

strength, still increasing in the blessed assurance that God himself will perfect His work in us (Phil. 1:6).”



**Principles of Spiritual
Growth Series - Lesson 16:**

HELP

By Miles J. Stanford

This article is taken from the wonderful little book, Principles of Spiritual Growth, authored by Miles J. Stanford.

For most of us, it is time to stop asking God for help. He didn't help us to be saved, and He doesn't intend to help us live the Christian life.

Immaturity considers the Lord Jesus a helper. Maturity knows Him to be life itself. Dr. J.E. Conant wrote: "Christian living is not our living with Christ's help, it is Christ living His life in us. Therefore that portion of our lives that is not His living is not Christian living; and that portion of our service that is not His doing is not Christian service; for all such life and service have but a human and natural source, and Christian life and service have a supernatural and spiritual source." Paul insisted, "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21) and, "I can do all things through Christ" (4:13).

William R. Newell said, "Satan's great device is to drive earnest souls back to beseeching God for what God says has already been done!" Each of us had to go beyond the "help" stage for our new birth and thank Him for what He had already done on our behalf. God could never answer a prayer for help in the matter of justification. The same principle holds true for the Christian life. Our Lord Jesus waits to be wanted and to be all in us and do all through us. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him" (Col. 2:9, 10).

God is not trusted, not honored, in our continually asking Him for help. In the face of "my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19), how can we beg for help? Our responsibility is to see in the Word all that is ours in Christ and then thank and trust Him for that which we need.

Sooner or later we must face up to what F. J. Huegel declares: "When a Christian's prayer life springs from a right position (a thorough adjustment to Christ in His death and resurrection), a vast change in procedure follows. Much of the mere begging type (though of course asking is always in order, for the Lord says, 'Ask, and ye shall receive' [John 16:24]) gives away to a positive and unspeakably joyous appropriation. Much of our begging fails to register in heaven because it fails to spring from right relations with the Father in union with Christ in death and resurrection: in which position one simply appropriates what is already his. 'All things,' says the Apostle Paul, 'are your's. And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's' (I Cor. 3:21, 23)."

Since "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11:6), we might consider several more strong but true statements to further clarify the attitude of faith that does please His heart.

'In our private prayers and in our public services,' Dr. A. W. Tozer writes, "we are forever asking God to do things that He either has already done or cannot do because of our unbelief. We plead for Him to speak when He has already spoken and is at that very moment speaking. We ask Him to come when He is already present and waiting for us to recognize Him. We beg the Holy Spirit to fill us while all the time we are preventing Him by our doubts."

Dr. S. D. Gordon admonished: "When you are in the thick of the fight, when you are the object of attack, plead less and claim more, on the ground of the blood of the Lord Jesus. I do not mean ask God to give you victory, but claim His victory, to overshadow you."

Watchman Nee startles many by saying, "God's way of deliverance is altogether different from man's way. Man's way is to try to suppress sin by seeking to overcome it; God's way is to remove the sinner. Many Christians mourn over their weakness, thinking that if only they were stronger all would be well. The idea that, because failure to lead a holy life is due to our impotence, something more is therefore demanded of us, leads naturally to this false conception of the way of deliverance. If we are preoccupied with the power of sin and with our inability to meet it, then we naturally conclude that to gain the victory over sin we must have more power. 'If only I were stronger,' we say, 'I could overcome my violent outbursts of temper,' and so we plead with the Lord to strengthen us that we may exercise more self-control.

"But this is altogether wrong; this is not Christianity. God's means of delivering us from sin is not by making us stronger and stronger, but by making us weaker and weaker. This is surely a peculiar way of victory, you say; but it is the Divine way. God sets us free from the dominion of sin, not by strengthening our old man but by crucifying him; not by helping him to do anything but by removing him from the scene of action."

The believer does not have to beg for help. He does have to thankfully appropriate that which is already his in Christ, for, "the just shall live by faith" (Heb. 10:38). And dear old Andrew Murray encourages us with "Even though it is slow, and with many a stumble, the faith that always thanks Him not for experiences, but for the promises on which it can rely—goes on from strength to