

LIFE OF PRAYER (II)

(Six lessons based on EFFECTUAL PRAYER--Foulks)

Mary Rexroth

LESSON I

Text References: Chapter 1--Effectual Prayer &
Chapter 2--Preparation

Supplementary Reading: Prayer Can Change Your Life--William R. Parker
Praying; How, When, Where, Why--Muriel Lester
(Fleming R. Revel Company)

Subject: UNDERSTANDING

1. Introduction:

Prayer is communion with God.

Mind is man's medium of communication with God.

Three phases of mind are:

Superconscious--knowing phase--realm of divine ideas.

Conscious--thinking phase

Subconscious--feeling phase and realm of memory.

✓ The object of prayer is to bring man's whole being under the direction of the Superconscious or Christ Mind.

Effectual prayer is based on understanding.

2. Types of prayer that have come down to us from our ancestors:

Prayer of Praise. Praise of the Father in prayer changes man, not God. The mental attitude that praise sets up stimulates, quickens, and establishes in character the ideals for which one prays.

Prayer of thanksgiving. Charles Fillmore says that thanksgiving means rendering our grateful thoughts to God for His manifold blessings. Not to say "thank you" is uncouth.

Prayer of confession. A denial is a confession that we need help. A confession of faith is to state what we believe. Forgiveness is a part of confession. Admitting we have erred but are dedicating ourselves to changing is part of the prayer of confession.

LESSON I cont'd

Prayer of petition. This is the asking prayer. Do not beg. Talk over with God your needs. Ask and you shall receive. The Father knows your need. Affirm the Truth.

Prayer of intercession. Asking others to pray for us or with us. This is the work of Silent Unity. Praying for another is like holding up a sinking swimmer until the rescue boat comes.

3. Why some prayers seem not to be answered.

We ask amiss.

Praying to false gods: Baal vs Elijah.

Whenever a prayer remains unanswered in the manifest realm, we can be sure that somewhere there is a closed door between us and God.

True prayer is not begging--it is right knowing.

Do not expect another to be the answer to your prayer. You are the only channel through which the Kingdom of God can come. It is your knowing that brings your blessings to you.

4. Preparation for prayer.

Purification. Indians prepared themselves by cleansing the body with sweat baths and fasting. The Israelites made sacrifices.

We must purify our hearts by casting out hatred, criticism, intolerance, selfishness, condemnation, jealousy, anxiety and fear, if His perfect work is to be done in us.

Finding time to pray. Prayer should be an every day discipline. Praying at the same time each day is a good idea. (DAILY WORD every morning, for example).

How to deal with annoyances. Ignore them. Go into the "inner chamber and close the door." If the telephone rings--don't answer. You have an important meeting with the Lord of your being.

LESSON I cont'd

How long to pray. Until achievement comes. No one can take the necessary steps toward achievement for another, just as not one can eat for another or sleep for another. Each one must take the steps for himself, at his own time, in his own way.

Through many experiences one learns the way. Through prayers of many words, through desire and emotion the soul finally learns to cut out the unessential and go direct to the Father.

Instantaneous answer to prayer is always possible.

Pray without ceasing is to continually look toward God. It is to enter into the mind that takes no offense and has nothing to do with error. Don't look to another's shortcomings. Did not Jesus say, "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

5. Conclusion.

Clement of Alexander (2nd century) said, "The aim of prayer is to attain the habit of goodness so as no longer merely to have things, that are good, but rather to be good."

Emerson: "Prayer is the contemplation of life from the highest point of view."

Henry Emerson Fosdick: "Prayer is a battleground. The inner battlefield where we most effectively conquer the false worries, trivial anxieties and all the unwholesome specters of the mind that irritate the spirit and make the body ill."

What does prayer mean to you?

LIFE OF PRAYER (II)

Lesson II

Mary Rexroth

Text References: Chapter 3--Relaxation

Subject: RELAXATION

1. Review three phases of mind

Superconscious:

Christ awareness
Infinite intelligence
Spiritual ideas
All knowing

Conscious:

Thinking awareness
Reasoning mind
Decision-making faculty
Free will
Objective in nature

Subconscious:

Feeling awareness
Seat of memory
Speaks in language of imagination
Subjective in nature.

The objective of prayer is to find at-one-ment with God.
The product of at-one-ment with God is peace, health,
happiness, abundance of all good.

2. WHY relaxation

The mystical way of life involves the body as well as the soul. In old ways of thinking much attention was given to saving the soul, but the body received little attention.

We prepare for meditation and prayer by relaxation:

- a) to bring the physical under control (get the body out of the way).
- b) to prevent the physical from detracting us from the work of the mental and emotional nature.
- c) to subject the physical to the blessing and healing power of Spirit.

3. What relaxation does.

It brings the body into a natural state of comfort.

In the part of prayer we call relaxation we gain a better understanding of our body. We learn to let go mentally of inharmonies.

We learn to let go physically so that the mental purity that we contact in prayer or meditation may enter into the flesh and make it perfect.

To relax is to become open and receptive.

In relaxation the body, obedient to the soul, is eager and ready to receive the Truth teaching.

In relaxation the mind is always in control.
Relaxation is not inertia.

Those who are prone to live at high tension will find great benefit in the relaxation drill.

The body is the clothing of the soul, and the soul is the clothing of the Spirit. A body so cramped that it cannot let go and relax is closed to the beauty and life that Spirit seeks to express in it.

4. Drill in relaxation

Follow drill as outlined on pages 42 to 47 (Effectual Prayer), omitting any part if it seems too long.

5. Close with a prayer

The prayer on page 48 (Effectual Prayer) is good to use.

Or, some statement such as: GONE IS ALL TENSION, STRESS, OR STRAIN. I AM RELAXED.

DAILY WORD for Thursday, May 22, 1969 on relaxation is good.

Drill in the Silence and Come Ye Apart Awhile.

LESSON III

Mary Rexroth

Text Reference: Chapter 4--Concentration

Subject: CONCENTRATION

Relaxation is on the physical level.

Concentration is a mental process.

Concentration is fixing the attention of the mind on one thing.

1. Reason for concentration.

We concentrate on spiritual thoughts in order to build them strong within.

Concentration keeps us poised and centered in our prayer and meditation.

In concentration we keep our mind on one God idea.

2. How to concentrate.

Few people still their mind enough to hear Christ knocking.

Concentration on God for a few minutes vs spending hours thinking and living the exact opposite.

What to do when a doubt thought comes? Don't give it room. Push it aside gently, but firmly.

What to do when a fear thought comes? Don't give it room. Push it aside gently, but firmly.

If we start Godward in our time of meditation and then let other thoughts come trooping in, we have wasted energy and unrecalable time which if we had used in concentrated prayer would have given us peace and power and strength.

Don't waste your meditation time. Concentrate.

3. How long should we concentrate in prayer?

Remember Jacob who would not let the angel go until it had blessed him.

LESSON III Cont'd

How long should an affirmation be repeated?
Until the good you seek has become manifest.

When we take a thought for the purpose of concentrating upon it, we repeat it over and over until it is fixed in our mind. We give it our undivided attention.

Only patient practice and earnest desire will give power to concentration.

There will come a time, after we have truly learned to concentrate without the intellect interfering, when we can go directly to the Source.

Until then, we shall practice concentration whenever we pray.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."

4. Practice.

Concentrate on the word "light."

See this light in your mind's eye. Take the light down through your body. See it filling the twelve power centers described in Fillmore's Twelve Powers of Man.

Do not let the mind waver. Concentrate on "light." *

If the mind does waver, gently bring it back to the light.

5. Conclusion.

As a closing prayer use the text in italics on page 60 in *Effectual Prayer*.

2/50
Irene
Alexander

LIFE OF PRAYER (II)

Mary Rexroth

Lesson IV

Text References: Chapter 5--Meditation
Chapter 6--The Silence

Subject: MEDITATION AND THE SILENCE

1. What is meditation?

Meditation is prayer, but not all prayer is meditation.

Meditation is thinking about God or His nature, and one's relationship to Him.

Meditation brings the thoughts of the thinking (conscious) mind under control.

Meditation closes the door of the mind on unwanted thoughts (denials) and opens it to the free flow of Godlike thoughts (affirmation).

Meditation draws the mind within in singleness of thought and purpose.

Meditation helps us to mentally digest the Truth.

In meditation the conscious and the subconscious become open and receptive to the Superconscious Mind.

In true meditation we become conscious that our I AM has made union with the great "I AM THAT I AM" and our whole being is lifted to a higher plane.

2. How to meditate.

In Unity we use two types of meditation:

- a. Group meditation with a leader. (There is great power in group meditation as evidenced by Silent Unity).
- b. Private meditation in which you are alone in your time of turning to God.

Whether in a group or alone begin with relaxation.

Center your thoughts on God.

Take an affirmation into your meditation.

Repeat this affirmation over and over until the words become alive in your consciousness and take on their real power.

3. What not to do.

Daydreaming versus true meditation.

Care should be taken about what we think about in meditation. When we take a thought and meditate on it to the exclusion of all else, this thought becomes a power within us, a power for good or evil, according to the kind of thought it is.

Watch for fear and worry meditations! Many times we are really praying for a thing we do not desire by holding it in our mind in fear and worry. All the time we are begging and beseeching God to take the condition away, we are holding on to it with all our might.

4. Overcoming fear through meditation.

Remember, nothing can enter our world except it find access through a thought.

Watch your thoughts in meditation.

Take for meditation a thought that will leave the appearance far behind. Use a thought that will make us feel and see and know only God.

5. From deep meditation to the Silence.

We ask in meditation.

We receive in the Silence.

Through concentration and meditation the mind is cleansed and we are ready to say, "Speak, Father, for I hear."

Samuel and Eli.

When we enter the Silence we are in the thought world. Your answer to prayer will come to you as a thought.

Do not be confused by what others may say about seeing visions, or hearing voices.

Visions and colors, or voices have never healed or prospered anyone. They only point toward the true message.

The true message is, "Be still and know."

Control your thoughts and go directly to God as the Source of all good. God is the answer. ✓

Read the story of Elijah in I Kings 19:4-17. Elijah sought the Lord in a strong wind (clearing the way for higher state of consciousness); in the earthquake (a shaking up); and in the fire (a cleansing). But he found God in the "still small voice (the voice of Spirit speaking from the depths of his own being). The still small voice comes from within as spiritual knowing.

When Elijah realized God was speaking through him he opened his consciousness more positively toward God.

Elijah is a perfect example of what happens when we seek God.

6. Practice.

Use for the closing meditation: THERE IS BUT ONE PRESENCE AND ONE POWER IN MY LIFE, GOD THE GOOD, OMNIPOTENT.

LIFE OF PRAYER (II)

LESSON V

Mary Rexroth

Text References: Chapter 7--The Message

Subject: REALIZATION: GETTING THE MESSAGE

1. The mesage of the silence.

No one can tell another person what is to come to him in the Silence.

No one can tell another what he will bring back with him into his life.

Each one of us ^{Communes} goes to God with different needs, in different states of consciousness, taking different steps in search of Him.

Some go round about--some go direct.

We receive according to our capacity. The degree of faith determines the capacity.

If we desire to have our prayers answered in full and running over measure, we must ask seeing the work already accomplished. "ALL THINGS, WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK IN PRAYER, BELIEVING, YE SHALL RECEIVE."

It takes a great hunger and thirst after God--an intense desire to be like Him--to find entrance into the most holy place. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

The higher the soul reaches in its aspiration to find God the greater will be the message and the richer the gifts.

Whatever the human heart craves, whatever the body needs, will be given in the SILENCE. For whenever a cry goes from the heart Godward, God will answer, "HERE AM I. Do you need me? I am there."

When we learn to draw near to the Father we will find the help we seek.

LESSON V cont'd

2. How long for prayers to be answered.

How long did it take you to dig the pit?

We should not count on the answer to prayer taking time, but we have to be willing to give it all the time it takes.

But the answer to prayer does come.

It comes as an act of the creative Spirit that made and rules the world.

We pray and work, and there is no visible sign that anything is taking place. Then one day, of a sudden, the process is complete and the answer to our prayer comes forth.

Keep practicing prayer and meditation. Remember J.G. Holland's words:

"Heaven is not reached in a single bound
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies
And mount to its summit round by round."

Life never gives us a life already lived...but a life to be lived.

Life never makes a tree already grown...but a tree to grow.

Nothing is ever finished...everything is to grow.

God gives us the seed of healing, the seed of prosperity, the seed of happiness. What we do with the seed-idea is up to us.

Remember, God--God only--answers prayer.

Our part is to make ourselves receptive and let the answer come.

We make ourselves receptive through much prayer and meditation.

Prayer takes practice.

Often we pray a few times and seeing no results, give up, saying, "Prayer does not work."

Prayer does work!

LESSON V cont'd

3. Practice.

Practice the Presence. Meditate daily. Pray often. Talk to God. Then in silence listen for an answer. Pray believing. Know with assurance that God does answer. He cooperates. He lets.

Close the lesson with a prayer of realization and thanksgiving:

"I THANK YOU, FATHER, THAT I AM BECAUSE YOU ARE
AND THAT I AM WHAT I AM BECAUSE YOU ARE WHAT YOU
ARE.

I THANK YOU FOR THIS CONSCIOUSNESS OF UNITY WITH
YOU.

MY SOUL IS GLAD, MY HEART REJOICES, AND ALL THAT
IS WITHIN ME BLESSES YOUR HOLY NAME."

LIFE OF PRAYER (II)

LESSON VI

Mary Rexroth

Text References: Chapter 8--Living the Life

Subject: LIVING A LIFE OF PRAYER

1. Obedience to the law.

If a person would grow, he must live whatever message is given to him in the silence.

Unless the message from the Father becomes a living, vital reality in the daily life, seeking the silence becomes a mere pastime, a pretense, and hinders growth instead of hastening it.

No message is too trivial to be carried out.

Frederich Douglas the great Negro Educator said that in the days of his slavery he used to pray for freedom. However, his prayer was not answered until it got down into his heels and he ran away.

Jonah found himself in serious trouble by acting in opposition to the inner guidance.

Naaman, seeking to be healed, was angry because the prophet gave him such a simple thing to do.

God does not force anyone to do His will. He gives us free will, the right of choice, but His law is that according as we use the gift of choice so will the manifestation be.

We each learn in some way, at some time, obedience to the higher self, that in us which is Godlike.

It is obedience to this self, no matter how trivial the command, that prepares us to receive higher messages, that strengthens us for greater endeavor.

2. Living the Truth we know.

If a person would have his prayers answered he must be willing to be a channel through which the prayers of others are answered.

LESSON VI cont'd

If he would be healed he must be willing to be a healer of discords.

If we would have prosperity we must be willing to give as freely as we desire to receive.

We must not only be willing to do these things, but we must prove our willingness by doing them.

If we look ourselves squarely in the face, we shall see that many times the things we are asking in prayer we are not trying to live in our life.

We all know more Truth than we live or try to live.

John Oxenham sums it up thusly:

"To every man there openeth
a way, and ways, and a Way.
The High Soul climbs the High Way
The Low Soul gropes the Low
And in between, on the misty flats
The rest drift to and fro.

But to every man there openeth
A High Way, and a Low
And every man decideth
The Way his soul shall go."

Henry van Dyke puts it this way:

"Four things a man must learn to do
If he would make his record true
To THINK without confusion clearly
To LOVE his fellow man sincerely
To ACT from honest motives purely
To TRUST in God and heaven securely."

3. Ten ideas for living a life of prayer.

I call these rules for Thanksliving.

1. You can thank God for the gift of life by living triumphantly.
2. You can thank God for your talents and abilities by accepting them as obligations to be invested for the good of all.

LESSON VI cont'd

3. You can thank God for all that has been done for you by doing things for others.
4. You can thank God for challenges by accepting them as opportunities to achievement.
5. You can thank God for happiness by striving to make others happy.
6. You can thank God for beauty by helping to make the world more beautiful.
7. You can thank God for health and strength by the care and reverence you show your body.
8. You can thank God for the creative ideas that enrich your life by adding your own creative contribution to human progress.
9. You can thank God for each new day by living it to the fullest.
10. You can thank God for inspiration by trying to be an inspiration to others.

To your prayers of thanksgiving add your acts of thanksgiving. And do it all in Love.

4. Conclusion.

For the closing meditation use the prayer in italics on page 106 of Effectual Prayer.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE OF PRAYER II

ASSIGNMENT 1:

1. Our spiritual ancestors prayed in infinitely varied ways. Through prayer books and hymnals they have provided us with prayers of (1) praise, (2) thanksgiving, (3) petition, (4) confession, and (5) intercession. Write a paragraph explaining and giving an example of each of the above mentioned types of prayer.
2. How does Unity's method of affirmative prayer make use of these methods?
3. Tell briefly how you have used prayer effectively in your life.

ASSIGNMENT 2:

1. In approximately 500 words discuss what meditation is, why we meditate, what meditation does for us, and how personal meditation differs from group meditation.
2. In about 100 words, write a meditation suitable for group meditation.
3. What is the Silence and how does God speak to us in the Silence? Explain briefly.

