

# *How To Draw Near To God In Prayer*

(Part II)

Here is the story of one man's spiritual pilgrimage in prayer toward his God.

Here is hope for every man –and woman –who longs to know God in the intimacy of prayer.

Here is practical help for every child of God who chooses to make God his one great goal in life.

Here is a path through the maze –light in the tunnel –a beginning of the unraveling of the infinite mysteries of finding the eternal God in the quiet of personal prayer communion.

After twenty-nine years in various Christian ministries, God used the slow financial collapse of my publishing ministry of fourteen years to drive me to my knees.

Instead of getting the financial answers I expected, the situation grew steadily worse. And God kept telling me to leave the money concern with Him and make Him my only object.

So I began to seek Him, and find rest and peace of mind and spirit in the most distressing of circumstances with such effect that I had only a handful of sleepless hours caused by worry in two years of circumstantial distress.

Whenever I sought to pray for things or people, the peace would flee. But as I sought Him alone, the peace and rest would return. How mercifully God worked to draw selfish me to Himself, not that I wanted to pay such a great price for Him, but that I needed desperately the peace that He alone could bring.

I would read the worship and praise Psalms or Job's concluding chapters, Isaiah or other of the prophets, or I would thank Him for His various wonderful attributes and revel in them, or sing a hymn uplifting Him, or meditate on Him or His names or His love to me, or praise Him, or thank Him, or worship Him, or simply long and yearn for Him.

And on occasion I would sense His nearness so fully and sweetly that it would block out everything else, and I would wish I could stay there in the intimacy of shared love. But it would flee.

## **With Him Alone**

For a year and more I then sought to block out all other thoughts in my prolonged quiet times but worshipful, loving thoughts of Him with a view to spending more and more time in that happy state that I called His Presence or the Holiest of All.

It seemed like I obtained more and more of this relationship for a period of months. At one time I began to find the tears rolling down my cheeks as I meditated and prayed with my concentration on Him alone. And for a period I assumed that the tears were evidence that I was in this special Presence.

But I soon concluded that, while they were indeed a sign of sensitivity to Him, they were not to be considered a sign of His special Presence.

And with this I began to find it, not easier, but harder to "sense His Presence."

During this time there was a period also when I would from time to time share with Him my highest spiritual aspirations and find a tremendous sense of oneness with Him in spirit. And then this to me was His Presence.

But slowly I began to back off the stimulation of my spiritual impulses by virtually anything other than the Word of God and even sought not to use that especially to stimulate my natural senses.

There was in me a craving to let God be God and not to disturb His quiet working with anything that might be less than purely Him.

I had read Molinos' *Spiritual Guide* on the prayer of silence in which the flesh is to have no part. But, more than that, there was an instinctive craving to let God be God and not to disturb His quiet working with anything that might be less than purely Him.

At the same time I began to be freer again in intercessory prayer and to some extent even in the prayers of supplication for personal need –so long as they didn't reintroduce worry or self-striving but remained in rest and peace.

### **Growth Through Failure**

At length after "endless hours" of frustration, I came to see the quiet times when God seemed not to be there and I seemed able to do little or say little that was meaningful, helpful or spiritual but simply wait on Him, as special hours of His gracious drawing. There He was doing His purgative work of withdrawing everything from me, even Himself, so I could realize my total utter dependence on Him and no longer seek to take credit for what He alone can do.

The purging work goes on. And only God knows *how* it will go on until I am with Him and like Him when I shall see Him as He is.

Now, to help you further, let me give you some of the events occurring simultaneous to what I have just told you.

In the early stages I learned so much as I listened to Him, I thought I should be a spiritual giant overnight and experienced much frustration when that did not occur. I had at the same time meticulously to repent of and confess, even to people, my specific sins of past and present. Then I told the Lord I chose to die to self and sin in all of its particularly nauseating forms in my life. Then I found myself occasionally spending hours in the Lord's presence hating my sinfulness and repudiating it and rejoicing that God should cause me to do so.

### **Himself**

All throughout I was seeking Him for Himself alone and for His Special Presence and seeking to shut out from my consciousness in prayer all but Him.

Then in an especially unusual sequence of prayer sessions, God convinced me that I really could begin to seek to live only to the praise of His glory. After two hours in which He told me that, I had to hold still nearly another two hours in His Presence while He convinced me it could genuinely be so. And that was only the first of several prayer sessions concentrating on bringing me to the place of recognizing I could really want to live for His glory alone.

Each of the phases I have gone through has been so special that I would want to build a tabernacle and stay there. But instead God has insisted, "Press on, my son, into My infinite Self. The end is not yet in sight. Nor shall it be until you see Me face to face and I am in eternal truth your All."

In the meantime, oh, the joy of seeking to draw nearer and nearer to God in prayer –and doing so even when it seems to be not so but the opposite. For we walk with Him by faith and not by sight.

Draw near to God in prayer, my dear brother or sister, and quench the thirsting of your longing heart at the Fountain of Life.

*\*NOTE: This is one of a series of tracts on this subject. The most that any man's experience with God can do is bring into focus some spiritual principles, warn of dangers, and provide encouragement along the way. This particular tract should be so understood, Write for Parts 1, 3, 4 & 5.*

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