle within
of watchful, godly fear;
a sensitivity to sin,
a pain to feel it near.
Help me the first approach to feel
of pride or wrong desire,
to catch the wandering of the will
and quench the kindling fire."

Richard Foster... "To believe that God can reach us and bless us in the ordinary junctures of daily life is the stuff of prayer."

Ronnie Floyd... "When you ask God for something in prayer, you are recognizing His authority over you and submitting your request in faith that He will answer. We are also to seek after God in prayer. Knocking indicates that you go beyond asking and seeking in going after what you need. Jesus was teaching to not give up in prayer -- the importance of praying something through."

How long should you pray it through?

1. Until you know it is not God's will.

2. Until God answers your prayers.
3. Until God releases you.

Persistency in your prayer life demonstrates that you have great faith in God. Remember, you have a perfect Father in heaven who is willing to meet your needs. So pray through.

Andrew Murray...”It is to prayer that God has given the right to take hold of Him and His strength. It is in prayer that the promises wait for their fulfillment, the kingdom for its coming, the glory of God for its full revelation.”

David Jeremiah...”Does God do anything without prayer? No.”

- Prayer is the way you defeat the devil. (Lk. 22:32; Jas. 4:7)
- Prayer is the way you get the lost saved. (Lk. 8:13)
- Prayer is the way you acquire wisdom. (Jas. 1:5)
- Prayer is the way a backslider gets restored. (Jas. 5:16-20)
- Prayer is the way saints get strengthened. (Jude 20; Matt. 26:41)
- Prayer is the way we get laborers out to the mission field. (Matt. 9:38)
- Prayer is how we cure the sick. (Jas. 5:13-15)
- Prayer is how we accomplish the impossible. (Mk. 11:23-24)

Everything we do that is worth doing, everything God wants to do in the church, everything God wants to do in your life, He has subjugated it all to one thing: prayer. It is impossible for us to do or to be anything that God wants us to do or be apart from spending time in the prayer closet. Andrew Murray..”Our unlimited God..He did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith (Matt. 13:58). Beware above everything else in your praying of limiting God, not only by unbelief but by fancying that you know what He can do. Expect unexpected things abundantly above all that we ask or think (Eph. 3:20). Each time you intercede, be quiet first and worship God in His glory. Meditate on what He can do. Then expect great things!

St. Bernard ... “Dear brothers, you should never doubt your prayer, thinking that it might have been in vain, for I tell you truly that before you have uttered the words, the prayer is already recorded in heaven. Therefore, you should confidently expect from God one of two things;

either that your prayer will be granted, or that if it is not granted, the granting of it would not be good for you.”

Martin Luther...”Prayer is a special exercise of faith. Faith makes the prayer acceptable because it believes that either the prayer will be granted, or that something better will be given instead. When we pray, we must hold fast and believe that God has heard our prayer.”

Andrew Murray...A Clean Heart...”Our power to bless others and to intercede successfully can only flourish as sins are faced and put away. Sanctification begins with a troubling awareness of our own sin. Plead with God today for a “spirit of fire” to uncover and burn out sin in His people, so that they will be blessed and become a blessing to the world.”

David Jeremiah...”From the beginning of the Bible to its conclusion, we see absolute evidence that God answers prayer. Things that we think are impossible, God does when people pray.

- Prayer has won victories over fire and air and earth and waters.
- Prayer opened the Red Sea.
- Prayer brought water from the rock and bread from heaven.
- Prayer made the sun stand still.
- Prayer brought fire from the sky on Elijah’s sacrifice.
- Prayer overthrew armies and healed the sick.
- Prayer raised the dead.
- Prayer has paved the way for the conversion of millions of people.

When we pray, we align ourselves with the purpose of God and tap into the power of God, the almighty. Because we pray, God works through us in ways that He would not otherwise. God has made certain things dependent upon prayer, things that will never be done unless we pray. Could God do whatever He chooses without prayer? Of course. But God has determined that He will use the prayers of His people to accomplish His purposes on this earth. When we do not pray, we limit what God might do in our lives. Jas. 4:2; 2 Thess. 3:1-2.

Jo Fraser...”Many of us cannot reach the mission field on our feet, but we can reach them on our knees. Solid, lasting missionary work is

accomplished by prayer, whether offered in China, India, or the United States.”

Jean-Nicholas Grou... “Perhaps we are praying in our own way, but we are not praying in God’s way. If God does not teach us, we shall never know thoroughly the nature of prayer. Prayer, then, is a wholly spiritual act. For it is the heart that prays, it is to the voice of the heart that God listens, and it is the heart that He answers.”

David Jeremiah... “What is the balance between Calvinism (which says it is all up to God) and Arminianism (which says it is all up to us)? How do we discover God’s part in prayer and our part? There is no better teaching on that subject than the Lord’s Prayer. It is perfectly in balance. It teaches us who He is and who we are, and how we are to come to Him in prayer. It is not too much to say that this prayer is at the very heart of who God is and what He longs for His children to be. Prayer is something we learn by praying. We cannot learn to pray only by hearing about it. The truth is when we pray, we become subject to the most powerful force in the universe.

Andrew Murray... “If we do not learn how to pray when we are younger, we will stumble at it all of our lives.”

“The nearer we come to God Himself and the deeper we enter into His will, the more power we have in prayer. In the stillness you will receive power to pray.”

Bernard Bangley... There are three kinds of prayer:

1. Spoken prayer with a prepared text, such as the Lord’s Prayer and other special prayers. These prayers can lift you up to God.
2. Spoken prayer without a prepared text -- speaking to God as though you were standing together. The words match an inward stirring and reflection of the various concerns of the moment. It pleases God because it comes from the heart; it never goes away without some type of God’s grace.
3. Prayer only in the heart. It is silent and brings with it great rest of body and soul. Some can pray in the heart continually, glorifying and praising God.

Bernard of Clairvoux...”Who is free from defects? He lacks everything who thinks he lacks nothing.”

Corrie ten Boom...”If all things are possible with God, then all things are possible to Him who believes in Him.”

Andrew Murray...”Be specific in your petitions, then you’ll know what answers to look for. Intercession is not the breathing out of pious wishes; its aim is to bring down God’s blessing through believing, persevering prayer.”

Siang & Douglas...”The heart of the matter is the matter of the heart! This is especially true when it comes to spiritual practices. Our hearts must be fully involved if we are to avoid dead legalism, cheap grace, or superficial spirituality. We need to come to God, with passionate desire to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. God has promised that we will find Him when we seek Him with all our heart (Jer. 29:13). As we seek Him through the disciplines of the Holy Spirit, we will be found by Him!

Doug Steere...”Prayer is the process of intentionally turning the focus of the soul’s sincere desire upon the active nature of the Divine Love and by every device with its power holding it there until it becomes engaged.”

1. The first condition of the practice of private prayer is to be alone.

Francis of Assisi found it necessary to withdraw from brothers in order to be made fit to be among them. The New Testament suggests this habitual practice of Jesus of retirement for prayer, when it says, “as He was wont.”

2. The second condition of private prayer is to recognize that solitude is the stronghold of the strong and to provide for its place in life.

3. The most common form of private prayer is spoken prayer, and the kneeling posture is an active bodily gesture of loving submission.

Richard Foster...”Prayer is the human response to the perpetual outpouring of love by which God lays siege to every soul.”

D.L. Moody... "Spread out your petition before God, and then say, 'Thy will, not mine, be done.' The sweetest lesson I have learned in God's school is to let the Lord choose for me."

John of the Cross... "Whenever anything disagreeable or displeasing happens to you, remember Christ crucified and be silent."

A.B. Simpson... "I would rather teach one man to pray than to teach ten men how to preach."

Siang & Douglas... "Prayer is our primary pathway of relationship to God. Prayer is the oxygen of the spiritual life. Prayer is the central avenue the Holy Spirit uses to transform us. Prayer is to be the main business of our lives. As we engage in the disciplines of prayer and intercessions, we give God time and room to draw us near to Himself and grow us into the likeness of Jesus."

Martin Luther... "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."

Julian of Norwich... Prayer unites the soul to God. Intercession is waiting before God, developing quietness in the heart, listening for His still small voice. How do we move into intercession? Look for what God is doing right now. What can we do to become more open to the Holy Spirit's leading in intercessory prayer?

First - Cultivate intimacy with Jesus.

Second - Listen. When we develop a listening heart, we will become aware of what God is purposing. Listen especially to His voice through the Word of God and begin praying the prayer you find in scriptures.

Third - We must respond to the Spirit's initiative and invitation; as we remain close to Jesus, however, and develop a listening heart, we will more and more often be able to say yes and enter obediently into partnership with the Spirit.

Fourth - At the completion of an intercession, there will often be a sense of release, accompanied by the deep peace of God.

Samuel Chadwick... The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing of prayerless studies, prayerless work and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks

at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray. We need the Holy Spirit to draw us to prayer. Resisting the temptation to fall asleep while praying, keeping ones mind from wandering, and avoiding unbelief and disenchantment when we don't see speedy answers to our prayers requires the discipline of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to always pray and not lose heart. (Luke 18:1)

C.S. Lewis...The moment you wake up each morning all your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists in shoving it all back, in listening to that other voice, taking the other point of view, letting that other, larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in. Entering into a life of prayer is entry into spiritual battle. God uses our prayers to invade enemy territory and establish His kingdom. As we are in tune with the Spirit, our prayer for others helps bring physical, emotional, and spiritual healing as well as deliverance from demonic oppression. How do we engage in spiritual warfare? By listening to the Spirit and praying with boldness and authority as He gives prompting and direction. We are to pray against every "mountain" that holds back our faith from receiving God's blessings (Mk. 11:23-24)

S.D. Gordon..."I do not mean those who talk about prayer, nor those who say they believe in prayer, but I mean those people who take time and pray."

1. Ask God to grow you into a person of prayer.
2. Wait quietly and listen for God's leading. Let God bring to your mind any situations or persons for whom you should intercede. Lift these up before God, listening again for any special discernment or revelation that will guide the content of your prayers.

D.L. Moody..."I firmly believe a great many prayers are not answered because we are not willing to forgive someone."

Warren Myers...Only as we nurture a growing relationship with the Lord can our prayer life thrive.

1. Cultivate faith through pursuing God. Faith is trusting God -- counting on Him to be who He says He is and to do what He says He will do. As we study the Scriptures day by day with the earnest prayer, "Lord, show me what You are like. By your Spirit impress

truths about You on my heart. Use Your Word to clear out my wrong ideas and to plant deep in my heart a true knowledge of You.” Our faith will flourish as we focus on God and praise Him for how awesome and wonderful He is. Ask God for a growing thirst for Him.

O God, I have tasted your goodness and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more...O God, the Triune God, I want to want you; I long to be filled with longing... Show me Your glory, I pray, so that I may know You indeed...Give me grace to rise and follow You up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long. In Jesus' Name, Amen. (A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God)

2. Count on the truth of instant forgiveness. When we sense we are living in obedience to God, it is easier to pray with confidence. He longs for you to confess your sins, including your lack of trust, and to reaffirm your commitment to Christ as your Lord. Think of confession as part of maintaining a healthy relationship with God and an essential part of your obedience. Immediately after you confess, you can pray with boldness before God!

“Well, my poor soul, here we are in the ditch again, in spite of our earnest resolve to stay out of it. Ah well, let us get out and go on our way. We'll do well enough, God helping us.” Frances De Sales, Bishop of Geneva.

Don't let vague guilt hinder your prayers (vague guilt and condemnation). That is the devil's business. Thank the Father that Satan is a defeated enemy, that Jesus is victor over Him. Thank the father that His Son bore all your guilt on the cross and that now your true self is clean and righteous. Praise Him that He does not treat you as your sins deserve, for His love and mercy are as high as the heavens are above the earth. After we confess our sins, we should resist the urge to scold or punish ourselves.

3. Abide in Christ. Hudson Taylor, a great missionary to China during the 1800's, had been groping through a period of dense darkness. He felt overwhelmed by his failures and inadequacy and lack of power. He knew that all he needed was in Christ -- but the big question he wrestled with was how to get it out of Christ and into himself. Then through a letter from a co-worker, the Lord opened

Taylor's eyes to see that he was so united to Christ that he shared His life. He was simply to accept Christ's invitation to "abide in me" and not try to get anything out of Him. He wrote to his sister,

"How great seemed my mistake in wishing to get the sap, the fullness, out of Him!...The vine is not the root merely, but all -- root, stem, branches, twigs...and Jesus is not that alone -- He is oil and sunshine, air and showers, and ten thousand times more than we have ever dreamed, wished for, or needed. Oh, the joy of seeing this truth! Can Christ be rich and I poor? Can your head be well fed while your body starves?"

Abiding in Christ means to depend on Him, enjoying our spiritual union with Him and allowing Him to meet our needs. Abiding is a basic preparation for praying the way God wants us to pray (John 15:7), a life that is wrapped up in the desires that are on God's heart. Then when you pray, you express His longings; you want what He wants. And so He does what you ask.

Abiding is not complicated or strenuous, but to turn and trust Him, as we did when we were saved.

Abiding in Christ requires God's continual working. We are "in Christ" -- we don't have to try to get there. "In Christ" could be translated "in union with Christ." We simply agree to a constant dependence on Him. We turn time and again from our own abilities, our own sufficiency, and our own pride that wants to do it on our own. We accept His word, "Without me you can do nothing" -- that is, nothing significant in God's eyes. We turn, and we trust.

We choose to depend on Christ as our constant source of life, our constant source of all we need for living and growing, for bearing spiritual fruit, for praying. Then we trust Him to keep us trusting and ask Him to help us turn back quickly whenever we slip into going our own way, doing our own thing, or depending on our own resources. We can keep our trust more constant by saying often, "Thank you that you are my life." (Eph. 3:16-17; Jn. 15:1-3; Isa. 27:3)

Andrew Murray..."Abiding in Jesus is nothing but giving up of oneself to be ruled and taught and led, and so resting in the arms of everlasting love."

Years after Hudson Taylor learned the secret of abiding in Christ, someone asked him if he was always conscious of abiding in Christ. He replied, "While sleeping last night, did I cease to abide in your home because I was unconscious of the fact? We should never be conscious of not abiding in Christ." What a difference in our praying when we abide in Christ.

4. Walk humbly with your God.

What is true humility? One side is "Without me you can do nothing." The other is "I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me." (John 15:5; Phil. 4:13) As we humble ourselves and honor God, we qualify for the promise in I Sam. 2:30. He will honor us, and He will also honor our prayers.

5. Depend on the Word, not feelings.

We get into trouble when we depend on feelings in prayer. We start thinking we have to be in a praying mood to pray, or we call our petitions "good prayers" if they give us a certain feeling. It is much better to just decide to pray as God commands -- regardless of how we feel.

Charles Spurgeon..."We should pray when we are in a praying mood, for it would be sinful to neglect so fair an opportunity. We should pray when we are not in a praying mood because it would be dangerous to remain in so unhealthy a condition." It is not that feelings are out of place. If He makes us particularly conscious of His presence, let's enjoy it; and if the Spirit carries us along in prayer, let's be grateful. (Ps. 102; Ps. 62:8) Leaving our feelings in God's hands helps us to be more consistent in prayer.

A Heart Check-Up

- Am I yielding to Christ's lordship and abiding in Him?
- Have I confessed every known sin?
- Am I praying in Jesus' name - in His merits and not my own?
- Am I praying in agreement with what I understand to be God's will and purposes?
- Am I praying in faith based on God's Word?

We can pray “in the Spirit”, directed and helped by Him, and depending on the Word He inspired no matter how we feel. If you are troubled about an overall lack of positive emotions during prayer, bring your concerns to God. Ask Him to overcome any patterns of living or thinking that may be hindering you. Hudson Taylor received amazing answers to prayer. Someone asked him late in life if he always felt joyful when he prayed. He replied that his heart usually felt like wood when he prayed and that most of his major victories came through “emotionless prayers.” Choose to bring God joy by letting Him, not your feelings, govern your prayer choices.

6. Learn to be still before God.

How can we prepare our hearts for prayer? By cultivating a quiet heart before the Lord, both in our times alone with Him and throughout our days. By letting Him lead us beside still waters. We can let our thoughts about His greatness lead us to an inner stillness that absorbs His reality and responds to Him with relaxed confidence. Waiting on God and resting in Him have much in common. Both result in absorbing His strength; both involve truly tuning in to God and His Word. Prayer is conversation, not just monologue. We're to listen as well as speak. God's voice is often “still” and “small” and we can drown it out. By waiting in quietness before Him, we express our respect and adoration, and we let Him speak to our hearts. He may speak through a sense of nearness, His love, His welcome, His power, His guidance. He may bring to mind scriptures that speak to our need. The strength we absorb from the Lord and the quietness of heart He gives prepare us to pray effectively.

7. Pray with a nonjudgmental attitude. John Hyde started to pray negatively for a pastor who was cold towards God. God stopped Him. Hyde cried out for God to forgive him for being, like Satan, an accuser of a believer -- even in prayer. Hyde decided to turn his thoughts from the negatives that were temporarily true in his fellow servant to the things that were true and admirable. He asked God to show him all that deserved praise in the pastor's life. Shortly afterward he learned that at the very time he was praising and giving thanks, his brother in Christ experienced spiritual renewal.

8. View prayer as a way of life.

I Thess. 5:17 How can we pray all the time when so many things demand our attention? Pray (now and often) that the Lord will

help you turn your heart to Him more frequently throughout the day, and that this will develop into praying continually. Also pray that you will turn to God more often with short arrow prayers -- prayers that rise to God throughout your waking hours for people you see, people you relate to, and people who come to mind.

"I cannot tell why there should come to me
a thought of someone miles and years away,
In swift insistence on the memory,
Unless there is a need that I should pray.
Perhaps just then my friend has fiercer fight,
A more appalling weakness, a decay
Of courage, darkness, some lost sense of right;
And so, in case He needs my prayers, I pray."

Rosalind Goforth

Thomas a Kempis The beginning of all evil temptations is an unstable mind and a small trust in God.

The process of being overcome.

1. The thought is allowed to enter our minds.
2. The imagination is sparked by thought.
3. We feel a sense of pleasure at the fantasy, and we entertain it.
4. We engage in the evil action, assenting to its urges.

Peace is not found by escaping temptations but by being tried by them. It is hard to give up old habits, but it is even harder to go against one's own will.

Four sources of Peace

1. Strive to do another's will rather than your own.
2. Choose always to have less than more.
3. Seek the lower places in life, dying to the need to be recognized and important.
4. Always and in everything desire that the will of God may be completely fulfilled in you.

William Law For there is no reason why we should make God the rule and measure of our prayers, why we should look wholly unto Him

and pray according to His will, and yet not make Him the rule and the measure of all other actions of our life. Our lives should be as holy and heavenly as our prayers. It is our strict duty to live by reason, to devote all of the action of our lives to God, to walk before Him in wisdom and holiness and all heavenly conversation, and to do everything in His name and for His glory. If our prayers do not lead us to this, they are of no value, no matter how wise or heavenly. If we are going to pray for the Spirit of God, we must make that Spirit the rule of all our actions. Just as it is our duty to look wholly unto God in our prayers, so it is our duty to live wholly unto God in our lives.

A.W. Tozer Fullness

Before fullness there must be emptiness. How I can be filled may be answered in four words, all of them active verbs.

1. Surrender Rom. 12:1,2
2. Ask Luke 11:13
3. Obey Acts 5:32
4. Believe Gal. 3:2

C.H. Spurgeon ..."We ought not to tolerate for a minute the ghastly and grievous thought that God will not answer prayer. History, as manifested in Christ Jesus, demands it."

William Temple..."If your prayer is selfish, the answer will be something that will rebuke your selfishness. You may not recognize it as having come at all, but it is sure to be there."

A.W. Tozer..."To speak of the 'deeper life' is...to insist that believers explore the depth of the Christian evangel for those riches it surely contains but which we are surely missing. The 'deeper life' is deeper only because the average Christian life is tragically shallow."

6 Reasons to Pray

1. Because God commands it.

God repeatedly encourages us to pray to honor His dominion, to seek His face, to discover His will and to enlist His help. He has made us for Himself and prayer is an essential expression of that.

2. Because God is glorified in it.

It gives Him the glory of His omniscience (the word means all knowing, all seeing) in addressing Him.

It gives Him the glory of His omnipotence (all powerfulness) and His goodness in seeking help. It gives Him the glory of His holiness in making confession, of His wisdom in seeking guidance, and of His mercy, grace, and love in praise and thanksgiving.

3. Because people need our prayers.
(Col. 4:3; I Thess. 5:25-26)

4. Because we change as we pray.

"To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us."
Richard Foster

5. Because things change as we pray.

"People tell me that answers to prayer are merely coincidences. I can only relay that when I pray coincidences happen, and when I stop, they stop happening."..William Temple

6. Because Jesus prayed.

The one who gives us the Lord's Prayer always lives to intercede for us. He is the Great Pray-er.

Bernard of Clairvoux ..."If you want to pray, you must choose not only the right place but also the right time. Quiet time is best. The deep silence when others are asleep inspires natural prayer. Prayer is a secret thing at night. It is witnessed only by God. It is pleasing, untainted, modest prayer. There are no interruptions, no noise. It becomes pure prayer, sincere prayer. There is no trace of exhibitionism or human adulations. RESPONSE: 'Lord, teach me what the modest and untainted prayer of the quiet hour is.'

E.M. Bounds..."Prayer governs conduct, and conduct makes character. The more we pray, the better we are, the purer and better our lives. The character of the inner life is a condition of effectual praying. As is the life, so will the praying be.

Faith - does the impossible because it brings God to undertake for us, and nothing is impossible, but faith and prayer move God.

Faith - brings great ease of mind and perfect peace of heart. They thrive best and get most out of life who live in the living present. True prayers are born of present trials and present needs.

Faith - and prayer select the things, and God commits Himself to do the very things which faith and persevering prayer nominates and petition Him to accomplish. Perfect faith has always in its keeping what perfect prayer asks for. The work of the ministry is to change unbelieving sinners into praying and believing saints.

Faith - starts prayer to work.

Faith - makes prayer strong.

Faith - gives patience to wait on God.

Faith - believes that God is a rewarder.

Prayer does not stand alone. Trust is a conscious act, a fact of which we are sensible. The trust which inspires our prayers must be not only trust in the person of God and of Christ but in their ability and willingness to grant the thing prayed for. Neglect of the inner chamber is the cause of most spiritual failure. It is depth and intensity of spiritual desire which gives intensity and depth to prayer.

God draws mightily near to the praying soul. To see God, to know God, and to live for God -- these form the objective of all true praying.

Prayer governs conduct, and conduct makes character. Conduct is what we do; character is what we are. Conduct is the outward life. Character is the life unseen, hidden within, yet evidenced by that which is seen. The more we pray, the better we are, the purer and better our lives.

Eph. 6. The Christian soldiers fighting the fight of faith have access to a place of retreat, to which they continually repair for prayer.

God's Word is a record of prayer. A reverence for God's holy name is closely related to a high regard for His Word. By scriptural warrant prayer may be divided into the petition of faith and that of submission.

The prayer of faith is based on the written Word. The prayer of submission is without a definite word of promise, so to speak, but takes hold of God with a lowly and contrite spirit and asks and pleads with Him for that which the soul desires. By prayer we bring these promises of God's holy will into the realm of the actual and the real. To pray is not merely to get a blessing but also to be able to give a blessing. One reads the Bible to discover God's will; he prays in order that he may receive power to do that will. Prayer draws its very life from the Bible and has no standing ground outside of the warrant of the scriptures. Its very existence and character is dependent on revelation made by God to man in His holy Word.

Julian of Norwich..."God, of your goodness give me Yourself for You are sufficient for me. I cannot properly ask anything less, to be worthy of you. If I were to ask less, I should always be in want. In You alone do I have it all."

Richard Foster..."Prayer ushers us into the Holy of Holies, where we bow before the deepest mysteries of the faith and one fears to touch the ark."

Julian of Norwich..."He said not, thou shall not be tempted, thou shall not be travailed, thou shall not be afflicted. But He said, thou shall not be overcome."

J.C. Ryle..."What is the reason that some believers are so much brighter and holier than others? I believe the difference, in nineteen cases out of twenty, arises from different habits about private prayer."

A.W. Tozer..."If you will not worship God seven days a week, you do not worship Him on one day a week."

Donald S. Whitney..."One of the more obvious reasons for getting away from earthly noise and human voices is to hear the voice from heaven better."

Henri Nouwen..."The gospel for tomorrow is about forgiving from your heart."

Frank Damagio..."Our first need is to desire God more than anything else in life. This desire motivates us to learn prayer, to deepen our spiritual roots."

May the hand of God protect us.
May the way of God direct us.
May the shield of God defend us.
May the host of God guard us against the snares of the evil one
and the temptations of the world.
May Christ be with us, before us, in us, and over us.
May your salvation, O Lord, be always ours this day and
forevermore. Amen.”

E.M. Bounds...”Just as God has commanded us to pray always, to pray everywhere, and to pray in everything, so He will answer always, everywhere, and in everything. God explicitly says, “Call unto me, and I will answer.” There are no limitations, no hedges, no hindrances in the way of God fulfilling the promise. His word is at stake. His word is involved. God solemnly engages to answer prayer. God will forever hear and answer prayer. Prayer brings divine power into the ranks of men and puts it to work.

Consecration

Consecration is a life of personal holiness. It will bring spiritual power into the heart and enlivens the entire inner man. It is a life which ever recognizes God and a life given up to true prayer.

Consecration...is the separation from worldly, secular and even legitimate things, if they come in conflict with God's plans to holy use.

The prayer life and the consecrated life are intimate companions.

“Pray”, “prayer”, or “praying” are used 350 times in the Bible. When we pray with the spirit of prayer and with a passion of heart, prayer is the contact of a living soul with God. Prayer fills man's emptiness with God's fullness, man's poverty with God's riches, man's weakness with God's strength, and man's smallness with God's greatness. We as the people of God are being called to return to our first call, intercessory prayer. One day a young man in Alexander the Great's army was caught running from the battle. As he was brought before Alexander, the lad responded with fear, “Sir, my name is Alexander.” Filled with anger that this coward would share the same name as himself, Alexander demanded, “What did you say your name was?” Terrified, the lad answered, “My name is Alexander.”

Alexander the Great approached him and stared straight into his face. "Young man, either change your conduct or change your name." Truly, we as Christians are living in a season in which we need to change our conduct or change our names. God has given us a priority call, a call to supplication, a call to prayer, a call to intercession, a call to giving of thanks. He exhorts us to fulfill this ministry, to take up this mighty weapon of prayer and intercession. We bear His name. Let us live in fulfillment of this call and bring honor to His name. (I Tim. 2:1)

St. Patrick 5th Century

May the strength of God pilot us.
May the power of God preserve us.
May the wisdom of God instruct us.

Consecration is really the setting apart of ones self-life to a life of prayer.

Consecration brings answers to prayer. God can depend upon consecrated men. God can afford to commit Himself in prayer to those who have fully committed themselves to God. The spirit of consecration is the spirit of prayer.

Consecration is the practical expression of true prayer. The possibilities of prayer are gauged by faith in God's ability to do. Faith is the one prime condition by which God works.

Faith is the one prime condition by which man prays.

Faith draws on God to its full extent.

Faith gives character to prayer.

Corrie ten Boom..."It is not my ability but my response to God's ability that counts."

Hannah Hurnard (II Cor. 10:3-5)... "We are called to be God's transmitters, to be completely separated from all thoughts which are contrary to His thinking, so that we may transmit His thoughts to others."

E.M. Bounds... All answers to prayer are but the intervention of the providence of God in the affairs of men. Prayer brings God's providence into action. Praying men and God's providence go together. They prayed over everything because God had to do with everything.

Clement of Alexandria..The Christian prays in every situation -- in his walks for recreation, in his dealings with others, in silence, in reading, in all rational pursuits.

Richard Foster...To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us. If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic in our lives. The closer we come to the heartbeat of God, the more we see our need and the more we desire to be conformed to Christ... In prayer, real prayer, we begin to think God's thoughts after Him, to desire the things He desires, to love the things He loves. Progressively we are taught to see things from His point of view."

Lloyd John Ogilvie..."Prayer starts with God. It is His idea. The desire to pray is the result of God's greater desire to talk with us. He has something to say when we feel the urge to pray. He is the initiator. The keen desire to begin and end the day with prolonged prayer is His gift. The sense of need to pray for challenges or opportunities throughout the day is because He has wisdom and insight He wants to impart.

Amy Carmichael..."Do not be afraid of silence in your prayer time. It may be that you are meant to listen, not to speak. So wait before the Lord. Wait in stillness. Wait as David waited when he 'sat before the Lord', and in that stillness, assurance will come to you. You will know you are heard; you will know that your Lord ponders the voice of your humble desires; you will hear quiet words spoken to you yourself, perhaps to your grateful surprise and refreshment."

Paul Tournier..."God guides us, despite our uncertainties and our vagueness, even through our failings and mistakes. He often starts us off to the left, only to bring us up in the end to the right; or else He brings us back to the right, after a long detour, because we started off by mistake to the left in the belief that we were obeying Him. He leads us step by step, from event to event. Only afterwards, as we

look back over the way we have come and reconsider certain important moments in our lives in the light of all that has followed them or when we survey the whole process of our lives, do we experience the feeling of having been led without knowing it, the feeling that God has mysteriously guided us.”

David McKenna...”Every truth about suffering can be twisted into a weapon for or against God. Most often, suffering speeds us in the direction we are already heading - whether toward or away from God.”

Roy Hicks, Jr....”The miraculous always begins with something you can do. Jesus only asked Peter to ‘launch out’. He didn’t ask him to produce the catch. But often the miraculous also begins with something you don’t want to do. It requires time, energy, or resources that you’d rather not expend. It’s all about fishing where you’ve already fished - just because He asks you to.”

Julian of Norwich...”God, of Your goodness give me Yourself for You are sufficient for me. I cannot properly ask anything less, to be worthy of You. If I were to ask less, I should always be in want. In You alone do I have all.”

A.W. Tozer...”Sometimes God gives us the desires of our hearts to teach us that it is possible to famish while we feed, that these desires gratify self but send leanness to the soul. In fact, if we ask God for anything, only desiring to get pleasure out of it, we are asking on a low level. For prayer is God answering His own desires; that is, desires begotten in the soul by God the Holy Spirit, which are presented in the name of God the Son and answered by God the Father.”

Teresa of Avila...”Govern all by your wisdom, O Lord, so that my soul may always be serving You as You desire, and not as I may choose. Do not punish me, I beg you, by granting that which I wish or ask if it offends Your love, which would always live in me. Let me die to myself that so I may serve You; let me live to You, who...are true life.”

Francois de Fenelon...”My Creator, I close my eyes and shut out all exterior things. They are nothing but pointless irritations to the spirit.

In the depths of my heart I can enjoy an intimacy with You through Jesus, Your Son.”

Martin Luther...”A Christian is never in a state of completion but always in the process of becoming.”

George Muller...”The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.”

E.M. Bounds...”Prayer belongs to the spirit, and at times it possesses the spirit and stirs the spirit with high and holy purposes and resolves.

Prayer is the outstretched arms of the child for the Father’s help. Prayer is the child’s cry ...calling to the Father’s ear, the Father’s heart, and to the Father’s ability, which the Father is to hear, the Father is to feel, and which the Father is to relieve. Prayer is the seeking of God’s great and greatest good, which will not come if we do not pray. A life of prayer is the only life which heaven counts. Men are bettered by prayer, and the world is bettered by praying. God does His best work for the world through prayer. God’s greatest glory and man’s highest good are secured by prayer. Prayer is God’s life giving breath. To God prayer is what the incense was to the Jewish temple. By prayer God’s name is hallowed.”

John Donne ... 16th - 17th centuries...”O Lord, never allow us to think that we can stand by ourselves and not need you.”

George Herbert...17th century...”Thou hast given so much to me. Give me one thing more - a grateful heart; Not thankful when it pleaseth me, as if Thy blessings had spare days, but such a heart whose pulse may be Thy praise.”

A.W. Tozer...”It is not words that nourish the soul, but God Himself...The Bible is not an end in itself but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts.”

“Very few of us know the secret of bathing our souls in silence.”

C.S. Lewis..."Lay before Him what is in us, not what ought to be in us."

Richard J. Foster..."I now want to give a counsel that may sound strange. It is that we should learn to pray even while we are dwelling on evil. Perhaps we are waging an interior battle over anger, or lust, or pride, or greed, or ambition. We need not isolate these things from prayer. Instead we talk to God about what is going on inside that we know displeases Him. We lift even our disobedience into the arms of the Father; He is strong enough to carry the weight. Sin, to be sure, separates us from God; but trying to hide our sin separates us all the more. 'The Lord, writes Emile Griffin, loves us - perhaps most of all - when we fail and try again'. In prayer we pass from thinking of God as part of our life to the realization that we are part of His life. Wondrously and mysteriously God moves from the periphery of our prayer experience to the center. A conversion of the heart takes place, a transformation of the spirit."

Dwight L. Moody..."If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself."

Teresa of Avila..."Be not curious about matters that do not concern thee; never speak of them, and do not ask about them."

James Hudson Taylor..."Every day almost every hour the consciousness of sin oppressed me. I knew that if I could only abide in Christ, all would be well, but I could not...When my agony of soul was at its height, a sentence in a letter from dear McCarthy was used to remove the scales from my eyes, and the Spirit of God revealed the truth of our oneness with Jesus as I had never known before. But how to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One. As I read, I saw it all! I looked to Jesus and saw (and when I saw, oh, how the joy flowed!) that He had said, 'I will never leave you' (Heb. 13:5). 'Ah, there is rest!' I thought. I have striven in vain to rest in Him. I'll strive no more. For has He not promised to abide with me - never to leave me, never to fail me? And, He never will!"

Julian of Norwich ..."It is easier for us to get to know God than to know our own soul...God is nearer to us than our own soul, for He is

the ground in which it stands...so if we want to know our own soul and enjoy its fellowship, it is necessary to seek it in our Lord God."

A.W. Tozer..."Who that is truly born of the Spirit, unless he has been prejudiced by wrong teaching, can object to such a thorough cleansing of the heart as will enable him perfectly to love God and worthily to praise Him? Yet this is exactly what we mean when we speak about the 'deeper life' experience. Only we mean that it should be literally fulfilled within the heart, not merely accepted by the head. Ps. 139:23,24. Yearning after God has never completely died in any generation. Always there were some who scorned the low paths and insisted upon walking the high road of spiritual perfection. Yet, strangely enough, that word 'perfection' never meant a spiritual terminal point nor a state of purity that made watchfulness and prayer unnecessary. Exactly the opposite was true."

Charles H. Spurgeon...Ruth 2:3.."It seemed nothing but an accidental happenstance, but how divinely was it planned! Ruth had gone forth with her (mother-in-law's) blessing, under the care of her (mother-in-law's) God to humble but honorable toil, and the providence of God was guiding her every step. Little did she know that amid the sheaves she would find a husband, that he would make her the joint owner of all those broad acres, and that she, a poor foreigner, would become one of the progenitors of the great Messiah. God is very good to those who trust in Him and often surprises them with unlooked for blessings. Little do we know what may happen to us tomorrow, but this sweet fact may cheer us, that no good thing shall be withheld. Chance is banished from the faith of Christians, for they see the hand of God in everything. The trivial events of today or tomorrow may involve consequences of the highest importance. O Lord, deal as graciously with your servants as you did with Ruth. How blessed would it be, if, in wandering in the field of meditation tonight, our (happenstance) should be to "light" on the place where our kinsman will reveal Himself to us! O Spirit of God, guide us to Him. We would sooner glean in His field than bear away the whole harvest from any other."

Blaise Pascal..."The servant of God has a good master."

John Calvin...Perseverance in Prayer..."We must not wish to bind God to certain circumstances, however, because...we are taught not

to put on Him any law, nor to impose upon Him any condition. For, before making any prayer for ourselves, before all things, we ask that His will be done, whereby we submit beforehand our will to His in order that, as if it were caught and retained by a rein, our will may not presume to wish to range and to submit Him under our will. If, having the heart formed in this obedience, we permit ourselves to be governed according to the good pleasure of the divine providence, we shall easily learn to persevere in prayer and wait with patience upon the Lord, while deferring the fulfillment of our desires to the hour set by His will, being assured that, although He does not show Himself to us, yet He did not at all have ears deaf to our prayers, though they seemed to men to be despised by Him.

And even if at the end, after long waiting, our mind cannot understand the profit of our praying, and our senses feel no fruit thereof, nevertheless our faith will certify unto us what our mind and sense will not be able to perceive; that is, we shall have obtained (from God) all that which was good for us, for He will make us in poverty to possess abundance and, in affliction, to have consolation. For even if all things should fail us, yet God will never leave us, inasmuch as He cannot disappoint the expectation and patience of His own."

Oswald Chambers..."I wonder if that is God's voice? God never speaks to us in dramatic ways but in ways that are easy to misunderstand. Then we say, 'I wonder if that is God's voice?' Isaiah said that the Lord spoke to him 'with a strong hand', that is by the pressure of circumstances (Isa. 8:11). Without the sovereign hand of God Himself, nothing touches our lives. Do we discern His hand at work, or do we see things as mere occurrences? Get into the habit of saying, 'Speak Lord', and life will become a romance (I Sam. 3:9). Every time circumstances press in on you, say, 'Speak, Lord', and make time to listen. Chastening is more than a means of discipline -- it is meant to get me to the point of saying, 'Speak, Lord'. Think back to a time when God spoke to you. Do you remember what He said? Was it Luke 11:13 or was it I Thess. 5:23? As we listen, our ears become more sensitive; and like Jesus, we shall hear God all the time. Should I tell my "Eli" what God has shown to me? This is where the dilemma of obedience hits us. We disobey God by becoming amateur providences and thinking, 'I must shield Eli', who represents the best people we know. God did not tell Samuel to tell

Eli -- he had to decide that for himself. God's message to you may hurt your Eli, but trying to prevent suffering in another's life will prove to be an obstruction between your soul and God."

Armin Gesswein..."When God is about to do something great, He starts with a difficulty. When He is about to do something truly magnificent, He starts with an impossibility."

Leanne Payne..."The Bible -- the revealed Word of God -- is a vital part of prayer. Those with a low view of the Bible should not attempt listening prayer, for it can lead into dangerous Gnostic listening. Some with a high view of Scriptures, in contrast, are prone to cordon the Bible off as though it was not a vital part of prayer. These people first study the Scriptures and then pray. But because God's basic way of revealing Himself to us is through His Son and the Holy Scriptures that bear witness to Him, we can delight in listening to God even as we read them....To listen to God in prayer is to look up to Him with the intuitive thinking organ the Bible calls the heart. Through the eyes and ears of the heart we see and hear God; through it we apprehend the transcendent -- that which is beyond the merely physical or material. The Scriptures graciously invite us to look up and see the invisible."

John Newton..."A Branch of Blessedness. Blessedness is a power of reposing ourselves and our concerns upon the Lord's faithfulness and care and may be considered in two respects: a reliance upon Him that will surely provide for us, guide us, protect us, be our help in trouble, our shield in danger, so that however poor, weak, and defenseless in ourselves, we may rejoice in His all-sufficiency as our own; and further, in consequence of this, a peaceful, humble submission to His will under all events which upon their first impression are contrary to our own views and desires. But blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; he shall be kept in perfect peace, though the earth be moved and the mountains cast into the midst of the sea."

A.B. Simpson..."Prayer, always prayer; though weary and faint and alone. Prayer nestles by the Father's sheltering throne."

Thomas 'a Kempis..."Two things increase temptation's hold on you: an indecisive mind and little confidence in God."

Richard Foster..."None of us will keep up a life of prayer unless we are prepared to change."

Thomas 'a Kempis..."Adversities do not make a man frail; they show what sort of man he is."

Hannah Whitall Smith..."Faith is nothing at all tangible. It is simply believing God; and, like sight, it is nothing apart from its object. You might as well shut your eyes and look inside to see whether you have sight, as to look inside to discover if you have faith."

Anselm..."O Lord our God, grant us to desire Thee with our whole heart, that so desiring, we may seek, and seeking find Thee, and so finding Thee, may love Thee, and loving Thee, may hate those sins from which Thou hast redeemed us. Amen."

Anselm...Prayer for His Enemies:

"Almighty and tender Lord Jesus Christ, just as I have asked you to love my friends, so I ask the same for my enemies. You alone, Lord, are mighty. You alone are merciful. Whatever you make me desire for my enemies, grant it to them. And give the same back to me. If I ever ask for anything which is outside your perfect rule of love, whether through weakness, ignorance, or malice, Good Lord, do not give it to them, and do not give it back to me."

Simon Tugwell..."If we want to keep company with God, we must be prepared to let Him remind us of His ways, not at the times that suit us, but at the times that suit Him. If, through our use of the Bible, through our reading and meditation, we let Him into our hearts, below the level of our deliberation, that means that we hand over to Him the right to choose how and when to present Himself to our consciousness. We are like keeping God in a cupboard with the best china and the family silver, to look at when we feel inclined. But the

living God chooses His own times and will come when He is not wanted.”

Henri Nouwen...”We too must mourn if we hope to experience God’s consolation.” Living a spiritual life, therefore, means living in the same communion with the Father as Jesus did, and thus making God present in the world.”

“Prayer is the gift of the Spirit. Often we wonder how to pray, when to pray, and what to pray. We can become very concerned about methods and techniques of prayer. But finally it is not we who pray but the Spirit who prays in us....Calling God ‘Abba Father’ (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6) is a cry of the heart, a prayer welling up from our innermost beings. The word ‘Abba’ expresses trust, safety, confidence, belonging, and most of all, intimacy.”

“Spiritual courage is completely different. It is following the deepest desires of our hearts at the risk of losing fame and popularity. It asks our willingness to lose our temporal lives in order to gain eternal life.”

How time heals -- “Time Heals” people often say. This is not true when it means that we will eventually forget the wounds inflicted on us and be able to live as if nothing happened. That is not really healing; it is simply ignoring reality. But when the expression, “time heals” means that faithfulness in a difficult relationship can lead us to a deeper understanding of the ways we have hurt each other, then there is much truth in it. “Time heals” implies not passively waiting but actively working with our pain and trusting in the possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation.”

Wounded Healers -- “Nobody escapes being wounded. We all are wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not, ‘How can we hide our wounds?’ so we don’t have to be embarrassed but ‘How can we put our wounds in the service of others?’ When our wounds cease to be a source of shame and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers. Jesus is God’s wounded healer; through His wounds we are healed. Jesus’ suffering and death brought joy and life. His humiliation brought glory; His rejection brought a community of love. As followers of Jesus we can also allow our wounds to bring healing to others. A wounded healer is someone who can listen to a person

in pain without having to speak about his or her wounds. When we have lived through a painful depression, we can listen with great attentiveness and love to a depressed friend without mentioning our experience.”

C. Peter Wagner...”Intercession is coming to God on behalf of another. All intercession is prayer, but not all prayer is intercession...a majority ministry of intercessors is to bring into being the purposes of God, and many describe some of their more intense periods of intercession as trivial. Mothers know even better than could the Apostle Paul the full meaning of his statement, ‘My little children, I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.’ (Gal. 4:19)”

A.W. Tozer...”We must love God with all our power, with fear, wonder, yearning, awe. Yearn for God with great yearning. At times this will lead us to breathless silence. I think that some of the greatest prayer is prayer when you don’t utter one word or ask for anything.”

Frank Damazio...”When we pray with the spirit of prayer and with a passion of heart, prayer is the contact of a living soul with God. Prayer fills man’s emptiness with God’s fullness, man’s poverty with God’s riches, man’s weakness with God’s strength, and man’s smallness with God’s greatness.”

T.S. Eliot...”Where shall the wound be found, where will the Word resound? Not here, there is not enough silence.”

Thomas ‘a Kempis...”If I go among men, I come back less of a man.”

Blaise Pascal...”I have discovered that all the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber.”

Joan D. Chittester...”Silence is a frightening thing. Silence leaves us at the mercy of the noise within us. We hear the fears that need to be faced. We hear, then, the angers that need to be cooled. We hear the emptiness that needs to be filled. We hear the cries for humility and reconciliation and centeredness. We hear ambition and arrogance and attitudes of uncaring awash in the shallows of the soul.”

Aldous Huxley... "They intoxicate themselves with work so they won't see how they really are."

Paul Tillich... "Our language has wisely sensed the two sides of being alone. It has created the word loneliness to express the pain of being alone. And it has created the word solitude to express the glory of being alone."

T.S. Eliot ... "Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood. Teach us to care and not to care. Teach us to sit still."

Marcel Marceau... "Do not the most moving moments of our lives find us without words?"

Samuel Beckett... "Every word is like an unnecessary strain on silence and nothingness."

Thomas Merton... "It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers. The more solitary I am, the more affection I have for them. It is pure affection and filled with reverence for the solitude of others."

A.W. Tozer... "To have found God and still pursue Him is the soul paradox of love, scorned indeed by the too easily satisfied religionist, but justified in happy experience by the children of the burning heart."

Thomas Goodwin... "No prayer is ever useless. Where God has given a heart to speak, He has an ear to hear. To think otherwise is to despise God's gracious provision for us. When God wants us to pray, He creates a praying frame of mind. When you reach heaven, your joy will be full when you see that your prayers have resulted in the conversion of those for whom you prayed, and the ruin of the church's enemies."

Henri Nouwen... "Actions that lead to overwork, exhaustion, and burnout can't praise and glorify God. What God calls us to do, we can do and do well. When we listen in silence to God's voice and speak with our friends in trust, we will know what we are called to do, and we will do it with a grateful heart."

Thomas Merton... "The United States is a land where silence made men nervous and prayer drove them crazy. A monk's greatest work

is spiritual. In a world in which men have forgotten the value of prayer, it is the monks who pray for the world and for all those in the world who have forgotten how to pray. If there is some small degree of happiness and spiritual joy and faith to temper the despair of our time, it has been obtained by prayer. And if people have been able to discover any ultimate meaning of the chaos of our world, they owe it to the grace of God, which was obtained for them by somebody's prayer."

"God works in silence."

"The Spirit of God gives men peace, teaches them not to be afraid of silence but to find themselves in quiet. When a monk ceases to rule and dominate his own life, for the sake of God, it is God who assumes command of his life and his body and his soul, but to be commanded and ruled entirely by God is to be endowed with His tremendous love; for, whatever God teaches, He floods it with the riches of His infinite actuality. As long as the monk retains private ownership of any corner of his own being, he is far short of the freedom and purity of love found only in union with the common will."

Henri Nouwen..."Prayer is to think and live in the presence of God. Although it is important and even indispensable for the spiritual life to set apart time for God and God alone, prayer can only become unceasing prayer when all our thoughts -- beautiful or ugly, high or low, proud or shameful, sorrowful or joyful -- can be thought in the presence of God. Thus, converting our unceasing thinking into unceasing prayer moves us from a self-centered monologue to a God-centered dialogue. This requires that we turn all our thoughts into conversations. The main question, therefore, is not so much what we think but to whom we present our thoughts."

"When you pray, you open yourself to the influence of the power which has revealed itself as Love. This power gives you freedom and independence....You have found a center for your life that gives you a creative distance so that everything you see, hear and feel can be tested against the source. Prayer is a revolutionary matter because once you begin, you put your entire life in the balance. If you really set about praying, that is, truly enter into the reality of the unseen, you must realize that you are daring to express a most fundamental

criticism which many are waiting for, but which will be too much for many others.”

Thomas Merton...”Lord, receive my prayer
Sweet as incense smoke
Rising from my heart
Full of care.
I lift up my hands
In evening sacrifice.
Lord, receive my prayer.” (Rev. 8:3-4)

A.B. Simpson... ”Prayer is the incense of a Holy Heart
Rising to God from bruised and broken things,
When kindled by the Spirit’s burning breath
And upward borne by faith’s ascending wings.”

William Wordsworth...”The fetters of my tongue do those unbind, that
I may have the power to sing of Thee and sound Thy praises
everlastingly.”

Julian of Norwich...”God knows the hardest waiting of all is waiting for
a beloved prodigal to come to his or her senses. Waiting, at its best,
is essentially trust, trust that in time or, if not in time, then in eternity,
all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well.”

Toyahiko Kagawa...About to board ship for his return journey to
Japan, he was asked about his impression of the church in North
America. His succinct reply, “too much talk”.

Martin Luther...”The fewer words, the better prayer.”

Brother Lawrence...”You need not cry very loud. He is nearer to us
than we think.”

Chinese Proverb: “Outside noisy; inside empty.”

Francois Fenelon...”How can you expect God to speak in that gentle
and inward voice which melts the soul when you are making so much
noise with your rapid reflections? Be silent and God will speak
again.”

Meister Eckhart... "The very best and utmost attainment in this life is to remain still and let God act and speak in thee."

Teresa of Avila... "Settle yourself in solitude, and you will come upon Him in yourself."

Alan Watts... "There is no other possession of God than to let oneself be possessed by God. Mysticism is an action in the passive."

Francis de Sales... Favorite prayer in which all personal religion is summed up -- "Yes, Father; Yes and always yes!"

William Johnston... "But as prayer and meditation develop, the whole process usually begins to simplify. One may be content to repeat a single word like the word 'Jesus', or he may use a favorite ejaculation like 'Come, Holy Spirit', repeated easily and quietly with the breathing or at one's own pace. And then the time may come when he prefers to use no words at all but simply to be; to be silent in the presence of the mystery. In such a state of prayer one may be unable to think because one is caught up in a peaceful wordlessness that is filled with love. It is now that one enters the mystical silence, the silentium mysticum about which the Christian mystics love to talk... In this silence the mystics speak of maintaining a certain awareness, that is to say, a certain attentiveness to the presence of God who is within or around. And for them this "obscure sense of presence" is a great grace. The old theologians spoke of it as presence through love, in this way distinguishing it from physical presence or presence through knowledge. It is indeed loving awareness. "

John Greenleaf Whittier... "Drop thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease; take from our souls the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace."

William Blake... "In seed time learn; in harvest teach; in winter enjoy."

Thomas Merton... "All day I have been waiting for you with my faculties bleeding the poison of unsuppressed activity... I have waited for Your silence and Your peace to stanch and cleanse them, O my Lord. You will heal my soul when it pleases You, because I have trusted in You. I will no longer wound myself with the thoughts and questions that have surrounded me like thorns. That is penance You

do not ask of me. You have made my soul for Your peace and Your silence, but it is lacerated by the noise of my activity and my desires. My mind is crucified all day by its own hunger for experience, for ideas for satisfaction. And I do not possess my house in silence. But I was created for Your peace, and You will not despise my longings for the holiness of Your deep silence. O my Lord, You will not leave me forever in this sorrow, because I have trusted in You, and I wait upon Your good pleasure in peace and without complaining anymore. This is for Your glory.”

“All true prayer somehow confesses our absolute dependence on the Lord of life and death. It is, therefore, a deep and vital contact with Him, Whom we know not only as Lord but as Father. It is when we pray that we really are.”

Henri Nouwen...“All mystics stress with an impressive unanimity that prayer is ‘grace’, that is, a free gift from God to which we can only respond with gratitude. But they hasten to add that this precious gift indeed is within our reach. In Jesus Christ, God has entered into our lives in the most intimate way, so that we could enter into His life through the Spirit...It is of primary importance that we strive for prayer with the understanding that it is an explicit way of being with God.”

Bernard of Clairvaux...“If then you are wise, you will show yourself rather as a reservoir than as a canal. For a canal spreads abroad water as it receives it, but a reservoir waits until it is filled before overflowing and thus communicates, without loss to itself, its superabundant water. In the church at the present day, we have many canals, few reservoirs.” We have determined to be reservoirs.

E.M. Bounds...“The more praying there is in the world, but better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil everywhere. God shapes the world by prayer, but the prayers live before God, and God’s heart is set on them, and prayers outlive the lives of those who uttered them. That man is the most immortal who has done the most and best praying. Prayer puts God in full ___?___ in the world.”

Richard Cecil...“Prayer is faith passing into act.”

Archbishop Trench...We must pray in the Spirit if we would pray at all. Lay this, I beseech, to heart. Do not address yourselves to prayer as

a work to be accomplished in your natural strength. It is the work of God, the Holy Ghost, a work in you and by you and in which you must be fellow workers with Him.”

Praying God's Promises: “Yes, the promises of God are firm ground to stand upon as we pray to the Father. When we're standing on the promises, as the old hymn declares, we cannot fail. God cannot lie. He is absolutely trustworthy. Memorized, God's Word will become the framework on which our prayers are built. Every day we need to affirm God's Word in prayer. By praying His promises, we are affirming God's truth and applying them to our situation.”

Binding or Loosing (Matt. 18:18)...”We need to bind ourselves to the will of God and the Word of God, and in so doing, we will have the power to bind all forces of negativity and evil that may endeavor to discourage or defeat us. Likewise, as we affirm God's Word through prayer, we loose ourselves from any bondage or sin that may hold us back.”

F.B. Meyer...Sensitive Spirit (Hosea 4:6)...”Most of us never use our spiritual sense God has given us. If you are a spiritual man, you will use these spiritual senses to discriminate the thoughts as they come to your heart. ‘By reason of use’ you will have your senses exercised to discern both good and evil. If you live in the midst of bad people, bad books, and bad things, you lose your power of detecting bad thoughts when they come teeming about you like microbes. But if every day you spend an hour on God's mountains or upon the broad sea of the Bible and get some of God's accurate senses into you, you will be able to detect things which are wrong that other people, even Christians, pass without seeing as wrong. ”

Brother Lawrence...”We ought to act with God in the greatest simplicity, speaking to Him frankly and plainly, and imploring His assistance in our affairs, just as they happen.”

Henri Nouwen...”When Jesus was loneliest, He gave most. That realization should help to deepen my commitment to service and let me desire to give and become independent of my actual experience of joy. Only a deepening of my life in Christ will make that possible.”

E.M. Bounds...”The only way to preserve our praying from being hindered is to estimate prayer at its true and great value. One of the ways Satan seeks to destroy my prayer life is by good things that will crowd out the best.... Courageous faith is made stronger and purer by mastering difficulties...Prayer is a rare gift, not a popular, ready gift...Prayer is not the fruit of natural talents; it is the product of faith, of holiness, of deeply spiritual character...The spirit of prayer should rule our spirits and our conduct. We must live for God out of the closet if we would meet God in the closet...Men would pray better if they lived better...Prayer affects three different spheres of existence - the divine, the angelic, and the human. It puts God to work, angels and men. The holier a man is, the more he esteems prayer, the clearer does he see that God gives Himself to the praying ones and that the measure of God’s revelation to the soul is the measure of the soul’s longing, importunate prayer for God...Prayer unites with the purpose of God and lays itself out to secure those purposes...Elijah’s prayer enters regions where prayer had never gone before. The awful, mysterious and powerful regions of the dead are now invaded by the presence and demands of prayer....To pray everywhere, to pray in everything, to continue instant in prayer, and to pray without ceasing, thus Paul spoke as a commentator on the divine uses and the nature of prayer...According to Paul, ‘supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks’, all these elements of prayer and forms of prayer are to be offered for men...Prayer always brings directions from heaven as to what God would have us to do. If we prayed more and more directly, we should make fewer mistakes in life as to duty. God’s will concerning us is revealed in answer to prayer. By prayer enemies are to be swept out of the way. By prayer prejudices are to be driven out of the hearts of good men...Prayer transforms crosses, trials, and oppositions into blessings and causes them to work together for good. ‘This shall turn to my salvation through your prayers’ says Paul. Paul says, ‘pray for us’.”

Brother Lawrence...”Here are the secrets of intimacy with God.

- Renounce everything that does not lead to God.
- Become accustomed to a continual conversation with Him in freedom and simplicity.
- Speak every moment to Him.
- Ask Him to tell you what to do when you are not sure.

- Get busy with it when you plainly see what He requires of you.
- Give God thanks when you accomplish something.

The depth of your spirituality does not depend upon changing the things you do but in doing for God what you ordinarily do for yourself...The biggest mistake is to think a time of prayer is different from any other time. It is all one. Prayer is experiencing the presence of God. There should be no change when a time of formal prayer ends. Continue with God. Praise and bless Him with all your energy.”

Gugo I...”Your purpose is not to be seen or known or loved or admired or praised. Your purpose is to see, know, love, admire, and praise God.”

R.A. Torrey...”Our whole life should be a life of prayer. We should walk in constant communion with God. There should be a constant looking upward to God. We should walk so habitually in His presence that even when we awake in the night it would be the most natural thing for us to speak to Him in thanksgiving or petition.”

Richard Foster...”By our prayers and by our words we liberate people, not bind them to us. God has placed into our hands the destiny of the world, and by means of our prayers we hold back the divine wrath....Spiritual director, mentor -- their task is to help people see the footprints of God in their lives and now and again to urge them to move in directions that they might not go otherwise...Prayer makes our love flow freely, both vertically and horizontally.”

M. Marty...”You have through each day helped me to build a temple of prayer in my heart, so that even in the midst of my labors, I may rejoice in you...The gift of simplicity turns the profane into the sacred. Profane does not mean vulgar or blasphemous. Instead it refers to that which is pro, ‘outside of’, the faun, which is the Latin word for temple. Those who appreciate the grace that comes with simplicity are free to move both ways across the thresholds of the temple each and every day. They bring the beauty of the sacred into ordinary life and ordinary concerns into the holy place..... Believers do not have to travel far to search for this temple of prayer. It goes wherever we go. When we are at home within it, we come and go confidently facing daily duties and delights. When we are at ease with it, we regularly transact across the threshold of the heart’s

temple, breathing worded and wordless prayers alike....The problem - - who can always avoid it? -- is that when we are in the midst of distractions, we tend to stop transacting. Precisely in the midst of our labors we come to recognize that the temple of prayer is always available. It remains as close as our heart, waiting for us to enter and be refreshed."

Thresholds..."Make the threshold of this house smooth enough to be no stumbling block to children, nor to straying feet, but rugged and strong enough to turn back the tempter's power...The gift of simplicity resembles the plan of the builder, the work of the carpenter. It helps us order the elements that make our day and provides the foundation for living, the framework for deciding. Among these elements are windows that let in the light and doors that can be opened for receiving the neighbor but closed for protection from the enemy. The door's threshold can serve as a figure for actual ways of living. The threshold comes to stand for the comings and goings of people throughout the days and years. It suggests the heart that can put up barriers against the guest who should be welcome or the heart that can produce no barriers against the enemies who would destroy. Fixed in our mind as the image for this day, the threshold prompts us to measure those comings and goings in a new way. Living is simple when the threshold is smooth enough for the innocent to cross and enter our lives and strong enough to bar the beguilers. God rightly frames the door to our souls and our lives as promised, and friends and neighbors freely cross its threshold." Eph. 2:19-22

Enter my room and I will be satisfied. Reveal your beauty, and my joy will be complete. The ear of faith hears the name God, and the voice of faith speaks in response to the question, "who". As we go about activities today and tomorrow, the way we do so can signal what we mean when we invoke the name God. For many of us the most personal form of meeting occurs in the simplest of settings: in one's room, one's heart. When thus quietly visited in the humblest corner, we proclaim, "This quiet place is now made beautiful". (Matt. 14:22-23)

Lord Nelson Byron..."The dew of compassion is a tear."

Martin Luther..."Pouring out your complaint you must learn to pray and not sit alone or lie about hanging your head and shaking it, brooding over your thoughts, worrying about how you can escape

and looking at nothing but yourself and your sad and painful condition. Get up, you lazy villain. Then fall upon your knees, lift your eyes and hands towards heaven, take a Psalm or the Lord's Prayer, and pour out your trouble with tears before God, lamenting and calling upon Him...The lifting up of hands, prayer, and the mentioning of trouble are sacrifices most pleasing to God. He desires it, and it is His will that you should pour out your trouble before Him and not let it lie upon yourself, dragging it about with you and being chafed and tortured by it, so that in the end you make two or even ten or a hundred calamities out of one. He wills that you should be too weak to bear and overcome such trouble in order that you may learn to find strength in Him and that He may be praised through His strength in you. Behold, this is how Christians are made."

Jonathan Edwards Dedication

"In January 12, 1723, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God and wrote down, giving up myself and all that I had to God, to be for the future, in no respect my own; to act as one that had no right to himself, in any respect. And solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity, looking on nothing else, as any part of my happiness, nor acting as it were; and His law for constant rule of my obedience, engaging to fight, with all my might, against the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the end of my life. But I have reason to be infinitely humbled when I consider how much I have failed of answering my obligations."

Martin Marty...Priority -- "Let my first thought be of thee; let my first impulse be to worship thee; let my first speech be Thy name; let my first action be to kneel before Thee in prayer...So much for the natural, the almost inevitable, the apparently urgent things that take over if we let them. Beginning today we reach for a different concept, an almost supernatural grasp of the gifts that are ours if we are open to them. We try out this act of receiving, and the day turns out differently. We let our minds be fixed on Thou who purges guilt, urges us not to let worry dominate, and inspires the language which makes grouching irrelevant. The practical action of the day follows. We still might do what we know we have to do, but we are now free to direct action to higher purpose." Ps. 108:1-4

Ken Boa... "The concept of communicating with God -- talking directly and openly with Him just as we would talk with an intimate friend -- is one of the great experiences of the Christian life. And just as the key to quality relationships is time spent effectively communicating with other people, so the key to a growing personal relationship with God is time invested conversing with Him in prayer and listening to His voice in Scripture.

Henri Nouwen, Points to Ponder... "All through His life Jesus considers His relationship with the Father as the center, beginning. At the end of His ministry it is obvious that Jesus does not maintain His relationship with the Father as a means of fulfilling His ministry. On the contrary, His relationship with the Father is the core of His ministry. Therefore, prayer, days alone with God, or moments of silence, should never be seen or understood as healthy devices to keep in shape, to charge our "spiritual batteries" or to build up energy for ministry. No, they are all ministry."

Alexander Pope... "Pride, the never-failing voice of fools."

Martin Marty... "What will befall us today, O God, we know not; we only know that nothing will happen which Thou hast not foreseen, determined, desired, and ordered. Today is one more twenty-four hour period in which we know nothing in detail of what has been divinely foreseen. Little of that has been determined in advance. The longer we linger on the theme - instead of the unknown particulars - of the day's futures, however, the surer we are of knowing what God desires, until we desire the same. And when these desires meet, we find that our hours are more filled with meaning." Rom. 8:31-39

Francis of Assisi... "Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me, Lord, a correct faith, a certain hope, a perfect charity, sense and knowledge, so that I may carry out Your holy and true command."

Thomas Merton... "To have nothing to do but abandon yourself to God and love God! It is the greatest of luxuries. Silence and solitude are the supreme luxuries of life! How this silence keeps claiming you for itself! As soon as you start anything, it says, "Come back for a moment! Pray! Be quiet. Rest in your God!"

C.H. Spurgeon... "The cry of a young raven is nothing but the natural cry of a creature, but your cry, if it be sincere, is the result of a work of grace in your heart."

Oswald Chambers... "You cannot consecrate what is not yours. There is only one thing you can consecrate to God, and that is the right to yourself."

Mornings with Henri J. M. Nouwen... "I hope that the day will come when the memory of my present joy will give me the strength to keep giving even when loneliness gnaws at my heart. When Jesus was loneliest, He gave most. That realization should help to deepen my commitment to service and let my desire to give become independent of my actual experience of joy. Only a deepening of my life in Christ will make that possible."

Make My Fear a Prayer

Today, O Lord, I felt intense fear. My whole being seemed to be invaded by fear. No peace, no rest; just plain fear: fear of mental breakdown, fear of living the wrong life, fear of rejection and condemnation, and fear of You. O Lord, why is it so hard to overcome fear? Why is it so hard to let Your love banish my fear? Only when I worked with my hands for a while did it seem that the intensity of the fear decreased.

I feel so powerless to overcome this fear. Maybe it is Your way of asking me to experience some solidarity with the fearful people all over the world: those who are hungry and cold in this harsh winter, those who are threatened by unexpected guerrilla attacks, and those who are hidden in prisons, mental institutions, and hospitals. O Lord, this world is full of fear. Make my fear into a prayer for the fearful. Let that prayer lift up the hearts of others. Perhaps then my darkness can become light for others, and my inner pain a source for healing for others.

You, O Lord, have also known fear... Make my fear, O Lord, part of Yours, so that it will lead me not to darkness but to the light.

Now "Where?" or "What?" but "How?"

Today I realized that the question of where to live and what to do is insignificant compared to the question of how to keep the eyes of my heart focused on the Lord...There is not such a thing as the right place or the right job. I can be happy and unhappy in all situations...When I knew that I was walking with the Lord, I always felt happy and at peace.

The Secret of Waiting

The secret of waiting is the faith that the seed has been planted, that something has begun. Active waiting means to be present fully to the moment, in the conviction that something is happening where you are that you want to be present to it. A waiting person is someone who is present to the moment, who believes that this moment is the moment.

A waiting person is a patient person. The word "patience" means the willingness to stay where we are and live the situation out to the full in the belief that something there will manifest itself to us.

One who never prays, on the contrary, is like the child with asthma: because he is short of breath, the whole world shrivels up before him. He creeps in a corner gasping for air and is virtually in agony. But the person who prays opens himself to God and can freely breathe again. He stands upright, stretches out his hands and comes out of his corner, free to boldly stride through the world because he can move about without fear.

A person who prays is one who can once more breathe freely, who has the freedom to move where he wishes with no fears to haunt him.

Prayer

as

Ministry

All through His life Jesus considered His relationship with the Father as the center, beginning, and end of His ministry. All He says and does He says and does in the name of the Father. He comes from the Father and returns to the Father, and it is in His Father's house that He wants to prepare a place for us.

It is obvious that Jesus does not maintain His relationship with the Father as a means of fulfilling His ministry. On the contrary, His relationship with the Father is the core of His ministry. Therefore,

prayer, days alone with God, or moments of silence, should never be seen or understood as healthy devices to keep in shape, to charge our “spiritual batteries”, or to build up energy for ministry. No, they are all ministry.

Dallas Willard, Legalism...“The legalistic tendencies of the religious and cultural life also thrust us toward superstition. “Legalism” holds that overt action conforming to rules for explicit behavior is what makes us right and pleasing to God and worthy of blessing. Jesus called it “the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.” (Matt. 5:20)

Hannah Hurnard...“An intercessor means one who is in such vital contact with God and with his fellow men that he is like a live wire closing the gap between the saving power of God and the sinful men who have been cut off from that power. An intercessor is the contacting link between the source of power (the life of the Lord Jesus Christ) and the objects needing that power and life.”

Dallas Willard, Scripture...“We will be spiritually safe in our use of the Bible if we follow a simple rule: read in a repentant manner. That is, read with readiness to surrender all we are, all of our plans, opinions, possessions, positions. Study as intelligently as possible, with all available means, but never merely to find the truth and still less merely to prove anything. subordinate your desire to find the truth, and your desire to have others do the truth, to your desire to do it yourself!”

William Law, Praying the Scriptures...“Therefore, the Scriptures should only be read in an attitude of prayer, trusting to the inward working of the Holy Spirit to make their truths reality within us.”

Thomas ‘a Kempis...“Of what use is it to discourse learnedly on the Trinity if you lack humility and therefore displease the Trinity? Lofty words do not make a man just or holy; but a good life makes him dear to God. I would far rather feel contrition than be able to define it. If you know the whole Bible by heart and all the teaching of the philosophers, how would this help you without the grace and love of God?”

Dallas Willard, Prayer Reading Scripture... "Come to your chosen passage as to the place where you will have a holy meeting with God. Read a small part of the passage selected and dwell on each of its parts, praying for the assistance of God's Spirit in bringing fully before your mind and into your life the realities expressed. Always ask, 'What is my life like because this is true?' and 'How shall I speak and act because of this?' You may wish to turn the passage into a prayer of praise or of request."

Brother Lawrence... "There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God. Those only can comprehend it who practice and experience it; yet I do not advise you to do it from that motive. It is not pleasure which we ought to seek in this exercise; but let us do it from a principle of love and because God would have us. Part of the prayer of listening to God and letting God direct me and such direction is widely claimed. But those who experience a directing word from God rarely speak about it. Often they have never spoken of it at all, even to their closest friends. I believe we cannot, as disciples of Jesus Christ, abandon faith in the availability of God's personal and intelligible guidance for our minds and our lives."

E. Stanley Jones... "Obviously God must guide us in a way that will develop spontaneity in us. The development of character, rather than direction in this, that, and the other matter, must be the primary purpose of the Father. He will guide us, but He won't override us. That fact should make us use with caution the method of sitting down with a pencil and a blank sheet of paper to write down the instructions dictated by God for the day. Suppose a parent would dictate to the child minutely everything he is to do during the day. The child would be stunted under that regime. The parent must guide in such a manner, and to the degree, that autonomous character, capable of making right decisions for itself, is produced. God does the same."

A.W. Tozer... "It is altogether possible to be instructed in the faith and still have no real understanding of the whole thing. And it is possible to go on to become expert in Bible doctrine and not have spiritual illumination, with the result that a veil remains over the mind, preventing it from apprehending the truth in its spiritual essence."

Dallas Willard...”His greatness is precisely what allows Him to ‘plan His day’ around me or any and everyone else as He chooses. But if we allow God’s conversational walk with us (or anything else, for that matter) to make us think we are someone great, guidance will pretty certainly be withdrawn.....Lord, when we are wrong, make us willing to change, and when we are right, make us easy to live with.”

Dark Night of the Soul...Ps. 31:1..”I waited in silence. And God was silent. Then when God’s intended work had been accomplished in His soul, the Divine Voice returned to his experience.”

Sensing God’s Presence

1. Beyond mere faith that God must be here is an indeterminate but very powerful sense of or feeling or impression of God’s presence. Considerable experience is required to recognize accurately and assess the meaning of such impressions. God’s attention to us should result in a reciprocal awareness of His presence.

2. If God is personal, would He not also talk with us?

3. God’s personal creatures, whether angelic or human, are guided by communication of His thoughts and intentions.

George MacDonald...”Afflictions are but the shadow of God’s wings.”

Dallas Willard

1. God Would (speak to us)

“We should be surprised if He did not speak to us.”

E. Stanley Jones...”Does God guide? Strange if He didn’t. The Psalmist asks, ‘He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eyes, shall He not see?’ (Ps. 94:9) And I ask, ‘He that made the tongue and gave us power to communicate with one another, shall He not speak and communicate with us?’ I do not believe that God our Father is a dumb, non-communicative impersonality.”

2. And God Does - Though we can miss or prevent it. “First of all, that we do not hear does not mean He is not speaking to us. Also

they could make no good use of a word from God because of how they were living.”

G. Campbell Morgan...”You have never heard the voice of God, and you say: ‘The day of miracles is past. I am never disturbed. I make my own plans and live where I please and do as I like.’ What do you mean by a disturbing element? ...Beloved, you are living still among the fleshpots and garlic of Egypt. You are still in slavery...You know no disturbing voice? God never points out for you a pathway altogether different from the one you had planned? Then, my brother, you are still in the land of slavery, in the land of darkness. We expect the great ones in the Way of Christ to hear that voice just because we see their lives wholly given up to doing what God wants.”

3. Certainly God Can: The Open Creation

“God does not have to go through physical intermediaries of any sort to reach us, though on some occasions He obviously chooses to do so.”

4. And God Should (speak). But - Chaos in the Church?

“If you believe God has told you to do something, ask Him to confirm it to you three times: through His Word, through circumstances, and through others -- people who may know nothing of the situation.”

George MacDonald...”Afflictions are but the shadow of God’s wings.”

Dallas Willard...”God can, certainly, determine the course of our lives by manipulation of our thoughts and feelings or by arranging external circumstances -- what is often called the ‘closing’ and ‘opening’ of doors in the ‘sovereign will’ of God. But He can, and He does, also guide us by addressing us. Humanity’s actual experience of God, profusely documented in history, shows that God does address us. But it is a major point of this book that the ‘still small voice’ -- or the ‘interior’ voice as it also is sometimes called - is the preferred or highest form of individual communication for God’s purposes. God addresses us whose lives are in harmony with God in the form of our own thoughts and the attendant feelings.”

Russ Johnson points out -- “We would see wonderful results if we would just deal with the thoughts that continue in our minds in a godly

manner. But most people don't...As thoughts come into your mind and continue, ask God, 'Do you really want me (or us) to do this?' Most of us just let those thoughts collapse -- and God looks to someone else to stand in the gap."

Dallas Willard..."So the thoughts and attendant feelings in the mind and spirit surrendered to God make it as if God were walking through the personality with a candle, directing our attention to one thing and then to another. A Biblical Christian has a life of personal, intelligent interaction with God. If we know how to listen, God will normally tell us something when He does not give us our request. We must be made to see that recognizing God speaking is something that they (we) must learn to do through our own course of personal experience and experimentation. When the spectacular is sought, this is because of childishness in the personality. It may be given by God, even may be necessary, because of our denseness or our hard heartedness. However, it is never to be taken as a mark of spiritual superiority. To understand guidance we must in some good measure understand what the Word of God is, for divine guidance is basically God speaking. We will be spiritually safe in our use of the Bible if we follow a simple rule: READ IN A REPENTANT MANNER."

G. Campbell Morgan..."The doctrine of the inner light is not sufficiently taught. To the individual believer, who is by the very fact of relationship to Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, there is granted the direct impression of the Spirit of God on the Spirit of man, imparting the knowledge of His will in matters of the smallest and greatest importance. This has to be sought and waited for. We may mistakenly think that if God spoke to us, we would automatically know, without having to learn Who it is that is speaking to us. But that is simply a mistake and one of the most harmful of mistakes of those trying to understand divine guidance."

E. Stanley Jones..."Perhaps the rough distinction is this: The voice of the subconscious argues with you, tries to convince you; but the inner voice of God does not argue, does not try to convince you. It just speaks, and it is self-authenticating. It has the feel of the voice of God within it."

F.B. Meyer... "The written Word is the wire along which the voice of God will certainly come to you if the heart is hushed and the attention fixed."

Dallas Willard... "The understanding of the voice of God as here described gives substance to the relationship between Christ and His church. He talks to it."

G. Campbell Morgan... "Wherever there are hearts waiting for the Voice of God, that Voice is to be heard."

Guidance - Specific Steps

1. We meditate constantly on God's principles.
2. We are alert and attentive to what is happening.
3. We pray, speak to God constantly and specifically about matters that concern us.
4. In those cases in which God does not speak to you on the matter concerned:
 - a. Seek guidance on guidance. Ask God to inform you in whatever way He chooses, if there is some hindrance in you. Be quiet and listen in the 'inner forum' of your mind for any indication that you are blocking guidance, but do not endlessly pursue this. In prayer set a specific length of time for this inquiry about guidance itself -- normally no more than three days. Believe that if there is a problem, God will make it clear to you.

Abraham Lincoln ... "I am satisfied that, when the Almighty wants me to do or not to do something, He finds a way of letting me know."

- b. Counsel with at least two people.
- c. If you find a reason why guidance could not come, correct it.
- d. If you cannot find such a reason, then act on what seems best to you after itemized consideration of the details of the alternatives.

John Newton...“You are coming to a King. Large petitions with you bring for His grace and power are such none can ever ask too much.”

Charles H. Spurgeon...“It may seem an easy thing to wait, but it is one of the postures which a Christian soldier does not learn without years of teaching. Marching and quick marching are much easier to God’s warriors than standing still. There are hours of perplexity when the most willing spirit, anxiously desirous to serve the Lord, knows not what part to take. Then what shall it do? Vex itself by despair? Fly back in cowardice, turn to the right hand in fear, or rush forward in presumption? No, only simply wait. Wait in prayer, however. Call on God, and spread the case before Him; tell Him your difficulty and plead His promises of aid. In dilemmas between one duty and another, it is sweet to be humble as a child and wait with simplicity of soul on the Lord. It is sure to be well with us when we feel and know our own folly and are heartily willing to be guided by the will of God. But wait in faith. Express your unstaggering confidence in Him, for unfaithful, untrusting waiting is but an insult to the Lord. Believe that if He keeps you tarrying even till midnight, yet He will come at the right time; the vision will come and will not tarry. God’s chariots of fire conquer men’s chariots of iron. He has forces of a spiritual order which prevail over the most stubborn wills and strongest arms. Jesus has many lovers of His crown but few bearers of His cross.”

“Many men owe the grandeur of their lives to their tremendous difficulties.”

“The doorstep to the temple of wisdom is the knowledge of our own ignorance.”

“Our house ought to be a little church with holiness to the Lord over the door, but it ought never to be a prison where there is plenty of rule and order, but little love and no pleasure.”

“The husband should be the ‘house-band’ binding all together like a cornerstone, but not crushing everything like a millstone.”

“I am sure we cannot expect our children to grow up a godly seed if there is no family prayer.”

"I always felt that there is something wrong if I go without prayer for even (a) half an hour in the day."

"Faith without promise would be a foot without ground to stand upon."

Martin Luther..."God creates out of nothing. Therefore, until a man is nothing, God can make nothing out of him."

A.W. Tozer..."God saw not only what we were -- He was faithful in seeing what we could become. He took away the curse of being and gave us the glorious blessing of becoming."

"The need for solitude and quietness was never greater than it is today."

"Compromise will take the pressure off. Satan will not bother a man who has quit fighting. But the cost of quitting will be a life of peaceful stagnation. We sons of eternity just cannot afford such a thing."

"Our prayers are only as powerful as our lives. In the long pull we pray only as well as we live. "

"Grace will save a man, but it will not save him and his idol."

"What I believe about God is the most important thing about me."

"We can afford to suffer now; we'll have a long eternity to enjoy ourselves."

"Ransomed man need no longer pause in fear to enter the Holy of Holies. God wills that we should push on into His presence and live our whole life there."

"Faith is not a once done act, but a continuous gaze of the heart at the Triune God."

"The knowledge that we are never alone calms the troubled sea of our lives and speaks peace to our souls."

"The best way to control our thoughts is to offer the mind to God in complete surrender."

Faith Praying God's Promises

Faith firmly states (Rom. 8:31) "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Faith believes (Lk. 1:37) "Without God nothing shall be impossible."

Faith claims the promises.

Faith holds onto truth.

Faith saves the sick (James 5:15)

Faith reaches out to God for all He has in store. (Eph. 3:20) "Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

Read God's Word and build your faith. (Rom. 10:17)

Pray God's promises and receive His answers.

Raise your faith as a shield and quench Satan's darts. (Eph. 6:16)

Alfred Lord Tennyson..."More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

Augustine..."For human praises can't lift you to heaven, nor can their condemnations bring you down from there."

Andrew Murray..."You may be feeling unworthy and unable to pray as you know you should. Accept this heartily and be content to come to God anyway and be blessed in your unworthiness, simply trusting God's grace. This is true humility. Humility is the strength behind a great faith and leads to answered prayers. Don't let your 'littleness' hinder your prayers for a moment."

Ben Johnson..."Afflictions teach a wicked person sometimes to pray: prosperity never."

Andrew Murray..."Don't think that you have no influence or that your prayers are not important. Your prayers and faith will make a difference."

George Mueller..."The great point is never give up until the answer comes. I have been praying for 52 years, every day, for two men, sons of a friend of my youth. They are not converted yet, but they will

be...The great fault of the children of God is they do not continue in prayer, they do not go on praying, they do not persevere. If they desire anything for God's glory, they should pray until they get it."

Jonathan Edwards..."Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach as humility."

Andrew Murray..."Humility is perfect quietness of heart...It is to be at rest when nobody praises me and when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in the Lord where I can go in and shut the door and kneel to my Father in secret and am at peace as in the deep sea of calmness when all around and above is troubled."

Andre Louf..."Prayer is God's gift to him who prays. Prayer is the superabundance of the heart. Prayer is the precious fruit of the Word."

Andrew Murray..."The adoration of God the Father and the need for sufficient time each day to worship Him in some of His glorious attributes...But we must remind ourselves that, in all our communion with the Father, the presence and the power of the Son and the Spirit are absolutely necessary...For the sake of God's glory, let us learn to pray well."

A.W. Tozer..."When you approach God, you should always use reverent language. It is God, not man, we're talking to in prayer!"

Warren Myers..."We can tailor our prayer life to fit each stage of our earthly life and spiritual growth, beginning with ten or fifteen minutes, then letting the time grow...We can learn to pray more throughout the day. Continual praying is not something we suddenly decide to do. It is something we grow into."

S.D. Gordon..."Prayer puts us into direct dynamic touch with a world. A man may go aside today and shut his door and truly spend a half hour in India for God as though he were there in person...Surely you and I must get more half hours for this secret service."

Robert Murray McCheyne..."Behold he prayeth,' was the first mark that Paul was brought from death to life. The soul enjoys great nearness to God, enters within the veil, lies down at the feet of Jesus, and there pours out its groans and tears. The believer rises, like his

Lord, a great while before day, or waking in the night, he cries in secret to God. Before entering any company, or by appointment meeting a friend, or answering a proposal, his heart wings its way to the mercy seat. He prays without ceasing. He pours forth earnest cries for the deliverance from sin. The sins he is most tempted to, he prays most against. His intercessions for others are deep, constant, wide. It is sweet and easy for him to pray for others. 'Forbid that I should sin against God by ceasing to pray for you'."

Charles Spurgeon..."It is good that we are commanded to pray, or else in times of heaviness we might give up. If God commands me, unfit as I may be, I will creep to the footstool of grace; and since He says, 'pray without ceasing', though my words fail me and my heart itself will wonder, yet I will stammer out the wishes of my hungering soul and say, 'O God, at least teach me to pray and help me to prevail with you'."

Corrie ten Boom..."In the concentration camp where I was imprisoned many years ago, sometimes bitterness and hatred tried to enter my heart when people were so cruel to my sister and me. Then I learned this prayer, a 'thank you' from Romans 5:5:

'Thank you, Lord Jesus, that You have brought into my heart the love of God through the Holy Spirit, Who is given me. Thank you, Father, that Your love in me is victorious over the bitterness in me and the cruelty around me.'

After I prayed it, I experienced the miracle that there was no room for bitterness in my heart anymore."

St. Benedict..."When we make application to men in high position, we do not presume to do so without reverence and humility. How much more, then, are we bound to entreat God, the Lord of all, with all humility and devout purity of heart? We must recognize that we are heard not for our much speaking, but for our purity of heart and tears of contrition. Therefore, our prayer must be brief and pure -- unless it chance to be prolonged with the inspiration of God's grace."

St. Makarii of Optimo...The Broom of Humility..."Pray simply. Do not expect to find in your heart any remarkable gift of prayer. Consider yourself unworthy of it. Then you will find peace...Use the empty cold

dryness of your prayer as food for your humility. Repeat constantly: 'I am not worthy, Lord, I am not worthy!' But say it calmly, without agitation. This humble prayer will be acceptable to God. Remember that the most important thing of all is humility. Remember, too, that Isaac the Syrian warns us that God's wrath visits all who refuse the bitter cross of agony, the cross of active suffering, and who, striving after visions and special graces of prayer, waywardly seek to appropriate the glories of the cross. He also says, 'God's grace comes of itself, suddenly, without our seeing it approach. It comes when the place is clean.' Therefore, carefully, diligently, constantly clean the place; sweep it with the broom of humility;"

St. Mechthildis of Magdenburg..."Lord, you have taken away from me everything I once had of you. Nevertheless, by Your grace, please leave me one gift -- a gift every day has by nature. Please let me be true to You in my distress, even though I no longer feel Your presence. This I desire more fervently than anything else in Your heavenly kingdom."

Cyprion..."Be constant in prayer as well as in reading. Speak with God, and let God speak with you. Let Him instruct you in His commands; let Him direct you. No one can make poor those He makes rich, for those who have been supplied with heavenly food can't be poor. When you know that it is you who will be perfect, golden ceilings and houses with costly marble mosaics will seem dull to you in comparison to the dwelling in which God has lived and in which the Holy Spirit has begun to make His home. Let us then decorate this house with the colors of innocence. Let us illuminate it with the light of justice. Then it will never decay with the wear of age, nor will its wall colors or its gold become tarnished. Those things made artificially beautiful are perishing. Things that can't really be owned can't provide abiding assurance for their possessors. But remain in a beauty that is continually vivid, in perfect honor, in permanent splendor. It can neither decay nor be destroyed. It can only be fashioned into greater perfection."

Jerome... "Gifts aren't evaluated by their weight, but by the willingness of the giver...But if you give yourself to the Lord and resolve to follow the Savior in righteousness, then you will see what you once were. Offer to God that which no enemy can carry off and no tyrant take from you."

Augustine...”By genuine holiness the people of God cast out the enemy of godliness. They do so by rejecting him, not by pacifying him. And they overcome all of the enemy’s temptations by praying to God against him.”

John Cassian...”Our main effort should be to always cling to God and to heavenly things. The Lord said Mary chose the better part. She was clinging close to the feet of Jesus. Martha was weighed down by her service. You see, then, that the Lord considers meditation (i.e. pondering divine things) the supreme good. Therefore, all other virtues should be put in second place. We admit, however, that they are necessary, useful, and excellent because they exist for the sake of this one thing.”

Chrysostom...”If we always see God in our minds and always remember Him, everything appears tolerable to us. We can bear everything easily and be above it all.”

Ben Patterson...”Churches can run without prayer. Whole denominations can run without prayer. The question is: ‘Is what they’re doing worth doing if they can do it without prayer?’ I don’t think so. Jesus commissioned His church to storm the gates of hell. Evil and darkness are as intractable and entrenched as they were in the first century. So we must pray, because the work of the church is God’s work, not ours! We must also pray because prayer actually gets God’s work done.”

Mary Slessor...”I can testify with a full and often wonder-stricken awe that I...know God answers prayer...Prayer is the greatest power God has put into our hands for service. Praying is harder work than doing...but the dynamic lies that way to advance the kingdom. I have no idea how and why God has carried me over so many hard places and made these hordes submit to me...except in answer to prayer at home for me. It is all beyond my comprehension. The only way I can explain it is on the ground that I have been prayed for more than most. Pray on -- power lies that way.”

Eugene Peterson...”The pastor who claims to be too busy to pray is really a lazy person. In busyness, they are procrastinating, avoiding the real work of prayer. Where did we get the silly idea that a

graduate degree in theology qualifies one to pastor the church of Christ?"

Ben Patterson..."So we must pray, for prayer actually gets God's work done. We must also pray because prayer allows God to work on us. To stand in the presence of God is as it was with Moses' shining face, to reflect His glory. Not only that, but it is to absorb His glory, to be transformed into His likeness. Many of us feel we just have too much to do to have time to pray. That is the problem. We don't believe we are really doing anything when we pray, other than saying the words that is....There is a sign on the Alaskan Highway that reads, 'Choose your rut carefully. You'll be in it for 200 miles'...Theologian Hans Kung wrote On Being A Christian, a 602 page theology of the Christian life, without a word about prayer. He was asked why, and he answered, in effect, 'I forgot'.

Ora Labora -- Ora (pray) and labora (work) Benedict taught his followers that to pray was to work and to work was prayer.

Ole Hallesby ..."Wherever we touch His almighty arm, some of His omnipotence streams in upon us, into our souls and into our bodies. And not only that, but, through us, it streams out to others." Ora Labora

"Not to pray is to lose the desire to pray for prayerlessness is its own punishment. You learn to pray like you learn to swim -- not by talking about it but by getting in the water and splashing around. You re-learn prayer the same way. Prayer is a discipline before it is a joy and remains a discipline even after it becomes a joy. There are two kinds of pain: the pain of discipline and the pain of regret."

"The ministry is a calling. The distinction between the two -- calling and career -- is pivotal if we are to understand the central place of prayer in our work."

"A call, on the other hand, has no maps, no itinerary to follow, because a call depends on hearing a voice. The organ of faith is the ear, not the eye; we walk by faith, not by sight. First and last, a call is something one listens for. Everything depends on the relationship of the listener to the one who calls."

"Before it is anything else, lack of prayer is a lack of hunger for God."

“Restoring the hunger -- the first is simply to memorize some of the hungry, ravenous, visionary prayers of Scripture. Paul’s prayers are especially good for this. God’s way to change us is to first change our hearts. Memorization can be to our hunger for God what practicing a musical instrument is for performance. If the prayers don’t express what you feel, pray them until you feel what they express.”

“Another way to restore hunger for God is to choose hunger of another kind -- fasting.”

“Almighty God, the Lord of Eternity, wants to be intimate with us, to draw near and spend time with us. Not only does God command us to pray, He permits us to pray. Prayer is both a must and a may, an obligation and a gift. Why would any of us ignore the God of the universe, bending low to offer us the pleasure of His company? We do not really understand just how personal this God is.”

“Here is a key: What we fear marvelously focuses us. The fear of God is respect and awe and reverence. Fear God, and you’ll fear nothing else!”

“Why is it when we talk to God we call it prayer, but when God talks to us, we call it schizophrenia?”

“Prayer is a dialogue, a conversation with God, not a monologue or soliloquy.”

“So God speaks. But how can we hear His voice? By praying obediently, willing to do what we hear if we hear it. Obedience is the basis of biblical epistemology.”

“I’ve come to believe that I won’t hear from God unless I am first willing to act on what I’ve heard.”

“Asking God to speak is subject to the same rule that asking God to do anything else is. John 15:7 Jesus was saying that prayer must flow out of a relationship of fellowship and communion with Him. Answered prayer comes from His living in us and our living in Him. In that kind of obedient praying it is the most natural of events to hear the voice of the living God speak.”

"The value of praying scripture is that it can train us to feel what it expresses, to think God's thoughts after Him, and thus to tune our hearts to hear God's voice in other ways. These represent the distilled wisdom of God's people and can train our hearts in obedient prayer."

"I have also memorized all of the prayers of St. Paul, praying them over and over until they become my own."

"Does God wonder in frustration why it is that He has spoken and I haven't listened -- because I have been too busy or rationalistic or timid to obey? God reserves the right to speak when and what and how He desires."

"The secret of Jesus' life was His constant contact with God."

"God really is more interested in being heard than we are to hear Him."

"C.S. Lewis wrote in The Weight of Glory, 'We are far too easily pleased.' That, in the end, is the reason we do not pray more than we do."

Simon Chan..."Prayer keeps God at the center of all things, and unceasing prayer brings God into every aspect of our day to day existence."

Jean Grou..."Unceasing prayer is 'prayer of the heart' created by the Holy Spirit who indwells us. The intention of the Spirit is to pray in us always."

Simon Chan..."Unceasing prayer is cultivated by means of three related exercises:

1. Practicing the presence of God.
2. Conforming to God's will.
3. Maintaining fidelity to grace. (refers to a specific act of obedience)

The practice of unceasing prayer, self-examination and meditating on God's Word is not readily separable in actual practice. Neither should they be. A Puritan spiritual writer reminds us that 'to read and not to meditate is unfruitful; to meditate and not to read is dangerous;

to read and meditate without prayer is hurtful.' It is desirable to combine some of these exercises as meditation and journaling. Writing out our meditation on a text of scripture as we let it speak to us combines the advantage to both exercises to further enhance our knowledge of self in the light of God's Word."

Fannie E. Davison...

"Pure in heart, O God, help me to be,
That I Thy holy face one day may see;
Keep me from secret sin,
Reign Thou my soul within.
Purer in heart help me to be."

A.W. Tozer..."Millions of professed believers talk as if He were real and act as if He were not. For myself, I long ago decided that I would rather know the truth than be happy in ignorance. If I cannot have both truth and happiness, give me truth. We'll have a long time to be happy in heaven."

Charles de Foucauld..."I love this desert, the solitude; it is so quiet and so wholesome; eternal things seem very real, and truth invades one's soul. I am very reluctant to leave my solitude and silence for travel. But God's will be done whatever it may be, not only done but preferred, adored, loved, and blessed without reserve."

A.W. Tozer...The Communion of Saints

"If we would enter into the power of it, we must exercise ourselves in this truth; we must practice thinking and praying with the thought that we are members of the Body of Christ and brothers to all the ransomed saints living and dead who have believed on Christ and acknowledged Him as Lord...The truth makes men free, and the truth will bind and loose, will open and shut, will include and exclude at its high will without respect to persons. To reject or deny the truth of the Word is to exclude ourselves from the apostolic communion...But who is able to complete the roster of the saints? To them we owe a debt of gratitude too great to comprehend: prophet and apostle, martyr and reformer, scholar and translator, hymnist and composer, teacher and evangelist, not to mention ten thousand souls who kept the flame of pure religion alive even in those times when the faith of our fathers was burning but dimly all over the world."

Tertullian... "Prayer is the wall of faith. It arms us and hurls missiles against the enemy who watches us on all sides. So we never walk unarmed. By day, we are aware of our part -- by night, of our vigil. Under the armor of prayer we guard the banner of our General. We wait in prayer for the angel's trumpet... What more do we need then but the duty of prayer? Even the Lord Himself prayed, to whom be honor and virtue for ages and ages."

Origen... "The way of the Lord is made straight in two ways. First through contemplation when your thoughts are cleared of falsehood by truth. And then through conduct, when we contemplate what to do and act accordingly."

Hugh Feiss, Monastic Wisdom

Saint Benedict... He legislated that his monks spend more than three hours a day reading or listening to reading. He expected this reading to be prayerful and to lead to spontaneous or wordless prayer.

Peter of Celle... "When you pray, pray in spirit and mind. Enter into your room. Close the door, and pray to your Father, more with heart than voice, more with faith than singing."

Ludovico Barbo... "Without mental praying it would be virtually impossible for frail humanity to bear the fierce struggles of religious life. You can inebriate with sweetness your dryness of heart, making use of the water of prayer drawn from the fountains of the Savior. As a tree experiencing drought sheds its unripened fruit and leaves, so the soul that is deprived of the dew of prayer brings forth incomplete works infected with distaste."

Three ways of praying:

1. Vocal

Great contemplative saints make it their custom to always start from this form of prayer before ascending to the other, higher ways of prayer.

2. Meditation

Meditation happens this way: it prays not with words, but in the heart, understanding, and affectivity.

3. Contemplation

God prepares the soul for divine contemplation.

Peter of Celle... "Reading is bound to silence...Constant and attentive reading done devoutly purifies our inner self."

Hugh Feiss... "principle enemy of interior and exterior silence for most of us is our own tongue. Perhaps we fear the emptiness within us and take refuge in speech. Speech serving as an escape is likely to be speech devoid of serious content and full of ego."

Peter of Celle... "Our solitary inquiry goes better in silence and is studied more deeply in solitude."

Louis De Blois... "Have a special love for solitude, silence, and restraint in speech. Always be more ready to listen to talk than to utter it."

Esther De Waal... "For true satisfaction...comes when I am silent and listen... God's voice is drowned out by incessant clamor."

Antony... "I have seen all the snares of the enemy spread out over the world, and I said with a groan, 'Who can get through such snares'? Then I heard a voice say to me, 'humility'."

Thomas Merton... "A humble man is not disturbed by praise."

Hugh Feiss... "Obedience (ob-audire) is related to listening (audire). It is only when I remind myself that obedience is ob-audire, listening intently to God rather than listening to my own self."

Thomas Merton ... "Contemplation, far from being opposed to theology, is in fact the normal perfection of theology. We must not separate intellectual study of divinely revealed truth and contemplative experience of that truth as if they could never have anything to do with one another. Unless they are united, there is no fervor, no life, and no spiritual value in theology, no substance, no meaning, and no sure orientation in the contemplative life."

Geert Zerbolt van Zutphen...

1. Scripture prepares the reader for meditation.
2. Meditation prepares for prayer.
3. Prayer prepares us for contemplation.

Dangers:

1. To meditate without first reading Scripture is to run the risk of being deluded or falling into error.
2. Reading Scripture without turning to prayer is arid and barren.

Martin Luther..on praying the 10 commandments...

"I take one part after another and free myself as much as possible from distraction in order that I may pray. I divide each commandment into four parts, so that I fashion a garland of four strands. In other words, I think of each commandment as in the

First place - instruction (which is really what it ought to be)

Second - I turn it into thanksgiving.

Third - a confession

Fourth - a prayer

Teresa of Avila..."Govern all by thy wisdom, O Lord, so that my soul may always be serving thee as Thou dost will and not as I may choose. Do not punish me, I beseech thee, by granting that which I wish or ask if it offends Thy love, which would always live in me. Let me die to myself so that I may serve Thee; let me live to Thee, who in Thyself art the true life."

Cloud of the Unknowing..."God is a jealous lover. He suffers no rival. God cannot work in our wills unless He can possess our wills for Himself. He wants us to be willing to think on nothing but Himself."

A.W. Tozer..."Prayer is the elevation of the heart to God and that is all a man needs to praise, to pray, and to worship."

"The basic teaching of the deeper Christian life is the willingness to let Jesus Christ Himself be glorified in us and through us. It is the willingness to quit trying to use the Lord for our ends and let Him work in us for His glory."

John Bunyan... “If you want encouragement, entertain the promises.”

Ruth Bell Graham...“Lord, someone once said that anything that becomes a burden will be discarded with relief. So please keep me from ever giving to the children the impression that belonging to You and obeying You are a burden and a joyless journey.”

Dr. Helen Roseveare, a medical missionary from England, was serving in the Congo when the Mau Mau revolutionaries invaded. This woman who wanted nothing more than to serve God and love others – and had committed her life in doing just that – was attacked by invading soldiers. She was beaten, raped, and humiliated at the hands of her attackers. Yet she survived.

During her recovery from this traumatic event, Helen struggled with God and how He might let something like that happen to her, His very own servant and child. Finally after many tears and prayers, she wrote herself a note, a letter to herself from God.

“Can you thank Me for trusting you with this experience,” she wrote, “even if I never tell you why?”

We must learn to trust God, no matter what blessing and curses He wills into our lives.¹

Abba Agathon “Amongst all good works, which is the virtue which requires the greatest efforts?” He answered, Forgive me, but I think there is no greater than that of prayer to God. For every time a man want to pray, his enemies, the demons, want to prevent him, for they know that they can hinder his journey whatever good work a man undertakes, if he perseveres in it, he will attain rest. But prayer is warfare to the last breath.”

The Holy Fathers teach that man finds himself, if not always under the domination of the demons, then in any case, under their influence and persistent hostility. The demons continually revolve around the soul and try, by any means, to make the faithful sin, either through the senses (when the object is near), through the imagination (when the person or the object is far away), or through the rebellion of the

¹ Mike Nappa, The Prayer Of Jesus

flesh. The hostile tactics of the evil one, however, are more apparent during prayer.²

Prayer is the primary work of our life. All of life is to be lived worshipping God, and the more our heart is enriched through prayer, the stronger our feelings toward God grow. Through praying without ceasing, we join ourselves to God, making ourselves available to be filled with the glory of God. In addition, our personal prayers orient and prepare us to join in the corporate prayers of the Church, assisting us to participate more fully in the common worship. We wish to enter into the sacraments with pure hearts, so we pray for God's will to be worked out in us.³

Effectual Praying, According To The Bible, IS

1. PRAYING in Faith Mark 11:24
2. PRAYING God's Word 1John 5:14-15
3. PRAYING in the Name of Jesus John 14:14
4. PRAYING with Persistence 1 Thess. 5:17
5. PRAYING for Specific Things Mark 11:23
6. PRAYING in Humility 2Chron. 7:14
7. PRAYING in the Spirit Eph. 6:18
8. WAITING on God Isa. 49:23
9. THANKSGIVING and PRAISE Ps. 100:4
10. ABIDING in Christ John 15:7
11. ABSOLUTE SURRENDER Luke 22:42
12. PRIORITIES Matthew 6:33
13. TRUSTING God Prov. 3:5-6
14. PRAYING with a Forgiving Heart Matthew 5: 23-24
15. PRAYING in Agreement Matthew 18:19-20
16. PRAYING in Obedience 1John 3:22
17. ACTIVE LISTENING Isa. 30:21⁴

We are always in God's presence and may enjoy that fact as we exercise faith.

Fire must come from above; indeed, he has already come. The Holy Spirit burns quietly within the Christian, ready to light the fuel of Scripture's truth. But the fuel must be there.

² A Night In The Desert Of The Holy Mountain Effie Mavromichali

³ Prayer In The Unseen Warfare Jack Sparks

⁴ Clift and Kathleen Richards, Knowing God Intimately

In Paul's case, it is evident that his mind was so soaked in divine truth that it served as the fuel by which his prayers caught fire.

If we would intercede for others, then we must soak our minds in Scripture that the Holy Spirit may have fuel to light within us. There must be plenty of fuel to light within us. There must be plenty of fuel, not just isolated texts chosen at random. The fuel has to be thick and heavy. Promises may catch alight quickly, but for a lasting fire we will need some solid knowledge about nature and character of God, and of his Christ, and of their intervention in human history.⁵

⁵ John White, *Daring to Draw Near*

PRAYER QUOTES

CHAPTER 1.

Andrew Murray The Best Of Andrew Murray On Prayer

Approaching God in Prayer

If your heart is cold and dead, remember that worship is not simply a matter of feeling but has to do first with the will.

Praise God for the inner chamber of prayer and His promise of blessing there. God will make the place a Beth-El (house of God) where His angels shall ascend and descend and where you will cry out, "Yahweh will be my God." He will also make it Peni-El where you will see the face of God, as a prince of God (Isra-El,) wrestling in over-coming – type prayer.

It will become the most blessed place on earth.

Time for Jesus

The clear focused objective of the morning quiet time is to secure the presence of Christ for the whole day. Meditation and prayer and the Word are secondary to this purpose of renewing the link for the day between Christ and you in the morning hour.

What encouragement when we can say: God has taken charge of me; He is going with me; I am going to do his will all day in His strength; I am ready for all that may come. Yes, what a change would come into our lives if secret prayer were not only an asking for knowledge of strength, but the giving of our lives for one day into the safe keeping of a faithful God.

Prayer's Unbroken Fellowship

Close and continued prayer fellowship with God will in due time leave its mark and be evident to those around us. Just as Moses did not know that his face shone, we ourselves will be unaware of the light of God shining from us.

The spirit of inner prayer must be carried over into a holy watchfulness throughout the day. We do not know at what hour the enemy will come. This continuance of the morning watch can be maintained by quiet self-restraint, by not giving the reins of our lives over to our natural impulses.

It is a great thing to enter the inner chamber, shut the door, and meet the Father in secret. It is a greater thing to open the door again and go out to enjoy God's presence – which nothing can disturb.

The Place Of Prayer

When Moses went into pray for himself or his people and to wait for instructions, he found One waiting for him. What a lesson for our morning watch.

We must get into the right place. Moses went into the tabernacle to speak with God.

He separated himself from the people and went where he could be alone with God.

He went to a place where God was to be found.

Jesus has told us where that place is. He calls us to enter into our closet, shut the door, and pray to the Father in secret.

Any place where we are really alone with God can be for us the secret of His presence.

To speak with God requires separation from all else. It needs a heart intently set upon and in full expectation of meeting God personally and having direct dealings with Him.

When we go there to speak to God will hear the voice of one speaking to them.

We must get into the right position. Moses heard the voice of One speaking from the mercy seat. Bow before the mercy seat where the awareness of your unworthiness will not hinder you, but will be a real help in trusting God. At the mercy seat you can have assurance that your upward look will be met by His eye, that your prayer can be heard, that His loving answer will be given. Bow before the mercy seat and be sure that the God of mercy will see and bless you. Numbers 7:89

God's Word And Prayer

Prayer and God's word are inseparably linked together: power in the use of either depends upon the presence of the other. It is clear why this is so.

Prayer and the Word have one common center – God.

Prayer seeks God; the Word reveals God.

In prayer, we ask God: in the Word, God answers us.

In prayer we rise to heaven to dwell with God; in the Word, God comes to dwell with us.

In prayer, we give ourselves to God; in the Word, God gives Himself to us.

In Prayer and the Word, God must be all.

Make God the center of your heart, the one objective of your desires.

Prayer and the Word will be a blessed fellowship with God, the interchange of thought and love and life – a dwelling in God and God in us.

Seek God and Live!

The Will Of God

Let this be our heart's one desire – that in everything the will of God be done in us and by us, even as it is in heaven.

As we fellowship with God in the inner chamber of the morning watch, waiting and depending with a childlike attitude of trust on what He gives us, we receive the knowledge of His will as well as the power to perform it. In surrender to do all that He wills, the study of His Word and this time of prayer bring true and full blessing.

According To God's Will

Jesus' teaching continually connected the answer to prayer with a life that was being lived according to God's will: trusting, forgiving, merciful, humble, believing, asking in His name, abiding in His love, observing/keeping His commands, and having His words abiding within.

Prayer has power according to the life! A life in line with God's will can ask according to God's will.

When you live according to God's will you are spiritually able to discern what to ask for. A life yielded to and molded by the will of God will know what and how to pray. Boldness in prayer comes from the assurance that the spirit of asking and the thing asked are both according to the will of God.

Intercession

There is a mystery of glory in prayer. On the one hand we see God in His holiness, love, and power – waiting, longing to bless us. On the other hand is a sinful, unworthy human being – asking God in prayer for the very life and love of heaven to dwell in our hearts.

There is strength in the unity of believers. God will certainly avenge His own who cry day and night to Him. It is when Christians cease looking for help apart from God and aim at being bound together to the throne of God, that the church will put on her strength to overcome the world. This comes by continuously asking for the power of God's Spirit.

Open Their Eyes

The prayer of Elisha for his servant was answered in a wonderful way. The young man saw the mountain full of chariots of fire and horsemen surrounding Elisha. The heavenly host had been sent by God to protect His servant.

Elisha prayed a second time. The Syrian army was struck with blindness and was led into Samaria. There Elisha prayed for God to open their eyes, and they found themselves hopeless prisoners in the hand of the enemy.

All the powers of the heaven are at our disposal in the service of His kingdom. How little the children of God live in the faith of the heavenly vision – the power of the Holy Spirit, on them, with them, and in them.

The church is unconscious of its weakness to do the work of bringing others to Christ and building up believers for a life of holiness and fruitfulness. Pray that God may open eyes to see the great and fundamental need of the Church: the need for intercession to bring down His blessing.

CHAPTER 2.

Hanna Whitall Smith A Time To Reflect Henry Morgan

Because we cannot see the hand of God in our affairs, we rush to the conclusion that he lost sight of them and of us. We look at the 'seemings' of things instead of at the underlying facts, and declare that, because God is unseen, he must necessarily be absent. And especially is this the case if we are conscious of having ourselves wandered away from him and forgotten him. We judge him by ourselves, and think that he must also have forsaken us. We measure his truth by our falseness, and find it hard to believe he can be faithful when we know ourselves to be so unfaithful.

Jeremy Taylor Pray frequently and effectually; I had rather your prayers should be often than long. It was well said of Petrarch, 'When you speak to your superior, you ought to have a bridle on your tongue'; much more when you speak to God.

Theophan the Recluse In purely contemplative prayer, words and thoughts themselves disappear, not by our own wish, but of their own accord. Prayer of the mind changes into prayer of the heart, or rather into prayer of the mind in the heart: its appearance coincides with the birth of warmth in the heart. From now on in the usual course of spiritual life there is no other prayer. This prayer, taking deep root in the heart, may be without words or thought: it may consist only in a standing before God, in an opening of the heart to him in reverence and love. It is a state of being irresistibly drawn within to stand before God in prayer; or it is the visitation of the spirit of prayer. But all this is not yet true contemplative prayer, which is prayer's highest state, appearing from time to time in God's elect.

Catherine de Hueck Doherty Deserts, silence, solitudes are not necessarily places but states of mind and heart. These deserts can be found in the midst of the city, and in the every day of our lives. We need only to look for them and realize our tremendous need for them. They will be small solitudes, little deserts, tiny pools of silence, but the experience they will bring, if we are

disposed to enter them, may be as exultant and as holy as all the deserts of the world, even the one God himself entered. For it is God who makes solitude, deserts, and silences holy.

There is no solitude without silence. True silence is sometimes the absence of speech – but always the act of listening. The mere absence of noise (which is empty of our listening to the voice of God) is not silence. A day filled with noise and voice can be a day of silence, if the noise becomes for us the echo of the presence of God, if the voices are, for us, messages and solicitations of God.

Stand still, and look deep into the motivations of life . . . Stand still, and lifting your hearts and hands to God, pray that the mighty wind of his Holy Spirit may clear all the cobwebs of fears, selfishness, greed, narrow-hearted-ness away from the soul: that his tongues of flame may descend to give courage to begin again.

All this standing still can be done in the midst of the outward noise of daily living and the duties of state in life. For it will bring order into the soul, God's order will bring tranquility, his own tranquility. And it will bring silence.

At first such silences will be few and far between. But if nourished with a life of liturgical prayer, mental prayer, with the sacramental life of the church, slowly, slowly, like the seedling of a mighty tree, silence will grow and come to dwell in the soul more and more often. Then suddenly, it will come to stay any day.

To confuse prayer with solitude, to say that I must have solitude in which to pray, is a fallacy. It is good to have periodic solitude.

Andrew Murray The Whole Heart. Meditate and pray about this. Spend time before God until you know that you really mean what you say and you have the assurance that God will hear your prayer. Then each morning as you approach God in prayer you can honestly say, 'I seek you in with my whole heart.' You gradually will feel the need of waiting in holy stillness upon God so that He may take possession of your whole heart. You will learn to love Him with your whole heart and your whole mind.¹

¹ The Best of Andrew Murray on Prayer

Thomas Merton In technology you have this horizontal progress where you must start at one point and move to another. But that is not the way to build a life of prayer. In prayer we discover what we already have. *You start where you are and you deepen what you already have, and you realize that you are already there.* We already have everything, but we don't experience it. Everything has been given to us in Christ. All we need is to experience what we already possess.²

John Huss Therefore, O faithful Christian, search for *truth*, hear *truth*, learn *truth*, love *truth*, speak *truth*, hold the *truth*, defend the *truth* till death.³

² The Formation Bible

³ The Formation Bible

PRAYER QUOTES

CHAPTER 2.

Hanna Whitall Smith A Time To Reflect Henry Morgan

Because we cannot see the hand of God in our affairs, we rush to the conclusion that he lost sight of them and of us. We look at the 'seemings' of things instead of at the underlying facts, and declare that, because God is unseen, he must necessarily be absent. And especially is this the case if we are conscious of having ourselves wandered away from him and forgotten him. We judge him by ourselves, and think that he must also have forsaken us. We measure his truth by our falseness, and find it hard to believe he can be faithful when we know ourselves to be so unfaithful.

Jeremy Taylor Pray frequently and effectually; I had rather your prayers should be often than long. It was well said of Petrarch, 'When you speak to your superior, you ought to have a bridle on your tongue'; much more when you speak to God.

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To confuse prayer with solitude, to say that I must have solitude in which to pray, is a fallacy. It is good to have periodic solitude.

Thomas Cranmer Almighty and everlasting God, which art always more ready to hear than we are to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving unto us that that our prayer dare not presume to ask, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne Pray to be taught to pray. Do not be content with old forms that flow from the lips only. Most Christians have need to cast their formal prayers away, to be taught to cry Abba. Arrange beforehand what you have to pray for. Do not forget confession of sin, thanksgiving. Pray to get your closed lips opened in intercession – embrace the whole world and carry it within the veil.

Ruth Burgess

The desert waits,
Ready for those who come,
Or who are driven,
Because they will not come any other way.

The desert always waits,
Ready to let us know who we are
The place of self-discovery.

And whilst we fear, and rightly,
The loneliness and emptiness and harshness,
We forget the angels,
Whom we cannot see for our blindness,
But who come when God decides
That we need their help;
When we are ready
For what they can give us.

Andrew Murray People are diligent in seeking for the treasure of the earth for their use. Shouldn't the children of God be equally faithful in seeking for the treasures of heaven? It is by the unceasing intercession of God's people that His kingdom will come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10).

Christians need to realize they have the right to expect that God will hear prayer. God waits for each individual believer to take his part in the power of intercession to fulfill the petition "as in heaven, so on earth" (Matt. 6:10).

God had among His people intercessors to whom He listened. In Isaiah we read of a time of trouble when He sought for an intercessor in vain.

God rules the world and His Church through the prayers of His people.

Tommy Tenney “And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was (Ex. 20:18-21). They preferred distant respect over intimate relationship.

(On revival) It’s time to seek the Reviver instead of revival.

There is something in us that makes us afraid of the commitment that comes with real intimacy with God.

Intimacy with God requires a certain level of brokenness because purity comes from brokenness.

When David’s procession came to God’s holy shaking place in the road, the oxen stumbled and Uzzah reached out to steady the ark. Uzzah’s name literally means “strength, boldness, majesty, security.” The presence of God never needs the assistance or guidance of man’s strength to hold its rightful place. Nor will God ever allow the arm of flesh to glory in His presence without tasting death.

God’s glory “broke out” on the flesh that drew near to it in a living state and Uzzah was instantly killed. Only dead men can see God’s face, and only repentant dead flesh can touch His glory.

You can be busy being a disciple and doing the work, but miss the worship!

Did you notice that God didn’t break Mary’s alabaster box? Mary had to break it. If you want to have that kind of encounter with God, then you will have to “break” yourself. The highest level of worship comes from brokenness, and there are no shortcuts or formulas to help you “reach the top.”

You can't see His face and save your "face." The "end" of your glory, the dismantling, if you please, is the beginning of His glory.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne Hear David _ "as the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"

He panted not after the gifts of God – nor His favours or comforts – but after Himself. A believer longs after God – to come into His presence – to feel His love- to feel near to Him in secret – to feel in the crowd that He is nearer than all the creatures. Ah! Dear brethren, have you ever tasted this blessedness? There is greater rest and solace to be found in the presence of God for one hour, than in an eternity of the presence of man. To be in His presence – under His love – under His eye – is heaven, wherever it be. God can make you happy in any circumstance. Without Him nothing can.

Rosalind Goforth When I was a very little child, so young I can remember nothing earlier, a severe thunderstorm passed over our home. Terrified, I ran to my mother, who placed my hands together, and pointing upward repeated over and over again one word Jesus.

More than fifty years have passed since that day, but the impression left upon my child-mind, of a Being invisible but able to hear and help, has never been effaced.

The most precious recollections of early childhood are associated with stories told us by our mother, many which illustrated the power of prayer.

**I cannot tell why there should come to me
A thought of someone miles and years away,
In swift insistence on the memory,
Unless there is a need that I should pray.
We are too busy to spare thought
For days together of some friends away;
Perhaps God does it for us – and we ought
To read His signal as a sign to pray.
Perhaps just then my friend has fiercer fight,**

**A more appalling weakness, a decay
Of courage, darkness, some lost sense of right;
And so, in case he needs my prayers – I pray.**

Yes, the deeper the need, and the bitterer the extremity, the greater the opportunity for God to show forth His mighty power in our lives, if we but give Him a chance by unswerving obedience at any cost. “In the day when I cried thou answered me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul” (Ps. 138:3).

Rosalind Goforth In recent years I have often tested myself by these conditions, when weeks, and perhaps months, have passed without some answer to prayer, and there has come a conscious spiritual sagging. As the discerning soul can plainly see, all the conditions mentioned in the list below may be included in the one word abide.

Conditions of Prevailing Prayer

- 1. Contrite humility before God and forsaking of sin
2Chronicles 7:14.**
- 2. Seeking God with the whole heart Jer. 29:12,13.**
- 3. Faith in God Mk. 11:23,24.**
- 4. Obedience 1John 3:22.**
- 5. Dependence on the Holy Spirit Rom. 8:26.**
- 6. Importunity Mk. 7:24-30; Lk. 11:5-10.**
- 7. Must ask in accordance with God’s will 1 John 5:14.**
- 8. In Christ’s name John 14: 13,14.**
- 9. Must be willing to make amends for wrong to others Matt.
5:23,24.**

Causes of Failures in Prayer

- 1. Sin in the heart and life Ps. 66:18; Isa 59:1,2.**
- 2. Persistent refusal to obey God Pr. 1:24-28, Zec. 7:11:25,26.**
- 3. Formalism and hypocrisy Isa. 1:2-15.**
- 4. Unwillingness to forgive others Mk. 11:25,26.**
- 5. Wrong motives Jas. 4:2,3.**
- 6. Despising God’s law Amos 2:4.**
- 7. Lack of love and mercy Pr. 21:13.**

William Law We readily acknowledge that God alone is to be the rule and measure of our prayers. In them we are to look wholly to God and act wholly for God. We are to pray only in such a manner, for such things, and for such ends as are suitable to God's glory.

As devotion of the heart naturally breaks out into outward acts of prayer, so outward acts of prayer are natural means of raising the devotion of the heart.

Martin Luther First, when I feel that I become cool and joyless in prayer because of other tasks or thoughts (for the flesh and the devil always impede and obstruct prayer), I take my little Psalter, hurry to my room, or, if it be the day and hour for it, to the church where a congregation is assembled and, as time permits, I say quietly to myself and word for word the Ten Commandments, The Creed, and if I have time, some words of Christ or of Paul, or some psalm, just like a child might do.

It is a good thing to let prayer be the first business of the morning and the last at night.

Luther's method of turning to scriptures (particularly the Psalms and the Gospels) as a way to "warm the heart" in preparation for prayer expresses a very ancient wisdom in the church.

Moreover, Luther's basic pattern of meditating on each phrase of the Lord's Prayer has rich affinities with the Benedictine tradition of lectio divina.

The path of Luther's prayer is instructive. He begins with the Lord's Prayer, and continues (if time and inclinations allow) with the Ten Commandments and the

Apostles Creed, devising a "fourfold garland of meditation and prayer for the latter two.

1. Instruction which is really what it is intended to be, and consider what the Lord God demands of me so earnestly.
2. Thanksgiving
3. Confession
4. A Prayer

Luther always begins with a passage from the Bible or the Creed. First, he carefully reflects upon the content of the

passage and then meditates upon what the Holy Spirit is saying to him personally in and through the passage.

A Prayer Of Martin Luther

**O heavenly Father, dear God, I am a
Poor unworthy sinner. I do not deserve
To raise my eyes or hands toward thee
Or to pray. But because thou hast commanded
Us all to pray and hast promised
To hear us and through thy dear
Son Jesus Christ hast taught us both
How and what to pray. I come to thee in
Obedience to thy word trusting in thy
Gracious promise I pray in the name of
My Lord Jesus Christ together with all
Thy saints and Christians on earth as
He has taught us
Our Father who art, etc.
(through the whole prayer, word for word)**

We know that when children ask us how to pray, it is rarely an abstract question. They want to know how we ourselves pray. The same was surely true for those first disciples who longed to understand Jesus' prayer life, the power of which was so evident to them.

Luther once acknowledged that he could not get on without three or four hours of prayer daily.

Yet we must be careful not to break the habit of true prayer and imagine other works to be necessary which, after all, are nothing of the kind. Thus at the end we become lax and lazy, cool and listless toward prayer. The devil that besets us is not lazy or careless, and our flesh is too ready and eager to sin and is disinclined to the spirit of prayer.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer The God of Jesus Christ has nothing to do with what God, as we imagine him, could do and ought to do. If we are to learn what God promises, and what he fulfills we must persevere in quiet meditation on the life and sayings, deeds,

suffering, and death of Jesus. It is certain that we may always live close to God and in the light of his presence, and that such living is an entirely new life for us; that nothing is then impossible for us, because all things are possible with God; that danger and distress can only drive us closer to him. It is certain that we can claim nothing for ourselves, and may yet pray for everything; it is certain that our joy is hidden in suffering, and our life in death; it is certain that in all this we are in a fellowship that sustains us. In Jesus God has said Yes and Amen to it all, and that Yes and Amen is the firm ground on which we stand. (Bonhoeffer is now in prison waiting certain death.)

A W. Tozer Prayer is the elevation of the heart to God and that is all a man needs to praise, to pray and to worship. The basic teaching of the deeper Christian life. It is the willingness to let Jesus Christ Himself be glorified in us and through us. It is the willingness to quit trying to use the Lord for our ends and let Him work in us for His glory.

Cloud of the Unknowing God is a jealous lover; He suffers no rival. God cannot work in our wills unless He can possess our wills for Himself. He wants us to be willing to think on anything but God Himself.

Listen! Jesus Is Praying

**Father, I will that they also,
Whom thou hast given me,
Be with me where I am;
That they may behold my glory,
Which thou hast given me:
For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.
John 17:24**

Robert Murray M'Cheyne Father I will. This is the most wonderful prayer that rose from this earth to the throne of God, and this petition is the most wonderful in the prayer. No human lips ever prayed thus before – 'Father I will.' Abraham was the friend of God, and got very near to God in prayer, but he prayed as dust and ashes. 'I have taken upon me to speak unto God that am but

dust and ashes.' Jacob had power with God, and prevailed, yet his boldest word was, 'I will not let thee go except you bless me.' Daniel was a man greatly beloved, and got immediate answers to prayer, and yet he cried to God as a sinner – 'O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hearken and do!' Paul was a man who got very near to God, and yet he says, 'I bow my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' But when Christ prayed, He cried, 'Father I will.' Why did he pray thus? He was God's fellow. 'Awake O sword against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow.' He thought it no robbery to be equal with God. It was He that said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' So now He says, 'Father I will.'

He spoke as the intercessor with the Father. He felt as if His work were already done. 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' He felt as if He had already suffered the cross, and now claims the crown. 'Father, I will.' This is the intercession now heard in heaven.

He had one will with the Father. 'I and my Father are one.' One God – one in heart and will. True, He had a holy human soul, and, therefore, a human will; but His human will was one with His divine will. The human string in His heart was tuned to the same string with His divine will.

Learn how surely this prayer should be answered, dear Children of God. It is impossible this prayer should be unanswered. It is the will of the Father and of the Son. If Christ wills it, and if the Father wills it, you may be sure nothing can hinder it. If the sheep be in Christ's hand, and in the Father's hand, they shall never perish.

Andrew Murray It is only the fully surrendered heart that can fully trust God for all he has promised.

Wholly for God! What blessedness as the soul learns what it means and what God gives with it.

Jeremy Taylor When you do receive praise for something you have done, take it indifferently and return it to God. Reflect it back to God, the giver of the gift, the blesser of the action, the aid of the project. Always give God thanks for making you an instrument of his glory for the benefit of others. But be cautious

and on guard that pride never enters in, thereby rendering your praise, a loss.

John Wesley Let there be in you that lowly mind which was in Christ Jesus. By enthusion I mean the tendency to hastily ascribe everything to God, supposing dreams and voices and visions to be special revelations that God has given to you, Beware of desiring anything other than God.

E Stanley Jones Jesus Christ

1. He stood up to read as was his custom
2. He went out into the mountain to pray as was his custom – he prayed by habit.
3. He taught them again as was his custom – He passed on to others by habit what he had found by reading and prayer.

Why we have to have revelation of God through the Word. It is God interpreting Himself to us.

President Lincoln said I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go: my own conviction and that of others around me seemed insufficient for the day.

Sadhu Sundar Singh It is very difficult to explain the deep experiences of the inner life.

As Goethe has said the highest cannot be spoken, as Tertullian has said whenever the soul comes to itself and attains something of its natural soundness, it speaks of God.

God reveals spiritual realities to those who seek to live according to his will. Those who seek to try to understand the inner life merely intellectually will meet with similar failure. The life for which they are looking will vanish with the analysis. In old age the material body cannot keep company forever with the spirit. This is because the body cannot keep pace with the eternal growing soul. In the same way the one Spirit works in us, God's children, but different results are produced, and God is glorified through them according to each one's temperament and personality.

Madame Guyon Praying the Scriptures – you do not read quickly; you read very slowly. You do not move from one passage to another, not until you have sensed the very heart of what you have read. You may then want to take that portion of Scripture that has touched you and turn it into prayer. Praying the Scriptures is not judged by how much you read but the way you read. You are reading, in the very words themselves. Therefore, as you come before the Lord to sit in his presence, beholding him, make use of the scripture to quiet your mind. The Lord is found only in your spirit. Your attention is no longer on outward things or on surface thoughts of your mind; instead sweetly and silently, your mind becomes occupied with that which you have read and by that touch of his presence.

Isaac Penington Profession of truth, without the life and power, is but a slippery place, which men may easily slide from.

Teresa of Avila I see few people who have not too much sense for everything they have to do.

Bruce Wilkinson Simply put, God favors those who ask. He holds back nothing from those who want and earnestly long for what He wants.¹

Saint Clement of Alexandria Prayer without ceasing, struggling to be with God. Prayer is, if I may use the phrase, a conversation with God. Even if we whisper, even if we do not open our mouth, a cry rises within us. And God never fails to hear this inner conversation.²

Saint Cyrtian OUR LORD PRAYED

It is not only with his words that our Lord taught us to pray, but also by his works; he, too, often prayed to his Father. He showed us how he went into the desert to pray. And in another place we find, he went apart onto the mountain to pray and there he spent the entire night in prayer with God. If it was his practice to pray, he who knew not sin, then what of us who are sinners?

¹ Bruce Wilkinson The Prayer of Jabez Multnomah Pub.2000

² John Skinner Wisdom of the Cloister Image Book 1999

How much more do we stand in need of prayer. If he would spend whole nights in prayer, are we not duty bound to make our vigils into the night?

Our Lord prayed: he pleaded with his Father, not on his own account, for He needed no forgiveness, but on behalf of us sinners. In those words he spoke to Simon Peter: "Simon, Simon! Satan, you must know, has got his wish to sift you all like wheat; but I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:31). And elsewhere he prays to his Father for the salvation of all men. "I pray not only for these, but for those also who through their word will believe in me. May they all be one. Father, may they be one in us" (John 17:20).³

George A. Buttrick Prayer is friendship with God. Prayer begins not in asking, but in silent self-preparation. Always prayer is prefaced by an act of faith. The first stage may be thanksgiving. Perhaps we should try to write down the blessing of one day – this would remind us of our "most treasure of content. "We will have neither inward peace nor inward power until we have offered prayers of penitence. Confession and thanksgiving, should be specific. Contrition is not easy work: it is surgery, but will always lead to God's pardon (healing).

Calvin Miller DEPRESSION – All spiritual pain, depression included, holds this glorious possibility. Depression, like other spiritual needs, becomes the prayer focus that keeps us in touch with God. Many like Paul, would also confess that it was weakness which, through prayer, made them strong. But I saw my spiritual status to be the result of my circumstances. How very false! It is due to the person of Satan more principally than to the events of our lives. "Gloom and depression are ploys of the destroyer to end the glorious possession of joy in our lives" – Teresa of Avila. Too often we pray for things rather than union with Christ. You cannot be a disciple without discipline. The number one discipline is focusing.

1. Focusing is primary – is the quieting of the heart and stopping the busyness of the mind.
2. Focusing on the discipline of prayer

³ John Skinner Wisdom of the Cloister

3. **Focusing on the discipline of meditation**
4. **Focusing on selective Listening to what God has to say about us and to those who we know are walking with God.**
5. **Focusing on bold praying we must simply go to God and say "I boldly ask you to eliminate my darkness." "The prayer of quiet".**

Our depression often issues as a kind of mental noise. The most healing restoration of God in his silence. His holy quiet in wondrous stillness heals the inner discord of our depression. The light of God then drives out the darkness. His splitting sunlight washes over our darkened moods. Joy is born, for Christ is all – sufficient.

Richard Foster – Prayer is not another duty to add onto an already overcommitted schedule; far from being a hindrance, it is an asset. Our vocation is an asset to prayer because our work becomes prayer. It is prayer in action.

Calvin Miller We build our own interior shrines, the fact that they mark off spiritual geography. Like nomads who worship Him, we will never find enough of God at any single place of prayer to satisfy us long. Why? Because He moves! We, too, must journey, ever following, ever holding on to God as we journey, toward Him. We travel for two reasons.

1. We will find all of Him someday at that glorious place where life's journey ends.

2. As we travel toward Him, the journey itself brings Him near. Spiritual need is rooted in our honesty. And this need is all that can put vitality in our relationship with Him.

One of my greatest fears for contemporary Christians is that we are failing to take Satan seriously. Satan is a gradual deceiver. For any who have ever tasted of the grace of Christ there is no appetite so demanding as the hunger for God. Only our longing brings Him near.

Henri J. Nouwen Prayer is the bridge between our conscious and unconscious lives. To pray is to connect these two sides of our lives by going to the place where God dwells.

Evan B. Howard Prayer is a term to describe talking to God; meditation describes the repeated placement of our attention on thoughts about God.

Henri J. Nouwen Prayer has meaning only if it is necessary and indispensable. Pray only when we can say without it, we cannot live. Often it is said prayer is simply an expression of helplessness. It is asking from another that we cannot do ourselves. Prayer requires the humble recognition of our condition as broken human beings. Prayer is a way of life which allows you to find a stillness in the midst of the world where you open your hands to God's promises. Prayer leads you to see new paths and to hear new melodies in the air. Prayer is the breath of your life which gives you freedom to go and stay where you wish.

St. Augustine God is closer to us than we ourselves.

Jean – Nicholas Grou Prayer, then, is a wholly spiritual act, addressed to God who is the Supreme Spirit who sees all things and is present in all things. Knowing this is the essence of prayer. For it is the heart that God listens to, and it is the heart that he answers. For God reads the secrets of the heart. God reads its most intimate feelings, even those which we are not aware of.

John Owen Without this sense of need, (danger of sin) our prayers are of no use to the glory of God or of any good to the souls of men. The Spirit of God assists us to pray as we should.

Prayer and Sin

1. Reveals all the secret workings and actions of sin.
2. Gives the heart a deep full sense of the vileness of sin.
3. To obtain strength and power against sin.
4. Prayer and meditation counteract all the deceitful workings of sin.

Does God answer prayer? Without a doubt. The Bible clearly promises that God will answer prayer. Matt. 7:7-8, Matt. 18:19, Matt. 21:22, Jn.14:13, Jn. 15:7, Jn. 15:16, Jas. 1:5, 1JN. 3:22. We feel the pain of unanswered prayer even more keenly when we pray from the Scriptures.

The Character Of God And Prayer

- 1. God knows your needs – you are praying not to an ignorant or disinterested God but to an all-knowing one.**
- 2. God loves you – the great Comforter loves you and wants to do what is best for you.**
- 3. God is powerful – The almighty rules over all events. The powerful One is constantly active, able to act in all the events of your life. The Lord is the creator. He can create again in your situation. You can trust in God.**
- 4. God is sovereign – A prayer is not a request of God to alter his eternal purposes or to form new ones, “active dependence”. God is almighty one. The Lord is the central matter in prayer, not your will. God is powerful; the Almighty rules over all events including those in our life. We must remember that God is sovereign and dependent on no one; though God is moved by our prayers, he will be neither controlled nor manipulated. Prayer is not merely the placing of a request; it is the pursuing of a relationship. We must search for God in prayer not just answers.**
 - a. Scripture promises concerning prayer should not be taken out of context. Because these authors were addressing issues other than unanswered prayer, the problems related to unanswered prayer, simply are not mentioned.**
 - b. Scriptures do not guarantee results for every single prayer. The encouragement to pray for “whatever” we wish 1 Jn. 15:7 means that you can pray for anything. God will answer all kinds of request. But it does not mean that you are guaranteed to receive everything, every individual item for which you pray.**
 - c. Scriptural clearly identifies a variety of factors that promote answered prayer Jeremiah 29:12-13 If you want to see your prayers answered more often, I recommend that you aggressively pursue characteristics like earnestness, humility, repentance, faith and obedience.**
 - d. Scriptures also name conditions that hinder prayer. Thus unconfessed sin, severe rebellion, neglect of the needy, selfish motives – all these can hinder the effectiveness of your prayers.**

- e. Scriptures describe occasions when God does not answer prayer and does not offer explanation. I.e. Paul's "thorn in the flesh", and the Lord refused him, instructing him to be satisfied and strengthened in his weakness.

Approaching Unanswered Prayer

1. Be quick to affirm the character of God. The Father loves you; the Spirit knows you; the Almighty is Sovereign. God is able to answer your request.
2. Examine the promises of Scripture in their own light. You can only learn to apply the Scriptures correctly when you spend time reading them.
3. Keep praying. Persistence in prayer will cultivate the transformation from merely seeking the object of your request in prayer to seeking the Lord in prayer.
4. Self-examination. If after persistent prayer you are not expressing yourself. Simply allow the Lord to show you if your prayers are being hindered by some matter in your own walk.
5. Trust God. Finally, always approach God with a sense of trust in his mystery and Sovereignty. And as a lifestyle of asking, you will experience a life style of receiving. So Pray POUND on those gates of heaven!

Henri Nouwen Because we do not stay in touch with that center of our spiritual life called prayer, we lose touch with all that grows from it.

Elizabeth Alves Prayer is an unselfish work that is often unseen and unappreciated by others. Our times with God the Father bring us into oneness of heart with Him.

Philip Doddridge Principal Parts of Prayer

1. A Acts
2. C Confession
3. T Thanksgiving
4. S Supplication

Corrie Ten Boom Any concern too small to be turned into prayer is too small to be made a burden.

Andrew Murray Even Jesus had to deal with unanswered prayer . . . For our sins, He suffered beneath the burden of that unanswered prayer.

Jean Ingelow I have lived to thank God that all my prayers have not been answered.

P. T. Forsyth We shall come one day to a heaven where we shall gratefully know that God's great refusals were sometimes the true answer to our prayers.

C. S. Lewis If God had granted all the silly prayers I've made in my life, where would I be now.

William Mac Donald God is not mocked. He does not answer prayers if He has already given us the answer and we are not willing to use it.

A Trappist Monk There are two main pitfalls on the road to mastering the art of prayer. If a person gets what he ask for, His humility is in danger. If he fails to get what he seeks for, he is apt to loose confidence. Indeed, no matter whether prayer seems to be succeeding or failing, humility and confidence are two virtues which are absolutely essential.

Maltbie D. Babeock Our prayers must mean something to us if they are to mean anything to God.

E. M. Bounds The possibilities of prayer are the possibilities of Faith. Prayer and faith are Siamese twins. Our heart animates Them both. Faith is always praying. Prayer is always believing.

Terry W. Glospey Faith – is the unwillingness to be limited to what we can see, and the willingness to believe that there is a deeper reality than the seen world we participate in every day.

Abba Zeno Desert Father, if a man wants God to hear his prayer quickly, then before he prays for anything else, even his own soul, when he stands and stretches out his hands towards God,

he must pray with all his heart for his enemies. Through this action God will hear everything that he asks.⁴

Frances Fenelon He who prays without confidence cannot hope that his prayers will be granted.

Teresa of Avila The whole aim of any person who is beginning prayer – and don't forget this, because it's very important – should be that he work and prepare himself with determination and every possible effort to bring his will into conformity with God's will . . . It is the person who lives in more perfect conformity who will receive more from the Lord and be more advanced on this road.

Romano Guardini The most effective kind of prayer is that in which we place ourselves, in our hearts, before God, relinquishing all resistance, letting go of all secret irritation opening ourselves to the truth, to God's holy mystery, saying over and over again. "I desire truth, I am ready to receive it, even this truth which causes me such concern, if it be the truth. Give me the light to know it – and see how it bears on me.

Terry W. Glaspey The reason satan does not want us to pray is that prayer is the strongest weapon against him.

Bernard Of Clairvaux You should never doubt your prayer, thinking that it might have been in vain, for I tell you truly before you have uttered the words, the prayer is recorded already in heaven.⁵

Andrew Murray The Whole Heart. Meditate and pray about this. Spend time before God until you know that you really mean what you say and you have the assurance that God will hear your prayer. Then each morning as you approach God in prayer you can honestly say, 'I seek you with my whole heart.' You gradually will feel the need of waiting in holy stillness upon God

⁴ Henry Morgan A Time To Reflect

⁵ Calvin Miller Into the Depths of God

so that He may take possession of your whole heart. You will learn to love Him with your whole heart and your whole mind.⁶

Thomas Merton, In technology you have this horizontal progress where you must start at one point and move to another. But that is not the way to build a life of prayer. In prayer we discover what we already have. You start where you are and you deepen what you already have, and you realize that you are already there. We already have everything, but we don't experience it. Everything has been given to us in Christ. All we need is to experience what we already possess.⁷

John Huss, Therefore, O faithful Christian, search for truth, hear truth, learn truth, love truth, speak truth, hold the truth, defend the truth till death.⁸

⁶ The Best of Andrew Murray on Prayer

⁷ The Formation Bible

⁸ The Formation Bible

GENERAL PRAYER QUOTES

George Herbert, Prayer, the church's banquet.

P. T. Forsyth, It is a difficult and even formidable thing to write on prayer, and one fears to touch the Ark.

Prayer makes sense only when it is seen as an aspect of a vital divine-human relationship. The heart of prayer lies in God's desire to enter into relationship with humankind. It is His self-revelation, divine attributes, and work of redemption that causes Him to invite us to pray, "Our Father in heaven" (Matthew 6:9).

Jesus reminds us that true prayer is a matter of the heart and must be free of show and self-glorification. Jesus warned about the dangers of "showing off" our praying, and we learn from Mary the value of quietly treasuring in our hearts our deep spiritual experiences.

Eastern Orthodox Prayer, Set our hearts on fire with love to you, Christ our God, that in its flame we may love you with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and love our neighbors as ourselves, so that, keeping your commandments, we may glorify you, the giver of all good gifts.

Who is this God to whom I am praying?

These are just a few of the names of God which describe his character. Study them, for in a given day, you may need each one of them.

- 1. When you are confused about the future, go to your *Jehovah-raa*, your caring shepherd.**
- 2. When you are anxious about provision, talk to *Jehovah-jireh*, the Lord who provides.**
- 3. Are your challenges too great? Seek help of *Jehovah-shalom*, the Lord is peace.**
- 4. Is your body sick? Are your emotions weak? *Jehovah-rophe*, the Lord who heals you, will see you now.**
- 5. Do you feel like a soldier stranded behind enemy lines? Take refuge in *Jehovah-nissi*, the Lord my banner.**

Meditating on the names of God reminds you of the character of God. Take these names and bury them in your heart.

s

**brings peace in the storm
heals the sick
guides the soldier**

**out the curriculum for biblical teaching
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**was radically different. In the Lord's
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**hat to pray to achieve the glory of God,
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cult to let go when you know God says
o, walk away. The worst place you can
re God does not want you to be in your
God says yes. Thank God for the times
ence in prayer resulted in God saying
nent! What faith is created through God
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ntil God gives you the answer. I have
should pray that burden through until
does not release you from that burden,
sistently about it.**

Persistency in your prayer life demonstrates that you have great faith in God.

God is always faithful to His promises. God's faithfulness does not always take the form of deliverance from adversity. Many times God demonstrates His faithfulness by sustaining us through adversity. Part of standing strong in times of unanswered prayer is waiting, and waiting produces patience. Since we have no choice but to wait, our attitude makes a lot of difference. We can either shake our fist at God and scream, "Why me?" Or we can open up our hearts to God and pray, "Lord, change this situation. Perfect Your life in me as I wait on You. Help me to do the right thing, and let it all work out for my greatest good."

Prayer unleashes the ministry of guardian angels in ways we perhaps never fully comprehend.

Prayer should not be reduced to a mere formula, but there are important elements that are good to include if our prayers are to be as powerful as we want them to be. In prayer, we should try to:

- 1. Tell God how much we love Him.**
- 2. Praise Him for who He is.**
- 3. Thank Him for all He has done.**
- 4. Declare our dependence on Him.**
- 5. Confess any sin in our lives.**
- 6. Share everything that is in our hearts.**
- 7. Tell Him our requests.**
- 8. Wait on Him to speak to our souls.**
- 9. Thank Him for hearing our prayers.**

The principle for power, the formula, is yielding! Too many believers go through life today never learning to yield to the will of God in their prayer lives. But God says that if we are filled with the Holy Spirit and yield to His will in prayer, we will have power with Him and with men. How we need that power today!

Fifteen reasons to pray

- 1. To seek the face of the Lord and know Him better (Ps. 27:8)**

2. To get your eyes off your problems and onto the Lord (Ps. 121:1)
3. To speak to God (1 Peter 3:12)
4. To unburden your heart (Ps. 142:1-2)
5. To make your request known to God (Matt. 21:22)
6. To hear God (Prov. 8:34)
7. To be free of suffering (James 5:13)
8. To resist temptation (Matt. 26:41)
9. To be rescued from distress (Ps. 107:19)
10. To receive God's reward (Matt. 6:6)
11. To withstand evil (Eph. 6:13)
12. To have joy (John 16:24)
13. To get close to God (Isa. 64:7)
14. To be healed emotionally (James 5:13)
15. To have peace (Phil. 4:6-7)

Some Christians debate whether praying for the lost violates the sovereignty of God or free will of non-Christians. I do not believe either is true. Instead, I have found that praying for lost people by name somehow unleashes the special ministry of the Holy Spirit to woo, draw, and convict them of sin and of their need of the Savior (John 16:5-11).

In the inner life, Andrew Murray proposes, prayer and the Word are inseparably linked together. Power in the use of either depends upon the presence of the other. The Word gives me guidance for prayer, telling me what God will do for me. It shows me the path of prayer, telling me how God would have me come. It gives me the power for prayer, the courage to accept the assurance that I will be heard. And it brings me the answer to prayer, as it teaches what God will do for me. And so, prayer prepares the heart for receiving the Word from God Himself, for the teaching of the Spirit which gives spiritual understanding, and for the faith that carries out God's will.

There are times when to speak is to violate the moment . . . when silence represents the highest respect. The word for such times is reverence. The prayer for such times is "Hallowed be thy name."

Don't worry about having the right words; worry more about having the right heart. Be still. Be quiet. Be open and willing. Then you will know that God is God, and you can't help but confess, "Hallowed be thy name." At least half the time you spend in prayer should be devoted to silence. However you choose to spend your quiet time, treat it just as seriously as you do the verbal part of your prayers. Extreme prayer is not possible without an extreme quiet time.¹

George Whitfield, The genuine believer can no more live without prayer than without food day by day.

Teresa of Avila, Prayer is the doorway through which God's greatest gifts enter my soul.

Therese of Lisieux, I realized that our Lord does not call those who are worthy, but those whom he will.

John of the Cross, By stooping so low I mounted so high that I was able to reach my goal.

Oswald Chambers, If we think of prayer as the breath in our lungs and the blood from our hearts, we think rightly. Prayer is not an exercise, it is the life. Do we expect God to answer prayer? The danger with us is that we want to water down the things that Jesus says and make them mean something in accordance with common sense; if it were only common sense, it was not worthwhile for Him to say it. The things Jesus says about prayer are supernatural revelations.

Dr. Bruce Demarest, Howie wonders why, after teaching a man's Bible study for a decade, he feels so empty inside. All he can do to combat the growing deadness is to tell himself, I shouldn't feel this way. But it doesn't help. Howie feels empty, at least in part, because like so many other Christians he was trained to know God largely through the intellect. Unfortunately, the result of an intellectual approach to the faith is that we become detached from God Himself, and He becomes a set of

¹ Nelson's Personal Handbook On Prayer, Dr. James Wilhoit

propositions. Spiritual vision and passion fade. The badge of busyness we so proudly wear is a demon of our times. Do you see how the hyperactivity that crowds God out actually kills the soul? The goal of Christian spirituality is not information, it is transformation into the likeness of Christ.

The spirituality of the Puritans embraced three pillars, *intellectual knowledge, Spirit-directed religious experience, and practical obedience.*

Today, we commonly examine a person's doctrine before admitting him or her to church membership. Puritan candidates also were asked to give *experiential evidences* of the work of grace in their souls. By balancing biblical doctrines with personal experience of the truth, the Puritans avoided a frigid rationalism. The Puritans had a rich intellectual life, reading the great authors of Christendom as well as the secular classics. But they also enjoyed a robust spirituality, emphasizing the heart knowledge of God through lived experience. These disciplined lovers of Christ saw themselves as people on a spiritual pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem.²

Tozer A. W., You can be straight as a gun barrel theologically and as empty as one spiritually.

Stephen Charnock, A man may be theologically knowing and spiritually ignorant.

Frances de Sales, Sometimes, of course when we enter into God's presence we will not find ourselves speechless.

We will be ready to speak to Him and to hear what He has to say to us.

Usually He will respond in quiet inspirations, and in the silent movement of our heart. His voice will fill our soul with consolation and courage.

So if you are able to speak to the Lord do it with words of prayer. Praise Him listen to Him.

But if, no matter how full your heart is with things you wish to say to God, your voice stills fails you, stay right where you are in His presence. He will see you there, and bless your silence.

² Satisfy Your Souls, Navpress 1999

You know well that when you search for something too anxiously you can come upon it a hundred times without seeing it. So do not let anxiety sabotage your search for God. Anxiety is the enemy of a soul's peace. It cannot come from God.

Evening Prayer

I offer You the silence of this night to fill with Your voice. I offer You this darkness to fill with Your light.

I offer You this solitude to fill with Your presence.

I offer You what I have and who I am.

My Day Begins

The person who dives for pearls is never satisfied to come up with shells. Neither should those who aim at virtue be satisfied with honors and reputation.

The more virtue parades itself, the more it desires to be seen and acclaimed, the less likely it is to be real and true.

True virtue and personal attractiveness are not rooted and supported in pride, self-sufficiency, and vanity.

These produce a life lived strictly for show. It blooms brilliantly and quickly withers away.

Having the appearance of virtue may be fine for those who do not seek it, who accept it indifferently, and who do not mistake the shell for the pearl.

But it can become very dangerous and hurtful to those who cling to it, and take delight in it.

For someone who is truly wise, truly learned, truly generous and noble, their gifts will flower in true humility and modesty.

A really great soul will not waste itself on such empty goods as rank, honor, and form. It has higher aspirations.³

Catherine Of Siena, With God as your companion you will live in the light of faith, with hope and fortitude, with true patience and perseverance, all the days of your life. You will never be alone, never fear anyone or anything, for you will find your security in God.⁴

Thomas a Kempis, Evening Prayer

³ Set Your Heart Free, The Practical Spirituality of Frances de Sales

⁴ Set Aside Every Fear Catherine Of Siena

O Lord, You have been with me all through the Day. Now evening has come. The shadows have lengthened into darkness. Let my busy world now grow quiet, the feverish concerns of my day be stilled, my work put away. Reward me with your silence. O Lord, all through the day I have heard your invitation to let go of myself. It is easy to say that I will surrender myself to you and give you all for all. But I can think of a thousand things that I would find easier to hold back, a thousand ways in which to hold onto myself. Take away my crippling fears of surrender to you and as my day ends, keep me in your embrace through the night, give me quiet rest and your peace, now and forever. Amen.⁵

John Wesley, Rejoice always in uninterrupted happiness in God. Pray without ceasing, which is the fruit of always rejoicing in the Lord.

In everything give thanks, which is the fruit of both the former. This is Christian perfection. Further than this we cannot go, and we need not stop short of it.

Our Lord purchased joy, as well as righteousness for us. It is the very design of the gospel that, being saved from guilt, we should be happy in the love of Christ.

Prayer may be said to be the breath of our spiritual life. One who lives cannot possibly cease breathing. So much as we really enjoy of God's presence, so much prayer and praise do we offer up without ceasing, else our rejoicing is but delusion.

Thanksgiving is inseparable from true prayer, it is almost essentially connected with it. One who always prays is ever giving praise, whether in ease or pain, both for prosperity and for great adversity, He blesses God for all things, looks on them as coming from Him, and receives them only for His sake – not choosing nor refusing, liking nor disliking anything, but only as it is agreeable or disagreeable to His perfect will.

For this, that you should thus rejoice, pray, give thanks, is the will of God, always good, always pointing at our salvation.⁶

⁵ True Serenity, Based on Thomas a Kempis The Imitation Of Christ

⁶ Renew My Heart, Daily Wisdom From The Writings Of John Wesley, Barbour Pub.

Thomas H. Green, Meditation and contemplation are just the beginning of the Christian life of prayer. They should lead to a living faith, to a lived experience of God.

Talking and silence are spontaneous and easy and relaxed – not labored or artificial.

“Please don’t talk to me. I am busy thinking about you”? I think a friend would say, “Think about me when I’m absent! When I’m with you, just be with me, talk to me.” This is the difference between meditation or contemplation (thinking about the Lord and His place in my life) and real prayer, which is being with the Lord.

DRYNESS

The time of dryness becomes the normal pattern of our prayer life; we have come to realize what God is doing and to desire that He do it. Then dryness is not desolation, because we are not anxious, fearful, doubting about what the Lord is doing. We have freely submitted ourselves to the fire of His purifying love. People are quite surprised when I suggest to them that probably their dry hours were the best prayer. How can that be, when these hours seem so fruitless? The reason is because at these times our prayer is likely to be most unselfish, most “God-centered,” provided we persevere despite the dryness. Now, as the dryness and darkness become more a constant pattern of our prayer, we discover that it is much more than God’s way of asserting His sovereignty. The darkness is actually “contemplation,” a whole new way of praying in which we truly become clay in the hands of the potter. I often say to people who ask me how to handle this painful dryness, “If the Lord makes it dark, you make it darker.” This sounds strange. What I mean, though, is to trust the Potter, to lean in the direction in which the Spirit is blowing. Don’t resist His drying wind by trying to recapture the thoughts and rekindle the feelings of earlier days. Trust God that He knows what He is doing, even if we don’t. And relax in His hands.

The life of prayer is perhaps the most mysterious dimension of all human experience.

What hinders our spiritual growth is that we don’t really want it badly enough to discover God in our lives.

FLOATING

I try to teach people how to float. It is puzzling to see what a difficult art floating really is – difficult not because it demands much skill, but because it demands much letting go. The secret of floating is in learning not to do all the things we instinctively want to do. To learn to float, it seems, is essential to learn to trust, first the teacher and then the water.

What we should be concerned about is letting God become the absolute Lord of our lives and rest in that.⁷

Karl Rahner, “To be religious is to believe that it is meaningful to speak into the endless desert of God’s silence.⁸”

Thomas H. Green, “Prayer at the same time, is a dialogue, an encounter between two persons. What man does or says is an integral part of prayer, since God cannot speak with us unless we also speak.

I believe there are two senses in which we can speak legitimately of techniques of prayer. In the first place, we can speak of techniques for becoming quiet, for bringing ourselves to that stillness in which the voice of God can be heard. Secondly, we can speak of techniques for positively disposing ourselves to encounter the Lord.

Meditation books have traditionally recommended a structure of prayer for beginners. While details may vary, it essentially involves three stages: the remote preparation, the immediate preparation and the actual meditation itself. Let us assume that we choose to make our meditation in the morning. This is often the best time, before our minds are filled with concerns and distractions of the day. In this case, the remote preparation – reading over the scripture passage we are going to pray about, and consulting one of the commentaries to clarify the context and the basic message of the passage which we have chosen – would take place before evening. This remote preparation, along

⁷ When The Well Runs Dry, Ave Marie Press 2002

⁸ Silent Hope, John Kirvan Sorin Books 2001

with our daily spiritual reading, plays a very important role in opening and sensitizing our minds to the things of God.

The immediate preparation for prayer is what we do when we are ready to begin to pray. St. Ignatius recommends that we stand back from the place where we are going to pray, and take a moment to recall the passage or theme we are to pray about, and then we recall what a wondrous thing it is we seek to do. I have found a short prayer like the following very helpful: ‘Lord, I realize that you are truly present and anxious to teach me to pray. You care more for me than I care for myself. Help me to realize the wonder of your speaking to me, and to respond as generously as possible.’

The goal is to come to prayer prepared to hear the Lord, and reverently attentive to His word.⁹

Intimacy with God is seldom high on the priority list of contemporary Christian people. It somehow feels too romantic, too ethereal. We need something more solid. And yet, what could be closer to the core of our purpose for living than loving God.

P. T. Forsyth writes, “When we speak to God it is really the God who lives in us speaking through us to Himself . . . The dialogue of grace is really the monologue of the divine nature in self-communing love.” How incredible! How beyond belief! “We pray and yet it is not we who pray, but a Greater who prays in us.”

Anthony Bloom writes, “A prayer makes sense only if it is lived. Unless they are ‘lived’, unless life and prayer become completely interwoven, prayers become a sort of polite madrigal which you offer to God at moments when you are giving time to Him.”

Supplication means to ask with earnestness, with intensity, with perseverance. It is a declaration that we are deadly serious about this prayer business. We are going to keep at it and not give up. John Calvin writes, “We must repeat the same supplications not twice or three times only, but as often as we

⁹ Thomas H. Green, *Opening To God* AMP pub.

have need, a hundred and a thousand times . . . We must never be weary in waiting for God's help."¹⁰

To pray, then, in the name of Jesus Christ, means simply this: That we recognize that we have no claims whatever on God. That we have no merit whatsoever in His sight, and furthermore, that Jesus Christ has immeasurable claims on God, and has given us the right to draw near to God not on the ground of our claims, but on the ground of His claims. And when we thus draw near to God in prayer, God will give us what we ask.

What a precious privilege it is to pray in the name of Jesus Christ! How rich we are if we only realize that Jesus Christ has given us the privilege of drawing near to the Heavenly Father in His name, on the ground of His claims on God.¹¹

I fear many Christians are being encouraged to pray in the power of the flesh for temporal blessing rather than in the spirit of Christ for godliness of character. Here is a prayer I made years ago, when I began asking God to conform me to the image of His Son.

I prayed: God, make me like Jesus.

I call this the prayer of Christlikeness.

Whatever it takes, I am willing . . . Create in me the heart of a true son . . . Make me like Jesus.

It is a quiet prayer, a personal prayer, a humbling prayer, an invisible prayer. It can be a lonely prayer, a painful prayer, a sacrificial prayer. One cannot pray this prayer anywhere but at the altar.

If spiritual maturity is one's goal, it seems to me that praying for blessings for oneself is something of a backward approach. Jesus did not pray that blessing would come to Him. He prayed rather, to do His Father's will. Jesus said we must deny the flesh, not indulge it with prayers that continue to feed it. But I suppose none of us wants to walk the Calvary road as much as we think we do. I am surely no exception. It has always been easier to talk about dying to self than to actually die to self, to

¹⁰ Richard J. Foster, Seeking the Kingdom Harper

¹¹ R. A. Torrey, The Power of Prayer

talk obedience than to obey, to talk of crucifying the flesh than to crucify the flesh.

Make me like Jesus, the courage to pray dangerously.¹²

When you seek a word from God, it must be with an attitude that is primed to obey. God's opinion is not just one of your options. God is not interested in debating with you about your best course of action. He already knows what that is. If you only respond to God on your terms and in your timing, then you are not prepared to hear from Him.

Sometimes the cost of ignoring God's voice extends to those around you. If you are not in the habit of regularly communing with God, when you need to hear God's voice, you will be disoriented to it. Take time to evaluate how well you recognize when God is speaking.

Whenever God allows an event to take place in your life, whether a failure or a success, allow God to interpret the event for you. Be aware God often speaks to people in the stillness of the night. Pay attention when the Holy Spirit gently whispers to you. Be mindful that God often chooses to communicate His most profound truths in the midst of a crisis. Don't become preoccupied during turbulent moments by fixing your gaze on the circumstances. Rather, be watchful lest you miss a divine visitation during those tumultuous moments (Mark 6:47-52). There is no shortcut to intimacy with God. It takes time and many experiences with Him as He teaches you and guides you in his ways (Ps. 25).

One reason God's people miss hearing Him speak is their disorientation to His ways. Sometimes Christians expect God to do one thing, and when He does another, they miss Him. The truth is, God is not our servant. He does not speak to us on demand. He communicates on His terms, in His timing, in His way. The more you understand God's ways, the more easily you will identify His words, and the better you'll know how to respond.¹³

¹² Michael Philips, *Make Me Like Jesus*

¹³ Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Hearing God's Voice*

Mike Bickle, "In order to sustain this mighty end-time prayer movement, our hearts must become fascinated with God and prayer must become enjoyable.

We need to know that God wants to see us so that we want to see Him. Then as we gaze at His loveliness -like the angels- we will become absolutely fascinated. Our hearts will burn and the fire will fill us with a desire to pray. From there, it is a short step to enjoyable prayer. Isaiah prophesied that in the last day, God would give us joy in the house of prayer." Isaiah 56:7 "Even them (the sons of the strangers) will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer".¹⁴

Tozer, "It's difficult to get Christians to attend any meeting where God is the only center of attention."

Barbara Wentroble, The key then to walking a life of victory is to renew the mind according to the Word of God. We must say what God's Word says about us rather than what our emotions tell us. He has made us new creations. We are not our former selves. We are becoming the people He originally created us to be.

Too many Christians try to live victorious lives by constantly focusing on crucifying the flesh, instead of repenting and turning away from the things of the flesh.¹⁵

Calvin Miller, Pretense in prayer is a common activity in our churches. Real prayer ends in the pleasure of God and the joy of the believer. The other ends in dyspepsia and a continual rehearsal of the happiness act. In short, those who engage in pretend prayer are always wearing a mask.¹⁶

Calvin Miller, Two thousand years ago, Mary was set free of the blistering gossip of Nazareth not by returning Elizabeth's compliment but by bursting forth in the singing of her magnificat. Once she praised God, she was free of self-concern. That's what praising does. It gets us out of the middle of our egocentric troubles and gets us to a place where we can see

¹⁴ Wesley and Stacy Campbell, Praying the Bible The pathway to Spirituality

¹⁵ Praying With Authority

¹⁶ The Power Of Living For God's Pleasure

God clearly enough to beckon Him into focus we have been lavishing on our own whining self-pity. Praising God is indispensable to the healing of our lives. Without it we remain self-focused and sick. We know we are truly free from the killing love of self when we joyfully sing with Mary, "Oh, how I praise the Lord. How I rejoice in God my Savior!" (Lk. 1:46-47).¹⁷

Oswald Chambers, God wants to turn our times of prayer into mounts of transfiguration, and we will not let Him.

It is not part of the life of a natural man to pray. We hear it said that a man will suffer in his life if he does not pray; I question it. What will suffer is the life of the Son of God in him, which is nourished not by food, but by prayer. When a man is born from above, the life of the Son on God is born in him, and he can either starve that life or nourish it.

We look upon prayer as a means of getting things for ourselves; the Bible idea of prayer is that we get to know God Himself.¹⁸

Matoes, put it so well, "The more man gets closer to God, the more he sees himself a sinner."¹⁹

¹⁷ The Power Of Encouragement

¹⁸ My Utmost For His Highest

¹⁹ The Day – to – Day life of the Desert Fathers in Fourth Century Egypt, Lucien Regnault

General Quotes

Jonathan Goforth “By my Spirit” Normal Christianity, as planned by our Lord, was not supposed to begin in the Spirit and continue in the flesh. In the building of His temple it never was by might nor by power, but always by His Spirit.

The Lord Himself met and foiled Satan after first being filled with the Spirit. And no child of God has ever been victorious over the adversary, unless empowered from the same source. Our Lord did not permit His chosen followers to witness a word in His name until endued with power from on high.

William Law Nothing hurts us, nothing destroys us, but the ill use of that liberty with which God has entrusted us.

Henri Nouwen Praying is no easy matter. It demands a relationship in which you allow someone other than yourself to enter into the very center of your being.

Ruth Bell Graham Lord, someone once said that anything that becomes a burden will be discarded with relief. So please keep me from ever giving to the children the impression that belonging to you and obeying you are a burden and a joyless journey.

Jean Vanier Forgiveness is understanding and holding the pain of another; it is compassion.

Forgiveness is the acceptance of our brokenness, yours and mine.

Forgiveness is letting go of unrealistic expectations of others, and of the desire that they be other than they are.

Forgiveness is liberating others to be themselves, not making them feel guilty for what may have been . . .

Forgiveness is peace-making

Struggling to create unity,

To build one body,

To heal the broken body of humanity.

Bernard of Clairvoux If then you are wise, you will show yourself rather as a reservoir than a canal. For a canal spreads a abroad

water as it receives it, but a reservoir waits until it is filled before overflowing, and thus communicates, without loss to itself, its superabundant water. In the church at the present day, we have many canals, few reservoirs. We have determined to be reservoirs.

Henri Nouwen Without your forgiveness I am still bound to what happened between us. Only you can set me free.¹

Tozer First of all, he should put away all defense and make no attempt to excuse himself either in his own eyes or before the Lord. Whoever defends himself will have himself for his defense, and he will have no other. But let him come defenseless before the Lord and he will have for his defender no less than God Himself. Let the inquiring Christian trample under foot every slippery trick of his deceitful heart and insist upon frank and open relations with the Lord.²

John Skellen "by self-consciousness I mean an awareness not so much of others looking at me as of me looking at me."
James Johnson "is my worship worthy of God."³

Henri Nouwen "The Tears of the Father. The father in the story of the prodigal son suffered much. He saw his younger son leave, knowing the disappointments, rejections, and that abuses facing him. He saw his older son become angry and bitter, and was unable to offer him affection and support. A larger part of the father's life had been spent waiting. He could not force his younger son to come home or his older son to let go of his resentments. Only they themselves could take the initiative to return.

During these long years of waiting the father cried many tears and died many deaths. He was emptied out by suffering. But that emptiness created a place of welcome for his sons when the time of their return came. We are called to become like that

¹ Henri Nouwen Bread for the Journey

² The Pursuit of God

³ Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail

father. We are called to be father to those who want to come home."⁴

Walter Wangerin Jr. "What room may be furnished more beautifully than the heart where prayer is? For in that room God is."⁵

Ron Mehl "When I meet people who are in crisis, I often suggest that they do three things: *get alone, get a promise, and get serious.*"⁶

Oswald Chambers "What's the good of Prayer"

We need it – Luke 11:1

Human wits have an end – Psalm 107:13, 19, 27-28.

Human wills have an end – Romans 8:26.

Human wisdom has an end – James 1:5.

Prayer alters me.

We must do it – Luke 18:1.

If we would know God – Matthew 6:8.

If we would help men – John 14:12-13.

If we would do God's will – 1John 5:14-16.

Prayer alters others.

We can do it – James 5:16.

By asking – John 15:7.

By seeking – John 15:7.

By knocking – Matthew 7:7.

*Prayer alters circumstances through me.*⁷

⁴ Bread for the Journey

⁵ Whole Prayer

⁶ A Prayer That Moves Heaven

⁷ If You Will Ask

The Lords Prayer

Section 4

PRAYER GUIDE USING THE LORD'S PRAYER

A. OUR FATHER

B. WHICH ART IN HEAVEN

C. HALLOWED BE THY NAME

D. THY KINGDOM COME

E. THY WILL BE DONE (in my life)

F. THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH

G. AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

H. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

I. AND FORGIVE US

J. AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

K. AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

L. AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION (a putting to the proof by experiment)

M. BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL (one)

N. FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM

O. FOR THINE IS THE POWER

P. FOR THINE IS THE GLORY

Q. FOR EVER AMEN

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Mike Nappa, The question is not does God care about my daily needs? It is, do I trust God to care for my daily needs? ¹

Timothy Jones, We do well not to pray the Lord's Prayer lightly. It takes guts to pray it at all . . . "Thy will be done" is what we are saying . . . We are asking God to be God. We are asking God to do not what we want but what God wants . . . ²

James Mulholland, on the temptations of Jesus.

- 1. His first temptation was to use his power, gifts, and resources in his own self-interest.**
- 2. His second temptation was to use his power, gifts, and resources for Self-advancement.**
- 3. His final temptation was to use his power, gifts, and resources to succeed in the kingdoms of this world. ³**

This, then is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven; hallowed be your name. Matthew 6:9 Prayer is the gateway to God's heart. Who better to open the gate for us than the Son whom He loved? Who better to give us instruction on prayer than the One who lived by prayer, the One who did only what He saw His Father doing, the One who said only what He heard His Father saying? ⁴

¹ The prayer of Jesus

² Prayers Jesus Prayed

³ Praying Like Jesus

⁴ 101 Most Powerful Prayers in the Bible, Steve Rabey

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.

- ❖ The Prayer Principles of
ADORATION
Praise God for who He is
THANKSGIVING
Praise God for what He has done

Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven

- ❖ The Prayer Principle of
AFFIRMATION
Agreeing and submitting to God's will

Give us this day our daily bread

- ❖ The Prayer Principle of
SUPPLICATION
Request for ourselves
PETITION
Request for others
INTERCESSION

And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors

- ❖ The Prayer Principle of
CONFESSION
Our need of forgiveness of sin

And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil:

- ❖ The Prayer Principle of
RENEWAL
God's empowering to live in victory

For thine is the kingdom and the power

And the glory, forever. Amen.¹

❖ The Prayer Principle of

Glorification

Seeking to put God first daily²

¹ Matthew 5:9-13

² Insights Kenneth Boa, Jim Logan

**THE MODEL PRAYER OF OUR LORD
PRAYER GUIDE USING
THE LORD'S PRAYER**

WORSHIPING GOD

OUR FATHER
WHICH ART IN HEAVEN
HALLOWED BE THY NAME

SURRENDER TO GOD'S WILL

THY KINGDOM COME
THY WILL BE DONE (in my life)
THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH
AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

MAKING NECESSARY PETITIONS

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

CONFESSING SIN

AND FORGIVE US
AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS
AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

SEEKING DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION (a putting to proof by
experiment)
BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL (one) [Bruce Wilkinson "Lord I can't
Cope with this today. Please chase evil far away!"]

WORSHIP AND PRAISE (coming full circle)

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM
FOR THINE IS THE POWER
FOR THINE IS THE GLORY
FOREVER AMEN

THE LORD'S PRAYER IS A SIMPLE WAY TO STRUCTURE PRAYER. THIS PRAYER ALLOWS YOU INTERVALS FOR WORSHIP, SURRENDER, REQUEST AND CONFESSION.

- 1. Worship**
- 2. Surrender to God's will**
- 3. Making necessary petitions**
- 4. Confessing sin**
- 5. Seeking deliverance from the evil one**
- 6. Worship and Praise**

Andrew Murray exhorts us "O do what Jesus says; just shut the door and pray to thy Father which is in secret. Is it not wonderful? To be able to go alone with God, the infinite God, and then look up and say: My Father!"

If we do not learn how to pray when we are younger, we will stumble at it all our lives. Andrew Murray

Francis Ridley Havergal, on the Lord's Prayer

SUNDAY – HALLOWED BE THY NAME

That I may make most of the Sabbath hours, and gain much from the Word.

Deliverance from wandering thoughts

Pure praise

Blessings on the service and choir

Intercession

MONDAY – THY KINGDOM COME

That the life of Jesus may be magnified in me.

For joy and peace

Intercession

TUESDAY – THY WILL BE DONE

That my unconscious influence may be all for Him.

For longsuffering

Intercession

WEDNESDAY – GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

For a spirit of prayer and shadowless communion.
For gentleness
Intercession

Thursday – FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES

For much fruit to His praise
Soul winning
Spirit of praise
Goodness
Intercession

Friday – LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

Wisdom to be shown more of His will and commands
Faith
Intercession

Saturday – DELIVER US FROM EVIL

That the Word of Christ may dwell in me richly, open the treasure of
Thy Word to me, fill my seed bushel.
Meekness and temperance
Intercession

LIKE A RIVER GLORIOUS, Francis Ridley Havergal

Like a river glorious
is God's perfect peace
Over all victorious
in it's bright increase
Perfect, yet it floweth
fuller every day
Perfect, yet it groweth
deeper all the way

Hidden in the hollow
of His blessed hand
Never foe can follow
never traitor stand
Not a surge of worry
not a shade of care
Not a blast of hurry
touch the spirit there

Every joy or trial
falleth from above
Traced upon our dial
by the Sun of love
We may trust Him fully
all for us to do
They who trust Him wholly
find Him wholly true

CHORUS

Stayed upon Jehovah
Hearts are fully blest
Finding as He promised
Perfect peace and rest.

THE PRAYER OF OUR LORD

- The fatherhood of God (and His loving care for His children)
- The holiness of God (and His holy sacrifice for us)
- The kingdom of God (and His reign over all of life)
- The will of God (and His perfect plan for us)
- The provision of God (day by day for all our needs)
- The forgiveness of God (from temptation and from Satan's power)
- The reality of His kingdom, His power, and His glory forever

OUR FAMILY PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer is a family prayer for all God's children. There are three important ways in which this is true.

FIRST

In the Lord's Prayer we pray to our Father. No one can learn to pray who does not learn to call God "Father". That is what prayer is: It is talking with our heavenly Father. Our fundamental identity as Christians is as sons and daughters of the Most High God. Therefore when we pray we address God as Father.

SECOND

The Father to whom we pray is called *our* Father.

Jesus was teaching his disciples how to pray not what to pray. He did not say, "Pray this:" and then give the exact words we always have to use in our prayers. Instead he said, in effect, "Pray like this, or "Pray in this manner."

Even though Jesus gave His disciples a prayer to imitate rather than a prayer to memorize, He did give us specific words to use when we pray, the first-person plural pronouns "our" and "us".

"Our Father." "Give us." "Forgive us." "Deliver us."

You cannot pray the Lord's Prayer

And even once say "I."

You cannot pray the Lord's Prayer

And even once say "My."

Nor can you pray the Lord's Prayer

And not pray for another,

For when you ask for daily bread

**You must include your brother.
For others are included
In each and every plea-
From the beginning to the end of it,
It never once says "Me!"**

Since the Lord's Prayer is a family prayer, we not only pray with one another, but we also pray for one another. In the last three petitions we do not pray for ourselves primarily but for the whole church.

Our daily provision – "Give us today our daily bread"

Our daily pardon – "Forgive us our debts"

Our daily protection – "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"

ABBA, FATHER

Jesus was the first to employ the precise word that He used when He addressed His Father. It was the word Jewish children used for their fathers: abba.

The word abba was picked up by the apostles and used by the first Christians when they prayed.

When we pray to God as our Father, we draw near to Him with confidence. This confidence comes from intimacy from knowing that our Father is also our friend.

PRAY WITH REVERANCE

Jesus teaches us to pray "Abba Father" so that we will come to God with confidence of a child. But we do not approach God without reverence. He is our Father in heaven. He dwells in a high and lofty place of majesty, power, and dominion, where He is worshiped by myriads upon myriads of angels. Revelation Ch. 4 & 5. This fact ought to make a great difference when we pray. Christians sometimes forget that the fatherhood of God demands their reverence. It is often said that the best translation of the Aramaic word abba is something like "daddy." After all, "daddy" is the word small children use for their fathers in English. If abba is the word small children used for their fathers in Aramaic, then "daddy" it is.

However, abba does not mean “daddy.” The Oxford Linguist James Barr has proven that abba was not merely a word used by small children. (Journal of Theological Studies, 39 (1988): 28-47. It was also the word Jewish children used for their parents after they were fully grown. Abba was a mature, yet affectionate way for adults to speak to their fathers. (Robert H. Grundy, Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution, 2nd Ed).

The New Testament is careful not to be too casual in the way it addresses God. The Aramaic word abba appears three times in the English New Testament (Mark 14:36; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). In each case, it is followed immediately by the Greek word pater. Pater is not the Greek word for “daddy”. The Greek language has a word for “daddy” – the word pappas – but that is not the word the New Testament uses to translate abba. Instead, in order to make sure that our intimacy with God does not become an excuse for immaturity, it says, “abba, pater.

The best way to translate abba is “Dear Father,” or even “Dearest Father.” That phrase captures both the warm confidence and the deep reverence that we have for our Father in heaven. It expresses our intimacy with God, while still preserving His dignity. When we pray, therefore, we are to say, “Our dear Father in heaven.”

We come to God with both reverence and confidence. But what do we come for? We come for what children usually come to their fathers for.

PROVISION – Daily Bread

PARDON – Forgiveness

PROTECTION – From The Evil One

HOLY IS YOUR NAME

The Lord’s Prayer compels us to acknowledge God’s bright and burning holiness. From the very beginning, it directs our thoughts toward God and His perfections. **FIRST** comes the address, in which we cry to our Father in heaven. Yet lest we approach Him too casually, the first petition reminds us that He is a holy Father: “Hallowed be your name.” As we begin the asking part of our prayer, then, the first thing we beg God to do

is to make His name holy. The Bible says that “the holy God will show himself holy by His righteousness” (Isa. 5:6b). Holiness refers to everything that distinguishes the Creator from His creation. It is the infinite distance between His deity and our humanity. Holiness is the very Godness of God, the sum total of all His glorious perfections. God is so holy that everything associated with Him is holy, including His name. The name is God Himself, as He has made Himself known to us. It reveals His divine nature and His eternal qualities. God is who His name is, and His name deserves the highest praise. Jeremiah said, “No one is like you, O Lord: you are great, and your name is mighty in power” (Jer.10:6). David sang, “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (Ps. 8:1a). He was echoing the seraphim, who always sing, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isa. 6:3).

We are starting to understand what Jesus meant when He taught us to pray, “Hallowed be your name.” What does it mean to be holy? To be holy is to be set apart in purity. What is God’s name? It is the sum total of His character. But what does it mean for God’s name to be hallowed?

What we are asking God to do in this petition is to satisfy His own chief end, which is to glorify Himself. God is hallowed whenever He shows that He is holy. When we ask Him to hallow His name, therefore, all we are doing is asking Him to reveal that He is exactly who He is. Since God is holy, and His name is holy, to ask Him to live up to His name. “Hallowed be your name” means “Make yourself known as the Holy One that you are.” It is a prayer for God to display the Godness of His Godhood. What better way to begin our prayers? When we get on our knees, the first thing we ask God is to glorify Himself, to show that He is utterly transcendent in His holiness. We pray that God would be given that unique reverence that His nature and character demand.

Once it was God’s holiness that separated us from God, the holiness of His being. Now it is God’s holiness that brings us to God, the holiness of the perfect sacrifice Jesus offered for our sins on the cross. God displayed His holiness by making us holy through His holy Son.

We are holy because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. But we must continue to be holy by what His Spirit does in us. When we worship God properly, we leave off seeking a name for ourselves and begin to seek the honor of His name. To summarize, we are to pray that God would make us holy in everything we do, say, think, feel, and adore. “Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’” (1 Pet. 1:15). This is the whole task of the Christian life: to become what God is in His holiness. In other words, to hallow His name.

THY KINGDOM COME

In one sense, God has always been the King: “The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all” (Ps. 103:19); “His dominion is an eternal dominion; His kingdom endures from generation to generation” (Dan.4:34b). This universe has never been a democracy; it has always been an absolute monarchy, for God has always been on the throne. Yet God’s kingship has also been a matter of endless dispute. God has always had to fight to defend His sovereign rule against the kingdom of darkness.

By performing these kingdom miracles, Jesus was overthrowing Satan’s kingdom. Every time He cast out a demon, healed a disease, or raised the dead, He was undoing the work of the devil. “If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God,” Jesus said on one occasion, “then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matt. 12:28). In this way God’s King began to restore God’s rule over God’s creation.

Although the people of Jerusalem were longing for God’s kingdom to come, they did not understand what kind of kingdom it was.

- 1. People misunderstood God’s plan for His kingdom.**
- 2. People misunderstood the kingdom’s purpose.**
- 3. People misunderstood the progress of the kingdom.**

God’s Plan

The very fact that we are to pray for the kingdom proves that it is not the kind of thing we establish through our own efforts. It is something we must ask God to do because only He can do it.

God's plan was to establish His kingdom through His Son. His kingdom comes mainly through proclamation, through the announcements that Christ, who was crucified, is now King. The reason the church tries so many other things besides preaching Christ is because it suspects the kingdom can be established in some other way. When we hear the glad news that Christ is King, the thing to do is submit to His rule.

Kingdom Purpose

We pray, "Your kingdom come" reminds us that the kingdom is not here yet, at least not in all its fullness. Otherwise, why would we still pray for it to come? Also it reminds us to ask for God's kingdom to come, not our own. The kingdom of God is simply the rule of God.

Kingdom Progress

We should not be surprised if the kingdom seems to come slowly. But it will come. Make no mistake about that! Jesus even promised that it would come soon (Rev.22:12). As we wait for its coming, the prayer we often find on our lips is the last prayer in the whole Bible: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

Thy Will Be Done

When we pray the way Jesus taught us to pray, we ask God to help us do His work on earth the way the angels do in heaven: "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). This is the third petition in the Lord's Prayer. It is the last of the "Thy" petitions: "Hallowed be THY name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done." Up to this point, the prayer has been all about God. We have prayed for God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will. But from this point on we will pray for ourselves – our provision, our pardon, and our protection. For the Bible teaches that God is the one "Who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will" (Eph. 1:11).

My Will Be Done

In the meantime, God's revealed will is not always done. Otherwise, why would we need to pray for it. We need the third petition of the Lord's Prayer to show us how wrong it is to think of prayer as a way of getting something from God. Imagine what

a mess our lives would be in if God always did what we wanted Him to do! For unlike God's will, our own wills are evil, displeasing, and imperfect. It is much better for us to yield to the sovereign purpose of our loving heavenly Father, who really does know best!

Have Thine Own Way, Lord

Submitting to God's will means accepting the way God made us, with all our strengths and weaknesses, and thus embracing who we are in Christ. Submitting to God's will means going wherever He sends us, to do whatever He calls us to do. Really, the first question about God's will is, "Am I willing to do it?" There is no sense asking God to reveal His will unless we are committed to doing what He wants done. What pleases God is nothing less than our total surrender. Are you ready to submit to God?

Give Us Today Our Daily Bread

Give . . .

First, there is the word give, which shows that even the most basic necessities of life are a gift from God.

Us . . .

When we pray for God to give us bread, we are also committing ourselves to share it when we get it. Otherwise our prayer is insincere. How can we pray, "Give us our daily bread." And then refuse to provide what the rest of us need?

Today . . .

The Greek word for "daily" bread is used only once in the New Testament, and was found part of the word in an old manuscript. There have been discussions for centuries by scholars on the exact meaning of the word translated "daily" bread. Isn't it a strange debate, over a common word translated "daily" bread. What has been more common than daily bread, in no matter what form it takes in the lives of people, from tortilla to pita bread. (God is sovereign. Why is something as common daily bread, "so rare"? I wonder if it is a message to us not to take daily bread for granted. Jim Logan)

Forgive Us Our Debts

In God's Debt

There is a sense in which we owe everything to God. We owe Him our existence. Our very lives are on loan from Him, for He is the One who made us and sustains us. We are indebted to God for our gifts and talents, for our daily bread, and for every other good thing. Since we are God's creatures, we also owe Him our perfect obedience.

More Than We Can Pay

The truth is, however, that forgiveness is not something we can work for; it is only something we can ask for. The debts we ask God to forgive when we pray the way Jesus taught us to pray are the very debts that were crucified with Christ at Calvary. When Christ died on the cross, all our debts were cancelled. The Greek word for "cancel" (exaleipho), which Paul used in Col.2, means "to blot out" or "to wipe away." It means that the mountain of debt we once owed to God because of our sin has been completely removed.

The fifth petition is joined to the fourth petition by the conjunction "and": "Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts" (Matt. 6:11,12). We need God to "forgive us" as well as to "Give us" every day. We are asking Him for daily pardon as well as daily provision.

As We Forgive Our Debtors

Forgiven And Forgiving

We have debtors of our own, people who owe us something for what they have done to us. And we are to forgive them. The prayer for forgiveness is the only petition in the Lord's Prayer that comes with a condition attached to it. The unforgiving are unforgiven. Those who are truly forgiven, truly forgive. The ability to forgive is one of the surest signs of having been forgiven.

Lead Us Not Into Temptation

A Real Temptation

Peter's downfall shows that the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer is crucial for the Christian Life. We always stand in danger of sinning against our Savior, the way Peter did. We are in danger for two reasons.

First, our enemy is strong – deadly strong, for our adversary is Satan himself. This is clear from the second half of the petition: “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matt. 6:13).

The second reason we are in mortal spiritual danger is because we are so weak. We are sinners; therefore, sin is a real temptation for us. When we pray, therefore, we are asking God to keep us from being tempted.

The Power And The Glory

Yours, O Lord, Is The Kingdom

First we praise God for His kingdom, declaring that He is ruler over all.

Yours, O Lord, Is The Power

Having prayed for God's name, God's rule, and God's will, we begin to pray for our own needs.

We confess the omnipotence of God every time we say “For Thine is . . . the power.

Yours, O Lord, is the Glory

The word glory comes from the Hebrew term for “heavy,” and thus “signifies gravity, heaviness, greatness, and abundance.”

First, glory is the inward majesty of God.

Second, It is the brightness God shines out into the world.

Third, it is the worship we offer to God.

When we see God's glory, the proper way for us to respond is to give Him the glory – to offer Him all honor and praise He deserves.

To God alone be the glory! Forever and Ever, Amen!¹

¹ Philip Graham Ryken, *The Prayer of Our Lord*. Crossway Books

PRAY LIKE THIS

Matt. 6:6,8-9

HEAVENLY FATHER

Jesus taught us how to talk to you.

Close the door (it's a personal relationship)

Pray (your Father is listening)

Ask (because your Father knows and cares)

Here me as I pray with my Lord Jesus today. (Heb. 7:25)

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN

Yes, you are my Father, my identity, my provider and protector. My true and eventual home will be in your presence. You are High God – immortal, invisible- yet I can call you “Daddy,” (Rom. 8:15).

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

Let me say Your names – “Father,” “Lord,” “Only God” – with proper awe and fear today. You are holy, so completely apart from and above me, Father. Yet I can call out Your name with confidence (Heb. 4:16).

And when you turn to answer. You see me clothed in Jesus' beautiful robes of “righteousness, holiness and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).

Thank you! Let Your name be the treasure of my talk today.

THY KINGDOM COME THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

(This is the hard part, Lord.) My prayers should first be about Your kingdom, Your purposes, You. Then let it be so, my God. Be King of my life today. In the big picture, show me Your every requirement and wish (Ps. 119:33-35), and help me do it. In the details – of my daydreams, cash, phone calls, free time, complements – order in my life to your liking. Through my feeble willingness, bring a peace of heaven to earth today.

GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Yes, Lord, it's not the company, or the bank, or the national economy that give me what I need to survive (forgive my insatiable greed). It's just the basics for today. In my whole life, Lord, You've never left me abandoned and starving (Ps. 37:25). You open Your hand, and I'm satisfied (Ps. 145:16). Praise You!

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

O Father no matter how hard I try (and sometimes I don't try at all), I can stay ahead of my debts: the ways I've injured and disappointed those I love, my convenient omissions and forgetfulness, my constant turning away from You. Forgiveness is my only hope. Teach me today to forgive those who've wronged me with the same sincerity I ask now.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Save me from "perfectly sensible" decisions, Lord. Rescue me from stupid indulgences and errors. And keep me awake to satan's traps – they lurk everywhere just out of sight. Show me the escape routes You've promised (1 Cor. 10:13). So often, my very nature is at war with you. Father! Renew me today with the "new self" You can create in me by Your amazing power (Col. 3:10).

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER.

Yes, You are Lord and King of heaven and earth. And You are my Father. For my life today. I give you all worship, all ownership, all honor. I pray to you with Jesus help today in His love, by His saving grace, meditating on the words of His own prayer to you.

AMEN¹

¹ David Kapp

LORD'S PRAYER

Richard Burr The entire trinity is involved in our prayers, since they are to be.

Directed to the Father

Interpreted by the Spirit

Validated by our Lord Jesus Christ

Hallowed Be Thy Name – How then does His name become hallowed in us?

It is yielding to His authority, submitting to His will and ascribing all praise, and honor and glory to our living God.

Rom. 11:36 prayer is not the means by which man gets his will, done in heaven, but the means by which God gets His will done on earth.

To see the perfect will of God accomplished in your life demands the total surrender of your mind, emotions and will to His sovereignty. Otherwise the enemy, that wicked serpent, will hold sway within your will. Matthew Henery expressed it well “all wickedness of the wicked world is owing to the willfulness of the wicked will.” Therefore, we must die to self on a daily basis in order for the will of God to be fulfilled within our lives (Luke 9:23).

The Lord's Prayer – the model prayer

- 1. Begins with ADORATION – Hallowed be thy name**
- 2. In the middle, THANKSGIVING, CONFESSION, REPENTANCE**
- 3. ends with WORSHIP and PRAISE – glory for ever and ever**

Even the best of His saints have reason to be ashamed when they enter into the presence of God, For His holiness will always reveal unholiness.

Three Rules Spiritual Exercise The second rule is that if when you are meditating on the Our Father and you discover that one or two Words give you spiritual delight or consolation, you should not be keen to move on but rest thereSaint Ignatius Loyola ¹

¹ John Skinner Wisdom Of The Cloister

Frank Colquhoun

**Loving Father of us all,
Transcendent in glory,
May all people honour your holy name
And acknowledge your kingly rule,
That your purpose may be fulfilled on earth
As truly as they are in heaven.
Give us today all things that we need
For our material and bodily wants.
Forgive us the wrong we have done,
And make us as ready to forgive others.
Save us from yielding to temptation
And falling into sin;
And rescue us from the forces of evil
At work around us and within us.
For you, O Lord, are sovereign over all things;
Your power is sufficient for all our need;
To you be the glory now and for ever.**

THE PRAYER OF JESUS

What's The Point Of Prayer?

Have you been praying according to the proper guidelines in the manner that the Master himself taught?

What have you been expecting prayer to do for you? And what would it look like to you if it were working?

In fact is prayer actually supposed to “work” at all? Does it perhaps have a purpose far more significant than the shallow practicality we expect of a gas-powered lawn tool? Would it be asking far too little of prayer – far too little of God – to demand that it, and He, perform just the way we want them to?

However, having our request granted is not the primary goal of prayer. Prayer is not simply the process of giving God our wish list. Many times we ask for things that – had we gotten them – they would have been far from our best interest. God does not exist merely to give us what we want.

Neither is prayer a way to alert God to our needs. As we'll see later in this Bible passage, God knows our needs even better than we do, and He needs no formula reminders about where we are and what we're up against.

One of the most primary purposes of prayer is to spend time in conversation with our Father. And when this is our goal, we can pray at all times *guaranteed* that it will be rewarded.

Will it be answered the way you want it to? Maybe.

But will it be rewarded by bringing us into the Father's presence? Absolutely.

You see, prayer is not about answers, Prayer is about reward.

I'm telling you, this understanding of the purpose of prayer will begin to revolutionize the way you approach God. It will cause you to marvel at the miraculous privilege of being able to engage in intimate conversation with the Creator of the universe. By His own grace and design, He has chosen to become our Father. He has opened the windows of heaven and allowed us to spend hours at a time in His awesome presence. This fellowship is hardly limited to what we usually consider our “prayer time” but is truly a constant, continuous, moment-by-moment relationship with God.

And you can enjoy His reward every time you pray.

“When You Pray . . . (Matt. 6:5a)

One of the main problems with our prayers is we don't pray.

“When you pray” means there is no question that the follower of Christ will invest himself in prayer. “When you pray,” says a lot more than “if you pray” or “whenever you feel like praying.” But unfortunately, “when you pray” begins at a basic starting point that too many people rarely achieve.

The Phony Prayer . . . (Matt. 6:5b)

Jesus had a succinct response to such showboating-one little phrase that kind of says it all, that takes all the air out of phony praying. He said, “They have their reward.”

If you want recognition, good. Take it.

If you want other people's approval, fine. Enjoy it.

If you want to say you're wonderful, OK. You're wonderful.

For the humble and pure in heart, however, the reward of prayer comes from God Himself “who sees what is done in secret.” And His reward is always enough.

The Frivolous Prayer . . . (Matt. 6:7)

God's reward is reserved for those who seek His heart, not His attention.

All words and no heart. Gets us nowhere every time. Prayer is a precious privilege that allows us to have direct dialogue with the Father.

The Lord's Prayer

Perhaps there is no prayer, however, that has been more widely abused and mindlessly repeated than the Lord's Prayer itself.

Often it's prayed only in public (for effect).

Often it's prayed without thinking (vain repetition).

And more often, I suspect, it's not prayed at all (prayerlessness).

I want you to see the Lord's Prayer, not as a memorized mantra, but as a pattern you can use at all times, in all situations all day long to express prayers to God that connect and communicate.

The Three – Part Address

Our	Stresses community
Father	Stresses relationship
Who art in heaven	Stresses authority

The Three – Part Commitment

Hallowed be Thy name	Commitment to holiness
Thy kingdom come	Commitment to participation
Thy will be done	Commitment to obedience

The Three – Part Petition

Daily bread	Trust for physical provisions
Forgiveness of debts	Trust for cleansing from sin
Deliverance from evil	Trust for power over temptation

The Three – Part Benediction

Thine is the kingdom	Focuses on His rule
Thy power	Focuses on His sufficiency
Thy glory	Focuses on His presence

When we use this pattern, prayer becomes what Jesus intended it to be: a conscious, volitional opening of our lives to God as we invite Him to accomplish His purpose in and through us. It enables us to seek His resources unselfishly as we commit ourselves to the advancement of His kingdom. In this way the effectiveness of our prayer life does not depend on the amount of our faith. Such a misunderstanding subtly teaches that our works are necessary, added ingredient to God's grace. Instead, the effectiveness of our prayer depends on God, who gives us faith in order to lead us to total dependence on Him.¹

¹ Ken Hemphill, The Prayer of Jesus

Ways of Meeting God

Meeting God in Prayer

Sometimes, however, we need guidance -- we need to learn to pray. Prayer grows out of a relationship with God that is permeated by grace and love and is therefore preeminently communion -- wordless, Spirit -- to -- Spirit oneness with God. But prayer is also conversation with God. So we learn to pray by using the words God has given us. In the pages of the Bible we discover not only teaching about prayer but ancient prayers that help us dialogue with God today. "Repeating God's words after [God]," wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "we began to pray to [God]."

The Lord's Prayer

One very meaningful way to "repeat God's words" in our prayer is through the prayer Jesus gave his disciples -- the Lords Prayer. A Jewish Rabbi in that time often gave his followers an outline for prayer that expressed the unique characteristics of his teaching, an exercise that brought the group together around a common identity. But behind the disciples request lies a deeper need. He wants to know how to both commune and communicate with God. Many of us still make the same request as this disciple. Jesus' response can enrich and transform our praying. In fact, many consider the "discovery" of this prayer as a turning point in their prayer life. The Lords Prayer is not just a prayer to say, but more significantly, a way to pray. More than a formula to recite, the Lords Prayer guides us through three successive movements of opening ourselves to God.

ADORATION

"Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come." Adoration celebrates our communion with God. It brings us into conscious awareness of the reality of God with us. Adoration focuses our attention on God, liberating us from focusing on ourselves and setting the context for all true prayer. In adoration we align our lives with God's purposes, we gladly let go of lesser attachments and give God's love full control of our hearts

and minds. We respond with gratitude to the God who first called us into a loving relationship.

An act of adoration may consist of slowly repeating the words, "Father, holy and honored be your name" for a period of time, letting Jesus name for God give expression to our love and praise as God's children. We may build on these trusted words with psalms of praise or familiar hymns that come to mind. Adoration may consist of quiet reading and reflection on Scripture verses and spiritual classics that bring us into God's presence.

PETITION

"Give us each day our daily bread . . . and lead us not into temptation. Petition is asking God for what we need, especially for those things we need in order to continue in our communion with him. Petition invites us to bring to God no less than the totality of our daily lives: our joys and struggles, hopes and hurts, desires and disappointments, loves and hates, pleas and resentments, and our need for healing and for change. By opening ourselves fully to God, we allow God to meet our true needs; God may also kindle in us a desire to question some of our perceived needs. By presenting to God every desire and request, we allow God to bless worthy dreams, to expose not-so-worthy dreams and to give us a passion for God's own dreams.

CONTRITION

"Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us." Contrition seeks grace to restore our communion with God. It is admitting that there are areas in which we have failed. Contrition is the inner chamber of decision and transformation where sin and grace meet, where, with Jesus, we die to sin and rise with him to new life. Contrition is also opening to God those parts of our lives that have been closed to him.

The Lord's Prayer, then, is both a prayer and a formula for prayer. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says of it, "Every prayer is contained in it . . . All the prayers of Holy Scripture are summarized in the Lord's Prayer, and are contained in its immeasurable breadth."

The Lord's Prayer is not just a prayer to say but, more significantly a way to pray.

Praying The Bible

Perhaps no other book of the Bible has been prayed more frequently than the book of Psalms. Of the Psalter, the collection of psalms, Martin Luther once wrote, "It penetrates the Lord's Prayer and the Lord's Prayer penetrates it." No wonder some call Psalms the "prayer book of the Bible." Praying through the Ten Commandments can become a prayer of self-examination.

Being Quiet Before God.

Learning to be quiet and to rest with God is essential in prayer. Silence is the discipline of pushing aside words, busyness and noise in order to create space within for God. In what some have called "contemplative prayer," the words and forms recede altogether. Prayer becomes a simple, restful experience of basking in the Lord's presence. Rich silence – not our own making – allow us to commune with God. Our prayers may even alternate between articulated words and these quieter, less verbal times.

Whether we pray with the depth and breadth of the Lord's Prayer or recite a verse of a psalm, whether our words are many or few, whether we actively intercede or simply rest in God's presence, prayer is an intimate meeting with God.¹

¹ The Spiritual Formational Bible

THIS IS THE WAY
Pray Then
Matt. 6:9

He who best knew what we ought to pray for and how we ought to pray, what matter of desire, what manner of address would most please Himself and best become us, has here dictated to us a most perfect and universal form of prayer. It comprehends all our real wants, expresses all our lawful desires – a complete directory and full exercise of all our devotions. He here directs us to pray thus – for these things; sometimes, in these words. At least in this manner: short, close, full.

This prayer consists of three parts – the Preface, the Petitions, and the Conclusion.

The Preface, *Our Father who art in heaven*, lays a general foundation for prayer. It comprises what we must first know of God before we can pray in confidence of being heard. It likewise points out to us the faith, humility, and love of God and man with which we are to approach God in prayer.

OUR FATHER – who art good and gracious to all, our Creator, our preserver; the Father of our Lord and of us in Him, Your children by adoption and grace. Not my Father only, but the Father of the Universe, of angels and human beings.

Who art in heaven – filling heaven and earth and beholding all things in heaven and earth; knowing every creature and all their works, and every possible event from everlasting to everlasting. The Almighty Lord and ruler of all, superintending and disposing all things.

The second portion of this prayer consists of *six petitions*, four of which we here consider:

Hallowed be Thy name – May You, O Father, be truly known by all intelligent beings and with affections suitable to that knowledge! May You be duly honored, loved, feared, by all in heaven and in earth, by all angels and all men!

Thy kingdom come – May Your kingdom come quickly and swallow up all the kingdoms of the earth! May all people receive You, O Christ, for their King and truly believe in Your name. May they be filled with righteousness, peace, joy, holiness, and happiness till they are removed into Your kingdom of glory to reign with You forever.

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven – May all inhabitants of the earth do Your will as willingly as the holy angels! May these do it continually even as they, without any interruption of their willing service. And, as perfect as they! O Spirit of grace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make them perfect in every good work to do Your will, and work in them all that is well pleasing in Your sight!

Give us, O Father (for we claim nothing of right; only of Your free mercy) ***today*** (for we take no thought for tomorrow) ***our daily bread*** – all things needful for our souls and bodies, not only the meat that perishes, but the sacramental bread, and Your grace, the food which endures to everlasting life.

Two final petitions:

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors – Give us, O Lord, redemption in Your blood, the forgiveness of sins. As you enable us freely and fully to forgive, so forgive us all our trespasses.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil – Whenever we are tempted. O Lord who helps our infirmities, do not allow us to be overcome or suffer loss by it, but make a way for us to escape so that we may be more than conquerors, through Your love, over all sin and the consequences of it.

The principle desire of a Christian's heart is the glory of God (vv. 9-10); and all one wants for himself or others is the "daily bread" of soul and body, pardon of sin, and deliverance from the power of it and of the devil (vv. 11-13). There is nothing besides that a Christian can wish for. Therefore, this prayer comprehends all

his or her desires. Eternal life is the certain consequence, or rather completion, of holiness.

The conclusion:

For Thine is the kingdom – The sovereign right of all things that are or ever created.

The power – The executive power, whereby You govern all things in Your everlasting kingdom.

And the glory – The praise due from every creature for Your power, all Your wondrous works, and the mightiness of Your kingdom, which endures through all ages, even *forever. Amen.*¹

¹ Renew MY Heart, Daily Wisdom From The Writings Of John Wesley

HOW WE CAN HALLOW GOD'S NAME

1. We hallow His name by rehearsing who He is.
To set apart and magnify the one who stands behind the Name.
If we took one of God's names every day and focused on it, hallowing it, we would develop a much better understanding of who God is.
2. We hallow His name by relinquishing control of our lives.
By the Holy Spirit's power we can relinquish control to God and allow Him to live through us. When people see that our lives are different, that there is a quality about us that goes beyond the natural, then the Father's name is glorified.
3. We hallow His name by recognizing His presence in our lives.
When we are constantly aware of the presence of God, when we live every moment in light of the fact He is our God, we hallow His name.

SEVEN BENEFITS OF PRAISE

1. Worship enhances our appreciation and love for God. Did you know that by speaking words of praise (even when we don't feel like it), those words begin to explode within us so that we see God more clearly?
2. Worship expands our vision. We will begin to look at life not in terms of what we can do but what God can do through us.
3. Worship eclipses our fears. When I worship God, I soon forget those things that gnaw at me. I begin to realize that I'm a child of the King; I am in His hands.
4. Worship energizes our work. Andrew Murray said "When I follow His example, putting God first by worshipping Him, my work gets done better".
5. Worship refreshes our spirit. When I get into the presence of God, little by little, the spirit of heaviness is exchanged for a garment of praise.
6. Worship exhausts our enemy. Worship, hallowing the name of the Lord, is a great weapon for spiritual warfare. I love to worship, not only because of what I know it means to God, but because it's a powerful way to combat the evil one.
7. Worship prepares us for heaven. God, help me to worship you, help me to live in your presence here, so that when the time comes for me to change venues, it won't be a major transition.

(From Dr. David Jeremiah)

THE LORDS PRAYER

The First Three Petitions

1. Hallowing of God's name – majesty of God
2. Coming of God's Kingdom – purpose of God
3. Doing of God's will – accepting the will of God

Then we turn to our own needs and request.

- a. We can become so busy thinking of what we want that we have no time to think of what God wants.
- b. We can become so busy telling God that we never stop to listen to God.

The Second Part Of The Most Comprehensive Prayer That Men Were Ever Taught To Pray.

1. Give us this day our daily bread
2. Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
3. Lead us not into temptations, but deliver us from evil.

1. Give us – our present need
2. Forgive us – past sin
3. Lead us – future welfare and goodness

Further Insight

1. Give us (daily bread) – God The Father Creator and Sustainer of all life
2. Forgive us (sins) – God The Son the Saviour and Redeemer
3. Lead us (future Help) – God The Holy Spirit the Helper, Guide, and Protector

These three petitions bring us face to face with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The pattern of the Lord's Prayer must be the pattern of all prayer, by giving God His proper place. **WILLIAM BARCLAY**

Silence & Solitude

Section 5

THE THREE HABITS OF JESUS

**1. He stood up to read as was His custom.
He read the Word of God by habit.**

**2. He went out into the mountain to pray as was His custom.
Prayer and Solitude were a habit.**

**3. He taught them again as was His custom.
He passed on to others by habit what He had found.**

**1. The first habit I need to develop -- reading the Word.
No Christian is sound who is not scriptural.**

**2. The second habit I need to develop -- private prayer and solitude.
We are as spiritual as we are prayerful no more no less.**

**3. The third habit I need to develop -- pass on to others what I have
found.
Share insights from the Word and answers to prayer.**

By E. Stanley Jones

CULTIVATING A QUIET SPIRIT

Cultivating the quiet is a painful experience when we are addicted to noise, excitement, and occupation. Opening the door to spiritual quiet can also open the door to spiritual fear and loneliness. It takes a great amount of courage to face God.

There are four themes to enter the quiet.

1. A captivated heart:

John of the Cross... "The more people rejoice over something outside God, the less intense will be their joy in God, and the more their hope goes out toward something else, the less there is for God."

Proverbs 4:23 - "guarding my heart" - By becoming preoccupied with passing things, I exhaust my heart's ability to care about the things that really do matter.

Augustine.... "Thus, with the baggage of this present world was I held down pleasantly, as in sleep." The deeper Christian life consists of finding ways to bring the remembrance of God into our daily existence.

Fenelon... "A continual effort to push away the thoughts which occupy us with ourselves and our own interest would be in itself a continual occupation with ourselves, which would distract us from the presence of God and the tasks which He wants us to accomplish. The important thing is sincerely to have surrendered into the hands of God all our interests in pleasure, convenience and reputation." I want to have a simple and quiet heart because I want to hear from God. I want to be captivated by Him so I am willing to give up everything else if only I can know Him. Some of what I give up may be given back, but I will accept back only those elements that allow my God focus to remain."

2. A Bridled Tongue:

One of the most practical ways to enter into the quiet is to be quiet. Ignatius wrote, "Idle words are not to be spoken, by which I mean whatever does not profit me or anyone else, or whatever is not ordained to the end. Climacus urged monks, "a man should know that a devil's sickness is on him if he is seized by the urge in conversation to assert his opinion, however correct it may be".

Thomas a Kempis... "If thou will withdraw thyself from speaking vainly and from gadding idly, as also from listening to novelties and rumors, thou shalt find leisure enough and suitable for meditation on good things." The mark of a spiritual man or woman is a listening heart, not a lecturing tongue. A simple Christian wants to hear from God; this person has little enjoyment hearing his or her own voice.

3. A Limited Curiosity:

We need to trust God and those He has placed in leadership. If someone is not accountable to us, we don't need to know the details. Our responsibility is not to figure out everything but to keep ourselves at peace. Curiosity kills our souls. Pascal..."We usually only want to know something so that we can talk about it." Clemocus..."Stay away from that what does not concern you, for curiosity can defile stillness as nothing else can." Thomas a Kempis..."My son, in many things it is thy duty to be ignorant, and to esteem thyself dead upon the earth, and as one to whom the whole world is crucified. It is thy duty also to pass by many things with a deaf ear, and rather to think of those which belong unto thy peace. It is more useful to turn away ones eyes from unpleasant things and to leave everyone to his own opinion, than to be a slave to contentious discourses."

4. A Slow Re-Entry After Prayer:

The goal of simplicity is communion with God. Thomas a Kempis referred to a "spiritual contemplation". Since spiritual contemplation is largely a lost art in today's busy culture, we need to be reminded that spiritual truths, when first birthed, are fragile.

Frances de Sales..."After prayer, be careful not to agitate your heart, lest you spill the precious balm it has received. My meaning is, that you must, for some time, if possible, remain in silence, and gently remove your heart from prayer to your other employments, retaining as long as you can a feeling of the affections which you have conceived. Rise slowly, with reverence, and keep your eye trained on God's face. Remember...to retire occasionally into the solitude of your heart, where, separated from all men, you may familiarly treat God on the affairs of your souls. Simplicity then is both silence in solitude and detachment in diversion. It ties life together. Simplicity brings eternity into our time and helps us use time for eternity. It gives us strength to do what we must do as citizens of earth but liberates us to live as citizens of heaven."

THE QUIET'S REWARDS

The simpler I become, the freer my mind becomes for spiritual understanding and discernment. John Climocus..."Stillness of soul is the accurate knowledge of ones thoughts and is an unassailable mind."

Fenelon said, "A man with simplicity has a heart with peace that is deep as the sea in the midst of its troubles."

Teresa of Avila..."Simplicity is a doorway to prayer, which is also the doorway to inner strength." Simplicity has power to usher us into God's presence. The spiritual life is impossible in a heart full of noise and occupation. God will not fill a heart that has no room. I seek simplicity only because God is so great. I want to strip away the clutter that

keeps me from Him. I want nothing, absolutely nothing, to stand between me and God. I would be a fool to settle for anything less."

De Sales..."Since, o my soul, thou art capable of God, woe be to thee if thou content thyself with anything less than God."

Dallas Willard..."It is solitude and solitude alone that opens the possibility of a radical relationship to God that can withstand all external events up to and beyond death."

SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

The discipline of silence is the voluntary and temporary abstention from speaking so that certain goals might be sought. Though there is no outward speaking, there are internal dialogues with self and with God. This can be called "outward silence". Other times, silence is maintained not only outwardly but also inwardly so that God's voice might be heard more clearly.

Solitude is the spiritual discipline of voluntarily and temporarily withdrawing to privacy for spiritual purposes. The period of solitude may last only a few minutes or for days. As with silence, solitude may be sought in order to participate without interruption in other spiritual disciplines, or just to be alone with God

1. Without silence and solitude, we're shallow. Without fellowship, we're stagnant. Balance requires them all.
2. Silence and solitude are usually found together.
3. Western culture conditions us to be comfortable with noise and crowds, not with silence and solitude.

Jean Fleming... "We have become a people with an aversion to quiet, an uneasiness with being alone."

Follow Jesus' example:

1. Matt. 4:1 Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert.
2. Matt. 14:23 He dismissed them and went up a mountain alone to pray.
3. Mark 1:35 Very early when still dark Jesus went to a solitary place to pray.
4. Luke 4:42 At daybreak Jesus went to a solitary place.

Dallas Willard... "We must reemphasize the "desert" or "closet" is the primary place of strength for the beginner, as it was for Christ and for Paul. They show us by their example what we must do. In stark aloneness it is possible to have silence, to be still, and to know that Jehovah indeed is God, (Ps. 46:10), to set the Lord before our minds with sufficient intensity and duration that we stay centered upon Him -- our hearts fixed, established in trust (Ps. 112:7-8) even when back in the office, shop, or home.

One of the more obvious reasons for getting away from earthly noise and human voices is to hear the voice from heaven better.

Biblical examples:

Elijah going to Mount Horeb where he heard the gentle whisper of God's voice (I Kings 19:11-13)

Habakkuk standing on the guardpost and keeping watch to see what God would say to him. (Hab. 2:1)

Apostle Paul went to Arabia to be alone with God. (Gal. 1:17)

Jonathan Edwards. This was the secret of the godliness of his wife, Sarah. In his first record of her, penned while his future wife was still a teenager, he wrote, "She hardly cares for anything, except to meditate on Him...She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have someone invisible, always conversing with her".

To express worship to God does not always require words, sounds, or actions. Sometimes worship consists of a God-focused stillness and hush. Hab. 2:20... "But the Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him." Zeph. 1:7..."Be silent before the sovereign Lord." There are times to speak to God, and there are times simply to behold and adore Him in silence.

George Whitfield speaks of silent worship experience he had in the solitude of his home..."God was pleased to pour into my soul a great spirit of supplication, and of His free, distinguishing mercies so filled me with love, humility, and joy and holy confusion that I could at last only pour out my heart before Him in an awful silence. I was so full that I could not well speak." Worshipping God in silence may occur because your heart, like Whitfield's is so filled that words cannot express your love for Him.

The simple act of silence before the Lord, as opposed to coming to Him in a wordy fret, can be a demonstration of faith in Him. Twice in Psalm 62 David displays this kind of faith. In verses 1-2 "My soul waits in silence for God only; from Him is my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken." Verses 5-6 "My soul waits in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold, I shall not be shaken." Isaiah 30:15 "This is what the sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel says: In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength."

Quiet absence of anxiety communicates trust in His sovereign control.

David Brainerd. He wrote in his journal on Wednesday, April 28, 1742, "I withdrew to my usual place of retirement in great peace and tranquillity; spent about two hours in secret duties and felt much as I did yesterday morning, only weaker and more overcome. I seemed to depend wholly upon my dear Lord, wholly weaned from all other dependencies. I knew not what to say to my God, but only lean on His bosom, as it were, and breathe out my desires and insatiable longings possessed my soul that the world with all its

enjoyments was infinitely vile. I had no more value for all the favor of men than pebbles. The Lord was my all; and that He overruled all greatly delighted me. I think my faith and dependence upon God scarce ever rose so high. I saw Him such a fountain of goodness that it seemed impossible I should distrust Him again or be any way anxious about anything that should happen to me.”

Learning to keep silent for extended periods of time can help us control our tongue all the time.

A.W. Tozer. “Retire from the world each day to some private spot, even if it be only the bedroom (for a while I retreated to the furnace room for want of a better place). Stay in the secret place till the surrounding noises begin to fade out of your heart and a sense of God’s presence envelopes you...Listen for the inward voice till you learn to recognize it. Stop trying to compete with others. Give yourself to God, and then be what and who you are without regard to what others think...Learn to pray inwardly every moment. After a while you can do this even while you work...Read less, but more of what is important to your inner life. Never let your mind remain scattered for very long. Call home your roving thoughts. Gaze on Christ with the eyes of your soul. Practice spiritual concentration. All the above is contingent upon a right relationship to God through Christ and daily meditation on the Scriptures. Lacking these, nothing will help us; granted these, the discipline recommended will go far to neutralize the evil effects of externals and to make us acquainted with God and our own souls.”

As sleep and rest are needed each day for the body, so silence and solitude are needed each day for the soul.

Jonathan Edwards. “Some are greatly affected when in company; but have nothing that bears any manner of proportion to it in secret, in close meditation, prayer and conversation with God when alone, and separated from the world. A true Christian doubtless delights in religious fellowship and Christian conversations and finds much to affect his heart in it, but he also delights at times to retire from all mankind, to converse with God in solitude. And this also has peculiar advantages for fixing his heart and engaging his affections. True religion disposes persons to much alone in solitary places, however it loves Christian society in its place, in a peculiar manner to delight in retirement, and secret converse with God.”

If you’ve experienced God’s saving grace, then silence and solitude will be, in the words of Edwards, a “delight”, a faithful fountain of refreshment, joy, and transformation.

Donald S. Whitney

The Prayer Of Stillness Before God

God calls us to be still before Him. In this quiet expectancy, with humility of spirit and honesty of soul, we will discover He is very near to us.

Stillness Before the Most High is Creative

Almost any thing God accomplishes is done in silence. It is in the stillness of His profound presence that we sense our souls become serene. There we find rest, repose, and re-creation. Only in intimate and first hand interaction with His Spirit am I remade in His likeness. Christ's own superb character impacts mine. I become like the one with whom I spend my most special time daily.

One Must Be Still to Hear Our Father

To hear God implies three personal responses on my part:

- 1. I recognize in truth it is Him speaking to me;**
- 2. I ready myself to respond in faith to what He says;**
- 3. I actually, then, resolve to go out and do His bidding.**

Most of us are so preoccupied pouring out our own petitions we will not pause to listen to what He tells us. Be still. Be calm. Be receptive. Wait confidently for Him to instruct and guide in the way He wishes you to live. This is the way to pray.

Our Father has chosen several specific ways in which to commune with His own beloved children. It is essential to understand these. Then life with Him becomes a great adventure as we learn daily to carry out His wishes and bring enormous pleasure to Him.

- 1. He speaks clearly to us through His own Word. Read it. Ruminant on it. Resolve to act on it in faith.**
- 2. He speaks to us through the remarkable life of Christ. It is He who is the visible expression of the invisible God.**
- 3. He speaks to us through the still, small, inner voice of His**

- own Spirit. He convicts us in how we ought to live.
4. He speaks to us through the splendor, design, order, and beauty of His created world. Spend time outdoors alone with Him.

Be Still and Wait on God to Act in His Own Time

Christ, just as with His own disciples | His earthly days, calls us to come to the awareness we need to be still. We need to get alone with Him. We need to sense the still, refreshing dews of His presence, His peace, His power to restore our souls and spirits. Give Him time to do this!

To do this in a practical way, find a quiet spot where you can have a secret rendezvous with Christ. Set aside a special time to be alone with Christ in close communion. Compose your soul calmly. Quiet your emotions, concentrate your mind on your heavenly Father's great generosity to you to allow His Spirit to speak to your innermost heart (or will), from and by His Word.

You will be refreshed. He will not disappoint you. Your spirit will be serene. Your soul will be at rest. You will be strong in your confidence in Christ. Then you can calmly go out into the weary world knowing God will use you to touch others with His own divine love and dignity.

Be Still and Watch Him Work in the World

Our Father yearns for His children to awake to the fact we need His might to make things right. For far too long we assumed it was our skills, our plans, our programs that would turn back the tide of evil sweeping over society. Only He can, by the majestic power of His own supernatural Spirit!

In stillness, in solitude, in sincerity there are those stalwarts who in severe self-sacrifice pray and pray and pray for a mighty calling to stand strong in unshakable faith and see what great things our God can do in a world on the edge of anarchy and utter destruction. This is a solitary, unsung labor of love.

In Stillness Christ Draws Very Near

It is essential for us to understand clearly that our Father is not only delighted to have us draw near to Him in quiet communion, but He in turn loves to draw near to us. He loves to make Himself known in reality to His child. He revels in the company of the one who is humble in heart (will,soul) and contrite in spirit.

***It is in stillness we bear our souls before Him.
In solitude we honestly confess our sinister sins.
In silence we wait to hear Him speak peace.
In serenity He assures us all is well.***

Ay such times we since and know and respond in Christ's precious presence. His profound peace flows into our spirits. We are renewed with power to face the day and all its demands.

God's gracious Spirit bears quiet witness within my seeking spirit that He is here! He is near! He is very dear! And because of Him all is well!

This is the way to pray in privacy and in purity. Nothing is hidden. All is open. Hope comes anew.

***It is He who wipes away the tears of our inner anguish.
It is He who speaks consolation to our contrition.
It is He who heals our wounded spirits.
He gives us the joy of gladness again.
He it is who re-creates us.***

For the seeking soul, the hours of stillness and of solitude with the living Christ becomes treasured times. I urge you, get to truly know God this way.

Be Still and Honestly Worship the Most High

Perhaps there is no other encounter with our Father that leads us into utter humility and quiet brokenness before Him. In solitude we sense something of the supreme purity of His person. We are still, subdued, in awe and wonder at His

absolute Holiness. There sweeps over us, around us, through us, an amazing awareness of indescribable delight of wholeness.

I am forgiven.

I am cleansed.

I am re-created

I am made new.

This generates such an up swelling of gratitude, praise, and worship that it flows freely, spontaneously. This is true worship, honest worship at its loftiest and most noble level. His spirit injects into our spirits a new dimension of strength, serenity, and surety in Christ.

It is out of such remarkable moments that I can go out into our sin-stained society and boldly, gladly, gratefully speak of our Lord without shame and without apology. For He has met me. He has touched me. He has made me whole!

It is all His grace, His generosity, His goodness. So I am glad, glad, glad to go on His behalf.

In Stillness Christ Fills Me with His Spirit

Oh, the wonder of just coming to Christ in open, honest, and deep longing to be refreshed with His life! He invites us to come day after day to drink and drink of Him. There is no other way to pray and to ask to be filled and filled and filled, again and again and again.

We are but the channels through which He can pour the power and refreshment of His own life. In stillness we repose in Him, open to His presence, allowing Him to fill us constantly!¹

¹ Adapted from His Way To Pray By . Philip Keller

Waiting on God

Psalm 27:14, Waiting is difficult, especially in our age of high-speed technology. We tend to think that change should be instantaneous in ourselves, in others and in our situations. Yet again and again the psalmist admonishes us to wait for the Lord (Psalms 37:7; 62:5; 130:5). God's vision of time is much keener than ours. What problem is causing you to feel anxious or impatient? Can you surrender it to the Lord? You may choose to write all your concerns about the situation in your journal or on a piece of paper. In silence, lay these concerns before God.

Andrew Murray One of the chief needs in our waiting upon God, one of the deepest secrets of its blessedness and blessing, is a quiet confident persuasion that it is not in vain. Have courage and believe that God will hear and help. We are waiting on a God who could never disappoint His people.

Clift & Kathleen Richards Wait Only Upon God

Isa. 40:31 But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

The Psalmist wrote, "My soul, wait thou only upon God" (Ps.62:1). Implicit in this good counsel are the following aspects: standing still, being quiet, exercising patience, persevering, being vigilant, standing fast, and believing. Andrew Murray helps us to see what waiting on God entails: "Take heed, and be quiet: fear not, neither be faint-hearted." "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Such words reveal to us the close connection between quietness and faith. They show us what a deep need there is of quietness, the element of true waiting upon God. If we are to have our whole heart turned toward God, we must have it turned away from man, from all that occupies and interests, whether of joy or sorrow." (From Waiting on God by Andrew Murray.)

The Bible abounds with wonderful promises about waiting on God:

You will never be ashamed when you wait on God. (Isa. 49:23).

Waiting on God brings blessings into your life. (Isa. 30:18).

God will strengthen your heart. (Ps. 27:14).

God will be your help and your shield when you wait on Him. (Ps. 33:20).

Your strength will be renewed. (Isa. 40:31).

God's promises are fulfilled when we learn to wait on Him. (Hab. 2:3).

Waiting on God builds up our hope. (Ps. 130:5).

Waiting on God gives us gladness and rejoicing. (Isa. 25:9).

Promises To Keep

God keeps all of His promises. We must believe this, pray them, and then simply wait for their fulfillment. C. H. Spurgeon wrote, "Every promise of Scripture is a writing of God, which may be pleaded before Him with this reasonable request: 'Do as Thou hast said.'"

Waiting on God then is waiting on Him to fulfill the promises of His Word in our lives. Prayer and the promises go hand in hand as we learn to wait on God.

Waiting Patiently

All of God's ways are perfect, including His timing. Sometimes we may unwittingly try to get ahead of God by rushing into a situation before the time is right, or by trying to bring something to pass before the appropriate time. Waiting on God involves patience, letting Him have His perfect way. (Ps.27:14, Zeph. 3:8, Acts 1:4, Heb. 10:36, Gal. 6:9, 2Pet. 3:8, Ps. 40:1-3).

Waiting Restfully

There is a direct connection between waiting and rest, as the Scriptures point out to us: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth" (Ps. 37:7-9).

As we wait on God in prayer, we can be sure that He is listening to us. This enables us to be hopeful and encouraged in prayer. As we wait on Him, we become more established as believers and this leads us into wider realms of joy and praise. Others will note these changes in our lives, and this will lead many to trust in God (Isa. 30:18).

Waiting Confidently

As we wait on God patiently and restfully through prayer, we learn to wait on Him with confidence as well. "Therefore I will

look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me”(Mic. 7:7).

Our confidence comes from knowing that God will hear us when we wait on Him. Micah expresses the confidence that David described: “Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord” (Ps. 27:14).

Good courage, greater strength, and renewal are promised to those who wait on God. Isaiah wrote, “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall walk, and not faint” (Isa. 40:31).

Waiting Expectantly

Joyful expectancy is an outgrowth of waiting on God. As we wait on Him we are not just waiting for an answer to our prayer, but we are also waiting for Him. He is our life, and He is the answer. It is God that we wait for as the Psalmist proclaimed: “I wait for the Lord, my soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning” (Ps. 130:5-6).

Andrew Murray puts it this way: “Waiting for the answer to prayer is not the whole of waiting, but only a part. . . .When we have special petitions, in connection with which we are waiting on God, our waiting must be very definitely in the confident assurance: ‘My God will hear me.’ A holy, joyful expectancy is of the very essence of true waiting. And this is not only true in reference to the many varied requests every believer has to make, but most especially to the one great petition which ought to be the chief thing every heart seeks for itself – that the life of God in the soul may have full sway. That Christ may be fully formed within, and that we may be filled to all the fullness of God.”

Let our attitude be, “My soul, wait only upon God.” This is faith in action, and it is a style of prayer that God will hear. Our continual prayer should be: “Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day” (Ps. 25:4-5). As we wait upon Him, may we experience His wonderful presence. May we say with the Psalmist, “In thy presence is fullness of joy” (Ps. 16:11).¹

¹ Prayer Keys

SOLITUDE AND SILENCE

The Desert Fathers

Did not think of SOLITUDE as being alone, but being alone with GOD. They did not think of SILENCE as not speaking, but listening to God.

SOLITUDE AND SILENCE is the context within which prayer is practiced.

If we do not set aside sometime to be with God and listen to Him, we do not take our spiritual life seriously.

Without SOLITUDE it is virtually impossible to live the spiritual life. SOLITUDE begins with a time and a place for God. When we remove our distractions, we often find that our inner distractions manifest themselves to us in full force.

If we do not set aside time to be with God and listen to Him, we hold to the deception that our words are more important than our SILENCE. Someone said I have often repented of having spoken but never for having remained silent.

Someone said many people ask me to speak, but nobody as yet has invited me for silence. Still I realize that the more I speak, the more I will need SILENCE to remain faithful to what I say. People expect too much from speaking and too little from SILENCE.

Tozer said very few of us know the secret of bathing our souls in SILENCE.

Amy Carmichael Wait in stillness. Do not be afraid of SILENCE in your prayer time. It may be that you are meant to listen, not to speak. Wait in stillness before the Lord. Wait as David waited when he sat before the Lord. And in that stillness, assurance will come to you. You will know that your Lord ponders the voice of your humble desires; you will hear quiet words spoken to yourself, perhaps to your grateful surprise and refreshment.

Tim Sanford Ps.46: 10, “Be still and know I am God.” Being still and knowing Him go together. We cannot have an intimate knowledge of God without being still.

Even during His active ministry, Jesus continued to return to hidden places to be alone with God. If we don't have a hidden place a hidden life with God, our public life for God cannot bear fruit.

LONELINESS VS. SOLITUDE

I think it was Paul Tillich who said, "Language has created the word loneliness to express the pain of being alone – and the word solitude to express the glory of being alone with God."

Here is how one Christian turns loneliness into solitude.

Each morning let the first words you say be, "Jesus is with me. I claim His presence." In the middle of the morning, stop wherever you are and whatever you are doing, close your eyes for a moment and say, "Jesus is with me. I claim His presence." At noon repeat it and sometime during the afternoon when your energies are depleted, and repeat it again. Finally, the last thing you do before falling asleep, look up at the darkness and say, "Jesus is with me. I claim His presence." Practice the presence of God by placing yourself deliberately before God every day in your prayers, by praying a presence prayer many times during the day, by wakefulness and inner attention to each word you pray, and by shutting the doors of the senses to be alone with God for a few minutes each day. For it is by practicing the presence that the presence becomes real. A successful businessman shared his secret for preventing tensions. He needed to be renewed at least twice a day, he said, so he had a short period of meditation at 10 o'clock and 3 o'clock. This did not take the usual form of prayer for he did not think about his problems but dwelt upon God's power and peace. He placed himself deliberately in God's presence: he thought of the spiritual strength of Christ flowing into him. He reported that those few minutes a day spent practicing God's presence resulted in complete renewal of energy and clarity of mind. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee because he trusteth in Thee" (Isaiah 26:3). "Close your cell door to your body, the door of your lips to words, the interior door to spirits. Hesychia is worship and uninterrupted service to God." (St. John Climacus) Like a person in a telephone booth with the door open, we are bombarded daily by the many conflicting voices of the crowd. What we need is to close the door on the crowd daily and listen to the voice of God, who is trying so hard to speak to us.¹

¹ Anthony M. Coniaris, Discovering God

A SOLACE OF SOLITUDE

***And when He had sent the multitudes away,
He went up into a mountain apart to pray:
Matthew 14:23***

It is noteworthy that even Christ Himself, when He was here among us, continually separated Himself from the clamor of the crowds. He simply had to detach Himself from the pressure of people and the crush of the cities to find solitude on the mountain slopes. Nor is it mere accident that we are told again and again by those who were closest to Him.

Finding stillness was an essential part of His life.

He did not neglect this exercise.

It was something He did continually at personal cost and the risk of gross misunderstanding.

It was the sure guarantee that His character would not be compressed or deformed by His contemporaries.

It was the stillness of the night that He gave Himself to prayer, to meditation, and to quiet spiritual communication with His His Father. These were interludes of inspiration, uplift, and restoration for His spirit.

If such moments were precious to Him, how much more so it must be true for us! It is in these quiet times that we can be open and receptive to the still small voice of the Most High.¹

¹ Philip Keller, Songs Of My Soul

STILLNESS

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord. 1Chron.17:16

Time spent in quiet prostration of soul before the Lord is most invigorating. David “sat before the Lord”; it is a great thing to hold these sacred sittings; the mind being receptive, like an open flower drinking in the sunbeams, or the sensitive photographic plate accepting the image before it. Quietude, which some men cannot abide, because it reveals their inward poverty, is as a palace of cedar to the wise, for along its hallowed courts the King in his beauty deigns to walk.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

PRAY ABOUT IT: Being quiet seems impossible for some people, revealing “their inward poverty,” but to prayers, silence is the place wherein we behold the King.

Today, remain quiet before the King of Glory. Meditate on Him. Worship the King.

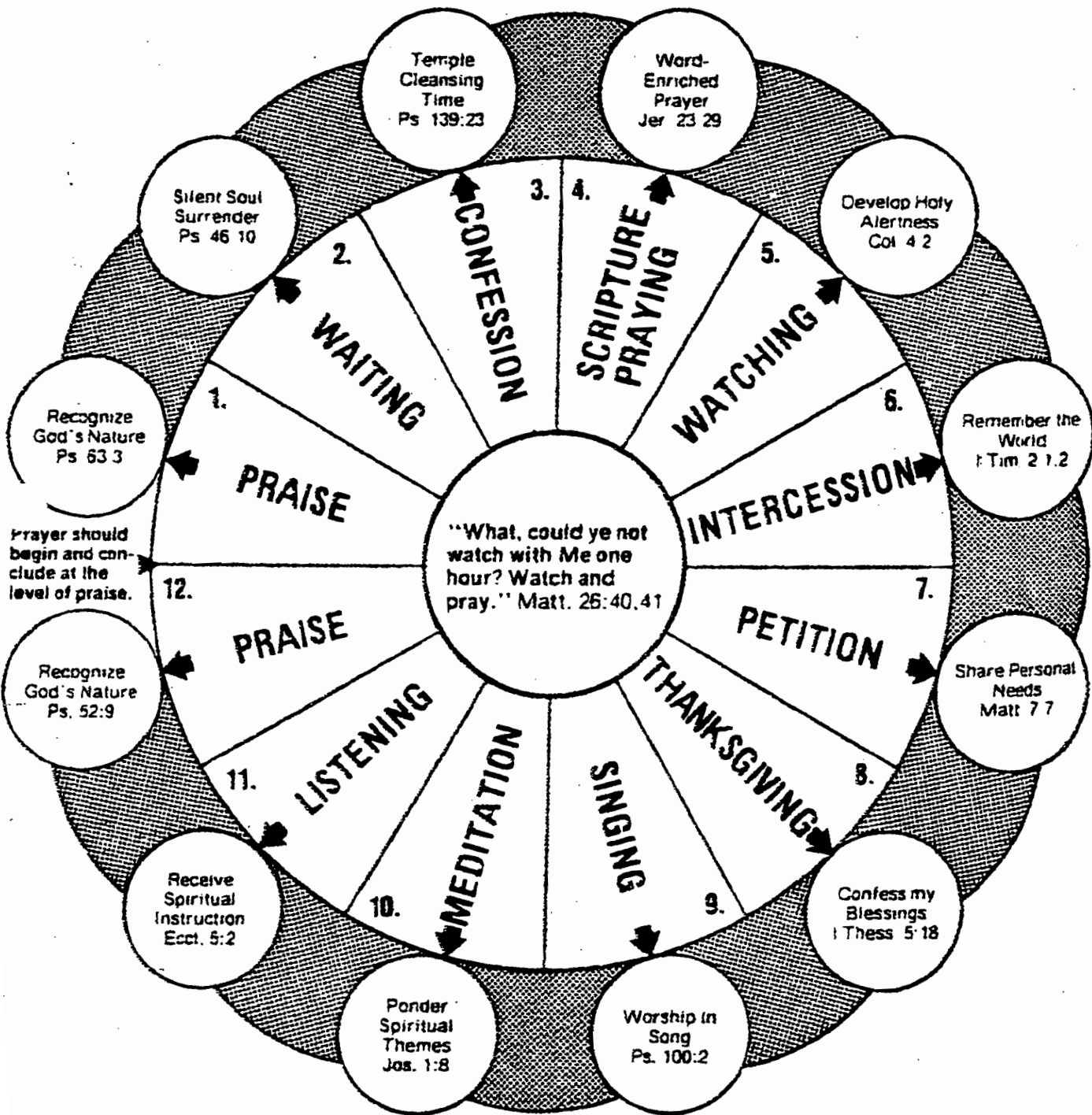
Our intercourse with God resembles that with a friend; at first, there are a thousand things to be told, and as many to be asked; but after a time, these diminish, while the pleasure of being together does not. Everything has been said, but the satisfaction of seeing each other, of feeling that one is near the other, or reposing in the enjoyment of a pure and sweet friendship, can be felt without conversation; the silence is eloquent and mutually understood. Each feels that the other is in perfect sympathy with him, and that their two hearts are incessantly poured one into the other, and constitute but one.

Francois Fenelon¹

¹ Nick Harrison, Magnificent Prayer

One Hour

Section 6



Prayer for Protection

**By the authority of the Almighty God,
I surround myself with the light of Christ,
I cover myself with the blood of Christ,
And I seal myself with the cross of Christ,
All dark and evil spirits must leave now.
No influence is allowed to come near me,
But that it is first filtered through the
Light of Jesus Christ in whose name I pray.
Amen**

Richard Foster

INTRODUCTION

One Hour

- ❖ Praise – a time of exaltation!
- ❖ Waiting – a time of adoration.
- ❖ Confession – a time of examination.
- ❖ Scripture Praying – a time of appropriations.
- ❖ Watching – a time of observation.
- ❖ Intercession – a time of intervention.
- ❖ Petition – a time of expectation.
- ❖ Thanksgiving – a time of appreciation.
- ❖ Singing – a time of edification.
- ❖ Meditation – a time of investigation.
- ❖ Listening – a time of revelation.
- ❖ Praise – a time of jubilation.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne You will get more knowledge in one hour with God than in all your life spent with man. You will get more holiness from immediate conversing with God than all other means of grace put together. Indeed, all means are empty vanity, unless you come to God in them.

PRAISE

The Act Of Divine Adoration

- 1. Sanctify, or set aside, a period of time specifically to praise God at the beginning of your prayer.**
- 2. Select a specific theme for praise such as God's righteousness, His Word, or His creative acts.**
- 3. Drawing on your selected theme, declare vocally all that God is.**
- 4. Expand your theme as much as possible. Allow God to reveal new themes for worship as your time of praise develops.**

WAITING OR SILENCE

The Act Of Soul Surrender

- 1. After your moments of praise, bring your mind and spirit into a time of complete silence to the world.**
- 2. Think no thoughts but thoughts of God the Father, His Son Jesus, or the Holy Spirit.**
- 3. If words are to be voiced, let them be quiet whispering like, I love you, Lord, or, I long for your presence, O God.**
- 4. Concentrate full attention on the love aspect of God's nature in these minutes of silence.**

CONFESSION

The Act Of Declared Admission

- 1. Following your time of Silent waiting, immediately ask God to search your heart for any unconfessed sin**
- 2. Mentally examine your recent activities to discover possible areas of spiritual failure that need confessing.**
- 3. Confess specific sins you may be guilty of either against God or your fellow man.**
- 4. Confess your need of specific divine guidance and supernatural unction.**

SCRIPTURE PRAYING

The Act Of Faith Appropriation

- 1. When bringing Scripture into your devotional hour, ask God to bless His Word to your spiritual body, just as He blesses natural food to your physical body.**
- 2. Examine a passage from either the Gospels, the Epistles, Psalms, or Proverbs. Look carefully for specific ways to apply each verse to prayer.**
- 3. As you study a verse (or verses), ask yourself what petition this passage prompts you to make, or what promise this passage contains that stands directly behind a specific petition.**
- 4. Develop actual prayers based on the thoughts and phrases included in a verse (or verses) of Scripture and offer those prayers confidently to the Lord.**

WATCHING

The Act Of Mental Awareness

- 1. Take a few moments during prayer to become spiritually alert. Watch for the methods Satan may try to use to hinder your Christian walk that day. Prayerfully claim power to defeat Satan in each of these areas.**
- 2. Read denominational or missionary-evangelism magazines to help become alert to specific needs in God's work around the world.**
- 3. Prayerfully recall various international news developments that deserve special prayer.**
- 4. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal further spiritual facts about these needs. This will aid you in praying more intelligently for these needs.**

INTERCESSION

The Act Of Earnest Appeal

- 1. Carefully prepare for intercession by developing a specific plan that includes special prayer for God's work around the world.**
- 2. Summon a new compassion for these moments of intercession, so your praying will reach out to the lost with genuine concern.**
- 3. Fill your intercession with the four key scriptural claims:**
 - a. Ask god to give more laborers to the harvest**
 - b. To open doors for these workers**
 - c. To bless them with fruit as the result of their efforts**
 - d. And with finances to expand their work.**
- 4. Always endeavor to include specific countries and their leaders during your time of intercession.**

PETITION

The Act Of Personal Supplication

- 1. Begin your petition by asking the Holy Spirit to help you claim only those desires that will bring special honor to the Lord.**
- 2. Make a mental list of specific needs you have for that very day and offer each need to God.**
- 3. Enlarge a petition carefully, taking time to explain to God why you desire an answer for that request.**
- 4. Frequently examine your motives for claiming a petition. Be certain they are pure in the sight of God.**
 - a. A petition should be specific**
 - b. A petition should be complete**
 - c. A petition should be sincere**
 - d. A petition should be simple**

THANKSGIVING

The Act Of Expressed Appreciation

- 1. Begin thanksgiving by thinking about all God has given you in recent days.**
- 2. Use these moments of reflection as a basis for offering specific thanksgiving for spiritual, material, physical, and external blessings.**
- 3. Frequently thank God in advance for blessings you expect Him to bestow on you in the future.**
- 4. Thank God for at least one particular blessing you have not thanked Him for previously.**

SINGING

The Act Of Melodic Worship

- 1. Pause in your devotion hour to sing a specific song unto the Lord.**
- 2. Select a special theme for your song, such as praise, thanksgiving, or a favorite passage of Scripture.**
- 3. Ask the Holy Spirit to create an original melody in your heart so your song is truly “a new song”.**
- 4. Don’t hesitate to sing “songs of thanksgiving” for specific blessings or victories you believe God will give you in the days ahead.**

MEDITATION

The Act Of Spiritual Evaluation

- 1. Select a theme for your time of meditation, applying full attention to that specific area of spiritual thought.**
- 2. Allow your mind to wander within the framework of your chosen theme. Ponder all aspects of the theme carefully in reference to God.**
- 3. Ask questions about this theme that might lead you into even deeper mental study of the subject.**
- 4. Bring Scripture into all phases of meditation. This strengthens your awareness that God’s Word is the necessary foundation for all meaningful spiritual thought.**

LISTENING

The Act Of Mental Absorption

- 1. In the listening time of prayer do not hesitate to ask God very specific questions about difficult problems or situations.**
- 2. Search Scriptures for specific answers to your questions. God most often speaks through His Word.**
- 3. Mentally evaluate all circumstances that relate to a problem. Ask God to show you His plan through those circumstances.**
- 4. Be prepared to write down any ideas God may share concerning the details of solving that particular problem.**

CLOSING PRAISE

The Act Of Divine Magnification

- 1. End your prayer with specific praise concerning God's greatness. Focus your praise on His omnipotence (power), His omniscience (knowledge), and His omnipresence (presence).**
- 2. With the Psalmist let us praise God because He has done it. Look back at the devotional hour and praise God for hearing each of your requests.**
- 3. Let your spirit rejoice for a few moments at the close of prayer. Repeat the universal word for praise, Hallelujah!**
- 4. As Martin Luther suggested, when your devotional hour concludes make your amen strong. Confess with authority that you believe God is trustworthy.¹**

¹ The Hour That Changes the World, Dick Eastman

PRAISE

The Act Of Divine Adoration

- 1. Sanctify, or set aside, a period of time specifically to praise God at the beginning of your prayer.**
- 2. Select a specific theme for praise such as God's righteousness, His Word, or His creative acts.**
- 3. Drawing on your selected theme, declare vocally all that God is.**
- 4. Expand your theme as much as possible. Allow God to reveal new themes for worship as your time of praise develops.**

What is praise? Praise is the vocal adoration of God. Only praise puts God in His rightful position at the very outset of our praying.

Harold Lindsell Since adoration brings man into immediate and direct contact with God, in the role of servant Master, or the created to the Creator, it is foundational to all other kinds of prayer.

Paul Billheimer Here is one of the greatest values of praise; it decentralizes self. The worship and praise of God demands a shift of center from self to God. One cannot praise God without relinquishing occupation with self. Praise produces forgetfulness of self – and forgetfulness of self is health.

LORD, TEACH ME TO ADORE YOU!

David's prayer of Praise

1Chronicles 29:10-15 N.L.T.

Then David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly:

O Lord, the God of our ancestor Isreal, may you be praised forever and ever!

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty.

Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom.

We adore you as the one who is over all things.

Riches and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything.

Power and might are in your hand, and it is at your discretion that people are made great and given strength.

O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name!

But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you?

Everything we have has come from you, and we give only what you have already given us!

We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us.

Our days on earth are like a shadow, gone so soon without a trace.

WAITING OR SILENCE

The Act Of Soul Surrender

1. After your moments of praise, bring your mind and spirit into a time of complete silence to the world.
2. Think no thoughts but thoughts of God the Father, His Son Jesus, or the Holy Spirit.
3. If words are to be voiced, let them be quiet whispering like, I love you, Lord, or, I long for your presence, O God.
4. Concentrate full attention on the love aspect of God's nature in these minutes of silence.

Waiting on the Lord is basically the silent surrender of the soul to God.

The highest worship of almighty God consists in being wholly taken up with Him.

Slowly the old Franciscan gazed up at Madame Guyon and declared, your efforts have been unsuccessful, because you have sought without only what you can find within. Accustom yourself to seek God in your heart, and you will not fail to find Him. Madam Guyon had received her introduction to a most vital element of prayer, that of silently waiting in the presence of God.

Bridgid E. Herman If we read biographies of the great and wise, we shall find they were people of long silences and deep ponderings. Whatever of vision, of power, of genius there was in their work was wrought in silence. And when we turn to the inner circle of the spiritual masters – the men and women, not necessarily gifted or distinguished, to whom God was a living, bright reality which supernaturalized their everyday life and transmuted their homeliest actions into sublime worship – we find that their roots stuck deep into the soil of spiritual silence.

LORD TEACH ME TO WAIT!

THE DISCIPLINE OF SOLITUDE

Kenneth Boa Although many believers, especially extroverts, completely avoid this primary discipline of Faith, the spiritual cost in doing so is simply too great.

Even a casual look at the gospels reveals that solitude was an indispensable practice in the life of the Lord Jesus (see Matt. 14:23; Mk. 1:35; Lk. 5:16; Jn. 6:15) as it was in the lives of all the great saints who have preceded us.

It was in the solitude of the wilderness that Jesus prepared to inaugurate His public ministry (Matt. 4:1-11); it was in the solitude of the mountain that He prepared to select His disciples (Lk. 6:12); and it was in the solitude of the garden that He prepared to sacrifice His life for the sins of the world (Matt. 26:36-46).

Solitude transcends loneliness – whenever Jesus sought solitude, it was to be in the presence of His Father.

Solitude also transcends place, since Jesus practiced an inner solitude of heart and mind even when He was in the midst of people.

It is in solitude that we remove ourselves from the siren calls and illusions of our society and wrestle with the need of ongoing transformation as we meet with the Lord.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Life Together warned; “Let him who cannot be alone beware of community . . . Let him who is not in community beware of being alone.”

Times deliberately spent away from interaction with other people nurture depth, perspective, purpose, and resolve.

They deliver us from the tyranny and distractions of daily routine and prepare us for the next stage of the journey through an inner call rather than an external compulsion.

By periodically distancing ourselves from schedules, noise, and crowds, we become less captivated by the demands and expectations of others and more captivated by the purpose of God.

In this way, we measure and define ourselves in terms of what God thinks rather than what people think.

This, in turn, empowers us to serve and show compassion to others, since we are less manipulated by human expectations and more alive to divine intentions.

Extended times spent in solitude can be frightening, since they remove our external props and force us to confront sinful and selfish attitudes and behaviors.

Such times can make us uncomfortably vulnerable before God, but this is as it should be, since this process drives us to the grace, forgiveness, and love of Christ.

The purgation of solitude diminishes arrogance and autonomy and fosters humility and trust.

As this discipline moves us in the direction of greater Christlikeness, ministry to others becomes an extension of our being.

It is good to have a place for daily meeting alone with the Lord. But we can also carry an inner spirit of solitude with us even in the presence of others.

Each day is also clustered with opportunities for little moments of solitude (e.g. driving alone) if we come to see them in this way.

More extended seasons of solitude can be pivotal in our growth, but they require planning and resolve.

I periodically plan a one-day personal retreat for solitude, silence, prayer, and reflection at a friend's cabin in the country.

I have always profited from these retreats, but they never happen unless I put them in my calendar far in advance.

Even then, I am tempted to find a dozen excuses for not going when the time arrives.

This is where the discipline of choice over feelings comes in.

THE DISCIPLINE OF SILENCE

Solitude and silence are companion disciplines; silence gives depth to solitude, and solitude creates a place for silence.

Similarly, both of these disciplines can be practiced inwardly (whether we are with people or not) as well as outwardly.

“Where shall the world be found, where will the word resound? Not here, there is not enough silence.”

When T. S. Eliot wrote these words, he succinctly captured the essence of our zeitgeist, the spirit of our time and culture.

The contemporary epidemic of drivenness to crowds, words, music, entertainment, and noise is inimical to the life of the spirit and points to an inner emptiness.

I am convinced that many people would begin to experience withdrawal symptoms if they were completely deprived of these sounds for more than an hour.

Only a minority of us even know what total silence is like.

“In repentance and rest you shall be saved, in quietness and trust is your strength” (Isa. 30:15).

The transformational discipline of silence encourages us to grow “in quietness and trust” by being still and hushed before God so we can listen with our spirit to Him and enjoy His presence.

This discipline also extends to our relationship with people. Silence in the presence of others can be practiced by deliberately speaking less than we otherwise would in a number of situations.

James encourages us to turn this practice into a lifestyle: “Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger” (Jas 1:19; also see 1:26; 3:2-12).

Solomon added, “When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise” (Pr. 10:19). Consider how much less people would say if they eliminated boasting (Pr. 25:14; 27:1-2), gossip and slander (Pr. 11:13; 18:8; 20:19), flattery (Pr. 26:28; 29:5), nagging (Pr. 19:13; 21:9, 19; 27:15-16), and quarreling (Pr. 20:3; 26:21; 2 Tim. 2:23-24) from their speech! Although words can have healing and life-giving power, there are far more occasions when I have regretted opening my mouth than I have regretted remaining silent. Like toothpaste, once the words are out, we cannot put them back in the tube by unsaying them. The discipline of silence increases our psychic margin by giving us the time and composure to weigh our words carefully and use them in more appropriate ways. Silence not only increases our poise and credibility, but it also enables us to be better observers and more effective, other-

centered listeners. In addition, this discipline makes us less inclined to use words to control people or manipulate them into approving and affirming us.

Although many have observed that it is easier to be completely silent than to speak in moderation, it would be well worth spending a day in unbroken silence. (If you try this, it goes without saying that you should previously inform others of your intention.) Such a verbal fast would be a real source of illumination about our social strategies and devices.

Henri Nouwen observed that silence "can be seen as a portable cell taken with us from the solitary place into the midst of our ministry." Clearly, the discipline of silence before God and people relates to the practice of self-control; the more we develop inner control and composure, the less we will feel compelled to gain outward control over people and circumstances.

CONFESSION

The Act Of Declared Admission

1. Following your time of Silent waiting, immediately ask God to search your heart for any unconfessed sin
2. Mentally examine your recent activities to discover possible areas of spiritual failure that need confessing.
3. Confess specific sins you may be guilty of either against God or your fellow man.
4. Confess your need specific divine guidance and supernatural unction.

He needs to know we have sinned but because He knows that we need to know that we have sinned.

My prayer life will never rise above my personal life in Jesus Christ.

There can be no healing within until there is first confession without.

How can a holy God pour Himself through a believer whose life is clogged with debris of this world?

Andrew Murray God cannot hear the prayers on our lips often because the desires of our heart after the world cry out to Him much more strongly and loudly than our desires for Him.

John Lavender Before you pray for a change in circumstances, you should pray for a change in character.

Charles Spurgeon A prayer without penitence is a prayer without acceptance. If no tear has fallen upon it, it is withered. There must be confession of sin before God, or our prayer is faulty.

David's Confession found in Psalm 51

1. David cries out for divine holiness.
Create in me a clean heart.

- 2. David cries out for a divine attitude.
And renew a right spirit within me.**
- 3. David confessed his need for divine guidance.
Cast me not away from thy presence.**
- 4. David cries out for divine unction.
Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.**

LORD, TEACH ME TO CONFESS

SCRIPTURE PRAYING

The Act Of Faith Appropriation

1. When bringing Scripture into your devotional hour, ask God to bless His Word to your spiritual body, just as He blesses natural food to your physical body.
2. Examine a passage from either the Gospels, the Epistles, Psalms, or Proverbs. Look carefully for specific ways to apply each verse to prayer.
3. As you study a verse (or verses), ask yourself what petition this passage prompts you to make, or what promise this passage contains that stands directly behind a specific petition.
4. Develop actual prayers based on the thoughts and phrases included in a verse (or verses) of Scripture and offer those prayers confidently to the Lord.

God's Word must become an actual part of the devotional life.

E. M. Bounds Prayer projects faith on God, and God on the world. Only God can move mountains, but faith and prayer can move God.

Andrew Murray Develop an intense prayer life heavily saturated with the Word Of God.

He once explained, little of the Word with little prayer is death to the spiritual life.

Much of the Word with little prayer gives a sickly life.

Much prayer and little of the Word gives more life, but without steadfastness.

A full measure of the Word and prayer each day gives a healthy and powerful life.

George Mueller Always prayed with an open Bible.

Three step plan for Scripture Praying

- 1. Listen to (or read) a passage from the Word of God. Try to include approximately one Chapter during each devotional hour.**
- 2. The moment you discover a verse (or two) that impresses a particular truth upon your heart, close your bible, and quietly meditate on what that verse is saying to you.**
- 3. With these moments of meditation as a base, from a personal prayer "enriched" by that promise from God.**

LORD, TEACH ME TO PLEAD YOUR PROMISES!

WATCHING

The Act Of Mental Awareness

1. Take a few moments during prayer to become spiritually alert. Watch for the methods Satan may try to use to hinder your Christian walk that day. Prayerfully claim power to defeat Satan in each of these areas.
2. Read denominational or missionary-evangelism magazines to help become alert to specific needs in God's work around the world.
3. Prayerfully recall various international news developments that deserve special prayer.
4. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal further spiritual facts about these needs. This will aid you in praying more intelligently for these needs.

The watchman's chief responsibility was to warn the inhabitants of approaching enemies.

Jesus Christ commanded us to watch and pray (Matt. 26:41; Mark 14:38).

Apostle Paul challenged believers to continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving (Col. 4:2).

The Greek word for watch is *gregoreo*, to be awake or vigilant.

Dr. Curtis Mitchell To pray correctly one must be mentally alert and vigilant. Much praying is hampered by a dull, drowsy frame of mind.

Not only must we be alert to personal satanic attacks, but we must become aware of the wiles of the devil as they pertain to God's plan throughout the world.

Bishop J. C. Ryle I commend to you the importance of praying spiritually. I mean by that, that we should labor always to have help of the Spirit in our prayers, and beware above all things of

formality. There is nothing so spiritual but that it may become form, and this is especially true of private prayer.

We must depend daily on the Holy Spirit to enlarge our awareness in all matters of prayer.

Andrew Murray The great lesson for every time of prayer is – to see to it, first of all, that you commit yourself to the leading of the Holy Spirit, with entire dependence on Him, give Him the first place; for through Him your prayer will have a value you cannot imagine, and through Him also you will learn to speak out your desires in the name of Christ.

LORD, TEACH ME TO WATCH!

INTERCESSION

The Act Of Earnest Appeal

- 1. Carefully prepare for intercession by developing a specific plan that includes special prayer for God's work around the world.**
- 2. Summon a new compassion for these moments of intercession, so your praying will reach out to the lost with genuine concern.**
- 3. Fill your intercession with the four key scriptural claims:**
 - a. Ask god to give more laborers to the harvest**
 - b. To open doors for these workers**
 - c. To bless them with fruit as the result of their efforts**
 - d. And with finances to expand their work.**
- 4. Always endeavor to include specific countries and their leaders during your time of intercession.**

Intercession might be labeled the heart of prayer.

To intercede is to mediate.

It is to stand between a lost being and Almighty God, praying that this person will come to know about God and His salvation.

There is no other mode of prayer that reaches out to all the world, as does intercessory prayer.

In intercessory prayer we find the key to freedom for those in bondage.

As intercessors we must go beyond the simple act of praying for others to the point of manifesting a genuine spirit of concern for others.

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray it was clear the emphasis was to be on others.

His prayer began with the plural possessive pronoun adjective – our. We were not taught to pray My father, but, Our Father, give

us . . . lead us . . . forgive us. In the deepest sense, the prayer is a love prayer

To keep our praying centered on others, intercession should come before petition.

Edward Bauman When we pray for others we do not stand with outstretched hands hoping to receive something for ourselves. We stand at God's side, working together with Him, in the task of redeeming others.

Paul Billheimer Many people grieve because they have been denied service on the mission field or in some other chosen endeavor. But through faithful intercession they may accomplish as much and reap as full a reward as though they had been on the field in person.

E. M. Bounds Prayer must be broad in its scope – it must plead for others. Intercession for others is the hallmark of all true prayer . . . Prayer is the soul of a man stirred to plead with God for men.

Professor Hallesby As far as my understanding of these things goes, intercessory prayer is the finest and most exacting kind of work that is possible for men to perform.

Jim Logan Lord teach me how to be an intercessor.

PETITION

The Act Of Personal Supplication

1. Begin your petition by asking the Holy Spirit to help you claim only those desires that will bring special honor to the Lord.
2. Make a mental list of specific needs you have for that very day and offer each need to God.
3. Enlarge a petition carefully, taking time to explain to God why you desire an answer for that request.
4. Frequently examine your motives for claiming a petition. Be certain they are pure in the sight of God.
 - a. A petition should be specific
 - b. A petition should be complete
 - c. A petition should be sincere
 - d. A petition should be simple

The offering of a petition should be complete enough to build faith, but simple in its expression. Eloquence is not necessary for effective praying.

Expressing helplessness is the key to opening that door, thus giving God access to our need. We must define the need.

It is well said asking is the rule of the kingdom. We will learn principles of prayer only by the actual practice of prayer.

E. Stanley Jones Some things God will not give until we want them enough to ask.

Charles Spurgeon Asking is the rule of the kingdom. It is a rule that will never be altered in anybody's case. If the royal and divine Son of God cannot be exempted from the rule of asking that He may have, you and I cannot expect to have the rule relaxed in our favor. God will bless Elijah and send rain to Israel, but Elijah must pray for it. If the Jews are to be delivered, Daniel must intercede. God will bless Paul, and the nations shall be converted through him, but Paul must pray. Pray he did without

ceasing; his epistles show that he expected nothing except by asking for it.

E. M. Bounds Prayer is the language of a man burdened with a sense of need. Not to pray is not only to declare that there is nothing needed, but to admit to a non-realization of that need.

Andrew Murray Let your prayer be so definite that you can say as you leave the prayer closet "I know what I have asked from the Father, and I expect an answer."

Pray carefully through each request. It is spiritually healthy to take a need apart, piece-by-piece, during prayer. Analyze the problem from every angle and then express it as a petition. The more specific and complete the petition, the more faith is generated when we bring it to God.

1. We are to ask with a beggar's humility,
2. to seek with a servant's carefulness,
3. to knock with the confidence of a friend.

Andrew Murray One of the great reasons why prayer in the inner chamber does not bring more joy and blessing is that it is too selfish, and selfishness is the death of prayer.

Even the simplest petition, when offered in faith, opens doors to the miraculous. God is greatly pleased when we come before His presence ready to ask of Him those petitions that will honor His Name.

LORD, TEACH ME TO ASK!

SINGING

The Act Of Melodic Worship

- 1. Pause in your devotion hour to sing a specific song unto the Lord.**
- 2. Select a special theme for your song, such as praise, thanksgiving, or a favorite passage of Scripture.**
- 3. Ask the Holy Spirit so create an original melody in your heart to your song is truly “a new song”.**
- 4. Don't hesitate to sing “songs of thanksgiving” for specific blessings or victories you believe God will give you in the days ahead.**

No fewer than fifty-one of the Psalms specifically refer to “singing praises” unto the Lord.

- 1. Sing praise unto the Lord.**
- 2. Sing of God's power and mercy.**
- 3. Sing a song of thanksgiving.**
- 4. Sing God's Word.**

LORD, TEACH ME TO SING!

THANKSGIVING

The Act Of Expressed Appreciation

- 1. Begin thanksgiving by thinking about all God has given you in recent days.**
- 2. Use these moments of reflection as a basis for offering specific thanksgiving for spiritual, material, physical, and external blessings.**
- 3. Frequently thank God in advance for blessings you expect Him to bestow on you in the future.**
- 4. Thank God for at least one particular blessing you have not thanked Him for previously.**

Basically, thanksgiving is the act of expressing specific gratitude to God for blessings He has bestowed upon us. These expressions may be mental or vocal.

Thanksgiving differs from praise in that praise focuses on who God is, whereas thanksgiving focuses on what God has specifically done for us. When we give thanks we give God the glory for what He has done for us: and when we worship or give praise, we give God glory for what He is in Himself.

Thanksgiving helps us focus on God's faithfulness.

Thanksgiving might well be labeled "a confession of blessing". The Psalmist declared, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" (Ps. 116:12). Later, he answers, "I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord" (Ps. 116:17).

Four ideas for a thank offering.

- 1. Confess spiritual blessings**
- 2. Confess material blessings**
- 3. Confess physical blessings**
- 4. Confess external blessings (blessings not directly related to us).**

Giving thanks for past blessings will require a moment of quiet contemplation concerning God's goodness.

Eph. 5:18,20 "Be filled with the Spirit . . . Giving thanks always for all things unto God."

1 Thess. 5:18,19 "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit."

LORD TEACH ME TO GIVE THANKS!

MEDITATION

The Act Of Spiritual Evaluation

- 1. Select a theme for your time of meditation, applying full attention to that specific area of spiritual thought.**
- 2. Allow your mind to wander within the framework of your chosen theme. Ponder all aspects of the theme carefully in reference to God.**
- 3. Ask questions about this theme that might lead you into even deeper mental study of the subject.**
- 4. Bring Scripture into all phases of meditation. This strengthens your awareness that God's Word is the necessary foundation for all meaningful spiritual thought.**

The Old Testament definition for the word meditation is to mutter or muse. This suggests a silent inner study of some spiritual matter.

Another Hebrew expression translated meditate is sichah, which means to bow down. The thought is that we render special mental attention by bowing down in respect of God's Word. (Ps. 119:15).

Focus On

- 1. Focus meditation on God Himself**
- 2. Focus meditation on God's Word**
- 3. Focus meditation on the works of God**
- 4. Focus meditation on past victories**
- 5. Focus meditation on positive thoughts**

Anything worthy of Praise is worthy of meditation.

LORD, TEACH ME TO MEDITATE!

LISTENING

The Act Of Mental Absorption

- 1. In the listening time of prayer do not hesitate to ask God very specific questions about difficult problems or situations.**
- 2. Search Scriptures for specific answers to your questions. God most often speaks through His Word.**
- 3. Mentally evaluate all circumstances that relate to a problem. Ask God to show you His plan through those circumstances.**
- 4. Be prepared to write down any ideas God may share concerning the details of solving that particular problem.**

Prayer is the soul's pilgrimage from self to God; and the most effectual remedy for self-love and self-absorption is the habit of humble listening.

Waiting is to thoughtfully focus attention on God in a love relationship. It is a time of resting silently in God's love.

On the other hand, meditation is a very careful exploration of a particular spiritual theme.

Though closely related to both, listening is an element of prayer that stands alone.

To listen in prayer is to mentally absorb divine instructions from God concerning specific matters for that day.

Not only did Jesus say He would enter the open door of a person's heart, but He promised to sup with that person as well (Rev. 3:20). To sup means to have fellowship.

Much of our praying consists of asking instead of supping. Prayer often becomes one-sided and self-centered. Our prayer should be a conversation, one in which we listen as much as we speak.

To be like Jesus is to be a listener, especially in prayer. The desire of Jesus was to do the will of His Father. To find His Father's will Jesus spent whole nights listening.

J. R. Miller Quietness in a man or a women is a mark of strength. Noise is not eloquence. Loudness is not power. In all the departments of life, it is the quiet forces that effect most. Therefore, if we would be strong, we must learn to be quiet. A quiet heart will give a quiet life.

LISTENING IMPLIES CONFIDENCE THAT GOD TRULY DESIRES TO SPEAK TO US.

Alan Redpath Sometimes I wonder if our devotions are not the greatest barrier to spiritual growth, because they are so often just one sided – it is our praying, it is our talking, our bible study, our effort. How long is it since you sat down with great delight in His presence and were conscious that He was flooding your heart and speaking with you?

Only as we learn to hear the voice of the Father can we learn to dispel the voice of the world.

Donald E. Demaray Individual guidance from God, received in prayer, is of vital importance. And how easy to listen to your own voice pressing you to do selfish things! But it is the voice of God – the inner voice – we must learn to hear. The regular quiet time is the laboratory for developing that capacity to hear. In the course of the busy day, too, we will hear His voice, but it is in the stillness of the prayer closet that the gift of listening is given and received.

John Anthony Hanne There were men like Aaron who were eloquent preachers, men like Korah who were natural leaders, but only one man that recognized that he couldn't lead unless God first spoke to him and then spoke through him. Day after day for 40 years, dwelling upon what God had said, Moses listened and so spoke. Small wonder that through Moses came more of the Bible than any other man.

Awesome power awaits the Christian who develops a listener's spirit.

What is the price of silence, but the gift of self to God. It is to shut our eyes to what the world considers important and listen only to the Holy Spirit's call.

The price of silence is also time, much time given to the practice of listening.

Prayer of positive, creative quality needs a background of silence, and until we are prepared to practice this silence, we need not hope to know the power of prayer.

F. W. Faber Whenever the sounds of the world die out in the soul, then we hear the whisperings of God. He is always whispering to us, only we don't always hear because of the noise, hurry and distractions.

How will God speak during these times of stillness? Often His whisperings come in the form of a quiet impression on the heart.

On other occasions there is no inner voice to guide us, yet we sense God's presence gently leading. We know that to move in a certain direction will please God, and so we follow this quiet leading.

Most often God speaks through His Word. In fact, all forms of guidance must be measured by Scripture. Guidance contrary to God's Word is guidance originating from another source.

During the listening aspect of prayer you may wish to keep a note tablet handy to record these impressions concerning your day. The value of having paper and pen is that it displays faith. It says to God, I believe you will truly speak to me, and I have come prepared to record your instructions.

LORD, TEACH ME TO LISTEN

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Jan. 20th, 1930

Although I have been minister and missionary for 15 years, I have not lived the entire day of every day, minute by minute to follow the will of

God. But this year I have started out to live all my waking moments in conscious listening to the inner voice, asking without ceasing. "What, Father, do you desire said? What, Father, do you desire this minute?"

Jan.26, 1930

Yesterday and today I have made a new adventure, which is not easy to express. I am feeling God in each moment, by impact of the will -- willing that he should direct these fingers that now strike this typewriter -- willing that he should pour through my steps as I walked -- willing that he should direct my words as I speak, and my very jaws as I eat!

It is exactly that "moment by moment," every waking moments, surrender, responsiveness, obedience, sensitiveness, pliability, "lost in His love," that I now have the mind -- bent to explore with all my might, to respond to Jesus Christ as a violin responds to the bow of the master.

If we are so impoverished that we have nothing to reveal but small talk, then we need to struggle for more richness of soul.

Open your soul and entertain the glory of God and after awhile that glory will be reflected in the world about you and in the very clouds above your head.

Jan. 29, 1930

My minds heart is to live this hour in continuous inner conversation with God and in perfect responsiveness to his will, to make this hour gloriously rich.

Mar. 1st, 1930

The sense of being led by an unseen hand which takes mine while another hand reaches ahead and prepares the way, grows upon me daily. This is more than surrender. I had that before. More than listening to God. I tried that before. I cannot find a word that will mean to you or to me what I am now experiencing. It is an act of the will. I can tell my mind to open straight out towards God. I wait and listen with determined sensitiveness. I fixed my attention there, and sometimes it requires a long time early in the morning. I determined not to get out of bed until that mind set upon the Lord is settled.

Because I feel convinced that for me, and for you who read, there lies ahead undiscovered continents of spiritual living compared with which we are infants in arms.

I would find God's will and I would do that will though every fiber in me says no, and I would win the battle in my thoughts.

Mar. 9th, 1930

I know why God left this aching void - for himself to fill. Off on this mountain I must pursue this voyage of discovery in quest of God's will.

Mar. 15th, 1930

How infinitely richer this direct first hand grasping of God Himself is, than the old method which I used and recommended for years, the reading of endless devotional books. Almost it seems to mean now that the very Bible cannot be read as a substitute for meeting God soul-to-soul and face-to-face. And yet, how was this new closeness achieved? Ah, I know now that it was by cutting the very heart of my heart and by suffering. Somebody was telling me this week that nobody can make a violin speak the last depths of human longing until the soul has been made tender by some great anguish. I do not say it is the only way to the heart of God, but I must witness that it has opened an inner shrine for me which I never entered before.

Mar. 23rd 1930

Someone may be saying that this introspection and this struggle to achieve God - consciousness is abnormal and perilous. I'm going to take the risk, for somebody ought to do it. If our religious premises are correct at all then this oneness with God is the most normal condition one can have. It is what made Christ, Christ. It is what Saint Augustine meant when he said "Thou has made us for Thyself, and our souls are restless until they find their rest in Thee."

I do not invite anybody else to follow this arduous path. I wish many might. We need to know so much which one man alone cannot answer.

Is this attainable?

Any hour of any day may be made perfect by merely choosing. It is perfect if one looks towards God that entire hour, waiting for His leadership all through the hour and trying hard to do every tiny thing exactly as God wishes it done, as perfectly as possible. No emotions are necessary. Just the doing of God's will perfectly makes the hour a perfect one.

May 14, 1930

Now I like the Lord's presence so much that when for a half hour or so he slips out of mind - as he does many times a day - I feel as though I had deserted him, and as though I had lost something very precious in my life.

August 21st, 1930

Here I was, engaging in the most glorious action of all human and of all superhuman life -- I was communing with the very God of the universe Himself. He was showing me His very heart, even the Angels can do no more than this.

Mar. 3rd 1931

Oh, if we only let God have His full chance He will break our heart with the glory of His revelation. It is my business to look into the very face of God until I ache with bliss. That is how I feel this morning after two hours with God. And now on this "mount of transfiguration" I do not ever want to leave.

September 18th, 1931

I choose to look at people through God, using God as my glasses, colored with His love for them.

Last year, as you know, I decided to try to keep the Lord in mind all the time. That was rather easy for a lonesome man in a strange land. It has always been easier for the shepherds, and the monks, and the anchorites than for people surrounded by crowds.

But today it is an altogether different thing. I am no longer lonesome. The hours of the day from dawn to bedtime are spent in the presence of others. Either this new situation will crowd God out or I must take Him into it all. I must learn a continuous silent conversation of heart to heart speaking with God while looking into other eyes and listening to other voices.

October 11th, 1931

There are three questions, which we may ask: "do you believe in God?" That is not getting very far. "The devils believe and tremble." Second, "are you acquainted with God?" We are acquainted with people with whom we have had some business dealings.

Third, "is God your friend?" Or putting this another way. "Do you love God?"

It is this third stage that is really vital how is it to be achieved? Precisely as any friendships achieved. By doing things together. The depth and intensity of the friendship will depend upon the variety and extent of the things we do and enjoy together. Will the friendship be consistent? That again depends upon the permanence of our common interests, and upon whether or not our interests grow into ever widening circles, so that we do not stagnate. The highest friendship demands growth. "It must be Progressive as life itself is Progressive." Friends must walk together; they cannot long stand still together, for that means death to the friendship and to life.

Friendship with God is the friendship of a child with parents. As an ideal Son grows daily into a closer relationship with his father, so we may grow into closer love with God by widening into His interests, and thinking His thoughts and sharing His enterprises.

Far more than any other device of God to create love was the Cross—where the most loving person the world has known hangs loving through all his pain. That Cross has become the symbol of love for a third of the world because it catches the deepest depths of human love.

January 2nd 1932

Here is something we can share with all the people in the world. They cannot all be brilliant or rich or beautiful. They cannot all even dream beautiful dreams like God gives some of us. They cannot all enjoy music. Their hearts do not all burn with love. But everybody can learn to hold God. And when God is ready to speak, the fresh thoughts of heaven will flow in like a crystal spring. Everybody rests at the end of the day. What a gain if everybody could rest in the waiting arms of the Father, and listen until He whispers.¹

¹ Frank Laubach Practicing His Presence

CLOSING PRAISE

The Act Of Divine Magnification

1. End your prayer with specific praise concerning God's greatness. Focus your praise on His omnipotence (power), His omniscience (knowledge), and His omnipresence (presence).
2. With the Psalmist let us praise God because He has done it. Look back at the devotional hour and praise God for hearing each of your requests.
3. Let your spirit rejoice for a few moments at the close of prayer. Repeat the universal word for praise, Hallelujah!
4. As Martin Luther suggested, when your devotional hour concludes make your amen strong. Confess with authority that you believe God is trustworthy.

When Mary received word she would give birth to the Son of God, divine worship exploded from her lips: My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. . . For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and Holy is His name (Luke 1:46-49).

As we come to these final moments of prayer, the soul pauses to contemplate the awesome wonder of God's being. We vocally magnify the nature of God.

Praise in the closet also prepares us to conquer our foes outside the closet.

Perhaps the greatest secret to learn about prayer is how to maintain a devotional attitude after the devotional hour concludes. We must learn to take the spirit of praise with us from the prayer closet.

Andrew Murray Let us be careful to consider not only the length of the time we spend with God in prayer, but the power with which our prayer takes possession of our whole life.

Spiritual power is not the power of prayer, but is the power of God realized in action through a man in the attitude of prayer.

Martin Luther Mark this! Make your amen strong, never doubting that God is surely listening to you. This is what amen means: That I know with certainty that this prayer has been heard by God.

Our goal beyond the closet is to magnify God's name in all we do.

LORD, TEACH ME TO MAGNIFY YOU!

Lord, Teach Me To Recognize The Worth Of My Prayers!¹

¹ The Hour That Changes the World, Dick Eastman

Listening

Section 7

LISTENING

The Act Of Mental Absorption

- 1. In the listening time of prayer do not hesitate to ask God very specific questions about difficult problems or situations.**
- 2. Search Scriptures for specific answers to your questions. God most often speaks through His Word.**
- 3. Mentally evaluate all circumstances that relate to a problem. Ask God to show you His plan through those circumstances.**
- 4. Be prepared to write down any ideas God may share concerning the details of solving that particular problem.**

Prayer is the soul's pilgrimage from self to God; and the most effectual remedy for self-love and self-absorption is the habit of humble listening.

Waiting is to thoughtfully focus attention on God in a love relationship. It is a time of resting silently in God's love.

On the other hand, meditation is a very careful exploration of a particular spiritual theme.

Though closely related to both, listening is an element of prayer that stands alone.

To listen in prayer is to mentally absorb divine instructions from God concerning specific matters for that day.

Not only did Jesus say He would enter the open door of a person's heart, but He promised to sup with that person as well (Rev. 3:20). To sup means to have fellowship.

Much of our praying consists of asking instead of supping. Prayer often becomes one-sided and self-centered. Our prayer should be a conversation, one in which we listen as much as we speak.

To be like Jesus is to be a listener, especially in prayer. The desire of Jesus was to do the will of His Father. To find His Father's will Jesus spent whole nights listening.

J. R. Miller Quietness in a man or a women is a mark of strength. Noise is not eloquence. Loudness is not power. In all the departments of life, it is the quiet forces that effect most. Therefore, if we would be strong, we must learn to be quiet. A quiet heart will give a quiet life.

LISTENING IMPLIES CONFIDENCE THAT GOD TRULY DESIRES TO SPEAK TO US.

Alan Redpath Sometimes I wonder if our devotions are not the greatest barrier to spiritual growth, because they are so often just one sided – it is our praying, it is our talking, our bible study, our effort. How long is it since you sat down with great delight in His presence and were conscious that He was flooding your heart and speaking with you?

Only as we learn to hear the voice of the Father can we learn to dispel the voice of the world.

Donald E. Demaray Individual guidance from God, received in prayer, is of vital importance. And how easy to listen to your own voice pressing you to do selfish things! But it is the voice of God – the inner voice – we must learn to hear. The regular quiet time is the laboratory for developing that capacity to hear. In the course of the busy day, too, we will hear His voice, but it is in the stillness of the prayer closet that the gift of listening is given and received.

John Anthony Hanne There were men like Aaron who were eloquent preachers, men like Korah who were natural leaders, but only one man that recognized that he couldn't lead unless God first spoke to him and then spoke through him. Day after day for 40 years, dwelling upon what God had said, Moses listened and so spoke. Small wonder that through Moses came more of the Bible than any other man.

Awesome power awaits the Christian who develops a listener's spirit.

What is the price of silence, but the gift of self to God. It is to shut our eyes to what the world considers important and listen only to the Holy Spirit's call.

The price of silence is also time, much time given to the practice of listening.

Prayer of positive, creative quality needs a background of silence, and until we are prepared to practice this silence, we need not hope to know the power of prayer.

F. W. Faber Whenever the sounds of the world die out in the soul, then we hear the whisperings of God. He is always whispering to us, only we don't always hear because of the noise, hurry and distractions.

How will God speak during these times of stillness? Often His whisperings come in the form of a quiet impression on the heart.

On other occasions there is no inner voice to guide us, yet we sense God's presence gently leading. We know that to move in a certain direction will please God, and so we follow this quiet leading.

Most often God speaks through His Word. In fact, all forms of guidance must be measured by Scripture. Guidance contrary to God's Word is guidance originating from another source.

During the listening aspect of prayer you may wish to keep a note tablet handy to record these impressions concerning your day. The value of having paper and pen is that it displays faith. It says to God, I believe you will truly speak to me, and I have come prepared to record your instructions.

LORD, TEACH ME TO LISTEN

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Jan. 20th, 1930

Although I have been minister and missionary for 15 years, I have not lived the entire day of every day, minute by minute to follow the will of

God. But this year I have started out to live all my waking moments in conscious listening to the inner voice, asking without ceasing. "What, Father, do you desire said? What, Father, do you desire this minute?"

Jan.26, 1930

Yesterday and today I have made a new adventure, which is not easy to express. I am feeling God in each moment, by impact of the will -- willing that he should direct these fingers that now strike this typewriter -- willing that he should pour through my steps as I walked -- willing that he should direct my words as I speak, and my very jaws as I eat!

It is exactly that "moment by moment," every waking moments, surrender, responsiveness, obedience, sensitiveness, pliability, "lost in His love," that I now have the mind-bent to explore with all my might, to respond to Jesus Christ as a violin responds to the bow of the master.

If we are so impoverished that we have nothing to reveal but small talk, then we need to struggle for more richness of soul.

Open your soul and entertain the glory of God and after awhile that glory will be reflected in the world about you and in the very clouds above your head.

Jan. 29, 1930

My mind's heart is to live this hour in continuous inner conversation with God and in perfect responsiveness to His will, to make this hour gloriously rich.

Mar. 1st, 1930

The sense of being led by an unseen hand which takes mine while another hand reaches ahead and prepares the way, grows upon me daily. This is more than surrender. I had that before. More than listening to God. I tried that before. I cannot find a word that will mean to you or to me what I am now experiencing. It is an act of the will. I can tell my mind to open straight out towards God. I wait and listen with determined sensitiveness. I fixed my attention there, and sometimes it requires a long time early in the morning. I determined not to get out of bed until that mind set upon the Lord is settled.

Because I feel convinced that for me, and for you who read, there lies ahead undiscovered continents of spiritual living compared with which we are infants in arms.

I would find God's will and I would do that will though every fiber in me says no, and I would win the battle in my thoughts.

Mar. 9th, 1930

I know why God left this aching void - for himself to fill. Off on this mountain I must pursue this voyage of discovery in quest of God's will.

Mar. 15th, 1930

How infinitely richer this direct first hand grasping of God Himself is, than the old method which I used and recommended for years, the reading of endless devotional books. Almost it seems to mean now that the very Bible cannot be read as a substitute for meeting God soul-to-soul and face-to-face. And yet, how was this new closeness achieved? Ah, I know now that it was by cutting the very heart of my heart and by suffering. Somebody was telling me this week that nobody can make a violin speak the last depths of human longing until the soul has been made tender by some great anguish. I do not say it is the only way to the heart of God, but I must witness that it has opened an inner shrine for me which I never entered before.

Mar. 23rd 1930

Someone may be saying that this introspection and this struggle to achieve God-consciousness is abnormal and perilous. I'm going to take the risk, for somebody ought to do it. If our religious premises are correct at all then this oneness with God is the most normal condition one can have. It is what made Christ, Christ. It is what Saint Augustine meant when he said "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our souls are restless until they find their rest in Thee."

I do not invite anybody else to follow this arduous path. I wish many might. We need to know so much which one man alone cannot answer.

Is this attainable?

Any hour of any day may be made perfect by merely choosing. It is perfect if one looks towards God that entire hour, waiting for His leadership all through the hour and trying hard to do every tiny thing exactly as God wishes it done, as perfectly as possible. No emotions are necessary. Just the doing of God's will perfectly makes the hour a perfect one.

May 14, 1930

Now I like the Lord's presence so much that when for a half hour or so he slips out of mind - as he does many times a day - I feel as though I had deserted him, and as though I had lost something very precious in my life.

August 21st, 1930

Here I was, engaging in the most glorious action of all human and of all superhuman life -- I was communing with the very God of the universe Himself. He was showing me His very heart, even the Angels can do no more than this.

Mar. 3rd 1931

Oh, if we only let God have His full chance He will break our heart with the glory of His revelation. It is my business to look into the very face of God until I ache with bliss. That is how I feel this morning after two hours with God. And now on this "mount of transfiguration" I do not ever want to leave.

September 18th, 1931

I choose to look at people through God, using God as my glasses, colored with His love for them.

Last year, as you know, I decided to try to keep the Lord in mind all the time. That was rather easy for a lonesome man in a strange land. It has always been easier for the shepherds, and the monks, and the anchorites than for people surrounded by crowds.

But today it is an altogether different thing. I am no longer lonesome. The hours of the day from dawn to bedtime are spent in the presence of others. Either this new situation will crowd God out or I must take Him into it all. I must learn a continuous silent conversation of heart to heart speaking with God while looking into other eyes and listening to other voices.

October 11th, 1931

There are three questions, which we may ask: "do you believe in God?" That is not getting very far. "The devils believe and tremble."

Second, "are you acquainted with God?" We are acquainted with people with whom we have had some business dealings.

Third, "is God your friend?" Or putting this another way. "Do you love God?"

It is this third stage that is really vital. How is it to be achieved? Precisely as any friendships achieved by doing things together. The depth and intensity of the friendship will depend upon the variety and extent of the things we do and enjoy together. Will the friendship be consistent? That again depends upon the permanence of our common interests, and upon whether or not our interests grow into ever-widening circles, so that we do not stagnate. The highest friendship demands growth. "It must be Progressive as life itself is Progressive." Friends must walk together; they cannot long stand still together, for that means death to the friendship and to life.

Friendship with God is the friendship of a child with parents. As an ideal Son grows daily into a closer relationship with his father, so we may grow into closer love with God by widening into His interests, and thinking His thoughts and sharing His enterprises.

Far more than any other device of God to create love was the Cross, where the most loving person the world has known hangs loving through all his pain. That Cross has become the symbol of love for a third of the world because it catches the deepest depths of human love.

January 2nd 1932

Here is something we can share with all the people in the world. They cannot all be brilliant or rich or beautiful. They cannot all even dream beautiful dreams like God gives some of us. They cannot all enjoy music. Their hearts do not all burn with love. But everybody can learn to hold God. And when God is ready to speak, the fresh thoughts of heaven will flow in like a crystal spring. Everybody rests at the end of the day. What a gain if everybody could rest in the waiting arms of the Father, and listen until He whispers.¹

¹ Frank Laubach Practicing His Presence

LISTENING

Hugh Feiss Obedience (ob-audire) is related to listening (audire). It is only when I remind myself that obedience is ob-audien, listening intently to God rather than listening to my own self.

Silent Adoration

**I wait quietly before God . . . I wait quietly before God,
For my hope is in him.
Psalm 62:1,5**

Andrew Murray When we in our littleness and God in His Glory meet, we all understand that what God says has infinitely more worth than what a person says. And yet our prayer so often consists of what we need that we give God no time to speak to us.

It is a great lesson to learn that to be silent before God is the secret of true adoration. It is only as the soul bows itself before Him in honor and reverence that the heart will be opened to receive the divine impression of the nearness of God and of the working of His power.

Such worship of God is the surest way to give Him the glory that is due Him. It will lead to blessedness that can only be found in quiet prayer. Do not think that it is time lost. Do not abandon it if at first it appears difficult or fruitless. Be assured that it brings you into the right relationship with God. It opens the way to fellowship with Him. It leads to the blessed assurance that He is looking on you in tender love and working in you with a divine power. As you become more accustomed to it, you will experience His presence abiding with you all day long, and people will begin to sense that you have been with God.

Douglas V. Steere If we are sensitive and listening, there comes clear insight of things to be done. Often they come in that receptive silent waiting after we have opened our needs and where we do nothing but wait for direction . . . The Quakers have called this concerns. They lack a word for the tiny promptings, the gentle whispers . . . Adoration is looking back.

Frank Lauback Submission is the first and last duty of men. This year I have started out trying to live all my waking moments in conscious listening to the inner voice, asking without ceasing, "What Father do you want said? What Father do you desire done this minute?" I'm feeling God in each movement, by an act of will. My part is to live in this hour in continuous inner conversation with God and in perfect responsiveness to his will, to make this hour gloriously rich. This seems to be all I need to think about. I determine not to get out of bed until that mind set, that concentration upon God, is settled. Oh, this thing of keeping in constant touch with God, making him the object of my thought and the companion of my conversations, is the most amazing thing I ever ran across. It is working. Now I like God's presence so much that when for a half hour or so he slips out of mind – I feel as though I had deserted him, and as though I had lost something very precious in my life.

Henri Nouwen A spiritual life without discipline is impossible. The practice of a spiritual discipline makes us more sensitive to the small, gentle voice of God, and we are willing to respond when we hear it.

Ben Campbell Johnson How often we forget that speech defines the character of this one who inhabits the Beyond. God is the God who speaks. If we are to believe the biblical record, this self-communicating God takes the initiative to engage us and speak words we need to hear.

Listeners for God must always have an ear cocked, we might say, to learn the language of the One who continually speaks. Very soon we will discover that the solitary God engages us in dialogical speech. God is the One who not only speaks but also listens.

Solitary Speech

On the opening page of the Bible, we encounter God's solitary speech. Without provocation from anything or anyone, this lone Voice spoke (Gen. 1:3-5).

How is it that we so easily shrug off this solitary speech that comes spontaneously and so powerfully? Perhaps the Voice

fails to get our attention because we expect a noisy display. Yet when God spoke at creation, there was no sound at all. And when God spoke at the Baptism, no one heard the Voice but Jesus.

Do we not also have these gentle, frequent, and spontaneous intrusions into our consciousness? Is this not one of the ways God speaks to us if we are listening?

Dialogical Speech

God speaks through the deep, inward impressions of the soul but also in response to our direct questions and concerns. The whole Bible has been written on the premise that vital religion consists of an ongoing dialogue between God and humankind. I like to think of the Spirit as the universal presence of Christ. The resurrection of Christ liberated him from the bonds of time, and the ascension liberated him from the limitations of space. The pouring forth of the Spirit through the cosmos suggests that the risen Lord fills all time and every place. This presence makes possible our continuous dialogue with him.

This dialogical communication does still occur today. When persons are willing to set aside time, quiet themselves, and offer themselves to God in conversation, God's speech can be heard.

Prophetic Speech

This is where I am today (Jim Logan) I believe God can lay things upon your heart like cautions, or check my spirit about choices I'm about to make but I cannot go as far as the writer of this section goes.

Liturgical Speech

I first began to notice the divine Voice in liturgical speech through the reading of the Psalms. In an effort to place myself before God during worship, I listen for an invitation from God in the call to worship, whether spoken or sung. My favorite call to worship comes from Psalm 100: 4,5 "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures

forever, and his faithfulness to all generations". I try to think of these words as the Lord's invitation to me to come before him. After the confession of sin, when the minister speaks the words of assurance, I listen for the Voice of Christ saying to me once again. "Your sins are forgiven!" And as the service of worship closes, I listen for the blessing of God in the words of the benediction. During this final blessing I open my arms to receive it from God, and at the conclusion of the benediction, I often fold my arms and hands over my chest to symbolically press it into my being.

The God who speaks, speaks in the ordinary events and interactions of the day. What excitement this adds to a routine day! (Jim Logan) When you pray for this to happen (that is, to see God in the ordinary), you will see He was already there but you weren't looking.

How can I live faithfully each day before God? What help can you give me in being alert to the spirit? The first suggestion he gave me was from an old novice master, perhaps the one who had introduced him to the way of monastic life. He said "Believe that everything that happens in your life happens for your good or God's glory. But you must take everything in this light, for one denial breaks everything down. He suggested that I pray the Serenity Prayer daily: God give me the grace to accept things I cannot change, the power to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Finally he drew from St. Teresa. We all need two senses: a sense of faith and a sense of humor. If we awake up without a sense of faith, then we must lean on our sense of humor. If we awake without a sense of humor, then we must lean on our sense of faith. Accepting every aspect of life, regularly praying for such acceptance, and developing the two senses we most need will keep us joyously in the present.¹

SECRET SORROWS, SECRET JOYS

Oswald Chambers

What is the sign of a friend? That he tells you secret sorrows? No, that he tells you secret joys. Many will confide to you their

¹ Ben Campbell Johnson Living before God

secret sorrows, but the last mark of intimacy is to confide secret joys. Have we ever let God tell us any of his joys, or are we telling God our secrets so continually that we leave no room for him to talk to us? At the beginning of our Christian life we are full of requests to God, then we find that God wants to get us into relationship with himself, to get us in touch with his purposes. Are we so wedded to Jesus Christ's idea of prayer – "Thy will be done" – that we catch the secrets of God? The things that make God dear to us are not so much his great big blessings as the tiny things, because they show his amazing intimacy with us. He knows every detail of our individual lives.

Solitude – In the Garden of Solitude where we listen for the voice of God we must be able to discern both voices, God and satan.

Listening – God's first act in the Bible was to speak and no one was there to hear.

God is the God who speaks.

God spoke in the darkness; the result was light.

Is God speaking today and there is no one to hear.

St. Augustine tells us that we pray not only to Him, but with Him. He is the one who prays within us. If you listen you will be able to hear now and then the Holy Spirit responding to the Father and Son within you.

Listening accurately is simple, but not easy.²

Silent Listening Before God

2 Cor. 6:16

After worshipping God in prayer with praise and thanksgiving, prepare yourself for intercessory prayer by waiting on God in meditative, prayerful Bible study.

One reason why the discipline of prayer is not attractive is that people do not know how to pray. Their stock of words is soon exhausted, and they do not know what else to say. This

² Listening At Prayer Benedict J. Groeschel

happens because they forget that prayer is not a soliloquy where everything comments from one side, but it is a dialogue where God's child listens to what the Father says, replies to it, and then asks for the things he needs.

Read a few verses from the Bible. Do not concern yourself with different parts of them; you can consider these later. Take what you understand, apply it to yourself, and ask the Father to make His Word light and power in your heart. Thus you'll have material enough for prayer from the Word which the Father speaks to you. You also have the liberty to ask for things you need.

Keep on this way, and prayer will become at length, not a place where you sigh and struggle, but a place of living fellowship with the Father in heaven. Prayerful study of the Bible is indispensable for powerful prayer. The Word prayerfully read and cherished in the heart by faith will, through the Spirit, be both light and life within us.

Lord, I need to hear from you before bringing my request to you. Teach me to listen to You as I read Your Word. Amen. Andrew Murray³

Prayer and God's Word

Isa. 66:1 -- 2

Many of us are so occupied with how much or how little we have to say in our prayers that the voice of One speaking is never heard because it is not expected or waited for. We need to get into the right frame of mind and have a listening attitude.

In regard to the connection between prayer and the Word of God in our private devotions, this expression has often been quoted: "I pray, I speak to God; I read the Bible, God speaks to me." We need to ask how our Scripture reading and prayer can become Fellowship with God.

A prayerful Spirit is the Spirit to which God will speak. Prayer prepares the heart for receiving the Word from God Himself, for the teaching of the Spirit to give the spiritual understanding of it, for the faith that is made part of its mighty working.

³ The Best of Andrew Murray

In God's Word I read what God will do in me, how God would have me to come to Him in prayer, the assurance that I will be heard, and what God will do in the world. A prayerful Spirit will be a listening Spirit waiting to hear what God says and true communion with God, His presence and the part He takes must be as real as my own.

Let us prepare ourselves to pray with the heart that humbly waits to hear God speak. The greatest blessing and prayer will be our ceasing to pray to let God speak.

My Lord, I come to You with anticipation. I have "ears to hear." I will obey. Amen. Andrew Murray⁴

To listen requires a quieting of our own interest and experiences so that we can become open not only in that particular relationship. Heneri Nouwen writes, "Real training for service asks for a hard and often painful process of self-emptying. The main problem of service is to be the way without being in the way."⁵

"I don't say anything," said an old Irish peasant about his quiet, solitary visits to the church. "I just look at God, and He looks at me." He was practicing the ancient, contemplative Prayer of Simple Regard (also known as centering prayer) by turning his heart and soul toward God.⁶

Archbishop Anthony Bloom "So when we think of the absence of God, is it not worthwhile to ask ourselves whom we blame for it? We always blame God, we always accuse Him, either straight to His face or in front of people, of being absent, of never being there when He is needed, never answering when He is addressed. At times we are more 'pious' (very much in quotes), and we say piously 'God is testing my patience, my faith, my humility.' We find all sorts of ways of turning God's judgments on us into a new way of pleasing ourselves. We are so patient that we can even put up with God."⁷

⁴ The Best of Andrew Murray

⁵ The Spiritual Formation Bible

⁶ The Spiritual Formation Bible

⁷ The Spiritual Formation Bible

Abbe De Tourville “How beautiful obedience is. For it alone silences doubt, preserves our stability and presence of mind, our freedom of heart and firmness of will in the midst of all that might shake or disturb us. Unless we constantly bring ourselves back to Obedience, we loose our heads, and that which should be a blessing becomes a torment and a curse. We lose all sense of where we stand.”⁸

SPEAKING THROUGH THE LESSER MESSENGERS

I must already now begin to speak about the fourth part of praying – our listening – even while I’m still discussing the third part, God’s speaking. This is where our faith becomes important, for God will hear all prayers, whether by those who believe in him or by those who do not. And God will speak his response to every prayer. Every prayer!

But if we are not prepared to listen to God – to anything God might choose to say, for it is the Lord who is God, after all, and not we ourselves – then we will miss his speaking. And then it will seem to us that God didn’t answer our prayer at all. But faith trusts enough to wait upon the speaking of the Lord. Faith believes that the God of creation will speak through his creation in multitude of means.

Faith, moreover, is a way of being: it is being in such relationship with the Lord, that we become willing to pay a continual attention to him.

What room may be furnished more beautifully than the heart where prayer is? For in that room God is.

Whole prayer grows into the wholeness of divine relationship.⁹

Francois Fenelon God never ceases to speak to us, but the noise of the world without, and the tumult of our passions within, bewilder us, and prevent us from listening to Him.

To truly listen to God we must quiet our hearts and minds in His presence. In such a peaceful atmosphere we see our awesome

⁸ The Spiritual Formation Bible

⁹ Whole Prayer, Walter Wangerin Jr.

God in all His glory. A single glimpse of His glory causes us to remain quiet in His presence, to listen reverently for His voice.¹⁰

Andrew Murray Listening to God's voice is the secret of the assurance that he will listen to mine.

God says: "be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). The Bible says: "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him" (Habakkuk 2:20). It also commands: "Be still before the Lord, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling" (Zechariah 2:13).

Furthermore, as we have seen repeatedly, Worship takes time. You cannot "gaze upon the beauty of the Lord" (Psalm 27:4) while you also gaze at your watch. You cannot "meditate on [His] unfailing love" (Psalm 48:9) while you also meditate on tomorrow's deadlines. The reason God desires our Worship is because He desires a personal relationship with each of his children.¹¹

Tozer, When God spoke out of heaven to our Lord, self-centered men who heard it explained it by natural causes, saying, "It thundered." The habit of explaining the Voice by appeals to natural law is at the very root of modern science. In the living, breathing cosmos there is a mysterious Something, too wonderful, too awful for any mind to understand. He falls to his knees and whispers, "God." The man of earth kneels also, but not to worship. He kneels to examine, to search, to find the cause and the how of things. Just now we happen to be living in a secular age. Our thought habits are those of the scientist, not those of the worshipper. We are more likely to explain than to adore. "It thundered," we explain, and go our earthly way. But still the Voice sounds and searches. The order and life of the world depend upon that voice, but men are mostly too busy or too stubborn to give attention.

Prayer

Lord teach me to listen. The times are noisy and my ears are weary with the thousand raucous sounds which continuously

¹⁰ Prayer Keys, Clift & Kathleen Richards

¹¹ Worship A Way Of Life, Patrick Kavanaugh

assault them. Give me the spirit of the boy Samuel when he said to Thee, "Speak for thy servant heareth." Let me hear Thee speaking in my heart. Let me get used to the sound of Thy voice, that its tones may be familiar when the sounds of the earth die away and the only sound will be the music of Thy speaking voice. Amen.¹²

¹² Reflections on the Word, Ken Gire

LISTENING WITH THE HEART

“Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying. This is the way; walk in it.” Isaiah 30:21

In Meditative Prayer God is always addressing our will. Christ confronts us and asks us to choose. Having heard His voice, we are to obey His word. It is this ethical call to repentance, to change, to obedience that most clearly distinguishes Christian meditation from its Eastern and secular counterparts. In Meditative Prayer there is no loss of identity, no merging with the cosmic consciousness, no fanciful astral travel. Rather, we are called to life-transforming obedience because we have encountered the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Christ is truly present among us to heal us to ,forgive us, to change us, to empower us.

There is a technical word for what I have been describing, and it might be helpful for you to know it – *lectio divina* (divine reading). This is a kind of reading in which the mind descends into the heart, and both are drawn into the love and goodness of God. Henri Nouwen once pointed to a lovely picture hanging in his apartment and said to me, “That is *lectio divina*.” It depicted a woman with an open Bible in her lap, but her eyes were lifted upward. Do you get the idea? We are doing more than reading words; we are seeking “the Word exposed in the words,” to use the phrase of Karl Barth. We are listening with the heart to the Holy within. This prayerful reading as we call it, edifies us and strengthens us.

The Sacrament of the Word

Today, O Lord, I’m listening to the proclamation of the Word. Help me to listen with the heart and the will as I do with the head. Amen.¹

¹ Richard J. Foster, Prayers from the Heart

HEARING GOD'S VOICE

Elizabeth Alves - "When we communicate, we listen with our hearts to the one who is speaking and then respond."

God wants to speak to you personally. He wants you to hear His voice. (Jn. 10:3-5) He desires to teach you (Ps. 32:8), lead you into the truth and show you things to come. (Jn. 16:13-15) He speaks to you through the person of the Holy Spirit. (Ezek. 36:27; Jn. 14:16,17)

Jesus calls the Holy Spirit counselor. (Isa. 9:6; Jn. 14:16-17; 2 Tim. 3:16) You need not be afraid of the voice of the Holy Spirit. He never moves outside of the character of the Lord and is always in harmony with the Word of God. He is your friend who is called to walk beside you and communicate with you. His is not a silent friendship. (Ps. 28:1, 37:3; Jn. 12:49, 14:26)

God wants to instruct. (Ps. 21:2, 119:169) Hearing God's voice can become an everyday experience if you spend time with Him in study, meditation and memorizing Scripture. (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 119:11,16) Then when you hear His voice, you know that it is the Lord because it is in agreement with the Word of God. The more you know His Word, the more you will also understand His character and His ways. (Ex. 33:13; Ps. 25:4, 103:7)

TESTING THE VOICE

1. The voice of the Holy Spirit gently leads. The voice of Satan is commanding and harsh. (Ps. 18:35; Isa. 40:11; Jas. 3:17)
2. God leads; Satan drives. (Jn. 10:4,10)
3. God convicts; Satan condemns and brings guilt. (Jn. 16:8-11; Rev. 12:10)
4. God does not use fear to motivate us. If fear overcomes you, it is the enemy. (2 Tim. 1:7)

A good verse: Proverbs 4:20,21

GUIDELINES FOR HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

1. Bind the voice of the enemy. (Matt. 16:19; Jn. 14:26, 15:26,27, 16:13-15; Jas. 4:7,8; I Pet. 5:8,9)
2. Submit your own will and reasoning to the Holy Spirit. (Ps. 119:104,125; Pr. 3:5, 16:3; I Cor. 2:14-16; Jas. 4:7,8)
3. Turn off your own problems. (Ps. 37:5, 42:5, 43:5; Pr. 3:5, 14:30; Isa. 26:3; Phil. 2:4 Phil. 4:6,7; I Pet. 5:7)

4. Give your undivided attention to God's Word. Focus your mind on what He is saying: hearing is passive while listening is active. This will require mental effort and attention. Satan will fight you on this because the more revelation of God's Word you have, the more of a threat you will be to the kingdom of darkness. (Ps. 37:7; Pr. 4:4, 20,23; I Cor. 2:10-12; 2 Cor. 10:5)
5. Limit your own talking. After you have petitioned the Lord, take time to be still and wait upon Him. (Num. 9:8; Ps. 18:28, 27:14, 31:34, 37:5; Song of Sol. 2:14)
6. Write it down. Listen to your inner thoughts and ideas. When God speaks, write it down. You will see after a while it will fit a pattern. (Ex. 17:14; Ps. 16:7, 36:8b, 9, 37:5, 77:6, Pr. 9:10, 16:3,9; I Cor. 2:9-16) Continue to pray and see answers to your prayers.
7. Don't argue mentally. (I.e. "It's just me" etc.) Check your notes. God will give you confirmation from previous times with Him. (Isa. 46:10,11; Jn. 16:13; I Cor. 2:16; 2 Cor. 13:1b; Phil. 2:5)
8. Wait upon the Lord for the interpretation. Don't try to figure out impressions when you receive them. Wait upon the timing and wisdom of the Lord. (Ps. 27:14, 37:7; Pr. 2:6, 16:3; Dan. 2:22,23,28,30; Jn. 10:4; Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:9)
9. Don't get ahead of or lag behind the Holy Spirit. Let Him develop the thoughts He gives you. Wait until you know He is through. Don't make things happen. (Pr. 16:9; Jer. 10:23; I Cor. 4:5a; 2 Cor. 4:6; 2 Pet. 3:9a)
10. Be trustworthy. The more He can trust you with deep and intimate things, the more He will entrust to you. (Gen. 18:17-19; Num. 12:7,8; Ps. 25:14; Isa. 45:3)
11. The Holy Spirit speaks through music. If God places a song in your mind, listen to the message God is speaking. (Ex. 15:1; 2 Chron. 20:21,22; Ps. 32:7b, 40:3, 42:8, 138:5; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
12. Pay attention to your dreams. Not all dreams are of God. Those that are will stand out and leave a deeper impression on you. Write them down and what you think they mean to you. (Job 33:14-16; Dan. 2:19-23, 4:18, 7:1,2,7,13, 9:21,22, 10:14,21; Matt. 1:20, 2:13)
13. Don't be afraid of silence. Just worship the Lord. He just desires that you come and bask in His presence because you love Him and want to be with Him. Be still and know that He is God. (Ps. 45:11, 46:10, 96:9; Song of Sol. 1:4; Isa. 12:2,3, 30:15, 50:10)

LISTENING AND GUIDANCE

We have been created to be in a listening relationship to God. As we draw near to God, we begin to hear His voice and receive affirmation, encouragement, correction, and direction for our lives. (John 10:14-16, 27) We listen in order to receive guidance. The outcome of a close relationship with God is guidance and invitation into partnership with Him. Jesus believed that listening was fundamental to the Christian life and a natural consequence of a deepening relationship with God. (John 8:47) Hearing from God is the work of the Holy Spirit who makes God's will clear to us as we engage in the discipline of listening and guidance. (John 14:26)

G. Campbell Morgan encourages us to wait for such guidance. "To the individual believer who is, by the very fact of relationship to Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit...there is granted the least impression of the Spirit of God on the spirit of man, imparting the knowledge of His will in matters of the smallest and greatest importance. This has to be sought and waited for."

Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians emphasizes that it is the Holy Spirit who reveals the deep things of God to us. As we pray, we must expect that answers will come as the Holy Spirit guides us to Scripture or through circumstances or wise counsel or through personal words or a divine encounter.

OUR PART IN LISTENING AND GUIDANCE

As you are becoming a Spirit-empowered person, entering into that experience of His leading, there are several things you can do to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the process of listening and guidance.

1. Let the Holy Spirit build in you a desire to be yielded and obedient to God's will and plans. (I Sam. 15:22; Rom. 12:1,2; Ps. 81:11-13; John 14:21)
2. Starting where you are, seek after God with your whole heart, striving to know Him intimately. (Jer. 29:13)
3. Resolve to want to glorify God and bring honor to His great name in all things in your life. (I Cor. 10:31)
4. Be alert and sensitive at all times for the Spirit's prompting. Seek guidance from God, watch for it, expect it. Remember that the Holy Spirit is your teacher. (John 14:26)
5. Take time daily to listen and be in conversation with God. (Luke 5:16) Get into the habit of asking questions like, "What are you doing, Lord? What do you want me to see and understand in my current circumstances?" Keep a journal of such

daily conversations with God.

6. Wait for confirmation. "Test everything". (1 Thess. 5:21) God isn't in a hurry. Trust that He will confirm His will through Scripture, wise counsel, and circumstances.
7. Take steps to respond obediently to the guidance you receive, trusting that God will provide confirmation and blessing. (James 1:22; 2:17)

MEANS OF GUIDANCE

The Holy Spirit usually works through the following means of guidance: The Bible, God's Word. There are times when God reveals Himself by an angel or special manifestation of Himself. (Dan. 9:20-23; Acts 8:26,29; 9:3-6; 11:21; Ezra 7:28) This brief review of the means of guidance reminds us that we are meant to be in a listening relationship with God. God can and will speak to us. Matt. 28:20

RIGHT NOW

Take a few moments to listen to God. Prepare your heart by turning any problems over to Him. Your part is to wait upon Him and listen. Simply ask the Lord how He is praying for you, how He is at work in your life. (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34) Take notes.

IN THE COMING DAYS AND WEEKS

1. Put aside a few minutes each day this week to listen to God through His Word. (Ps. 139:23-24) Praying and listening through the Word will lead to praying about God's desires for your life.
2. Set aside an hour or more one day, write down examples of ways God has spoken to you and guided you in the past.
3. Practice the presence of God. Be attentive to how God is working and speaking in all that is happening around you.
4. As you intercede for others, do not assume you already know what to pray for. Listen for the prompting of the Spirit for ways you can help, encourage, and meet needs.
5. Gather with other Christians to wait upon the Lord, seeking God's mind about

a matter of concern for your church or community. All prompting from the Spirit must be tested and be confirmed by the Word, by circumstances, by inner convictions, and by the community of believers.

Thomas A. Kempis... "I will listen to what the Lord God says in me. That soul is blessed who God speaks to primarily through His Word, as we read and meditate upon it. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jn. 14:26; Ps. 119:105)

Prayer - Conversation with God

Prayer is not just talking to God but dialogue with God. We listen for and hear God's voice in the midst of prayer. (Eph. 6:18; Jas. 1:5; Matt. 7:7-8; Phil. 4:6-7)

Godly Counsel

God often speaks to us through the wise counsel of mature Christian believers, people who walk closely with God and who know Him intimately. (Pr. 15:22)

Providential Circumstances

God can work through even our most difficult circumstances to guide us in a particular direction. (Acts 8:1, 4-5)

Sanctified Common Sense

God works through our reason in bringing us to a decision. Even when it seems He has not spoken clearly...use our best common sense to choose the alternative that will bring glory to God as the Holy Spirit leads us. (I Cor. 10:31)

Inner Witness and Peace

Generally the Holy Spirit confirms God's will to us by giving peace in our hearts. (Col. 3:15)

Visions and Dreams

God has spoken to His people through visions and dreams in the past, and we believe He continues to do so in the present. (Dan. 2:19; Acts 9:10-16; 10:9-23; 18:9-10)

Nature

There are times when God touches us afresh and guides us through some part of the beauty of His creation. (Rom. 1:20; Ps. 19:1-4)

Heavenly Visitation, or the Hand of the Lord

One hears the Lord speaking and inwardly receives His words of comfort. Blessed are the ears that hear the divine whisper and ignore the murmuring of the world. Truly blessed are the ears that listen to no external voice, but to the truth that is taught within. Blessed are the eyes that are closed, focusing inward on eternal things. Blessed are the ones who can enter deeply within themselves, who prepare themselves more and more, by daily exercises, to receive heavenly secrets. Think about these things, o my soul, and close the door on your physical senses, that you may hear what God says within you. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening. I am your servant; help me to know and understand what you are saying. Let your teaching distill like dew. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening. You have the words of eternal life. Speak to me. Comfort my soul. Transform my life. I will give praise, glory, and honor to you always.

FOOD FOR THE INNER MAN...GEORGE MUELLER

The most important thing I had to do was to read the Word of God and to meditate on it. Thus my heart would be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprov'd, and instructed.

Formerly, when I rose, I began to pray as soon as possible. But I often spent a quarter of an hour to an hour on my knees struggling to pray while my mind wandered. Now I rarely have this problem. As my heart is nourished by the truth of the Word, I am brought into true fellowship with God. I speak to my Father and to my Friend (although I am unworthy) about the things that He has brought before me in His precious Word.

It often astonishes me that I did not see the importance of meditation upon Scriptures earlier in my Christian life. As the outward man is not fit for work for any length of time unless he eats, so it is with the inner man. What is the food for the inner man? Not prayer, but the Word of God — not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds just as water runs through a pipe. No, we must consider what we read, ponder over it, and apply it to our hearts...

Meditation on God's Word has given me the help and strength to pass peacefully through deep trials. What a difference there is where the soul is refreshed in fellowship with God early in the morning! Without spiritual preparation, the service, the trials, and the temptation of the day can be overwhelming.

LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF GOD

Roger Barrier

Hearing from God precludes the possibility we can remain the same. The “want to” issue of hearing God speak must be settled before the “how to” part can draw us closer to God. It is hard to want to listen to God when I sense He intends to say things I don’t want to hear.

God spoke to Hosea, “Go marry a prostitute”. “God, I am a preacher. I can’t marry her. She will ruin my ministry.” The truth is, she made his ministry. But hearing God speak cost him a lot. She broke his heart.

God spoke to Jeremiah, “Do you want to hear me speak?” People cursed him, mocked him, tossed him in jail and bound him in chains. They threw him in cisterns and beat him senseless. They humiliated him in stocks in the marketplaces. Was hearing God worth it? The people never believed a word Jeremiah said.

God spoke to Isaiah, “Take off your clothes.” Finally, three years later, God spoke again. “Isaiah, put on your clothes and pronounce this word from the Lord to the people.”

In Exodus 20, the Israelites refused Moses’ invitation to come to the base of the mountain and hear God speak. Their excuse sounds remarkably up-to-date. “No,” they said. “We are afraid that if we hear the voice of God, it will cost us our lives.”

I know that God sometimes hides Himself for spiritual reasons, remaining quiet for a season. But more often than not, the reason I do not hear from God has less to do with His inscrutable purpose than with the fact that I live with a fogged over, dirtied up spirit. Only the pure in heart see God.

While God speaks in many ways, He provides an internal spiritual organ known as the human spirit that, when properly cultivated, is dependable in hearing God speak. In Faith -- Tried And Triumphant, Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote about various ways God communicates, and then he describes a more mystical approach:

“Then God sometimes answers directly in our spirit. The prophet said, “I will watch and see what he will say in me”. God speaks to me by speaking in me. He can also lay something upon the mind that we are certain of the answer. He can impress something upon our spirits in an unmistakable manner. We find ourselves unable to get away from an impression that is on our mind or heart; we try to rid ourselves of it, but it comes back. So does God answer at times.”

Whenever I sense what may be a word from God, I refuse to accept it until I carefully consider whether I am hearing from God, myself, or Satan. My overriding principle is simple: I don’t do anything until I am certain who is speaking.

Over the years I have developed a checklist of what I think God's voice sounds like. The following list points in broad strokes and is certainly not complete or foolproof. No one point is sufficient to prove the voice of God.

1. God speaks in my innermost spirit. Satan and I speak in my soul or human mind. (Heb. 4:12) My understanding is that God Himself takes up residence deep in my inner spirit during conversion. As I listen for God to speak deep within, I try to discern whether what I hear emanates from my soul (my mind) or from my inner human spirit. If from my mind, I take it to be from either self or Satan. What comes from deep in my inner spirit can only be from God.
2. God tends to speak with gentle leadings. (I Kings 19:11-13)
3. God's voice produces freedom. (Matt. 11:30)
4. God tends to speak when I am seeking Him. (Jer. 29:12-13)
5. When God is speaking, there is a sense that everything is under control. (I Cor. 14:32) When self and Satan speak, there is an inner sense that something is out of control. (2 Tim. 2:24-26)
6. God gives specific directions. If you are not certain, either God has not spoken or you have not heard clearly. God is not the author of confusion. Satan and self, however, often communicate in confused, uncertain wanderings. But when God speaks, there is no doubt about what to do.
7. God convicts of specific sins. (Jn. 16:8) Satan and self, on the other hand, often accuse in broad generalities, leaving me with an unfocused sense of haunting guilt centered around poor choices, questioned priorities, unfinished responsibilities or unmet expectations. If there is not a definite sense of conviction about a specific sin, I know the feelings are not from God's Spirit but rather from the "accuser of the brothers". (Rev. 12:10)
8. God speaks with 100 percent truth that can be tested by the Word of God. Satan and self often traffic in lies, deceit, and half-truths. Filtering my thoughts for truth and error is a constant exercise for me. I want no lies or half-truths in my mind. Life is hard enough to handle with the truth; it is impossible to navigate successfully when the mind is filled with lies and deceit.
9. God's voice always leads to a deep, abiding sense of peace. (John 14:27) When God speaks, I have a deep sense of peace. When I am not hearing God clearly, the Holy Spirit blows his whistle to stop the game with a lack of peace and stirring unrest in my inner being. (Col. 3:15)

I never act solely on the basis of what I hear in my inner spirit. I seek counsel from trusted advisers who help me verify if I am on the right track. (Pr. 11:14; Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16)

A MODEL FOR CULTIVATING THE INNER SPIRIT

1. Practice the disciplines. The disciplines are prayer, service, worship, submission, confession, study, celebration, meditation, fasting, simplicity, solitude, and guidance.
2. Listen deep in the inner spirit. (I Cor. 2:10-13) Paul describes how the Holy Spirit expresses spiritual words to our inner, human spirit. We discover the human spirit is our organ for God consciousness and the seat of our communion with God where He longs to minister to and fellowship with us. Listening for the voice of God in my inner spirit was not easy at first. I had to learn to quiet my mind if I were to hear the “still, small voice”. I had to acquire new skills to focus my listening habits.
 - A. I set aside time to quiet down and make a conscious choice to calm my soul. (Psalm 131) David made a choice not to let his mind run away with all the issues facing his life and so can I.
 - B. Focusing on a Bible passage. I learned to concentrate and pray slowly through the Scriptures or meditate on Christ until my mind was sufficiently settled. Then I listened for God’s Spirit to speak deep within. I pray with my mind by working through a prayer list and by consciously praying for the things I know need prayer. Then, when the list is complete, I quiet my mind and seek to commune with God in my spirit. I listen for God’s voice and sense His prompting to pray for people and for situations that would normally never come to mind. That is what Paul called “praying in his spirit”.
3. Obey God’s prompting. When I sense God speaking, I am careful to obey Him. Each time I do, I believe my spirit is strengthened and matured, and I am better equipped to hear again.

Remember: Hearing God speak can carry a high price tag, though usually not.

PRACTICING THE CONTEMPLATIVE TRADITION

1. Experiment with varied venues for solitude. Take a pre-dawn walk, listening to the awakening sounds of your world (whether city or country). Limit your speaking for one day and see what you learn about yourself and others.

Take a one day silent retreat or a three day or seven day retreat.

For one month leave your car radio off and make your morning commute a mini-retreat.

2. For a time, set aside your normal Bible reading and try praying the Scriptures. This is prayerful reading in which we turn our heart and mind and spirit ever so gently to the divine center. We read slowly, quietly, prayerfully, pausing at any word or phrase where we feel the Spirit's drawing. Perhaps we come upon Nehemiah's wonderful statement, "The joy of the Lord is your strength". (Neh. 8:10) We stop and wait, yielded and still. We begin to pray, "Lord, help me to enter into Your joy".
3. Undermine that perennial, everlasting human itch to get ahead with intentional times of "holy leisure". Take a nap or a walk, sit in silence, doing nothing, having nothing, needing nothing.

Thomas Merton, "I have not only repeated the affirmation that contemplation is real, but I have insisted on its simplicity, sobriety, humility and its integration in normal Christian life". Explore a loving attention to God and a growing union with God.

HOW TO LISTEN WITH A “HEARING HEART”

- **REQUIRED TO COUNSEL WITH UNDERSTANDING**

“Give thy servant an understanding (8085) heart” I Kings 3:9
8085 = Shawma - “to hear intelligently”

- **COMMUNICATION IS COMPOSED OF MANY PARTS**

Visible Messages = posture, eye contact, type of clothes, hair style, position of arms, hands, etc.

Tonal Pattern = soft, loud, sarcastic, nervous

Words = choice, quantity, type

Character = bold, crude, persuasive, sincere, etc.

- **LISTENING IS “HEART TO HEART COMMUNICATION”**

Hearing the emotions behind each word: hurt, anger, bitterness, regret, guilt, sorrow.

- **UNDERSTANDING COMES FROM SIMILAR EXPERIENCES**

“The God of all comfort (3870)

3870 = “parakaleo” - To call near, to exhort, beseech, comfort

Who comforteth (3870) us in all our tribulation that we may be able to comfort (3870) they which are in any trouble (2347 = pressure, affliction, anguish, burden, persecution) by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” II Cor. 1:4

- **WRITE OUT TROUBLES YOU HAD AND HOW GOD COMFORTED YOU:
ILLUSTRATE EACH PRINCIPLE**

- **GOAL IS TO DRAW OTHERS TO GOD’S COMFORT - NOT TO US.**

Please note: numbers in parentheses refer to numbers in Strong’s Concordance.

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Warfare

Section 8



PRAYER COVERAGE

PROTECTOR

Protect or protector are translations of the Hebrew words for “watchman.” Psalm 121:5,7,8 (italics mine) tells us, “The Lord is your keeper [*shamar*]. . . the Lord will protect [*shamar*] you from all evil; He will keep [*shamar*] your soul. The Lord will guard [*shamar*] your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever.” Four times the Holy Spirit uses this watchman word *shamar* to assure us of His protection. The English word *protect* comes from two Latin words: *pro*, meaning “before,” and *tego*, meaning, “to cover; to cover or shield from danger or injury.”

KEEPER

Keep and *keeper* are also ways the words are used. Adam, as mentioned in Chapter 1, was instructed to keep (*shamar*) the garden (see Gen. 2:1:15). He was the watchman, assigned by God to *protect* what was given him, *keeping* it from the serpent. *Keeping* the serpent out of the gardens is the primary assignment of watchmen.

“Assignment” is a very appropriate and revealing term. God’s gifts are also His assignments. He frequently spoke of “giving” Canaan to Abraham and his descendants. Psalm 115:16 states that He has “given” the earth to the sons of men. This word “give” (*nathan*) means to give a charge, assignment or possession. God was assigning stewardship of the earth to humans. He was assigning the land to Abraham and his seed. This is why Israel had to *take* what God was *giving*.

GUARD

Guard and *bodyguard* are also usages of the watchman words. We must *guard* carefully that which is entrusted to us, whether it be human beings or spiritual treasures. We are called to *guard* and *protect* one another both spiritually and physically. We are *bodyguards* – shields – who cover one another. Paul told

Timothy to “*guard* . . . the treasure which has been entrusted to you (2 Tim. 1:14, emphasis mine), referring to spiritual gifts and callings.

Daniel 10 records an instant when Daniel received a message from God concerning a great conflict between the angelic host. The Hebrew word translated “message” is sometimes translated “burden.” Often when God gives you a message or a word, there is a heaviness or a burden placed upon you to pray that word into action. Sometimes the directive will be to pray the Word of God. At other times you may be led to do warfare against the enemy forces. Sometimes intercession may cause an anguish of heart, or a wrestling within your spirit.

You must be available to receive a prayer message or prayer burden from God. And when the Lord reveals His secrets to you in this way, it is a holy trust; do not take the matter lightly. If you feel the power of the Holy Spirit moving within your heart, be obedient to cry out to God on behalf of a spiritual leader, a nation or an individual as the Spirit brings names and places to your mind. Effective prayer requires availability, sensitivity and obedience.

Be available, sensitive and obedient; and you will be an effective *bodyguard* in the Spirit.

DOORKEEPER AND GATEKEEPER

Two more protective usages of the watchman words are *doorkeeper* and *gatekeeper*. As watchmen of old guarded gates and doors of cities or vineyards, we, too, guard entrances. We are responsible and able to determine who or what is allowed into homes, churches, cities and other places.

Run the evil one out of your house!

Drive him out of your city!

Keep him out of your garden!

Watchman Prayer by Dutch Sheets Regal 2000

WARFARE PRAYING

Bernard of Clairvoux However great may be the temptation, if we know how to use the weapon of prayer well we shall come off as conquerors at least, for prayer is more powerful than all the devils. He who is attacked by the spirits of darkness needs only apply himself vigorously to prayer and he will beat them back with great success.

Agathon The brethren also asked him, “amongst all good works, which is the virtue which requires the greatest effort?” He answered “forgive me, but I think there is no labor greater than that of prayer to God. For every time a man wants to pray, his enemies, the demons, want to prevent him, for they know that it is only by turning him from prayer that they can hinder his journey. Whatever good work a man undertakes, if he perseveres in it, he will attain rest. But prayer is warfare to the last breath.”

Samuel Chadwick The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, he mocks at our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray.

Martin Luther Prayer is that mightiest of all weapons that created natures can wield.

John Newton Prayer is the great engine to overthrow and rout my spiritual enemies, the great means by which I procure the graces of which I stand in hourly need.

Unknown When you pray, there is a clash of arms in the heavenly sphere.

William Cowper Restraining prayer we cease to fight
Prayer makes the Christian's Armour bright
And satan trembles when he sees,
The weakest saint upon his knees.

CELESTIAL WARFARE

Cyprian of Carthage Do you, however, whom the celestial warfare has enlisted in the spiritual camp, only observe a discipline uncorrupted and chastened in the virtues of religion. Be constant as well in prayer as in reading. Now speak with God, now let God speak with you. Let God direct you. Whom God has made rich, none shall make poor. In fact, there can no poverty come to one whose breast has once been supplied with heavenly food.

Hudson Taylor, We are SUPERNATURAL people born again by a SUPERNATURAL birth, kept by a SUPERNATURAL Teacher from a SUPERNATURAL Book. We are led by a SUPERNATURAL Captain in right paths and assured victories.¹

¹ E. Lutzer, Who Are You to Judge

AUTHORITATIVE PRAYER - WARFARE PRAYER

Dr. Ole Hallesby... "Prayer is the conduit through which power from heaven is brought to earth. The secret prayer chamber is a bloody battleground. Here violent and decisive battles are fought out."

COMMONSENSE COUNSEL FOR WARFARE

1. In the Power of God we learn to take authority over everyday issues like our eating habits and our sexual fantasies and our fears and our failures.
2. When the power of God is present, we do not have to put on some special voice... So rather than try to be something we are not, we can speak normally and do whatever seems appropriate to the situation.
3. We have special resources to draw upon... Pray that God would surround us with the light of Christ and cover us with the blood of Christ and seal us with the cross of Christ. In addition, many of the angels of God have been assigned to aid us in our battle. We can ask God for their help.
4. While we deal firmly and decisively with evil, we always remain gentle and compassionate with the individual.
5. Warfare prayer is not a substitute for disciplined habit of living. Many times people need not deliverance but discipline. In such cases, our task is to help them enter an overall pattern of living that involves the normal disciplines of the spiritual life.
6. In the ministry of spiritual warfare, we will do well to stay connected with others, where there can be accountability and support.
7. While we always want to be bold in the boldness of God, we must immerse our efforts in the most profound humility of spirit.

Richard Sibbs... "What cannot prayer do when the people of God have their hearts quickened and raised to pray? Prayer can open heaven. Prayer can open the womb. Prayer can open the prison and strike off the fetters.

Adapted from Prayer by Richard Foster.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Frank Damazio...The church that moves in the authority delegated by Christ moves into the realm of intercessory prayer. The gates of hell will not be able to resist the moving of God's people in the spirit realm. The keys are given to the church to stop hell's worst, to unlock prison doors and to shatter Satan's chains. Keys represent the authority one has to enter certain domains. God has given Believers the right to function in the domain of the almighty. To bind is to move into a realm of intercessory prayer or to intercede. "Bind" is the Greek word *deses*. "Supplication" is the Greek word *deesis*. These are words from the same Greek family. To supplicate or to bind is the same work in the realm of the Holy Spirit. Binding is contracting with God through intercessory prayer, saying, "Father, what you have willed, I call forth on earth".

Binding is a steadfast continuity of regular and unceasing prayers, indicating a timeless pursuit of a given goal.

Binding is an intense spiritual struggle, the issue of which will determine with far-reaching effect the whole work of the Kingdom of God. Every believer's spirit must say, "I am responsible. This is my ministry. I am called to be an intercessor."

Eze. 13:5."You have not gone up into the gaps to build a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the Lord." When the Lord looks down upon my home, let Him not say, "I wonder that there was no intercessor.", or "Why were you not gone to stand in the gap or to build a hedge? Why were you not in the battle?" But let Him look upon every family in _____ and say, "There are intercessors in that home, people who understand their spiritual responsibility, and they have a mark on their foreheads, the mark of the cross, the mark of true discipleship." Throughout Scripture, time after time, we see, that one person has made a difference from Abraham to the Apostle Paul. Each time one person has stood in the gap, has built a hedge or stood on the day of battle, God has moved in miraculous ways.

Richard J. Foster..."Our little prayers of intercession are backed up and reinforced by the eternal Intercessor.

Donald Bloesch..."To pray in the name of Christ means in the awareness that our prayers have no worthiness or efficacy apart from His atoning sacrifice and redemptive mediation...To pray in His name means that we recognize that our prayers cannot penetrate the tribunal of God unless they are presented to the Father by the Son, our one Savior and Redeemer. We have been given His name to use with full authority. Therefore, the content and the character of our praying must be, of necessity, in unity with His nature.

THE PRAYER BATTLE

The Word of God reveals at least four great laws of battle which require recognition and obedience.

1. **Claim the protection of God in the prayer life** (Dan. 2:18). To enter into active resistance to the forces of evil by prayer means conflict, and all conflict entails physical, mental, and spiritual strain. Danger inevitably follows.

All that Calvary stands for we must claim, while in prayer we seek to do the work of God. And all must be claimed definitely. To take things for granted in our relationship to God, in such a battle as this, is to find a speedy path to disaster and disillusionment. As we need constantly to seek the Blood to cleanse from sin, so likewise do we require to ask and take by faith the protection of the Cross from the malice of Satan.

Claim protection for the body against accident or weakness; protection for the mind against lies or subtle delusions and deceptions; protection for the spirit against the danger of passivity, or a hardness of spirit that affects the attitude to others in the work; protection for the will against a paralysis which leads to non-action of faculties, and opens the way to serious consequences.

Claim the protection of God, through the power of the Cross, as signifying the victory of the Saviour, against missing strategic points in service, such as the choice of helpers, or even the selection of hymns, for there can be no trifles in any work for God. Claim that protection against each scheme of Satan, against the direct and indirect attacks of his forces. Those who have been called to the prayer battle cannot be too careful in asking and taking such wondrous shelter as the precious Blood of the Son of God affords.

2. **Pray with an ever-enlarging vision of the need of the world for God and the need of God for the world** (Acts 1:8). As the eye of St. Paul was on "the regions beyond", so must ours be, to lay claim to every land for God, as the Spirit of God lays on our hearts its burden. The command of the risen Christ is as much to go into all the world and pray as it is to preach the Gospel. Without prayer, preaching halts in its progress and fails in its aim.

3. **Learn to bind the forces of evil** (Matt. 16:19). The words of our Lord are worthy of the most careful consideration by the believer.

They manifestly refer to some divinely bestowed power of infinite value for him in his partnership with Christ on the battlefield. And experience teaches us the truth of the words. Have we not frequently felt the powers of darkness

coming down in full force upon the atmosphere to disturb it, to influence minds and souls, to crush the spirit of prayer, and wreck the plans of the Church?

The Lord Jesus Christ assures us they can be met. How? On the ground of His victory over them, and in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, we are permitted to bind these forces, to claim that they shall not be allowed to act out any satanic purpose of evil.

And the Lord says that as we do that on earth, He will answer our action by making these forces of evil powerless to hinder us. It is a work of faith. It is a test of faith. It is a challenge to us to say if we really believe the Lord, and recognize that by His death on the Cross He has conquered Satan and all his hosts.

It is a call to make the prayer battle, begun in the closet, effective in the Church. This law should be put in force before ever a prayer meeting is convened or any form of service commenced.

4. **Make sure of the ground on which you stand in opposition to the enemy of God** (2 Chron. 20:6). The prayer of Jehoshaphat in the hour of his country's danger rested on very definite grounds. He appealed (1) to the **character** of God: "O Lord God of our fathers, art not Thou God in heaven? and rulest not Thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen?" (2) To His **power**: "And in Thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand Thee?" (3) To His **faithfulness**: "Art not Thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before Thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham Thy friend for ever?" (4) To the people's **confidence** in God: "And they dwelt therein, and have built Thee a sanctuary therein for Thy Name." (5) To the **rights** of God: "Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of Thy possession, which Thou hast given us to inherit"; and (6) to their own **weakness**: "O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee."

That appeal was not in vain. The Lord "made them to rejoice over their enemies," and in the valley of Berachah "they blessed the Lord." Is this not a picture of Calvary in the Old Testament, drawn for our learning and encouragement? On what ground can we hope to stand in certainty of victory, as day by day, in life or work, in home or church, we face the foe?

Our appeal is to be made to (1) the **character** of God, and at the Cross He declares "His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past" (Rom. 3:25); (2) to the **power** of God as He deals with our need through sin, justifying us by the

Blood of His Son (Rom. 5:9); and answering for ever the claim of the old creation (Rom. 6:6). We appeal (3) to His **faithfulness**. For what is the message of the sacrifice of the Saviour? Is it not this? "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord," and in that magnificent climax to the Passion of His Son He proves His unchanging faithfulness (Rom. 5:20, 21); we appeal (4) to our **confidence** in Him, for every generation of men has trusted Him, and the Cross has been the pledge that He would not disappoint them (Rom. 9:33); and (5) to the **rights** of God. The message of Calvary to the life that has believed on Him is: "Ye are not your own." The believer is "the peculiar treasure" of the Lord, and in that lies the promise of God to care for and protect him in the hour of battle (Rom. 14:9); and, finally, we appeal (6) **on the ground of our weakness**, for it was when we were "without strength" that Christ died for us. Apart from Him we have no might, but our eyes are unto Him (Rom. 5:6).

The finished work of Christ is our plea before the Throne and our weapon against the enemy. Our right it is in Christ to ask God to bear witness, on the battlefield of life, to the power of the Blood and the effectiveness of the Cross against Satan and all his forces. He will not disappoint us. He cannot fail us.

Effectual Fervent Prayer, Rev. Gordon Watt, M.A., printed 1927, reprinted 1981, available from Great Commission, Route 9, North Parker Road, Greenville, SC 29609

ANGEL WARRIORS PRAYER

“The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.”

LORD OF ANGELS

Thank you for your heavenly beings with which you surround my life. These guardians take a stand for your kingdom in the unseen realm every day (Eph. 6:12). Today, when I think that what’s in front of my nose or what I can see or touch is all that matters, remind me of the reality of that other dimension.

My angels are ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit my salvation. (from Heb. 1:14)

Open my understanding to “spiritual forces” (Eph. 6:12). I don’t want to be ignorant or vulnerable. Yet, I thank you that I can trust in you and your “ministering spirits”. Your angel warriors can shut the mouth of lions and defeat any agent of Satan. (Ps. 103:20; Dan. 6:22)

If you make me your refuge, then no disaster will overwhelm you. I will command my angels to guard you and your children in all your ways. (from Ps. 91:9-12)

Thank you that your angels of mercy and power guard me and those I love. Even the weakest is safe with you.

“See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.” (Matt. 18:10)

When I’m afraid today, help me to remember my angels, just beyond my sight. They’re on guard right here, right now. Thank you!

Amen.

David Kopp

FIVE ELEMENTS OF A VICTORIOUS WALK

by Dr. Jim Logan

1. Genuine Repentance (Psalm 51).
Does the counselee see his sin as an affront to a holy God or just remorse over the consequences?
2. Taking back ground (Ephesians 4:27).
Ground is given by sinful acts. This gives Satan legal jurisdiction in our lives.
3. Tearing down strongholds (II Corinthians 10:3-5).
These are false belief systems that give the enemy an area to bring destructive attacks.
4. Building towers of truth (John 8:32).
These towers are a belief system based on the truth of God's Word (Living Free in Christ, by Neil T. Anderson, is an excellent tool to accomplish steps 3 and 4).
5. Taking every thought captive (Philippians 4:8).
This is God's standard for right thinking. If you do not take your thoughts captive, they will captivate you.

you - the Prince of Peace - to rule and reign in every area of my life today (Isaiah 9:6).

I TAKE...

• the shield of faith, which is obedience to objective truth (the Word of God). For Thou, Oh Lord, are a shield for me and the lifer of my head (Psalm 3:3). I pray you would encompass me and my family today. As the mountains encompass Jerusalem, so encompass us as a shield (Psalm 5:12).

I PUT ON...

• the helmet of salvation, refusing to receive thoughts that are contrary to your character. I bring every thought into captivity and obedience to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 10:5). I want my mind to be stayed upon you (Isaiah 26:3).

WEAPONS

(II Corinthians 10:3,4)

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds."

I take the

SWORD of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17)

and grasp it tightly with the powerful hand of

PRAYER (Ephesians 6:18) in the

NAME (Luke 10:17; Philippians 2:10) and through the

BLOOD of the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:11).

PRAISING (I Samuel 16:23),

PERSEVERING (Ephesians 6:18), and seeking

GODLY COMRADES (II Timothy 4:19-21) by the

WORD of our

TESTIMONY (Revelation 12:11), the powerful commodity of

GRACE (James 4:6,7).

FASTING (Mark 9:29),

HUMILITY (I Peter 5:5,6; James 4:6-10),

WORSHIP (Matthew 4:8-11; John 4:23,24),

A GOOD CONSCIENCE (I Timothy 1:5,9) and

MORAL PURITY (I Thessalonians 4:3-7). I seek to live for you

today.



The Morning Prayer

Introduction: Gracious Heavenly Father, I love you and want to live my life for you this day. Please allow me to pray in the Spirit because you know what I will face today and where to emphasize my prayers. (Ephesians 6:18)

(Then express personal praise for the attributes of God's character that come from you heart - this will vary from day-to-day.)

Praying with regard to:

Enemy number 1: THE FLESH

I choose today to die to self, to put off the old man and put on the new and take up my cross and follow you (Luke 9:23; Colossians 3:9,10).

I choose to do this because I know that it is the refusal to die to self that makes me miserable...

I yield my rights to:

1. **BE APPRECIATED** (Luke 17:11-19)
2. **BE RIGHT** (I Corinthians 6:7,8; I Peter 2:19,20; 3:14,17)
3. **BE HEARD** (I Peter 2:23; 3:1-10)
4. **NURSE MY HURTS** (Matthew 18:21,22)
5. **PRIVACY** (Luke 9:12)
6. **LEISURE** (Mark 6:30-33)
7. **DEFEND MYSELF** (Luke 23:9)
8. **BE NEEDED** (II Timothy 4:16,17)
9. **GOOD HEALTH** (II Corinthians 11:23-28; 12:7-10)
10. **FINANCIAL SECURITY** (Acts 3:6; I Corinthians 9:16-18)
11. **MY SCHEDULE** (I Thessalonians 2:18)
12. **FRIENDS** (Psalm 38:11; 41:9; Proverbs 18:24)
13. **SUCCESS IN MINISTRY** (II Corinthians 4:7-11)
14. **BE FORGIVEN** (Matthew 6:12; 5:23-26)
15. **BE UNDERSTOOD** (Mark 8:14-21)
16. **BE ACCEPTED** (Mark 8:14-21)
17. **PLEASURE** (Philippians 2:3,4)
18. **INDEPENDENCE** (I Corinthians. 6:19,20; Hebrews 10:24,25)
19. **BE RESPECTED** (II Corinthians 12:11-16)
20. **MY FUTURE PLANS** (II Timothy 4:6; Revelation 12:11; Hebrews 11:36-40)

21. *TRIMMINGS* (I Peter 3:10-14; Matthew 6:21; Luke 12:31-34)
 22. *MY EXPECTATIONS* (Psalm 62:5)
 23. *CONTROL* (Mark 8:33; Ephesians 5:18)
 24. *REPUTATION* (Philippians 2:7)
 25. *EAT CARELESSLY* (Leviticus 11)
- I now yield you my body, hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, mind, will, emotions, spirit, soul and body. I commit - create - to you and your service. (Romans 6:11-13; 12:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7; 11 Corinthians 7:1)*

Enemy number 2: THE WORLD

- I choose today to be crucified to the world. Quote Galatians 6:14:*
"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."
- *I don't want to love the world nor the things in the world (I John 2:15-17) but set my affection on things above. Colossians 3:2; Matthew 6:33).*
 - *I don't want to have the philosophies of this world (Colossians 2:8) but rather the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5).*
 - *I don't want to be conformed to this world (Romans 12:2) but I want to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29; Galatians 4:19)*
 - *I don't want to walk according to the course of this world (Ephesians 2:2) but I want to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). For Jesus has said, "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer - I have overcome the world (John 16:33). And what is the victory that overcomes the world - even our faith (I John 5:4). For I want to walk by faith today, and not by sight... (11 Corinthians 5:7).*

Enemy number 3: THE DEVIL

- I take my position - along with other saints - in resisting the devil (I Peter 5:8,9). I pray that you would deny him any permission that he would want in launching an assault against me or my family today (Luke 22:31,32 preventive prayer). I pray that you not allow me to be deceived but discerning in what the will of the Lord is (Revelation 20:10).*
- I pray that you would lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from the evil one (Matthew 6:13).*
- I THANK YOU...*
- *that Jesus came into the world to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8).*
 - *that because we are of God, and are your children, we have overcome them. Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world (I John 4:4).*

- *that he that is begotten of God, God keeps. The wicked one touches Him not. (I John 5:18).*
- *that you have written unto us - and we can be strong in your Word and overcome the wicked one (I John 2:11).*
- *that we are complete in Him who is head of all principalities and powers (Colossians 2:10).*
- *that you spoiled all principalities and powers and made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them and stripping them of their rank and their power - all by yourself - at the Cross (Colossians 2:15).*
- *for delivering us from the power of darkness and translating us to the kingdom of your dear Son (Colossians 1:13).*
- *that the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly (Romans 16:20).*
- *that the devil that deceived them will one day be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 20:10).*
- *that satan never had a thing on Jesus (John 14:30) and that the prince of this world is judged (John 16:11).*

PUTTING ON THE ARMOR

This is the appropriation, by faith, of what I already have in Christ (Ephesians 6:10-18).

I want to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might, so by faith I appropriate all the armor that you have provided for me.

I PUT ON...

- *the girdle (belt) of Truth. I want to speak truth today (Ephesians 4:25) because Jesus is truth (John 14:6). His Spirit is truth (John 14:6). His Spirit is truth (John 14:17). His Word is Truth (John 17:17) and the church is the pillar and ground of Truth (I Timothy 3:15). When you KNOW the Truth, the Truth will always set you free (John 8:32).*

I PUT ON...

- *the breastplate of righteousness not having my own righteousness, which is after the law, but the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:9). Uphold me today, Oh Lord, by the right hand of your righteousness (Isaiah 41:10; Psalm 48:10).*

I PUT ON...

- *the sandals of peace. I want to be a peacemaker today and I pray that the peace of God that passes understanding will keep my heart and mind (Philippians 4:7). Oh Lord, I want:*

WARFARE PRAYER

Dr. Warren Wiersbe, in his book The Strategy of Satan states, "My own experience has been that the morning devotional time is the best time to put on the armor. After I have given God my body, mind, and will, I ask the Holy Spirit to fill me, and then I by faith put on the pieces of the armor. I pray something like this:

Father, thank You for the provision You have made for victory over Satan. Now, by faith, I put on the girdle of truth. May my life today be motivated by truth. Help me to maintain integrity. By faith, I put on the breastplate of righteousness. May my heart love that which is righteous and refuse what is sinful. Thank You for the imputed righteousness of Christ. By faith, I put on the shoes of peace. Help me to be a peacemaker and not a troublemaker. By faith, I take the shield of faith. May I trust You and Your Word today and not add fuel to any of Satan's darts, Thank You that I can go into this day without fear. By faith, I put on the helmet of Salvation. May I remember today that Jesus is coming again. Help me to live in the future tense. Protect my mind from discouragement and despair. By faith, I take the Sword of the Spirit. Help me to remember Your Word and use it today. Father, by faith I have put on the armor. May this be a day of victory."

This is not a routine prayer, and I have not recorded it here so that you can memorize and repeat it. Rather, it is here to give you some idea of how we can put on the pieces of the armor by faith, by prayer. This is a private matter between you and the Lord. I cannot tell you how to pray; but I can tell you that you had better pray! Paul describes the kind of praying we must do. It is persevering prayer --"praying at all times".

PREPARING FOR WAR

Now here is the part you may be "tempted" to skip. I have made it a habit of putting on the armor of God every morning before I get out of bed. Right over my pajamas! Remember, this is a spiritual armor. Therefore, it must be put on by faith. Paul understood that spiritual warfare was somewhat of a difficult concept to grasp, so he gave us an illustration through his description of the Roman soldier. Using that mental image as a guide, we can properly prepare ourselves for the battle. But it is done by faith, not by sight. The best way to explain this is to simply walk you through the routine I follow every morning. You do not have to do it just like I do. Paul did not leave us directions as to how to put it on by faith. There is no right or wrong way. He simply said, "Put it on." Each morning when I first awaken I say something like this:

Good morning, Lord. Thank you for assuring me of victory today if I will but follow your battle plan. So by faith I claim victory over (). (I normally list some things I know will be faced with that day.)

To prepare myself for the battle ahead, by faith I put on the belt of truth. The Truth about You, Lord - that You are a sovereign God Who knows everything about me, both my strengths and weaknesses. Lord, You know my breaking point and have promised not to allow me to be tempted beyond what I am able to bear. The truth about me, Lord, is that I am a new creature in Christ and have been set free from the power of sin. I am indwelt with the Holy Spirit Who will guide me and warn me when danger is near. I am Your child, and nothing can separate me from Your love. The truth is that You have a purpose for me this day - someone to encourage, someone to share with, someone to love.

Next Lord, I want to, by faith, put on the breastplate of righteousness. Through this I guard my heart and emotions. I will not allow my emotions to rule my decisions. I will set them on what is right and good and just. I will live today by what is true, not by what I feel.

Lord, this morning I put on the sandals of the Gospel of peace. I am available to you, Lord. Send me where you will. Guide me to those who need encouragement or physical help of some kind. Use me to solve conflicts wherever they may arise. Make me a calming presence in every circumstance in which You place me. I will not be hurried or rushed, for my schedule is in Your hands. I will not leave a trail of tension or apprehension. I will leave tracks of peace and stability everywhere I go.

I now take up the shield of faith, Lord. My faith is in You and You alone. Apart from You, I can do nothing. With You, I do all things. No temptation that comes my way can penetrate Your protecting hand. I will not be afraid, for You are going with me throughout this day. When I am tempted, I will claim my victory to those who walk in obedience to Your Word. So by faith I claim victory even now because I know there are fiery darts headed my way even as I pray. Lord, You already know what they are and have already provided the way of escape.

Lord, by faith I am putting on the helmet of salvation. You know how Satan bombards my mind day and night with evil thoughts, doubt, and fear. I put on this helmet that will protect my mind. I may feel the impact of his attacks, but nothing can penetrate this helmet. I choose to stop every impure and negative thought at the door of my mind. And, with the helmet of salvation, those thoughts will get no further. I elect to take every thought captive; I will dwell on nothing but what is good and right and pleasing to You.

Lord, I take up the sword of the Spirit, which is Your Word. Thank You for the precious gift of Your Word. It is strong and powerful and able to defeat even the strongest of Satan's onslaughts. Your Word says that I am not under obligation to the flesh to obey its lusts. Your Word says that I am free from the power of sin. Your Word says that He that is in me is greater than he that is in the world. So by faith, I take up the strong and powerful sword of the Spirit, which is able to defend me in time of attack, comfort me in time of sorrow, teach me in time of meditation, and prevail against the power of the enemy on behalf of others who need the truth to set them free.

So Lord, I go now rejoicing that You have chosen me to represent You to this lost and dying world. May others see Jesus in me, and may Satan and his hosts shudder as Your power is made manifest in me. In Jesus' name I pray. AMEN

A Warfare Prayer

Heavenly Father, I bow in worship and praise before You. I cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as my protection during this time of prayer. I surrender myself completely and unreservedly in every area of my life to Yourself. I do take a stand against all the workings of Satan that would hinder me in this time of prayer, and I address myself only to the true and living God and refuse any involvement of Satan in my prayer.

Satan, I command you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to leave my presence with all your demons, and I bring the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ between us.

Heavenly Father, I worship You, and I give You praise. I recognize that You are worthy to receive all glory and honor and praise. I renew my allegiance to You and pray that the blessed Holy Spirit would enable me in this time of prayer. I am thankful, heavenly Father, that You have loved me from past eternity, that You sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to die as my substitute that I would be redeemed. I am thankful that the Lord Jesus Christ came as my representative, and that through Him You have completely forgiven me; You have adopted me into Your family; You have assumed all responsibility for me. You have given me eternal life; You have given me the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ so that I am now justified. I am thankful that in Him You have made me complete, and that You have offered Yourself to me to be my daily help and strength.

Heavenly Father, come and open my eyes that I might see how great You are and how complete Your provision is for this new day. I do, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, take my place in Him and I cover myself with the shelter of His blood. I take my place with Christ in the heavenlies with all principalities and powers (power of darkness and wicked spirits) under my feet. I am thankful that the victory the Lord Jesus Christ won for me on the cross and in His resurrection has been given to me and that I am seated with the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenlies; therefore, I declare that all principalities and powers and all wicked spirits are subject to me in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am thankful for the armor You have provided, and I put on the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the sandals of peace, the helmet of salvation. I lift up the shield of faith against all the fiery darts of the enemy, and take in my hand the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and use Your Word against all the forces of evil in my life; and I put on this armor, and live and pray in complete dependence upon You, blessed Holy Spirit.

I am grateful, heavenly Father, that the Lord Jesus Christ spoiled all principalities and powers and made a show of them openly and triumphed over them in Himself. I claim all the victory for my life today. I reject out of my life all the insinuations, the accusations, and the temptations of Satan. I affirm that the Word of God is true, and I choose to live today in the light of God's Word. I choose, heavenly Father, to live in obedience to You and in fellowship with Yourself. Open my eyes and show me the areas of my life that would not please You. Work in my life that there be no ground to give Satan a foothold against me. Show me any area of weakness. Show me any area of my life that I must deal with so that I would please You. I do in every way stand for You and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in my life.

By faith and in dependence upon You, I put off the old man and stand into all the victory of the crucifixion where the Lord Jesus Christ provided cleansing from the old nature. I put on the new man and stand into all the victory of the resurrection and the provision He has made for me there to live above sin. Therefore, in this day, I put off the old nature with its selfishness, and I put on the new nature with its love. I put off the old nature with its fear and I put on the new nature with its courage. I put off the old nature with its weakness and I put on the new nature with its strength. I put off today the old nature with all its deceitful lusts and I put on the new nature with all its righteousness and purity.

I do in every way stand into the victory of the ascension and the glorification of the Son of God where all principalities and powers were made subject to Him, and I claim my place in Christ victorious with Him over all the enemies of my soul. Blessed Holy Spirit, I pray that You would fill me. Come into my life, break down every idol and cast out every foe.

I am thankful, heavenly Father, for the expression of Your will for my daily life as You have shown me in Your Word. I therefore claim all the will of God for today. I am thankful that You have blessed me with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I am thankful that you have begotten me unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I am thankful that You have made provision so that today I can live filled with the Spirit of God with love and joy and peace, with longsuffering, gentleness and goodness, with meekness, faithfulness and self-control in my life. And I recognize that this is Your will for me, and I therefore reject and resist all the endeavors of Satan and of his demons to rob me of the will of God. I refuse in this day to believe my feelings, and I hold up the shield of faith against all the accusations and against all the insinuations that Satan would put in my mind. I claim the fullness of the will of God for today.

I do, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, completely surrender myself to You, heavenly Father, as a living sacrifice. I choose not to be conformed to this world. I choose to be transformed by the renewing of my mind, and I pray that You would show me Your will and enable me to walk in all the fullness of the will of God today.

I am thankful, heavenly Father, that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, to the casting down of imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring every thought into obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore in my own life today I tear down the strongholds of Satan, and I smash the plans of Satan that have been formed against me. I tear down the strongholds of Satan against my mind, and I surrender my mind to You, blessed Holy Spirit. I affirm, heavenly Father, that You have not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. I break and smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my emotions today, and I give my emotions to You. I smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my will today, and I give my will to You, and choose to make the right decisions of faith. I smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my body today, and I give my body to You, recognizing that I am Your temple; and I rejoice in Your mercy and Your goodness.

Heavenly Father, I pray that now through this day You would quicken me; show me the way that Satan is hindering and tempting and lying and counterfeiting and distorting the truth in my life. Enable me to be the kind of person that would please You. Enable me to be aggressive in prayer. Enable me to be aggressive mentally and to think Your thoughts after You, and to give You Your rightful place in my life.

Again, I now cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and pray that You, blessed Holy Spirit, would bring all the work of the crucifixion, all the work of the resurrection, all the work of the glorification, and all the work of Pentecost into my life today. I surrender myself to You. I refuse to be discouraged. You are the God of all hope. You have proven Your power by resurrecting Jesus Christ from the dead, and I claim in every way Your victory over all satanic forces active in my life, and I reject these forces; and I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ with thanksgiving. Amen.

...Dr. Victor Matthews

BREAKING UNHEALTHY SOUL TIES

1. Definition: The soul is the mind, will, and emotions; soul ties refer to a strong, intimate bonding relationship between two or more people.
2. Two Types of Bonding.
 - a. Healthy bonding:
 - marriage
 - family
 - Biblical friendship
 - b. Unhealthy bonding:
 - sexual activity outside of marriage
 - sexual promiscuity before marriage
 - parents unwilling to let go of adult children
 - children not able to leave home after being released by the parents
 - i.e. marriage, military, college, etc.
 - intimate verbal communication with a member of the same or opposite sex which leads to a strong bond
3. Examples.
 - a. Friendship:
 - I Sam. 18:1b "...the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."
 - Deut. 13:6-8 "...or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods...' thou shalt not consent unto him nor hearken unto him..."
 - b. Marriage:
 - Gen. 2:21 "therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh."
 - Mark 10:7 "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no longer twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."
 - c. Sexual promiscuity:
 - I Cor. 6:15-17 "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith He, shall be one flesh. But he which is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."

4. God's Grace and Power Breaks Bondage of Unhealthy Ties.

- a. God does the breaking of soul ties.
- b. The Word of God and power of prayer separates unhealthy bonding and cements healthy bonding.

Heb. 4:12-16 "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

II Peter 2:4-9 "...And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:... The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations,..."

Psa. 103:14 "For He knoweth our frame (what we are made of), He remembereth that we are dust."

Psa. 78:38-39 "But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, ...yea, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. For He remembered that they were but flesh;..."

Pro. 4:23 "Keep thy heart (affections) with all diligence."

Pro. 7:21-23 Proverbs warns against the many persuasions of a seductress, for in following them, you will lose your life.

Pro. 25:28 "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."

I Thess. 4:1-8 "...this is the will of God, even your own sanctification: that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor;..."

5. Guidelines for Breaking Unhealthy/Sinful Soul Ties.

- a. Confession of sin (repentant spirit)
 - sexual immorality: fornication, adultery, incest, ritual abuse (as victimizer, not as victim)
 - unhealthy bonding: parent/child, friendship, work relationship, counseling, etc.
 - e.g. prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, I come before the throne in Jesus Christ's name. I confess the sin of _____ with _____. I ask your forgiveness and I now choose to receive your forgiveness.

I Jn. 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

b. Giving up memories/fantasies

We must give up painful or pleasurable memories/ fantasies associated with the person (s) you are praying about.

e.g. prayer:

I choose to forgive _____ for [coercion, physical violence, shame, etc.]. I now release _____ to freedom, love and salvation through Jesus Christ. I choose to release _____ to you, Heavenly Father, for your wise justice.

c. It is important to ask forgiveness and receive forgiveness.

We need to verbalize in prayer self-forgiveness for our willing involvement in the relationship.

e.g. prayer:

I choose to forgive myself for _____ in my relationship with _____.

d. Affirmation of forgiveness using appropriate scripture.

God's word says that we have God's forgiveness in the name and shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Rom. 8:1-2 "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..."

e. Prayer asking God to break the bonding.

Dear Heavenly Father, please separate my body, soul and spirit from the body, soul, and spirit of _____ [partner(s)].

Isa. 58:6 "God breaks every yoke and loosens every bond of wickedness."

Remember to pray for the severing of drugs, occult involvement, group sex, previous partners involvement.

Regarding rape, special attention should be given in prayer to effects of victimization, violent acts, anger, hatred, murder, etc. You may also need to ask God's forgiveness for not crying out.

f. Take a strong stand against the enemy.

e.g. prayer:

In Jesus Christ's name I ask you, Father, to remove this stronghold away from Satan, in my life, the lives of my children and all future generations. Amen.

g. Personalize Psa. 25- a prayer for protection, pardon and guidance.

h. Scriptures for encouragement.

Isa. 54:4 "Thou shalt forget the shame..."

Psa. 34:5 "They looked unto Him and were lightened."

Psa. 37:19a "They will not be ashamed in the evil time."

Isa. 43:18-19 "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing:..."

i. Reminder:

Growth is an ongoing process, however past issues that have been dealt with are under the blood. Freedom is yours in Christ.

CURSES

This material is designed to help you discern if you are living under a curse. A curse happens when someone releases negative spiritual power toward a person, object, or place being cursed. Curses are mentioned over 160 times in Scripture. Deuteronomy Chapters 27 and 28 list for us many reasons why people are living under a curse. Section one (below) lists some common indications that a curse may be over your life. Section two lists twelve such causes of curses. Section three gives steps to follow in breaking a curse.

Section 1: Symptoms

1. Mental or emotional breakdown (Deut. 28:20,28,34,65)
2. Repeated or chronic sickness, especially if it is hereditary or without clear medical diagnosis (Deut. 28:21-61)
3. Repeated miscarriages or related female problems or barrenness (Deut. 28:18)
4. Marriage breakdown or family alientation in general (Deut. 28:41)
5. Continuing financial insufficiency, especially where the income appears sufficient (Deut. 28:17, 29, 47, 48)
6. Being accident prone (Deut. 28:29)
7. A history of suicides or unnatural deaths in the family (Deut. 28:21-22, 25)

Section 2: Causes

There are a number of common causes for curses. Scripture says a curse does not come without a cause. The following is a list of twelve such possible sources or causes of curses:

1. Idolatry, false gods, the occult (Ex. 20:3-6; I Sam. 15:23,24; Deut. 18:10, Acts 19:18-19)
2. Dishonoring parents (Deut. 27:16, Eph. 6:1-3)
3. Illicit or unnatural sex (Lev. 18:22, Deut. 27:15-16, 20-23)
4. Injustice to the weak or helpless. The greatest incidence of this in our society is abortion. (Deut. 27:19 & 25, Ps. 6:17)
5. Trusting in the flesh (Jer. 17:5,6; Gal. 3:3)

6. Stealing, perjury (Zech. 5:1-4)
7. Being stingy with God financially (Malachi 1:14, 3:8-11)
8. Words spoken by those with relational authority (I.e. parents, husbands, teachers, pastors) (Gen. 31:32, 35:16-19)
9. Curses people pronounce on themselves (Gen. 27:12 & 13 & 46; Mark 14:66-72; Mark 16:7; Jn. 21:15-17; Matt. 27:20-26)
10. Words pronounced by persons representing Satan (witch doctors, wizards, etc.) (Deut. 18:10-12; Num. 22-24; I Cor. 10:8; 2 Pet. 2:15-16; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14)
11. Fleshly prayers, words spoken with a hateful attitude, gossip (James 3:14-15; Jer. 18:18; Jude 16-19; Titus 3:2)
12. Covenants forbidden in Scripture I.e. covenants with people aligned with Satan (Ex. 23:32)

Section 3: Action Points

Include in your prayer of breaking or cancelling curses over your life truth from the following steps:

1. Confess your faith in Christ and in His sacrifice on your behalf. Rom. 10:9, 10
2. Repent of all your rebellion and sin. Acts 20:21; I Sam. 15:22, 23; I Jn. 1:9
3. Submit yourself to God and resist the devil. Rom. 12:1,2; James 4:7-10
4. Remove and burn all occultic or satanic material (Acts 19:19)
5. Make a list from Sections 1 and 2 that indicates you are under a curse and pray God will cancel and release you, your immediate family, and future generations from these curses.

Adapted from Blessing or Curse by Derek Prince, Chosen Books, Grand Rapids, MI: 1990.

BREAKING CURSES

A PRAYER

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, I come to You sincerely with a desire to be free from all curses and their results. Lord Jesus, I thank You for saving me and cleansing away my sin at the cross. I confess with my mouth that I belong to You. The devil has no power over me because I am cleansed and covered by Your precious blood.

I now confess all of my sins, known and unknown. I repent of them now in the name of Jesus. I ask You, Lord, to forgive me. I now confess the sins of all of my forefathers. In the name and by the blood of Jesus Christ, I break and renounce the power of every demonic curse that was passed down to me through the sins and actions of others. In the name of Jesus Christ, I break the power and the hold of every curse that came to me through sin, my sins and the sins of my forefathers.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I break the power and hold of every curse that came to me through words spoken. In the name of Jesus Christ, I break the power and hold of every curse that came to me through disobedience -- mine or my forefathers.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I now renounce, break, and loose myself and my family from all demonic subjection to my father, mother, grandparents or any other human being, living or dead, who has ever in the past or are now dominating or controlling me or my family in any way contrary to the Word and will of God.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce, break, and loose myself and my family from all psychic heredity, demonic strongholds, psychic power, bondages, bonds of inherited physical or mental illness or curses upon me and my family line as a result of sins, transgressions, iniquities, occult or psychic involvement of any member of my family line, living or dead.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I declare every legal hold and every legal ground of the enemy broken and destroyed. Satan no longer has a legal right to harass my family line through curses. Through the blood of Jesus Christ, I am free. Thank You, Jesus, for setting me free.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I command all demonic spirits that entered me through curses to leave me now. Go! In the name of Jesus! I confess that my body, soul, and spirit is the dwelling place of the Spirit of God. I am redeemed, cleansed, sanctified, and justified by the blood of Jesus. Therefore neither Satan nor his demons have any place in me nor power over me because of Jesus.

THANK YOU, JESUS, FOR SETTING ME FREE!

Lectio Divina

Section 9

Formation Prayer

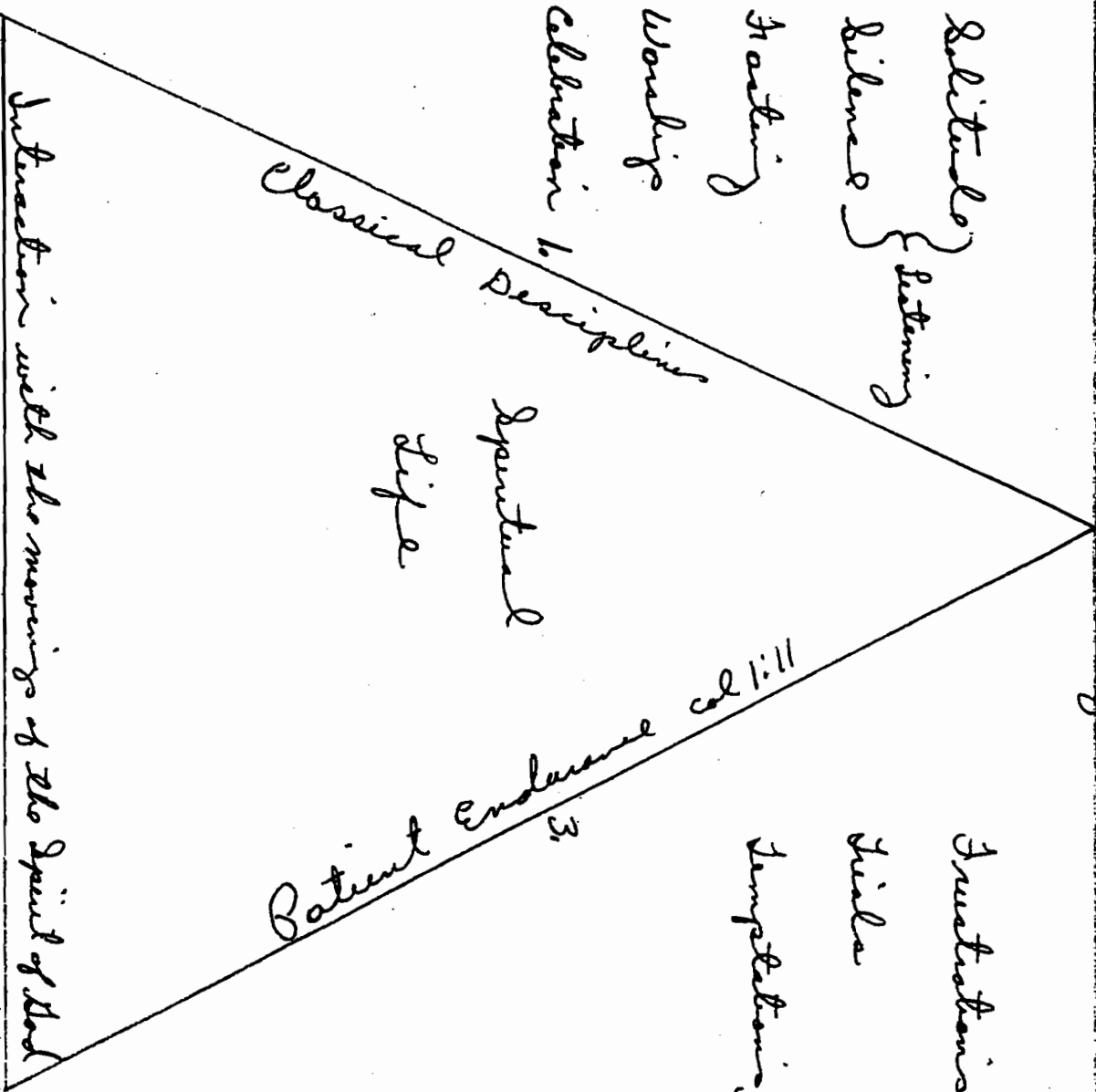
Listening

- 1. Reading Scriptures
- 2. Praying Scriptures
- 3. Recalling what God has to say to me.

Formation Prayer

- when we form spiritual habits
- We have experience
- 1. Solitude
- 2. Ongoing to self
- 3. Surrender to God's will

Asylum Strength



Interaction with the meaning of the Spirit of God
 Resistance, Discardance, Repentance, Submission to will of God

Dear friend,

I have been overwhelmed by the responses we have received for the material to grow closer to God. I'm sending material that I have collected from my reading in preparation for my new book on prayer, whenever I get a chance to start it. I started a group of ministerial students on the *Lectio Divina* method of Scripture reading just a couple weeks ago. It has blessed them, and I trust it will be a blessing to you also.

Andrew Murray commenting on John 20:16 said, "Here we have the first manifestation of the risen Savior to Mary Magdalene, the woman who loved Jesus so much. Think of what the morning watch meant to Mary. Is it not a proof of the intense longing of a love that would not rest until it had found the Lord? It meant a separation from all else in her longing to find Christ. It meant the struggle of fear against a faith that refused to let go of its hold of Christ's wonderful promise, 'those who love me . . . and I will love them, and manifest myself to them.'" (John 14:21)

"Mary teaches us what the morning watch can mean for the revelation of Jesus to the soul."

"In Luke 24:31, Emmaus reminds us of the place that the evening prayer has in preparing us for the full manifestation of Christ in the soul. When Jesus Himself approached the two disciples as they traveled, they did not recognize Him. But as the Lord spoke with them, their hearts began to burn within them. Yet they never thought that it might be Christ Himself. How often does Jesus come near with the purpose of manifesting Himself to us, and yet we don't see Him?"

Remember, *Lectio Divina* is a way to give God a chance to speak to you. Listen for Him with an open Bible. The following list is for your weekly drawing near time. Before you begin, ask God's protection as you meet with Him and that the enemy would not be allowed to deceive, blind the mind to truth, or steal the Word from your heart. Read the Scripture selection many times underlining the key words, look up the Hebrew or Greek meaning, and write it down. Personalize the verse and pray it back to God. Select one word or truth and ask God to minister this to your heart. Ask God to "reveal Himself" to you as you wait in silence before Him. Before you leave your morning watch, read the verse in context and jot down any further insight you receive. Remember to pray your written prayer daily for a week.

April 14	Ps. 29:2	July 7	Ps. 34:18
April 21	Ps 29:11	July 14	Ps. 31:24
April 28	Josh. 1:9	July 21	Matt. 7:7-8
		July 28	Ps 25:14-5
May 5	Isa. 30:15	August 4	Ps. 31:19
May 12	Pr. 21:2	August 11	your pick
May 19	Mark 12:29	August 18	Zeph. 3:17
May 26	Num. 6:24-6	August 25	Matt. 5:13-6
June 2	Hebrew 13:18-9	September 1	Mal. 6:8
June 9	John 4:35	September 8	your pick
June 16	Ps. 31:3	September 15	Lam. 3:21-3
June 23	1 Chron. 28:9	September 22	Ps. 37:23-4
June 30	Luke 11:28	September 29	Matt. 11:28-30

May the Holy Spirit guide you in your pursuit for God. If we can be any further help, please contact us. May God bless you (endue you with power for success).

Sincerely in Christ,



Jim Logan

READING SCRIPTURE

INFORMATIONAL READING	FORMATIONAL READING
❖ Seeks to cover as much as possible	❖ Focuses on small portions
❖ A linear process	❖ An in-depth process
❖ Seeks to master the text	❖ Allows the text to master us
❖ The text as an object to use	❖ The text as a subject that shapes us
❖ Analytical, critical, and Judgmental approach	❖ Humble, detached, willing loving approach
❖ Problem-Solving Mentality	❖ Openness to Mystery

M. Robert Mulholland, Jr.

There is an important place for informational reading of Scripture and for exegetical and topical methods of Bible study. But those who approach Scripture only in this way often overlook the formational approach that centers on speaking to the heart more than informing the mind. The Bible is not merely an object, but a divinely inspired oracle that is “living and active” (Hebrews 4:12) and has power to transform those who receive it in humility and obedience (James 1:21-22). Devotional spirituality stresses the formative power of revealed truth and encourages us to love God through His Word.

MEDITATIVE PRAYER	COMTEMPLATIVE PRAYER
❖ Speech	❖ Silence
❖ Activity	❖ Receptivity
❖ Discursive thoughts	❖ Loss of mental images and Concepts
❖ Vocal and mental prayer	❖ Wordless prayer and interior Stillness

❖ Natural faculties of reason And imagination	❖ Mysterious darkening of the natural faculties
❖ Affective feelings	❖ Loss of feelings
❖ Reading and reflection	❖ Inability to meditate
❖ Doing	❖ Being
❖ Seeking	❖ Receiving
❖ Talking to Jesus	❖ Entering into prayer of Jesus

When we enter into the numinous territory of contemplation, it is best for us to stop talking and “Listen to Him” in simple and loving attentiveness. In this strange and holy land we must remove the sandals of our ideas, constructs, and inclinations, and listen for the voice of God. Periods of contemplation can be little “dark nights of faith.” During these times, God may seem absent and silent, but His presence and speech is on a deeper level than what we can feel or understand. By preparing a peaceful place in the soul we learn to “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him” (Psalm 37:7).

Meditation and the prayer that flows out of it brings us into communication with the living and transcendent Lord, and as such, they prepare us for contemplation. . . Because of its very nature, it is notoriously difficult to communicate the characteristics of contemplative prayer. It is a mysterious territory in which the language is silence and the action is receptivity. True contemplation is a theological grace that cannot be reduced to logical, psychological, or aesthetic categories. My colleague George Grove uses the following set of analogies to integrate the four components of sacred reading:¹

LECTIO	MEDITATIO	ORATIO	CONTEMPLATIO
Read	Meditate	Pray	Abide
Lips	Mind	Heart	Spirit
Seek	Find	Knock	Open
Food	Chew	Savor	Fill

¹ Sacred Readings A Journal Kenneth Boa

Prayer for Protection

**By the authority of the Almighty God,
I surround myself with the light of Christ,
I cover myself with the blood of Christ,
And I seal myself with the cross of Christ,
All dark and evil spirits must leave now.
No influence is allowed to come near me,
But that it is first filtered through the
Light of Jesus Christ in whose name I pray.
Amen**

Richard Foster

Formational Scripture Reading

Formational Scripture reading is quite different from what were used to. Formational scripture reading invites us to open ourselves to allow God to set the agenda for our lives through the text. It facilitates genuine spiritual formation -- the process of being conformed to the image of Jesus. Formational reading helps us open our rational filter, which can sift out so much of God's voice. We begin to hear at the heart and soul level. Jesus frequently reminded those who had ears to hear (Mark 4:9, 23; Luke 8:8; 14:35).

Characteristics of Formational Scripture Reading

DEPTH. Informational reading seeks to cover as much material as possible as quickly as possible, while formational reading involves smaller portions of Scripture. The point is not just to get through the text, but to become personally involved in it. Formational reading is concerned with depth, so we may find ourselves holding on to just one sentence or paragraph or page for quite a while. We allow the passage to open out to us its deeper dynamics and multiple layers of meaning. We let the text intrude into our life and address us.

OPENNESS. In formational reading, we let the text master us. We come to the text with an openness to hear, to receive and to respond. This may feel risky because it lays us open to unforeseen conclusions.

HUMILITY. Formational reading requires a humble and willing approach, which requires a new inner posture in which we are willing to relinquish our insights and purposes. We stand ourselves before Scripture and wait its address.

MYSTERY. Informational reading can be characterized by a problem solving mentality. When we do respond, we often read our needs and desires into the Scripture, asking, does this

passage solve my problems, answer my questions, meet my needs?¹

Formational reading invites us to become open to the whole mystery of God. We are allowing God to address us however he may wish to do so. Eventually, we may discover that problem solving dynamics emerge from the encounter, but we relinquish the right to solve our problems with Scripture.

Suggestions for Formational Scripture Reading

Make listening to God's voice a top priority. Focus your attention on what God is saying to you as you read. Listening for God to speak to you in and through, around and within, over and behind the words. Ask yourself, what is God seeking to say to me in all this? Allow the text to become an instrument of God's control in your life. Respond to what you read with your heart and Spirit.

Let your response take place down in the deeper levels of your being. Ask yourself questions such as how do I feel about what is being said? How am I reacting? How am I responding deep down within myself? What is going on inside of me? Then begin to ask yourself why questions: why do I feel this way? Why am I responding in this manner? Why do I have these feelings within?

Let this exercise be an opportunity to get in touch with the deeper layers of your being. What do your reactions tell you about your habits, your attitudes, your perspectives, your responses and your reactions to life? Are you beginning to see something about yourself? Thomas a Kempis said, "A humble knowledge of ourselves is a surer way to God than is the searching for depth of learning." That humble knowledge of yourself can come when you read scripture if you balance your cognitive response pattern with this effective response from deep within your being.

¹ The Spiritual Formational Bible

Prepared to read by quieting yourself. You can't run in, sit down, pick up the text and read scripture formationally. You have to center down, to use the old Quaker phrase become still, relinquish your agenda and acknowledge the presence of God. You may have to relax first in order to do this. When you do this, you may find that no word addresses you out of that text on that day, but the constant discipline of preparing yourself and entering into formational reading will itself be spiritually forming to your soul.

Allow the two kinds of reading -- informational and formational -- to work together. You may begin reading a Scripture passage with informational dynamics, but then you must be sensitive to the need to move to the formational dynamics of reading. Allow yourself to be open and receptive to the instruction of the living word of God into your garbled, disoriented self. You may get tripped up on an informational point and need to move back to an informational mode. There is a necessary interplay between these two approaches, but you'll ultimately need to arrive at a disciplined development of the formational mode of approaching the text. As we become skilled at shifting to that inner posture of becoming listeners, we develop ears to hear. We become receptive and accessible to being addressed by the living word of God.

LECTIO DIVINA

Scripture

Select a verse or so and record it here.

Reading

Slowly read the Scripture passage several times

Meditation

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text.
Which words, phrases, or images speak most to you?

Prayer

Offer the internalized passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, affirmation, or thanksgiving.

Contemplation

What word or image captures the spirit of the passage for you?

Take a few minutes to present yourself before God in silence and yieldedness. When your mind wanders, center yourself by returning to the spirit of the passage. Ken Boa Sacred Readings A Journal

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Meditation

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text.
Which words, phrases, or images speak most to you?

Prayer

Offer the internalized passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, affirmation, or thanksgiving.

Contemplation

What word or image captures the spirit of the passage for you?

Take a few minutes to present yourself before God in silence and yieldedness. When your mind wanders, center yourself by returning to the spirit of the passage. Ken Boa Sacred Readings A Journal

LECTIO DIVINA

Scripture

Select a verse or so and record it here.

Reading

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SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Praying the Scriptures

The spiritual life is the life of God's Spirit in us, through living interaction between our spirit and the Holy Spirit to which we mature into the full stature of Christ and become more surrendered to the work of the Spirit within and around us.

To pray the Scriptures means to allow the words of the sacred text form our prayer - either directly or indirectly. Prayer entails heart – to – heart communication with God and moves in both directions. God speaks, we listen and respond; we speak, God listens in response.

To pray the Scriptures requires first of all that we approach the Word in a spirit of prayer. We acknowledge that we are seeking the living, active presence of God in and through God's Word. We bring ourselves consciously into the divine presence and affirm the reality of this presence even if we cannot feel it. Whatever we read and reflect on in the Word is part of our ongoing dialogue with God.

From this basic stance, we may take any number of approaches to praying the Scriptures. One of the most central and ancient practices of Christian prayer is called Lectio Divina, or spiritual reading. In Lectio Divina we begin by reading and savoring a short passage of Scripture. Our inner posture is one of a listening heart filled with an unhurried expectation that God has a message to convey especially suited to our condition and circumstances. We read and ruminate with the ears of our hearts open, alert to connections the Spirit may reveal between the passage and our life situation. We ask, what are you saying to me today, Lord? What am I to hear in this story, parable, prophecy? Listening in this way requires an attitude of patient receptivity in which we let go of our own agendas and open ourselves to God's good shaping purpose.¹

¹ The Spiritual Formation Bible

The Prayers and Songs of Scripture

There are other ways to pray Scripture as well. The Bible gives us categories for prayer, expands our language for prayer and tutors us in speaking to God as we hear God speak to us through the Word.

The words of Scripture can also become words through which we address God directly. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the book of Psalms. The book of Psalms has been called the prayer book of the Bible in both the Jewish and Christian traditions. It is a collection of sung prayers that has been used in corporate liturgy from the time of ancient Israel up to the present. Because the Psalms range so widely in the emotional expression, from the heights of adoration and praise to the depths of vengeful curses against the enemy, they have special pertinence to our prayer life. They teach us to hide nothing from God, but to bring all that is real into the only relationship that God can bless the best and heal the worst in us.

Sometimes the Psalms give us words for intercession as well. The Psalms I pray may not fit my experience but may very well reflect the experience of another person or group. Recently, praying Psalms 107 lead me into intercession for many people.

We need to set aside some time each day to listen and respond to God's Word. Take a few moments to settle peacefully into God's presence and pray for the guidance of the Spirit that your body be a partner in prayer. Find a comfortable posture that will keep you alert but relax. Then simply trust the Spirit to guide you into prayer as your listening, your reflection and your response are shaped by the Word of God. Be patient with your practice. In time, rich blessings will attend you!

Kenneth Leech From the very earliest times, writers have seen spiritual progress as involving three stages: purification, illumination and union with God. The origins of the threefold

pattern lie in the biblical teaching about repentance, sanctification and union.²

FUNCTIONAL FACETS IN SPIRITUAL FORMATION

For those of us seriously engaged in spiritual formation, there is a strong temptation to see spiritual foundation as a technique that we do, to replace worn-out methods of devotion or worship. How often do we see worship as something we do to get right with God, instead of an offering of ourselves to God in worship through which we can be drawn into the depths of God's loving presence.

Now there are two elements involved in Jesus' baptism. One is the element of empowerment. The second is Jesus' call. Jesus receives his call through the heavenly voice that says, "You are my son." Jesus' baptism is an experience of both empowerment for and call to ministry.

Jesus' temptation flows directly out of his empowerment and call. Temptations come at the very heart of our relationship with God; they are the temptation to subvert the relationship for our own purposes. Jesus', temptation comes from the empowerment and his call. The result of his empowerment is that the very Spirit who empowers him leads him out to be tested. Wrestle with that one for a while! The nature of the testing focuses upon the call. Notice that Satan challenges Jesus, "If you are the Son of God. . ." That is the call – "You are my Son." So we see that the temptation brings together both the empowerment and the call.

Jesus is tempted to use his empowerment to authenticate his call for himself, to use the power of the Spirit to do something to prove for himself that he is the Son of God. Consider Jesus' answer: "One does not live by bread alone." Obviously bread is necessary, but "not by bread alone." Jesus points to a deeper context of existence: Human beings live "by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Jesus responds to the functional temptation by pointing to the relational reality of life. At the center human life is set within a relationship with God.

² Soul Friend

We do not live by functional activities alone but by our relationship with God. True life and wholeness are the results of being shaped by the word of God. This shaping, however, is not something we do by our efforts (functional); it is what God does in us when we are in a loving, receptive, responsive relationship with God.

Our spiritual disciplines must emerge from our relationship with God if they are to become a means of grace to free us from our misformed false self and form us in the image of Christ. It seems, therefore, that the first and continuing question of spiritual formation is: Are we operating on a functional basis, somehow trying to get ourselves closer to God or to what we think God wants us to be; or are we operating on a relational basis, where, in responsiveness to God, we are allowing God to draw us into genuine spiritual formation? Are we seeking to use the scripture as a means by which we can draw closer to God, and a schedule of functional activities that will enable us to be what God wants us to be? Or are we seeking to come to the scripture openly, receptively, responsively; yielding ourselves to whatever God may want to say and then obeying in such a way that our functional activities flow from our relationship with God?

What is your primary mode of Christian Life: Is it functional or is it relational?³

³ Robert Mulholland Jr. Shaped By The Word

LECTIO DIVINA

Kenneth Boa The ancient art of *lectio divina*, or sacred reading, was introduced to the west by the Eastern desert father John Cassian early in the fifth century. It has been practiced for centuries by Cistercian monks (e.g., Mike Casey, *Sacred Reading and Toward God*) and is now being rediscovered in wider parts of the Christian community. This extraordinarily beneficial approach combines the disciplines of study, prayer, and meditation into a powerful method that when consistently applied, can revolutionize one's spiritual life. Sacred reading consists of four elements:

1. *Lectio* (reading) . Select a very short text and ingest it by reading it several times. I normally choose a verse or two from the chapters I read from the Old and New Testaments in my morning Bible reading.
2. *Meditatio* (meditation). Take a few minutes to reflect and ruminate over the words and phrases in the text you have read. Ponder the passage by asking questions and using your imagination.
3. *Oratio* (prayer). Having internalized the passage, offer it back to God in the form of personalized prayer.
4. *Contemplatio* (contemplation). For most of us, this will be the most difficult part, since it consists of silence and yieldedness in the presence of God. Contemplation is the fruit of the dialogue of the first three elements; it is the communion that is borne out of our reception of divine truth in our minds and hearts.

In spite of a multitude of inner distractions and times when God seems silent, practice and perseverance in *lectio divina* is profoundly rewarding.

Ben Campbell Johnson In the contemplative life, persons rested from active works of service and compassion and gave themselves to prayer and the contemplation of God. Like many of the ancients, Gregory illustrated his idea of contemplation by pointing to the examples of Mary and Martha. Martha busied herself with the tasks of cooking and preparing the meal, while Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, conversing with and caring for him.

The goal of the Christian life is to live in God, to be in a deep, profound relationship with God.

Gregory said, "The Son is the Word, but the Spirit is the tongue, through which the Son speaks.

As we continue to meditate upon Scripture, we will be led into a relationship of peace and stillness before God.

So we must approach the posture of prayerful meditation on Scripture with a spirit of poverty and humility.

The aim of our encounter with Scriptures is intimacy with God.

Through our persistent meditation on the Word, our inner life with its shadows and darkness is revealed to us. Confession and cleansing open our souls to the light of God, which dispels the darkness.

One ancient way of meditating on Scripture has been called *Lectio Divina*, or spiritual reading. This method may have originated in the desert of Egypt, the devotional life in Antioch, or the intellectual center of Alexander.

As the monks made their way through the Bible, meditating and reflecting on each word and phrase, it is little wonder that they memorized great portions of Scriptures. Some say that Benedict required all his monks to memorize the whole New Testament and the Psalms.

Lectio Divina indicates a slow, studied, reflective way of reading a text from the Bible. The point is not how many verses of Scriptures you read; you read not for information but for communion with Christ.

This way of encountering God through Scripture has four movements: *Lectio* – read, *Meditatio* – meditate, *Oratio* – prayer, *Contemplatio* – contemplate.

The monks of the desert, for example, did not name these four movements as a formal system; rather I suspect, they notice what happened to them as they read the Scripture.

FIRST, they read a text and thought about it with a listening heart.

SECOND, as they thought about the text from different perspectives, parts of their lives were illumined by the light of the text, and this deeper awareness generated material for further thought. Meditation on the text brought them closer and closer to themselves and to the divine presence.

THIRD, when the text connected with a specific need in their lives they prayed about it. As they prayed, deeper insights came and opened their lives even more.

FOURTH, as they were drawn into the text, their attention shifted from themselves to God. In contemplation they were drawn into a deeper communion with God, which Gregory calls union with God. Contemplation led not only to communion but to vision – not a vision of images like hallucinations, but an inner vision of the Divine.

THE PRACTICE OF *LECTIO DIVINA*

I think the best way to make the practice of *Lectio Divina* accessible is to provide a model of the practice step by step.

FIRST, I read (John 15:1-8), slowly and reflectively. I noted the words and phrases that grasped my attention.

As I read this passage, several phrases captured my interest:

“I am the true vine”

“Abide in me as I abide in you”

“Apart from me you can do nothing”

“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

With the selection of these lines, I completed the first movement of encountering this passage. I listened to the words that spoke to me.

SECOND, I meditated on the text. Meditation is a deliberate act of thinking about the text, asking questions of it, turning it over in my mind to let it attract parts of my life. Meditation unearthed more material for prayer as I moved beyond the surface thoughts that arose when I read the text.

“Apart from me you can do nothing.” What does it mean to depend upon you for strength and guidance? I have conversed with you about this great truth many times. Is there more for me to see?

What things are you doing now, what ministries are you attempting?

Asking the question about “apart from me you can do nothing” was my way of meditating on the text.

THIRD, I prayed about the way in which the text connected with my life today.

“I am the true vine.” Jesus is the true source of my life. All that has meaning and value for me springs from him. But I see myself often turning to other so-called sources of life. Some days I turn to my own thoughts of my own security in what I possess. Lord, you are the source of my life. Keep pruning these wild sprouts and renewing my sense of your presence. Etc.

As I recall what you have said to me in these texts, I see clearly that you are the source of my life. From you comes who I am, what I am to do – my very being comes from you. And when I rest in you as you constantly rest in me, I remain connected to the source of my life. Apart from your presence in me and your power that operates through me I can do nothing of value for your Kingdom. But when I abide in you and your words take root in my life, I have the privilege of asking for anything (yes anything) and it will be given to me. Thanks to you, O Christ, for this, your word to me.

Notice how prayer returns to meditation, and meditation expresses itself in prayer. The reflection on the affirmation “I am the true vine” began with my thinking objectively about Christ, but soon my consciousness changes from “thinking about” Christ to “being in conversation with” Christ.

FOURTH, I contemplated the text. Contemplation begins with the text but uses it as a means to enter into the presence of Christ (God). At this moment I am aware that my structured ways of being in the world has been penetrated by the Word of Christ. He has brought to my mind the things for which I need his help, both in my vocational life and in my personal life. I can do nothing apart from him. Realizing this, I deeply desire to enter into his presence and be before him.

My way into the presence will lead me beyond thoughts about my “nothingness,” my feelings of helplessness, and all my ideas about being a faithful disciple of Christ. Contemplation constitutes a state of being beyond thoughts, feelings, desires,

and intentions. The way into contemplation demands, “letting go” of everything but our awareness of and love for Him.

In my act of contemplation. I closed my eyes and began to think about two texts alternately: “Apart you do nothing” and “With me all things are possible.” I repeated these . . . two or three times. Then the words began to fall away, and I found myself saying, “Nothing. Possible. Nothing. Possible. Finally all words left, at that moment I was enjoying the contemplation of the presence, a sense of being connected to Christ, a peace about myself and my life.¹

¹ Ben Campbell Johnson Living Before God Eerdmans Pub.2000

LECTIO DIVINA SHARED IN COMMUNITY

Lectio **Reading God's Word**

- 1. One person reads aloud (twice) the chosen passage of scripture, as others in the group attend to some portion that is especially meaningful to them.**
- 2. Silence is observed for one or two minutes. Each person silently repeats a word or phrase that attracted his or her attention.**
- 3. Sharing aloud: each person repeats the word or phrase without elaboration.**

Meditatio **Reflecting on God's Word**

- 1. A second person reads the same Scripture passage.**
- 2. Silence is observed for two to three minutes. Each participant reflects on the question "Where does the content of this reading touch my life today?"**
- 3. Sharing aloud: Each person briefly shares what the reading means to him or her: "I hear ____" "I see ____" "I was struck by ____"**

Oratio **Responding to God**

- 1. A third person reads the same Scripture passage.**
- 2. Silence is observed for two or three minutes. All reflect on how God is calling them to respond.**
- 3. Sharing aloud: Each person says a brief, spontaneous prayer, expressing his response to God's call.**

Contemplatio **Resting in God**

- 1. A fourth person reads the same Scripture passage.**
- 2. Participants rest in the Word, in silence for two to three minutes.**

3. All say aloud, "The Lord's Prayer".

Operatio
Responding in Action

1. A fifth person reads the same Scripture passage.
2. Silence is observed for one or two minutes. Each person reflects on the question "What does the Lord want me to do? Which word or phrase will I take with me?"
3. Sharing aloud: Each person briefly shares the word or phrase that calls him to action.

CLOSURE

Do you see how this way of encountering Christ through Scripture can begin to shape you spiritually? Do you see how this practice will sharpen your awareness of His presence in you? And do you now understand how this way of reading Scripture will furnish you with criteria for discernment? All these signs of growth come to us as we seek Christ in the Word of Scripture.

Consider ways that you may fruitfully use this approach to reading Scripture in your personal discipline, but also consider groups to whom you may introduce it.

Kenneth Boa (There are two basic approaches to reading scripture informational reading and formational Jim Logan) There is an important place for informational reading of Scripture and for exegetical and topical methods of Bible study. But those who approach Scripture only in this way often overlook the formational approach that centers on speaking to the heart more than informing the mind. The Bible is not merely an object, but a divinely inspired oracle that is "*Living and Active*" (Hebrews 4:12) and has the power to transform those who receive it in humility and obedience (James 1:21-22). Devotional spirituality stresses the formative power to reveal truth and encourages us to love God through His Word. We will look at a time-tested method of doing this, *Lectio Divina*. Grateful reflection on what God has done for your soul is a vital component of devotional spirituality.

God's ways also relate to the multifaceted attributes of His person and power, and perfection. Because our capacity to love God is related to our image of God, we do well to pray for the grace of growing in understanding of the glories of His attributes. . . He is the absolute answer to the perennial quest for the true, the good, and the beautiful.²

Lectio Divina

St. John of the Cross's paraphrase of a verse from St. Luke's Gospel (11:9) provides us with an outline of the four steps of Lectio.

Seek in Reading,
and you will find in Meditation;
knock in Prayer
and it will be open to you
in Contemplation.

While leading to contemplative prayer as its function, Lectio incorporates within an undefined unfolding movement these forms of prayer which only as late as the 16th century were separated into distinct categories -- namely, Discursive prayer (or meditation), Affective prayer (or "prayer of the heart"), and Contemplation ("mystical" Prayer). In Lectio, these are spontaneous and integrated, in an orientation toward progressively greater simplicity and depth, the realm of contemplation.

1. Lectio: Reading and Listening to the Word of God

The first step of Lectio Divina is Lectio, or reading. It is not ordinary reading, either asked to matter or manner. The matter is the "Divine Word," or Scripture, and the manner of reading is, more acutely, a "Listening" and a "hearing," attuned to the inspired word and attentive to the Speaker.

Therefore I prepare for this sacred reading by taking time to quiet my body and mind in order to begin to bring my whole person into a single focus. I choose a text -- preferably short -- and read it slowly, listening to it interiorly with full attention.

² Kenneth Boa Sacred Readings

In all, my goal is to personalize the words, to realize them, as God speaking to me, now. The role of Lectio just described is analogous to coming to meet the other, with the intention of sharing in time together alone.

2. Meditatio: Reflecting on the Word

It is important at the beginning therefore to realize -- make real -- the truth that prayer is always a gifted response to the loving initiative of the Holy Spirit. Dom Chapman, a famous Benedictine spiritual director of the early 1900s: "Pray as you can, not as you can't!" Ultimately, only the Holy Spirit can teach us to pray and whatever anyone else may offer can only be of help in aiding us to dispose ourselves to receive that teaching experientially. Meditation is largely an activity of our intellect and imagination about God, and if it remains on an intellectual level it falls short of genuine prayer. For the goal of prayer is not thoughts or concepts or knowledge about God, however so blind, but God himself as he is.

3. Oratio: The Word Touches the Heart

The deepest center is the realm of contemplation, and Oratio or "prayer of the heart" which we will now consider is the beginning of the path that leads to it. Over a long period of time we may find ourselves moving between Meditation and this prayer of the heart, but eventually a gradual simplification begins to take place. In this prayer, our hearts are open to Him and by him, so that his life may enter.

In Oratio, until we learn to be at home with the patient waiting for God that prayer will eventually teach us, we may find it helpful to return now and then to Lectio with a few simple words from Scripture, such as the opening verse of Psalm 42.

As a deer yearns
for running streams,
so I yearn
for you my God.

However we must be careful not to substitute reading for prayer, for at this stage of Oratio we will gradually be brought to a more subtle and intuitive awareness of God which dawns slowly, and

ought not to be obscured by our own impatient search for the lesser light of our limited intellectual faculties. Teresa of Avila provides a helpful example here. She tells us that when a small fire has been lighted (in our prayer), to keep it burning we may from time to time place upon it a stick or two, (e.g., a few words from Scripture), but, she cautions us, we should not throw branches on it (lengthy reading or activity of the mind) because this will extinguish the flame.

Dom Marmion (a French Benedictine monk of an earlier era) said as follows:

Lectio We read
Meditatio under the eyes of God
Oratio until the heart touched
Contemplatio and leaps into flame.

The transition to the final Contemplatio, or contemplation (which is not a terminus but a new and crucial beginning), is very unlikely what one might have expected.

4:Contemplatio Entering the Silence "Too Deep for Words"

Contemplation is a strange new land, where everything natural to us seems to be turned upside down -- where we learn a new language (silence), a new way of being (not to do but simply to be), where our thoughts and concepts, our imagination, senses and feelings are abandoned for faith in what is unseen and unfelt, where God's seeming absence (to our senses) in his presence, and his silence (to our ordinary perception) is his speech.

To be a contemplative therefore is not limited to any specific lifestyle, such as a monastic or religious; rather, it has everything to do with hearing God's call, in whatever state of life we find ourselves. For contemplation will make us not less concerned for the world we live in, but more.³

³ Thelma Hall Too Deep for Words

Lectio Divina

This constant living doxology is buoyed up by the monastic discipline of Lectio Divina, or sacred reading. This is central to monastic asceticism, the heart of the monk's discipline. Lectio is not simply reading; it is not scanning a page for useful information. Lectio is a disciplined receptivity to God's revelation, involving the continual, slow, careful pondering of the Word of God in Scripture. By Lectio the Word lives in the heart and conforms the monk to the person of Christ. The monastic tradition stresses the importance of cultivating an attitude of receptivity, allowing God's Word to touch the depths of the heart. God's purifying Word draws forth many things from the bottom of the human heart, but ultimately it invokes a loving desire for communion with the living God. This communion takes full form in contemplation, a way of perceiving and of being attentive to the presence of the living God whose name is above all names, but who is God toward us, for us, with us, and in us through Jesus the Christ.

In every expression of monastic life, silence and solitude have been emphasized. Monastic rules and customs that safeguard an ambience of solitude are necessary in the monk's quest for God. Silence is a discipline that enables the monk to listen to God, to really hear the truth in the recesses of the human heart. Real communication is a rare gift. So much talk is insipid chatter or gossip. The monk learns that silence unites more deeply than speech, helps one to move from communication to communion.

Reading the life of God long and lovingly by spending time with the Word lies at the very heart of the monastic discipline. Others, not monks, adopt a ministry of preaching. Some teach or conduct schools for nursing the sick. The monk lives a life of lectio. He knows that to read is to love by taking care of the Word. To know how to read a book is a whole way of life. Benedict's first word to those who seek God in this way is "Listen!" All his work, prayer, and worship are ordered to fuller participation in this ministry of communion. The life of the mind is cultivated through lectio divina and through study. The purpose of lectio and study in the monastic life is not to gather useful information about the Scriptures. Rather, through lectio

and study the monk participates in the very life of God. The reflective life in the monastic tradition is an activity by which God is glorified. Study is an act of praise: the better known, the more God is love and adored. Contemplation does not lie primarily in the undisturbed mind's pure gaze upon eternal, unchanging truth -- up there or out there. It is more a matter of seeing the ordinary and the every day as the arena of God's presence and action. Contemplation is a kind of knowledge of God "from the inside out," a kind of knowing God, not just knowing about God.¹

Sacred Reading

As the dust settled after the intensive house cleaning initiated by the Council, monks and nuns began to appreciate more the spiritual heritage they had received in the monastic tradition. Increasingly through hospitality, writing, and speaking, they offered to the people of God the deep experiential wisdom of the monastic tradition. For many, monastic spirituality came as a breath of fresh air.

Primary among the elements of a monastic approach to God was the rediscovery of Lectio Divina, the art of sacred reading. This is so different from the sort of reading we do to obtain information that some re-education is the essential. Lectio Divina is more than the pious perusal of "spiritual books." Lectio Divina is a technique of prayer and a guide to living. It is a means of descending to the level of the heart and of finding God. In the past two decades many people have been initiated into Lectio, although often this has been merely a matter of refining an existing practice. It has been a common experience to discover that binding prayer to the Scriptures is an effective means of overcoming the obstacles of subjectivism and of finding a way out of what had become a blind alley of blank spiritual experiences.

Many of us today who attempt to master the technique of Lectio Divina find that it becomes confused with other types of reading undertaken professionally or for entertainment or knowledge. The specificity of the exercise can be difficult to maintain. This

¹ Michael Downey Trappist

means that we have to make an effort to build into our holy reading some of the qualities that the ancient monks were lucky enough to have by accident.

The first requirement is patience.

In fact, we have to slow down our intellectual metabolism and not expect to find quick and easy solutions to all life's problems. It is precisely this damping down of superficial excitement that creates the environment in which we are able to perceive spiritual things more intensely.

Wanting to grasp everything immediately is the best way to comprehend nothing.

In some senses the medium is the message. What are we doing in Lectio Divina? We are seeking God. We are hoping to hear God's voice and do God's will, but we are operating in search mode. In our practice of Lectio Divina, a patient receptivity may serve us better than a clamorous urgency to be enlightened.

Its aim is to confront us with the truth of our own existence, and to accomplish this it has to break down all the barriers that we interpose between our awareness and the truth.

Our reading like our prayer, mirrors the quality of our life. The major determinant of prayer or Lectio is our fidelity to seeking God in everyday behavior. It is no good being fervent in reading if we are slack in living. On the other hand, we are more likely to be attuned to the message of the Gospels if our conduct is patterned according to evangelical priorities. Lectio Divina is an element in a lifelong process of turning toward God: its effects are discernible only in the long term. Equally, the effects of the absence of Lectio may not be apparent to us until it is too late.

We cannot hear what a text is saying if we refuse to listen. And increasingly, many are reluctant to listen to truth or opinions that challenge any aspect of the personal view of reality. Reading the Scriptures is allowing God to speak to our hearts, and minds, and consciences.

Any personal encounter with God's Word in Scripture is good and has power to change our lives for the better. If, however, we desire to make such reading a regular part of our lives we will probably find it helpful to manipulate the process as little as possible: to let God speak to us and to act on our hearts rather than to prescribe for ourselves the remedies we believe will make us better.

First, reverence propels us towards silence, and silence enables us to listen. If we are to live according to God's Word we must first hear what is said. That usually involves the labor of listening. Lectio is the time to leave aside other thoughts and concerns and to devote ourselves entirely to sitting at the Lord's feet and allowing ourselves to be instructed. "It is appropriate for the teacher to speak and teach; the disciple is to be silent and listen."

Second, reverence will cause us to surround our reading with safeguards to its seriousness. This means a certain amount of care expended in the choice of time and place, attention to the quality of the environment in which our Lectio is done.

Thirdly, reverence for God's Word means respect for the text of the Bible. It points to a zeal for the authentic meaning of the text and a corresponding reluctance to twist the Bible's meaning to suit extrinsic demands.

Fourthly, the final quality that reverence builds in us is a determination to put into practice the good news encountered in Lectio -- to not merely be hearers of the Word but doers.

Monks work, almost by definition, to be men of the book, and this is why they went to such trouble to preserve the biblical texts, to purge it of mistakes, and to transmit to succeeding generations both the book and the skills to read it.

The first points to the role of Lectio in leading us to prayer and ultimately to contemplation.

The second emphasizes the corporate and the ecclesial nature of revelation and offers us some protection against the idiocies of subjectivism.

The third reminds us that God's Word comes to us in earthen vessels and helps us to separate the gold from the dross.

Lectio Divina is an essential element in the flowering of contemplation. What is contemplation? It is a change in consciousness marked by two elements. On the one hand, there is a recession from ordinary sense and intellectual awareness and all the concerns and programs that depend upon it. At the same time, more subtly, it is being processed by the reality and ministry of God.

This is the original meaning of the Word "mystery." The Greek term musterion is related to the verb muein (to contemplate) and means something that has the capacity to sustain prolonged contemplation, something so rich in meaning that the mind readily feeds upon it. We are not talking about a puzzle that, once solved, is left aside. A mystery holds us rapt. Revelation has achieved its goal if it brings us to that total experience of love and understanding that follows our immersion in God.

Three areas in particular may repay our reflection.

First, there is the need for mental preparation. When we read the Bible we cannot presume that its meaning will be immediately apparent to us. Unless we have attained a high competence in spiritual exegesis, we may find it necessary to prepare for Lectio Divina by some measure of preliminary study.

Secondly, there are varying levels of penetration. The repetitive character of Lectio Divina means that we passed through the same territory several times during our life.

Thirdly, the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness.

Fourth, levels of meaning.

The literal sense, this is sometimes called the historical meaning.

The christological sense, the so-called "allegorical sense" is an attempt to find added Christian meaning to an otherwise arid passage of Scripture. This involved relocating any particular text within the context of the totality of salvation.

The behavioral sense is also called the "moral" or "typological" sense. This terminology does not refer to the objective ethical content of Scripture, but to the way in which God's Word shapes our beliefs and values so as eventually to evangelize our behavior.

The mystical sense, the technical term for this was "anagogical" sense, refers to be Bible's power to lift up hearts to spiritual realities and to make us feel a great desire for the things of God, to lead us ever deeper into prayer.

As we read we become more aware of an attraction within to transcend the pettiness that characterizes so much of our lives and to open ourselves more fully to God present in the sacrament of the Word. To allow desire for God to become paramount in our lives, to "abide" in God and to allow God to abide in us.

We begin with a diligent attention to the literal meaning of the text. We allow our reading to contextualize itself within the totality of salvation so that, unbidden, every page of the Scriptures sings to us of Christ, of the confidence that our faith gives us, and to look at the reality of daily life and imprint on it a genuine evangelical character. The struggles involved in this and the inevitable failures lead us to recognize our limits and so we call out to God for help. Out of our experience of weakness prayer is born. As God responds to our prayer we begin to have some experience of what God is like.

Contemplation can never be seen as the outcome of a process. It remains a gift from God that is not automatically associated with particular human acts. It is given in God's time not as a "reward" for work well done, but as an energizing component within the total context of life.

Fundamentally it is the atmosphere of prayer that penetrates every aspect of Holy reading that makes it distinctive. Prayer is not subtly born at the third stage. Rather, prayer accompanies us as we open the book and settle our minds, as we read the page and ponder its meaning. Prayer is the meaning of Lectio Divina; that is why the exercise of sacred reading is sometimes said to be a technique of prayer.

When prayer comes naturally or with only a little coaxing, everything is fine. We don't need to examine our practice or read books about Lectio Divina.

The general rule is simple; if prayer is not found then insert it. Begin the reading with a prayer, interrupt the text with prayer. Some people find it useful to translate each verse that they read into an address to God that springs from the reality of their own life and experience.

Prayerful reading is the first moment of Lectio Divina. Everything that facilitates prayer will contribute something positive to our reading of the Scriptures. However, by making explicit at the very beginning of our perusal of the text to a deeper understanding. The best answer to the question, "Why am I doing this?" is "I hope to find God in my reading." Lectio Divina is an expression of my search for God. Sacred reading can be considered "successful" only if it causes me to drop my defenses and allow God to touch my heart and change my life.

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Guigo "from what has been said we may gather that reading without meditation is dry. Meditation without reading is subject to error. Prayer without meditation is lukewarm. Meditation without prayer is fruitless. Prayer with devotion leads to contemplation; whereas contemplation without prayer happens rarely or by a miracle.

Finding The Literal Sense

Lectio Divina leads to a conscious endeavor to live in accordance with the Gospels, to live what we read. It is certainly true that our sacred reading takes place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and of God's providence. I would like to listen in all the areas in which information can be helpful to an accurate reading of the inspired text, although I recognize that most of us are able to pursue only one line of inquiry at a time.

Background culture.

Biblical languages.

Method of composition.

Cross-referencing.

Theological synthesis.

Skills of interpretation.

Mindfulness

Our sacred reading is not merely for the moment. If Lectio Divina has no effect beyond a few moments of its exercise, then it is scarcely worth doing. It has been reduced to the level of devotional self-indulgence.

This is easy to understand in theory. As usual, practice is trickier. Why, I asked myself, do I not remember more of what I read? Why do I not let God's word flow more freely into my life? It seems to me that there are several overlapping reasons.

Inattention.

Hardheartedness. It is the experience of many that Lectio Divina often leads to prayer later in the day.

Irrelevance.

The Practice Of Lectio Divina.

Ambience. If you come to your Lectio Divina in areas associated with other activities, don't be surprised if you are assailed by distractions. If we remember that we are subtly influenced by

our environment, we may be motivated to experiment a little to discover a location that helps us remain alert and yet relatively free from opportunities of mind-- wandering.

The first requirement is a degree of privacy.

The second requirement is illumination.

Whereas meditation often works best in dimness, Lectio Divina obviously needs sufficient light to read the text comfortably. Some who spend a lot of time sitting find that to read standing is a pleasant change. You may discover that the act of furnishing the place and occupying it focuses the mind and facilitates an interior sense of prayerfulness. Some use the role of music as a means of tranquility and relaxation during the preparatory phase, but to my opinion is that during the time of sacred reading itself, it is better attempt to do it in silence.

Ritual. Many people find that the repetition of customary actions is a great help in dropping off to sleep. The same kind of process can often help us in our prayer-related activities. In meditation and sacred reading it is useful to begin formally or with some measure of ritual.

Inserting prayer. Sometimes prayer wells up naturally during our Lectio Divina. In such cases we do not need much external guidance. If prayer is slow in coming, it makes sense for us to go out and meet it half way.

At the beginning, we can introduce a prayerful element by consciously saying a prayer -- especially one that asks God's assistance in the reading we are about to begin.

During the reading, too, we should remember to pray. Let the text find an echo in our hearts so that we become part of the events that we read about. Sometimes the words of the text are directly applicable to our present situation and we can simply adopt them as a vehicle for our prayer. Alternatively, when we read it may arouse feelings, memories, and desires in us which express themselves naturally in other words or even in texts from different parts of the Bible. In each case we have to allow the text to lead us, without fully understanding what our final destination will be. It is our willingness to let the Bible stimulate prayer in us that makes our reading a dynamic factor in our ongoing conversation. Without prayer, Lectio is less Divina; it becomes mere reading.

When our session of sacred reading draws to a close, we may wish to conclude with the Lord's Prayer, a short Psalm of thanksgiving, or a prayer based on the passage we have just read. It is a simple means of effecting the transition from reading to life.

Active reading. We will probably need to be re-educated if we are to improve our skills of sacred reading. Lectio Divina is like reading poetry: we need to slow down, to savor what we read, and to allow the text to trigger memories and associations that reside below the threshold of awareness. We are so accustomed to reading quickly and "objectively" that we easily slip back into the habit, even when we are reading purely for "subjective" profit. This means that we may have to take a stand to protect the specific character of holy reading.

One useful technique is to revert to the ancient practice of verbalizing as we read. This means that as we read a text we vocalize the words, saying them quietly to ourselves or even aloud. By adding sound to sight, reading aloud increases its power both to capture our attention and to invoke latent memories. In the normal course of events it makes it easier to keep distracting thoughts at bay since it is almost impossible for the mind to drift towards alternative thoughts while we are actively vocalizing.

The heart of writing is itself a meditation -- a way of assimilating what we read. We may wish to compile a florilegium as the ancient monks did, writing a verse of two of our daily reading in a book, so that gradually we build up an anthology of texts that have spoken to us. Thus our reading can issue in a "Lectio journal," that chronicles the history of our devotion to God's Word. Two points we need to remember. Strictly speaking, we are referring to writing down passages of Scripture, without added comment or personal reflection. Such belong in another kind of journal. Secondly, the act of writing is as important as the end product. We should strive to write mindfully and with care. The practice should never become routine, but should always represent an act of homage and submission to a text that has begun to speak to us but which we would love to penetrate more.

Sacred reading is a way of spending time with God's revealed Word: it involves reflection on the meaning of the text,

application to our own situation and a willingness to be led into prayer. Spend some time writing a prayer based on the passage that we have just read.

Because Lectio Divina takes place in a low -- impact environment, it is easy to become drowsy, especially if we are tired or bored. There are a few commonsense precautions that we can take.

1. Choose a time of day in which we are less likely to be sleepy.
2. Make sure that there is sufficient oxygen in the air to sustain to wakefulness. Open a window; if you are using a portable heater turn it off.
3. Use a posture that is not too relaxed and encourages alertness. A straight spine often helps.
4. Don't stay too long. Prolonging reading beyond appropriate limits can be a cause of sleepiness.
5. Recognize that we cannot do always what we can do sometimes; we have to be realistic in periods of diminished energy.
6. Sometimes it helps to vary the content of our reading -- for example to switch from one biblical book to another -- so that a little variety acts as a break to the monotony.
7. If none of these practical suggestions effect an improvement, it may be that our sleepiness is really passive resistance. Unconsciously we do not wish to attend to God's Word. Perhaps we fear conversation! If such is the case we need to review our situation, and perhaps take counsel with someone whose wisdom we respect. Time is too precious to waste in catnaps.

Corporate reading. If our sacred reading serves as a channel of meeting with God, then it is far more likely that we will continue its practice. Conversely, reading that is perceived as not serving its purpose will be inevitably curtailed or abandoned. It was the experience of the ancient monks that reading together was a good thing, whether this was a common reading or simply a matter of several reading privately in a common space. There is nothing to prevent husband and wife, family, group or community from experimenting with different formats of reading together on either a temporary or permanent basis.

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When God seems silent.

First we have to struggle to maintain our openness to God's Word and to remain faithful to regular exposure to it.

Secondly, and this may come as a surprise, we have to contend with our own inner outrage as our deep resistance to revelation become disinhibited. We need to sit quietly for a time and let the words flow over us. Soon some sense will begin to emerge from the confusion and new light will illumine the landscape of our hearts.

It is important to ask ourselves why God seems silent.

Ill health. In such cases we have to learn to live within our limits and not uselessly to strive against them. We should always consider the possibility that our difficulties in Lectio Divina are not the results of deficient willpower but of some physical disability.

Lack of training. We may have suggestions on what to read, but we often do not think it necessary to tell them how to read or to inform them all the ways sacred reading differs from the common perusal of a book or magazine.

Social disharmony. God's Word is unitary; it cannot be simultaneously welcome and rejected.

Pedagogical withdrawal. Our sacred reading, like our prayer, often reflects what occurs at the level of behavior. To lead us to repentance, God has first to break through the husk of falsehood and complacency. The silence of God in this case is an eloquent condemnation of an unholy act of the will on our part.

Seasonal variations. Sometimes God's silence is an indication that we are not in a position to listen. We need time to accustom ourselves to the new demands that God's call imposes on us.

Divine transcendence. All these elements represent different manifestations of two complementary truths: on the one hand, the mystery of God, on the other, the radical incapacity of human beings.

These are the main reasons why God can seem silent when we attempt to read the Scriptures. We fail to hear God because there's too much noise within.

Inner noise.

The largest obstacle that prevents our hearing the Word of God is the volume of interior noise that interferes with our perception.

Residual echoes. Learning to live quietly is a means to a richer life. There are two possible messages to draw from this experience.

The first is that we need to consider the possibility of making our normal environment less abrasive.

The second message is this. To the extent that we are unwilling or unable to modify our environment, it may be necessary to think in terms of giving ourselves time to detoxify before attempting meditation or reading.

Acedia. Acedia is a state in which we find it impossible to commit ourselves to any serious and sustained activity.

Over concern with external projects. St. Luke draws a very clear picture of the potential conflict between fussy concern with things to be done and quiet listening to the Lord (Luke 10: 38 -- 42).

Divided heart. If singleness of heart is a factor in arriving at a spiritual understanding of the Scriptures, it must be clear that those with a "double soul" (James 1:8; 4:8) will often experience the revealed Word as impenetrable. It is the undivided heart that finds God in the Bible.

Unconscious factors. There is a resistance to God in all of us. Even though we believe that we are Christians and want to be, most of us have not yet radically submitted our will to God. Without an antecedent willingness to be instructed and to change, our reading of the Scriptures becomes selective. Faith is an obedience; we will not hear if we are not willing to obey.

Our Lectio Divina should not be so holy that we fear to review our practice with common sense and a critical eye. If it is not going well let us not be afraid to experiment. There may be nothing wrong. It may simply be that our circumstances have changed. It may also be that we have matured in our practice of sacred reading and are being called to a more challenging level of discipleship. Where there is life, there is growth. And with growth, change is inevitable.²

² Sacred Reading Michael Casey

Esther de Wail: A very high proportion of a monk's time is thus given over to reading and reflecting on the Scriptures. More or less four hours a day are assigned to Lectio Divina, prayerful private reading and Meditatio, the memorization, repetition and reflection of Biblical texts.³

³ Seeking God

Personal Prayer

An old monastic form of personal prayer is the *lectio divina*, or sacred reading. Usually four steps are prescribed: reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. These more or less flow into each other and need not be rigidly separated.

The purpose of the reading (*lectio*) of the biblical text, repeated as often as helpful, is to hear what the text is saying.

Meditation is designed to take the past text into the present moment. What force does the text have in one's heart? If we keep repeating it, ruminating on it, the power of the word will be revealed. This doctrine values experience and treasures life above understanding, since understanding is only the first step. While "meditation" is described from the point of view of the individual, it also has a corporate effect when it is voiced and shared in a (small) community. Each individual, by sharing the "meditation" with others, spurs them to seek and apply the manifold meanings of Holy Scripture.

Prayer is not like the third rung in a ladder. One cannot really say when meditation passes into prayer. Prayer is not delayed until the "proper" time. If an individual has arrived at a fairly clear picture of what the biblical text is saying to him or her, the question is now: What does the individual want to say to God? In any case, one should at least begin with prayer for help. But the expansion in prayer has no limits; it can burst forth in lament or in praise, in keeping with the movement of the text and the action of the spirit. The prayer can even consist in reading aloud again the psalm or biblical text with which one began.

Contemplation is the last step, but at the same time it is a beginning. It is not static, but the ever recurring encounter with God. At this point one should be ready for a deeper sense of the presence of God and the need to take one's rest in him.

Prayer should be real, the outflow of one's experience of God. May your understanding of the verse or verses lead to prayer, as your prayer leads to understanding.¹

¹ Ronald E. Murphy, *The Gift Of The Psalms*

PRAYING THE PSALMS

LECTIO DIVINA

An Ancient Way Of Praying

There is a very old form of Christians prayer called Lectio Divina (divine reading). Its purpose was maturity in the ambience of monasticism, a setting in which Psalm prayer became standardized into a regular pattern for communal prayer.

Lectio Divina has four movements that can be woven together in any sequence suggested by the individual prayer's interaction with the Holy Spirit. These movements are called Lectio, Meditatio, Oratio, and Contemplatio (reading, meditating, praying, and contemplating).

As in all prayer, a period of preparation gets us ready for what follows. In our overly full and highly complex lives, we often need some time to focus, to become aware that we are about to engage in a time of prayer, to still the insistent clamor within our heads, to awaken and tone the body, to call on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who, Christians understand, authors all prayer. Do not rush through the preparation time to get to the "real" prayer -- the preparation grounds everything that follows.

The first action in divine reading is reading, not so much for content as for depth. Read and reread until the passage takes on a kind of resonance, an ambience, a mood. A particular word or phrase may begin to draw your attention, to stand out, to be concentrated with energy, to "shimmer." Let your attention go to this word or phrase and allow it to become the doorway into greater depth and intimacy with God.

For most of us, reading means running our eyes over the printed page and drawing from the printed symbols the meaning conveyed by the words and their syntax, usually as quick and accurately as possible. But now imagine that you are a poet. You craft the space between sound and silence; you work sleight-of-hand between liberal and figurative meaning. For you to read as quickly as possible is anathema. Further, poetry must be read aloud, or it becomes dry as dust. Poetry arises in the interaction between sound and meaning, and as poetry, the Psalms come live in the same interaction.

The ancients had not yet developed the relationship between the ¹eye and the Word on the page such that they bypass speech. The ancients read the very way poets might read today, aloud. For contemporary persons, reading aloud has an unsuspected benefit: It connects us to two more senses, the kinesthetic forming of the words with mouth, lips, tongue, and vocal cords, and the hearing of the sounds produced. Our seeing, speaking, and hearing draw us back into our bodies as we pray. Lectio may be sung as well. Perhaps the words of a Psalm echoes a chorus or Hymn learned as a child. These passages associated with music invoke emotional resonance's not available even to the spoken word.

A second "moment" in the process of Lectio Divina invites the engagement of the mind and can prove particularly rich for those for whom thinking is the primary way they process reality. Here we ruminate or "turn over" the word, phrase, or concept evoked in the Lectio moment to see what richness might lie there waiting to be discovered.

A vivid image popular among the ancients illustrates this aspect. The rumen is the first stomach compartment of cows and other ruminants. When a cow chews its cud, it regurgitates the contents from one compartment, remasticates the contents from one compartment, remasticates it, and swallows it into another compartment, greatly enhancing the process of breaking down the tough fiber of its forage. In Lectio, one ruminates, turns over the material, and views it from all sides. Any connection in the text to other parts of Scripture, or to personal experience, work to "digest" the text and break open for our own personal encounter with the living God.

Sooner or later the meditation evokes a personal response to God, whether questions, angry rejoinder, phrase, gratitude, plea for help, or any of the infinite possibilities of exchange between one person and another.

The address of oratio is personal and immediate.

Finally, Lectio stills us into a wordless mode of communication: contemplatio (contemplation). This aspect consists of resting in God's presence, allowing God to uphold, nourish, love, heal, teach, and challenge us as God sees fit. It may consist of a brief

moment or it may expand to become the primary dynamic of the prayer.

At any moment of this process our attention may wander, or our energy or nourishment dry up. When this occurs, simply return to Lectio and repeat the reading. Another word or phrase may gender attention, serving to rein in our roving attention and to implant the words of the text deeply in our hearts and minds, where they can continue to transform us. Another day, another small bite of Scripture, thoroughly digested, may nourish us.

The process need not move in the order presented; one may move from Lectio directly to oratio or to contemplatio, and back to meditatio, then back to Lectio -- or any other possible combination -- as the Spirit leads. Notice the significant role the body plays, your physical feelings, as well as words and images. Varying your posture in different parts of Lectio Divina can yield different fruits. Experiment. Do what seems to facilitate your immediate and personal interaction with God. There is no way to pray, though this method, as others, offers us some wisdom and guidance. Finally, at the end of Lectio Divina take a few moments to write down the major movements that you experience. For example, you might note the text you selected; the word, phrase, image, or concept that caught your attention; one or two of the thoughts or ruminations that occurred to you; the tone or feeling by any moments of contemplation; and the central focus of your response. Such a journal entry might be about the length of paragraph. Sometimes the act of writing opens new levels of prayer.

LECTIO DIVINA AS GROUP PRAYER

Thus far we have treated Lectio Divina as a prayer for individuals, but it lends itself to powerful corporate prayer as well. The exercise below is ideal for groups of four to eight persons. It can be adapted for larger groups as well, though in larger groups it may prove difficult for all to speak aloud.

First, the leader selects the passage to be prayed together. The group may find relatively short selections filled with concrete images more accessible than long or abstract passages. The Psalms offer many powerful passages ideal for communal Lectio Divina. Before beginning, the leader may arrange with one or

two other persons to read the Psalms later in the process. It is sometimes helpful if the voices alternate between man's and women's and among several translations.

The leader assists the group members to come to silence and recollection and gives whenever brief directions are necessary to the process. Next follows Lectio, reading the Psalms slowly all the way through. After a pause, the same passage is read a second time, again at a gentle, reflective pace. Another pause, this time of some minutes. Each group member continues the Lectio interiorly, seeking the word or phrase that beckons. After a suitable amount of time, the leader invites each participant to share his or her word or phrase aloud. The other members of the group receive that word into themselves without comment. The pace here, as throughout the group Lectio Divina, is deliberate. It is like dropping a pebble into a pond: One waits until the ripples have reached the edges of the pond before another pebble is dropped into the depth.

The text is read again (a third time), with perhaps a different reader and translation. This reading signals the movement to meditatio. With simple direction the leader invites the group members to use the silence to turn over their words and phrases, to ruminate, to ponder. After a suitable amount of time the leader invites those who wish to share, briefly and simply, something that arose for them during the time of meditation. Again, these sharing are received in silence by the other members of the group.

The text is read a fourth time. This time the leader invites the group to contemplate and somewhat more extended silence, opening to the presence of God through not only their own meditation but also the rich collage that has been created by the group sharing. Participants may be invited to journal or simply to rest in God's embrace. Finally, the leader invites the members to oratio, to simple prayers voice aloud. The leader then "collects" the group members into a final prayer.

The process may be expanded or abbreviated according to the needs and desires of the group. Variations are certainly possible. Many groups like to conclude with a time of intercessory prayer, for example.

Lectio Divina, whether in individual or group form, invites participants to a deep experience of the word of God here and

now. Its long, vibrant history is a testimony to its flexibility and its appeal to a broad variety of persons.¹

¹ A Retreat with the Psalms, Enders & Liebert

CENTERING

Calvin Miller Centering is the act of focus in our relationship with God. Prayer is a discipline that begins with the willful act of centering. Centering is the life-consuming art of approaching God where he is to be found – in the center of our souls.

- ❖ Emilie Griffin “There is a moment between intending to pray and actually praying that is as dark and silent as any moment in our lives. It is the split second between thinking about prayer and really praying. For some of us, this split second may last for decades. It seems, then, that the greatest obstacle to prayer is the simple matter of beginning, the simple exertion of the will, the starting, the acting, the doing.”

The whole idea of centering is not to talk about the inner life but actually to move into it. If you seem to talk a lot about prayer but pray very little, you are seeking only a godly mystique and not God himself.

Praying is the art of focusing on God and allowing our focus to conduct us into his presence. Our private prayers need not be intelligible. In fact, when we are lost in prayer the likelihood is that we will be overcome by an urgent wordlessness. The Spirit “helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express” (Romans 8:26). The more earnestly we pray, the more our prayers transcend mere words. In fact, St. Anthony of the Desert wrote, “It is not a perfect prayer if one is conscious of oneself or understands one’s prayer.” Centering is a function of our wanting to get in touch with God, and prayer is the avenue of this art.

Humility is the fastest way to the center of the self.

Centering is the merger of two “selves” – our and his. Centering is union with Christ.

Prayer is a dialogue of lovers. Centering is the abandonment of the grasping aspects of selfhood.

All of our lives we cry out to be in constant communion with God. But is it really possible to pray without ceasing as the apostle advocates (1 Thess. 5:17)? Yes. Of course, the trick is to make your way into the cell of your inward self and be content to live there.

- ❖ **William Law** The pearl of eternity is the church or temple of God within you, the consecrated place of divine worship, where alone you can worship God in the spirit and in truth. When once you are well grounded in this inward worship, you will have learned to live unto God above time and place. For every day will be Sunday to you, and wherever you go, you will have a priest, a church, and an altar along with you.

Thomas More says there are three passions: love, hate, and prayer.

Once in some forever, there is a person who prays so much that it seems his or her very life becomes a prayer. But centering prayers are prayers that surpass our infrequent intermittent petitions. Centering prayers are never those hurried sky-lobbs that we toss upward amid our hassled to and fro-ings. Such giddy intercession assumes that God replies to our low-caliber asking by shooting back at us his high-caliber answers.

Centering prayers are interested in relationship, not answers.

Centering prayer wants God alone – all of God – more of God – only God.

God's glory must come gradually into our fragile finite lives or we would die overwhelmed by his immensity.

I suspect that the difference between a person of seasoned prayer and one of smaller prayer experience is the amount of time they spend talking than listening. I used to be troubled by Paul's admonition to "pray without ceasing." I now believe this is only possible to those who have had enough significant prayer experience to make the listening prayer a large part of their praying. Those whose prayers are unending monologues make themselves a giant mouth while making God a small ear. The best prayers are dialogues of rapport. *PRESENCE* is being "with God." It is neither talking nor listening. It is abiding in the presence of God. Rapport treasures oneness so much it will not make of prayer two modes – one mode of talking, and one of listening.

Silent togetherness is better than chatty concord.

Centering becomes the point of greatest rapport between God and his needy children. This conversation goes on and on, and when neither partner speaks, both are welded into a powerful

listening mode. It is then that our wordless conversation reaches its apex.

At the depths of centered praying lies a hush. Godly godliness is crushed to silence by majesty. In the majesty of final things there was silence in heaven for half an hour (Rev. 8:1). One of the theologians used a term *mysterium tremendum* (Latin for "Overwhelming mystery"). In the Holy of Holies we are forbidden trivial speech because the air is too heavy with unfathomable glory.

Remember how Peter sinned by getting chatty at the transfiguration? The hush of things exalted usually leads the naïve to fill the silence with words. It is because they live such surface lives that deeper things leave them nervous and talkative. We are to be like John that first Easter. Seeing the empty tomb, he was forbidden speech by the awe of majesty. This quiet encounter is the most direct route to the center.

What is the power of this mystery? Proximity to God. What is the step of Proximity? The center. Drawing near to the epicenter of power will cause the prudent to shut up. Only the foolish and shallow will speak. This is good. Why? Because listening is a part of centering. God's omniscience informs us that we all know too little and talk too much.

We have already said that prayer may be the communion of silent concord. It needs no words at all to express the togetherness of God and ourselves. Prayer is dialogue, and God would rather have us be overly chatty in his presence than never enter his presence at all.

Here lies the great paradox of the centered life. Quiet listening is the mode of our entering in, but sometimes life at the center grows overwhelming with the pleasure of praise. The *mysterium tremendum* begins to swell to the point of rupture. Its vastness becomes too great for its human container. Then it forbids the believer to sit still and be quiet. The quiet that at first ushers the believer into the center of God gives way to praise that bursts into his glorification.¹

Henri Nouwen, We are speaking about a mystery for which words are inadequate. It is the mystery that the heart, which is

¹ Calvin Miller Into the Depths of God

the center of our being, is transformed by God into his own heart, a heart large enough to embrace the entire universe. Through prayer we can carry in our heart all human pain and sorrow, all conflicts and agonies, all torture and war, all hunger, loneliness, and misery, not because of some great psychological or emotional capacity, but because God's heart has become one with ours.²

LIVING OUT OF THE CENTER

**“Those who listen to the word but do not do what it says are like people who look at their faces in a mirror and, after looking at themselves, go away and immediately forget what they look like. But those who look intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continue to do this, not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it – they will be blessed in what they do.”
James 1:23-25 NIV**

I hope you understand what I mean when I speak of living out of the Center. I am of course referring to God, but I do not mean God in an abstract theoretical sense, nor even God in the sense of One to be feared and revered. Nor do I mean God only in the sense of One to be loved and obeyed. For years I loved Him and sought to obey Him, but He remained on the periphery of my life. God and Christ were extremely important to me but certainly not the Center. After all, I had many tasks and aspirations that did not relate to God in the least. What, for heaven's sake, did swimming and gardening have to do with God? I was deeply committed, but I was not integrated or unified. I thought that serving God was another duty to be added onto an already busy schedule.

But slowly I came to see that God desired to be not on the outskirts, but at the heart of my experience. Gardening was no longer an experience outside of my relationship with God - I discovered God in the gardening. Swimming was no longer just good exercise – it became an opportunity for communion with God. God in Christ had become the Center.³

² Henri Nouwen, *The way of the Heart*

³ Richard J. Foster, *Freedom of Simplicity*

CONTEMPLATION

- ❖ Take enough time to present yourself before God in silence and yieldedness. Contemplative prayer involves the development of a deeper and more intuitive form of receptivity to the supernatural. (Please remember that demons can speak with a quiet voice; God's voice will never violate His written word. Jim Logan)
- ❖ As with meditation and prayer, do not be concerned with results, feelings, or experiences during contemplation. The important thing is to "appear before God" in a quiet and receptive mode of being.
- ❖ It is helpful to think of a word or an image that expresses what I call the *spirit of the passage* that you have been processing in your reading, meditation, and prayer. When your mind wanders during your time for contemplation, center yourself by returning once again to the spirit of the passage.
- ❖ Contemplation is a gift very few believers have attempted to develop. Expect that growth in this new terrain will involve time, discipline, and the frustration of apparent failure. Don't allow distractions or lack of initial benefits to dissuade you from this time-tested discipline. True contemplation may require years of fidelity, but any consistency in this practice will greatly reward you.
- ❖ Contemplation is especially difficult for the more extroverted and sensory temperaments. This is a discipline of silence, of loss of control, of abandoning the attempt to analyze and intellectualize, and of developing the intuitive faculties.
- ❖ Remember that you cannot engage in contemplative prayer by your own effort; it is God's work, and it requires a *receptive passivity*. In contemplation it is best to abandon self-consciousness and to allow yourself to be drawn into the inexpressible depths of God's love.
- ❖ Since *lectio divina* is not rigid movement through four steps, you may find yourself going back to reading, meditation, or prayer and returning again to the interior silence of contemplation. The amount of time you spend in each of these four elements is up to you, and you should

experiment with this. However, I recommend that you practice all four since each of them has a unique benefit.

- ❖ **Nourish your interior life by reducing your exposure to radio, television, and other forms of distraction and commotion.**

A Blend Of Contemplation And Action

The polarity between the contemplative life and the active life has been a source of tension for many centuries. Saint Gregory advocates a more contemplative approach to prayer as rest from exterior action in the quest for communion with God. Saint Basil promoted a more active approach to prayer in association with work. Carried too far, the contemplative extreme could divorce our primary calling to know God from our secondary calling to express this knowledge in the world. On the other hand, the active extreme tends to elevate our secondary calling of work to the point of replacing our primary calling. A more balanced approach integrates and honors both callings and unites the contemplative and active vocations. Saint Benedict encouraged this blended rhythm of rest and action, interior aspirations and exterior obedience, devotion and discipline, prayer and labor, desire for God and service of neighbor, the spring of living water and the stream that flows out of it. By uniting the strengths of both Mary and Martha, we can learn to be contemplatives in action.

The daily four-part sequence of reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation invites you to engage personally with the text and to record your thoughts and prayers in the process. This journaling component will enhance your reflections and prayers. Grateful reflection on what God has done for your soul is a vital component of devotional spirituality.

God's ways also relate to the multifaceted attributes of His person, powers, and perfection. Because our capacity to love God is related to our image of God, we do well to pray for the grace of growing in understanding of the glories of His attributes.¹

¹ Kenneth Boa Sacred Readings

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplation is the practice of focusing our inmost being by fixing the eyes of the inner man on God Himself. It's a longstanding practice in our ancient Hebrew-Christian tradition. Why do we not teach the art of contemplation today?

My dictionary defines contemplation as "Looking at or viewing an object with continued attention."

Contemplative prayer focuses you on God with your spirit, the discerning eye of the heart.

What Are We Talking About?

How do you practice this ancient, but neglected form of prayer? Here are a few simple basics. It isn't difficult really, and it's amazing how natural it becomes.

First, quiet your heart by gently turning aside from the distractions of your life. Begin by focusing your thoughts on an attribute of God, such as His power, goodness, or mercy. Many testify to the fact that focusing on such attributes of the divine nature is radically transforming, as it may occur for the very first time how God has shown Himself powerful, good, or merciful in their lives. Invariably, such an interior realization moves a person to heartfelt worship.

Then rest in the Lord, believing as you draw near to God, He will draw near to you (James 4:8). Agree with the psalmist who writes, "When thou said, 'Seek ye my face.' My heart responds, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek'" (Psalm 27:8). In the sacred place of prayer sit, as it were, at the Lord's feet. Yield your entire being to Him who owns your body, soul, and spirit (Romans 12:2).

At this point you might pray from the heart, "Lord, You are my Father and by grace I am Your adopted child. You are the divine Lover, and by Your favor I am beloved. I surrender all to you so that You might show Yourself as you see fit."

Look to the Lord in faith with singular attentiveness. Listen for His voice. Sense His presence. Rest in His Love. Marvel at His purity, holiness, and how altogether right it is for Him to enact His judgments throughout the earth. Then lift your heart in love and adoration to God in whom you delight.

Here is the delightful surprise: Many have brushed aside the practice of contemplation because they believe they're 'too busy' for such a luxury. But once they've practiced this ancient and soul-renewing type of prayer form, they find it so inwardly satisfying that they are loathe to live without it!

Is It Prayer If I'm Not Speaking To God?

Some are troubled by this question, but longing, joy, and even contrition do not always need to be communicated in words. John Calvin agrees, for he writes that "the best prayers are sometimes unspoken."

Richard of St. Victor (1173) puts it, "Meditation investigates, contemplation wonders. Meditation is the act of turning our attention from the things of the world to the things of God, but contemplation involves turning our attention from the things of God to attend to God himself."

Both disciplines should be staples in the Christian spiritual diet. Meditation without contemplation can become dry and ponderous. Contemplation without meditation may lack the surety of biblical rootedness.

Growing Christians might follow the order of biblical meditation, verbal prayer, and practicing the presence of God. This is the order of the classical *lectio divina*.

Testimonies From Our Christian Heritage

Practicing the presence of God has been a staple of Christian devotion through the centuries. Augustine (430) describes the prayer of contemplation as a loving gaze of the human spirit directed toward God. The great church father observed that God called some biblical figures, such as Rachel, Mary, and John to a series of contemplation.

Recalling the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10, John Cassian (435) wrote, The Lord establishes as the prime good contemplation, that is, the gaze turned in the direction of the things of God. Hence we say that the other virtues, however useful and good . . . must nevertheless be put on a secondary level, since they are all practiced for the sake of this one . . . The Lord locates the primary good not in activity, however praiseworthy, however abundantly fruitful, but in the truly simple and unified contemplation of Himself.

Another great theologian of the church, Anselm of Canterbury (1109), said this about the prayer of contemplation, "Abandon yourself for a little to God and rest for a little in Him. Enter into the little chamber of your soul, shut out everything save God and what can be of help in your quest for Him and having locked the door seek Him out (Matt. 6:6). Speak now, my whole heart, speak now to God: 'I seek Your countenance, O Lord, Your countenance I seek' (Psa. 36;8).

Come then, Lord my God, teach my heart where and how to seek You, where and how to find You."

The great Puritan divine, John Owen (1683), agrees. "One of the greatest privileges and advancement of believers, both in this world and into eternity, consists in the beholding of the glory of Christ." This is precisely the prayer of the heart, or contemplative prayer.

Though some evangelicals today resist contemplation as "coming from another tradition," earlier Reformed believers defended and practiced it regularly.

Richard Baxter (1691), author of *The Reformed Pastor*, believed that the Reformers overreacted to Rome by vilifying certain spiritually edifying disciplines. Baxter wrote, "We are fled so far from superstitious solitude, that we have cast off the solitude of contemplative devotion. Setting your heart upon God in contemplation is a noble activity, for it opens the door between the head and heart and presents to the affections those things which are most important." Baxter imagined that at the final judgment "the question will not be, how much have you known,

or professed, or talked, but how much have you loved, and where was your heart?" Knowing the Word is a means to the end of knowing God Himself. And Baxter wrote, "If God's Word be so full of consolation, what overflowing springs should we find in God Himself?"

Likewise, the highly respected Norwegian evangelical leader and authority on prayer, Ole Hallesby (1961), recognized the importance of practicing the presence. Prayer is really an attitude of our hearts to God. As such it finds expression, at times in words and at times without words, precisely as when two people love each other.

In the soul's fellowship with God in prayer, there are things which can and should be formulated in words . . . But there are also things for which we can find no words. Likely it is this to which the apostle makes reference when he speaks in Romans 8:26 of the "groanings which cannot be uttered."

For centuries, then, Christians practiced a full range of prayer that we have lost today. Mental prayer (via the mind), verbal prayer (through the lips), and contemplative prayer (from the heart) were once integrated through the practice of *lectio divina*.

Benefits Of Contemplative Prayer

What good do we derive from the habit of contemplating God? By practicing the presence, Christians touch the heart of God and are restored and empowered spiritually (Romans 12:2).

I have discovered, from uneven experience, that I love most dearly the person with whom I spend the most time and to whom I most open my heart. It's impossible to love a person I don't know. By balancing verbal prayer with contemplative prayer, God becomes more real to me, and my love for Him more consuming. In verbal prayer, I tell God that He is loved, but through contemplative prayer, God tells me that I am loved with a love that is undying.

Tozer (1963) comments that verbal prayer, Bible study and Christian service "are all good and should be engaged in by

every Christian. But at the bottom of all these things, giving meaning to them will be the inward habit of beholding God . . . When the habit of inwardly gazing Godward becomes fixed within us, we shall be ushered onto a new level of spiritual life more in keeping with the promise of God and the mood of the New Testament.

The purpose of contemplation is not primarily to form ideas about God. No, it's to enter into God's presence and be touched by One who lives at the center of our being. Practicing the presence deepens experiential knowledge of God. It enlarges love at a more profound and renewing level than mental reflection alone.

Another benefit of contemplative prayer is the discovery of your true identity as a child of God. As we practice the presence, the Spirit – through an inner anointing – helps us let go of the old “false self” with its insecurities, fears, and hostilities. The Spirit empowers the “new self” in Christ, with its gift of being loved and valued by God. In this way, contemplation of God enhances both spiritual growth and emotional well-being.

Augustine recognized these two benefits of contemplative prayer: “May I know You, may I know myself. That is my prayer.”

Neglecting the contemplative dimension not only lets the fires of inner passion burn down; ultimately it leads to real lethargy and ineffective service.

Tozer observed that in his day there were many Bible teachers and preachers around: “Too many of these seemed satisfied to teach the fundamentals of the faith year after year, strangely unaware that there is in their ministry no manifest Presence, nor anything unusual in their lives.” Tozer concluded, “It is not mere words that nourish the soul, but God Himself.” God shows Himself to us, not only in silence and solitude but as we follow Him in obedience.

As Christians we achieve balance on contemplative living with prayer and action. Activity for God must be born of reflection; service, of contemplation; and action, of prayer.

From Satisfy Your Soul, Dr. Bruce Demarest, Navpress

CHAPTER 6

PRAYER OF FORMATION

William Carry Prayer – secret, fervent, believing prayer – lies at the root of all personal godliness.

DEAR LORD JESUS

In my better moments I want nothing more than to be like you. But there are other moments... Help me to see how good conformity to your way really is. In my seeking for you may I be found by you. I love you Lord.

AMEN RICHARD FOSTER

O LORD, MY GOD.

Form me more fully into your likeness.

Use the circumstances and interaction of this day to form your will in me.

From the frustration of this day form peace.

From the joys of this day form strength.

From the struggles of this day courage.

From the beauties of this day love.

In the name of Jesus Christ who is all peace and strength and courage and love.

AMEN

The primary purpose of prayer is to bring us into such a life of communion with the Father that, by the power of the spirit, we are increasingly conformed to the image of the Son. This process of transformation is the sole focus of Formation prayer. A tool for progress in the Spiritual life.

None of us will keep up a life of prayer unless we are prepared to change.

ACTIVE SIDE

Dallas Willard Golden Triangle speaks of three major areas God uses in our continuing transformation of our will.

1. The **First** area is the **classical disciplines** of the spiritual life: **Solitude, Fasting, Worship, Celebration**, and the like.
2. The **Second** area is our continual **interaction with the mov-ings of the Spirit of God. Resistance, Disobedience, Repen-tance, Submission, Faith, Obedience**, and more.
3. The **Third** area is the **patient endurance** God develops in us by means of the various **frustrations, trials, and temptations** we face daily. Col. 1:11

Ignatius Loyola Spiritual Exercises.

1. Focuses upon our sins in light of God's love.
2. Center on the life of Christ.
3. Center on the passion of Christ.
4. Center on the resurrection of Christ.

Teresa of Avila Humility is the principal aid to prayer.

The Little Way of THERESE OF LISIEUX The Little Flower devised a prayer-filled approach to life that has helped many. To seek out a menial job, to welcome unjust criticism, to befriend those who annoy us, to help those who are ungrateful. These trifles please Jesus.

PASSIVE SIDE Solitude

Henri Nouwen Without **Solitude** it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life.

The reason for this is simple to see: by means of **Solitude** God frees us from our bondage to people and our own inner compulsions.

Saint Jerome reminds us we are never less alone than when alone.

To enter **Solitude**, we must disregard what others think of us. But oh, the liberty that is released in our hearts when we let go of the opinions of others! The less we are manipulated by the expectations of others, the more we are open to the expectations of God. In **Solitude**, however, we die not only to others but also to ourselves. To be sure, at first we thought **Solitude** was a way to recharge our batteries in order to enter life's many competitions with new vigor and strength.

Henri Nouwen Loneliness is one of the most universal sources of human suffering today. We not only **bury our dead as if they were still alive, but we also bury our pains as if they were really not there.** An intimate relationship between people not only asks for mutual openness but also for mutual respectful protection of each other's uniqueness. It is probably difficult, if not impossible, to move from loneliness to **Solitude** without any form of withdrawal from a distracting world, and therefore it is understandable that those who seriously try to develop their spiritual life are attracted to places and situations where they can be alone, sometimes more or less permanently. But the **Solitude** that really counts is the **Solitude** of heart; it is an inner quality or attitude that does not depend on physical isolation. It seems more important than ever to stress that **Solitude** is one of the human capacities that can exist, be maintained and developed in the center of a big city, and in the context of a very active and productive life. When we live in **Solitude** of heart, we can listen with attention to the words of others, but when we are driven by loneliness, we tend to select just those remarks and events that bring immediate satisfaction to our own craving needs. **The first characteristic of the spiritual life is the continuing movement from loneliness to Solitude.** We need to convert **our crying loneliness** into a **Silent Solitude** where we reach out to God, our God, the one who is eternally real and from whom all reality comes forth. Prayer under girds and makes possible the movement from loneliness to **Solitude.**

Thomas Kelley Within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking voice, to which we may continuously return. Eternity is in our hearts... It is a light within which illuminates the face of God... new glories, the shekinah of the soul, the presence in the midst. The basic response of the soul to the light is internal adoration and joy, thanksgiving and worship. They become a holy sanctuary of adoration and self-ablation, where we are

kept in perfect peace if our minds be stayed on Him who has found us in the inward springs of our life. Let us explore together the secret of deeper devotions. What are here urged are secret habits of unceasing orientation of the deeps of our beings about the Inward Light, ways of conducting our inward life so that we are perpetually bowed in worship while we are also very busy in the world of daily affairs. What is here urged are inward practices of the mind at deepest levels, letting it swing like a needle, to the polestar of the soul. But, more deeply he who is within us urges, by secret persuasion, to such an amazing inward life with him so that, firmly cleaving to him, we always look out upon all the world through the sheen of the inward center. Such practice of inward orientation, of inward worship and listening...is the secret of the inner life of the master in Galilee. A society of believers grounded in reverence, history rooted in eternity, colonies in heaven? A practicing Christian must above all be one who practices the perpetual return of the soul into the inner sanctuary, who brings the world into its light and prejudices. We may also be in prayer and adoration, song and worship and a gentle receptiveness to divine breathing, where the soul dwells in the presence of the Holy One. By quiet, persistent practice in turning all of our being, day and night, in prayer and inward worship and surrender, toward him who calls in the deeps of our souls, utterly and in joyful abandon, in quiet glad surrender to him who is within, we keep up the life of simple prayer and inward worship. Let inward prayer be your last act before you fall asleep and the first act when you awake. Inward prayer is a process of alternation of attention between outer things and the inner light. We need to be able to enter worship constantly and living prayer continuously. The process of inward prayer does not grow more complex, but more simple. Ps. 42:1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks so panteth my soul after thee, O God. The conscious cooperation of the surface level is needed at first, before prayer sinks into the second level as habitual divine orientation.

Jack Deer The Lord may speak to us invading our minds with only part of a sentence or just a single word that we may not even understand at that time. **A Divine Impression comes to us from the Holy Spirit**, while intuition arises from within our human spirit. **By impression I am referring to the Holy Spirit's influences on our feelings, our physical senses, or our minds.** Over the years I have come to rely on divine impressions guidance in our everyday affairs and for directions

in ministry. One of my most frequent prayers to God is that he would grant me a warning before I say a critical word that he has not ordained to come forth from my lips or before I say a self-exalting word. Availability to God carries with it an expectation that he will speak to us. Habakkuk 2:1, Ps. 138:6. God is intimate with the humble. The highest form of exaltation God can give is intimacy and friendship with Himself. When I humbled myself and ask for help, then the voice came. The voice of Jesus in the scriptures is calm, quiet, and confident, not mean or condemning.

Peter Lord Over and over again Jesus taught the importance of hearing God speak to us. *Jesus' most repeated statement (15 times in the N. T.) was He that hath ears, let him hear. The more you get to know God, the more you recognize His voice. God's voice always has relevance, meaning that it has to do with the matter at hand, timing, resources, circumstances, comprehension, as he speaks to us in his self-established ways. Prayer is a two-way conversation.*

Leanne Payne Three vital steps for listening prayer.

1. Take the sacred text into our very spirit and soul by meditating on them prayerfully.
2. Praying scripture back to God.
3. Listening exercises our spiritual ears, preparing us to receive from God any word he might send.

Through the eyes and the ears of the heart we see and hear God.

C. Peter Wagner Hearing the voice of God as part of a prayer life. We need to begin experimenting a bit in distinguishing between my own thoughts and what the Father was attempting to speak to me. *I am convinced that God does indeed speak apart from the Bible, though never in contradiction to it.* God at times uses supernatural means to speak to us, such as an audible voice: the voice audible to you alone, the internal audible voice and the voice of angels. God also uses natural means such as, visions, trances, sentence fragments, single words, impressions and human messengers.

Brother Lawrence We should make a private chapel of our hearts where we can retire from time to time to commune with Him, peacefully, humbly, lovingly.

I keep in His presence by simple attentiveness and a loving gaze upon God.

Francis De Sales Remember to retire occasionally into the **Solitude** of your heart while you are outwardly engaged in business or conversation... Withdraw, then from your thoughts, from time to time, into your heart, where separated from all men, you may familiarly entreat with God on the affairs of your soul.

FORMATION PRAYER Has two sides **Passive, Active.**

1. **Active** – we are pursuing God, pilgrims on a faith journey, exercising ourselves unto godliness.
2. **Passive** – We are being pursued by God. We are warm clay in the hands of the Master Potter. (Jer. 18)

St. Benedict Steps to focus on our relationship with God.

1. Have a constant reverence for God before our eyes.
2. Reject our own will and desires and, instead do God's will.
3. Confess all our evil thoughts and all our evil actions to the Lord.

E. M. Bounds Devotion dwells in the realm of **Quietness** and is still before God.

THE PURPOSE OF MEDITATION

Read Psalm 119:97-104

In meditation we are growing into what Thomas a Kempis calls “a familiar friendship with Jesus.” We are sinking down into the light and life of Christ and becoming comfortable in that posture. The perpetual presence of the Lord (omnipresence, as we say) moves from theological dogma into a radiant reality. “He walks with me and He talks with me” ceases to be pious jargon and instead becomes a straightforward description of daily life.

Please understand me: I am not speaking of some mushy, giddy, buddy-buddy relationship. All such sentimentality only betrays how little we know, how distant we are from the Lord high and lifted up who is revealed to us in Scripture. John tells us in his Apocalypse that when he saw the reigning Christ, he fell at His feet as though dead, and so should we (Rev. 1:17). No I am speaking of a reality more akin to what the disciples felt in the upper room when they experienced both intense intimacy and awful reverence.

What happens in meditation is that we create the emotional and spiritual space which allows Christ to construct an inner sanctuary in the heart. The wonderful verse “I stand at the door and knock . . .” was originally penned for believers, not unbelievers (Rev. 3:20). We who have turned our lives over to Christ need to know how very much He longs to eat with us, to commune with us. He desires a perpetual Eucharistics feast in the inner sanctuary of the heart. Meditation opens the door and, although we are engaging in specific meditation exercises at specific times, the aim is to bring this living reality into all of life. It is a portable sanctuary that is brought into all we are and do.

Inward fellowship of this kind transforms the inner personality. We cannot burn the eternal flame of the inner sanctuary and remain the same, for the Divine Fire will consume everything that is impure. Our ever-present Teacher will always be leading us into “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). Everything that is foreign to His way we will have

to let go. No, not “have to” but “want to,” for our desires and aspirations will be more and more conformed to His way. Increasingly, everything within us will swing like a needle to the polestar of the Spirit. (Celebration of Discipline)

REFLECTION

The Psalmist talks of God's promises being “sweeter than honey to my mouth.” For centuries Christians have been meditating upon Scripture and savoring its goodness. Meditation is about drinking in Scripture, hearing God speak to you personally through His Word. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer has said, “. . . just as you do not analyze the words of someone you love, but accept them as they are said to you, accept the Word Of Scripture and ponder it in your heart, as Mary did.”

Meditate upon the following promise, rolling it around like honey in your mouth until you have sucked all the sweetness from it. “Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt. 11:28-29).¹

¹ Richard J. Foster, *Seeking the Kingdom*

MEDITATION CONTEMPLATION

Kenneth Boa The Discipline of Meditation

It is impossible to think about nothing. Try it, and you will be aware of your self trying to be aware of nothing – a zoo of images and thoughts will run through your mind in spite of your efforts to squelch them. When you ask someone what she is thinking about and she responds, “Oh nothing,” you know this cannot be so. Since the mind does not shut off, the issue is not whether we will think or even meditate; it is what we will think about and where we will direct our thoughts.

LISTEN TO THIS OLD PROVERB

**Sow a thought, reap an act;
Sow an act, reap a habit;
Sow a habit, reap a character
Sow a character, reap a destiny.**

Whether we like it or not, we are always sowing thoughts, since our minds are constantly dwelling on something. The experience of Discursive meditation is universal, but the practice of directed meditation is rare. The discipline comes in the effort to deliberately choose that upon which we will set our minds and in the skill of gently returning to it when we find that we have wandered.

As the saints in previous centuries have attested, meditation is an integral component of Christian spirituality, and yet it has largely fallen into disuse in our time. Many believers have become suspicious of the whole idea, since they think it refers only to the consciousness-voiding techniques of Buddhism, Hinduism, and the New Age movement. But as the psalms make clear, a biblical approach to meditation does not empty one's consciousness, but fills it with the truths of God's revealed Word. To meditate on Scripture and on the person and works of God is to take nourishment for our souls by extending our root downward, the more deeply into holy ground. The more we take root downward, the more we will bear fruit upward (Isa. 37:31).

As we feed on the Lord by focusing our minds, affections, and wills on Him and on His words (Josh. 1:8; Ps.1:2-3; Jn. 6:63), we commune with Him and manifest the fruit of abiding in Him (Jn.15:4-8).

The apostle Paul understood the importance of the believer's thought life when he encouraged the Romans to set their minds on the things of the Spirit and not on the things of the flesh (Rom. 8:4-9), and when he instructed the Colossians to set their minds on things above, not on the things that are on the earth (Col. 3:1-2). Similarly, he exhorted the Philippians to engage in biblical form of positive thinking: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of a good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things" (Phil. 4:8). This is not an easy practice, since it is far easier to dwell on thoughts that are untrue, dishonorable, wrong, impure, and ugly, and on things that are of bad repute, shoddy, and worthy of blame. Gossip and criticism are often more appealing in conversation about others than commendation and praise. In addition, we are more likely to view our circumstances in terms of the benefits we lack rather than the blessings we have received, and this is why our prayers are high on petition and low on thanksgiving. (If you don't believe this, try offering nothing but prayers of thanksgiving for twenty minutes and see how often you have the impulse to slip in prayers of request!) Remember that the heart will make room for that upon which it dwells.

Here are some suggestions to assist you in this life-giving discipline.

- Choose very brief passages from Scripture that are meaningful to you. One or two verses can become the theme of one day's meditation.**
- Select specific times for brief interludes of meditation on the text you have chosen for the day. These could be before meals and coffee breaks, or you could use a watch with an alarm to remind you at regular intervals throughout**

the day (when the alarm sounds, immediately set it for the next brief meditation break.

- Use your imagination and begin to visualize the concepts in the text in as many ways as you can. Put yourself into the words and into the historical context of the verse.
- Ponder each word and phrase of the text and try to gain as many insights as you can. Creatively approach it from different angles, and ask the Spirit of God to minister to you through this process.
- Personalize the passage and make it your own by putting it in the first person and praying it back to God. Commit yourself to pursue and apply the truths you have found in it.
- Offer praise and worship to God on the basis of your day's meditation.
- Jim Downing in his book on meditation suggest a plan that involves the daily reading of every thirtieth psalm, starting with the psalm that corresponds by number to the day of the month. Five minutes before going to bed, read through the next day's psalm until you find a verse that particularly speaks to you. Then close your Bible and be sure to make that your last waking thought. If you wake up during the night, think about the verse. In the morning, read through the first five psalms with your verse in mind and let it be the theme of your meditation that day.
- Meditation directs the conscious mind during the day, and is an excellent way to practice the presence of God. The H.W.L.W. habit – His Word the Last Word before retiring – programs the subconscious mind during the night (Ps.63:6; Pr. 6:22).
- The only way you will develop skill in meditation is by doing it, even when it does not seem to be effective.

Thomas Merton Contemplation, far from being opposed to theology, is in fact the normal perfection of theology. We must not separate intellectual study of divinely revealed truth and contemplation experience of that truth as if they could never have anything to do with one another. Unless they are united there is no fervor, no meaning and no sure orientation in the contemplative life.

God Is Great

**For you are great and perform great miracles
You alone are God.
Psalm 86:10**

Andrew Murray Men and women of science, in studying nature, require years of labor to grasp the magnitude of the universe. Isn't God more glorious and worthy? And shouldn't we take the time to know and adore His greatness?

Our knowledge of God's greatness is so superficial. We do not allow ourselves time to bow before Him. Therefore we do not come under the deep impression of His incomprehensible majesty and glory.

Meditate on the following text until you are filled with some sense of what a glorious Being God is: "Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise! His greatness is beyond discovery!" (Psalm 145:3).

Take time for meaning of those words to master your heart. Then bow in speechless adoration before God and say, "O Sovereign Lord! . . . Nothing is too hard for you! . . . You are the great and powerful God, the Lord Almighty. You have all wisdom and do great and mighty miracles" (Jeremiah 32: 17-19). And hear God answer: "I am the Lord, the God of all peoples of the world. Is anything too hard for me?" (v.27).

The true comprehension of God's greatness will take time. But if our faith grows strong in the knowledge of what a great and powerful God we have, we will be compelled to worship before this great and mighty God.

Henri Nouwen Contemplative life is a human response to the fundamental fact that the central things in life, although spiritually perceptible, remain invisible in large measure and can very easily be overlooked by the inattentive, busy distracted person that each of us can so readily become. The contemplative looks not so much at things but through them into their center . . . The contemplative life is like hearing a different drummer.

Nouwen advocated two foci for contemplation that helped the mind to “descend into the heart” in order to discern the nature of reality. The first focus was that of God himself. Nouwen suggested that contemplative prayer is prayer in which believers attentively look at God, “an imaging of Christ, a letting him enter fully into their consciousness so that he becomes the icon always present in their room.” The second focus that Nouwen mentions is Scripture, especially the Gospels. The Scriptures were, for Nouwen, a tangible way to envision Jesus and learn from his life. In the daily contemplation of the Gospel, Nouwen said, “the life of Jesus becomes more and more alive in me and starts to guide me in my daily activities.” Nouwen did not encourage, however, elaborate theological analysis during this contemplative reading, but encouraged his readers to simply read the sentences over and over, focusing on what the passage said. The reason for a more meditative encounter with the Bible was so that its truth could “descend from the mind into the heart.” Nouwen saw a distinction between head knowledge of Scripture and heart knowledge that allowed the truths to transform and change the inner wellspring from which life flows.

St. John of the Cross O life, how canst thou endure since thou livest on where God Livest? How is it that, when we mean so very much to God, he means so little to us? Knowledge may write theology, but only love can spell Union with Christ. All who are satisfied to Contemplate Jesus, as sole activity for life should see their contemplation as a ministry.

Richard Foster In meditative prayer we are growing into what Thomas a Kempis called ‘a familiar friendship with Jesus’. We are sinking down into the light and life of Christ and becoming comfortable in that posture. The perpetual presence of the Lord (omnipresence, as we say) moves from theological dogma into a radiant reality. ‘He walks with me and he talks with me’ ceases to be pious jargon and instead becomes a straightforward description of daily life.¹

¹ A Time To Reflect Henry Morgan

James Houston Contemplative prayer is for those who are discontented with second-hand description of God, and who want to experience the intimate presence of God for themselves.
William Bridge Begin with reading or hearing. Go on with meditation; end with prayer. . . Reading without meditation is unfruitful, to meditate and to read without prayer upon both, is without blessing.

Thomas Merton² Useless to try to meditate merely by thinking – still worse to meditate by stringing words together, reviewing an army of platitudes.

A purely mental life may be destructive if it leads us to substitute thought for the life and ideas for actions. Our destiny is to live out what we think, because unless we live what we know, we do not even know it. It is only by, by making our knowledge part of ourselves, through actions, that we enter into the reality that is signified by our concepts.

Living is the constant adjustment of thought to life and life to thought in such a way that we are always growing, always experiencing new things in the old and old things in the new. Thus life is always new.

The spiritual life is first of all life. It is not merely something to be known and studied, it is to be lived. Meditation is one of the ways in which the spiritual man keeps himself awake.

In meditative prayer, one thinks and speaks not only with his mind and lips, but in a certain sense with his whole being. Prayer is then not just a formula of words, or a series of desires springing up in the heart – it is the orientation of our whole body, mind and spirit to God in silence, attention, and adoration. All good meditative prayer is a conversion of our entire self to God.

The only thing to seek in contemplative prayer is God; and we seek Him successfully when we realize that we cannot find Him unless He shows Himself to us, and yet at the same time that He would not have inspired us to seek Him unless we had already found Him.

God does not tell His purest secrets to one who is prepared to reveal them. He has secrets which He tells to those who will

² Thomas Merton Thoughts in Solitude

communicate some idea of them to others. But these secrets are the common property of many. He has other secrets, which cannot be told. The mere desire to tell them makes us incapable of receiving them.

The greatest of God's secrets is God Himself. He waits to communicate Himself to me in a way that I can never express to others or even think about coherently to myself. I must desire it in silence. It is for this that I must leave all things.

Ben Campbell Johnson In the contemplative life, persons rested from the active works of service and compassion and gave themselves to prayer and the contemplation of God. Like many of the ancients, Gregory illustrated his idea of contemplation by pointing to the examples of Mary and Martha. Martha busied herself with the tasks of cooking and preparing the meal, while Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, conversing with and caring for him. The goal of the Christian Life is to live in God, to be in a deep, profound relationship with God. Gregory said, "The Son is the Word, but the Spirit is the tongue, through which the Son speaks." As we continue to meditate upon Scripture, we will be led into a relationship of peace and stillness before God. So we must approach the posture of prayerful meditation on Scripture with a spirit of poverty and humility. Vision suggests a union of see-er with the seen. The theological framework for our encounter with Scripture is intimacy with God. Through our persistent meditation on the Word, our inner life with its shadows, and darkness is revealed to us. Confession and cleansing open our souls to the light of God, which dispels the darkness.

A way Of Meditation

One ancient way of meditation on Scripture has been called *Lectio Divina*, or spiritual reading. As monks made their way through the Bible, meditating and reflecting on each word and phrase, it is little wonder that they memorized great portions of Scripture. Some say that Benedict required all his monks to memorize the whole New Testament and the Psalms. The point is not how many verses of Scripture you read; you read not for information but for communion with Christ. This way of

encountering God through Scripture has four movements, read, meditate, pray, and contemplate.

First - Read a text and think about it with a listening heart.

Second – Think about the text from the different parts of my life as they are illuminated by the light of the text, and this deeper awareness generates material for deeper thought. Meditation on the text will bring you closer and closer to yourself and to God.

Third – When the text connects with a specific need in your life pray about it. As you pray deeper insights will come and will open your life even more.

Fourth – As you are drawn into the text, your attention will shift off of self to God. In contemplation you will be drawn in to deeper and deeper communion with God.

How to start

First – Select a short passage, read it slowly and reflectively. Note the words or phrases that grasped your attention, and make a list of them.

Second – Meditate on the text. Meditation is a deliberate act of thinking about the text, asking questions, turning it over in your mind and letting it penetrate parts of your life.

Third – Pray about the way in which the text connected you're your life today. Prayer will bring you back to meditation, and meditation expresses itself in prayer.

Fourth – Contemplation begins with the text but uses it as a means to enter the presence of Christ (God). He has brought to my mind the things for which I needed help in my work and personal life. But going beyond this I deeply desire to enter into his presence and be before Him.

See Material in Lectio Divina on how to do this in a group.³

³ Ben Campbell Johnson Living before God

John Skinner What is the significance of this way of life for monasticism as a whole and for Christian life in general? The first thing, I would say, is that it centers the whole life on contemplation or the experience of God. We have a long tradition of contemplation and contemplative life in the church, but its meaning and significance have been obscured in recent times. In the first place we have to clear what we mean by contemplation. The word is Latin, translating the Greek theoria, neither words convey its real significance. In the early church, following Saint Paul, the human being was said to be composed of body, soul and spirit. In later times the body-soul psychology of Aristotle was introduced and the significance of the spirit was largely lost. The spirit transcends both body and soul or 'psyche' and is the point of human transcendence of contact with the divine. It is a 'capacity' for God, an obediential power in the old scholastic language, which enables the human being to receive the Spirit of God.

Now it is at this point of the spirit that contemplation takes place. Contemplation is the experience of God in the spirit. It is what Saint Paul means by living 'in the spirit' or living 'in Christ'. It is thus the fundamental Christian experience. It means monastic life will center not so much on the liturgy of lectio divina, this, of course has an essential place, but in contemplative prayer. In the Benedictine tradition, the liturgy has always the central place and there is no doubt that accompanied by lectio divina it can lead effectively to contemplation.

This means in practice the personal prayer becomes more central than the common prayer of the liturgy. The prayer of the liturgy then becomes an overflow from this contemplative prayer and also a means of nourishing it. In this way the whole life becomes really centered on contemplation.

But if a monastery seeks to be a center of contemplative life, it would seem that it needs to be more free of structures. Thomas Merton complained towards the end of his life that the monastic life often tended to frustrate the very vocations for which it existed. A monastery can be so highly organized with its liturgy,

its study and its work that there is no freedom to develop the contemplative gift which is unique in each person.⁴

Henri Nouwen A mystic is a person whose identity is deeply rooted in God's first love. Contemplative prayer keep us home, rooted safe, even when we are on the road, moving from place to place.

Leaders of the future are men and women of God, people with an ardent desire to dwell in God's presence, to listen to God's voice, to look at God's beauty, to touch God's incarnate Word and to taste fully God's infinite goodness. The original meaning of the word "THEOLOGY" was "union with God in prayer."

I began to realize the importance of letting biblical ideas impact my imagination and experience. I read some words of a medieval writer whose name I continue to have difficulty in pronouncing. Geert Zerbolt van Zutphen (1367-1400) stressed the importance of meditating on Scripture, not understanding, but meditating. Here is what he had to say.

Meditation is the process in which you diligently turn over in your heart whatever you have read or heard, earnestly reflecting upon it and thus enkindling your affections in some particular manner, or enlightening your understanding.

Meditation is about letting the biblical text impact upon me, "enkindling the emotions" – what a wonderful phrase! – and "enlightening the understanding." And my heart as well as my mind is to be involved! The worlds of understanding and emotion are brought together, opening the door to a far more authentic and satisfying way of living out the Christian life.⁵

As we learn to meditate upon the Word of God, and let its principles be incorporated into our prayer life, amazing things begin to happen. Promises, stored in the heart, are to be fuel from which prayer receives life and warmth, just as the coal, stored in the earth, ministers to our comfort on stormy days and wintry nights.⁶

⁴ John Skinner Wisdom of the Cloister

⁵ The Journey Alister McGrath

⁶ Prayer Keys, Clift & Kathleen Richards

EXCERPTS FROM CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

1. MAGICAL METHODS

In meditation we should not look for a “method” or a “system”, but cultivate an “attitude”, an “outlook”: faith, openness, attention, reverence, expectation, supplication, trust, joy. All these finally permeate our being with love in so far as our living faith tells us we are in the presence of God, that we live in Christ, that in the Spirit of God we “see” God our Father without “seeing”. We know him in “unknowing”. Faith is the bond that unites us to him in the Spirit who gives us light and love.

Some people may doubtless have a spontaneous gift for meditative prayer. This is unusual today. Most people have to learn to meditate. There are ways of meditation. But we should not expect to find magical methods, systems which will make all difficulties and obstacles dissolve into thin air.

2. HARSHIP IN PRAYER

Meditation is sometimes quite difficult. If we bear with hardship in prayer and wait patiently for the time of grace, we may well discover that meditation and prayer are very joyful experiences. We should not, however, judge the value of our meditation by “how we feel.” A hard and apparently fruitless meditation may in fact be much more valuable than one that is easy, happy, enlightened, and apparently a big success.

There is a “movement” of meditation, expressing the basic “paschal” rhythm of the Christian life, the passage from death to life in Christ. Sometimes prayer, meditation, and contemplation are “death” - a kind of descent into our own nothingness, a recognition of helplessness, frustration, infidelity, confusion, ignorance. Note how common this theme is in the Psalms (see Ps. 39, 56).

Any effort and sacrifice should be made in order to enter the kingdom of God. Such sacrifices are amply compensated for by

the results even when the results are not clear and evident to us. But effort is necessary, *enlightened, well-directed, and sustained.*

3. MERE GOOD WILL

Right away we confront one of the problems of the life of prayer: that of learning when one's efforts are enlightened and well-directed and when they spring simply from our confused whims and our immature desires. It would be a mistake to suppose that mere good will is, by itself, a sufficient guarantee that all our efforts will finally attain to a good result. Serious mistakes can be made even with the greatest goodwill.

Certain temptations and delusions are to be regarded as a normal part of the life of prayer. But when we think we have attained a certain degree of skill in contemplation, we may find ourselves getting all kinds of strange ideas. We may even cling to them with a fierce dedication, convinced that they are supernatural graces and signs of God's blessing upon our efforts when, in fact, they simply show that one has gone off the right track and is perhaps in serious danger.

4. GUIDING THE BEGINNER

For this reason, humility and docile acceptance of sound advice are very necessary in the life of prayer. Though spiritual direction may not be necessary in the ordinary Christian life, and though a monk may be able to get along to some extent without it (many have to!), it becomes a moral necessity for anyone who is trying to deepen his or her life of prayer.

The spiritual director is someone who is capable of guiding the beginner in the ways of prayer and detecting any sign of misguided zeal and wrong-headed effort. Such a one should be listened to and obeyed, especially when the director cautions against the use of certain methods and practices which he sees to be out of place or harmful in a particular case, or when he declines to accept certain "experiences" as progress.

5. RESISTING GOD

The right use of effort is determined by the indications of God's will and grace. When one is simply obeying God, a little effort goes a long way. When one is in fact resisting him (though claiming to have no other intention than that of fulfilling his will), no amount of effort can produce a good result.

On the contrary, the stubborn ability to go on resisting God in spite of ever clearer indications of his will is a sign that one is in great spiritual danger. Quite often we are not able to see this in ourselves. This is another reason why a spiritual director may be really necessary.

The work of the spiritual director consists not so much in teaching us a secret and infallible method for attaining to esoteric experiences, but in showing us how to recognize God's grace and his will, how to be humble and patient, how to develop insight into our own difficulties, and how to remove the main obstacles keeping us from becoming people of prayer.

6. THE "TRICKS" OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

These obstacles may have very deep roots in our character, and in fact we may eventually learn that a whole lifetime will barely be sufficient for their removal. For example, many people who have a few natural gifts and a little ingenuity tend to imagine that they can quite easily learn, by their own cleverness, to master the methods one might say the "tricks" of the spiritual life.

The only trouble is that in the spiritual life there are no tricks and no shortcuts. Those who imagine that they can discover spiritual gimmicks and put them to work for themselves usually ignore God's will and his grace. They are self-confident and even self-complacent. They make up their minds that they are going to attain to this or that and try to write their own ticket in the life of contemplation.

They may even appear to succeed to some extent. But certain systems of spirituality-notably Zen Buddhism - place great

stress on a severe, no-nonsense style of direction that makes short work of this kind of confidence. One cannot begin to face the real difficulties of the life of prayer and meditation unless one is first perfectly content to be a beginner and really experience himself as one who knows little or nothing and has a desperate need to learn the bare rudiments. Those who think they "know" from the beginning will never, in fact, come to know anything.

7. IMPRISONED IN THEMSELVES

People who try to pray and meditate above their proper level, who are too eager to reach what they believe to be "a high degree of prayer," get away from the truth and from reality. In observing themselves and trying to convince themselves of their advance, they become imprisoned in themselves. Then when they realize that grace has left them, they are caught in their own emptiness and futility and remain helpless. *Acedia* (sloth, or apathy in spirit) follows the enthusiasm of pride and spiritual vanity. A long course in humility and compunction is the remedy!

We do not want to be beginners. But let us be convinced of the fact that we will never be anything else but beginners.

8. A BRAVE AND ABSURD ATTEMPT TO EVADE REALITY

Another obstacle- and perhaps this one is most common is spiritual inertia, inner confusion, coldness, lack of confidence. This may be the case of those who, after having made a satisfactory beginning, experience the inevitable let-down which comes when the life of meditation gets to be serious.

What at first seemed easy and rewarding suddenly comes to be utterly impossible. The mind will not work. One cannot concentrate on anything. The imagination and the emotions wander away. Sometimes they run wild. At this point, perhaps, in the midst of a prayer that is dry, desolate, and repugnant, unconscious fantasies may take over. These may be unpleasant

and even frightening. More often, one's inner life simply becomes a desert which lacks all interest whatever.

This may no doubt be explained as a passing trial, but we must face the fact that it is often more serious than that. It may be the result of a wrong start in which a blockage has appeared, dividing the "inner life" from the rest of one's existence. In this case, supposed "inner life" may actually be nothing but a brave and absurd attempt to evade reality altogether.

9. FIRMLY ROOTED IN LIFE

Under the pretext that what is "within" is in fact real, spiritual, supernatural, etc., one cultivates neglect and contempt for the "external" as worldly, sensual, material, and opposed to grace. This is bad theology and bad asceticism. In fact, it is bad in every respect because instead of accepting reality as it is, we reject it in order to explore some perfect realm of abstract ideals which in fact has no reality at all.

Very often the inertia and repugnance which characterize the so-called "spiritual life" of many Christians could perhaps be cured by a simple respect for the concrete realities of every day life, for nature, for the body, for one's work, one's friends, one's surroundings, etc.

A false supernaturalism which imagines that "supernatural" is a kind of realm of abstract essences (as Plato imagined) that is totally apart from and opposed to the concrete world of nature offers no real support to a genuine life of meditation and prayer. Meditation has no point unless it is firmly rooted in life.

THOMAS

MERTON

BIBLE SELECTION: PSALM 39

1I said, "I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue; I will keep a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked are in my presence." 2I was silent and still; I held my peace to no avail;

my distress grew worse, 3my heart became hot within me. While I mused, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue:

4“Lord, let me know my end, and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. 5You have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing in your sight. Surely everyone stands as a mere breath. 6Surely everyone goes about like a shadow. Surely for nothing they are in turmoil; they heap up, and do not know who will gather.

7“And now, O Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in you. 8Deliver me from all my transgressions. Do not make me the scorn of the fool. 9I am silent; I do not open my mouth, for it is you who have done it. 10Remove your stroke from me; I am worn down by the blows of your hand.

11You chastise mortals in punishment for sin, consuming like a moth what is dear to them; surely everyone is a mere breath. 12“Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; do not hold your peace at my tears. For I am your passing guest, an alien, like all my forebears. 13Turn your gaze away from me, that I may smile again, before I depart and am no more.”

Dark Night & Know God

Section 10

DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

The Christian life does include times of close encounter with God, but in my experience these are not a norm we can count on.

**Those who hope in the Lord
Will renew their strength.
They will soar on the wings like eagles;
They will run and not grow weary
They will walk and not faint.**

Isa. 40:31

John Claypool, reflecting on that passage, notes that the order reverses what we might expect. As if to overturn our preconceptions, Isa. begins with soaring and ends with walking. All Christians pass through various stages. At times – for many it comes early in our journey – we soar in a state of spiritual ecstasy; at times we run, expressing our faith with the boundless energy of activism; at times we can barely take a step without fainting.

Who wants to be slowed to a walk, to creep along inch by inch, just barely above the threshold of consciousness and not fainting? That may not sound like much of a religious experience, but believe me, in the kind of darkness where I have been, it is the only form of the promise that fits the situation. When there is no occasion to soar and no place to run, and all you can do is trudge along step by step, to hear of a Help that will enable you to “walk and not faint” is good news indeed.

I have mentioned that distractions can push God away from the center of my life – in truth, they push God out of my field of consciousness altogether.

I used to jump out of bed as soon as I woke up. Now I lie there in the quiet and invite God into my day, not as a participant in my life or an item on a checklist but as the hub of all that will happen that day. I want God to become the central reality, so that I am aware of God as I am of my own moods and desires.

C. S. Lewis . . . “What is concrete but immaterial can be kept in view only by painful effort. That is why the real problem of the Christian life comes where people do not usually look for it. It comes the very moment you wake up each morning.”

The first great commandment requires us to love God, which we do best through awareness of his great love for us. Thomas Merton remarks, "The remembering of God, of which we sing in the Psalms, is simply the rediscovery, in deep compunction of heart, that God remembers us."

We remember God best by believing that we matter, personally and infinitely, to him. I must ask again and again for the faith to believe that God delights in me and desires to relate to me.

Brother Lawrence emphasizes our need for God's help and then asks bluntly, "But how can we ask him without being with him?

And how can we be with him without often thinking of him?

And how can we often think of him without forming a holy habit of doing so?"

In a *Serious Call to a Holy Life*, William Law sets out particular subjects of meditation for different hours in the day:

6:00 A.M. praise and thanksgiving

9:00 A.M. humility

12-noon intercession for others

3:00 P.M. conforming to the will of God

6:00 P.M. self-examination and confession of the sins of the day

Bedtime death

His regimen in relating to God seemed awfully strict when I read it, until I recalled that faithful Muslims pray five times per day, and many computer users check their e-mail at least that often.¹

David Stienl & Rast "Obedience is not constraint; it is loving listening, and readiness to respond. Western monastic life for 1,500 years - reminded monks that they stand in the presence of angel choirs whenever they chant. But our lives have depth and meaning only when we view them from a higher vantage point, when we measure our temporal concerns against the eternal now. There is a mysterious woundedness that somehow goes with great blessing. The angel that blessed Jacob and from that day on he limps. The blessing that attended the dark night leaves us wounded. Vigils allow monks to add a whole extra dimension to their day. Not a few men and women outside the monastic life have discovered that they, too, can bring the spirit of vigils into their lives by setting aside a certain time and space

¹ Philip Yancey *Reaching for the Invisible* Zondervan Pub. 2000

for nothing but spiritual pursuit: meditation, prayer, silence, listening to music – whatever suits them. Joy is that kind of happiness that doesn't depend on what happens.

When we are thankful for whatever is given to us, no matter how uninvited it may be, the thankfulness itself makes us happy. Saints teach us this; they're full of humble thanks for whatever life brings them. Of course, that attitude is often difficult to adapt when suddenly we're faced with a trying, even tragic situation. But if we start with easy things, then the habit of gratefulness will gradually become second nature. When we open our eyes with gratitude to anything that comes our way; we see the divine light shining through everything. Joy is something we can cultivate. When we greet the new day as a gift, a sense of gratefulness can carry us through the hours that follow. We can be generous in our compassion. But the monastic attitude is to begin deliberately and to do with an even, stately pace and with wholehearted attention. We pray that God may guide our actions. When we do our work in this way, then everything becomes prayer. Everything we do, in the sight of God, is prayer. In that way, our hands are hallowed, blessed. Monks take a vow of obedience. But obedience in the monastic context does not mean doing what you are told, the sort of obedience a dog learns in obedience school. It means a loving listening: listening to the Word of God that comes to us moment by moment, listening to the message of the angel that comes to us hour by hour. (Angel means the messages in the vigils sung by the choir) The very word obedience means an intensive listening.

BLESSINGS That we all as believers share in God's life, that aliveness flows unto us as blessing to others. We can bless others with a good word or a smile, a kind action that goes completely unobserved, or simply a good wish in silence. What a joy to become aware of blessing, of that special aliveness flowing into us and through us. The Jordan River is a blessing to Israel. It flows into the Sea of Galilee and out again. It flows into the Dead Sea with no outlet and the blessing ceases. We receive blessing after blessing; will we pass these blessings on? Sharing or deadness, paradise or desert: we have a choice. Blessing is well-wishing.

Prayer does indeed have healing effects. Most of all, prayer heals those who pray. Praying for peace entails believing that

peace begins with you and aligning yourself with peacefulness. As monks get alone with the Alone, so do we. We face aloneness when we enter our heart of hearts and confront God. At evening God draws everything home. First, there is giving up, in the sense of offering up the work of our hands. The Second form of giving, which we can practice all day long, is giving thanks. The Third and greatest form of giving at the end of day – forgiving. By forgiving you are taking away the blame. Evening is a good time for an hour of peace of heart, of serenity. We confront the darkness a compline (means completion) by examining our conscience, asking ourselves, “What went wrong today! Where did I fail to meet the challenge.” A prayer now in the fading light of day, “Maker of All to you we pray that in your ever watchful love you guard and guide us from above. Help and defend us through the night. Danger and terror put to flight. Never let evil have its way. Preserve us for another day.” I am bowing my face a better prayer. (He calls this prayer of silence a better prayer).

David Stancliffe In the depths of our isolation, we cry to you, Lord God; give light in our darkness and bring us out of the prison of our despair, through Jesus Christ our Lord.²

John Of The Cross John of the cross speaks to people who feel unable to change. We may have sensed in our lives a call to freedom, to wholeness, to more than what we are now. John felt this as a call to reach out for God. But within us, an unvoiced fear can make change impossible. It is the fear that when we reach, we may not find. It begs the question: If I give myself, will God fill me in my life?

Our being naturally hesitates to say ‘yes’ to a one-way track that may end only in wasteland. This is the undermining fear, and while we may not opt for a different track, we may never fully choose this one.

Here John of the Cross has something helpful to say. Poet, pastor, mystic, John is first witness to the impact of God in his life. He has taken the risk of surrender, and can speak with the authority of one who has been there. He testifies to a God who,

² The Complete Book Of Christian Prayer

precisely is pressing in to meet, to change, and to fill us in our deepest need. *Iain Matthew, The Impact of God*³

Flame Alive

Flame, alive, compelling,
Yet tender past all telling,
Reaching the secret center of my soul!
Since now evasion's over,
Finish your work, my Lover,
Break the last thread, wound me and make me whole!

Burn that is for my healing!
Wound of delight past feeling!
Ah, gentle hand whose touch is a caress,
Foretaste of heaven conveying
And every debt repaying:
Slaying, you give me life for death's distress.

Ah! Gentle and so loving
You wake within me, proving
That you are there in secret and alone;
Your grace, your glory fills me
So tenderly your love becomes my own.
John Of The Cross

Luke 5:4-6, We've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. Simon's words might also describe the dark night of the soul: The soul has to go on loving in the emptiness, or at least go on wanting to love, though it may only be with an infinitesimal part of itself. Then, one day, God will come to show himself to this soul and reveal the beauty of the world to it. It is often in periods of seeming fruitlessness that Jesus Christ reveals his power, and in times of darkness that God sheds the greatest light. Are you enduring a period of fruitlessness or darkness? Ask Jesus to tell you where to "let down your nets" in order to see his power revealed.

³ John Skinner Wisdom Of The Cloister p.133

Darkness -- Emilie Griffin

Looking for a given scheme, measuring ourselves by it, is a self-regarding, self-conscious practice. It sets limitations on our prayer, sets us up for disappointments, creates false expectations, arouses a success mentality by which we constantly ask to know whether we have arrived.

Darkness is a definite experience of prayer, surely not to be sought, almost impossible to flee from.

When it comes, it is precisely that nothing happening that is in fact something happening. Something is happening. We are being asked to hold on by faith and to go on praying when we have no sense of progress or momentum at all. The something is that we are being asked to be ordinary in prayer.

If the beginner finds darkness, he or she should not start by counting on the spiritual life of John of the Cross. Each person is given only what God intends for that moment at that precise intersection between God and the individual made possible by prayer.

Darkness is worth describing simply because it is so unlike what we expect. It is not consolation disguised as desolation. It does not meet our expectations that darkness will blaze with intensity.

Darkness is not, as we have thought, just light turned inside out.

Darkness, when it comes, is not like anything. It is itself. And just what we might expect from God, a surprise.

But what is more important than our inability to control or predict darkness is the sudden understanding we have that this darkness, which comes at the beginning, or in the middle, or whenever, is the very same darkness as any other darkness. It is not different in character from the darkness that the saints and mystics have told us to expect at the heights of prayer. When it comes, it does not have the character of something, but of nothing.

And when one asked the Lord in prayer about the wall, asking him to take the wall away, the answer is simply that the wall exists in order for us to walk through it.

But the remarkable thing is that we do. We walked into and through the wall in a way that is beyond comprehension.

Darkness comes to deepen our prayer and to strengthen us.

Trust and faith are the only companions for darkness, a walk that doesn't feel like a journey because there is no sense of going anywhere.

Darkness calls us to fast by washing our faces and going on as though nothing were happening, to fast from fasting itself, from anything with sharp edges and neat borders meant to convince us we are getting somewhere. Darkness calls us to detachment from somewhere and the need to arrive there. Darkness is one foot in front of another. Darkness then is that growth that comes in silence and by remaining perfectly still.

The goal in darkness is not to whimper about it but to live it, while it lasts, as deeply as any other gift God gives us in experience. One day, without knowing how or why, something has lifted. The darkness is simply gone away.⁴

**Jean-Pierre De Caussade: The Dark Night of Faith
The Experience of Passive Saintliness**

There is a kind of saintliness when divine communication is precise and clear as daylight. But there is also a passive saintliness communicated by God through faith from the impenetrable darkness that surrounds his throne, in terms that are confused and obscure. Those who find this way are often afraid, like the prophet, to follow it and afraid of running into danger when walking through the darkness. Have no fear, faithful souls! That is where your path lies, the way along which God is guiding you. There is nothing safer or more sure than the dark night of faith.⁵

In a book called It's All Right To Cry this quotation is to be found:

'Nobody is wise who does not know the darkness. I appreciate the dark hours of my existence in which my senses are sharpened.'

**Lord, in Your presence is fullness of joy.
You made sense of the darkness.
You understand it.
Even my darkness is no surprise to You,**

⁴ Emilie Griffin, *Clinging*

⁵ *The Sacrament of the Present Moment*

**And Your presence is my light.⁶
Hast thou no scar?
No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?
I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,
I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star:
Hast thou no scar?
Hast thou no wound?
Yet, I was wounded by the archers, spent;
Leaned Me against the tree to die, and rent
By ravening beasts that compassed Me, I swooned:
Hast thou no wound?**

**No wound? No scar?
Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,
And pierced are the feet that follow Me:
But thine are whole. Can he have followed far
Who has no wound, no scar?
Amy Carmichael⁷**

John Of The Cross . . . “It is well for those who find themselves in the dark night of the soul to persevere in patience . . . Let them trust in God, who does not abandon those who seek God, with a simple and right heart, and will not fail to give them what is needful for the road, until he brings them into the clear pure light of love.⁸”

The Cloud of Unknowing . . . “Try as you might, this darkness and this cloud will remain between you and your God. You feel frustrated, for your mind will be unable to grasp Him, and your heart will not relish the delight of His love. But learn to be at home in this darkness. Return to it as often as you can, letting your spirit cry out to Him whom you love. For if, in this life, you hope to⁹ feel and see God as He is in Himself it must be within this darkness and this cloud.”

⁶ Celtic Daily Prayer, Northumbria Community

⁷ Celtic Daily Prayer, Northumbria Community

⁸ Spiritual Formation Bible

⁹ Spiritual Formation Bible

John of the Cross . . . “This is the first and principal benefit caused by [the] arid and dark night of [the soul]: the knowledge of oneself and of one’s misery . . . These aridities and this emptiness of the faculties, compared with the abundance which the soul experienced before the difficulty it now finds in good works, make it recognize its own lowliness . . . which in the time of its prosperity it was unable to see.¹⁰”

C. S. Lewis . . . “God whispers to us in our pleasure, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pain.¹¹”

John of the Cross . . . “Courage, then O soul most beautiful, you now know that your Beloved, whom you long for, dwells hidden within your breast; strive, therefore, to be truly hidden with your Beloved, and then you will embrace Him, and be conscious of His presence with loving affection.¹²”

Thomas Keating, At some point in our journey, a pervasive sense of God’s absence begins to manifest itself during prayer and spreads into other areas of one’s life. This is actually the beginning of a deeper union with Christ. Most of us however, do not experience it that way. When the biblical desert opens up within us, we worry that something is going wrong in our relationship with God.

In the night sense, we are called to make the transition from superficial spiritual nourishment to the solid food of pure faith. We not only experience dryness in our relationship with God, but also a lack of satisfaction in all the areas in which we previously sought happiness. When the emotional programs dry out and begin to crumble, they make a last stand to resist their demise.

The principal of the night of sense is humility. God is giving us more protection than before, though in secret.

The night sense is designed to bring about the dismantling of the emotional program and the death of the false self. As the false diminishes, the trust in God increases; in the night of sense, our energies can be put to better purposes. This is

¹⁰ The Spiritual Formation Bible

¹¹ The Spiritual Formation Bible

¹² The Spiritual Formation Bible

particularly true of contemplative prayer by a receptive method such as Centering Prayer. For the Christian, devotion and dedication to God are cultivated in the practice of *lectio divina* (a sacred, attentive listening to the Word of God through Scripture), and prayer. A practice for daily life is *lectio divina*, listening to the Word of God in Scripture as a means of deepening our relationship with Him on the levels of reflection and spontaneous prayer. Daily *lectio divina* is especially important since it leads to the contemplative practice of resting in God and provides an ongoing conceptual background for it. In fact, contemplative prayer was traditionally seen by the Fathers of the Church as the final stage of *lectio divina*, the natural result of reading and reflecting on the Word of God with a listening heart.

We translate dryness in prayer as God's absence until we perceive that God is communicating with us at a deeper level. Silence is God's first language; we must learn to be still and to rest in God. One of the signs of the night of sense is an inclination for solitude and silence, to be alone with God, even though we do not find any satisfaction in it.

The attraction to interior silence is the result of the food of pure faith that God is communicating, not to the sense or to reason, but to our intuitive faculties. At first we do not know what to do with this dryness, hence, the disconcerting reaction that makes us want to give up the whole process of prayer in favor of relaxation or some form of engrossing work. As we accustom ourselves to the exercise of pure faith, however, we begin to experience its fruits, trust in God and humility. Pure faith transcends every human experience and accesses God just as God is.

DRYNESS

The experience described as the feeling that "God has moved away and left no forwarding address." It is the feeling of God's distance, if not absence, with the attending sense of meaninglessness and emotional flatness in our faith. It is important to note that dryness is a feeling on our part, not an action on God's part. Dryness is described graphically in the Psalms (e.g. 6; 13; 22; 55; 74; 77;). In the New Testament, Jesus

decried his abject dryness from the cross (Matt. 27:46), and Paul described an all-consuming dryness in his life (2 Cor. 1:8).

Spiritual dryness technically differs from the “dark night of the soul” described by John of the Cross and others. The dark night is part of a larger mystical way in which God deliberately removes God’s presence to see if we will persevere in our faith – a faith that relies on nothing for its existence. The dark night is a prelude to union with God.

Spiritual dryness, on the other hand, is a temporary condition (although it may last for a long time) brought on by such things as unconfessed sin, physical illness, anxiety during times of change, insufficient attention to our spiritual life, religious addiction, separating our spirituality from the rest of our life, claiming more of an experience of God than we actually have, and the vain attempt to imitate others. It is a condition that should be acknowledged rather than hidden. Spiritual direction and life together in community are two frequent means for restoring vitality.

During periods of spiritual dryness we should continue to practice the classic disciplines and the means of grace, for it is often through these actions that a sense of “God’s return” and a general renewal in our spiritual vitality will emerge.¹³

¹³ The Upper Room Dictionary Of Christian Spiritual Formation, Keith Beasley - Toplifee

A Hidden God

Presence in Absence

God is "beyond," beyond our heart and mind, beyond our feelings and thoughts, beyond our expectations and desires, and beyond all the events and experiences that make up our life. Still He is in the center of all of it. Here we touch the heart of prayer since here it becomes manifest that in prayer the distinction between God's presence and God's absence no longer really distinguishes. In prayer, God's presence is never separated from His absence and God's absence is never separated from His presence. His presence is so much beyond the human experience of being together that it quite easily is perceived as absence. His absence, on the other hand, is often so deeply felt that it leads to a new sense of his presence. This is powerfully expressed in Psalm 22: 1 -- 5:

**My God, my God,
why hast thou forsaken me?
Why art thou so far from helping me,
and from the words of my roaring?**

**O my God,
I cry in the daytime,
but thou hearest not;
and in the night season,
and am not silent.**

**But Thou art Holy,
O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.**

**Our fathers trusted in thee:
they trusted,
and thou didst deliver them.**

This prayer not only is the expression of the experience of the people of Israel, but also the culmination of the Christian experience. When Jesus spoke these words on the cross, total aloneness and full acceptance touched each other. In that

moment of complete emptiness all was fulfilled. In that hour of darkness new life was seen. While death was witnessed, life was affirmed. Where God's absence was most loudly expressed, his presence was most profoundly revealed. When God Himself in his humanity became part of our most painful experience of God's absence he became most present to us. It is in this ministry that we enter when we pray.¹

¹ Henri Nouwen Reaching Out

HOW WE CAN HALLOW GOD'S NAME

1. We hallow His name by rehearsing who He is.
To set apart and magnify the one who stands behind the Name.
If we took one of God's names every day and focused on it, hallowing it, we would develop a much better understanding of who God is.
2. We hallow His name by relinquishing control of our lives.
By the Holy Spirit's power we can relinquish control to God and allow Him to live through us. When people see that our lives are different, that there is a quality about us that goes beyond the natural, then the Father's name is glorified.
3. We hallow His name by recognizing His presence in our lives.
When we are constantly aware of the presence of God, when we live every moment in light of the fact He is our God, we hallow His name.

SEVEN BENEFITS OF PRAISE

1. Worship enhances our appreciation and love for God. Did you know that by speaking words of praise (even when we don't feel like it), those words begin to explode within us so that we see God more clearly?
2. Worship expands our vision. We will begin to look at life not in terms of what we can do but what God can do through us.
3. Worship eclipses our fears. When I worship God, I soon forget those things that gnaw at me. I begin to realize that I'm a child of the King; I am in His hands.
4. Worship energizes our work. Andrew Murray said "When I follow His example, putting God first by worshipping Him, my work gets done better".
5. Worship refreshes our spirit. When I get into the presence of God, little by little, the spirit of heaviness is exchanged for a garment of praise.
6. Worship exhausts our enemy. Worship, hallowing the name of the Lord, is a great weapon for spiritual warfare. I love to worship, not only because of what I know it means to God, but because it's a powerful way to combat the evil one.
7. Worship prepares us for heaven. God, help me to worship you, help me to live in your presence here, so that when the time comes for me to change venues, it won't be a major transition.

(From Dr. David Jeremiah)

NAMES OF GOD

Proverbs 18:10

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe."

LEARNING WHO GOD IS BY NAME IS THE ANSWER TO EVERY SITUATION IN LIFE.

Is the Lord your great tower? Is His name your fortress in a time of weariness or attack or great distress? But how, you ask, could His name defend me? In biblical times, a name represented a person's character. God's name represents His attributes, His nature. His name is a statement of who He is. And He has many names! Each reveals something of His power and love and purpose towards you. The Father longs to have you know Him better that you might "trust in the name of the Lord and rely" on your God (Isaiah 50:10). Did you know that this was uppermost in the mind and heart of Jesus as He faced the cross? Just before He went to Calvary, He prayed for His disciples; looking down through the centuries He prayed for you and me, too. His deep desire was that "they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent". (John 17:3)

Elohim - God the Creator - Gen. 1:1; Job 36:22

You exist because of God. He formed you -- specifically, individually, thoughtfully, carefully, precisely the way you are. You are to show the world the character of God -- His love, peace, mercy, gentleness etc.

El Elyon - God Most High - Isa. 14:14; Ps. 91:1

The unshakeable fact of God's sovereign control over all is the foundation of sanity in this crazy world. This is the name that carries you through the storms of life.

El Roi - The God who sees - Gen. 16:13; Gen. 6:5

Where does healing begin? When I know God sees what others have done to me and that He will take care of it.

El Shaddai - God Almighty, the all-sufficient one - Gen. 17:1

This name caused Abraham to fall on his face. God was saying He was the all-sufficient one. You can quit running, hiding, and seeking other ways. Trust in Him. Rest in Him. Let Him supply your needs.

Adonai - Lord and Master - Gen. 15:1,2; Isa. 6:1-8

He is the sovereign of the universe and our Lord and Master. He alone has final authority.

Jehovah - The self-existent one; the I AM - Ex. 3:14

He has always been, He always is, and He always will be. This is the personal name of God Himself. He is anything and everything you will ever need. He is the God who is always there.

Jehovah-Jireh - The Lord will provide - Gen. 22:1-14

The Lord will provide. He not only saw our need for salvation. He also sees our day-to-day needs. Nothing is too small or insignificant to escape His attention. He will provide.

Jehovah-Rapha - The Lord who heals - Ex. 15:22-27

He can heal the bitter waters of life. He will take your bitterness and make it sweet.

Jehovah-Nissi - The Lord my banner - Ex. 17:8-16

Look to His banner for the strength and will to stand fast and keep fighting the good fight. Look beyond the darkness and confusion of life's struggles to see our great King's standard lifted high. He is our shining assurance of victory. Look to the Lord your banner. Victory is assured.

Jehovah-Mekoddishkem - The Lord who sanctifies - Lev. 20:7-8

It is the Lord who sanctifies us. It isn't we ourselves. It isn't a set of rules and laws. It is the Lord. We are made holy by God. Therefore, we live a holy life in response to what He has already accomplished. He carries us on eagles wings and lets us enter into His wonderful rest.

Jehovah-Shalom - The Lord our peace - Judges 6:1-24

When the hour is dark, when the situation is desperate, when we are humbled and brought very low, we finally begin looking and longing for God's peace. Trembling, we grope through the darkness, longing for reassurance that all will be well. Run to the shelter of His name. You will find Him and find peace, for He is peace.

Jehovah-Sabaoth - the Lord of Hosts - Ps. 46:7

When you are in deep trouble and sense defeat and darkness closing in on all sides, run to the Lord of Hosts, the name to use in conflict and warfare. The battle is His. No one in heaven or earth - angels, demons, or Satan himself - can stand against the Lord of Hosts.

Jehovah-Raah - The Lord is our Shepherd - Ps. 23:1

It is not a bad life being a plain old sheep when we stop and consider that the Lord is our shepherd. Every single lamb matters to the Good Shepherd.

Jehovah-Tsidkenu - The Lord our Righteousness - Jer. 23:1-6

This is a name of hope for those who have given up hope. It is a name of life for those who can see only death. The Lord our righteousness. Our sins and failures are removed by the blood of the lamb. We are clothed in His perfect and glorious righteousness.

Jehovah-Shammah - The Lord is there - Ezek. 48:35

When you feel alone, abandoned, and forgotten by everyone, remember the Lord is there. Rejoice in His nearness. Worship Him in the Holy Spirit. Feed on His Word. Delight in His people and know He will never abandon you.

Father - Loves - Jer. 31:3; I John 3:1

When you feel unloved, God loves you with an eternal love.

Adapted from Lord, I Want to Know You, Kay Arthur, Multnomah Press, Sisters, OR: 1992.

LEARNING WHO GOD IS - THE ANSWER TO EVERY SITUATION IN LIFE

- Elohim - God, the Creator
Purpose for life - He designed me specifically
- El Elyon - God Most High
Fear and anxiety - God's sovereign control
- El Roi - God who sees
What others have done to me - He will take care of it
- El Shaddai - All-sufficient One
He will supply all my needs
- Adonai - Lord and Master
He has final authority - the last word
- Jehovah - Self-existent one
He is all I will ever need. He is always there.
- Jehovah
Jireh - The Lord will provide
He will provide all my needs.
- Jehovah
Rapha - The Lord who heals
He will heal all my hurts -- mental, emotional, psychological etc.
- Jehovah
Nissi - The Lord my banner
Focus on His strength for the battle. Victory is assured.
- Jehovah
Mekoddishkem - The Lord who sanctifies
We are already made holy. Enter into His rest and serve Him.
- Jehovah
Shalom - The Lord our peace
He is my peace in the midst of the storm.

Jehovah
Sabaoth - The Lord of Hosts
Deliverance is assured when I call upon this name.

Jehovah
Raah - The Lord is our Shepherd
He will shepherd my life.

Jehovah
Tsidkenu - The Lord our Righteousness
The name that deals with my past (guilt)

Jehovah
Shammah - The Lord is there
The name that assures His presence

GOD'S NAME FOR MY NEEDS

Purpose	- Elohim - Creator
Fear	- El Elyon - Sovereign
Bitterness	- El Roi - sees
Needs	- El Shaddai - all-sufficient
Confusion	- Adonai - Lord
Comfort	- Jehovah - always there
Spiritual needs	- Jehovah-Jireh - provider
Hurts	- Jehovah-Rapha - healer
Defeat	- Jehovah-Nissi - victory
Defiled	- Jehovah-Mekoddishkem - holiness
Anxiety	- Jehovah-Shalom - peace
Spiritual Warfare	- Jehovah-Sabaoth - victory over demons
Guidance	- Jehovah-Raah - Shepherd
Guilt	- Jehovah Tsidkenu - righteousness
Forsaken	- Jehovah Shammah - present
Unloved	- Father - love

GOD & Me

1. God created me for a purpose ----- **Elohim**
2. God is in control of life's situations ----- **El Elyon**
3. God sees what is happening to me ----- **El Roi**
4. God invites me to come to Him to meet my needs ----- **El Shaddai**
5. God wants me to surrender to His Lordship ----- **Adonai**
6. God is always there for me, what a comfort ----- **Jehovah**
7. God provides my spiritual needs ----- **Jehovah – Jireh**
8. God heals the bitter waters of life ----- **Jehovah – Rapha**
9. God will give me victory over temptation ----- **Jehovah – Nissi**
10. God sets me apart for Himself ----- **Jehovah – Mekoddishkem**
11. God is my peace in the storms of life ----- **Jehovah – Shalom**
12. God will give me victory over Demons ----- **Jehovah – Sabaoth**
13. God gives me His righteousness ----- **Jehovah – Tsidkenu**
14. God will never abandon me ----- **Jehovah – Shammah**
15. God always loves me ----- **Father**
16. God will guide my life ----- **Jehovah – Raah**

LEARNING TO KNOW GOD

- A RESOURCE FOR PRIVATE WORSHIP -

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS GUIDE:

1. Select an attribute corresponding to a need you might be experiencing. (i.e. Worry/All-Powerful; Insecurity/Love)
2. Read each of the suggested portions of Scripture listed for the attribute.
3. Write a definition of the attribute as seen in the verses you read.
4. Answer on paper the question: "What would be different in my life if this attribute were not true about God?"
5. Write a prayer to God expressing your thankfulness for the attribute and telling Him why you are thankful!
6. Read Him your prayer.

GOD'S ETERNAL ATTRIBUTES

GOD IS ABSOLUTE! -- Job 42:1-3; Psalm 145:11-13; Ecclesiastes 9:1; Isaiah 44:6; Daniel 2:20-21; Romans 14:11; I Timothy 6:15, 16

GOD IS ACCESSIBLE! -- Psalm 145:18, 19; Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:13, 18; 3:12; Colossians 1:21, 22; Hebrews 4:16; James 4:8

GOD IS ALL-KNOWING! -- Job 34:21; Psalm 33:13-15; 94:9-11; Isaiah 40:13, 14, 27, 28; 46:9, 10; Matthew 6:8

GOD IS ALL-POWERFUL! -- II Chronicles 20:6; Job 9:4-10; 42:2; Psalm 66:6, 7; 89:8, 9, 13; Isaiah 40:22-28; Mark 14:36

GOD IS ALL-SUFFICIENT! -- Exodus 3:14; Job 35:5-7; Isaiah 40:18, 28-31; 44:6; Jeremiah 10:10; John 5:26; Acts 17:24, 25.

GOD IS AWE-INSPIRING! -- Exodus 15:11; Nehemiah 1:5; Psalm 33:8-12; 89:6, 7; Ecclesiastes 3:14; Jeremiah 10:6, 7; Hebrews 12:28, 29

GOD IS COMMUNICATIVE! -- Numbers 12:6-8; Psalm 19:1, 2; 105:1-5; 119:9-11, 18; John 9:29-31; 16:13; Hebrews 1:1, 2

GOD IS COMPASSIONATE! -- II Kings 13:23; Psalm 78:38, 39; 103:3-17; 111:4; 145:8; Isaiah 65:1-3; Matthew 23:37-39

GOD IS CREATIVE! -- Genesis 1:1-31; Psalm 8:1-4; 19:12; 121:1, 2; Zechariah 12:1; Romans 1:20; II Corinthians 5:17

GOD IS DIRECTIVE! -- Job 42:1-3; Psalm 25:4, 5, 9; 32:8, 9; Proverbs 3:5, 6; 16:2-4, 9; Jeremiah 10:23, 24; 29:11-13

GOD IS ETERNAL! -- Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 9:7-8; 41:12-13; 102:24-28; Lamentations 5:19; Daniel 4:34; Revelation 4:8, 9

GOD IS EXCELLENT! -- Deuteronomy 32:4; II Samuel 22:31; Psalm 8; 36:7; 148:13; Isaiah 12:5; Mark 7:37; I Peter 2:9

- GOD IS FAITHFUL! -- Numbers 23:19; Lamentations 3:22, 23; Romans 3:3, 4;
I Corinthians 10:13; II Corinthians 1:20; I Thessalonians 5:24; II Timothy 2:13
- GOD IS FATHERLY! -- Psalm 103:13; Isaiah 63:16; Jeremiah 3:19-22; Romans 8:14-29; Matthew 7:11; Hebrews 12:6-9; I John 3:1, 2
- GOD IS FEARLESS! -- Exodus 15:3-11; Job 42:2; Isaiah 46:10, 11; Jeremiah 27:5; Psalm 2:1-5; Daniel 4:35; Nahum 1:3-6
- GOD IS FORGIVING! -- Psalm 86:5; Isaiah 1:18; Luke 5:18-24; 23:34; Colossians 2:13; Hebrews 10:17; I John 1:9; 2:12
- GOD IS FRIENDLY! -- II Chronicles 20:6, 7; Proverbs 17:9; 18:24; John 15:14, 15; James 2:22-23; James 4:4-6
- GOD IS GENEROUS! -- Psalm 4:7; 84:11; Luke 6:38; Romans 8:32; II Corinthians 8:7-9; I Timothy 6:17; II Peter 1:3
- GOD IS GENTLE! -- Psalm 78:38, 39; 86:15; Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew 11:28-30; Galatians 5:22, 23; I Thessalonians 2:7, 8; II Timothy 2:24
- GOD IS GLORIOUS! -- Psalm 29:2; 104:31; Isaiah 6:1-5; Matthew 6:13; Luke 2:14; Revelation 4:11; Revelation 21:23
- GOD IS GOOD! -- Exodus 33:18, 19; Deuteronomy 30:9; Psalm 33:5; 34:8; 107:8, 9; 145:9; Isaiah 63:7; Matthew 7:11
- GOD IS GRACIOUS! -- Exodus 33:12-17; Deuteronomy 7:6-9; Job 10:12; Romans 4:4, 5; 5:2, 6, 7; Ephesians 1:6; Hebrews 4:16
- GOD IS HOLY! -- Exodus 15:11; Deuteronomy 32:4; I Samuel 2:2; Psalm 30:4; 145:17; Isaiah 6:1-3; I Peter 1:15, 16
- GOD IS HUMBLE! -- Psalm 8; Isaiah 53:1-12; Mark 15:16-20; John 1:1-14; Philippians 2:1-8; I Peter 2:21-23
- GOD IS IMPARTIAL! -- Deuteronomy 10:17; Job 36:5; Acts 10:34; Romans 2:6, 11; Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:25; I Peter 1:17
- GOD IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE! -- Job 11:7-9; Psalm 18:11; 97:2; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Isaiah 40:12-31; 55:8, 9; I Corinthians 2:16
- GOD IS IN CONTROL! -- Psalm 75:6, 7; 135:5, 6; Daniel 4:35; John 19:10, 11; Acts 17:26; Romans 9:19-20; Revelation 4:11
- GOD IS INFINITE! -- I Kings 8:27; II Chronicles 2:6; Job 11:7-9; Psalm 139:3-10; 147:5; Isaiah 55:8, 9; Jeremiah 23:23, 24
- GOD IS INVISIBLE! -- Exodus 33:20; Job 9:11; John 1:18; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:13; I Timothy 1:17; I Timothy 6:16; Hebrews 11:27
- GOD IS JEALOUS! -- Exodus 20:5-7; 34:12-16; Deuteronomy 32:15-18; Joshua 24:19; Isaiah 31:1-3; Nahum 1:1-8
- GOD IS JOYOUS! -- Psalm 19:8; Ecclesiastes 2:26; Matthew 25:21; John 15:7-11; 17:13; Galatians 5:22; Philippians 4:4

GOD IS JUST! -- Deuteronomy 10:17; 32:4; I Samuel 2:3; Nehemiah 9:33; Psalm 7:9-11; Isaiah 33:22; Jeremiah 32:19; I John 1:9

GOD IS LIFE! -- Deuteronomy 30:20; John 5:24-26; 10:10; 11:25, 26; Acts 17:25-28; I John 1:1-4; 2:25

GOD IS LIGHT! -- Psalm 27:1; Isaiah 60:19-20; Matthew 4:16; Luke 2:32; I Timothy 6:15, 16; James 1:17; I John 1:5

GOD IS LONG-SUFFERING! -- Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; Psalm 86:15; Isaiah 65:1-3; Joel 2:13; Romans 2:14; II Peter 3:9

GOD IS LOVE! -- John 3:16; 14:21-23; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:4, 5; II Thessalonians 2:16; Hebrews 12:6

GOD IS MERCIFUL! -- Exodus 34:6, 7; Numbers 14:18-20; Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 145:8, 9; Lamentations 3:22, 23; Micah 7:18, 19; Ephesians 2:4-7

GOD IS OMNIPRESENT! -- I Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:3-10; Isaiah 57:15; Jeremiah 23:23; 32:18, 19; Jonah 1:3, 4; Acts 17:24

GOD IS PATIENT! -- Numbers 14:18; Isaiah 30:18; Joel 2:13; Romans 15:4-6; I Corinthians 13:4, 5; Hebrews 10:36; II Peter 3:9

GOD IS PEACEFUL! -- Job 22:21; Psalm 4:8; 119:165; Isaiah 26:3; John 14:27; 16:33; Colossians 3:15

GOD IS PERFECT! -- Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 18:32; 19:7; Matthew 5:48; Romans 12:2; Philippians 1:6; James 1:17

GOD IS PERSONAL! -- Psalm 23; 139:1-12; 139:13-16; 139:17-24; John 10:11-15; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-7

GOD IS PRACTICAL! -- Proverbs 16:3, 4; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Isaiah 14:24-27; John 1:9-13; Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:11; I Timothy 1:8-11

GOD IS PRESERVATION! -- Deuteronomy 33:12; II Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 3:3; 31:20-23; 37:23-28; 91:1-4; 97:10

GOD IS PROTECTIVE! -- Psalm 46:1-3; Ezekiel 34:11, 12; Acts 17:28; Romans 13:1-7; II Thessalonians 3:3; I Peter 2:13-17; 3:12, 13

GOD IS PROVIDING! -- Genesis 49:24, 25; Leviticus 25:20-22; I Samuel 2:7, 8; I Chronicles 29:12-14; Psalm 23; 107; Acts 14:17

GOD IS RIGHTEOUS! -- Ezra 9:15; Job 36:3; Psalm 71:15, 19; 111:3; Jeremiah 9:24; Romans 10:3, 4; Revelation 16:5

GOD IS SELF-CONTROLLED! -- Genesis 28:15; Exodus 3:14; Lamentations 3:22, 23; Psalm 90:1-4; John 6:38-40; Acts 17:24-25; James 1:17

GOD IS SELF-EXISTENT! -- Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 32:40; Job 35:6; Isaiah 44:6; Jeremiah 10:10; John 5:26; Acts 17:24, 25

GOD IS SPIRIT! -- Numbers 16:22; 27:16; Zechariah 4:6; John 4:24; Romans 8:14-16; I Corinthians 2:10-12; II Corinthians 2:18

GOD IS TIRELESS! -- Deuteronomy 20:3, 4; Psalm 23; 41:2, 3; 121:3, 4; Isaiah 40:28; 41:10; Jeremiah 12:1-6.

GOD IS TRINITY! -- Matthew 28:19; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 12:3-6; II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; I Peter 1:2; Revelation 1:4, 5

GOD IS TRUTHFUL! -- Numbers 23:19; Deuteronomy 32:4; I Samuel 15:29; Psalm 25:10; 86:15; John 4:24; 8:26; Titus 1:2

GOD IS UNCHANGING! -- Numbers 23:19; Psalm 119:89-91; Ecclesiastes 3:14; Isaiah 40:28; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17

GOD IS UNDERSTANDING! -- I Kings 8:39; Job 12:13; Psalm 103:14; 147:5; Proverbs 3:19-20; Daniel 2:20-21; Hebrews 4:13-16

GOD IS UNIQUE! -- Exodus 15:11; II Samuel 7:20-22; I Kings 8:23; Isaiah 40:18-22; 43:11; 44:6-8; Mark 12:32

GOD IS UNITY! -- I Kings 8:60; 20:28; Isaiah 42:8; Mark 12:29, 32; John 17:3; I Timothy 2:5; James 2:19

GOD IS UNRESTRICTED! -- I Chronicles 29:11, 12; I Samuel 2:6-8; Proverbs 21:1; Isaiah 55:11; Daniel 4:35; Romans 9:20-21; 11:34

GOD IS UNSEARCHABLE! -- Deuteronomy 29:29; Job 5:8, 9; Psalm 92:5; 145:3; Isaiah 55:8, 9; Romans 11:33; I Corinthians 2:10, 11

GOD IS UNSELFISH! -- Psalm 34:10; 84:11; 103; Matthew 11:28; Romans 5:16-18; Romans 6:23; 8:32

GOD IS WISE! -- Psalm 37:1-6; 92:5-9; 119:97-100; Proverbs 3:19-26; Isaiah 55:6-9; Jeremiah 51:15-17; Romans 11:33-36

GOD IS WRATHFUL! -- Numbers 14:11; II Kings 22:13; Psalm 7:11; 78:38; 103:8, 9; John 3:17, 18, 36; Hebrews 10:28-31

(This study guide is available in booklet form for .29¢ from:
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THE CALL OF GOD

Invocation

Almighty God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I commit all my ways unto you. I pledge my life to your service. Speak to me of duty and faithfulness. Show me my noble task, and strengthen me to walk in it. Amen.

The first thing that you are to do when you are upon your knees is to shut your eyes. Then with a short silence let your soul place itself in the presence of God. That is, you are to use this or some other better method to separate yourself from all common thoughts, and make your heart as sensible as you can of the divine presence.

- William Law

A speaker was once introduced by the perfect chairman who said simply, "Mr. Weaver, we are ready. Are you ready?" When I gather myself for prayer it is almost as if God were so addressing me: "Douglas Steere, I am ready. Are you ready?" And my answer is, "O Lord, you are always ready, but am I ever ready? O Lord, make me ready, or at least make me more ready to be made ready."

- Douglas Steere

We do not always realize what a radical suggestion it is for us to read to be formed and transformed rather than to gather information. We are information seekers. We love to cover territory. It is not easy for us to stop reading when the heart is touched; we are a people who like to get finished. Lectio offers us a new way to read. Read with a vulnerable heart. Expect to be blessed in the reading. Read as one awake, one waiting for the beloved. Read with reverence.

As divine reading becomes a way of life for us, it is easy to see that it is more of a process than a technique. For example, it is not necessary in this process to start with reading. I do not look at reading as the beginning, but rather as part of the process. Being a frequent guest at the table of Scripture, I have enough of the Word of God stored in my heart that I can begin with

meditation or some other aspect of prayer. I can begin with adoration. The secret of Divine Reading is to live my life around the Word of God to such extent that I am like a portable sanctuary filled with the real presence of God. Being a temple of God, how can I see God everywhere I look? Within your temple, Lord I sing about your glory. I am that temple, but you are the glory.

- Macrina Wiederkehr

O Lord Jesus, your words to your Father were born out of silence. Lead me into this silence, so that my words may be spoken in your name and thus be fruitful. It is so hard to be silent, silent with my mouth, but even more, silent with my heart. There is so much talking going on within me. It seems that I am always involved in inner debates within myself, my friends, my enemies, my supporters, my opponents, my colleagues, and my rivals. But this inner debate reveals how far my heart is from you. If I were simply to rest at your feet and realize that I belong to you and you alone, I would easily stop arguing with all the real and imagined people around me. These arguments show my insecurity, my fear, my apprehensions, and my need for being recognized and receiving attention. You, O Lord, will give me all the attention I need if I would simply stop talking and start listening to you. I know that in the silence of my heart you will speak to me and show me your love. Give me, O Lord, that silence. Let me be patient and grow slowly into this silence in which I can be with you. Amen

- Henri J. M. Nouwen

Benediction

Dear Jesus, assist me to follow God's will, even as you followed His will. Shed light upon my path, and keep close to me that I may follow close to you. Amen¹

¹ A Guide To Prayer For All God's People

**Call of God
Gen. 12:1-4**

God's covenant with His people begins with this simple yet earthshaking command, stated simply: "Leave what you know and go into the unknown." The command is united with a promise of blessing, yet it is no less fearful for that. God calls to each of us: "Leave what you know and go into the unknown. I will be with you and I will bless you, but you must act in faith in response to my word." Usually we are given many opportunities, and we need them, because we often deflect a call, ask for more information, distract ourselves, even run away. When you hear God's call, how do you usually respond? What is your preferred strategy when faced with this breathtaking word?¹

¹ The Spiritual Formational Bible

UNTO GOD

We take the name of God upon our lips, but there is no real conscious approach to God in our hearts. We are really taking the name of God in vain while we are praying to Him. If there is to be any power in our prayer, if our prayer is to get anything, the first thing to be sure of when we pray is that we have really come into the presence of God and are really speaking to Him. We should never utter one syllable of prayer, either in public or in private, until we are definitely conscious that we have come into the presence of God and are actually praying to Him.¹

IN JESUS NAME

“And whatsoever ye [that is, ye that believe on the Son] shall ask in my name, that will I do John 14:13.”

The promise then is made, first of all, to those who believe upon Jesus Christ. Notice that it is not made to those who believe about Jesus Christ, but those who believe on Jesus Christ. A person may believe perfectly correct about Jesus Christ, and yet not believe on Him at all. The devil himself believes about Jesus Christ and is doubtless perfectly orthodox; he knows more about Jesus Christ as He really is than we do, but the devil certainly does not believe on Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to believe on Jesus Christ? To believe on Jesus Christ means to put our personal confidence in Jesus Christ as what He claims to be and to accept Him to be to ourselves what He offers Himself to be to us.

That is one of the many good things about believing on Jesus Christ, it puts us on praying ground, it puts us in the place where we may go to God in every time of need and get from Him the very thing we need and ask for.

When you come across a word or a phrase in the Bible and do not know what it means, the thing to do is not to run off to a dictionary, or a commentary, or to some book of theology, but to

¹ The Power Of Prayer, R. A. Torrey

take your concordance and go through the Bible and look up every place where that word or phrase, or synonymous words or phrases, are used. Then you will know just what the word or phrase means. The meaning of words and phrases in the Bible is to be determined; just as it is in all other books, by usage. Now I have done this with this phrase, "In my name" and with synonymous phrases, "In His name" or "In the name of Jesus Christ."

It means simply this, that you ask the thing that you ask from the person of whom you ask it, on the ground of some claim that the person in whose name you ask it has upon the one from whom you ask it. Or to put it another way, to pray in the name of Jesus Christ is to recognize that we have no claim on God whatever, that God owes us nothing whatever, that we deserve nothing of God; but, believing what God Himself tells us about Jesus Christ's claim upon Him, we ask God for things on the ground of Jesus Christ's claims upon God. And when we draw near to God in that way we can get "whatsoever we ask," no matter how great it may be.

In Melbourne, Australia, as I went on the platform one day at the business men's meeting, a note was put in my hands. This note read:

Dear Dr. Torrey:

I am in great perplexity. I have been praying for a long time for something that I am confident is according to God's will, but I do not get it. I have been a member of the church for thirty years and have . . .

I took the note with me on to the platform and read it and said, "It is perfectly easy to explain. This man thinks that because he has been a consistent church member for thirty years, a faithful Sunday school superintendent for twenty-five years, and an elder in the church for twenty years, that God is under obligation to answer his prayer. He is really praying in his own name, and God will not hear our prayers when we approach Him in that way. We must, if we would have God answer our prayers, give up any thought that we have any claims upon God. Not one of us deserves, anything from God. If we got what we deserved, every last one of us would spend eternity in hell. But Jesus Christ has great claims on God, and we should go to God in our prayers

not on the ground of any goodness in ourselves, but on the ground of Jesus Christ's claims."

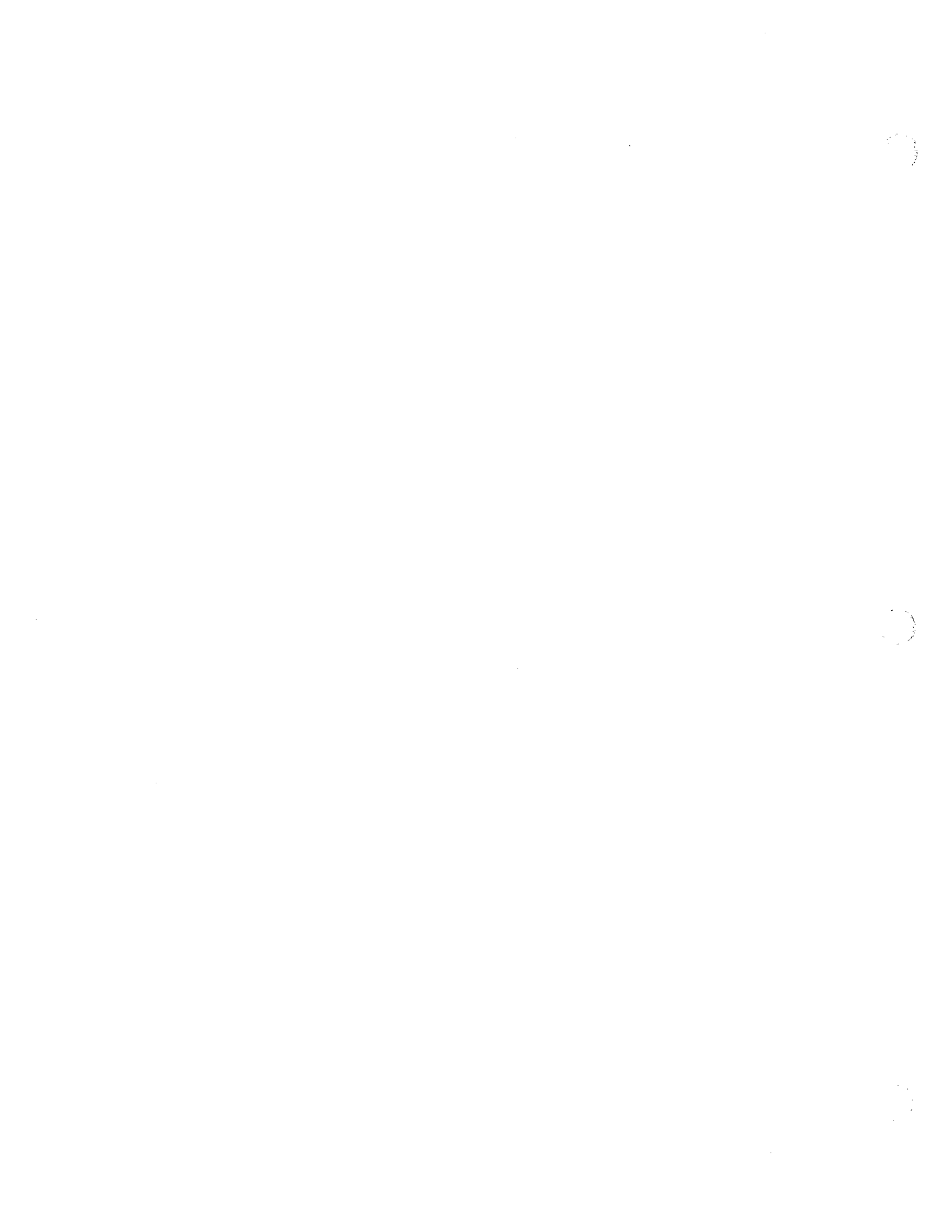
To pray, then, in the name of Jesus Christ, means simply this: That we recognize that we have no claims whatever on God. That we have no merit whatsoever in His sight, and furthermore, that Jesus Christ has immeasurable claims on God, and has given us the right to draw near to God not on the ground of our claims, but on the ground of His claims. And when we thus draw near to God in prayer, God will give us what we ask.

What a precious privilege it is to pray in the name of Jesus Christ! How rich we are if we only realize that Jesus Christ has given us the privilege of drawing near to the Heavenly Father in His name, on the ground of His claims on God.²

² The Power Of Prayer, R. A. Torrey

Secret Closet of Prayer, Praying, Prayer, Fasting

Section 11



Secret Closet

Andrew Murray Alone With God

**When you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you,
And pray to your Father secretly,
Matthew 6:6**

Have you ever thought what a wonderful privilege it is to have the liberty of asking God to meet with you and to hear what you have to say? We should use such a privilege gladly and faithfully.

“When you pray,” says Jesus, “go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly.” This means two things.

1. Shut the world out; withdraw from all the thoughts and concerns of the day.
2. Shut yourself in alone with God to pray in secret.

Let this be your chief object in prayer, to realize the presence of your heavenly Father. Let your goal be “Alone with God.”

Being alone in His presence and praying to the Father in secret is only the beginning. Come to Him in the full assurance that He knows how you long for His help and guidance. He will listen to you.

Then follows the great promise of verse 6: “Then your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you.” Your Father will see to it that your prayer is not in vain. Prayer in secret will be followed by the secret working of God in my heart.

Lord Jesus, thank you for the promise of Your presence and show me the way to be alone with You. Help me to be childlike and trustful in my fellowship with You, confessing each sin and bringing You my every need. Amen.¹

Andrew Murray The first thing the Lord teaches His disciples is that they must have a secret place for prayer; every one must have some solitary spot where he can be alone with his God. He wants each one to choose for himself the fixed spot where he

¹ The Best Of Andrew Murray On Prayer Pub. Barbour

can daily meet him. That inner chamber, that solitary place is Jesus' schoolroom. That spot may be anywhere; that spot may change from day to day if we have to change our abode; but that secret place there must be, with the quiet time in which the pupil places himself in the master's presence, to be by Him prepared to worship the Father. There alone, but there most surely, Jesus comes to teach us to pray.

William Tyndale We need a secret place of prayer. This will keep us from showing off. It leaves us free to use any words we please. If we want to make gestures that increase our devotion, no one else will know. True prayer comforts and encourages.

A CALL TO THE SECRET PLACE

If we learn to listen, if we are still, we will hear the voice that calls each one of us. And if we follow, we will find the secret place where the One who is love eternal dwells. There alone will we find strength and peace in His everlasting arms. There we'll be shown the wonders of His love.

Many of us pray but have no clue how to find God in our prayer time. With all our understanding about God's awesome power, it's as if we've lost sight of God Himself and His longing to be intimate with us.

If we want to find God in our everyday experience and sense His real presence throughout all life's struggles and joys, we must learn about a kind of prayer few of us understand. I am speaking about the prayer of inner quiet.

"Pause Think about Me." In this tender instruction we hear the echo of God's voice calling to us from out of time. Calling us apart to be alone with Him. Although God is always present with us, coming into the secret place with Him is one thing you cannot hurry. You're not going to get there if you're a speed-reader, or if you're a great administrator who lives by a checklist. None of the things you know how to do to "make things happen" will help you come into this place in spirit.

ENTERING IN

How do we begin?

First

Most of us have to disregard the idea that we have to be "specially called" to times of prayer. When we read First Thessalonians 5:17, where Paul tells us to "pray without ceasing," we might think that prayer is meant only for "super saints."

The fact is that God calls every one of us to prayer. The thing we must realize, however, is this: *Before God calls us to prayer, He calls us to himself. When God says, "Come away, my beloved" (see Song 8:14a), He is calling every one of us. He is calling you.*

Second, we need to find a place to be entirely alone.

Third, we must also learn what it takes to quiet our own spirit. If we want to find the secret place with God, we must enter with our true selves. Keeping up false fronts and masks will hinder us from experiencing God's presence.

Fourth, we need help to prevent our minds from wandering. If you've ever tried to spend time alone with the Lord you know what I mean. For this reason I recommend you enter into the secret place with God by meditating on His Word.

Fifth, we must open ourselves to receive His love.

The strongest need we possess is our need to be loved. Most arguments we have with each other have to do with the issue of being loved. We each have inside us this huge vacuum that no human being can ever fill. Only God can fill the void we have within.

In order for God to fill us, our hearts must be wide open to Him – *yielded* to Him.

John 14:17b, God Himself lives in you! His Kingdom, the place where He rules and reigns, is inside you.

Prayer is surely about storming the heavenlies to tear down strongholds (see 2 Cor. 10:4), and prayer is about asking for our daily needs (see Matt. 6:11); but do you know about the kind of prayer that allows you to enter into the Kingdom of God, the presence of God, that has been deposited in you?

This is an incredible fact – the Kingdom of God is within us, making God Himself accessible to us at any time. It's in the secret place of prayer that we find inspiration for the dull dry times and comfort for the lonely and hurting times.

Prayer that brings us into intimate experiences with God does not involve imitating another or reproducing their prayers. One of the greatest problems many of us have is wishing we were someone else. You can't make yourself into somebody you're not.

"Come up here!" (Rev. 4:1b).

When Jesus Christ calls you into the secret place of prayer, it's an invitation like no other. That call from the depths of God's presence is an unspeakable privilege, an open door to a

revelation of God Himself. My one major goal in life is to be like the apostle John and answer the call of God to come into the secret place. What about you?

In the book of Revelation, the veil is pulled back for a moment and we are afforded a glimpse of what John saw when he was called into the secret place. When John turned to see who was calling, he was amazed! The One who commanded his attention was none other than Jesus. But it was not the Jesus he'd seen before – the itinerant Jewish rabbi in a robe and sandals. Here was the shining, resurrected Son of God, summoning John to come up with Him in the glorious heavenly sanctuary where He stood in the midst of fiery candlesticks. From His feet to His hair He was a blazing fire, so that “His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance” (Rev. 1:16b)!

John was so overcome by this shining revelation of God that he “fell at His feet as a dead man” (Rev. 1:17). But Jesus placed His right hand on John, and lifted him up . . . and then He unfolded one of the greatest revelations of God that mankind has ever received.

I want to meet with Jesus Christ in the secret and holy place where He dwells in Spirit and, like John, be taken into the depths of God. I want to be a vessel that reveals the awesome mysteries of God's grace and truth to the world. Isn't that the greatest goal of your life, too?

The problem for most of us is that life crowds out the time we need to spend alone answering God's call.

Our God is God. It makes no difference what circumstances surround us; He can still meet with us, and He can still provide for our every need.¹

¹ Michal Ann Goll, A Call To The Secret Place

DEVELOPING YOUR SECRET CLOSET OF PRAYER

Matt. 6:6 "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet"

enter - aorist imperative active tense
tense - aorist - action as being accomplished by subject
mood - imperative - makes a demand on the will of the reader to obey the command
voice - active - indicates the subject produces the action

closet - A place of solitude where we can withdraw and shut out the world and commune with God. It's a place of silent retreat from the world, a place of entrance into the eternal

A secret closet - a well guarded place where things of value were placed. A place, if not guarded, that thieves would plunder. It is a place where our spiritual lives are strengthened and revived.

A place where our private prayer life is developed, a place where Satan will do all he can to keep us from entering. "One's spiritual life will never rise above the practice of one's private prayer life." It's a place of solitude where God refines us, molds us, and prepares us to fulfill His purpose for our lives. God will use these private times alone to develop our Christian character.

The spiritual disciplines of giving, praying, and fasting are in secret. Those who parade their piety forfeit their reward.

Matt. 6:5-8 Is a powerful prescription that teaches crucial principles for our private prayer life.

1. Teaches us how to pray
 - a. Warns us how not to pray
2. Promises a reward
 - a. Not the applause of others
3. Favor of God
 - a. For those who get it right

What is prayer?

A dialogue between God and a believer, which includes both talking and listening to God. Sometimes our prayers are just vain repetitions, a monologue of just talking but seldom listening to His instruction. Could it be that what God has to say to me is much more important than what I have to say to Him? He delights in our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, but for many, listening to and discovering His voice is almost nonexistent in their communication with the Great Creator.

What prayer is not: What I can get from God.

Prayer is to be an intimate and personal relationship with our living God in which the believer comes to want only what God wants for him, nothing more, nothing less. We need to yield to God's desire by dying to our own agenda. (Luke 9:23) This must be built into our prayer life by actually participating in our own funeral on a daily basis. Dying to self is a daily imperative that must be an integral part of our closet time. This requires a daily commitment of time in solitude with a holy God.

Prayer is not what I can get from God but to have my heart so radically changed by Him that I come to want only what God wants for me, nothing more, nothing less.

The central issue is solitude with God. There are things God only shares in secret, and there are some secrets that are only heard in solitude with Him. The secret closet is the place where God builds His character within our hearts. Private discipline that prepares us for public life. Our spiritual life will never rise above the practice of our private prayer life!

God's Promise: "Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

The enemy of our souls, the author of all doubt and discouragement, will do everything possible to make us think that private prayer is a waste of time. Satan hates prayer, particularly the "closet life" of the believer. This is why the discipline of the secret closet is so difficult to maintain, for our flesh wars against it.

Do you have a place which is a special meeting site for intimacy with God? Do you have a place which is holy ground? Do you have a place of solitude? Do you have a secret closet of prayer?

If the answer is no, you need to buy a copy of "Developing Your Secret Closet of Prayer" by Richard A. Burr, Christian Publications. The above material was adapted from the introduction to the book. In my opinion, it is one of the very best books ever written on prayer.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SECRET CLOSET

Principle One: Make an appointment with God

Principle Two: Select a location

Principle Three: Consider your posture

Principle Four: Prepare your heart

- a. Ponder the throne room of God
- b. Reflect upon the eternal view of life
- c. Consider God's attributes

Principle Five: Submit to God, Resist the enemy

- a. Express your desire to worship and serve God only
- b. Voluntarily submit to His authority
- c. Acknowledge your dependence upon Him
- d. Express your desire to live a Spirit-filled life
- e. Ask the Holy Spirit to guard your mind

Our great need is for all God's people to experience revival. The word "revival" means "bringing back to life", implying that one has experienced previous "life", that is, has been born again and has walked in the Spirit, but now desperately needs spiritual restoration. Therefore revival is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in concert with prayer and the Word of God, that ushers into a Christian's heart wave upon wave of obedience and causes the believer to be flourishing in the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)

Corporate revival always begins with personal revival - specifically, the revival of ones heart in the secret closet of prayer. The following principles outline the preparations needed to establish an effective prayer life that will lead to personal revival -- all by the grace and mercy of our faithful God!

Principle One: Make an appointment with God

The first and foundational principle in implementing your closet of prayer is to establish an appointment with God. Jesus recognized that apart from the Father He could do nothing. (John 5:19) This is illustrated in Mark 1:35, "and in the morning rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed". Our early morning appointment with God must be a non-negotiable in our daily schedule.

Why this prayerlessness?

Richard Burr says, "I have come to believe that self-sufficiency is the chief cause of this sin of prayerlessness. And, of course, it has its roots in pride - that ungodly annoyance that is spawned in the residue of my old nature, the flesh."

Principle Two: Select a location

Matt. 6:6 indicates it is 1. a solitary place where you will be 2. undisturbed to avoid distraction 3. unheard to experience liberty of spirit and 4. unobserved to avoid ostentation. Psalm 37:7 encourages us to develop a listening ear to discern His will, purpose and direction for our life. There are some things that God only says in secret, and there are some secrets that are only heard in solitude!

Principle Three: Consider your posture

One of the tragedies in our society today is the absence of the fear of God. Our culture has become so casual and shameless that strands of this dreadful disease have spilled over into the church. A casualness with God tends toward carelessness and compromise, which invariably leads to carnality. The posture of your praying can reveal your attitude of heart toward God. Psalm 95:6 My posture before God needs to be reverent and humbly communicating a desperate need for a fresh touch from the Almighty.

Principle Four: Prepare your heart

Internal preparations that prepare me for effective communion with our Lord:

- a. Ponder the throne room of God
Isa. 6:1-3; Rev. 4 Read and pray through all verses and you will capture a good glimpse of the glory that is awaiting you in the throne room of heaven. The setting of the throne room is awesome! Yet even more astounding is God's invitation for us to approach Him with freedom and confidence - all because of the blood of the Lamb. Heb. 4:16
- b. Reflect upon the eternal view of life.
We need to become visionary Christians by allowing the Master to write this eternal view of life across the tables of our heart. Pray through Ps. 138:1-8; Rom. 8:31-39.
- c. Consider God's attributes
We must never forget who this is that has invited us to have intimate fellowship with Him. This is failure to understand the awesome wonder and reverence that is due His name. How comforting to know that our Lord Jesus Christ has the power and authority to take all tragedies of the past or present and by His abounding grace turn them into triumphs. II Pet. 1:3

Principle Five: Submit to God, Resist the enemy

James 4:7 is one of the most significant Scriptures in the entire Word that deals with victorious living.

- a. Express your desire to worship and serve God only.
It is the conscious acknowledgment before God that the desire of my heart is to worship and serve Him throughout this coming day.
- b. Voluntarily submit to His authority.
Complete submission to the Lordship of Christ relinquishing all rights and authority to ones life . We are called upon to daily participate in our own funeral, to consider ourselves dead unto the world and alive unto Christ. The goal is not what I can get from God but to have such an intimate and personal relationship with Him that I come to want only what He wants for me, nothing more and nothing less. This definition in and of itself speaks of the necessity of dying to self and submitting to His will.
- c. Acknowledge your dependence upon Him.
John 15:5 "Apart from me you can do nothing". We must constantly remind ourselves of this truth.

- d. Express your desire to live a Spirit-filled life.

The Holy Spirit desires to rule and reign in our lives and to provide us with all the power necessary to live triumphantly. When this transaction takes place, we draw upon the same power that raised Jesus from the grave, that supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

- e. Ask the Holy Spirit to guard your mind.

My flesh can fill my mind with chaos and confusion for it never wants me to have any meaningful communion with God. Phil. 4:7 II Cor. 10:4-5 indicates the spiritual battle is to take thoughts captive.

A fundamental truth in prayer is the sufficiency of the Word of God, along with the enlightening work of the Holy Spirit. This must be the foundation of ones prayer life.

Taken from Developing Your Secret Closet Of Prayer by Richard A. Burr,

Christian Publications, Camp Hill, PA:, 1998.

PRAYING

Ludovico Barbo Three ways of praying.

1. The first VOCAL

**Great contemplative saints make it their custom to always
Start from this form of prayer before ascending to the other,
Higher ways of prayer.**

2. The second stage MEDITATION

**Meditation happens this way: it prays not with words, but in
The heart, understanding, and affectively.**

3. The third stage CONTEMPLATION

God prepares the soul, for divine contemplation.

God's Word Works Genesis 1:9

Over and over we read, "God said.... And it was so". Verse 9 is one of the many such refrains in this chapter of Genesis. God spoke, and creation leaped into being in joyful response to the overwhelming power of God's Word. Great Comfort can be found in knowing that God's will is always fruitful. God doesn't just try. God does. Is there a place in your prayer today where this fact might bring you assurance? The next time you wonder how anything good can possibly emerge from your current situation, remember that God's response to your prayer is immediate, even though the effects may not at first be visible. When God speaks, things happen -- both within us and around us!

GOD'S SILENCE

"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." John 11:21-22

How many of us have been blind in our prayers? Look back and think of the prayers you thought had not been answered but now find that God has answered with a bigger manifestation than you ever dreamed. God has trusted you in the most intimate way He could trust you, with an absolute silence, not of despair but of

pleasure, because He saw you could stand a much bigger revelation than you had at the time.

Some prayers are followed by silence because they are wrong, others because they are bigger than we can understand. Jesus stayed where He was – a positive staying, because He loved Martha and Mary. Did they get Lazarus back? They got infinitely more; they got to know that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life.

It will be a wonderful moment when we stand before God and find that the prayers we clamored for in early days and imagined were never answered, have been answered in the most amazing way, and that God's silence has been the sign of the answer.

PRAY ABOUT IT: The silence of God in response to our prayers isn't a sign that He has not heard or will not grant our requests. Many pray-ers think that God's silence means they have done something wrong and thus He won't answer. But Martha and Mary had done nothing wrong. Their request of Jesus was good. And He complied – in His own time, not theirs. As a result, their blessing was even greater than their original request.

God's silence may offer proof that the answer has come or will come in a greater way than we suppose. Don't fence God in with your expectations of His action. His silence itself may be the action that grants your prayer.

As you pray today, God may be silent. But the answer you need is on its way, nevertheless.

Prayer is knocking at the door; faith is the expectation that it will be opened. W. J. Harney¹

My Daily Orthodox Prayer Book

The Orthodox Rule of Prayer

To dedicate a period of time each day to listening to Jesus, and to prayer, is to choose, as Mary did, "the better part", "the one thing needful." It means that we have realized that meeting God in prayer is the most important thing we can do each day.

¹ Magnificent Prayer, Nick Harrison

Power in Prayer

William Barclay has said that “in prayer for those we love we must remember;

- 1. the love of God that wants the best for them;**
- 2. the wisdom of God that knows what is best for them; and**
- 3. the power of God that can accomplish it.”**

They Prayed

Abraham prayed, and so long as he prayed, God did not destroy the city of Sodom (Gen. 18:20-23).

Elijah prayed, and God sent fire from heaven to consume the offering on the altar in order to show that He is the One True God (1Kings 18:17-40).

Elisha prayed, and the son of the Shunammite woman was resurrected from the dead (2Kings 4:17-37).

The thief on the cross prayed and received the answer to his prayer immediately as Jesus said to him, “Today, you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:39-43).

Paul prayed and churches were born in Europe and Asia Minor (Acts 9:22-31).

Jesus prayed at the door of the tomb of Lazarus, and Lazarus who had been dead for four days, came walking out of the tomb (John 11:1-44).

Peter prayed and Dorcas was raised from death to Life (Acts 9:36-42).

The Rule Of Prayer

This means that you have to set aside a regular period of time each day and devote it exclusively to prayer, to uniting yourself to God.

Theophan, "Prayer is the rising of the mind and heart to God in praise and thanksgiving to Him and in supplication for the good things that we need, both spiritual and physical."²

² My Daily Orthodox Prayer Book. Anthony Coniars

INTERCESSION

Andrew Murray Intercession is the main element in the conversion of souls. What can we do to stir up the spirit of intercession?

Begin to get an insight into the need and the power of intercession.

Intercede on behalf of single individuals.

Pray for your children, your relatives, friends, and for all with whom you come into contact.

If you feel you don't have power to intercede, ask the Holy Spirit for that power.

God wants every redeemed child of His to intercede for those who do not know Him.

Pray fervently that God will give you the power of His Holy Spirit for this ministry of intercession.

Dick Eastman I am convinced that when we stand before God in preparation for our eternal rulership with Christ, we will discover that every soul ever brought to a knowledge of Christ was in some way related to intercessory prayer.

Intercession, for example, is derived from the two Latin words *inter* and *ceder*: *inter* meaning between among involved intervention; and *ceder* meaning to go, to yield, to move, or to pay the price of.

Let's look at these derivations in the order noted above.

First, the roots suggest that intercession means to go between, as when stepping between someone and his enemy in battle.

Second, these terms describe one who yields himself among those who are weak and need assistance.

Third, intercession is a moving in the direction of involvement.

Finally, intercession means to pay the price of intervention. Christ Himself provides the most worthy example of this definition.

Intercession is a recognition that intercession is far more a way of life than a type of prayer.

Jesus Christ lifestyle was characterized by a spirit of intercession.

An intercessor is a man or women or child who fights on behalf of others.

- 1. We need to understand our privilege as intercessors.**
- 2. We need to understand our position as intercessors.**
- 3. We need to understand our promise as intercessors.**
- 4. We must understand our power as intercessors Lk.10:19.**

Andrew Murray There is nothing that can bring us near to God and lead us deeper into His love than the work of intercession. Nothing gives us a higher experience of God than pouring out our hearts to Him in prayer for men and women.

When Nehemiah Cried to God, "Listen to my prayer! Look down and see me praying night and day for your people Israel.

A CALL FOR DECISION

Are you willing to give yourself totally to the power of Jesus Christ to make intercession for God's Church and for a dying world? Will you make this the main object of your life? Is it too much to yield your life to the Lord who gave Himself for you? Intercession should not take a subordinate place in the teaching and practice of the church with its ministers and members. It is of such supreme importance as to make it an essential, altogether indispensable element in the true Christian life. There can be no doubt about this to those who take God's Word in its full meaning.

Child of God, God counts upon you to take your place before His Throne as an intercessor. Renew the consciousness of your holy calling as a royal priesthood. Begin to live in the assurance that intercession is the highest privilege a man or woman can desire. Accept the Word with great expectation: "Ask me. I will tell you some remarkable secrets about what is going to happen here." Jeremiah 33:3

Andrew Murray Intercession is an essential element in God's redeeming purpose, so much so that without it the failure of God's purpose may lie at the door.

A Solemn Responsibility

**We always pray for you, and give thanks to God. . .
So we have continued praying for you ever since
We first heard about you.
Colossians 1:3,9**

Andrew Murray.

God will hear me. What a solemn responsibility! Often we complain of failure as if there was no help for it. Yet God has promised an answer to prayer to supply every need and give us His light and strength and peace. We can feel confident that God's grace will enable us to pray as we should.

Access to a God who hears prayer is meant to make us intercessors for others. If we have truly given ourselves to God for others, we share Christ's right of intercession and are able to obtain the powers of heaven.

The Power of life and death is in our hands. In answer to prayer the Spirit is poured out, souls are converted, believers are established. In prayer the kingdom of darkness is conquered, souls brought out of prison into the liberty of Christ, and the glory of God is revealed. Through prayer the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is used in power.

The Church needs to do the work of intercession. What a responsibility! Every believer must seek to use his or her talent in prayer for others. The more we understand the power in prayer that God has given the more we will surrender to the work of intercession.

Andrew Murray The better we know God, the more wonderful our insight into the power of intercession becomes. We begin to understand that it is the greater means by which man can take part in carrying out God's purpose. God has entrusted the whole of His redemption in Christ to His people to make known and to communicate to men. In all this, intercession is the chief and

essential element. Through it, His servants receive the power of the Spirit as their power of service.

Polycarp May God the Father, and the eternal High Priest Jesus Christ, build us up in faith and truth and love, and grant us our portion among the saints with all those who believe on our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray for all saints, for kings and rulers, for the enemies of the cross of Christ, and for ourselves we pray that our fruit may abound and we be made perfect in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Intercession

Andrew Murray Will God really make the pouring out of blessing on others dependent on our prayers? Yes, He makes us His fellow workers. He has taken us into partnership in His work. If we fail to do our part, others will suffer and His work will suffer.

God has appointed intercession as one of the means by which others will be saved and Christians built up in the faith. People all over the world will receive life and blessing through our prayers. Should we not expect God's children to endeavor with all their strength to pray for God's blessing on the world?

Begin to use intercession as a means of grace for yourself and for others. Pray for your neighbors. Pray for sinners that they may come to Christ. Pray for your minister and for missionaries. Pray for your country and for government leaders. If you live a life completely for God, you will realize that the time spent in prayer is an offering pleasing to God.

Yes, "pray at all times. . . and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere." In so doing you will learn the lesson that intercession is the chief means of bringing others to Christ and bringing glory to God. Eph. 6:18 Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit.¹

Intercession

There is a mystery of glory in prayer. On the one hand we see God in His holiness, love, and power – waiting, longing to bless

¹ Andrew Murray The best of Andrew Murray on Prayer

us. On the other hand is a sinful, unworthy human being – asking God in prayer for the very life and love of heaven to dwell in our hearts.

There is strength in the unity of believers. God will certainly avenge His own who cry day and night to Him. It is when Christians cease looking for help apart from God and aim at being bound together to the throne of God, that the church will put on her strength to overcome the world. This comes by continuously asking for the power of God's Spirit.

Andrew Murray People are diligent in seeking for the treasure of the earth for their use. Shouldn't the children of God be equally faithful in seeking for the treasures of heaven? It is by the unceasing intercession of God's people that His kingdom will come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10).

Christians need to realize they have the right to expect that God will hear prayer. God waits for each individual believer to take his part in the power of intercession to fulfill the petition "as in heaven, so on earth" (Matt. 6:10).

God had among His people intercessors to whom He listened. In Isaiah we read of a time of trouble when He sought for an intercessor in vain.

God rules the world and His Church through the prayers of His people.

PRAYER OF THE HEART

Henri Nouwen Hesychastic prayer, which leads to that rest where the soul can dwell with God, is prayer of the heart.

We find the best formulation of the prayer of the heart in the words of the Russian mystic Theophan the Recluse: "To pray is to descend with the mind into the heart, and there to stand before the face of the Lord, ever-present, all-seeing, within you."

Prayer is standing in the presence of God with the mind in the heart; that is, at that point of our being where we are totally one.

One of the Desert Fathers, Macarius the Great, says, "The chief task of the athlete [that is, the monk] is to enter his heart." The most profound insight of the Desert Fathers is that entering into the heart is entering into the kingdom of God. In other words, the way to God is through the heart. Isaac the Syrian writes: "Try to enter the treasure chamber . . . that is within you and then you will discover the treasure chamber of heaven.

And John Carpathios says: "It takes great effort and struggle in prayer to reach that state of mind which is free from all disturbance; it is a heaven within the heart [literally 'endocardial'], the place, as the Apostle assures us, 'where Christ dwells in us' (2 Cor. 13:5)".

The prayer of the heart is a prayer that does not allow us to limit our relationship with God to interesting words of pious emotions.

Thus the prayer of the heart is the prayer of truth.

- ❖ The prayer of the heart is nurtured by short, simple prayers.
- ❖ The prayer of the heart is unceasing.
- ❖ The prayer of the heart is all-inclusive.

John Climacus "When you pray do not try to express yourself in fancy words, for often it is the simple, repetitious phrases of a little child that our Father in heaven finds most irresistible. Do not strive for verbosity lest your mind be distracted from devotion by a search for words. One phrase on the lips of the tax

collector was enough to win God's mercy; one humble request made with faith was enough to save the good thief. Wordiness in prayer often subjects the mind to fantasy and dissipation; single words of their very nature tend to concentrate the mind. When you find satisfaction or compunction in a certain word of your prayer, stop at that point".

When our worries are led to the Heart of God and there become prayer, then ministry and prayer become two manifestations of the same all-embracing love of God.

To live a prayerful life we cannot do without specific prayers. We need to say them in such a way that we can listen better to the Spirit praying in us.

Solitude shows us the way to let our behavior be shaped not by the compulsions of the world but by our new mind, the mind of Christ. Silence prevents us from being suffocated by our wordy world and teaches us to speak the Word of God. Finally, unceasing prayer gives solitude and silence their real meaning. In unceasing prayer, we descend with the mind into the heart. Thus we enter through our heart into the heart of God.¹

Fenelon True prayer is that of the heart, and the heart prays only for what it desires. To pray then, is to desire or long for, but to desire what God would have us desire. We must continually seek to cherish it, and we must avoid every thing that tends to make us lose it. We must have appointed times of secret prayer and frequently recall our minds consciously to God during the day. Periods of secret prayer must be determined by the time available, the disposition, the condition and the inward leading of each individual. Apply yourself again to listen for the voice of God in prayer, and listen less to yourself.

Madame Guyon Prayer can help you to attain perfection, because it will keep you in the presence of God. Prayer from the heart cannot be interrupted by reason. By prayer you can live in God's presence. When meditating on Scriptures read a small section and allow that passage to be digested before going on to another; draw its full meaning. Commit it to memory, proceed then to another one and do the same. By doing this you will

¹ Henri Nouwen The Way Of The Heart

have made meditating on the Word a habit that will cause you to grow as a Christian. Another method is to learn to pray the Word, using the Lord's Prayer in Mat. 6:9-13, as an example, the prayer of faith and stillness. After you have been meditating in the word and praying it out to God for some time, you will gradually find how easy it is to come into His presence. First remain in respectful silence for a little while. Remain there in His divine presence without being troubled about a subject for prayer. Simply enjoy God. When you feel a release, you may proceed in prayer. If, however, there remains a tender tug at your spirit to simply stay quiet in His presence, by all means do so. Cease all activity, lest God's presence be diminished by your activity. When you have finished in prayer, remain a while longer in respectful silence. It is essential to continually submit your will and renounce every private inclination as soon as it arises no matter how good it appears.

Henri Nouwen Because we do not stay in touch with that center of our spiritual life called prayer, we loose touch with all that grows from it.

Three Rules for Prayer of the Heart

1. A contemplative reading of the Word.
2. A silent listening to the voice of God.
3. A trusted obedience to a spiritual guide or mentor.

The prayer of the heart requires first of all that we make God our only thought. That means that we must dispel all distractions, concerns, worries, and preoccupation, and fill the mind with God alone.

Henri Nouwen Calling God "Abba Father (See Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6) is a cry of the heart, a prayer welling up from our innermost being. The word Abba expresses trust, safety, confidence, belonging, and most of all, intimacy.²

² Henri Nouwen Bread for the Journey

The PRAYER OF GENUINE GRATITUDE

The prayer of genuine gratitude might also be called the prayer of profound praise to the Most High.

It is possible to pray the prayer of genuine gratitude to Him even in the greatest adversity. We can learn how to praise Him in absolute sincerity and integrity even in the worse of times. We can discover the secret of honest prayer and praise that releases His power to change us and to change circumstances amid any calamity. We can offer Him forthright thanksgiving in utter transparency.

Only in this way will we ever be changed from being *victims* of our circumstances to becoming *victors* in Christ Jesus.

Here is the supreme secret to the prayer of Praise! I am acutely aware that always, always the living Lord is here. He is not a remote, distant deity. He is here.

Again, let it be said here in tenderness: There is only one way to pray with praise amid all the darkness. Ask God Himself for the calm courage and strength of will to focus your attention upon His own presence with you. Cultivate His intimate companionship. He is here to help, to heal, and to make you whole! All is well.

It is possible to pray with genuine gratitude under every circumstance in life. God does not mock us. He does not put us into the furnace of affliction to test our faith in Himself. He allows the tough times to come for two purposes;

- 1. To show us His amazing faithfulness to us in the furnace of our afflictions.**
- 2. To change and conform our own character to His own.**

Once we accept this tremendous truth we are under girded with His peace. When troubles come I can then wait quietly on God. He and He alone can sustain me in the storms of life. He does not forsake me. His noble commitment to me as ever of old is (Josh. 1:9).

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

Having explained the enormous part played by God in all the experiences of life, no matter what assails us, let me now point out our part in offering up to Him our prayer of praise. There are three actions of my will (or heart) involved. Here is a supreme secret to a life of victory in Christ.

- 1. In true humility and open honesty before Him, I acknowledge He is God, that He arranges all my affairs with only my best interest in mind, because He loves me. This applies even when things appear to my view, to be awry.**
- 2. Without opposing Him in the trial, I accept everything that happens along life's path as His provision. This is the path of peace.
I do not fight life, trying in my own strength to change everything or everyone. They, instead, are quietly accepted and allowed to modify and mature me into Christ's own character.**
- 3. In sincerity I actually approve of what God my Father does and how He decides to do it. This strong action, initiated by His presence at work within my life and soul, sets His gracious Spirit free to do abundantly more than I can ever hope or imagine.**

I praise Him joyfully, for it is He who is at work in me both to will and do His good pleasure. This is to walk with God in peace, power, and praise. Then in all honor I can declare boldly,

It is God who brought me here!

It is God who can keep and sustain me here!

It is God who will lead me on from here!

Adapted from His Way to Pray W. Philip Keller

ABIDING IN CHRIST

There are at least three definitions for the word abiding. One has to do with *waiting*, which we have covered in an earlier chapter. The second denotation of the word involves *remaining stable or fixed*. The third meaning relates to *continuing in a given place or dwelling*.

Certainly all three of these explanations relate to our need for abiding in Christ. We watch and wait in Him as we become stable and fixed in our resolve to remain in and with Him. Abiding in Christ is continuing in Him and in His love. Abiding is staying put, and this is an important key to answered prayer. Jesus is our safe place, our refuge from the storms of life; but the key to getting our prayers answered is not found in fleeing to Jesus when times get rough – this key only works when we learn to live in Him, to stay there, knowing that He is our true abode (dwelling place), our resting place, our home. In Him we live and move and have our being. (See Acts 17:28.) In Him all things find their completion, and in Him all things hold together. (See Col. 1:16-17.) Because these things are true, we can be certain that abiding in Christ will bring answers to our prayers.

By abiding in Christ, and letting His words abide in us, we shall be able to ask what we will, and it shall be done. This opens the way for the Holy Spirit's anointing to bless our prayers and actions, and we will become fruitful. We will remember the things that Jesus has taught us, and we will not be ashamed when He returns.

Dwight L. Moody once discovered among his papers a powerful quotation about the person of Christ. He was unable to determine who had penned it, but its compelling images give us great insights into abiding in Christ.

“Christ is our Way; walk in Him.

He is our Truth; we embrace Him.

He is our Life; we live in him.

He is our Lord; we choose Him to rule over us.

He is our Master; we serve Him.

He is our Teacher; instructing us in the way of salvation.

He is our Prophet; pointing out the future.

He is our Priest; having atoned for us.

He is our Advocate; ever living to make intercession for us.

**He is our Savior; saving to the uttermost.
He is our Root; we grow in Him.
He is our Bread; we feed upon Him.
He is our Shepherd; leading us into green pastures.
He is our true Vine; we abide in Him.
He is the Water of Life; we satisfy our thirst from Him.
He is the fairest among the thousand; we admire Him above all others.
He is 'the the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person.' We strive to reflect His likeness.
He is the upholder of all things; we rest upon Him.
He is our Wisdom; we are guided by Him.
He is our Righteousness; we cast all our imperfections upon Him.
He is our Sanctification: we draw all our power for holy life from Him.
He is our Redemption; redeeming us from all iniquity.
He is our Healer; curing all our diseases.
He is our Friend; relieving us in all our necessities.
He is our Brother; cheering us in our difficulties.
To abide in Christ then, is to abide in all these marvelous truths.
Jesus is all in all to us. He has chosen to take up His abode in our hearts, and we are invited to take up our abode within His heart. He is in us, and we are in Him.¹**

¹ Prayer Keys, Clift & Kathleen Richards

PRAYING SCRIPTURES

Geert Zerbolt van Zutphur

1. Scripture prepares the reader for meditation.
2. Meditation prepares for prayer.
3. Prayer for contemplation.

Dangers

1. To meditate without first reading Scriptures is to run the risk of being deluded or falling into error.
2. Reading Scripture without turning to prayer is arid and barren.

Peter of Celle Reading is bound to silence . . . constant and attentive reading done devotedly, purifies our inner self.

The Word Of God

For the word of God is full of living power.
Hebrews 4:12

Andrew Murray When communing with God, His Word and prayer are both indispensable and should not be separated. In His Word, God speaks to me; I speak to God.

The Word teaches me to know the God to whom I pray; it teaches me how He would have me pray. It gives me precious promises to encourage me in prayer. It often gives me wonderful answers to prayer.

The more I pray, the more I feel my need of the Word and rejoice in it. The more I read God's Word, the more I have to pray about and the more power I have in prayer. One great cause of prayerlessness is that we read God's Word too little, or superficially, or in the light of human wisdom.

It is the Holy Spirit through whom the Word has been spoken, who is also the Spirit of prayer. He will teach me how to receive the Word and how to approach God.

What power and inspiration would be ours if we only took God's Word as from Himself, turning it into prayer and definitely expecting an answer. It is in the intimacy of God's presence and

by the Holy Spirit that God's Word will become our delight and our strength.¹

Madame Guyon In praying the scriptures you are seeking to find the Lord in what you are reading, in the very words themselves. Therefore as you come before the Lord to sit in his presence, beholding him make use of the scripture to quiet your mind. You come to the Lord by the simple act of beholding him and waiting upon him.

Turn your heart to the presence of God. You turn to him by faith. Next begin to read scripture, as you read pause, so that you may set your mind on the spirit. You are reading in order to turn your mind from outward things to the deeper parts of your being, you are not there to learn or to read, but you are there to experience the presence of your Lord. By faith hold your heart in his presence. Try to keep your mind free from distractions. The Lord is found only within your spirit, in the recesses of your being, in the Holy of Holies, this is where he dwells. Once your heart has been turned inwardly to the Lord, you will have an impression of His presence. Your mind becomes occupied with what you have read and by that touch of his presence.

Outer distraction irritate the mind don't pay attention. Instead, withdraw from your mind! Keep turning within to the Lord's presence. Be assured that as your soul becomes more accustomed to withdrawing to inward things, this process will become easier. Enjoy His presence.

¹ The Best Of Andrew Murray

PRAYING THE BIBLE

If you would like to pray through the Bible, any section will do; but the easiest place to start is with recorded prayers. There are at least eight genres of biblical prayers.

1. Theophanies are the “visions of God” (Ezekiel 1:1) recorded in Scriptures. We encourage people to begin praying the Bible by praying theophanies because in doing so, they will start all their prayers by praying to God as He has revealed Himself.

Visions of God - Ezekiel 1:1-28

Yahweh and the Ten Commandments - Ex. 19:16-20, 24-25; 20:1-21

Show Me Your Glory - Exodus 33:15-19; 34:5-8, 29

Eyes and Wings - Ezekiel 10:1-22

Here I Am, Send Me - Isaiah 6:1-8

The Ancient of Days - Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14, 18,21-22, 24-27

The Heavenly Man in Linen - Daniel 10:1-11:1; 12:8-10

The Glorified Son of Man - Revelation 1:9-18

The Heavenly Throne Room - Revelation 4:1-11

Faithful and True - Revelation 19:11-16

2. Psalms have been historically the prayer book of the church. The New Testament states that if you are filled with the Spirit, then praying the Psalms will be a natural outcome (see Eph. 5:17-20). All followers of God prayed the Psalms (see Acts 2:42; Col. 3:16; James 5:13), and the church has continued this practice for 2,000 years. By praying the Psalms you will have language to express the feelings of your heart to God.

Blessed is the Man - Psalm 1:1-6

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made - Psalm 139:1-24

A Prayer of Repentance - Psalm 51:1-19

Save Me, O God - Psalm 16:1-11

The Lord Is My Shepherd - Psalm 23

Battle Hymn of the King - Psalm 18:1-14,16-29,31-43,46,49-50

Under the Shadow of His Wings - Psalm 91

Better Is One Day - Psalm 84

Jesus' Prayer from the Cross - Psalm 22

Lift Up Your Heads - Psalm 24

A Prayer for Leaders - Psalm 20

A Blessing Psalm of Ascents - Psalm 128

3. Wisdom prayers are shaped from wisdom literature, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

A Time for Everything - Ecc. 3:1-8, 11

Wisdom Calls Out - Proverbs 2:1-6; 9:10-11; 7:4; 23:12; 4:7

The Righteous Workman - Proverbs 24:30-34; 23:4; 14:23; 10:4-5; 26:13-14; 18:9; 22:29

Let My Words Be Few - Psalm 39:1; Proverbs 13:3; 18:21; 12:18; 10:19; 15:1; 20:3; 12:16; 25:15; Ecclesiastes 5:2

Deliver Me from Evil - Job 31:1; Proverbs 6:24-27, 29; 30:20; 6:32-33; 2:18-19; 5:15, 18-19, 21

Mercy - Proverbs 14:31; 22:2,22-23; 29:7; 19:17; Job 29:12-13,15-17,25

Virtue and Honor - Proverbs 4:20,22-23,21:21;4:24,26; 22:1; 3:9-10; 13:20; I Corinthians 15:33; Proverbs 10:27

The Way of a King - Proverbs 30:29-31; 25:2; 8:15-16; Ecclesiastes 4:13; Proverbs 29:4,14; 31:2-5, 8

In Praise of the Noble Wife - Proverbs 31:10-12,14-18,20,23,25-31

The Whole Duty of Man - Ecclesiastes 12:1-7,13-14

4. The Song of Songs prayers provide language for intimate communion with God.

Beginnings of Intimacy and Revelation - Song of Songs 1:2-7

Faint with Love - Song of Songs 1:15-2:7

Embracing the Lover's Coming - Song of Songs 2:8-17

The Dark Night of Love - Song of Songs 3:1-5

The Might of the Lover - Song of Songs 3:6-11

The Beauty of the Beloved - Song of Songs 4:7-12,15-16

Anticipation - Song of Songs 5:2-8

Altogether Lovely - Song of Songs 5:9-16

The Ravished Bridegroom - Song of Songs 6:4-10,13

The Bridal Seal of Divine Fire - Song of Songs 8:5-7,12-14

5. The Prayers of the Prophets deal with man in crisis.

Hear, O Israel! - Deuteronomy 6:4-12

Meditating on the Law - Joshua 1:7-9

The Prayer of Jabez - "Oh, That You Would Bless Me" - I Chronicles 4:9-10

Face to the Wall--"A Prayer for Healing" - Isaiah 38:1-3, 10-14; 2 Kings 20:4-6; Isaiah 38:15-20

Job's Confession - Job 1:6-20; 19:25-27; 42:2-6

Our Eyes Are on You - 2 Chronicles 20:2-12,14-15,17

The Valley of Dry Bones - Ezekiel 37:1-14

Intercession for a Nation - Daniel 9:1-8,11-19

"Thank You, God"--David's Prayer - I Chronicles 17:16-27

Wholehearted Devotion - I Chronicles 29:10-20,22

The Aaronic Blessing - Numbers 6:22-27

6. The Prayers of Jesus will engage us in the highest form of discipleship. By praying the words of Jesus, we enter His mind and Spirit and soon His concerns become our concerns. As this happens, we can then begin to apply the prayers to similar situations in our own lives.

The Lord's Prayer - Matthew 6:9-13

Glorify Your Name - John 12:27-28

Glorify Your Son - John 17:1-5

A Prayer for Disciples - John 17:6-19

Unto Unity, Glory and Love - John 17:20-26

When You Are Converted - Luke 22:31-32

Your Will Be Done - Matthew 26:39-42; Luke 22:44; Matthew 26:42

Father Forgive Them - Matthew 27:46; Luke 23:33-34,46

The Jesus Prayer - The Philokalia

7. Apostolic Prayers are some of the most unique prayers in the Bible. The prayers of Paul for his disciples and the churches he planted are some of the richest, most meaty prayers in the Bible.

Revival Power - Acts 4:24-31

Revival of Divine Revelation - Ephesians 1:15-20

The Outpouring of Divine Love - Ephesians 3:14-21

The Release of Prophetic Boldness - Ephesians 6:18-20

Overflowing Holy Love - Philippians 1:3-4,9-11

Filled with a Knowledge of His Will - Colossians 1:2-4,9-12

The Door of God - Colossians 4:2-4,12

The Established Heart - I Thessalonians 3:9-13;5:23-25

Fulfill Your Call - 2 Thessalonians 1:3,11-12

Increase Your Word - 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3,5,16

Just Say No! - Titus 2:11-13

A Prayer of Prosperity - 3 John 1:2

Jude's Doxology - Jude 1:24-25

The Apostolic Benediction - 2 Corinthians 13:11-14

8. Hymns of the Revelation provide a sneak preview of what those who are before the face of God do and say. When you pray the hymns of the Revelation, you can pray with all of heaven, going before God as He sits on His throne to join with Him in worship.

Look...He is Coming! - Revelation 1:4-7

The Overcomer's Prayer - Revelation 2:1,7-8, 11-12,17-18, 26-29; 3:1, 5-7, 12-14,21-22

Holy, Holy, Holy! - Revelation 4:8-11

Worthy Is the Lamb - Revelation 5:8-14

The Martyr's Cry - Revelation 6:9-11

Praise of the End-Time Harvest - Revelation 7:9-17

Time to Reign - Revelation 11:15-18
Overcoming the Dragon - Revelation 12:7-12
The Song of Moses - Revelation 15:2-4
Just and True - Revelation 16:1,5-7
The Wedding Song - Revelation 19:1-8
Come, Lord Jesus! - Revelation 22:12-17,20

May it be that as you engage in this practice, your experience will be that of the disciples, whose hearts burned within them as God talked with them along the way. Yes, may your heart burn and your light shine.

If you want to see God, pray Revelation 4 out loud to God 100 times, and then you will “see God”! If anyone prays Revelation 4 through five times a day for 20 days, there is no question that they will be able to close their eyes and instantly picture heaven. Having access in our minds to the words and images of the heavenly throne room is crucial to God becoming personal to us. ¹

¹ Wesley and Stacey Campbell.

Organizational "Praying the Bible" Prayer Chart

Name: _____

Week of: _____

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<i>Prayer Categories</i>	<i>Today I prayed...</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Text	<i>Today I prayed...</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Text	<i>Today I prayed...</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Text	<i>Today I prayed...</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Text	<i>Today I prayed...</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Text	<i>Today I prayed...</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Text	<i>Today I prayed...</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Text
<i>Theophanies</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Psalms</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Wisdom</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Songs</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Prophets</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Jesus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Apostolic</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Hymns</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Extra Prayers</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Prayed # Min.</i>	min.	min.	min.	min.	min.	min.	min.
<i>Today I felt...</i>							

Organizational "Praying the Bible" Prayer Chart

Name: _____

Week of: _____

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<i>Prayer Categories</i>	Today I prayed... <input type="checkbox"/> Text	Today I prayed... <input type="checkbox"/> Text	Today I prayed... <input type="checkbox"/> Text	Today I prayed... <input type="checkbox"/> Text	Today I prayed... <input type="checkbox"/> Text	Today I prayed... <input type="checkbox"/> Text	Today I prayed... <input type="checkbox"/> Text
<i>Theophanies</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Psalms</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Wisdom</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Songs</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Prophets</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Jesus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Apostolic</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Hymns</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Extra Prayers</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Prayed # Min.</i>	min.	min.	min.	min.	min.	min.	min.
<i>Today I felt...</i>							

The Bible, God's Prayer Book

From *Praying the Bible for Your Life* by David Kopp

The Bible is a ready-made book for God's family. We "pray the Bible" when we use passages of Scripture to form prayers or when we say the verses directly back to God, making them our own petitions. The heart of praying Scripture, in it we hear most clearly our Father's voice.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRAYING THE BIBLE

1. A promise when considering a job or career decision: (Psalm 138:8)
2. A prayer for encouragement for a spouse: (Isa. 54:8; Deut. 13:17; Jer. 31:3)
3. A prayer for our children: (1 Cor. 16:13-14)
4. A praise from Scripture (written in chalk on the inside of the foundation of our house): (Nah. 1:7)

EXAMPLES OF PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Throughout the Bible, we see examples of Godly men and women incorporating God's promises and commands in their petitions to Him. (i.e. On the cross the words of the Psalm, *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*) Many other Bible passages are recorded prayers.

1. Moses after escaping through the Red Sea - Ex. 15
2. Hannah's song at the temple - 1 Sam. 2
3. Jeremiah's lament over Jerusalem - Lamentations
4. Jonah's plea for grace - Jonah 2

5. Mary's song after the angel's visit - Lk. 1:46-55
6. The Lord's Prayer - Matt. 6:9-13
7. Jesus' prayer for the disciples - Jn. 17:6-19
8. Paul's prayer for a young church - Eph. 3:14-21

PRINCIPLES OF PRAYING

Where should we start? With simple principles for talking with God that the Bible lays down.

1. Pray reverently - Keep in mind God's holiness and greatness. Pray with genuine respect and humility. Ec. 5:1-2; Matt. 6:9
2. Pray sincerely - The words don't matter as much as your heart. Bring a deeply-felt desire to see God act and a wholehearted willingness to do your part to make God's solutions possible. Matt. 6:7-8; Heb. 10:22; Ps. 51:17
3. Pray in Faith - Simply and completely trust in God's desire for your best interest and in His power to act on your behalf. Jer. 32:17; Heb. 11:6
4. Pray with Purity - Don't let your prayers be hindered by known sin in your heart or life: unfinished business with God, your neighbor, or your own family members. Pr. 15:8; Mk. 12:38-40; 1 Jn. 3:21, 22; 1 Pet. 3:7
5. Pray According to the Will of God - Submit your personal desires to God's greater glory and purposes. Test your wishes against His revealed truth. 1 Jn. 5:14; Matt. 6:10
6. Pray in Jesus' Name - We have access to the Father through Jesus' name and by His merits. His name is the

power above all powers on earth. Jn. 15:16; Eph. 2:18

7. Pray Thankfully - Recalling God's past goodness and His faithful character, surround every new request with thanksgiving and praise. Phil. 4:6; Ps. 22:3
8. Pray Boldly and Persistently. Jesus taught that a loving Father is waiting to give us His best, and it's better than we could ever imagine. make your request known and continue to expect answers. Heb. 4:16; Lk 18:1-8; Acts 12:5

Prayer includes

- praise
- thanksgiving
- confession
- petition
- intercession
- worship

—the wonderful hubbub of earnest talking and listening between children and their heavenly Father.

WAYS TO PRAY SCRIPTURE

1. Personalize a Bible prayer - put in your own name or another and use pronouns.
2. Personalize a Bible story.
3. Personalize a Bible statement as a response to God: "Lord, I hardly believe in prayer today. I'm sorry. 'What is impossible with men is possible with God.' (Lk. 18:27) Yes, prayer seems so impossible, Lord, How can I, all human, converse with God—all Spirit, all power, all knowledge, all good?" Jas. 4:8
4. Personalize a Bible truth as a meditation. "I am always welcome in my Father's presence today—no matter what." Heb. 10:19-22

RESULTS OF BIBLE

PRAYING

Praying the Bible enlarges our heart for God.

1. Praying the Bible gets us "unstuck." Pr. 3:6
2. Praying the Bible helps us get our memory back. Lam. 3:21,22
3. Praying the Bible helps us pray specifically and in line with God's will. Matt. 22:29; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Jas. 3:17-18; 1 Cor. 4:2; Pr. 8:13; 1 Jn. 5:14
4. Praying the Bible helps us mature a growing relationship with God.
5. Praying the Bible can open our hearts to allow our hearts to allow the Spirit to minister to us. Isa. 43:1; Ps. 131:2
6. Praying the Bible doesn't mean we have to leave out our untidy humanness when we talk with God. Heb. 10:19-22
7. Praying the Bible is not about using fancy language or sounding religious. Matt. 6
8. Praying the Bible doesn't mean we always get what we want. There are 650 recorded prayers in the Bible and 450 answers recorded. Jn. 16:33

Praying Scripture

from *Praying Scriptures*

by Evan B. Howard I.V.P.

One of the greatest attractions of praying Scriptures is that it is not boring.

1. Read through the passage slowly
 - a. Think about every phrase, every word
 - b. When something strikes you, dwell on it for a while
 - c. Pray about issues that the passage impresses upon you.

2. Read the Scriptures aloud

3. Repeat a phrase.

When a passage strikes you, repeat it again and again, silently or aloud.

4. Identify with the emotion - This feeling may be a communication to you from God, perceived through your own feelings. Likewise, feelings toward God can be triggered by the emotive tone of the passage you are praying.

5. Additional helps.

a. Look up words - commenting

b. Put the passage to music - singing it

c. Rewrite it - paraphrase it

d. Personalize it - add name

Do it - God will bless you as you apply it.

THE MODEL PRAYER OF OUR LORD

This prayer allows you intervals for worship, surrender, request, and confession. The Lord's Prayer is a simple way to structure prayer. [Matt. 6]

1. Worshipping God - *Our Father who are in heaven, hallowed be Thy name*

2. Surrendering to God's will - *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done*

3. Making necessary petitions - *Give us this day our daily bread*

4. Confessing sins - *Forgive us...as we forgive*

5. Seeking deliverance from evil - *Deliver us from evil*

6. Coming full circle - *For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen*

PRAYING THE PSALMS

1. The value of the Psalms

a. They are uniquely inspired prayers and therefore are models of prayer for

believers.

b. They express the full range of human emotions.

c. They provide the clearest pictures of Who God is and how He relates to his people.

2. How to pray the Psalms

a. Rewrite them - put into your own words, personalize them.

b. Sing them - put them to music.

c. Reflect on the imagery, (i.e. Ps. 18, God as a rock, fortress, stronghold, deliverer)

d. Identify the emotional content - let them express your emotions as a cry from your heart.

WORSHIP, PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING WITH SCRIPTURE

1. Scriptural expressions of worship - personalize these Scriptures and pray them back to God. 1 Tim. 1:17, *To the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.* "O, God, you are the eternal King. Your rule extends from eternity past to eternity future. O God, I want to surrender to Your rule over my life. You are incorruptible and though I cannot see You physically, make Your presence known to my spirit. I lack wisdom for direction. I worship You because You are the source for wisdom. O God, be glorified in my life today. I yield to Your sovereignty. Amen."

2. Scriptural windows on worship - God give us pictures of worship. (Isa. 6:1,4-5) The Bible is filled with descrip-

tions of worshipful visions of God. (Rev. 4 & 5)

3. In praying these passages read it slowly a few times, visualize what the writer saw.
4. Meditate on God's character as revealed in this passage. Allow yourself to respond to God as He reveals Himself through the passage. Express to God what in in your heart.

BIBLICAL MEDITATION

We are spiritually nourished when we allow a passage or thought to come back up in our minds again and again, slowly letting all the spiritual truths make their way into the deepest parts of our being.

1. Theological meditations focusing on an aspect of theological interest and gathering many Scriptures on that subject to meditate on and pray over.
2. Gospel meditation
 - a. Choose a section.
 - b. Pray for guidance.
 - c. Read the passage.
 - d. Picture the scene.
 - e. Identify with the characters.
 - f. Evaluate and record what God has revealed to you.

PETITION & INTERCESION

Petition - a request for ourselves.

Intercession - prayer on the behalf of others

1. Study the petitions and intercessions in Scripture. Examine the content.
2. Speak the prayers, turning them into your own prayers. See Isa. 26:7-9
3. Repeating a petition, pray the Scripture as it is written *Lord Jesus, have mercy on me a sinner.* [Lk. 18:9-14]

REVIVAL PRAYER

It is God's concern and God's intentions that move us to prayer. The Psalms are full of this kind of praying. Ps. 74:1-3; 22; Jer. 14:7-9

PRAYING THE PROMISES OF SCRIPTURE

Claiming and reminding God of His character, past deeds, and promises.

1. Let God's promises, in the context of God's plan, guide your prayers.
2. Seek to understand the promises in their proper Biblical context.
3. Bring personal faith to these promises.
4. Attune personal desire to God's desire when praying the promises of Scripture.
5. Allow the texts that speak of God's promises and the context of life to interact.
6. Allow your prayers to be driven by God's concerns and plans more than your plans.

CONFESSION AND SELF EXAMINATION

1. Pray the confession of Scripture - Ps. 51:1-5
2. Notice the presence of sin
 - a. Reflect on the history of my sin
 - b. Reflect on the patterns of my sin
 - c. Apply God's truth to my sin
3. Cultivate the practice of righteousness

DELIVERANCE PRAYER

Praying against the enemy - Ps. 80:40-42 etc. The term "enemy" refers to three distinct entities:

1. Political or personal enemies - 1 Sam. 29:8; Ps. 27:12; Ps.

37:20

2. God's people when immersed in sin - Isa. 1:24-25
3. The supernatural enemy - Job 1 & 2
Pray against the three enemies
 1. World - Ps. 55:15
 2. Flesh - Ps. 3
 3. Devil - Ps. 143:12

WHEN PRAYERS GO UNANSWERED

1. Does God answer prayer? Matt. 7:7-8, 18:19, 21:22; Jn. 14:13, 15:7, 15:16; Jas. 1:5; 1 Jn. 3:22, 5:14-15
2. Examples of unanswered prayer
 - a. King David - 2 Sam. 12:15-19
 - b. Paul - 1 Cor. 12:3-1
 - c. Jesus - Lk. 22:42

THE CHARACTER OF GOD AND PRAYER

1. God knows our needs - Ps. 139:1-4
2. God loves me - 1 Jn. 4:19; Jn. 3:16
3. God is powerful - Matt. 10:29; Jer. 33:3; Num. 11:23
4. God is sovereign - The Lord's will is a central matter in prayer, not mine.

SCRIPTURE ON PRAYER

1. Scriptural promises concerning prayer should not be taken out of context.
2. Scripture does not guarantee results for every single prayer. Jn 15:7 - *anything* means we can pray for anything big or small.
3. Scripture clearly identifies a variety of factors that promote answers to prayer. Jer. 29:12-13; 2 Chron. 7:14; Jas. 1:5-6; 1 Jn. 3:22
4. Scripture also names condi-

tions that hinder prayer. Ps. 66:18; Deut. 1:45; Ps. 1:28-31, 2:13; Jas. 4:3; 1 Pet. 3:7

5. Scripture describes occasions when God does not answer prayer and does not offer an explanation. Ex. 33:18; Deut. 3:23-27; 2 Cor. 12:7-10; Ps. 51, and 2 Sam. 12:2-23

APPROACHING UNANSWERED PRAYER

1. Be quick to affirm the character of God.
 - a. God loves me
 - b. God is sovereign
 - c. God is able to answer my prayers
2. Examine the promises in their own light. You can only learn to apply Scripture correctly when you spend time reading it.
3. Keep praying. Luke 11:5-8
4. Self-examination - Are my prayers being hindered because of my walk?
5. Trust God. As you take on a lifestyle of asking, you will experience a lifestyle of receiving.
6. Pray! Pound on the gates of Heaven with confidence.

31 Days of Prayer

by Warren & Ruth Myers

Use God's Word in prayer. For richer and more powerful praying, weave Scripture into your prayers. This will strengthen your faith, focus your heart and mind, and keep you praying according to the will of God. Andrew Murray wrote, "God's listening to our voice depends upon our listening to His voice...Our whole life must be under the supremacy of the Word: the Word must be dwelling in us."

Use Scripture that the Holy Spirit brings to your attention in your quiet time and verses you have memorized. Search out prayers and benedictions in the Bible. We've listed some references to get you started. Select the ones that mean the most to you and copy them for easy use. Then, as you are able, meditate more deeply on each one. Use them in prayer often for yourself and others.

Num. 6:24-26 1 Chron. 4:10
Ps. 143:8-10 Ps. 119:9-11, 73
Phil. 1:9-11 Col. 1:9-12
2 Thess. 3:16 Heb. 13:20-21
Ps. 24:4-5 Ps. 57:1-2
Eph. 1:17-21 Eph. 3:16-21
1 Thess. 5:23-24
2 Thess. 2:16-17

Other great passages for prayer:

Ps. 84:11-13 Isa. 55:1-3
Rom. 8:1-4 Rom. 8:31-39
Col. 3:1-17 Heb. 12:1-2
Heb. 3:17 Rom. 5:1-5
Eph. 1:3-13 Phil. 3:7-10
2 Pet. 1:2-8

Pray-Reading the Bible

Lillie O. Rogers & Nan Dickson

The term, "pray-reading the Bible," means that while we are praying, we are also reading the Bible. While we are reading the Bible, we are asking the Lord to speak to us as we speak with Him in prayer. This type of prayer is most effective in our daily scheduled time of prayer or "quiet time." We should have a set time to pray every day. This should be our life-style as Christians. If we don't have a set time of prayer and Bible reading, we allow other things to keep us from being with the Lord. It is the best to meet with the Lord in the early part of the

day. The early prayer time will give us opportunity to cover all the day before we get involved in the day's activities. While you pray, keep the Bible open to the portions of Scripture that are your planned Bible reading for the day. Ask the Lord to point out the verses for you to pray. The Holy Spirit will point out to you certain verses that are appropriate to pray for those on your prayer list or for yourself. Pray those verses, changing names, pronouns, verb tenses, or places as are necessary as you pray-read the Bible. You will find yourself saying, "Yes, Lord, that is just what my family needs today" or "Lord, I want to pray this for my friend, my church, my nation."

After pray-reading the Bible, you will find yourself praying the Word whenever you pray. Your words and vocabulary will be greatly influenced by the Word as you pray. You can pray-read through the Bible or companion book. (i. e. Genesis with books on the Gospel of John noting beginnings, Isaiah with books about the Messiah-Christ based on Matthew, Mark, and Luke; Daniel with Revelation and the end times; historical books with Acts; Joshua with Ephesians; Psalms 23 with Psalms 146.) As you pray-read, allow the Holy Spirit to lead you to appropriate what the Word is saying to you as you claim the verses for yourself and those He brings to mind. Prayer is more than asking. Prayer is also worshipping, praise, thanksgiving, and intercession. We need to learn more about worshipping and praising God.

FASTING

Dick Eastman To combine fasting with intercession is to add special power to our prayer. It is authoritative praying that allows us to fast down enemy strongholds.

Fasting in conjunction with intercessory prayer is authoritative praying at its highest level.

- 1. Fasting is a personal, voluntary humbling of the heart before God that increases spiritual brokenness. Fasting carries this quality of humility into the tangible, physical realm; it brings about a brokenness before God that can come in no other way.**
- 2. Fasting is a commitment to self-control that enables a believer to die to self.**
- 3. Fasting is a worship activity that increases spiritual receptivity by creating a climate for the Holy Spirit to speak.**
- 4. Fasting is concentrated spiritual preparation for Holy Spirit-empowered service that increases the believer's spiritual power.**
- 5. Fasting is a specialized service ministry that increases spiritual usefulness for the totally committed believer.**

FRUITFUL FASTING

- 1. We should fast sensibly**
- 2. We should fast secretly**
- 3. We should fast sensitively**
- 4. We should Fast systematically**
- 5. We should fast sacrificially**
- 6. We should fast specifically**
- 7. We should fast supernaturally**

Becky Tirabassi I used to think that prayer was boring and that fasting was for monks. Since discovering the power of fasting and prayer, I've determined to make these two disciplines a regular part of my life. I am now personally convinced that fasting in addition to prayer increases several Godly characteristics:

- ✓ **A listening and sensitive spirit**
- ✓ **A humbled heart and attitude**
- ✓ **A willingness to make temporary sacrifices for a more permanent cause or outcome.**
- ✓ **An extra measure of inner discipline that prompts increased outer discipline**
- ✓ **Awareness of an unseen world where spiritual powers are at war**
- ✓ **An eagerness and urgency that do not wane in the waiting**
- ✓ **A determination that is sustained**
- ✓ **A willingness to follow through on steps of obedience, even though they may be uncomfortable or uneasy**

**Is this not the fast I have chosen:
 To loose the bonds of wickedness,
 To undo the heavy burdens,
 To let the oppressed go free,
 And that you break every yoke?**

**Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
 And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;
 When you see the naked, that you cover him,
 And not hide yourself from your own flesh?
 Then your light shall break forth like the morning,
 Your healing shall spring forth speedily,
 And your righteousness shall go before you;
 The glory of the Lord shall be your guard.
 Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
 You shall cry, and He will say 'Here I am.'**

**If you take away the yoke from your midst,
 The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,
 If you extend your soul to the hungry
 And satisfy the afflicted soul,
 Then your light shall dawn in the darkness,
 And your darkness shall be as the noonday.
 The Lord will guide you continually,
 And satisfy your soul in drought,
 And strengthen your bones;
 You shall be like a watered garden,
 And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.**

**Those from among you
Shall build the old waste places;
You shall be called the repairer of the Breach,
The Restorer of Streets to dwell In.**

**If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,
From doing your pleasure on My holy day,
And call the Sabbath a delight,
The holy day of the Lord honorable,
And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,
Nor finding your own pleasure,
Nor speaking your own words,
Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord;
And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth,
And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.
The mouth of the Lord has spoken.
Isaiah 58:6-14**

Prayer and Fasting

Andrew Murray Jesus teaches us that a life of faith requires both prayer and fasting. Prayer grasps the power of heaven, fasting loosens the hold on earthly pleasure.

Let's remember that abstinence, moderation, and self-denial are a help to the spiritual life.

Prayer is not easy work. For the real practice of prayer – taking hold of God and having communion and fellowship with Him – it is necessary that our selfish desires be sacrificed.¹

¹ Andrew Murray The Best of Andrew Murray on Prayer

FASTING

Richard Rolle, "If it is done quietly, it may help one to be more holy. If it is done for exhibition, it is a hindrance to holiness. Fast in private, avoid the praise of others. I would rather see someone fail because of too much love than because of too much fasting.

Ronnie Floyd, "Fasting is abstinence from food with a spiritual goal in mind. I believe fasting is powerful because you humble yourself before God. Fasting is powerful because you neglect the flesh and its natural desire of eating in order to appeal to God to do something supernatural in your life.

Elmer L. Towns, "Isa. 58. God says He has chosen a fast that ...

1. Loosens the bonds of wickedness
2. Undoes heavy burdens
3. Lets the oppressed go free
4. Breaks every yoke
5. Gives bread to the hungry and provides the poor with housing
6. Allows the people's light to break forth like the morning
7. Causes their health to spring forth speedily
8. Causes their righteousness to go before them
9. Causes the glory of the Lord to be their reward (or "rear guard")

Christian fasting focuses on God. We fast and pray for results, but the results are in God's hands.

NINE FASTS GOD CAN USE

1. Disciple's fast - freeing ourselves and others from addictions to sin
2. Ezra fast - to solve problems getting the mind off of the Lord
3. Samuel fast - to free those from darkness and usher in revival and bring souls to a saving knowledge of Christ
4. Elijah fast - to conquer mental and emotional problems that would control our lives
5. Widows fast - to increase the desire to care for the poor
6. St. Paul's fast - bringing clearer perspective and insight as we make crucial decisions
7. Daniel fast - to gain a healthier life or for healing
8. John the Baptist fast - that our testimony and influence for Jesus will be enhanced before others
9. Esther fast - that "the glory of the Lord" will protect us from the evil one.

FOUR KINDS OF FASTING

1. Normal fast - no food for a definite period, but will drink liquids up to 40 days
2. Absolute fast - no food or water - should be a short fast
3. Partial fast - omits certain foods or meals
4. Rotational fast - eating or omitting certain foods for designated periods

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR FASTING

1. Spirit of fasting - Isa. 58:5-7
2. Fasting to God - Zech. 7:5, 6; Matt. 6:17,18

PURPOSE OF FASTING

1. To chasten the soul - Ps. 69:10
2. To humble the soul - Ezra 8:21; Ps. 35:13
3. To seek the Lord - 2 Chron. 20:3,4
4. To prepare for spiritual warfare - Matt. 17:21

WHEN TO FAST

1. When facing the judgment of God
 - Ahab - I Kings 21:27
 - Joel - Joel 1:14; 2:12
 - Jonah - Jonah 3:4, 5
2. During periods of national mourning
 - Jabesh Gilead - I Sam. 31:11-13; I Chron. 10:11, 12
 - Israel - 2 Sam. 1:12
 - David - 2 Sam. 3:35
3. When communion with Christ is broken
 - Jesus - Matt. 9:15
 - Jesus - Mark 2:19,20
 - Jesus - Luke 5:34,35
4. When concerned for the welfare of others
 - Psalm 35:13
5. When challenged by personal concerns
 - David - 2 Sam. 12:15-17, 21-23
6. When facing danger
 - Jehoshaphat - 2 Chron. 20:2, 3
 - Ezra - Ezra 8:21-23
 - Esther - Esther 4:15, 16
7. When engaged in spiritual warfare
 - Jesus - Matt. 17:21
 - Jesus - Mark 9:29

8. When ordaining ministers of the Gospel
early church - Acts 13:2,3; 14:23

FASTING ACCOMPANIED BY

1. Abstinence from sexual relationships
I Cor. 7:5
2. Confession of sin
I Sam. 7:6; Neh. 9:1-3
3. Humiliation
Deut. 9:18; Ps. 35:13; 69:10; I Kings 21:27; Neh. 9:1
4. Lamenting
Esther 9:30, 31
5. Mourning
2 Sam. 1:12; I Kings 21:27; Esther 4:3; Neh. 1:4; Joel 2:12; Ezra 10:6
6. Personal demeanor
Matt. 6:17
7. Prayer
Ezra 8:23; Neh. 1:4; Ps. 35:13; Dan. 9:3; Lk. 5:33
8. Reading the Scriptures
Neh. 9:1-3; Jer. 36:6 & 10
9. Weeping
2 Sam. 1:12; Neh. 1:4; Esther 4:3; Ps. 69:10; Joel 2:12
10. Worship
Neh. 9:1-3

PROMISED BLESSINGS ASSOCIATED WITH FASTING

1. Answered prayer, insight and restoration
Isa. 58:9-12
2. Joy, gladness and cheerfulness
Zech. 8:19

3. Rewarded by God the Father
Matt. 6:17, 18
4. Spiritual power over demons
Matt. 17:21; Mark 9:29
5. Effects of fasting
I Kings 21:28,29; Ps. 109:24; Matt. 15:32; Mk. 8:2,3

PROCLAMATION OF FASTS

1. Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)
Lev. 23:27
2. By Saul
I Sam. 14:24
3. By Jehoshophat
2 Chron. 20:3
4. By Joel
Joel 2:15
5. By the King of Nineveh
Jonah 3:5-9
6. By Jehoiakim
Jer. 36:9
7. By Ezra
Ezra 8:21-23
8. By Esther
Esther 4:15,16
9. For Purim
Esther 9:30,31

DURATION OF FASTS

1. Part of a day - Dan. 6:18
2. One day - Lev. 23:27; I Sam. 7:6, 14:24; Jer. 36:6; Neh. 9:1
3. Three days - I Sam. 30:12; Matt. 15:32; Mk. 8:2,3; Acts 9:9

4. Seven days - I Sam. 31:11-13; I Chron. 10:11,12; 2 Sam. 12:15-18; 21-23
5. Fourteen days - Acts 27:33
6. Three weeks - Dan. 10:2,3
7. Forty Days - Ex. 34:28; Deut. 9:9, 18; I Kings 19:8; Matt. 4:1,2; Lk. 4:1,2

ABUSES OF FASTING

1. By hypocrites - Isa. 58:3,4; Jer. 14:11,12
2. By Pharisees - Lk. 18:11,12
3. By Queen Jezebel - I Kings 21:9,10
4. By False teachers - I Tim. 4:1-3

EXAMPLES OF CORPORATE FASTING

1. Israel, before the battle against Benjamin - Judg. 20:26
2. Israel, at Mizpah - I Sam. 7:6
3. Saul's army - I Sam. 14:24
4. Men of Jabesh Gilead - I Sam. 31:11-13; I Chron. 10:11,12
5. Mighty men of David - 2 Sam. 1:12
6. Judah - 2 Chron. 20:3,4
7. People of Nineveh - Jonah 3:5-9
8. People of Judah (during the reign of Jehoiakim) - Jer. 36:9,10
9. Remnant returning after the captivity - Ezra 8:21-23
10. Remnant at Jerusalem after the captivity - Neh. 9:1
11. Jews during the reign of Ahasuerus - Esther 4:3,15,16
12. Pharisees - Matt. 9:14; Mk. 2:18; Lk. 5:33
13. Disciples of John - Matt. 9:14; Mk. 2:18; Lk. 5:33
14. Multitudes following Jesus - Matt. 15:32; Mk. 8:2,3
15. Leaders of the church at Antioch - Acts 13:1-3
16. Jews committed to killing Paul - Acts 23:12,13
17. Crew and ship passengers of Adramyttium - Acts 27:33

EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUALS FASTING

1. Ahab - I Kings 21:4,5 & 27
2. Anna - Lk. 2:36,37
3. Cornelius - Acts 10:30,31
4. Daniel - Dan. 6:18
5. David - Ps. 35:13; 69:10; 2 Sam. 3:35; 12:15-17; Ps. 109:24
6. Egyptian servant of Amalekite - I Sam. 30:12
7. Elijah - I Kings 19:8
8. Esther - Esther 4:15,16
9. Ezra - Ezra 9:5, 10:6
10. Hanna - I Sam. 1:7,8

11. Jesus - Matt. 4:1,2; Lk. 4:1,2
12. John the Baptist - Matt. 11:18; Lk. 7:33
13. Jonathan - I Sam. 20:34
14. Moses - Ex. 34:28; Deut. 9:9,18
15. Nehemiah - Neh. 1:4
16. Paul - Acts 9:9; 2 Cor. 6:5; 2 Cor. 11:27
17. Saul - I Sam. 28:20
18. Uriah - 2 Sam. 11:11

SPECIALIZED FASTS (RESTRICTED DIETS)

1. No cereals or grains (Feasts of Fruits - Lev. 23:14)
2. No grapes or grape products (Nazarite vow - Num. 6:3,4)
3. Vegetarian dishes only (Daniel in Babylon - Dan. 1:12-16)
4. Abstaining from questionable foods (Rom. 14:20,21; I Cor. 8:13)

FASTING PRAYER FROM ISA. 58

TO UNDO HEAVY BURDENS AND LET THE OPPRESSED GO FREE

Prayer-intercession targets the spirit of oppression. See this as a spiritual battle. Oppression is the work of the devil, and we are to destroy his authority over people. (Acts 10:38)

TO BREAK EVERY YOKE

The goal of intercession is to break every band or yoke from the oppressed. The yoke was an emblem of servitude. The yoke was fastened on prisoners who had been captured. They were in bondage, forced to serve their enemies in humiliation and shame. The Scripture speaks of a number of different yokes.

YOKE OF IRON

This was put upon a people who broke God's covenant. (Deut. 28:48)

YOKE OF ABUSIVE AUTHORITY

This was the bondage over a people from those in power. (Kings 12:4,11)

YOKE OF OPPRESSIVE BURDENS

This speaks of the oppressive laws put on a people. (Isa 9:4)

YOKE OF BABYLONIAN CONTROL

This is when one nation oppresses and controls another. (Jer. 27:12; 28: 4, 10)

YOKE OF COMPULSIVE SEXUAL DISORDERS

Intercession with fasting believes God to shatter these yokes. The yoke is destroyed by the power of anointed intercession. (Isa. 10:27; Lev. 26:13; Jer. 2:20, 5:5) The breaking of the yoke is possible. It will happen through the prayer of the intercessor who believes that the breaker goes before us. (Mal. 2:13; Rom. 8:21; John 8:32, 36).

Prayer with fasting is the only power that will shatter twenty first century yokes.

FASTING FROM CRITICISM

Catherine Marshall...

The Lord continues to deal with me about my critical spirit, convicting me that I have been wrong to judge any person or situation. (Matt. 7:1-2) One morning last week He gave me an assignment: for one day I was to go on a "fast" from criticism. I was not to criticize anybody about anything...

I noticed that my critical comments were not missed. The federal government, the judicial system, and the institutional church could apparently get along fine without my penetrating observations. But still I didn't see what this fast from criticism was accomplishing -- until mid-afternoon.

For years I had been praying for one talented young man whose life had gotten sidetracked. Perhaps my prayers for him had been too negative. That afternoon a specific, positive vision for this life was dropped into my mind with God's unmistakable hallmark on it -- joy.

Ideas began to flow in a way I had not experienced in years. Now it was apparent what the Lord wanted me to see. My critical nature had not corrected a single one of the multitudinous things I found fault with. What it had done was to stifle my own creativity -- in prayer -- in relationships, perhaps even in writing -- ideas that He wanted to give me.

What He is showing me so far can be summed up as follows:

1. A critical spirit focuses us on ourselves and makes us unhappy. We lose perspective and humor.
2. A critical spirit blocks the positive, creative thoughts God longs to give us.
3. A critical spirit can prevent good relationships between individuals and often produces retaliatory criticism.
4. Criticism blocks the work of the Spirit of God: love, goodwill, mercy.
5. Whenever we see something genuinely wrong in another person's behavior, rather than criticizing him or her directly, or -- far worse -- gripe about him behind his back, we should ask the Spirit of God to do the correction needed.

Convicted of the true destructiveness of a critical mind, on my knees I am repeating this prayer:

"Lord, I repent of this sin of judgment. I am deeply sorry for having committed so gross an offense against you and against myself so continually. I claim Your promise of forgiveness and seek a new beginning."

Reflections from Richard Foster...

The central idea of fasting is the voluntary denial of an otherwise function for the sake of intense, spiritual activity. One of the first things we learn in experiences of fasting is how it reveals what controls us. You see, we cover up with food and other good things what is inside of us, but in experiences of fasting these come to the surface. She saw what was controlling her, and this released her to begin moving in a new direction, a direction free from a critical spirit. The same will be true for you and for me.

CELTIC PRAYERS

The rich man's soul

Let me take you inside the soul of a rich
Man without love, and a wealthy man
Without friends.

The darkest night, with neither moon nor
Stars, is like the brightest day compared
With the darkness of this soul.

The coldest winter, with thick snow and
Hard ice, is like the warmest summer
Compared with the bleakness of this soul.

You would rather have your body hacked in
Pieces than present such a soul as this;
You would rather be boiled or burned,
Alive than suffer such inward torment.

Celtic Prayers

Ray Simpson Celtic Blessings Prayers for everyday Life

Discerning of Spirits

Almighty Father, victorious Savior, Holy Spirit,
You are stronger than the elements, stronger
Than the shadows, stronger than the fears, stronger
Than human wills, stronger than the spirits; we
Enthroned you in this place and lift you up with
Our praise.

A hymn may be sung.

In the name of the crucified and risen Christ,
We set this place free from the powers of the past.
In the name of Christ we say to all powers that
Do not reverence him as Lord: be gone from this
Place. Be gone.

GENERAL PRAYERS

John Bunyon

He that is down need fear no fall
He that is low, no pride:
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much:
And Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because thou savest such.

Charles Gordon O Lord God, grant us always, whatever the world may say, and to care only for Thine approval, which will outweigh all worlds; for Jesus Christ's sake.

JESU DULCIS MEMORIA

**Jesu, the very thought of thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far thy face to see,
And in thy presence rest.**

**Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find,
A sweeter sound than thy blest name,
O Savior of mankind.**

Living before God

**Gracious God,
We are before you.
We are always before you.**

**You see us as we are and
Love us for ourselves
You hear the words
We cannot say.**

**You know the longing
We cannot express**

**Grant that it be enough for us
To be seen,
To be known, and
To be loved by you this moment.
Amen.¹**

¹ Ben Campbell Johnson Living Before God

PRAYER IS THE SOUL'S SINCERE DESIRE

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but god is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
Majesty on high.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice
Returning from his ways.
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry, "Behold, he prays!"

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian native air,
His watchword at the gates of death:
He enters heaven with prayer.

The saints in prayer appear as one
In word, in deed, and mind,
While with the Father and the Son
Sweet fellowship they find.

O thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer thyself hast trod:
Lord, teach us how to pray.

James Montgomery

PRAYERS 2

Thomas Ken Lord sanctify us wholly, that our whole spirit, soul, and body may become thy temple. Oh, do thou dwell in us, and be thou our God, and we will be thy servants, through Jesus Christ. Amen

From Directions for prayers, for the priests of his diocese to teach illiterate parishioners to learn by heart: (1637 – 1711)

Going to Bed

I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest;
for it is thou, Lord, only, that makest me dwell in safety.

Rising from Bed

I laid me down and slept, and rose up again,
for thou Lord, sustained me:
all love, all glory, be to thee.

Going or coming

Lord, bless my going out and coming in,
from this time forth, for evermore.

Meals

Lord grant that whether I eat or drink, or what ever I do,
I may do all to thy glory.

Work

Prosper thou the works of my hands, O Lord;
O, prosper thou my handiwork.

At the Market

Lord, give me grace to use this world so as not to abuse it.
Lord, grant that I may never go beyond or defraud my brother

in any matter; for thou art the avenger of all such.

At any Time

Wherever I am, whatever I do, thou, Lord, seest me:

O, keep me in thy fear all day long.

Lord, give me grace to keep always a conscience void of offence towards thee and towards men.

Lord, teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart to wisdom.

O, let my mouth be filled with thy praise, that I may sing of thy glory and honour all the day long.

Eastern Orthodox 'Jesus Prayer' Lord Jesus Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.¹

Source Unknown O Lord forgive what I have been, sanctify what I am, and order what I shall be.

William Barclay Forgive us, O Lord, for everything that has spoiled our home life, for the moodiness and irritability which made us difficult to live with, for insensitiveness which made us careless of the feelings of others, for selfishness which made life harder for others.

Forgive us, O Lord, for everything that has spoiled our witness for thee, that so often men would never have known that we have been with Jesus and pledged ourselves to him, that we have so often denied with our lives that which we said with our lips, for the difference between our creed and our conduct, our profession and our practice; for any example which made it easier for men to criticize thy Church or another to sin.

When we think of ourselves and of the meanness and ugliness and weakness of our lives, we thank thee for Jesus Christ our Saviour. Grant unto us a true penitence for our sins. Grant that at the foot of the Cross we may find our burdens rolled away. And so strengthen us by thy Spirit that in the days to come, we

¹ The Complete Book Of Christian Prayer

may live more nearly as we ought. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

F. B. Meyer

If my soul has turned perversely to the dark;
If I have left some brother wounded by the way;
If I have preferred my aims to thine;
If I have been impatient and would not wait;
If I have marred the pattern drawn out of my life;
If I have cost tears to those I loved;
If my heart has murmured against thy will.
O Lord, forgive.

Eugene Bersier O thou who knowest our hearts, and who seest our temptations and struggles, have pity upon us, deliver us from the sins which make war upon our souls. Thou art all-powerful, and we are weak and erring. Our trust is in thee, O thou faithful and good God. Deliver us from the bondage of evil, and grant that we may hereafter be thy devoted servants, serving thee in the freedom of holy love, for Christ's sake.

Richard Hurrell Froude Save us, O Lord, from the snares of a double mind. Deliver us from all cowardly neutralities. Make us to go in the paths of thy commandments, and to trust for our defence in thy mighty arm alone, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Oh blessed Lord! How much I need
Thy light to guide me on my way!
So many hands, that, without heeds
Still touch thy wounds and make them bleed,
So many feet that day by day
Still wander from thy fold astray!
Feeble at best is my endeavour!
I see but cannot reach the height
That lies forever in the light;
And yet forever and forever,
When seeming just within my grasp,

**And sink discouraged into night;
For thine own purpose thou has sent
The strife and the discouragement.**

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

**O my Saviour
Let me not fall by little and little,
Or think myself able to bear
The indulgence of any known sin
Because it seems so insignificant.
Keep me from sinful beginnings,
Lest they lead me on
To sorrowful endings.**

Columba

**Alone with none but thee, my God,
I journey on my way.
What need I fear, when thou art near
O king of the night and day?
More safe am I within thy hand
Than if a host did round me stand.**

**Teresa of Avila Let us make our way together, Lord; wherever
you go I must go, and through whatever you pass, there, too, I
will pass.**

**Augustine Father, I am seeking; I am hesitant and uncertain, but
will you, O God, watch over each step of mine and guide me.**

**Christian Prayers 1578 O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast said that
thou art the way, the truth, and the life: suffer us not at any time
to stray from thee, who art the way; nor to distrust thy promises,
who art truth; nor to rest in any other thing than thee, who art
the life; beyond which there is nothing to be desired, neither in
heaven, nor in earth; for thy name sake.**

**Jerome Lord, thou hast given us thy Word for a light to shine
upon our path; grant us to meditate on that word, and to follow**

its teaching, that we may find in it the light that shines more and more until the perfect day; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John Henry Newman

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene: one step enough for me.

Patrick

May the strength of God pilot us,
May the power of God preserve us,
May the wisdom of God instruct us,
May the hand of God protect us,
May the way of God direct us,
May the shield of God defend us,
May the host of God guard us against the snares of evil and the temptations of the world.

Alexander Pope

If I am right, thy Grace impart
Still in the right to stay:
If I am wrong, oh teach my heart
To find that better way.

From "Holy Communion" It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty, everlasting God. Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name: evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Host heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord most High. Amen.²

Polycarp May God the Father, and the eternal High Priest Jesus Christ, build us up in faith and truth and love, and grant us our

² The Book Of Common Prayer

portion among the saints with all those who believe on our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray for all saints, for kings and rulers, for the enemies of the cross of Christ, and for ourselves we pray that our fruit may abound and we be made perfect in Christ Jesus our Lord.³

Anonymous God help my thoughts! They stray from me, setting off on the wildest journeys; when I am at prayer, they run off like naughty children, making trouble. When I read the Bible, they fly to a distant place, filled with seductions. My thoughts can cross an ocean with a single leap; they can fly from earth to heaven, and back again, in a single second. They come to me for a fleeting moment, and then away they flee. No chains, no locks can hold them back; no threats of punishments can restrain them, no hiss of a lash can frighten them. They slip from my grasp like tails of eels, they swoop hither and thither like swallows in flight.

Dear, chaste Christ, who can see into every heart, and read every mind, take hold of my thoughts. Bring my thoughts back to me, and clasp me to yourself.³

³ David Adam A Time To Pray

GREAT PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE

- Abraham's prayer for a son and God's answer (Gen. 15:1-6).
- Daniel's prayer for the sinful Jews in captivity (Dan. 9:3-19).
- David's prayer for forgiveness (Ps. 51:1-19).
- David's prayer for God's favor (2 Sam. 7:18-29).
- David's prayer for mercy (Ps. 86).
- Ezra's prayer for the sins of the Israelites (Ezra 9:5-15).
- Gideon's prayer for guidance (Judg. 6:36-40).
- Habakkuk's prayer for revival (Hab. 3:1-16).
- Hannah's prayer for a son who became a great leader of Israel (1Sam. 1:10-16).
- Hezekiah's prayer when Israel was invaded by Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:15-19).
- Jeremiah's prayer of faith in prison (Jer. 32:16-27).
- Jesus' intercessory prayer for all believers (John 17:1-26).
- Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36-44, Mk. 14:35-36).
- Joshua's prayer of remorse over the sins of Israel (Jos. 7:6-9).
- Mary's prayer of praise (Lk. 1:46-55).
- Moses, magnificent prayer (Ps. 90).
- Nehemiah's prayer for Israel (Neh. 1:8-11).
- Paul's prayer for the Ephesians (Eph. 1:15-23, 3:14-19).
- Paul's prayer for the Colossians (Col. 1:9-14).
- Peter's prayer for the church (1Pet. 5:10-11).
- Solomon's prayer for wisdom (1 Kings 3:6-10).
- The disciples' prayer for boldness (Acts 4:24-30).
- The model prayer Jesus taught the disciples (Mat. 6:9-13).
- The Psalmist's fervent prayers to know God. (Ps. 119).¹

¹ Gert McIntosh, A Heart for Prayer

PRAYERS

Ah, Lord, to whom all hearts are open, you can pilot the ship of our souls far better than we can. Stand up, Lord, and command the stormy wind and the troubled sea of our hearts to be still, and at peace in you, so that we may look up to you undisturbed, and rest in union with you, our Lord. Do not let us be carried hither and thither by wandering thoughts, but, forgetting all else, let us see and hear you alone. Renew our spirits; kindle in us your light, that it may shine within us, and our hearts may burn in love and adoration for you. Let your Holy Spirit dwell in us continually, and make us your temples and sanctuary. Fill us with divine love and light and life, with devout and heavenly thoughts, with comfort and strength, with joy and peace. Amen. Johann Arndt (1555 – 1621)

Help me, O God, to put off all pretences and to find my true self.
Help me, O God, to discard all false pictures of you, whatever the
Cost to my comfort.
Help me, O God, to let go all my problems, and fix my mind on you.
Help me, O God, to see my own sins, never judge my neighbors, and
May the glory be all yours.
Into your hands I commend my spirit.
Your will, not mine, be done.
Amen. Anthony Bloom

Lord help me today to realize that thou wilt be speaking to me
through the events of the day,
through people, through things, and through all creation.
Give me ears, eyes and heart to perceive thee,
however veiled thy presence may be.
Give me insight to see through the exterior things
to the inner truth.
Give me thy Spirit of discernment.
O Lord, thou knowest how busy I must be this day.
If I forget thee, do not forget me.
Amen Sir Jacob Astley (1579 – 1652)

Give me, O eternal Father, a docile heart that I may know what is acceptable with thee. Send from heaven the spirit of thy wisdom and rule my heart by thy command. Blessed is he whom thou dost instruct, O Lord, make learned in thy will. Without this I lack the strength either to purpose well for myself or to be of service to others. Amen
Queen Elizabeth 1 (1533 – 1603)

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you, and I hope that I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore I will trust you always. Though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death I will not fear, for you are ever with me and you will never leave me to face my peril alone. Thomas Merton (1915 – 68)

Teresa of Avila Govern all by thy wisdom, O Lord, so that my soul may always be serving thee as thou dost will, and not as I may choose. Do not punish me, I beseech thee, by granting that which I wish or ask, if it offends thy love, which would always live in me. Let me die to myself that so I may serve thee; let me live to thee, who in thyself art true life.

Johann Freylinghausen

**May your Spirit guide my mind,
Which is so often dull and empty.
Let my thoughts always be on you,
And let me see you in all things.**

**May your Spirit quicken my soul,
Which is so often listless and lethargic.
Let my soul be awake to your presence,
And let me know you in all things.**

**May your Spirit melt my heart,
Which is so often cold and indifferent.
Let my heart be warmed by your love,
And let me feel you in all things.¹**

Source Unknown, 16th century, O Lord, the Scripture says, 'There is a time for silence and a time for speech.' Saviour, teach me the silence of humility, the silence of wisdom, the silence of love, the silence of perfection, the silence that speaks without words, the silence of faith. Lord teach me to silence my own heart that I may listen to the gentle movement of the Holy Spirit within me and sense the depths which are of God.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer O God, early in the morning I cry to you. Help me to pray and to concentrate my thoughts on you; I cannot do this alone.

In me there is darkness, but with you there is light; I am lonely, but you do not leave me; I am Feeble in heart, but with you there is help; I am restless, but with you there is peace.

In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience; I do not understand your ways, but you know the way for me.

William Bright Almighty God, from whom every good prayer cometh, deliver us, when we draw nigh to thee, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thought and kindled desire we may worship thee in the faith and spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jim Cotter (based on a prayer by George Appleton) Give me a candle of the Spirit, O God, as I go down into the deeps of my being. Show me the hidden things, the creatures of my dreams, the storehouse of forgotten memories and hurts. Take me down to the spring of my life, and tell me my nature and my name. Give me freedom to grow, so that I may become that self, the seed of which you planted in me at my making. Out of the deep I cry to you, O god.

¹ The complete book of Christian Prayer, Continuum Pub. 2000

Francois Fenelon Teach me to pray, pray thou thyself in me.²

John R. W. Stott Our Heavenly Father, who through thy Son Jesus Christ hast said that men ought always to pray and not to faint, we beseech thee, teach us to pray. Our spirit is willing but our flesh is weak. Give us grace each day to approach thy throne and seek thy face; to be concerned as much for thy glory as for our need; and in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make our requests known to thee, until our lives be gathered up into thy presence and every breath is prayer, through Jesus Christ thy Son, our ransom and mediator.

Jeremy Taylor Teach us to pray often, that we may pray oftener.

Martin Luther We thank thee, O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou hast revealed thy Son to us, on whom we have believed, whom we have loved, and whom we worship. O Lord Jesus Christ, we commend our souls to thee. O heavenly Father, we know that although we shall in thine own good time be taken away from this life, we shall live before thee. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Father into thy hands we commend our spirits; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Source unknown Give us grace, O Lord, not only to hear thy Word with our ears, but also receive it into our hearts and to show it forth in our lives; for the glory of thy great name.

Horatius Bonar

**Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be;
Lead me by thy own hand,
Choose out the path for me.
Smooth let it be, or rough,
It will be still the best;
Winding or straight, it leads
Right onward to thy rest.**

² The Complete Book Of Christian Prayer

**Choose thou for me my friends,
My sickness or my health;
Choose thou my cares for me,
My proverty or wealth.
Not mine, nor mine the choice
In things, great or small;
Be thou my guide, my strength,
My wisdom, and my all.**

Thomas Chalmers Lord teach us to number our days, that we might apply our hearts unto wisdom. Lighten, if it be thy will, the pressures of this world's cares, above all reconcile us to thy will, and give us a peace which the world cannot take away; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Euchologium Anglicanum Cleanse our minds, O Lord, we beseech thee, of all anxious thoughts for ourselves, that we may learn not to trust in the abundance of what we have, save as tokens of thy goodness and grace, but that we may commit ourselves in faith to thy keeping, and devote all our energy of soul, mind and body to the work of thy kingdom and the furthering of the purposes of thy divine righteousness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Francis of Assisi Most High and glorious God, enlighten the darkness of our hearts and give us a true faith, a certain hope and a perfect love. Give us a sense of the divine and knowledge of yourself, so that we may do everything in fulfillment of your holy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus Caritas Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you do, I thank you; I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures – I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into your hands I commend my soul; I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, for I love you Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands, without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father.

Julian of Norwich

Lord, thou knowest what I want,
If it be thy will that I have it,
And if it be not thy will,
Good Lord, do not be displeased,
For I want nothing which you do not want.

William Laud Lord, I give and offer up unto thee myself and all that is mine, actions and words, repose and silence; only do thou preserve and guide me, and direct my hand and mind and tongue to things that are acceptable to thee, and withdraw me from anything from which it were better to abstain, by and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Narrow Way O our God, we believe in thee, we hope in thee, and we love thee, because you have created us, redeemed us, and dost sanctify us. Increase our faith, strengthen our hope, and deepen our love, that giving up ourselves wholly to thy will, we may serve thee faithfully all the rest of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John Wesley Deliver me, O God from a slothful mind, from all lukewarmness, and all dejection of spirit. I know these cannot but deaden my love to thee; mercifully free my heart from them, and give me a lively, zealous, active, and cheerful spirit; that I may vigorously perform whatever thou commandest, thankfully suffer whatever thou chooseth for me, and ever be ardent to obey in all things thy holy love.

Father forgive the cold love of the years,
While here in the silence we bow,
Perish our cowardice! Perish our fears!
Kindle us, kindle us now.

Lord, we believe, we accept, we adore,
Less than the least though we be.
Fire of love, burn in us, burn evermore
Till we burn out for thee.

Amy Carmichael

Miles Coverdale O Lord Jesus Christ, draw thou our heats unto thee; join them together in inseparable love, that we may abide in thee and thou in us, and that the everlasting covenant between us may stand sure forever.

Let the fiery darts of thy love pierce through all our slothful members and inward powers, that we being happily wounded, may so become whole and sound. Let us have no lover but thyself alone; let us seek no joy nor comfort except in thee.

Ignatius Loyola Grant, O Lord, that your love may so fill our lives that we may count nothing too small to do for you, nothing too much to give, and nothing too hard to bear, for Jesus Christ's sake.

**Most gracious Father,
This is our home;
Let your peace rest upon it.
Let love abide here,
Love of one another,
Love of mankind,
Love of life itself,
And love of God.
Let us remember that
As many hands build a house,
So many hearts make a home.
Hugh Blackburne**

**Jeremy Taylor Bless our children with healthful bodies,
With good understandings,
With the graces and gifts of thy Spirit,
With sweet dispositions, and holy habits;
And sanctify them throughout in their bodies, souls and spirits,
And keep them unblamable to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Vienna Cobb Anderson Those In Despair
God of eternal life,
Bless all who contemplate
Taking their own life.
Grant them peace**

**From the internal fears and doubts,
From the turmoil of failures,
From the pain and suffering in their souls,
Endow them with hope
For the days ahead,
Courage to make new beginnings,
And love to strengthen
Their resolve to live;
In the name of Christ
We pray.**

Prayers For The Lonely

A Saint Frances Prayer Book Accept my prayers, dear Father, for those who have no one to love them enough to pray for them. Whatever and whoever they are, give them a share of my blessings, and in thy love let them know that they are not forgotten.

David Stancliffe In the depths of our isolation, we cry to you, Lord God; give light in our darkness and bring us out of the prison of our despair; through Jesus Christ our Lord.³

**Almighty God, whose is the eternal only power
And other men's power but borrowed of thee:
We beseech thee for all those who hold office that,
Holding it first from thee, they may use it for
The general good and to thine honour: through
Jesus Christ our Lord.
William Tyndale**

CONTENTMENT

Augustine Almighty God, who knowest our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking, set free thy servants from all anxious thoughts for the morrow, give us contentment with thy good gifts; and confirm our faith that according as we seek

³ The Complete Book Of Christian Prayer

thy kingdom, thou wilt not suffer us to lack any good thing;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Simon H. Baynes O God make us more thankful for what we
have received, more content with what we have, and more
mindful of other people in need. We ask it for his sake who lived
for us in poverty, Jesus Christ our Lord.

John Bunyan He that is down needs fear no fall,
He that is low, no pride:
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much:
And Lord, contentment still I crave;
Because thou savest such.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Prayed as he waited trial for his part in a
plot against Hitler)
O Holy Spirit, give me faith that will protect me from despair,
from passion, and from vice; give me such love for God and men
as will blot out all hatred and bitterness; give me the hope that
will deliver me from fear and faint-heartedness.

Soren Kierkegaard Teach us, O God not to torture ourselves, not
to make martyrs of ourselves through stifling reflection; but
rather teach us to breathe deeply in faith, through Jesus, our
Lord.

John R. W. Stott O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst invite the heavy
laden to come to thee, and didst promise to give them rest and
never to cast them out, help us so to come to thee that we find
rest in thee, and so to believe thy promise that we may know
that thou hast received us, for the glory of thy name, who with
the Father and the Holy Spirit art ever worthy to be trusted and
adored.

Charles Kingsley O God, grant that looking upon the face of the
Lord, as into a glass, we may be changed into his likeness, from

glory to glory. Take out of us all pride and vanity, boasting and forwardness; and give us the true courage which shows itself by gentleness; the true wisdom which shows itself by simplicity; and the true power which shows itself by modesty.

William Walsham How O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst humble thyself to become man, and to be born into the world for our salvation: teach us grace of humility, root out of our hearts all pride and haughtiness, and so fashion us after thy holy likeness in this world, that in the world to come we may be made like unto thee in thy eternal kingdom.

William Penn Lord, help me not to despise or oppose what I do not understand.

Johann Arndt Bestow on me, O Lord, a genial spirit and unwearied forbearance; a mild, loving, patient heart; kindly looks, pleasant, cordial speech and manners in the exchanges of daily life; that I may give offence to none, but as much as in me lies live in charity with all men.

Peter Marshall In the name of Jesus Christ who was never in a hurry, we pray, O God, that thou wilt slow us down, for we know that we live too fast. With all of eternity before us, make us take time to live – time to get acquainted with thee, time to enjoy thy blessings, and time to know each other.

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace

Breathe through the hearts of our desire
Thy coolness and thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm!
John Greenleaf Whittier

Augustine Almighty God, in whom we live and move and have our being, thou hast made us for thyself, so that our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee; grant us purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing thy will, no weakness from doing it; but that in thy light we may see light, and in thy service find perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Charles Wesley Make and keep me pure within.

Sir Alexander Henry Paterson O Lord help us to be masters of ourselves that we may be the servants of others.

John Of The Cross Dear Lord, give me the truths which are veiled by the doctrines and articles of faith, which are masked by the pious words of sermons and books. Let my eyes penetrate the veil, and tear off the mask, that I can see your truth face to face.

Brook Foss Westcott Almighty God who hast sent the Spirit of truth unto us to guide us into all truth: so rule our lives by thy power that we may be truthful in thought and word and deed. May no fear or hope ever make us false in act or speech; cast out from us whatsoever loveth or maketh a lie, and brings us all into the perfect freedom of thy truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John Bradford O Lord, thou greatest and most true light, whence the light of the day doth spring! O Light which dost lighten every man that cometh into the world! O thou Wisdom of the eternal Father, lighten my mind, that I may see only those things that please thee, and may be blinded to all other things. Grant that I may walk in thy ways, and that nothing else may be light and pleasant.

Church of Scotland. Book Of Common Order O God, the Father of lights, who by entrance of thy Word giveth light unto the soul: grant to us the spirit of wisdom and understanding; that, being taught of thee in holy scriptures, we may receive with faith the

words of eternal life, and be made wise unto salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thomas Sherlock Arise, O sun of righteousness, upon us with healing in thy wings: make us children of the light and of the day. Show us the way in which we should walk, for unto thee, O Lord, do we lift up our souls. Dispel all mists of ignorance which cloud our understandings. Let no false suggestion either withdraw our hearts from the love of thy truth, or from the practice of it in all the actions of our lives; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Eastern Orthodox source unknown Fence me about, O Lord with the power of thine honourable and life-giving Cross, and preserve me from every evil.

Thomas a Kempis Write thy blessed name, O Lord upon my heart, there to remain so indelibly engraved, that no prosperity, no adversity shall ever move me from thy love. Be thou to me a strong tower of defence, a comforter in tribulation, a deliverer in distress, a very present help in trouble, and a guide to heaven through the many temptations and dangers of this life.

Reinhold Niebuhr O Lord, who has taught us that to gain the whole world and to lose our souls is great folly, grant us the grace so to lose ourselves that we may truly find ourselves anew in the life of grace, and so to forget ourselves that we may be remembered in your kingdom.

3rd Century Prayer We give thee hearty thanks, O God, for the rest of the past night and for the gift of a new day with its opportunities of pleasing thee. Grant that we so pass its hours in the perfect freedom of thy service, that at eventide we may again give thanks unto thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

William Barclay O God, our Father, help us all through this day so to live that we may bring help to others, credit to ourselves and to the name we bear, and joy to those that love us, and to you.

Cheerful when things go wrong;

**Persevering when things are difficult;
Serene when things are irritating.
Enable us to be:
Helpful to those in difficulties;
Kind to those in need;
Sympathetic to those whose hearts are sore and sad.
Grant that:**

**Nothing may make us lose our tempers;
Nothing may take away our joy;
Nothing may ruffle our peace;
Nothing may make us bitter towards anyone.
So grant that through all this day all those with whom we work,
and all those whom we meet, may see in us the reflection of the
master, whose we are, and whom we seek to serve. This we ask
for your love's sake.**

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Written while awaiting execution in a Nazi
prison) Lord, whatever this day may bring,
Thy name be praised.**

**Daily Prayer Office As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so
may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire
with love for you; now and forever.**

**Matthew Henry O Lord, prepare us for all the events of the day;
for we know not what a day may bring forth. Give us grace to
deny ourselves; to take up our cross daily, and to follow in the
steps of our Lord and Master.**

**Macarius of Egypt To thee, O Master that lovest all men, I hasten
on rising from sleep by thy mercy I go forth to do thy work, and I
pray to thee: help me at all time, in everything; deliver me from
every evil thing of this world and from every attack of the devil,
save me bring me to thine eternal kingdom. For thou art my
Creator, the Giver and Provider of everything good; in thee is all
my hope, and to thee I ascribe glory, now and ever, and to ages
of ages.**

**Ashton Oxenden O my God, make me happy this day in thy
service. Let me do nothing, say nothing, desire nothing, which is**

contrary to thy will. Give me a thankful spirit, and a heart full of praise for all thou hast given me, and for all thou hast withheld from me.

Patrick

Lord, be with us this day,
Within us to purify us;
Above us to draw us up;\Beneath us to sustain us;
Before us to lead us;
Behind us to restrain us;
Around us to protect us.

I bind unto myself today
The power of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch, his might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need,
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, his shield to ward,
The Word of God to give speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.

Brother Ramon Today, my Father, let me be like a tree planted by the river, bringing forth fruit in its season. Let the sap of your Holy Spirit rise within me. Let me not become dry and barren but rich in abundance and fertility. May many weary ones find refreshment in the shadow of my branches.

Mary Sumner All this day, Lord,
Let me touch as many lives as possible for thee;
And every life I touch, do thou by thy Spirit quicken,
Whether through the word I speak,
The prayer I breathe, or the life I live.

Charles John Vaughan Lord that which we have prayed against this morning suffer us not to have done before the evening.

John Wesley
Be present at our table, Lord;
Be here and everywhere adored.
Thy creatures bless, and grant that we

May feast in paradise with thee.

Jacob Ashley (1579 –1652 prayed before commanding troops at the battle of Edgehill, 23 October 1642, first battle of English Civil War) Lord, thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget thee, do not thou forget me.

**William Barclay O God, your Word tells me that,
Whatever my hands finds to do, I must do it with my might.
Help me today to concentrate with my whole attention on whatever I am doing, and keep my thoughts from wandering and my mind from straying.
When I am studying, help me to study with my whole mind.
When I am playing, help me to play with my whole heart.
Help me to do one thing at a time, and to do it well.
This I ask for Jesus' sake.**

William Walsham How Grant, O Lord, that as we go forth once more to our daily labour we may remember the truths that we learnt, and may carry out the resolutions we made on thy holy day. Keep us from our besetting sins, and strengthen us to do thy holy will, that we may never forget whose we are and whom we serve; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Brother Lawrence O my God, since thou art with me, and I must now, in obedience to thy commands, apply my mind to these outward things, I beseech thee to grant me the grace to continue in thy presence; and to this end do thou prosper me with thy assistance, receive all my work and possess all my affections.

F. B. Meyer If this day I should get lost amid the perplexities of life and the rush of many duties, do thou search me out, gracious Lord, and bring me back into the quiet of thy presence.

**Source unknown Give me this night, O Father, the peace of mind
Which is truly rest.
Take from me
All envy of anyone else
All resentment for anything which has been
Withheld from me**

**All anger against the apparent injustices of life
All foolish worry about the future
And all futile regret about the past.
Help me to be
At peace with myself
At peace with my fellow human beings
At peace with you
So indeed may I lay myself down to rest in peace,
Through Jesus Christ my Lord.**

Jeremy Taylor Into thy hands, most blessed Jesus, I commend my soul and body, for thou hast redeemed both by thy most precious blood. So bless and sanctify my sleep to me, that it may be temperate, holy, and safe, a refreshment to my weary body, to enable it so to serve my soul, that both may serve thee with never-failing duty. Visit, I beseech thee, O Lord, this habitation with thy mercy, and me with thy grace and favour. Teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom, and ever be mindful on my last end.

A prayer for protection before listening for the voice of God.

By the authority of Almighty God I surround myself with the light of Christ. I cover myself with the blood of Christ, and I seal myself with the cross of Christ. All dark and evil spirits must leave now. No influence is allowed to come near to me but that it is first filtered through the light of Jesus Christ in whose name I pray.

Amen. Richard Foster

People Helper & Quite Time

Section 12

DISCIPLINE

Discipline, Latin *disciplina*, or “teaching” or “learning”. In a general sense, a discipline is a particular *rule*, a method, a set pattern of behavior or system of conduct that one adopts with the intended purpose to train, correct, mold, or perfect one’s mental facilities or moral character. In a psychological sense, a discipline is related to *disposition* formation or personality formation.

In Christian spirituality, a discipline is a rule of life or a set pattern of living intended to facilitate spiritual growth and Christian community. Spiritual disciplines are concerned with our lifestyle or our practice of faith and faithful living.

Richard Foster divides the disciplines into three categories:

1. *Inward discipline of meditations, prayer, fasting, and study or spiritual reading.*
2. *Outward disciplines of social mercy, solitude, simplicity, submission to a rule or order.*
3. *Corporate discipline of worship, guidance or spiritual direction, confession, and jubilee or celebration.*

Spiritual disciplines involve more than just psychological change. Their concern is total and complete grace transformed and healing. The goal of the Christian disciple is to be completely conformed to the image and likeness of Christ or, as the apostle Paul describes it, having the mind of Christ within us (Phil. 2:5). One of the chief dangers Christians face is forgetting that this transformation is a gift of God. People can easily fall into the trap of thinking that this transformation is attained through human effort and thus practice spiritual disciplines in terms of human effort. By themselves the spiritual disciplines cannot change us, but they offer a way to participate in the *grace* that is available for spiritual growth. That is why *John Wesley* called them the “means of grace.” They are tools or conduits through which the grace is given that alone can transform the heart. In this sense, spiritual disciplines are relational expressions of our openness to God, of our commitment to the *covenant*, and our belief in the promise of complete transformation (or *sanctification*).

The Covenant And Common Disciplines Of Renovare

In utter dependence upon Jesus Christ as my ever-living Savior, Teacher, Lord, and Friend, I will seek continual renewal through: spiritual exercises, spiritual gifts, and acts of service By God's grace:

I will set aside time regularly for prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading, and will seek to practice the presence of God.

I will strive mightily against sin and will do deeds of love and mercy that lead to righteousness.

I will seek the gifts of the Holy Spirit, nurturing the fruit of the Spirit and experiencing the joy and power of the Spirit.

I will seek to serve others everywhere I can and will work for justice in all human relationships and social structures.

I will study the scriptures regularly and share my faith with others as God leads.

I will joyfully seek to show forth the presence of God in all that I am, in all that I do, in all that I say.¹

¹ The Upper Room Dictionary Of Christian Spiritual Formation, Keith Beasley-Topliffe

Spiritual Helpers

Christian helping agents build on the core issues of discipleship and do so by practicing personalized soul-care ministries that cultivate Christlikeness. I refer to these helping ministries as *Spiritual Friendship, Spiritual Guidance, Spiritual Mentoring, and Spiritual Direction.*

SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP is the most informal and reciprocal of helping ministries. It involves two or more Christians on a relatively equal basis, who support, encourage, and pray for one another. . . You need have no fear to confess your failings to this person.

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE is another informal ministry. Talking with a friend about Christian lifestyle issues; recommending a good book on the spiritual life; counseling another person informally. The parties involved may differ in spiritual maturity, but not in spiritual authority. Sometimes guidance takes place through correspondence.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR refers to the structured ministry in which a gifted and experienced Christian, called a spiritual director, helps another believer grow in relationship with and obedience to Christ. Richard Foster describes spiritual directors as “people gifted in discernment, wisdom, and knowledge. Their task is to help people see the footprints of God in their lives and now and again to urge them to move in directions that they might not go otherwise.”

Though we do not neglect Scripture or actively serving God, spiritual direction focuses particularly on the being dimension. The spiritual director is a physician of souls. He or she helps the individual to discern the workings of God in his life, to deepen the individual’s relationship with Christ, and to deal constructively with life issues.

Closer Look At Spiritual Direction

Many are starting to use the term *spiritual direction*, and so it’s important to look more closely at this practice.

A spiritual director does not exercise total, flat-handed authority because his or her job is to strengthen the soul of the other to make godly choices, so that serving Christ flows out of their inner desire with a sense of “freedom in obedience” to the Lord. The director is a true companion on the spiritual journey, maintaining a compassionate understanding for the other’s struggles while directing them through and beyond it. The director also helps the other sort out religious experiences, aids the discerning of God’s will, focuses the prayer life, and encourages the person in Christ-honoring obedience. The spiritual director is prayerfully concerned with the whole of the disciple’s life – with every aspiration, joy, frustration, and pain. Mentoring and spiritual direction, therefore, are highly personalized ministries.

Why Soul-Care Is Greatly Needed Today

***First*, every one of us needs to understand more clearly God’s working in our lives, and that requires the gift of objective counsel. We’re too close to ourselves to see things as they really are. We need a faithful friend who will help us distinguish the authentic voice of God from confusing voices and sinister spirits.**

***Second*, the spiritual path through life is cratered with tragedies waiting to happen. Daily we’re worn down by the world and tempted to fall. (Ecclesiastes 4:9,10) “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.”**

***Third*, Although the Holy Spirit is our ultimate Guide, God has chosen to use fellow believers as instruments of growth. God could work holiness in our lives by direct application of His sheer power. But His customary way of working good is through other believers. How true it is that “behind every saint stands another saint.”**

In the Old Testament, Yahweh Himself was the guide and mentor of His people. The psalmist’s words testify, “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Psalm

73:24). God graciously gave Israel human spiritual guides, as well – prophets, priests, wise men, and holy women – for instruction and growth. God called Moses to be a guide and mentor for the people of Israel.

Jesus was the mentor par excellence for His disciples. The disciples joined Jesus' company, listened to His teaching, observed His manner of life, and found their lives challenged and comforted by the Lord. Jesus poured His life into His disciples, loving them as brothers and sending them forth in kingdom service.

Qualities Of A Spiritual Helper

Foremost, the spiritual helper should be a person of *vital Christian faith*. Only when the helper is closely connected to Jesus can new life be called forth in the other. Mature faith, a close relationship with God, and a rich life of prayer are all necessary.

Second, the spiritual guide should possess *knowledge*, including a good understanding of Scripture and of sound practical knowledge.

Third, the spiritual helper should be a person of *loving concern*. The mentor must experience the love of God himself and be able to communicate love to others in the language of the heart. Love is the pure conduit through which God's grace flows into a life.

Fourth, the spiritual guide should possess *Discernment*. God is infinite, each soul is unique, and each journey is special. Hence discernment is a necessary competency for effective spiritual guides. Spiritual discernment is the ability to read hearts and to exegete souls.

Fifth, the effective spiritual helper has experienced some *suffering and failure* in life. A person who has known only the comforts of salvation, and not brokenness, has difficulty identifying with those undergoing trials (2 Corinthians 1:3-6). But a Christian who has dealt redemptively with doubt, betrayal,

and failure is able to minister more effectively to persons struggling with such issues

The Practice of Spiritual Mentoring or Direction

Ask Relevant Questions.

The mentor or director asks questions that helps him become better acquainted with the disciple.

How did you meet the Lord?

What is your picture of God?

Who is Christ for you?

The mentor might follow with questions that evaluate the quality of the person's spiritual life.

Where are you on the spiritual journey?

Where has God been at work in your life of late?

What disciplines or experiences have been life-giving to you.

You might ask questions that clarify the individual's real needs.

How satisfying is your prayer life?

What recurring patterns of behavior do you experience that seem to interfere with your experience of God?

Where do you seem to be stuck spiritually?

The mentor also asks questions that kindle a hunger for spiritual growth.

If Jesus were to come to you and speak grace into your life, what gifts would you desire of Him?

What might Jesus say to you that would nourish your heart and bless you?

Listen Carefully To The One Seeking Direction.

Encourage the person to tell his or her personal story. The simple act of relating one's story can be a healing experience. Practice the art of "active listening" – listening in a way that enters into the life experience of the other person. A common mistake of mentors or spiritual directors is to talk when they

should be listening. The Spirit will give the trusting mentor insight into the disciple's needs (1 Corinthians 2:10-12).

Help The Individual Learn How To Listen To God As He Reveals Himself.

Relationships develop and new life flows when people pay attention to one another. We know something of what it means to pay attention to another human being. But how does a person pay attention to the infinite God.

First, by being attentive in stillness.

Quietness before God greatly aids in knowing Him. Both mentor and disciple need to silence distractions and listen to the still small voice of the Spirit within, so their souls become committed to Him.

Second, we listen to God prayerfully meditating on the Scriptures.

The written Word of God is the customary way the Lord speaks to us. "But his delight is in the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2). Encourage the growing Christian in the daily practice of Bible reading and reflection.

Third, we pay attention through the discipline of prayer.

Not prayer in the form of a grocery list of request, but prayer of the heart, prayer of simplicity, or contemplative prayer.

Bring To Light Any Obstacles To A Relationship With Christ.

Any hidden moral fault or unhealed emotional wound hinders the soul progress. Prayerfully seek to diagnose hindrances to relationship with the Lord. If the individual's struggle is with unbelief, encourage wholehearted trust in God amidst the confusion. If pride is the problem, help the person to see that glory belongs to God alone. If the fault is selfishness, point the disciple to the cross, where his helpless condition is laid bare. If the disciple's sin is sensuality or lust, remind him that its consequences are destructive – a cutting off from God and an inability to pray.

Rebuke Firmly But Gently, When Necessary.

The spiritual helper's primary calling is to be the conduit through which Christ's love flows into the other person. But sometimes love requires that we rebuke and correct. When someone has fallen into a moral or spiritual trap, confront him compassionately from the Word (see Romans 15: 14-15).

Facilitate The Disciple's Repentance, Where Necessary.

Before Christ's life can flow freely, the residue of sin must be exercised. The prophet says to wayward Israel, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:20).

If someone is trapped in a moral fault, encourage him to feel sorrow for his sin, confess it and receive Christ's forgiveness. Repressing our sin is unhealthy – spiritually, emotionally, and even physically (see Psalm 32:3-4). How important it is to bring our sins of omission and commission to God for His cleansing touch!

Be A Coach Of The Spiritual Disciplines.

New Christians may not know where to begin with private disciplines such as fasting, contemplative prayer, and journaling; or with public disciplines such as confession, celebration, and service. The spiritual mentor guides the disciple in the regular practice of healthy spiritual habits. We form spiritual disciplines, and in time they form us. Always keep in mind that the disciplines are not ends in themselves, but means to deepening friendship with God.

Problem Solving in Soul-Care/Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Dryness

The first is the common problem of *dryness* in our relationship with God. By spiritual dryness I mean a lack of joy in the Lord,

loss of spiritual enthusiasm, and disinterest in prayer. Spiritual dryness may be due to *physical or mental fatigue*.

Spiritual Desolation

This second problem is related to the condition known as “dark night of the soul.” Henri Nouwen describes his own agonizing dark night. “In the months following the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood, I gradually entered into very dark interior places and began to experience immense inner anguish. I came to a point where I could no longer feel safe in my own community and had to leave to seek help in my struggle and to work directly on my inner healing.”

How do you minister to a person passing through spiritual desolation? Here are some general directives.

First, assure him of the value of suffering, in the divine economy. To become like Christ, the Christian must be purified by pain. The dark night we find so distressing is a necessary part of our union with Jesus, who experienced the Father’s absence and who “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;”(Hebrews 5:8). In this life, suffering is inevitable, but for the Christian it is always purposeful.

Second, encourage the disciple to cling tenaciously to the Lord in faith. In his dark night, David waited for God’s deliverance, even though He seemed worlds away. “But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation [deliverance]”(Psalm 69:13). When the shadows blot out the warmth of the Father’s love, remember Job, who confidently exclaimed, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:” (Job 13:15).

Third, help the struggler to emulate the confidence of Jesus who says, “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone”(John 8:29). The dark night serves notice that God is doing a new work of grace in our lives. In God’s good time, the

darkness will yield to the brightness and warmth of God's felt love.

Dallas Willard offers the following evaluation of spiritual direction in the church throughout history. "Spiritual direction was understood by Jesus, taught by Paul, obeyed by the early church, followed with excesses in the medieval church, narrowed by the Reformers, recaptured by the Puritans, and virtually lost in the modern church."

I personally pray that today we may see a return to the mandate of Scriptures and the example of Jesus, and begin to practice soul-care. My hope is that we will take up the ministries of spiritual friendship, spiritual guidance, spiritual mentoring, and spiritual direction on behalf of hungry Christians in search of spiritual transformation. Dr. Bruce Demarest¹

¹ Satisfy Your Soul, Dr. Bruce Demarest

FOUR QUALITIES IN CHOOSING A SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR OR MENTOR

1. We should be comfortable with the person.
2. The person should understand what we are seeking in prayer and spirituality.
3. The person should be able to respond objectively in interpreting our personal experiences in prayer.
4. The person should ideally be someone we recognize as being ahead of us in the spiritual pilgrimage.

Good directors are hard to find. One way to have a spiritual director is by spiritual reading such as the classics. Spiritual reading is done with an open spirit, a submissive mind, and a willingness to hear God's voice and follow him.

"A spiritual director or mentor's task is to help people to see the footprints of God in their lives and now and again, to urge them to move in directions that they might not go otherwise.."
...Dallas Willard

"He who makes himself his own teacher becomes the pupil of a fool." ...Thomas Aquinas

EXCERPTS FROM THE SPIRIT OF THE DISCIPLINES

1. DISCIPLESHIP: FOR SUPER-CHRISTIANS ONLY?

The word “disciple” occurs 269 times in the New Testament. “Christian” is found only three times and was first introduced to refer precisely to the disciples... The New Testament is a book about disciples, by disciples, and for disciples of Jesus Christ.

But the point is not merely verbal. What is more important is that the kind of life we see in the earliest church is that of a special type of person. All of the assurances and the benefits offered to humankind in the gospel evidently presuppose such a life and do not make realistic sense apart from it. The disciple of Jesus is not the deluxe or heavy-duty model of the Christian - especially padded, textured, streamlined, and empowered for the fast lane on the straight and narrow way. He stands on the pages of the New Testament as the first level of basic transportation in the Kingdom of God.

2. UNDISCIPLINED DISCIPLES

For at least several decades the churches of the Western world have not made discipleship a condition of being a Christian. One is not required to be, or intended to be, a disciple in order to become a Christian without any signs of progress toward or in discipleship. Contemporary American churches in particular do not require following Christ in his example, spirit, and teachings as a condition of membership - either of entering into or continuing in fellowship of a denomination or a local church. Any exception to this claim only serves to highlight its general validity and make the general rule more glaring. So far as the visible Christian institutions of our day are concerned, discipleship clearly is optional... Churches are filled with “undisciplined disciples,” as Jess Moody has called them. Most problems in contemporary churches can be explained by the fact that members have not yet decided to follow Christ.

Little good results from insisting that Christ is also supposed to be Lord: to present his lordship as an option leaves it squarely in the category of the white-wall tires and stereo equipment for the new car. You can do

without it. And it is - alas! - far from clear what you would do with it. Obedience and training in obedience form no intelligible doctrinal or practical unity with the salvation presented in recent versions of the gospel.

3. GREAT OMISSIONS FROM THE GREAT COMMISSION

A different model was instituted in the Great Commission Jesus left for the church. The first goal he set forth for the early church was to use his all-encompassing power and authority to make disciples... Having made disciples, these alone were to be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. With this twofold preparation they were to be taught to treasure and keep "all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The Christian church of the first century resulted from following this plan for church growth - a result hard to improve upon.

But in place of Christ's plan, historical drift has substituted: "Make converts (to a particular faith and practice) and baptize them into church membership." This causes two great omissions from the Great Commission to stand out. Most important, we start by omitting the making of disciples or enrolling people as Christ's students, when we should let all else wait for that. We also omit the step of taking our converts through training that will bring them ever increasingly to do what Jesus directed.

The two great omissions are connected. Not having made converts disciples, it is impossible for us to teach them how to live as Christ lived and taught. That was not part of the package, not what they converted to. When confronted with the example and teachings of Christ, the response today is less one of rebellion or rejection than one of puzzlement: How do we relate to these? What have they to do with us?

4. DISCIPLESHIP THEN

When Jesus walked among humankind there was a certain simplicity to being a disciple. Primarily it meant to go with him, in an attitude of study, obedience, and imitation. There were no correspondence courses. One knew what to do and what it would cost. Simon Peter exclaimed:

“Look, we’ve left everything and followed you!” (Mark 10:28). Family and occupations were deserted for long periods to go with Jesus as he walked from place to place announcing, showing, and explaining the governance of God. Disciples had to be with him to learn how to do what he did.

Imagine doing that today. How would family members, employers, and coworkers react to such abandonment? Probably they would conclude that we did not much care for them, or even for ourselves. Did not Zebedee think this as he watched his two sons desert the family business to keep company with Jesus (Mark 1:20)? Ask any father in a similar situation. So when Jesus observed that one must forsake the dearest things - family, “all that he hath,” and “his own life also” (Luke 14) - insofar as that was necessary to accompany him, he stated a simple fact: it was the only possible doorway to discipleship.

5. DISCIPLESHIP NOW

Though costly, discipleship once has a very clear, straightforward meaning. The mechanics are not the same today. We cannot literally be with him in the same way as his first disciples could. But the priorities and intentions - the heart or inner attitudes - of disciples are forever the same. In the heart of a disciple there is a desire, and there is a decision or settled intent. The disciple of Christ desires above all else to be like him...

Given this desire, usually produced by the lives and words of those already in The Way, there is yet a decision to be made: the decision to devote oneself to becoming like Christ. The disciple is one who, intent upon becoming Christlike and so dwelling in his “faith and practice,” systematically and progressively rearranges his affairs to that end. By these actions, even today, one who enrolls in Christ’s training, becomes his pupil or disciple.

And if we intend to become like Christ, that will be obvious to every thoughtful person around us, as well as to ourselves. Of course, attitudes that define the disciple cannot be realized today by leaving family and business to accompany Jesus on his travels about the countryside. But discipleship can be made concrete by loving our enemies, blessing those

who curse us, walking the second mile with an oppressor - in general, living out the gracious inward transformations of faith, hope and love. Such acts - carried out by the disciplined person with manifest grace, peace, and joy - make discipleship no less tangible and shocking today than were those desertions of long ago. Anyone who will enter into The Way can verify this, and he or she will prove that discipleship is far from dreadful.

6. THE COST OF NONDISCIPLESHIP

In 1937 Dietrich Bonhoeffer gave the world his book *The Cost of Discipleship*. It was a masterful attack on “easy Christianity” or “cheap grace,” but it did not set aside - perhaps it even enforced - the view of discipleship as a costly spiritual excess, and only for those especially driven or called to it. It was right to point out that one cannot be a disciple of Christ without forfeiting things normally sought in human life, and that one who pays little in the world’s coinage to bear his name has reason to wonder where he or she stands with God. But the cost of nondiscipleship is far greater - even when this life alone is considered - than the price paid to walk with Jesus.

Nondiscipleship costs abiding peace, a life penetrated throughout by love, faith that sees everything in the light of God’s overriding governance for good, hopefulness that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances, power to do what is right and withstand the forces of evil. In short, it costs exactly that abundance of life Jesus said he came to bring (John 10:10). The cross-shaped yoke of Christ is after all an instrument of liberation and power to those who live in it with him and learn the meekness and lowliness of heart that brings rest to the soul... the correct perspective is to see following Christ not only as the necessity it is, but as the fulfillment of the highest human possibilities and as life on the highest plane.

BIBLE SELECTION: MATTHEW 28: 16-20

16Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. 18And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Go therefore and make

disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Dallas Willard

FOLLOWING JESUS

Invocation

O Lord Jesus in this hour let me hear again your call, "Follow me." My steps are prone to wander. Come therefore, I pray, and make your way clear before me. Amen.

What Christ Said

**I said, "Let me walk in the fields."
He said, "No, walk in town."
I said, "There are no flowers there."
He said, "No flowers, but a crown."**

**I said, "But the skies are black,
There is nothing but noise and din";
And he wept and sent me back;
"There is more," he said, "there is sin."**

**I said, "But the air is thick,
And fogs are veiling the sun."
He answered, "Yet souls are sick,
And souls in the dark undone."**

**I said, "I shall miss the light,
And friends will miss me, they say."
He answered, "Choose tonight
If I am to miss you, or they."**

**I pleaded for time to be given.
He said, "Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem hard in heaven
To follow the steps of your guide."**

**I cast one look at the fields,
Then set my face to the town;
He said, "My child, do you yield?
Will you leave the flowers for the crown?"**

**Then into his hand went mine;
And into my heart came he;
And I walk in a light divine,
The path I had feared to see.
- George MacDonald**

**Lord, you know what is most profitable to me; do this or that according to Your will. Give me what You will, as much as You will, and when You will. Do with me as You know what is best to be done, as it shall please You, and as it shall be most to Your honor. Put me where You will. I am Your servant, ready to do all things that You command, for I do not desire to live to myself, but to You. Would to God that I might live worthy and profitably, and to Your honor.
- Thomas a Kempis**

**We take a giant step forward in Christian devotion when we see it more as a life to be lived than as a time to be observed. Consequently, it is more appropriate to speak of a “devotional life” than a “devotional time.” When we study Wesley’s spirituality, we see this coming through loud and clear. He never divided his life into compartments. For him, the essence of life was spiritual. All of it could properly be called devotional.
- Steve Harper**

Benediction

Dear Jesus, assist me to follow God’s will, even as you followed your own destiny. Shed light upon my path, and keep close to me that I may follow close to you. Amen.¹

¹ A Guide To Prayer For All God’s People

WOUNDED HEALERS

How Time Heals

"Time heals," people often say. This is not true when it means that we will eventually forget the wounds inflicted on us and be able to live on as if nothing happened. That is not really healing; it is simply ignoring reality. But when the expression "time heals" means that faithfulness in a difficult relationship can lead us to a deeper understanding of all the ways we have hurt each other, then there is much truth in it. "Time heals" implies not passively waiting but actively working with our pain and trusting in the possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Wounded Healers

Nobody escapes being wounded. We are all wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not "How can we hide our wounds?" So we do not have to be embarrassed but "How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?" When our wounds cease to be a source of shame and become a source of healing, we have become wounded healers.

Jesus is God's wounded healer: Through his wounds we are healed. Jesus' suffering and death brought joy and life. His humiliation brought glory; his rejection brought a community of love. As followers of Jesus we can also allow our wounds to bring healing to others.¹

Compassion

Hope – Thomas Merton wrote, "The real hope is not in something we think we can do, but in God, who is making something good out of it in some way we cannot see."

To live with compassion means to enter others' dark moments. It is to walk into places of pain, not to flinch or look away when

¹ Henri Nouwen

another agonizes. It means to stay where people suffer. Compassion holds us back from quick, eager explanations when tragedy meets someone we know or love.

And I wondered again, as perhaps we all wonder when grief hits hard and hurts us deeply: Why did such a thing happen? To reveal God's glory? To remind us of the fragility of life? Or perhaps to deepen the faith of those who carry on? It is hard to answer Yes when everything seems so dark.

I search for the right words. What could I say? I did not want to interfere with their grieving.

By greeting life's pain with something other than denial we may find something unexpected. By inviting God into our difficulties we ground life - even its sad moments - in joy and hope. We hear an invitation to allow our mourning to become a place of healing, and our sadness a way through pain to dancing.¹

COMPASSION

Henri Nouwen Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerabl, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human.

When I reflect on my own life, I realize that the moments of greatest comfort and consolation were moments when someone said: "I cannot take your pain away, I cannot offer you a solution for your problem, but I can promise you that I won't leave you alone and will hold on to you as long and as well as I can." There is much grief and pain in our lives, but what a blessing it is when we do not to live our grief and pain alone.

¹ Henri Nouwen Turn My Mourning Into Dancing

Aubrey Thomas De Vere, [sorrow] Count each affliction, whether light or grave, God's messenger sent down to thee do thou with courtesy receive him.²

Henri M. Nouwen Do not hesitate to love and to love deeply. You might be afraid of the pain that deep love can cause. When those you love deeply reject you, leave you, or die, your heart will be broken. But that should not hold you back from loving deeply. The pain that comes from deep love makes your love even more fruitful. It is like a plow that breaks the ground to allow the seed to take root and grow into a strong plant.³

² The Spiritual Formation Bible

³ The Spiritual Formation Bible

PRAYER COORDINATOR

Responsibilities of a Prayer Coordinator

Oversee the intercessory prayer ministry

Select and enlist prayer leadership

Research the church's / city current prayer ministry

Identify key people and enlist their support

Gather a wide array of resources on prayer

Work closely with pastors and leaders to receive prayer, vision and guidance

**Help develop and oversee the implementation of the plan
Coordinate changes, programs and other activities with the church staff**

Keep the pastor advised and request the pastor's counsel on significant matters

Develop an information network

Schedule services offering prayer, as well as orientation and training meetings

Schedule and conduct monthly leadership meetings

Encourage and promote prayer ministry throughout the church and the community

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

Elizabeth Alves Exercise your faith by speaking forth the Word and declaring aloud the victory Christ gives.

- 1. Praying in the Spirit is your Spirit communicating directly with God.**
- 2. Praying in the Spirit is a perfect prayer. The Holy Spirit your helper, enables you to pray as you ought thereby praying in the Lord's will¹ (1 Cor. 14:14; I John 5:14,15; Jas. 4:3).**
- 3. Praying in the Spirit has definite meaning.**
- 4. Praying in the Spirit (harmony with the Holy Spirit) encourages the person praying. This will encourage you in Warfare Praying (Eph. 6:18).**
- 5. Praying in harmony with the Holy Spirit has the authority of heaven behind it.**

The issue is not how to pray, but that you are faithful to the call of prayer and be led by the Spirit.

¹ Elizabeth Alves Becoming a Prayer Warrior

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness we do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. Rom. 8:26 NIV

The most profound prayer any person ever engages in seldom finds expression in human syllables. It is the stirring of our spirits by God's Spirit in such a way that we long with enormous inner longing. We are still, silent, subdued, yearning, knowing, seeing Him whom to know is life eternal.

Our Lord made it abundantly clear that much of our praying done either in public or in private, was really pagan. (Read Matthew 6:5-15.) The repetitive, thoughts, mouthing of tired phrases, or ritualistic rhetoric, is not the manner in which a man consciously communes with his Creator.

It is God's Spirit who impresses upon our spirits what we are to pray about. Seeing clearly what His concerns are, we proceed in faith to respond by placing these petitions before Him. This is the prayer of faith. He then honors and answers those prayers in the profound way which is most appropriate both to His will and our needs.

This is what is meant by Christ being both the Author and the Finisher of our faith. Our prayers are conceived in our spirit by Him. They are consummated in His own good time in His best way. And for all of this we give Him our genuine gratitude. Communing with Christ this way, we come to walk with God in quiet strength, serene stability, and constant assurance.¹

¹ Philip Keller Songs Of My Soul

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT (What does that mean?)

Pray According To The Leadership Of The Spirit

When you pray, do you pray under the leadership of the Holy Spirit?

Do you run through a prayer agenda without considering the Spirit's guidance in your time of prayer?

When you pray under the Spirit's leadership, you cannot be in a hurry. If you are in a rush, you cannot pray under the Spirit's leadership. How can you begin to pray according to the leadership of the Holy Spirit?

You begin with moments of not saying anything. Meditate on the things of God. I would encourage you to begin by praying something like this, "Lord I come to You in the name of Jesus today. I do not want to have moments of vain repetition that will not please You, but I want You to show me what to pray for right now." It is important to have a plan to pray. . . Yet, whatever your plan is, you need to have enough flexibility to let the Holy Spirit lead you in your prayer time. A plan should be used to give you a general direction, not to place you into bondage as you pray.

When you pray under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, He will lead you to pray the Word of God. At times, I have some people say to me, "Pastor, I am praying about a divorce, and I really sense the Holy Spirit is leading me to do so." The Bible is very clear about divorce: God does not like it. The Holy Spirit will always lead you to fulfill the Word of God. Therefore, the Spirit will not lead you to be divorced if Scripture does not permit it to take place. You cannot let the phrase "the Spirit is leading me" become a means to justify an action that is contrary to God's Word.

Praying under the Leadership of the Spirit means that you will pray by and with the Word of God. When you pray under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, you will let God show you what you need to pray for and about in your time of prayer. God will show

you what to pray for. Listen to Him. Let His Spirit talk to your spirit. At times, just be quiet and let God lead you.

Praying in the Holy Spirit also means that you. . .

Pray With Assistance From The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit pulls you toward God and to spiritual victory. Romans 8:26 says, "And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness: for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."

There are times in the Christian life when you do not know how to pray. This passage is very clear that God is not talking about groanings with words or in a prayer language. This passage is speaking of how the Holy Spirit comes to assist you in prayer when you do not know what to pray. The Holy Spirit is praying for you to have victory. He is praying for you to fulfill God's will in your life. He is praying for you to have assistance from Him.

When you pray with assistance from the Holy Spirit, your prayer will be something like this: "Lord I do not know how to pray about this matter. I must have Your help. I must have Your assistance. As You lead me to pray about this, May Your Spirit utter to the Father what the depths of my heart feel about this matter. Assist me, Holy Spirit, right now as I pray."

Pray With Power From The Spirit

The power of God in prayer usually precedes the power of God demonstrated in a public meeting.

Prayer leads you to the power of God, both in personal times of prayer and in public meetings of believers. God is attracted to men and women who want to pray in the Spirit. He will bless those who will pray in the Spirit with power.

Prayerlessness means you are depending on yourself. Prayer in the Spirit means you are depending on God. When you depend on God, you will receive His power when you pray.

When His power comes upon you mighty things begin to happen. You begin to experience power from on high. You begin to pray for things you did not have a burden to pray for before

this time. You are energized, filled, and empowered by His Spirit. You are granted the authority of Jesus Christ. You will experience boldness, courage, and faith like never before. It is a faith-building moment. A powerful moment. A true God moment! When you are praying in the Spirit, experiencing His power, you become God's tool. At times, you are simply a vessel in the hand of God as you represent His people and their needs before God. Yes, prayer leads you to the power of God. – Ronnie W. Floyd

Andrew Murray, "Prayer is the secret of power and life. Not only for ourselves, but for others, for the church, for the world, it is to prayer that God has given the right to take hold of Him and His strength. It is on prayer that the promises wait for that fulfillment."

Randy Southern, "Your prayers should reflect exactly who you are, where you are in your life, and what you want in your relationship with God – without any pretenses or fakeness."

Max Lucado, "To pray, 'Thy will be done' is to seek the heart of God."

E. Stanley Jones, "For God wants not merely to answer your prayer. He wants to make you – to make you into the kind of person through whom He can habitually answer prayer."

Ronnie Floyd, "Just remember this: If you do not plan to pray, you will not pray. In order to be an effective prayer warrior, you need to plan to meet with God daily."

Randy Southern, "Nothing is more important than your daily meeting with God. So nothing should ever interfere with it – not work or play or even an appointment nothing. Regardless of how crazy things get in your life or how jammed your schedule becomes, it's absolutely important that you keep your appointment with God everyday."¹

¹ Nelson's Personal Handbook On Prayer, Dr. James Wilhoit

A PRAYER FOR QUIET TIME

What can I give you in gratitude? Nothing but myself. I offer my life to You as an empty vessel for your purpose and glory. Cleanse me. Possess me. Fill me. Use me. Make me what You had in mind when You created me and chose me as Your own.

Lord I confess my bent toward unbelief, pride, and rebellion. Help me trust You today, to believe that everything You say is thoroughly true and right and good. Help me live as the Lord Jesus did, in total dependence on the Father. Give me a heart that wants to obey in all things.

Lord, I am in You and You are in me. Help me stay attached to You all day, connected, one with You. May I hear Your Spirit's promptings and respond. May Your life flow through me, fully expressing Yourself to me and through me. Keep my heart tender and attuned to You that I might work faithfully and diligently as unto You in all my work today.

Make Your will in all things clear and give me grace to do it. Above all, may Christ be formed in me. In all things may You be enthroned in my heart for Your glory and the furtherance of Your kingdom.¹

¹ Jean Fleming, Feeding Your Soul Navpress 1999

QUIET TIMES

EXAMPLE ONE: A Short Quiet Time (5-10 Minutes)

1. Bible: Read two chapters of Scriptures (3-5 min).
2. Prayer: Intercede for those in your immediate family (2-3 Min).
3. Worship: Spend time singing spontaneous praise (1-2 Min)

EXAMPLE TWO: A Moderate Quite Time (15-20 Minutes)

1. Prayer: Ask God's forgiveness for specific sins (2-3 min).
2. Worship: Speak praise to God (1-2 min).
3. Bible: Work on a "character quality" Bible study (7-8 min).
4. Worship: Meditate on a verse of Scripture that comes to mind (3-4 min).
5. Prayer: Thank the Lord for His many blessings (2-3 min).

EXAMPLE THREE: An Extended Quiet Time (One Hour Approximately)

1. Worship: Sing several songs of praise (3-5 min).
2. Bible: Read five chapters of Scripture (10-12 min).
3. Prayer: Dedicate yourself and your Bible study to God (2-3 min).
4. Bible: Study the life and writings of Peter (15-20 min).
5. Worship: Take a "worship walk" with God, speaking praise (7-10 min).
6. Prayer: Intercede for your loved ones and the needs of your community (2-3 min).
7. Bible: Freely search the Scriptures, asking God to speak through them (5-8 min).
8. Prayer: Lay your burdens and needs before the Lord (5-8 min).
9. Worship: Spend several moments waiting on God for guidance (3-5 min).¹

¹ Patrick Kavanaugh, Worship a Way Of Life

Ways of Meeting God

Meeting God in Prayer

Sometimes, however, we need guidance -- we need to learn to pray. Prayer grows out of a relationship with God that is permeated by grace and love and is therefore preeminently communion -- wordless, Spirit -- to -- Spirit oneness with God. But prayer is also conversation with God. So we learn to pray by using the words God has given us. In the pages of the Bible we discover not only teaching about prayer but ancient prayers that help us dialogue with God today. "Repeating God's words after [God]," wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "we began to pray to [God]."

The Lord's Prayer

One very meaningful way to "repeat God's words" in our prayer is through the prayer Jesus gave his disciples -- the Lords Prayer. A Jewish Rabbi in that time often gave his followers an outline for prayer that expressed the unique characteristics of his teaching, an exercise that brought the group together around a common identity. But behind the disciples request lies a deeper need. He wants to know how to both commune and communicate with God. Many of us still make the same request as this disciple. Jesus' response can enrich and transform our praying. In fact, many consider the "discovery" of this prayer as a turning point in their prayer life. The Lords Prayer is not just a prayer to say, but more significantly, a way to pray. More than a formula to recite, the Lords Prayer guides us through three successive movements of opening ourselves to God.

ADORATION

"Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come." Adoration celebrates our communion with God. It brings us into conscious awareness of the reality of God with us. Adoration focuses our attention on God, liberating us from focusing on ourselves and setting the context for all true prayer. In adoration we align our lives with God's purposes, we gladly let go of lesser attachments and give God's love full control of our hearts

and minds. We respond with gratitude to the God who first called us into a loving relationship.

An act of adoration may consist of slowly repeating the words, "Father, holy and honored be your name" for a period of time, letting Jesus name for God give expression to our love and praise as God's children. We may build on these trusted words with psalms of praise or familiar hymns that come to mind. Adoration may consist of quiet reading and reflection on Scripture verses and spiritual classics that bring us into God's presence.

PETITION

"Give us each day our daily bread . . . and lead us not into temptation. Petition is asking God for what we need, especially for those things we need in order to continue in our communion with him. Petition invites us to bring to God no less than the totality of our daily lives: our joys and struggles, hopes and hurts, desires and disappointments, loves and hates, pleas and resentments, and our need for healing and for change. By opening ourselves fully to God, we allow God to meet our true needs; God may also kindle in us a desire to question some of our perceived needs. By presenting to God every desire and request, we allow God to bless worthy dreams, to expose not-so-worthy dreams and to give us a passion for God's own dreams.

CONTRITION

"Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us." Contrition seeks grace to restore our communion with God. It is admitting that there are areas in which we have failed. Contrition is the inner chamber of decision and transformation where sin and grace meet, where, with Jesus, we die to sin and rise with him to new life. Contrition is also opening to God those parts of our lives that have been closed to him.

The Lord's Prayer, then, is both a prayer and a formula for prayer. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says of it, "Every prayer is contained in it . . . All the prayers of Holy Scripture are summarized in the Lord's Prayer, and are contained in its immeasurable breadth."

The Lord's Prayer is not just a prayer to say but, more significantly a way to pray.

Praying The Bible

Perhaps no other book of the Bible has been prayed more frequently than the book of Psalms. Of the Psalter, the collection of psalms, Martin Luther once wrote, "It penetrates the Lord's Prayer and the Lord's Prayer penetrates it." No wonder some call Psalms the "prayer book of the Bible." Praying through the Ten Commandments can become a prayer of self-examination.

Being Quiet Before God.

Learning to be quiet and to rest with God is essential in prayer. Silence is the discipline of pushing aside words, busyness and noise in order to create space within for God. In what some have called "contemplative prayer," the words and forms recede altogether. Prayer becomes a simple, restful experience of basking in the Lord's presence. Rich silence – not our own making – allow us to commune with God. Our prayers may even alternate between articulated words and these quieter, less verbal times.

Whether we pray with the depth and breadth of the Lord's Prayer or recite a verse of a psalm, whether our words are many or few, whether we actively intercede or simply rest in God's presence, prayer is an intimate meeting with God.¹

¹ The Spiritual Formational Bible

The Prayer Of Stillness Before God

God calls us to be still before Him. In this quiet expectancy, with humility of spirit and honesty of soul, we will discover He is very near to us.

Stillness Before the Most High is Creative

Almost any thing God accomplishes is done in silence. It is in the stillness of His profound presence that we sense our souls become serene. There we find rest, repose, and re-creation. Only in intimate and first hand interaction with His Spirit am I remade in His likeness. Christ's own superb character impacts mine. I become like the one with whom I spend my most special time daily.

One Must Be Still to Hear Our Father

To hear God implies three personal responses on my part:

- 1. I recognize in truth it is Him speaking to me;**
- 2. I ready myself to respond in faith to what He says;**
- 3. I actually, then, resolve to go out and do His bidding.**

Most of us are so preoccupied pouring out our own petitions we will not pause to listen to what He tells us. Be still. Be calm. Be receptive. Wait confidently for Him to instruct and guide in the way He wishes you to live. This is the way to pray.

Our Father has chosen several specific ways in which to commune with His own beloved children. It is essential to understand these. Then life with Him becomes a great adventure as we learn daily to carry out His wishes and bring enormous pleasure to Him.

- 1. He speaks clearly to us through His own Word. Read it. Ruminates on it. Resolve to act on it in faith.**
- 2. He speaks to us through the remarkable life of Christ. It is He who is the visible expression of the invisible God.**
- 3. He speaks to us through the still, small, inner voice of His**

- own Spirit. He convicts us in how we ought to live.
4. He speaks to us through the splendor, design, order, and beauty of His created world. Spend time outdoors alone with Him.

Be Still and Wait on God to Act in His Own Time

Christ, just as with His own disciples I His earthly days, calls us to come to the awareness we need to be still. We need to get alone with Him. We need to sense the still, refreshing dews of His presence, His peace, His power to restore our souls and spirits. Give Him time to do this!

To do this in a practical way, find a quiet spot where you can have a secret rendezvous with Christ. Set aside a special time to be alone with Christ in close communion. Compose your soul calmly. Quiet your emotions, concentrate your mind on your heavenly Father's great generosity to you to allow His Spirit to speak to your innermost heart (or will), from and by His Word.

You will be refreshed. He will not disappoint you. Your spirit will be serene. Your soul will be at rest. You will be strong in your confidence in Christ. Then you can calmly go out into the weary world knowing God will use you to touch others with His own divine love and dignity.

Be Still and Watch Him Work in the World

Our Father yearns for His children to awake to the fact we need His might to make things right. For far too long we assumed it was our skills, our plans, our programs that would turn back the tide of evil sweeping over society. Only He can, by the majestic power of His own supernatural Spirit!

In stillness, in solitude, in sincerity there are those stalwarts who in severe self-sacrifice pray and pray and pray for a mighty calling to stand strong in unshakable faith and see what great things our God can do in a world on the edge of anarchy and utter destruction. This is a solitary, unsung labor of love.

In Stillness Christ Draws Very Near

It is essential for us to understand clearly that our Father is not only delighted to have us draw near to Him in quiet communion, but He in turn loves to draw near to us. He loves to make Himself known in reality to His child. He revels in the company of the one who is humble in heart (will,soul) and contrite in spirit.

***It is in stillness we bear our souls before Him.
In solitude we honestly confess our sinister sins.
In silence we wait to hear Him speak peace.
In serenity He assures us all is well.***

Ay such times we since and know and respond in Christ's precious presence. His profound peace flows into our spirits. We are renewed with power to face the day and all its demands.

God's gracious Spirit bears quiet witness within my seeking spirit that He is here! He is near! He is very dear! And because of Him all is well!

This is the way to pray in privacy and in purity. Nothing is hidden. All is open. Hope comes anew.

***It is He who wipes away the tears of our inner anguish.
It is He who speaks consolation to our contrition.
It is He who heals our wounded spirits.
He gives us the joy of gladness again.
He it is who re-creates us.***

For the seeking soul, the hours of stillness and of solitude with the living Christ becomes treasured times. I urge you, get to truly know God this way.

Be Still and Honestly Worship the Most High

Perhaps there is no other encounter with our Father that leads us into utter humility and quiet brokenness before Him. In solitude we sense something of the supreme purity of His person. We are still, subdued, in awe and wonder at His

absolute Holiness. There sweeps over us, around us, through us, an amazing awareness of indescribable delight of wholeness.

I am forgiven.

I am cleansed.

I am re-created

I am made new.

This generates such an up swelling of gratitude, praise, and worship that it flows freely, spontaneously. This is true worship, honest worship at its loftiest and most noble level. His spirit injects into our spirits a new dimension of strength, serenity, and surety in Christ.

It is out of such remarkable moments that I can go out into our sin-stained society and boldly, gladly, gratefully speak of our Lord without shame and without apology. For He has met me. He has touched me. He has made me whole!

It is all His grace, His generosity, His goodness. So I am glad, glad, glad to go on His behalf.

In Stillness Christ Fills Me with His Spirit

Oh, the wonder of just coming to Christ in open, honest, and deep longing to be refreshed with His life! He invites us to come day after day to drink and drink of Him. There is no other way to pray and to ask to be filled and filled and filled, again and again and again.

We are but the channels through which He can pour the power and refreshment of His own life. In stillness we repose in Him, open to His presence, allowing Him to fill us constantly!¹

¹ Adapted from His Way To Pray By . Philip Keller

People of Prayer

Section 13

Calvin Miller

It seems to me that I know little about how to pursue the riches that lie at the depths of godliness.

I have often wondered why God gives a special hunger for himself to some, while others seem not to own it.

We would like to appear to be like Jesus without the discipline of really being like Him.

The heart is a plain door, yet its airy frame opens on majestic vistas of reality. It would seem that the opposite is true. Are not the vaulting thunderheads above the craggy mountains a better place to seek Him than the earthly doorways of our soul? No, for natural vastness inspires, but it rarely results in an intimate togetherness with God. The rapture we feel standing before the Grand Canyon is more likely to erupt in a shout than in a conversation. The soaring galaxies are more prone to cause us to take our eyes from heaven and ask, "Father, are you there?" The best answers never come from beyond us. Why? Because God best declares himself from within us.

1Cor. 2:10 contains one little word that lunges at us with challenge: "But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God."

The apostle uses the word *bathos* for "deep" here.

Deep is the dwelling place of God. Deep is the character of the ocean.

Deep is the gift of discipline.

Appetite is a life sign. Healthy people get hungry. Our appetites can at last define us. Christians are to be people who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5:6). In other words, Christians are to be defined as people who are hungry for God. They are hungry to please Christ. Martyrs are not necessarily those who are hungry to die. They are merely souls with an excessive appetite to please Jesus. They would rather please Him by having to die than disappoint Him by selling out on key issues of obedience.

But without self denial, every eater is a glutton, every earner is a larcenist, every lover is a rapist.

We fail at self denial for three reasons.

First, our focus is usually on the braking system rather than the steering wheel.

Second, we live at too great a distance from the Grand Enabler.

Third, we cannot get heaven's perspective on the real values.

The victory always lies in our hunger for the spiritual intimacy of our union with Christ. But it is more than our stalking of God. God is also haunting us with his intangible reality. Like children trembling in an old, dark, empty house, so God's lovers tremble before the reality of silence in his presence. Why do children quake in an empty large house? They fear it is not empty but filled with some portent of terror. So we tremble, knowing his reality is all about us, so real that we feel what we cannot see -- the terrifying reality of God. We are not afraid he will destroy us. We are only afraid of what he might require of us.

I was decades into my life in Christ before it seriously occurred to me that we do not become vibrant believers because of all the things we quit.

The Desert Fathers went into the desert to be "free of their plenty." Having plenty isn't an abominable state, but to be controlled by it is.

Catherine of Siena was convinced that hardship was a better friend of materialism than wealth.

The ancient monks interpreted detachment as "not allowing either worldly values or self centeredness to distract us from what is most essential in our relationship with God and with each other."

We must break the habit of treasuring our treasures and develop the habit of treasuring the abundance of God's grace.

We must slow down and get quiet in our worship. Why are we frightened by silence in evangelical churches? When worship gets quiet, evangelicals get fidgety. Thomas Merton suggested

that people who don't like each other have trouble being quiet together. The Quakers long ago learned the power of corporate silence. Evangelicals need to learn that to be quiet before God is to see him.

Throughout history, those who wrote about prayer were not largely people of intercession. They rarely went to God to get him to do things for them. Rather, they were enthralled by a hunger for relationship. They seemed to understand that intercession begs a "to do" list. Those who serve such lists actually make notes of the time when they ask God for something, and then leave a column in their prayer ledgers to record the date God gives them the answer. It is an odd kind of bookkeeping on the faithfulness of God. It can foster the notion that when the checklist is through, our prayer responsibilities are through, or that in order to pray longer, our lists will have to get longer.

Drowsiness that destroyed my prayer intention overcame me largely because I conceived of my prayers as my doing all the talking. If I wasn't talking, I wasn't praying, or so I thought. Fenelon instructed me, "Our conversation with God resembles that with a friend. At first there are 1000 things to be told, and just as many to be asked. After a time, however these diminish, while the pleasure of being together does not."

Art is the definition of our praise -- -- an idol is the recipient of it.

Give me a burlapped carpenter who will sit with me until my quiet emptiness is filled by his all sufficient power.

Those who will not praise him may bypass the Christ of the inner altar and know only the Christ of the theologians.

Bernard of Clairvaux "Dear brothers, you should never doubt your prayer, thinking that it might have been in vain, for I tell you truly that before you have uttered the words, the prayer is recorded already in heaven."

**Centering is the act of focus in our relationship with God.
Prayer is a discipline that begins with the willful act of centering.**

Centering is the life consuming art of approaching God where he is to be found - in the center of our souls.

Starting to pray, we undoubtedly confess the noise that prevents prayer. Where we volunteer for silence, and put our personal agendas to sleep, God comes to us, and his coming instructs our lives. Indeed his coming becomes our life.

Centering is more than conversation fodder for our next Bible study. It is a serious call -- an ardent methodology -- for moving into a profound relationship. It is the serious pursuit of God.

We are not the center of our centering; He is.

It is at the center that we know who we are and who is the source of our worth.

God has given each the defining talent that has come to define for the world who he is. In this case, the arts have ushered me into the heavenlies, and praise was my response. From my praise, I found myself propelled to the center. At the center, I sat in listening glory while God magnified himself in my life.

Most people spend so little time in prayer that they have never derived any spiritual growth from it.

Prayer at its highest is the meeting of a holy God with his child who hungers for holiness.

Centering becomes impossible to those who indulge themselves in the illicit.

"Mystical" is that wonderful word we apply to things that have ultimate meaning but elude our understanding.

It is unfortunate that evangelicals have quit building sanctuaries and began building auditoriums. It seems to make a statement about our trading mystery for a lectureship. We must quit making God a practical deity who exists to help us succeed. We forget that facts do not produce life, only the ministry of godliness can do that.

CENTERING

Calvin Miller Centering is the act of focus in our relationship with God. Prayer is a discipline that begins with the willful act of centering. Centering is the life-consuming art of approaching God where he is to be found – in the center of our souls.

- ❖ **Emilie Griffin** “There is a moment between intending to pray and actually praying that is as dark and silent as any moment in our lives. It is the split second between thinking about prayer and really praying. For some of us, this split second may last for decades. It seems, then, that the greatest obstacle to prayer is the simple matter of beginning, the simple exertion of the will, the starting, the acting, the doing.”

The whole idea of centering is not to talk about the inner life but actually to move into it. If you seem to talk a lot about prayer but pray very little, you are seeking only a godly mystique and not God himself.

Praying is the art of focusing on God and allowing our focus to conduct us into his presence. Our private prayers need not be intelligible. In fact, when we are lost in prayer the likelihood is that we will be overcome by an urgent wordlessness. The Spirit “helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express” (Romans 8:26). The more earnestly we pray, the more our prayers transcend mere words. In fact, St. Anthony of the Desert wrote, “It is not a perfect prayer if one is conscious of oneself or understands one’s prayer.” Centering is a function of our wanting to get in touch with God, and prayer is the avenue of this art.

Humility is the fastest way to the center of the self.

Centering is the merger of two “selves” – ours and his. Centering is union with Christ.

Prayer is a dialogue of lovers. Centering is the abandonment of the grasping aspects of selfhood.

All of our lives we cry out to be in constant communion with God. But is it really possible to pray without ceasing as the apostle advocates (1 Thess. 5:17)? Yes. Of course, the trick is to make your way into the cell of your inward self and be content to live there.

- ❖ **William Law** “The pearl of eternity is the church or temple of God within you, the consecrated place of divine worship, where alone you can worship God in the spirit and in truth. When once you are well grounded in this inward worship, you will have learned to live unto God above time and place. For every day will be Sunday to you, and wherever you go, you will have a priest, a church, and an altar along with you.”

Thomas Moore says there are three passions: love, hate, and prayer.

Then once in some forever, there is a person who prays so much that it seems his or her very life becomes a prayer. But centering prayers are payers that surpass our infrequent intermittent petitions. Centering prayers are never those hurried sky-lobs that we toss upward amid our hassled to and fro-ings. Such giddy intercession assumes that God replies to our low-caliber asking by shooting back at us his high-caliber answers.

Centering prayers are interested in relationship, not answers.

Centering prayer wants God alone – all of God – more of God – only God.

God’s glory must come gradually into our fragile finite lives or we would die overwhelmed by his immensity.

I suspect that the difference between a person of seasoned prayer and one of smaller prayer experience is the amount of time they spend talking than listening. I used to be troubled by Paul’s admonition to “pray without ceasing.” I now believe this is only possible to those who have had enough significant prayer experience to make the listening prayer a large part of their praying. Those whose prayers are unending monologues make themselves a giant mouth while making God a small ear. The best prayers are dialogues of rapport. *PRESENCE* is being “with God.” It is neither talking nor listening. It is abiding in the presence of God. Rapport treasures oneness so much it will not make of prayer two modes – one mode of talking, and one of listening.

Silent togetherness is better than chatty concord.

Centering becomes the point of greatest rapport between God and his needy children. This conversation goes on and on, and when neither partner speaks, both are welded into a powerful

listening mode. It is then that our wordless conversation reaches its apex.

At the depths of centered praying lies a hush. Glib godliness is crushed to silence by majesty. In the majesty of final things there was silence in heaven for half an hour (Rev. 8:1). One of the theologians used a term *mysterium tremendum* (Latin for "Overwhelming mystery"). In the Holy of Holies we are forbidden trivial speech because the air is too heavy with unfathomable glory.

Remember how Peter sinned by getting chatty at the transfiguration? The hush of things exalted usually leads the naïve to fill the silence with words. It is because they live such surface lives that deeper things leave them nervous and talkative. We are to be like John that first Easter. Seeing the empty tomb, he was forbidden speech by the awe of majesty. This quiet encounter is the most direct route to the center.

What is the power of this mystery? Proximity to God. What is the step of Proximity? The center. Drawing near to the epicenter of power will cause the prudent to shut up. Only the foolish and shallow will speak. This is good. Why? Because listening is a part of centering. God's omniscience informs us that we all know too little and talk too much.

We have already said that prayer may be the communion of silent concord. It needs no words at all to express the togetherness of God and ourselves. Prayer is dialogue, and God would rather have us be overly chatty in his presence than never enter his presence at all.

Here lies the great paradox of the centered life. Quiet listening is the mode of our entering in, but sometimes life at the center grows overwhelming with the pleasure of praise. The *mysterium tremendum* begins to swell to the point of rupture. Its vastness becomes too great for its human container. Then it forbids the believer to sit still, and be quiet that at first ushers the believer into the center of God gives way to praise that bursts into his glorification.¹

¹ Calvin Miller Into the Depths of God

The Informed Life

The call of God is a pilgrimage that is forever marked by eating our alarm clocks. Our call puts a holy centeredness in our living. The angels cannot help but applaud the kneeling and hungry who are famished for God. Vince Lombardi, "Men, you can only win the big games when you learn to play with the little hurts of life." It is every Christian's call to play the little hurts.

My suspicion is that only those who can bless the furnace ever understand the gold.

Tough times don't last for long, but tough saints go on forever. The calling gets us through the tough times.

When God is silent it is usually when we most need him to remind us that we are called.

If we want to be involved with God, we must play with pain – endure the little hurts of the game and maybe survive the big hurts. Playing with the little hurts has been the theme of so many saints of God. All they are may be admired, for all they are is so like Christ.

Hurt is the essential ingredient of ultimate Christlikeness.

Integrity in obedience is the lesson of the cross. Obedience is not the major work of the disciple; it is the only work.

Character is a by-product of our hunger for a deeper relationship with God. None of the saints ever worked on character development. They never hungered to be holy as though holiness were a virtue to be sought. They were needy men and women who cried out for concord with Jesus. The pursuit of any other virtue was unnecessary.

Character is a word of dignity; it finds its life in discipline and work. Character is the hidden "us," what we are in the dark. Christ-character does not come until we have lost control. While we are in charge, we swagger in our arrogance and grow smug in our weakness, which we assume to be strengths. But when we lose control, we see our weaknesses and let God transform them into strengths. Those who are in control long enough finally use their power to crucify others. But the nail side of the cross is the wisdom side of crucifixion; the nail side of dying is the place where character is born!

Born? Nay, Forged!

The forge is the anvil where heat and hammer are applied to recalcitrant metal. It is the white-hot, clanging, bruising blows that shape the iron.

Frederick Buechner, "Go where your best prayers take you, unclench the fists of your spirit and take it easy. Breathe deep of the glad air and live one day at a time. Know that you are precious."

The Confessional Life

Christ is always the key to winning over our dour moods. The issue of our wholeness lies in making Christ the Lord over all our circumstances.

Francois Fenelon observed, "Discouragement is not the fruit of humility, but of pride." Those who are easily depressed are usually those who were confident they could handle anything, until the gaseous bubble of their confidence was pricked by their failure. Their pride had set them up for the fall.

When we Welcome Christ into our lives, we gain the power to control life and not be crushed by it. Yet to withstand the crush of life, we must always be submitted to his inner lordship. The yielded life becomes the strong life.²

² Calvin Miller, Into the Depths of God

THE POWER OF LIVING FOR GOD'S PLEASURE

The Hebrews used the word shalom, a word usually translated "peace," to signify their deep contentment with their God. Faith in God's shalom puts Him in charge of the tangled instances of our lives. We were made to love Christ, and our loving Him pleases God. Then, as His pleasure falls over us, we are given all the power we need to handle the strangling circumstances that choke the purpose from our dreams. The new sense that God is pleased with us gives His wonderful shalom into our souls. God smiles, and we are set free from the shackles of believing that what anyone else thinks matters. We live for God's pleasure alone. So shalom has two sides- a heavenly side and an earthly side. Pleasure is God's side of the great shalom. Joy is our side. We don't need stuff to have joy and power. We need the pleasure of God. His smile always results in our joy. So most people – even most Christians, I'm afraid - spend their days trying to get all they can. Then they think they can enjoy all they get. But instead, they end up putting everything in a box, then sit on the lid and poison the rest. Are such thing-centered Christians really joyful? Of course not! Their selfish drive to get ahead in the world steals from them the power of getting ahead in God's pleasure.

God's pleasure bequeaths a double joy.

First the joy it gives us is the power to face all things. This power allows us to be achievers. And because we feel that through our achievements God has given us the upper hand in redeeming His world, we receive the second joy – we become people of confidence. Our achievements are never our doing. They come from our joyful dependency on Him. And our dependency leads to confidence in what we can do through Him. How do we find this rhythm of deliverance? We start at the center of our emptiness. We confess freely that our hearts are the unworthy temples for the adoration of our egos. We admit that we were foolish to become ensnared by our old routines, rhythms, and selfish dreams of fulfillment. When we put aside the rhythm of self, we are free to be swept up in the rhythm of God's joy. Confession is God's gift to us, to help us empty ourselves of self. Confession pulls the plug on ego, draining from our lives all that was most obnoxious – us! There is a

power to go about doing right, and our success or failure is not part of the equation. In fact, we are freed from the bondage of always having to feel like we're getting ahead. If we succeed, the glory is His. If we fail, He is pleased when we try again. And when He is pleased, we cannot fail. If God is served, what appears to be failure may be the most glorious successes.

Until we are doing what God has gifted us to do, we will not be doing what God has called us to do. His gifts are given unto us to furnish us to do His calling.

Brother Lawrence scrubbed pots in a monastery kitchen. He did not glory in the scrubbing as a way to praise. But he did glory in such mundane work as an opportunity to praise. The grime of his hands was not the goal, for it only distracted his hands, leaving his heart free to continue to sing its Te Deums in praise before the throne of God. His menial work afforded him singing room at the throne of God. Thus there was nothing that could prevent him from continuing to appropriate the power of God's pleasure. Then the pleasure of heaven brought joy to the dishwater, and the marriage of pleasure and joy elevated his living. How often I have discovered that the church is full of frowning saints. I can only surmise that we have missed Brother Lawrence's path to pleasure. We have begrudged the scrubbing of pots as a hell to be escaped rather than a heaven to be enjoyed. In the larger context, Brother Lawrence's scrubbing joy becomes a way of life to all who cherish the gifts of the Spirit. They are the scrub work of God.¹

¹ Calvin Miller, The Power Of Living For God's Pleasure

OSWALD CHAMBERS

The coming of Jesus is not a peaceful thing; it is a disturbing thing, because it means the destruction of every peace that is not based on a personal relationship to Himself.

The things that Jesus did were of the most menial and commonplace order, and this is an indication that it takes all God's power in me to do the most commonplace things in His way. It takes God Almighty incarnate in us to do the meanest duty as it ought to be done.

The thought is unspeakably full of glory, that God the Holy Spirit can come into my heart and fill it so full that the life of God will manifest itself all through this body which used to manifest exactly the opposite.

SIN is the outcome of a relationship set up between man and the devil whereby man becomes "boss" over himself, his own god. SIN is not wrong doing; it is wrong being, independence from God. God has undertaken the responsibility for its removal on the ground of the redemption.

Personal holiness is never the ground of my acceptance with God; the only ground of acceptance is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord did not say, "Go" or, "Do"; He said, "watch and pray." If we struggle in prayer, it is because the enemy is gaining ground. If prayer is simple to us, it is because we have the victory. If we have to fight, it is because we have disobeyed; we ought to be more than conquerors.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY is not reached by the passing of the years, but by obedience to the will of God. God never destroys the work of His own hands, He removes what would pervert it, that is all. Maturity is the stage where the whole life has been brought under the control of God.¹

¹ A New Testament Walk with Oswald Chambers, Compiled by Adair, and Verploegh

Time for prayer
Isaiah 64:7

There are earnest Christians who have just enough prayer to maintain their spiritual position but not enough to grow spiritually. Seeking to fight off temptation is a defensive attitude rather than assertive one which reaches for higher attainment. The spiritual teaching to cry out day and night in prayer must, to some degree, become our experience if we are to be intercessors.

A man said to me, " I see the importance of much prayer, and yet my life hardly shows time for it. Am I to give up? How can I accomplish what I desire?"

**I admitted that the difficulty was universal and quoted a Dutch proverb: "What is heavy as must weigh heaviest."
The most important must have the first place. The law of God is unchangeable. In our communication with heaven, we only get as we give. Unless we are willing to pay the price -- to sacrifice time and attention and seemingly necessary tasks for the sake of the heavenly gifts -- we cannot expect much power from heaven in our work.¹**

**Persistency That Prevails
Luke 11:7**

Here is the central lesson of the parable. In our intercession we may find that there is difficulty and delay in the answer. It may be as if God says, "I can't help you at this time." It is not easy to hold fast our confidence that He will hear and then to continue to preserve in full assurance that we shall have what we ask. Even so, this is what God desires from us. He highly prizes our confidence in him, which is essentially the highest honor the

¹ The Best of Andrew Murray

creature can render to Creator. He will therefore do anything to train us in the exercise of this trust in Him. Blessed the man who is not staggered by God's delay or silence or apparent refusal, but is strong in faith giving glory to God. Such faith perseveres, importunately if need be, and cannot fail to inherit the blessing.

Revealed Sin 1 Samuel 12:23

We may think we know what sin is keeping us from prayer, but only God can truly reveal it. For example, after the defeat at Ai, He spoke to Joshua. "Israel has sinned and broken my covenant." Israel had sinned. God himself revealed it.

God must reveal to us that the lack of prayer is a greater sin than we had thought. It means we have little taste for fellowship with God. Our faith rests more on our own work than on the power of God. We are not ready to sacrifice this for a time with God.

When the pressure of work becomes the excuse for not finding time in His presence, there is no sense of absolute dependence upon God. There is no full surrender to Christ.

If we would yield to God's spirit all our excuses would fall away and we would admit that we had sinned. Samuel once said, "as for me, I will certainly not sin against the Lord by ending my prayers for you. And I will continue to teach you what is good and right" (1 Samuel 12:23). Ceasing from prayer is sin against God.

When God discloses sin it must be confessed and cast out. If we have reason to think prayerlessness is the sin that is in "our camp," let us begin with personal and united confession. With God's help let us put away and destroy the sin. Then we can know His presence and power.

PRAYER QUOTES

Andrew Murray The Best Of Andrew Murray On Prayer

Approaching God in Prayer

If your heart is cold and dead, remember that worship is not simply a matter of feeling but has to do first with the will.

Praise God for the inner chamber of prayer and His promise of blessing there. God will make the place a Beth-EI (house of God) where His angels shall ascend and descend and where you will cry out, "Yahweh will be my God." He will also make it Peni-EI where you will see the face of God, as a prince of God (Isra-EI,) wrestling in overcoming – type prayer. It will become the most blessed place on earth.

Time for Jesus

The clear focused objective of the morning quiet time is to secure the presence of Christ for the whole day. Meditation and prayer and the Word are secondary to this purpose of renewing the link for the day between Christ and you in the morning hour.

What encouragement when we can say: God has taken charge of me; He is going with me; I am going to do his will all day in His strength; I am ready for all that may come. Yes, what a change would come into our lives if secret prayer were not only an asking for knowledge or strength, but the giving of our lives for one day into the safe keeping of a faithful God.

Prayer's Unbroken Fellowship

Close and continued prayer fellowship with God will in due time leave its mark and be evident to those around us. Just as Moses did not know that his face shone, we ourselves will be unaware of the light of God shining from us.

The spirit of inner prayer must be carried over into a holy watchfulness throughout the day. We do not know at what hour the enemy will come. This continuance of the morning watch

can be maintained by quiet self-restraint, by not giving the reins of our lives over to our natural impulses.

It is a great thing to enter the inner chamber, shut the door, and meet the Father in secret. It is a greater thing to open the door again and go out to enjoy God's presence – which nothing can disturb.

The Place Of Prayer

When Moses went in to pray for himself or his people and to wait for instructions, he found one waiting for him. What a lesson for our morning watch.

We must get into the right place. Moses went into the tabernacle to speak with God.

He separated himself from the people and went where he could be alone with God.

He went to a place where God was to be found.

Jesus has told us where that place is. He calls us to enter into our closet, shut the door, and pray to the Father in secret.

Any place where we are really alone with God can be for us the secret of His presence.

To speak with God requires separation from all else. It needs a heart intently set upon and in full expectation of meeting God personally and having direct dealings with Him.

When we go there to speak to God will hear the voice of one speaking to them.

We must get into the right position. Moses heard the voice of One speaking from the mercy seat. Bow before the mercy seat where the awareness of your unworthiness will not hinder you, but will be a real help in trusting God. At the mercy seat you can have assurance that your upward look will be met by His eye, that your prayer can be heard, that His loving answer will be given. Bow before the mercy seat and be sure that the God of mercy will see and bless you. Numbers 7:89

God's Word And Prayer

Prayer and God's word are inseparably linked together: power in the use of either depends upon the presence of the other. It is clear why this is so.

Prayer and the Word have one common center – God.

Prayer seeks God; the Word reveals God.

In prayer, we ask God: in the Word, God answers us.

In prayer we rise to heaven to dwell with God; in the Word, God comes to dwell with us.

In prayer, we give ourselves to God; in the Word, God gives Himself to us.

In Prayer and the Word, God must be all.

Make God the center of your heart, the one objective of your desires.

Prayer and the Word will be a blessed fellowship with God, the interchange of thought and love and life – a dwelling in God and God in us.

Seek God and Live!

The Will Of God

Let this be our hearts one desire – that in everything the will of God be done in us and by us, even as it is in heaven.

As we fellowship with God in the inner chamber of the morning watch, waiting and depending with a childlike attitude of trust on what He gives us, we receive the knowledge of His will as well as the power to perform it. In surrender to do all that He wills, the study of His Word and this time of prayer bring true and full blessing.

According To God's Will

Jesus' teaching continually connected the answer to prayer with a life that was being lived according to God's will: trusting, forgiving, merciful, humble, believing, asking in His name, abiding in His love, observing/keeping His commands, and having His words abiding within.

Prayer has power according to the life! A life in line with God's will can ask according to God's will.

When you live according to God's will you are spiritually able to discern what to ask for. A life yielded to and molded by the will

of God will know what and how to pray. Boldness in prayer comes from the assurance that the spirit of asking and the thing asked are both according to the will of God.

Intercession

There is a mystery of glory in prayer. On the one hand we see God in His holiness, love, and power – waiting, longing to bless us. On the other hand is a sinful, unworthy human being – asking God in prayer for the very life and love of heaven to dwell in our hearts.

There is strength in the unity of believers. God will certainly avenge His own who cry day and night to Him. It is when Christians cease looking for help apart from God and aim at being bound together to the throne of God, that the church will put on her strength to overcome the world. This comes by continuously asking for the power of God's Spirit.

Open Their Eyes

The prayer of Elisha for his servant was answered in a wonderful way. The young man saw the mountain full of chariots of fire and horsemen surrounding Elisha. The heavenly host had been sent by God to protect His servant.

Elisha prayed a second time. The Syrian army was struck with blindness and was led into Samaria. There Elisha prayed for God to open their eyes, and they found themselves hopeless prisoners in the hand of the enemy.

All the powers of the heaven are at our disposal in the service of His kingdom. How little the children of God live in the faith of the heavenly vision – the power of the Holy Spirit, on them, with them, and in them.

The church is unconscious of its weakness to do the work of bringing others to Christ and building up believers for a life of holiness and fruitfulness. Pray that God may open eyes to see the great and fundamental need of the Church: the need for intercession to bring down His blessing.

Name Of Jesus – Power Of Intercession

Faith in the power of Jesus' name and our right to use it gives us courage to be intercessors. Jesus sent the disciples out into the world with this awareness: He who sits upon the throne, and who lives in my heart, has promised that what I ask in His name I will receive.

Intense and unceasing prayerfulness is the essential mark of the healthy spiritual life. The power of all-prevailing intercession will indeed be the portion of those who live only for their Lord.

My Great Desire

Psalm 27:4 is our response to God's desire to dwell in us. When the desire of God begins to rule our life, our desire is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of our life, to delight in the Lord's perfection, to meditate in His temple and to learn what God means when He speaks.

The more we realize that God's desire is to give His rest, and the more our desire is to dwell in His temple and behold His beauty, the more the Spirit of prayer will be ours. . . The thought that God is longing to find His home and His rest in the hearts of men will urge us to pray. All the thoughts of our weakness and unworthiness will be swallowed up in the wonderful assurance that He has said of human hearts: "This is my home where I will live forever. . . I will live here, for this is the place I desired" (Psalm 132:14).

God has made fervent, persistent prayer indispensable to his purpose being fulfilled. Thank God for this divine partnership in which God commits the fulfillment of His desires to our keeping.

Why Could We Not?

Matt. 17:21

The disciples had often cast out demons. But here they had been powerless. They asked the Lord what the reason might be. His answer is very simple: "you didn't have enough faith."

How is it that we cannot live that life of unbroken Fellowship with Christ that the Scripture promises? Simply because of our unbelief. We do not realize that faith must accept and expect that God will, by His almighty power, fulfill every promise He has

made. We do not live in that utter helplessness and dependence on God alone which is the very essence of faith. We are not strong in the faith, fully persuaded that what God has promised He is able and willing to perform.

But what is the reason why this faith is so often lacking? "But this kind of demon won't leave unless you have prayed and fasted." To have a strong faith in God requires a life in close touch with Him by persistent prayer. We cannot call up faith at our bidding; it needs close communion with God through prayer. It needs the denial of self -- the sacrifice of a worldly heart. Just as we need God to give this faith and power, He to needs our whole being to be utterly given up to Him. Prayer and Fasting are essential to this.

**Worship God in the Spirit
Philippians 3:3**

Today let us worship God in the Spirit. We have, to come the Father asking for the Holy Spirit. We have requested the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Now we begin to pray

First we pray to God the Father, thanking Him for His blessings. We acknowledge our entire dependence on Him and express our trust in His love and care for us. We wait for Him until we have the assurance of His presence.

Second we direct our prayer to the Lord Jesus and ask for grace to abide in Him always, for without Him we can do nothing. We look to Him as our Lord, our preserver, our life, and give ourselves into His keeping.

Thirdly we pray to the Holy Spirit. Asking Him to strengthen us so that what we have asked for of the Father and the Son may happen. He is the dispenser of the power and gifts of the Father and of the Lord Jesus.

"We who worship God in the Spirit are the ones who are truly circumcised. We put no confidence in human effort. Instead, we boast about what Christ Jesus has done for us." We have no

power in ourselves to do good. We can count on the Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit to work in us. Take time to meditate on these things; ask God to grant His fruit in your life.

Intercession James 5:16

There is value in intercession. It is an indispensable part of prayer. It strengthens our love and faith in what God can do, and it brings blessing and salvation to others. Prayer should be mainly for others, not for ourselves alone. Begin by praying for those near and dear to us, those with whom we live, that we may be of help to them and not a hindrance.

Pray for your friends and all with whom you come into contact. Pray for all Christians, especially for ministries and those in responsible positions.

Pray for those who do not yet know the Lord as their Savior. Make a list of the names of those God has laid on your heart and pray for their conversion. Christ needs you to bring to Him in prayer the souls of those around you. Pray, too, for all poor and neglected ones. Pray for mission work. Use a mission calendar with daily subjects for prayer.

The Indwelling Christ Eph. 3:17

The great privilege that separated Israel from other nations was this: they had God dwelling in their midst. He made His home in the tabernacle and the temple. In the New Testament we see God dwelling in the heart of the believer. Jesus said: "all those who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and live with them" (John 14:23). Or, as Paul said of himself, "Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

The Gospel is the dispensation of the indwelling Christ. In the Eph. 3:14 -- 19 Paul teaches how we can experience this blessing of the Christian life.

- **"I fall on my knees and pray to the Father." The blessings must come from the Father to the praying believer.**

- **"I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will give you my mighty inner strength through his Holy Spirit."**
- **"I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in Him." It is in the very nature of Christ to desire to live in the hearts of faith.**
- **"May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love."**

Prayerfully meditate on what Christ, through the Holy Spirit, has chosen to do. He has chosen to make His home in our hearts!

Dear Lord, the thought that you would choose to live in us is "infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope" (Eph. 3:20). May our hearts be a pleasing dwelling place. In Jesus name, Amen. Andrew Murray

God's Word and Prayer

They have kept your word. . . My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you.

John 17:6,9

Prayer and God's Word are inseparably linked together: power in the use of either depends upon the presence of the other. It is clear why this is so. Prayer and the Word have one common center -- God. Prayer seeks God; the Word reveals God. In prayer, we ask God; in the Word, God answers us. In prayer, we rise to heaven to dwell with God; in the Word, God comes to dwell with us. In prayer, we give ourselves to God; in the Word, God gives Himself to us.

Little of the Word with little prayer is death to the spiritual life. Much of the Word with little prayer is unhealthy. Much prayer with little of the Word gives more life, but without steadfastness. A full measure of the Word and of prayer each day gives a healthy and powerful life.

In prayer and the Word, God must be all. Make God the center of your heart, the one object of your desire. Prayer and the Word will be a blessed fellowship with God, the interchange of thought and love and life -- a dwelling in God and God in us. Seek God and live!

O God, I come to you in prayer for your power to be operative in me. I am praying – and will read and will memorize more – so that Your holy words, will give my whole life in You steadfastness, and Your life in me will be healthy and powerful. Amen.²

Prayer and God's Word

This is what the Lord says: . . . I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my Word.

Isa. 66:1 -- 2

Many of us are so occupied with how much for how little we have to say in our prayers that the voice of One speaking is never heard because it is not expected were waited for. We need to get to the right frame of mind and have a listening attitude.

In regard to the connection between prayer and the Word of God in our private devotions, this expression has often been quoted: "I pray, I speak to God; I read the Bible, God speaks to me" we need to ask how our Scripture reading and praying can become true Fellowship with God.

A prayerful Spirit is the Spirit to which God speaks. Prayer prepares the heart for receiving the Word from God himself, for the teaching of the Spirit to give the spiritual understanding of it, for the faith that is made part of its mighty working.

In God's Word I read what God will do in me, how God would have me come to Him in prayer, assurance that I will be heard, and what God will do in the world. A prayerful Spirit will be a listening Spirit waiting to hear what God says. In true communion with God, His presence and the part He takes must be as real as my own.

Let us prepare ourselves to pray with a heart that humbly waits to hear God speak. The greatest blessing in prayer will be our ceasing to pray to let God speak.

My Lord, I come to You with anticipation. I have "ears to hear." I will obey. Amen³

² The Best Of Andrew Murray

³ The Best Of Andrew Murray

WHAT TO PRAY

For The Power Of The Holy Spirit

**I bow my knees unto the Father . . .
That He would grant you . . .
To be strengthened with might by His Spirit.
Ephesians 3:14, 16**

**Wait for the promise of the Father
Acts 1:4**

For The Spirit Of Supplication

**The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us.
Romans 8:26**

**I will pour [out] . . . the Spirit of . . . supplications.
Zechariah 12:10**

For All Saints

**With all prayer and supplications in the Spirit, and watching
thereunto with all perseverance and supplications for all saints.
Ephesians 6:18**

That God's People May Be Kept From The World

**Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom Thou
hast given me . . . I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out
of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil
[one]. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
John 17:11, 15-16**

For The Spirit Of Love In The Church

**[I pray] that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them and
Thou in me . . . that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me,
and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me . . . That the love**

**wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.
John 17:22-23, 26**

For The Power Of The Holy Spirit On Ministers

**I beseech you . . . that ye strive together with me in your prayers
to God for me. Romans 15:30**

For The Spirit On All Christian Workers

**Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift
bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may
be given by many on our behalf. 2 Corinthians 1:11**

For God's Spirit On Our Mission Work

**As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said,
separate me Barnabas and Soul . . . When they had fasted and
prayed . . . they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the
Holy Ghost departed. Acts 13:2-4**

For God's Spirit On Our Missionaries

**Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon
you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost
part of the earth. Acts 1:8**

For More Laborers

**Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth
laborers into His harvest. Matthew 9:38**

For The Spirit To Convince The World Of Sin

**I will send [the Comforter] unto you. And when He is come, He
will reprove the world of sin. John 16:7-8**

For The Spirit Of Burning

And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion . . . shall be called holy . . . When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion . . . by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. Isaiah 4:3-4

For The Church Of The Future

[That the children] might not be as their fathers . . . a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God. Psalm 78:8

I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. Isaiah 44:3

For Schools And Colleges

As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever. Isaiah 59:21

For The Power Of The Holy Spirit In Our Sabbath Schools

Thus saith the Lord, even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. Isaiah 49:25

For Kings And Rulers

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 1 Timothy 2:1-2

For Peace

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications . . . be made . . . for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. 1 Timothy 2:1-3

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth. Psalm 46:9

For The Holy Spirit On Christendom

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. 2 Timothy 3:5

Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Revelation 3:1

For God's Spirit On The Heathen

Behold, these shall come from far . . . and these from the land of Sinim. Isaiah 49:12

Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. Psalm 68:31

I the Lord will hasten it in his time. Isaiah 60:22

For God's Spirit On The Jews

I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced. Zechariah 12:10

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. Romans 10:1

For All Who Are In Suffering

Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. Hebrews 13:3

For The Holy Spirit In Your Own Work

I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mighty. Colossians 1:29

For The Spirit On Your Own Congregation

Beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:47

For More Conversions

He is able to save them to the uttermost . . . seeing he ever liveth to make intercession. Hebrews 7:25

We shall give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word . . . And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied . . . greatly. Acts 6:4,7

For The Holy Spirit On Young Converts

Peter and John . . . prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Acts 8:14-16

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also . . . given [us] the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

That God's People May Realize Their Calling

I will bless thee . . . and thou shalt be a blessing . . . In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. Genesis 12: 2-3

God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us . . . That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Psalm 67:1-2

That All God's People May Know The Holy Spirit

**The Spirit of truth; whom the world . . . neither knoweth . . . but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.
John 14:17**

**Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?
1 Corinthians 6:19**

For The Spirit Of Intercession

I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit . . . that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. John 15:16

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name . . . At that day ye shall ask in my name. John 16:24,26

For The Holy Spirit with the Word Of God

**Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.
1 Thessalonians 1:5**

[Those who] preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. 1 Peter 1:12

For The Spirit Of Christ In His People

I am the vine, ye are the branches. John 15:5

That ye should do as I have done to you. John 13:15

For The Spirit Of Holiness

God is the holy One. His people is a holy people. He speaks: I am holy: I am the Lord who makes you holy. Christ prayed: Sanctify them. Make them holy through Thy truth. Paul prayed: “[God] stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness.” God of peace, sanctify you wholly!

Pray for all saints – God’s holy ones – through out the church that the Spirit of holiness may rule them. Specially for new converts. For the saints in your own neighborhood or congregation. For any you are specially interested in. Think of their special need, weakness, or sin; and pray that God may make them holy.⁴

⁴ Andrew Murray, A 31-Day Guide To Prayer

PSALMS DEVOTIONS

Andrew Murray If you truly desire to meet God each morning and worship Him in spirit and in truth, then let your heart be filled with the Word of God in the Psalms.

As you read the Psalms, underline the word “Lord” or “God” wherever it occurs, and also the pronouns referring to God. This will help to connect the contents of the Psalms with God, who is the object of all prayer. These underlined words will make God the central thought and lead you to a new worship of Him.

The psalms, by the power of the Spirit, will teach us to abide in God’s presence. Read Psalm 119. Meditate on the thought that the God who is found throughout the whole psalm is the same God who gives us His law and enables us to keep it. This psalm will soon become one of the most beloved, and you will find its prayers and its teaching concerning God’s Word drawing you continually up to Him.

Experiencing God Through Prayer Chapter 1.

THIRSTING FOR GOD

Everyone is capable of praying, but many have the mistaken idea that they are not called to prayer. Just as we are called to salvation, we are called to prayer.

Scripture commands us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Prayer is nothing more than turning our hearts toward God and receiving in turn His love.

Meditating on God’s Word in prayer is desirable, but known by very few. For those who are seeking salvation, meditative prayer is not what God requires of you or what I would recommend.

Are you thirsting for those living waters Jesus promised when He said, “if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink” (John 7:37)?

Then come you starving souls; come and be filled!

Come bring your affliction, pain, and misery, and you will be comforted!

Come you who are sick and filled with disease, and you will be healed!

Come draw near to your Father who desires to embrace you in His loving arms!

Come you poor, wandering sheep back to the shepherd!

Come, sinner, to your savior!

Come you who are uneducated in spiritual things! You are not incapable of praying!

Let everyone, without exception, come! For Jesus has called all of you.

Yet those who are without a yielded heart are excused. For there must be a heart yielded before Him to receive His love.

Come then give your heart to God and learn the ways of prayer.

For those who have the desire, it is easy to pray. The Holy Spirit has enabled common men to pray great prayers by His gifts and grace.

Prayer can help you to attain perfection, because it will keep you in the presence of God. Genesis 17:1 says, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." We are brought into His presence and kept there without interruption through prayer.

There is only one requirement, though, that you must follow at all times. It will not interfere with outward actions. It may be practiced by princes, kings, priest, soldiers, children, and laborers.

This simple requirement is you must learn to pray from your heart and not from your head.

The reason is man's mind is so limited in its operation that it can only focus on one object at a time. But the prayer offered from the heart cannot be interrupted by reason. Nothing can interrupt this prayer except confused affection. When you have enjoyed God and the sweetness of His love, however, you will find it impossible to set your affections on anything other than Him.

I have found it easy to obtain the presence of God. He desires to be more present to us than we are to seek Him. He desires to give Himself to us far more readily than we are to receive Him. We only need to know how to seek God, and this is easier and more natural than breathing.

Oh, dear ones, do not think of yourselves as misfits. By prayer you can live in God's presence with as little effort as you live on the very air you are now breathing.

Is it not sinful to neglect prayer? But you do not have to live this way once you have learned this easy method.

Let us prepare our hearts now as we begin our study of prayer.

Experiencing God Through Prayer

Chapter 2

Scriptural Meditation

There are two ways of introducing you to prayer. One is meditation on the Word. The other is by reading the Word and then meditating in prayer.

To meditate on Gods Word simply means to take a portion of Scripture and begin the following procedure. Read only a small section and allow that passage to be “digested” before going on to another.

Draw from it its fullest meaning. Think it through. Try to relate it to other similar Scriptures. Commit it to memory. Then, having thoroughly examined the passage, proceed to take another one and do the same.

Try not to read more than half a page at a time. It is not the quantity of Scripture you read, but the quality that will be to your benefit.

Those who are fast readers gain no more advantage that a bee would by skimming the surface of a flower than penetrating it to extract its pollen.

Speed reading can be used for other subjects but never divine truth.

To receive profit from the Word, you must read as I have described. I am certain that by doing this you will have made meditating on the Word a habit that will cause you to grow as a Christian.

In physical food you receive no nourishment until you chew and swallow the food. The food may taste good in your mouth as you continue to enjoy its flavor. But it is in swallowing and digesting that it benefits the body.

In an act of love, full of respect and confidence in God, swallow the blessed spiritual food He has given to you. It will cause you to become a mature Christian.

A word of caution for beginners. Don't wander from truth to truth and from subject to subject. The right way is to allow each individual truth to be meditated upon while its sweet flavor remains fresh. You certainly would not stuff your mouth with another bite of food until you had swallowed the last one. Scriptural truth should be digested in the same way.

As you form the habit of meditating on God's Word, it will become easier for you to bring to remembrance other scriptures of the same

nature. This will further enhance your ability to bring the Word of God into reality in your life.

The second method is to learn to pray the Word.

When you come to God in prayer, open your Bible to where you have been meditating. Remember at this point that your main objective is to focus on God's presence. Your Scripture verse will keep your mind from straying to other things.

This method of praying can be used by those of you with even a small portion of faith, because it will keep your mind from distractions. This way even a small amount of faith will enlarge in proportion when viewed by itself.

Oh, dear one, God has promised that He would come and make His abode with him who does His will. (see John 14:23.) He has promised to dwell in our innermost being – the new Holy of Holies place.

St. Augustine once blamed himself for all the lost time trying to find God's will when, from the very beginning, he could have done so by this manner of praying the Word.

When you have settled into a peaceful spirit and are fully aware of God's presence; when earthly distractions are not primary thoughts; when your soul has properly fed on God's Word and you have chosen by an act of your will to believe it, you are now ready to communicate with your heavenly Father.

Oh, you who desire a deeper walk with God, come, enter into His presence through His Word. It is God's desire to communicate Himself to you, to impart abundant grace, and to allow you to enjoy His presence.

EXPERIENCING GOD THROUGH PRAYER CHAPTER 3

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Let us begin now to practice praying the Word to God using the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 as an example.

Dear reader, know this fundamental truth as you begin. When Jesus prays for God's Kingdom to come, remember that He said, "the Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).

Before we had invited Jesus to come into our heart, we were lost sinners. The only promise available to us was that our wages for sin was death. (See Romans 6:23.)

But now that we have repented from our sin, turned to Christ to be cleansed from our sin, and invited Him to take up His abode with us, He brought with Him the Kingdom of God with all its benefits and promises.

Let me say something now to those in the clergy. I know many of you tell your parishioners what waits for them in the end of their earthly lives. However, you often do not give clear or sufficient instruction as to how to attain it.

Make the steps to salvation understood by even the least educated in your congregation. Their attention should be on Jesus alone.

Then teach your people by an act of profound adoration before God, how to find Him in prayer. Tell them how to get quiet inwardly, how to keep their minds from wandering, and how to build up their faith in God through meditating on His Word.

Now let's look together at the Lord's prayer and ponder the meaning of the words.

Dwell on the word's "Our Father." God has taken the initiative to invite you to become His child. He desires to be your Father. Pour out your heart's desire to Him.

Now wait a few moments in silence before Him. Always allow some quiet time as you pray in case our heavenly Father wants to reveal His will to you.

Come to the Father as a feeble child, soiled and bruised by repeated falls, destitute of strength to stand or of power to cleanse yourself. Allow the Father to see your confusion. Then,

intermingle a word of love or grief for past sins and sink once again into silence before Him.

Continue on in the Lord's prayer in this same manner. Beseech the King of Glory to reign in you. Abandon yourself to God to do a finished work in you. Acknowledge His right to rule over you.

If you feel as though you should remain peaceful and quiet rather than continue on with the prayer, do so.

Then, when you are ready, continue on with the second petition, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

Ask God to accomplish in you and through you His will on earth. Surrender your freedom and will into His hands to be disposed of as He pleases.

When you find that it is God's will for you to be loving, you will desire to love. You will seek Him first for His love in which to love others.

Don't burden yourself with frequent repetition of set forms or studied prayer. When you meditate on the Lord's prayer only once and then pray it out to the Father, it will produce more fruit than meaningless repeated words.

When you come to the verse, "Give us this day our daily bread," place yourself as a sheep before your SHEPHERD. Look to Him for your food. "Oh, Divine Shepherd, feed Your flock with Yourself. You are indeed our daily bread."

Tell the Father all about your family 's needs, but do so remembering the one great principle of faith – God is within us.

As you pray, don't form image of God in your mind. All our imaginations of God amount to nothing. You may, however, remember Jesus Christ in His birth or crucifixion, provided you always seek Him in His resurrected state.

Perhaps, on some occasions, you come to Him needing a physician. Then, come without mental aggravation because He has the healing virtue for all our maladies. You have no need to exert yourself in prayer. Simply yield to God's operations within you until He completes His work.

As you experiment with prayer in this manner, you will enjoy a deeper walk with God than you have ever known before. You will relish these times of rest and quiet in His presence.

It is attainable for all of you who earnestly seek God. The only requirement is to begin.

EXPERIENCING GOD THROUGH PRAYER CHAPTER 4

THE REWARD OF SILENCE

You are now ready to know about another aspect of prayer which I will simply call *prayer of faith and stillness*.

After you have been meditating in the Word and praying it out to God for some time, you will gradually find how easy it is to come into His presence. You will remember other scriptures with less difficulty. Prayer has now become easy, sweet, and delightful.

You have now found, dear one, the true way of finding God and that His "*name is as ointment poured forth*" (Song of Solomon 1:3).

Now, I want you to pray a little differently. You must now begin to use your faith and courage without being disturbed as the difficulties you may encounter.

FIRST as soon as you come into the presence of God, remain in respectful silence for a little while.

Remain there in His divine presence without being troubled about a subject for prayer. Simply enjoy God.

TWO when you feel a release, you may proceed in prayer. If, however, there remains a tender tug at your Spirit to simply stay quiet in His presence, by all means do so. Cease all activity, lest God's presence is diminished by your activity.

THREE I would recommend to all of you, when you have finished in prayer, remain a while longer in respectful silence.

FOUR Seek nothing from God during these quiet moments except to love Him and please Him. A servant who places all diligence in his work only for the reward is unworthy of any recompense.

Five Go then to your place of prayer not only to enjoy spiritual delights, but simply to please the Father.

It will keep your spirit in tranquility and consolation.

Madame Guyon

EXPERIENCING GOD THROUGH PRAYER CHAPTER 5

SURVIVING DRY PERIODS

Although God has no other desire than to impart Himself to you, He frequently conceals Himself for a purpose. It may be to arouse you from laziness, or perhaps you have not been seeking Him in faith and love.

But, for whatever reason, He does so out of His abundant goodness and faithfulness to you. Often these apparent withdrawals of Himself are succeeded by the caresses of His love.

During these seasons, you may begin to believe that the way to prove your faith is by a greater degree of affection or by an exertion of strength and activity. Surely you may say this will induce God to revisit you.

No, dear soul, believe me this is not the way. You must await the return of the Beloved with patient love, humility, peace, and silent worship.

By doing these things, you demonstrate to the Father that it is Himself alone and His good pleasure that you seek and not the selfish delights of your own satisfaction.

Don't be impatient in your times of dryness. Wait patiently for God. In doing so, your prayer life will increase and be rewarded.

In abandonment and contentment, learn to wait for the return of your Beloved. Intermingle your waiting with sighs of love. This conduct will indeed please God and compel His return.

Madame Guyon

SADHU SUNDAR SINGH

The scientific mind does not grasp how the author of life holds in his hands the created laws of nature. It is God who establishes the laws of nature. Thus, it is foolish to suggest that miracles violate the laws of nature. There are actually higher laws about which we know little or nothing. In prayer, we can come to gradually recognize these higher laws. Then, we understand that miracles are not only possible but even natural.

Some people think that we alter God's will and plans through prayer, but it is actually our hearts that are changed.

The essence of prayer does not consist in asking for things, but in opening one's heart to God. Prayer is continual abandonment to God. It is the desire for God himself, the giver of life. Prayer is communion with God, receiving him who is the giver of all good gifts, living a life of fellowship with him. It is breathing and living in God.

If we remain in communion with God, our habits and disposition – even our appearance – are all changed. To pray means to be on speaking terms with God, to be in communion with him and to be transformed into his likeness. We begin to take on a glorious and incorruptible spiritual nature.

The wonderful peace and calm we experience in prayer does not come from our own thoughts or imaginations, but from the presence of God in our souls.

Some people live in the midst of evil and misery but still radiate joy and lead fruitful lives. Through prayer, the hidden roots of their faith have reached down to the source of living water. They draw from it energy to bear spiritual fruit. If we lead active lives of prayer, we will also gain the spiritual discernment to turn away from illusion and evil and to find the truth we need for life.¹

¹ Wisdom Of The Sadhu, Sundar Sing

THANKS FOR NOTHING

Psalm 106:6-15

Sometimes an unanswered prayer is the best thing for us. The psalmist says, "And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul" (v. 15). The Israelites had prayed selfishly. God was feeding them manna from heaven, angel's food, but they wanted meat. All they had to do every morning was step out of their tents, stoop down and pick up the precious, clean, sweet, life-giving manna. But after a while their old appetites came back. They said, "Oh, if somebody would give us some meat to eat." So God sent them meat, but while they were eating it, many of them died (Num. 11:31-33). We can learn from this experience.

FIRST, *selfish prayers are dangerous.*

How dangerous it is to say, "Oh, God I simply have to have this." Such prayers are never beneficial. "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:3).

SECOND, *prayer must change our character.*

The Israelites got their request, but it didn't help their character. In fact, they were in worse shape spiritually after they got what they wanted. The Prodigal Son said, "Father, give me." He got what he asked for, and it almost ruined him. Then he came home and said, "Father make me" – and his character changed. He began to be a real son (Luke 15:19). Selfish praying erodes our character, but praying in the will of God builds our character.

THIRD, *we must always pray for God's will.*

The purpose of prayer, it has well been said, is not to get man's will done in heaven but to get God's will done on earth. Never be afraid to say, "Thy will be done."¹

¹ Warren Wiersbe Prayer, Praise, and Promises

HOW TO HAVE A GOOD DAY PSALM 34:11-16

How often has someone said to you, "Have a good day". That's a nice statement, but what does it mean? When you review the day's activities before you go to bed, how do you know whether the day was good or bad? When Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, that was a bad day. But God turned it into good for Him. When Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph and had Him put into prison, it was a bad day. But God turned that into good for Him also. You see, we don't always know what a good day is. However, we can make our days good if we follow the instructions given in this passage.

First, control your tongue. David asks, "Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?" (v. 12). Of course, everybody wants long life and good days. So we must "keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit" (v. 13). When you say the wrong thing, you will have a bad day. So keep your tongue under control.

Second, depart from evil and do good (v. 14). If you want to have a good day, do good. If you sow the seeds of goodness, you'll reap the harvest of goodness.

Third, seek peace and pursue it (v.14). Don't go around with a revolver in your hand. Don't to be bothered by every little slight or by everything that people say. If somebody cuts in front of you in a line, don't let it bother you. Be a peacemaker, not a troublemaker.

Finally, trust the Lord because He's watching you. "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry" (v. 15). The Word open means "attentive to." You don't have to worry about what other people do. God is watching you, and He's listening to you. You can have a good day if you'll just follow these instructions. So, have a good day!

"Have a good day!" May be a trite expression, but you can have a good day if you follow certain instructions from Scripture. Try following the guidelines of the Psalm. Not only will you have a good day, but those with whom you come in contact will be blessed.

Prayer, Praise and Promises. -- Warren Wiersbe

PRAYER – AND GOD’S SPIRIT

We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit maketh intercession for us. (Romans 8:26)

Probably none of us really know as much about prayer as we should – but as students of the Word of God we may agree that only the Spirit can pray effectively.

The idea has been expressed that “wrestling in prayer” is always a good thing, but that is by no means true. Extreme religious “exercises” may be undergone with no higher motive than to get our own way!

The spiritual quality of a prayer is determined not by its intensity but by its origin. In evaluating prayer we should inquire who is doing the praying – our determined hearts, or the Holy Spirit? If the prayer originates with the Spirit, then the wrestling can be beautiful and wonderful; but if we are the victims of our own overheated desires, our praying can be as carnal as any other act.

Consider Jacob’s wrestling: “a man wrestled with him till daybreak.” But when Jacob had been beaten upon he cried, “I will not let you go unless you bless me!” That wrestling was of divine origin, and the blessed results are known to every Bible student!

A. W. Tozer

THE NEED FOR REVERENCE

**God is greatly to be feared. . . And to be had in reverence.
(Psalm 89:7)**

Many persons who have been raised in our churches no longer think in terms of reverence, which seems to indicate that they doubt God's presence is there! Much of the blame must be placed on the growing acceptance of a worldly secularism that seems much more appealing than any real desire for the spiritual life that is pleasing to God.

We secularize God; we secularize the Gospel of Christ and we secularize worship!

No great and spiritually minded men of God are going to come out of such churches, nor any great spiritual movement of believing prayer and revival. If God is to be honored and revered and truth worshiped, He may have to sweep us away and start somewhere else!

Let us confess that there is a necessity for true worship among us. If God is who He says He is and if we are the believing people of God we claim to be, we must worship Him! In my own assessment, for men and women to lose the awareness of God in our midst is a loss too terrible ever to be appraised!¹

¹ Renewed Day By Day

TOZER QUOTES

Our woes began when God was forced out of His central shrine and things were allowed to enter.

The way to deeper knowledge of God is through the lonely valleys of soul poverty and abnegation of all things.

There can be no doubt that this possessive clinging to things is one of the most harmful habits in the life. Because it is natural, it is rarely recognized for the evil that it is. But its outworkings are tragic.

The Church waits for the tender voice of the saint who has penetrated the veil and has gazed with inward eye upon the wonder that is God. And yet, thus to penetrate, to push in sensitive living experience into the holy Presence, is a privilege open to every child of God.

Self is the opaque veil that hides the face of God from us. It can be removed only in spiritual experience, never by mere instruction. We may as well try to instruct leprosy out of our system. There must be a work of God in destruction before we are free. We must invite the cross to do its deadly work within us.

Let us beware of tinkering with our inner life, hoping ourselves to rend the veil. God must do everything for us. Our past is to yield and trust. We must confess, forsake, repudiate the self-life and then reckon it crucified. But we must be careful to distinguish lazy "acceptance" from the real work of God. We must insist upon the work being done. We dare not rest content with a neat doctrine of self-crucifixion. That is to imitate Saul and spare the best of the sheep and the oxen.

Insist that the work be done in very truth and it will be done. The Cross is rough and it is deadly, but it is effective. It does not keep its victim hanging there forever. There comes a moment when its work is finished and the suffering victim dies. After that is resurrection glory and power, and the pain is forgotten for joy that the veil is taken away and we have entered in actual spiritual experience the presence the presence of the living God.

As with everything good in human life, back of this receptivity is God. The sovereignty of God is here and is felt even by those who have not placed particular stress upon it theologically. Important as it is that we recognize God working in us, I would yet warn against a too-great preoccupation with the thought. It is a sure road to sterile passivity. God will not hold us responsible to understand the mysteries of election, predestination and the divine sovereignty. The best and safest way to deal with these truths is to raise our eyes to God and in deepest reverence say, "O Lord, Thou knowest." These things belong to the deep and mysterious Profound of God's omniscience. Prying into them may make theologians, but it will never make saints.

Be completely honest with God when you pray.

But, O Lord of host, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause. Jer. 20:12

There is a vital element of true prayer which is likely to be overlooked in our artificial age.

That vital element is just plain honesty!

The saintly David M'Intyre once wrote: "honest dealings become us when we kneel in His pure presence."

Then he continued: on one occasion Jeremiah failed to interpret God aright. He cried as if in anger, "O Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived."

These are terrible words to utter before Him who is changeless truth. But the prophet spoke as he felt, and the Lord not only pardoned Him, but met Him and blessed Him there.

I recall another spiritual writer of unusual penetration has advised frankness in prayer even to a degree that might appear to be downright rudeness. When you come to prayer, he says, and mind that you have no taste for it, tell God so without mincing words. If God and spiritual things bore you, admit it frankly.

This advice will shock some squeamish saints, but it is altogether sound nevertheless. God loves the guileless soul even when in his ignorance he is actually guilty of rashness in prayer. The Lord can soon cure his ignorance, but for insincerity no cure is known.

We can learn something at this point if we will.

The Cross We Bear Must Be Assumed Voluntarily

Philippians 1:29

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ,

not only to believe on Him,

but also to suffer for his sake.

In the Christian faith there is a real sense in which the cross of Christ embraces all crosses and the death of Christ encompasses all deaths: "if one died for all, then were all dead."

This is in the judicial working of God in redemption. The Christian as a member of the body of Christ is crucified along with his divine Head. Before God every true believer is reckoned to have died when Christ died. All subsequent experience of personal crucifixion is based upon this identification with Christ on the Cross.

But in the practical, everyday working of the believer's crucifixion his own Cross is brought into play. "Let him. . . take up his Cross." That is obviously not the cross of Christ. Rather, it is the believer's own personal Cross by means of which the cross of Christ is made effective in slaying his evil nature and setting him free from its power.

The believer's own Cross is one he has assumed voluntarily. Therein lies the difference between his Cross and the cross on which Roman convicts died. They went to the cross against their will; He, because He chose to do so. No Roman officer ever pointed to a Cross and said, "If any man will, let him!" Only Christ said that, and by so saying he placed the whole matter in the hands of the Christian believer. Each of us, then, should count himself dead indeed with Christ and accept willingly whatever of self denial, repentance, humility and humble sacrifice may be found in the path of obedient daily living.¹

God Never Violates our freedom Of Choice

"So highly does God regard His handiwork that He will not for any reason violate it. He will take nine steps toward us but He will not take the tenth. He will incline us to repent, but He cannot do our repenting for us. It is of the essence of repentance that it can only be done by the one who committed the act to be repented of. God can wait on sinning man, He can withhold judgment, He can exercise long-suffering to the point where He appears lax in His judicial administration, but He cannot force a man to repent. To do this would be to violate the man's freedom and avoid the gift of God originally bestowed upon him. The believer knows he is free to choose – and with that knowledge he chooses forever the blessed will of God!"²

¹ Renewed Day By Day

² Renewed Day By Day

Faith: Our Minds Brought into Accord with Truth

"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." 2 Thess. 3:5

This we must remember: faith is not a noble quality found only in superior men. It is not a virtue attainable by a limited few. It is not the quality to persuade ourselves that black is white or that something we desire will come to pass if only we wish hard enough.

Faith is simply the bringing of our minds into accord with the truth. It is adjusting our expectations to the promises of God in complete assurance that the God of the whole earth cannot lie!

As long as we question the wisdom of any of God's ways our faith is still tentative and uncertain. While we are able to understand, we are not quite believing. Faith enters when there is no supporting evidence to corroborate God's Word of promise and we must put our confidence blindly in the character of the one who made the promise.

A man looks at a mountain and affirms, "That is a mountain." There is no particular virtue in the affirmation. It is simply accepting the fact that stands before Him and bringing his belief into accord with the fact. The man does not create the mountain by believing, nor could he annihilate it by denying.

And so with the truth of God! The believing man accepts a promise of God as a fact as solid as a mountain and vastly more enduring. His faith changes nothing except his own personal relation to the Word of promise. God's Word is true whether we believe it or not. Human unbelief cannot alter the character of God!

The Devil Never Forgets Those Who Escape Bondage

But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Acts 5:3

As we move farther along in the Christian life we may expect to encounter increased hostility from the enemy of our souls. Although this is seldom presented to the Christian as a fact of life it is a very solid fact indeed as every experienced Christian

knows, and one we shall learn how to handle or stumble over our own undoing.

If Satan opposes the new convert he opposes still more bitterly the Christian who is pressing on towards a higher life in Christ. The Spirit-filled life is not, as many suppose, a life of peace and quiet pleasure. It is likely to be something quite the opposite.

Satan hates the true Christian for several reasons. One is that God loves him, and whatever God loves is sure to be hated by the devil. Another is that the Christian, being a child of God, bears a family resemblance to the Father and to the household of faith.

A third reason is that a true Christian is a former slave who has escaped from the galley, and Satan cannot forgive him for this affront. A fourth reason is that a praying Christian is a constant threat to the stability of Satan's government. The Christian is a holy rebel loose in the world with access to the throne of God.

Satan never knows from what direction his danger will come. Who knows when another Elijah will arise, or another Daniel? or a Luther, a Finney or a Booth?

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The saintly David M'Intyre once wrote: "honest dealings become us when we kneel in His pure presence."

Then he continued: on one occasion Jeremiah failed to interpret God aright. He cried as if in anger, "O Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived."

These are terrible words to utter before Him who is changeless truth. But the prophet spoke as he felt, and the Lord not only pardoned Him, but met Him and blessed Him there.

I recall another spiritual writer of unusual penetration has advised frankness in prayer even to a degree that might appear to be downright rudeness. When you come to prayer, he says, and mind that you have no taste for it, tell God so without mincing words. If God and spiritual things bore you, admit it frankly.

This advice will shock some squeamish saints, but it is altogether sound nevertheless. God loves the guileless soul even when in his ignorance he is actually guilty of rashness in prayer. The Lord can soon cure his ignorance, but for insincerity no cure is known.

We can learn something at this point if we will.

The Cross We Bear Must Be Assumed Voluntarily

Philippians 1:29

**For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ,
not only to believe on Him,
but also to suffer for his sake.**

In the Christian faith there is a real sense in which the cross of Christ embraces all crosses and the death of Christ encompasses all deaths: "if one died for all, then were all dead."

This is in the judicial working of God in redemption. The Christian as a member of the body of Christ is crucified along with his divine Head. Before God every true believer is reckoned to have died when Christ died. All subsequent experience of personal crucifixion is based upon this identification with Christ on the Cross.

But in the practical, everyday working of the believer's crucifixion his own Cross is brought into play. "Let him. . . take up his Cross." That is obviously not the cross of Christ. Rather, it is the believer's own personal Cross by means of which the cross of Christ is made effective in slaying his evil nature and setting him free from its power.

The believer's own Cross is one he has assumed voluntarily. Therein lies the difference between his Cross and the cross on which Roman convicts died. They went to the cross against their will; He, because He chose to do so. No Roman officer ever pointed to a Cross and said, "If any man will, let him!" Only Christ said that, and by so saying he placed the whole matter in the hands of the Christian believer. Each of us, then, should count himself dead indeed with Christ and accept willingly whatever of self denial, repentance, humility and humble sacrifice may be found in the path of obedient daily living.¹

God Never Violates our freedom Of Choice

"So highly does God regard His handiwork that He will not for any reason violate it. He will take nine steps toward us but He will not take the tenth. He will incline us to repent, but He cannot do our repenting for us. It is of the essence of repentance that it can only be done by the one who committed the act to be repented of. God can wait on sinning man, He can withhold judgment, He can exercise long-suffering to the point where He appears lax in His judicial administration, but He cannot force a man to repent. To do this would be to violate the man's freedom and avoid the gift of God originally bestowed upon him. The believer knows he is free to choose – and with that knowledge he chooses forever the blessed will of God!"²

¹ Renewed Day By Day

² Renewed Day By Day

Faith: Our Minds Brought into Accord with Truth

"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." 2 Thess. 3:5

This we must remember: faith is not a noble quality found only in superior men. It is not a virtue attainable by a limited few. It is not the quality to persuade ourselves that black is white or that something we desire will come to pass if only we wish hard enough.

Faith is simply the bringing of our minds into accord with the truth. It is adjusting our expectations to the promises of God in complete assurance that the God of the whole earth cannot lie!

As long as we question the wisdom of any of God's ways our faith is still tentative and uncertain. While we are able to understand, we are not quite believing. Faith enters when there is no supporting evidence to corroborate God's Word of promise and we must put our confidence blindly in the character of the one who made the promise.

A man looks at a mountain and affirms, "That is a mountain." There is no particular virtue in the affirmation. It is simply accepting the fact that stands before Him and bringing his belief into accord with the fact. The man does not create the mountain by believing, nor could he annihilate it by denying.

And so with the truth of God! The believing man accepts a promise of God as a fact as solid as a mountain and vastly more enduring. His faith changes nothing except his own personal relation to the Word of promise. God's Word is true whether we believe it or not. Human unbelief cannot alter the character of God!

The Devil Never Forgets Those Who Escape Bondage

But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Acts 5:3

As we move farther along in the Christian life we may expect to encounter increased hostility from the enemy of our souls. Although this is seldom presented to the Christian as a fact of life it is a very solid fact indeed as every experienced Christian

knows, and one we shall learn how to handle or stumble over our own undoing.

If Satan opposes the new convert he opposes still more bitterly the Christian who is pressing on towards a higher life in Christ. The Spirit-filled life is not, as many suppose, a life of peace and quiet pleasure. It is likely to be something quite the opposite.

Satan hates the true Christian for several reasons. One is that God loves him, and whatever God loves is sure to be hated by the devil. Another is that the Christian, being a child of God, bears a family resemblance to the Father and to the household of faith.

A third reason is that a true Christian is a former slave who has escaped from the galley, and Satan cannot forgive him for this affront. A fourth reason is that a praying Christian is a constant threat to the stability of Satan's government. The Christian is a holy rebel loose in the world with access to the throne of God.

Satan never knows from what direction his danger will come. Who knows when another Elijah will arise, or another Daniel? or a Luther, a Finney or a Booth?

PRAYER – AND GOD'S SPIRIT

We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit maketh intercession for us. (Romans 8:26)

Probably none of us really know as much about prayer as we should – but as students of the Word of God we may agree that only the Spirit can pray effectively.

The idea has been expressed that “wrestling in prayer” is always a good thing, but that is by no means true. Extreme religious “exercises” may be undergone with no higher motive than to get our own way!

The spiritual quality of a prayer is determined not by its intensity but by its origin. In evaluating prayer we should inquire who is doing the praying – our determined hearts, or the Holy Spirit? If the prayer originates with the Spirit, then the wrestling can be beautiful and wonderful; but if we are the victims of our own overheated desires, our praying can be as carnal as any other act.

Consider Jacob's wrestling: "a man wrestled with him till daybreak." But when Jacob had been beaten upon he cried, "I will not let you go unless you bless me!" That wrestling was of divine origin, and the blessed results are known to every Bible student!

WHERE IS THE RADIANCE ?

**He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in Himself.
(1 John 5:10)**

I keep looking, but with little success, for a distinguishing radiance in life and testimony among our evangelical Christians. Instead of an inner witness, too many professing Christians are depending upon logical conclusions drawn from biblical texts. They have no witness of an encounter with God, no awareness of the inner change!

I believe that where there is a divine act within the soul, there will be a corresponding awareness. This act of God is its own evidence: it addresses itself directly to the spiritual consciousness.

Thankfully, there are elements that are always the same among men and women who have had a personal meeting with God. There is the compelling sense of God Himself; of His Person and of His Presence. From there on, the permanent results will be evident in the life and walk of the person touched as long as he or she lives!¹

¹ Renewed Day by Day

Other

Section 14

