

FUNDAMENTALS OF DIVINE SCIENCE

LESSON XI

PRAYER

Perhaps you have wondered why we have not yet talked about prayer. Indirectly we have been talking about prayer in each lesson. All the affirmations and treatments you have been using are a form of prayer. Every thought directed Godward has been a prayer. Indeed, now that you know that you are directly connected with God through your thinking, you are coming to see that every thought is a prayer. Since you are thinking most of the time, you are praying most of the time. Divine Science points out that it is your responsibility to pray according to Truth, to think according to Truth.

VARIOUS APPROACHES TO PRAYER

Everyone prays in some way or other, although not all may call it prayer. People have always prayed and their beliefs about God have determined the form of their prayers. Our Bible clearly shows the contrast between the primitive, fearful, and sometimes revengeful prayers of early parts of the Old Testament tradition, and the sublime declaration of Presence by Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I know that you always hear me."

In Divine Science, we do not attempt to cajole, appease, or bribe God with gifts and sacrifices. We seek to bring our own consciousness into attunement with God's intention for us, which is love, wisdom, health, harmony, and abundance. There are still, nevertheless, many sincere and intelligent Christians who believe that they must beg God for help, or do special favors for Him, or deny themselves some of the good things of life. Then, they believe, God will see that they are sincere, and be more inclined to grant their petitions.

THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

Our real reason for praying is to find God within ourselves, to realize His Presence, to feel His love, to become aware of His purpose for us. We pray for Self-awareness, not of our limited human sense of self, but of the Christ Self that indwells us. We pray in order to become aware of that which is. True prayer is not for things or favors *from* God, but for a realization *of* God. The life of prayer is the life of power; the prayer life is the life that Jesus lived.

The true prayer is the prayer of illuminated faith, and of the affirmation of God's loving Presence. True prayer gives us spiritual vision and is the foundation of a living faith. Through it comes the greatest of all joys; the realization of active oneness with God. Through prayer we become constantly more conscious of God and of God in action through our life experiences. In short, we become more conscious that God is *omnipresent* and *available*. We become more aware of who and what we really are, of what God knows us to be, of what He expects of us, and how we can attain it.

THE PRAYER OF AFFIRMATION

Through prayers of petition people have asked God for what they needed and desired throughout the centuries. Today, in a newer understanding, we use the prayer of affirmation, seeking to become conscious of what God has already given us. Truly He has already given us all. He has given us Himself and in Him is all we could ever need or desire. We already have all we need, but we are not fully conscious of it. Through prayer of affirmation we open our individual mentalities to the flow of that great Universal Mind and receive what has been there for us always.

We never pray to change God's Mind about anything; to do this is impossible. Divine Mind is changeless, perfect. It is pouring out to us, continually, an unending stream of all that is true, beautiful, and good. We pray to increase our own ability to open to that flood of goodness. We pray to attune ourselves to God-Mind and to lift ourselves to the level of consciousness where we willingly and knowingly cooperate with the abiding Presence and Power.

THE TECHNIQUE OF EFFECTIVE AFFIRMATION

There are no set rules for prayer but we believe that you will find these suggestions helpful:

- Set aside a regular daily period for prayer. Think of it as your daily appointment with your Father. It is wise to pick a time and place where you can be undisturbed for at least a half hour. Sit down in a comfortable position.
- You may fold your hands if you wish or you may place them palms upward on your lap. To some, this suggests the act of receiving from above. Some prefer to put their palms down on their knees; still others put them quietly on the arms of the chair.
- Your feet will probably be most comfortable when placed flat on the floor.
- There is nothing magical about any specific position. Any posture that will help you to forget your body entirely during the prayer period is the right one for you. You must decide for yourself which position proves to be the best for bringing you to a state of relaxation and serenity.
- Close your eyes gently and allow your thought to become very clear and calm. If your thoughts are turbulent, you may find it helpful to recall some beautiful scene of nature that suggests peace and quietness to you: the view of majestic mountains, the moon shining on a quiet lake, or snow falling silently on a field.
- When you are ready, speak your affirmation aloud or silently. Before you sit down decide what you most need to realize at this time. Prayer with a definite purpose finds a definite answer. Do not attempt to realize all that you know about God at one time. We suggest that you do not take up all the inherencies or qualities of God at once. Take that aspect of God that you feel you need the most and stay with it until you feel that inherency or

quality throughout your entire being. Affirm it slowly and let it sink deeply into your consciousness so that you may become aware of it as a living experience.

- There is nothing magical about any particular posture or any particular set of words. The meaning of the affirmation must be meditated upon, dwelt upon with all your attention, and felt to the core of your heart if, by means of it, you are to lift your consciousness into a true state of prayer.

BEYOND AFFIRMATIONS

Perhaps you are aware of an extension of the method of affirmation. This is the prayer of prolonged meditation and silence which may lead into direct communion with God, and in which direct guidance may be received. We will consider this in our next lesson. In the meantime, we urge you to put into practice what you have learned in this lesson.

We learn to do only by doing. We learn to pray only by praying. Your knowledge about prayer will not give you what you long for. You must put your knowledge into action with patience and persistence.

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

In addition to your regular period of prayer, you can keep centered in the awareness of Omnipresence by using every opportunity that presents itself to you to restate your affirmation. These so-called “minute prayers” keep your mind filled with truth and at one with Divine Mind.

It is wonderful to discover that as you change the tone of your thought through daily prayer and constant affirmation, the quality of your life will change also. You will hear more and more of the beauty and harmony that surrounds you.

ASSIGNMENT FOR LESSON XI

In *Divine Science: Its Principle and Practice*, study Chapter 6 through p.84.

Affirmation: I LIVE, MOVE, AND HAVE MY BEING IN THE INFINITE SOURCE OF ETERNAL BEING. I AM THAT I AM, FOR MY SOUL IS ONE WITH THE UNIVERSE, AND MY BODY EMANATES SPIRIT AND IS SPIRIT.

Bible Quotations: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)

“Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Philippians 4:8)

Questions:

1. How does affirmative prayer differ from prayer of petition?
2. Explain how you are carrying out your practice of the technique of affirmative prayer?
3. As you study and practice, what realization is dawning upon your consciousness?
4. What is “fasting” in the mental sense?
5. Why is a daily period of meditation desirable?
6. Why does evil have no place in eternal reality?