

CHAPTER 12

INTIMACY WITH GOD

Since prayer is the very breath of our Christian life, its sustaining principle, how necessary to have a clear conception of what prayer is basically. It is “waiting on God.” This puts God where He belongs – the Initiator of all spiritual activity – and the worshipper where he belongs, an empty vessel to receive of God’s fullness, and respond in whatever way God disposes.

When you get alone, tell Jesus that you are waiting on Him. Set yourself in faith in His presence and then let your heart rest. Cease your own activity, ask for nothing, express nothing with your lips, but let your heart sink its weariness and confusion into Him. Just rest, wait quietly. Trust Him to come to you. Into your heart He will come with a healing balm and heavenly rest, the rest of God. This will not be the result of your own effort to get quiet, but will be His work of quieting you. This is true intimacy with God.

Waiting on God –

Practice makes perfect. If at first you find that you just can’t get quiet, don’t give up. Let every time of prayer be a time to wait on Him. You might read some verses in the Bible to get your mind on the things of God, you might even express some petitions to Him, you might sing something softly to Him to tell Him of your love, but finally, your whole soul will want to sit at His feet in adoration. This is worship “in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24)

Andrew Murray once said of waiting on God, “If the question be asked whether this be anything different from what we do when we pray, the answer is that there may be much praying with but very little waiting on God. In praying, we are often occupied with ourselves, with our own needs, and our own efforts in the presentation of them. In waiting upon God, the first thought is of the God upon whom we wait. We enter His presence and feel we just need to be quiet so that He, as God, can overshadow us with Himself. God longs to reveal Himself, to fill us with Himself. Waiting on God gives Him time in His own way and divine power to come to us.”

As we cease from our own works (and nowhere can this be better done than in the place of prayer), the Holy Spirit is able to move upon us and stir our souls with His heavenly operation. We must learn that only God can produce a spiritual action. The soul of man is capable only of being an empty vessel in which God can work.

Our own operations, motivated by self, by our own wills, by any impulse of nature whatsoever, are carnal and not spiritual. Only what God does is spiritual. When we

begin to see this, we more and more learn to wait on God that He Himself may motivate us, using us as channels through which something spiritual may be accomplished.

Some people may think that praying like this will make the soul inactive, stupid, and unfruitful; but on the contrary, it acts in a higher and more noble way, for God becomes its mover, and whatever He does is most efficient. In the process of quieting the heart and getting rid of its impetuosity of self-motivation, it may seem that nothing is being accomplished, but when God Himself takes the place of these wasted motions of our souls, He fills us with divine love and we are led by the Spirit of God.

This waiting on God encourages a total dependence upon the Spirit of God. "We know not what to pray for as we ought" (Rom. 8:26), says the apostle, the master in prayer. This ignorance properly understood will lead a soul to set itself before God in silence and rest of heart, that the Spirit may enter with His divine wisdom and carry on the work of intercession, or worship, or petition. What a glorious day it is for us when we see that only the Spirit of God within can pray the way praying should be done. Then our whole life becomes a constant waiting on Him.

This is the "rest" of God in which His mightiest works are done. It takes away the care, and wear, and confusion. It brings us to the place that we can say with Paul, "It is no longer I that lives, but Christ who lives in me. (Gal. 2:20) For one who longs for this kind of life, waiting on God is absolutely indispensable.

Let God speak to you –

Make preparation for times of such waiting on God during your regular times of prayer. When you seem to have nothing more to say to God in the way of thanksgiving, or praise, or worship, or petition; rest before Him that He might talk to you. Believe that He will come to you in a special way. When one first tastes of the inward delight and peace of this humble abandonment to God, he finds that life begins to be lived on a new and higher plane. He gradually comes to love the workings of God and to hate his own workings. This is what Jesus means by "hating our own lives." We learn, by waiting on God, to have such a high regard for all that He does, that what we can do seems naught.

We must be ever leaning on Him. This is what is meant by Paul's admonition found in I Thes.5:17 – "Pray without ceasing." It is the very breath of a soul to pray when once it has seen how utterly dependent it is on Jesus. Then prayer becomes more than something to be stuck into some unneeded corner of the day. Prayer becomes the way for eternal life to be nourished within us. Waiting on God becomes our very life.

Have you tried to be so quiet inside, saying nothing, trying to think of nothing, but just to let your heart go out in love to Jesus? Have you waited until the still small voice begins

to tell of the love of God for you, of His care for you? Strange and wonderful it is that without words of any kind God can speak to us. Some people make much of dreams and visions, but surer than anything of that nature, which is presented to the senses, is the inward voice of our Divine Lover telling of Himself. Away down deep, deeper than any deception could penetrate, is this peace and warmth.

Have you waited on God till He communicates Himself to you like this? Or have you been so hurried in your devotions, so much occupied with your own efforts in them, that there was no place for the Lord Himself? How often have people knelt to pray and then, after preaching to God telling Him all that was happening in the world and what He should do about it, have arisen and been off, their speech finished? Some have no time to let the lowly Jesus talk to them, no time to hear His voice. That surely is not prayer, but self-love and the desire to hear one's own voice.

There is a price to pay –

The great lack in our Christian experience is that we do not know God as we should; we do not know Jesus in a sweet personal way. We know Him as a Master to be served, and we serve Him with all the vigor of which we are capable. We may know Him as the true God to be defended by pen or tongue, so that our life becomes one long series of disputes over doctrine in our endeavor to keep the faith pure. But do we know Him as our very life, as our very soul, as our Friend and Companion?

Why don't we know Jesus better? It is because we are too much occupied with ourselves. To learn to wait on God will revolutionize our lives. But you must pay the price of giving the time and perseverance, for it does not come all at once. You must pay the price of laying down all the efforts of your own soul in which you so delight. Either by our indifference or by our self effort we block God's efforts to give Himself fully to us.

If we were to know our true relationship to God – a relation of absolute poverty and helplessness – then we should sense our need of absolute and unceasing dependence. This would lead to unceasing waiting on God, and therefore, prayer without ceasing. We should then begin to see that each moment we must receive from God what God works each moment and would work in us. This would make us humble, yielded, acknowledging our inability to get along for even a minute without Him. Our greatest joy should then be to lean on our strong Lord, not wanting to have any feelings of self-confidence or self-dependence. It is this that the devil brought into the world. It is the opposite that Jesus came to bring.

And was not our blessed Lord One who was ever praying and thus receiving strength for Himself? Does not Jesus' life breathe out absolute dependence on His Father in Heaven? "I can of mine own self do nothing....The Son can do nothing of himself....The

word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." (John 5:30,19;14:24)
In these simple statements we see the inward life of Jesus. He worked out for you and me such a life of blessed dependence on God.

Isn't any self-dependent life a manifestation of the pride of Satan transported to earth? Isn't the self-dependent life exactly what that enemy of God and man brought to our beautiful Eden and by it brought ruin and sorrow? It is the waiting life, the humble life, that brings back to earth the kingdom of God.

Our reward – the abundant life –

Here, then, we find prayer at its highest. This is the more abundant life Jesus brought. The devil imported a life of self, a life not supported by God but by pride, self-will, self-choice, and self-strength. Jesus brought in a life supported by childlike trust in the Father; a life in which His own will was never used, His own choice never manifested. His words in the garden are the keynote to His whole life: "Not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42)

Jesus can give you this beautiful life of heaven, if you will ask Him. In waiting on Him, this life is poured into us by the Spirit. This waiting life is the Spirit-filled life. Out of it flow blessings like rivers. Out of it the power of God flows to transform those around you. You do not need strength – just weakness placed at His feet as an offering. Mourn not that talents seem to have escaped you. Wait on Him for His life and fullness and He will flow through you in ministry to others. Alas, it is not human talent the churches need, but the life of God. Were we to dispense with some of our machinery and do more waiting on God, there would be a revival such as we cannot conceive.

Jesus stands at the door and knocks, but in our busyness we hear Him not. O God, restore this lost art! Wait quietly on Him!

The following article from ***Bread of Life*** gives a suggested prayer list with which the preceding chapters fittingly close.

1. TO GET BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH JESUS –

"That I may know Him...." Phil.3:10) Oh, that I might know You, Jesus...I need you. I must have You! Increase my desire to find You. Give me a seeking spirit. You are all I want: all I need! Oh, come to me, Jesus. Reveal and manifest Yourself to me. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (Matt. 5:6)

2. CONSECRATION –

I long to belong altogether to You, Lord. Take me, just as I am, and make me what you would have me to be. I give myself to You, this day, just to be kept for You under the precious blood, separated from sin and self. Set (place or put) me in Your Presence, and if I should slip out, for some reason, please draw me back to the sweet consciousness of Your dear Presence. Let me feel Your nearness, continually. Get Your perfect will done in my life, today. Let every word, thought and action be pleasing to You. Give me “the mind of Christ.” Make me think the thoughts You want me to think. Live out Thy life within me, In all things have Thy way.

3. TO BE CLEANSED FROM NATURE FAULTS –

“Make me and keep me pure,
White with thy light within.
Guard my heart from itself,
And cleanse me from all its sin.”
“Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” (Psa. 51:7)

“Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults.” (Psa.19:12; 51:2,10) Purge my heart from all faults, nature sins, and weaknesses. Show me myself as You see me, and cleanse me from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Give me a heart like Thine, perfect, true, and empty of self.

“Wash me now, without, within,
Or purge with fire, if that must be.
No matter how, if only sin
Die out in me....”

Make me pure as You are pure, even in my spiritual life aims. (Matt.5:8) Give me purity in thoughts, words, actions, contacts, motives and dealings.

4. FOR LOVE –

“To know the love of Christ.... That I may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:19) Fill me more and more with Your Love. I want to love YOU with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” (Matt. 22:37,20; Mark 12:30,31) My love always falls short. I want the love of God to fill my heart and the life of everyone I meet. By Your grace I’ll never stop praying until this is made real in my life. (Pray daily over each verse of I Cor. 13:4-8). Make me see, dear Lord, where I am lacking in love in all the different phases of my life, that I may become perfected in the love of God.

5. FOR HUMILITY –

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.” (James 4:10)
“Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God.” (1 Pet. 5:5,6) Bring me down low at Your feet, every moment of every day, until “it is no more I, but Christ.” (Gal.2:20)

“Not I, but Christ, be honored, loved, exalted.
Not I, but Christ, be seen, be known, be heard.
Not I, but Christ, in every look and action.
Not I, but Christ, in every thought and word.”

“Oh, to be nothing, nothing.
Only to lie at His feet.
A broken and empty vessel,
For the Master’s use made meet.”

Clothe me with Your humility, Jesus. Let the old, worn garments of pride and self-love fall off that I may receive the garment of meekness and lowliness from Your hand. Give me the meek and humble spirit You showed, Jesus, when You washed the disciples’ feet even though You knew Peter would deny You, Thomas would doubt You, and Judas would betray You. Give me the meekness You had when You went to the cross for me and prayed for Your enemies, who had nailed You there, to be forgiven. Make me see my own helplessness, my worthlessness, and complete lack of ability to do anything perfectly, in my own strength. Help me to see I am good for nothing, apart from You. (John 15:5; 5:30) Show me my pride, and make me hate it, despise it and flee from it. Make my heart a living flame of love for Thee!

6. TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT –

(This is not to be confused with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is the beginning. We must go on becoming more and more filled with the Holy Spirit of God until we are always led, possessed, and controlled completely by the Holy Spirit. This does not happen all at once.)

Fill me now, with the Holy Spirit. Come, O come and fill me now! (It is a good thing to stop and praise the Lord a while here, or at different times during your prayer.) Empty my heart of all the world, the flesh, and self-life, and the natural, that I may be filled with the Holy Spirit. Teach me to be open and led by the Holy Spirit. Let faith spring up in my heart to receive, by Thy power, the mighty inner workings and changes that need to be made in my life. Make my heart in tune with what You desire to show me, that I may follow Thy leadings. Teach me true obedience to the Word of God, that I may not fail or fall short of all Your plans for my life.

There are people who have some “gift of the Spirit” who are not cleansed of inbred sin and do not live a holy life, so are a stumbling block to others. Therefore we should not seek gifts, but rather pray to be fully cleansed of all faults, made humble, like Christ, and filled with His Spirit, bearing the “fruit of the Spirit.” The real, true evidence of a completely Spirit-filled life is not the gifts, but the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal.5:22,23; 14-26)