

How To Draw Near To God In Prayer

(Part V)

I love Madame Guyon's definition of prayer: "Prayer is nothing more than turning our heart toward God and receiving in return His love."

Though we're born again and the Holy Spirit lives within, though we've accepted our position in Christ as dead to sin and alive to Christ, seated in heavenly places with Him; the sin principle continues to work within, drawing us back into the old selfish, self-destructive patterns of thought and activity.,

The world all around exercises its evil influences on our mind, our wills and our affections.

And Satan seeks to direct this duet in devilish disharmony from God.

Our life-habit has been all too much to let him have his way ...or to try to find our way out of this morass through self-destructive self-effort.

There is "a more excellent way" –the way of love.

Love grows through exposure to the one loved. It's the natural desire of everyone "in love" to spend time with the one loved. And you become like those with whom you spend "love time."

This is why in the previous four parts of this series, I've advocated much time alone with God.

The question is now how to spend this "love time." Obviously "love time" is not a time for begging, or worry, or fear –elements, all too frequently, of our regular prayers.

I've recommended reading portions of scripture that lead to worship or adoration of God –especially from the Psalms, Isaiah, and the other Prophets, and Revelation, and meditation on God and His glorious Person ...as a way to begin this love time.

I've suggested that we seek the Lord with all our hearts, asking God for a holy hunger for Himself and a passionate love for Himself.

I've recommended that we relinquish all to God, seeking nothing for ourselves but all for the praise and honor and glory of our Redeemer/Lord.

I've suggested that we seek a unity of mind and will and affections with our lovely Lord. But the problem remains how to engage in these spiritual exercises without falling prey to doing so in the energy of the flesh. And, as one grows in grace and in love with his lovely Lord, all that has attached to it the stench of dying flesh becomes increasingly repugnant ...no less so its good works than its evil works.

So what next?

Simply wait as silently, quietly, restfully, peacefully in God's presence as possible. Direct your mind, will, and especially your affections, toward Him in love to the extent that you relaxedly can but stay effortlessly in His presence, open-heartedly receptive to whatever He sends your way.

Know that, to the extent that you rest receptively and expectantly anticipating Him to shower His love on you and work His transforming work, He will do it. You need have no doubt. None. He has promised. He Himself “who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

Even though you feel nothing different, and perhaps at first seem to think nothing different, you can bank on it. He is “able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think” that we may “know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that we might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Praise His holy name.

You may object, “But is this not an opportunity to allow Satan to get in through the silence.” – If you feel you are so young in the Lord that you can’t recognize the difference between God and the devil, don’t yet start waiting quite so still in God’s presence – or if you have been involved in the occult and have not yet been entirely freed from its special Satanic influences.

You may object, “But what if I fall asleep?” – Fall asleep in Jesus’ arms and wake up the better for it.

All you are doing is resting in His love to let Him shed abroad his purifying, transforming, life-changing love in your heart that it might be returned to Him and shared with others.

What a joy! What a delight! What a privilege! But again let me remind you that you must keep on though you feel and sense nothing happening. His way, His pace, His doing are all in His Hands. Let Him do what He wills as He wills. Just keep on waiting on Him to do it in love and rest and peace. He will. Never fear. He will.

Madame Guyon speaks of six years of spiritual dryness before she emerged to shake her society and nation and even the papacy ...an influence still continuing today. So never, ever give up.

Wait in the quiet, restfully, expectantly receiving His love and letting it return to Him again. Begin today. Spend as much time as possible. And never stop. Never.

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