

How To Draw Near To God In Prayer

(Part III)

There is a simple and direct way to draw near to God in prayer.

It is available to every child of God no matter how young in the faith –no matter how old or discouraged.

It's so simple a way that most miss it –or lose it again after they've found it.

There is a reason why it is lost. –But it can be found again.

And it is for you!

“Ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).

There is, someone has said, a God-shaped empty spot in every man.

In every heart of man there is a longing that this spot be filled.

Into the child of God, the Holy Spirit comes to reside. He *would* fill that empty spot except that it is crammed plumb full of our selfishness and pride, so that He scarcely finds room to take up residence, as it were.

(All such illustrations of the eternal and spiritual, of course, fail of adequately reflecting the whole truth.)

The Longing Grows

But, once within, the Holy Spirit increases that longing for God which was already there.

But why, once He is within, is the desire for Him not satisfied, but rather the longing for Him increased? –Because we are designed by God to be complete in Him *alone*. Just as the body cells of a person dehydrated and dying for lack of water all scream out their painful demand for that life-sustaining liquid, so does every fiber of our being cry out to be *satiated* with God.

This cry is, from the beginning of our new life in Christ, stifled and subdued by the same selfishness and pride that litter our souls and crimp and cramp the Holy Spirit.

Why is the Cry Not Heard?

But in addition, there is another reason or two why this cry is so little heard and responded to.

First, we simply don't understand that it is *right* that we should release this pent-up cry for God. So we leave it stifled. In fact, we might even think that releasing this cry after God would be unnecessarily emotional and even unbiblical or unspiritual.

Second, when we do release this pent-up cry after God and allow it full expression, it frequently seems we get no answer. So we give it up as a bad job and settle in to accept our disappointment as manfully as we can ...and not blame God over much for having failed us.

After all, the Bible says that He cannot fail us. So it must be so! *Mustn't it!?!?*

You say, hold it right there. You promised me a simple way to draw near to God in prayer. Not insurmountable obstacles.

So I did. So I did.

So here it is.

A Simple Way

The next time you come to God seeking His fellowship and love, set aside all else.

Prepare to stay in His presence just as long as you must.

Using your concordance or your Nave's Topical Bible, seek out verses that bring your mind to settle on God or our Lord Jesus Christ. If you haven't these important tools, turn to the Psalms of worship and praise (for instance 110-118, 134-138 or 26-34) or to Revelation 4:8-11, 5:9-14, 19:1-16, 22:1-5 and 12-17. Or draw to mind other scriptures and your stored knowledge of the Lord and His glories – such as His attributes –and meditate on them; worship Him, adore Him, love Him, thank and praise Him for His glorious self. Now, the purpose of this spiritual exercise is to set your mind and affections on the Lord, thus releasing them from their accustomed bondage to all that is merely temporal, as directed by Colossians 3:1 and 2.

Express Your Longing For God

Then begin to express to God your longing for Him; and continue doing it in such loving, longing, submissive, all-consuming terms as come to your mind and spirit –for just as long as you can. Cry out to Him to release you from your bondage, not only to the selfishness and pride that might hold you back, but from all your accustomed bondage to the merely temporal.

You are alone with God. Ask Him to help you not to affront Him by allowing anything temporal to distract or disquiet you –to interfere with your longing after Him.

Don't expect any "results." Just lovingly yearn for Him just as long as you can. If you get happy, if you sense His nearness, if you just enjoy the experience of longing for Him, or if you feel like blaming God for His seeming lack of response when you call for Him, or if you are tempted to discouragement because you don't "feel" any thing ...whatever happens, just keep on longing for the Lord, and reject all negative reactions. Stay with Him as long as you must.

Then, throughout the day return to yearning for your Lord just as often as you can. Begin slowly to make it the habit of your spare moments just as much as of your extended prayer times to long for Him.

Little by little it will become more spontaneous and more continuous and finally become what the saintly Brother Lawrence called over three hundred years ago the practice of the presence of God.

It will, *if* you don't allow the evil one to snatch it away from you. You see there's another equally important statement in Jeremiah 17:9: "*The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,*" which I understand could just as well be translated, "The heart is crooked and slippery above all, and incurably sick," and then there's that accompanying *question*, "Who can know it?"

Recognize your sinfulness and need and propensity to fail, but turn quickly back to Him Who is your life and in Whom there is no failure. Keep your heart fixed on Him.

ChristLife Inc.
1642 Michigan Ave., Niagara Falls, New York 14305
716-284-7625, 1-800-676-3172
E-mail:- pastormarr@adelphia.net
Web Site: www.pastormarr.com
