

Personal Practice: Love

Opening the Heart with a Prayer of Loving Kindness

Supplies: Journal (optional)

Take one of the teachings of Christ seriously and put it to work in your life. This prayer expands our capacity to love. When our ability to love is fully developed it is universal the way God's is. This is what Jesus means when he says be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect. Grow up into God.

We start this prayer by praying for ourselves—you can modify the prayer and choose words that really pertain to you and what you really want to ask of God—and then we pray those same things for an ever widening circle of people. Whatever you pray for yourself, you end up praying for all beings everywhere. If you find it hard to begin by praying for yourself, then begin with someone (human or animal) that you find easier.

The way I learned it, you start with yourself; next you pray for a beloved benefactor or mentor; then for your spouse and/or family; then someone who you know needs prayer; then for the person that you find it difficult to pray for; and, finally, for all beings everywhere.

God, into your hands I commend _____

May _____ *be free of fear (doubt, anxiety, negativity, pain, danger)*

May _____ *be filled with the light of your healing spirit (of love, joy, peace, patience, insight, wisdom, and courage)*

May _____ *abide in happiness (and equanimity)*

May _____ *live with ease (and tranquility)*

May _____ *dwell in peace.*

Pray the prayer in the morning after quieting yourself and/or at night before you go to sleep. And any time during the day that that person comes into your mind and you start running the old tape, pray the loving kindness prayer.

It might be instructive to keep a journal—write down when you start and keep checking back—you might be surprised at how your feelings shift over time.

God is still speaking,
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