

Without Words

*Joy in My House
of Prayer*

Dr. Caleb U. Lussier

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Joy in MY House of Prayer

On the Practice, Purpose & Power
of Prayer

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Forward

Prayer is a much deeper and more meaningful practice than we who pray would regularly care to recognize. We want it to be momentary, and we want it to be sedentary. We want prayer to be easy, and in the process of trying to make it so, we over-complicate the feelings, oversimplify the forms, and overlook the functions thereof. Prayer then becomes much less involved and much less inviting than its pure biblical form. Prayer as seen in Scriptures is much more dramatic, much more dynamic, and this much more dreadful to our delicately modern and comfortable sensibilities. My hope and intention, in the writing of this paper, is to shed light upon a broader view of prayer itself, a thing I like to call All-Prayer. I intend to explain by Scripture and the reason why prayer is more than we imagine it to be and how it can achieve more than we could ever imagine. I mean to show why we offer prayer, what can be accomplished through the offering, and what it is that we are truly offering when we pray. I would have us understand what it means to be a "house of prayer", what it means to have joy in that house, and what it means to "pray without ceasing".

Introduction

"The idea of prayer is not in order to get answers from The LORD; prayer is perfect and complete oneness with The LORD." - Oswald Chambers. When we think of prayer, the first subject that comes to mind usually isn't that of joy, nor do we think upon our daily life and work as aspects thereof. The most common perception of prayer is of a person on bended knee, head bowed, eyes closed, and hands folded neatly before him. This is the classic image of how to pay homage to our CREATOR. Prayer is thought of as a duty or a responsibility, and it is taken on like a crushing burden, a heavy onus that if we can manage to carry, the LORD will grant whatever we wish. Prayer is sometimes called "talking to The LORD" at which time it is then used to express thanksgiving, to make requests for wants and needs, to ask for forgiveness and grace on behalf of ourselves and others, and to offer praise and worship to the ONE WHOM made us, for all His gifts and for His glorious SELF as well. Prayer, meaning the mere spoken words themselves and not the actual act of communion with the LORD On High, is wrongly thought of as more of wish-fulfillment-fantasy than it is as homage and honor. Prayer is seen as "what-to-do-when-all-else-fails" rather than "what-to-do-before-all-else-fails" or "what-to-do-so-all-else-does-not-fail" or even "what-to-do-so-all-else-succeeds." Heaven forbid, Prayer be seen simply as "what-to-do".

Our way of pondering Prayer never considers the daily life and how it should be affected by prayer, and joy is certainly not something that ever enters into this mindset. Prayer is seen as a momentary action and little more, to be repeated daily as a rite or ritual, and the MOST HIGH, as if HE were a genii, is expected by us to jump at fulfilling our wishes and wanton desires every time we "rub HIS lamp" so to speak. Whether or not we ourselves are aware of it, these are our ideas of prayer, our own concepts of our connection with HIS MAJESTY, but what does our MAKER have to say about it? What has HE told us in Scripture is our true calling and our real relationship to prayer and to HIM through prayer? What does prayer appear to be when the interests of the Almighty are all-encompassing and our own are entirely absent?

Scripture tells us that we are to give our attention to prayer, that we are to be faithful in prayer, that we are to be devoted to prayer. We are instructed to pray in every situation, and not only to be devoted to prayer but to be watchful and thankful in our prayers as well. We are told to lift up holy hands in prayer, that prayer is meant for our consecration, an act the righteous will perform and this with

persistence; above all, Scripture teaches us to pray according to the will of the LORD, and to pray without ceasing. According to Scripture, these things are prayer, and though not burdensome they do constitute a duty and responsibility carrying in themselves life-altering power and consequences. The classic image of the saint on his knees is indeed a genuine aspect of prayer, but it is not All-Prayer, and we would be wrong to consider it so as it fails to reflect the complete Biblical description of what it means to pray. The believer-by-the-bedside is only a fraction of what it looks like to pray, and in point of fact, it is the least possible (or impossible) part.

Prayer is as wide and high and deep a subject as the CREATOR to WHOM we call, but it is so daunting because it is so deep that most believers prefer to barely brush the surface when the SOVEREIGN has called us to jump in head-first and plumb to the depths of Divine mercy. Prayer is “talking to the LORD”, yes, but that is only the shallow end of the pool. In the deep end, we find that prayer is everything, not just a chat with the MAJESTY. Prayer is the Church service. Prayer is the songs of praise, psalms, and hymns in honor of HIS NAME. Prayer is the love given in the Lord’s name. It is the reading of the Word of the Lord and the study of His Gospel message. It is simply sitting and listening, being still in the perfect presence of Providence. Prayer is meditation, Prayer is worship. Prayer is the pure extension of heavenly joy.

C.S. Lewis said that “joy is the serious business of heaven” and it is probably that very reason why we are commanded to pray without ceasing. Joy, the purest and truest form of joy, that is, only comes to us through union with the Unmatched Messiah, and that oneness, accessible through so many avenues of All-Prayer, is what composes prayer itself. This overwhelming euphoria is so applied to our lives by prayer, because it is what we as human beings were created for in the first place, to reach for Heaven and to hold on to what we can grasp of HIS Greatness and Glory.

Were prayer to be found no more than the classic picture of the kneeling pious, ever on his knees but never living a life, then the gift of Grace would not be joyous but instead a joyless weight. Gratefully, however, this is not prayer in full, but only the smallest corner and the least form. It is true that we are at times called to use this form to commune with our CREATOR, but we can not carry on the notion that this single form composes and comprises all of prayer itself. To be sure, we are actually supposed to approach the Almighty on bended knee at times. I am not herein discounting that, especially when we can see for ourselves this form of prayer practiced throughout Scripture. We see it in the example of every Old Testament saint, in the conduct of the Apostles, and of course, in the character of Christ Himself, Who was always stealing away to be alone with His FATHER.

That said, the CREATOR's command is for us, HIS children, to pray without ceasing and HIS example in Messiah and in Scripture shows us this as well. Therefore, prayer cannot always be kneeling since we cannot remain perpetually on the floor. To pray without ceasing is to pray proactively. To pray without ceasing is to pray while living and even more so it requires that we pray by living. We pray by living a life in connection, communion, and under the command of the CREATOR Above. Prayer in its fullness is unity with HIM in HIS fullness. It is the life lived so close to Christ we walk with Him daily and walk like Him all our days. Augustine of Hippo once said, "Prayer is widening our hearts to THE LORD." He said that prayer is to train our desires so that we want what HE wants and are ready for what HE is going to give us. That training of which Augustine spoke is our whole life and the desires he said the LORD would have for us is the complete knowledge of HIMSELF in our hearts for all eternity. Our Heavenly FATHER wishes that we should know HIM and by way of prayer HE provides the possibility for us to do so. The Hebrew word often used to speak of prayer is "Teffillah". A closer study of this word, however, will yield more poignant definitions. While the word Teffillah is commonly used to indicate prayer, it also means "self judgment" or "introspection". In light of the life, prayer is just that, checking ourselves every single day and correcting ourselves with continuance to relentlessly reflect the likeness of Christ. As a word indicating prayer Teffillah is an even more interesting term yet, because if taken literally, it means "attaching oneself to the LORD". By this understanding, prayer becomes known as an aim or focus, an intention or goal, a purpose, the end of which is to grab hold, cling to, and bind ourselves to the Most High and to hang on for all HE is worth, to hang on for dear life.

Prayer is a wild ride of faith, and through prayer we are meant to hang on and take what adventure may come. Prayer is hanging on to the HOLY ONE and refusing to let go all our lives because HE is worth it all and because HE is our life. This is the purpose of All-Prayer, that we find the knowledge of the FATHER and that we cling so tightly to HIM and for so long that we become inseparable and indistinguishable from HIS glorious life. Prayer must make up every aspect of our life until ours and Christ's become one and the same. We are not being burdens nor making any wishes when we pray, and we are not waiting until all else fails before we exercise our faith. We pray calling on our Dear FATHER out of a pure desire to know and be known by HIM and to know HIS will for our lives, what HE would have us do and be and change within ourselves.

SECTION #1 - THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER: COMMUNION

Chapter 1 - The House That Bears My NAME

The best way to pray is the way of All-Prayer. It is the most wide-reaching and wide-ranging form of prayer, because it actually encompasses all forms of prayer, the full measure of power, practice and purpose. While most of Christendom would simply say "prayer" to refer to the individual domains of All-Prayer, and the same name to indicate the full scope of the collective forms, I myself prefer to be more specific and see this as good form and free from confusion and disorder. Since prayer covers too many styles and varieties, and since confusion is a thing we easily fall into in the Church. I find that specificity is of the utmost importance. And it is on this premise that I shall put my reasoning throughout this dissertation, and upon this basis that I will continually refer to the subject matter as All-Prayer.

Within the realm of All-Prayer resides a great many genres often mistaken for the full form of communion with the CREATOR. Among these are what I call "stationary prayer" or "sedentary prayer", the kind requiring one to stop and kneel and bow. There are also written prayers, psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, "exclamatory prayers", the category commonly called praise, and of course "devotional prayers" such as the study of Scriptures as well as the history of the Church and the writings of faithful men. Prayer is also to be found within the fellowship of believers in the moment of salvation, at the time of baptism, and in every partaking of the Lord's Supper, the Communion. We also have a demonstration of prayer by Christ in what has come to be called the Lord's Prayer though it ought rightly to be called the Disciples' Prayer, but more on that in time. For now, we shall look with a broad view at the mighty weapon of All-Prayer. We shall see how to wield it and how to maintain it. We shall see how by it and in it and through it we may come to our FATHER in Heaven and have joy in HIM and bring HIM joy. Not only shall we rejoice over our great weaponry, but we will have power and ability to fight our way beyond any obstacle to reach our good LORD at His throne of grace. And there by All-Prayer we can cling to HIM

and even die happy holding on. Yet should we die there we shall die whole, complete at HIS feet and holding on for dear life, and living there in complete joy.

When the Messiah cleared the Temple of all the buyers and sellers and abusers of His FATHER's holy house, He said to them as they fled, "It is written, "MY house shall be called a house of prayer' but you have made it a den of thieves". Here, Christ was quoting the prophet Isaiah when he addressed eunuchs and foreigners about the glories of being bound to the True CREATOR. The prophet told them they would have joy in that house. This then is the weapon that brings joy into that house, the weapon of All-Prayer that gathers together all people into one common cause even those unwelcome and unwanted by worldly standards - people like eunuchs and foreigners. All-Prayer binds us together in our pursuit of the LORD and attachment to HIM. It brings us into unity of mind to find that all-consuming joy in the FATHER's pure presence. More than this even, All-Prayer does not merely take us to the house of prayer. It makes us into a House of Prayer. What is this house after all but the Temple of the Living Elohim of which Christ was speaking. And what, according to Scripture, is the Temple of this one, true Mighty One? It is the House that bears HIS NAME, the very body and soul of the believer. As the Apostles have told us, we are the house of the FATHER. It is us, not some wood or stone structure erected in the world by human hands and irreverent to the LORD's plans. We are that holy house, and we are meant to be called a house of prayer.

The process that makes the LORD's house into a house of prayer is the practice of All-Prayer. By devoting ourselves to righteous progress and to the pursuit of attachment to HIM through the various forms of prayer, we will find ourselves transformed from being a temple named for the FATHER to being a temple that chases our FATHER with reckless abandon. We will give chase relentlessly and with ecstasy. Joy that we are promised from the LORD will be found in the journey, the tireless striving to hold on to HIM. That house that bears our FATHER's NAME will carry the title in more than mere pretense, but it will carry the NAME of HIM WHOM the house is hounding until such time as it catches HIM. Thereafter it shall be a house haunted by the Holy Spirit of Heaven, haunted by that Almighty joy. And that rejoicing temple shall be known as prayer, All-Prayer, not a moment of action but a life of moments. All-Prayer is not living on our knees, though we must genuflect from time to time. All-Prayer is instead, all things of this life done to the glory of the LORD, all things done to the end of holding on to HIM, the end of pursuing our FATHER, finding HIM, and holding on to HIM in a vice grip. All-Prayer is the time we kneel down to pray or the time we worship the LORD in what form of book we read or television show we watch. All-Prayer is the gathering of believers to praise the LORD on His day of rest,

and it is the worship we offer in a job well done at work. All-Prayer is a life that represents that continuous connection to heaven. Far from being just the moments on our knees, it is more so a life of moments in need of the presence of Providence, our Savior and our Sustainer.

Life itself is all moments lived in prayer. It is all about prayer, and it is All-Prayer, or at least it is supposed to be. For this reason, Jesus always showed us His life of prayer whether in the time he cleaned house in the Temple, or in the time he was transfigured on the mountain top before His disciples' eyes. We see Him praying constantly in every moment and then by word and deed, teaching us to pray as He did, in perfect oneness with the FATHER in heaven. "Jesus" told us about a widow who went to court before a judge seeking justice for having been wronged, yet the judge was unjust and would therefore not hear her pleas for recompense. But the widow did not accept this outcome in the story. Instead, she went away and returned later to face the unjust judge again. She kept returning before him, again and again, until such a time as the judge would hear her case, and though evil himself, he would work good for the poor widow if only to be rid of her perpetual nagging. This story "Jesus" told us to illustrate the outcome of prayer. If a widow gains all by persistence in praying for justice from a wicked judge, how much more ought we to gain who continually call upon a righteous Heavenly FATHER? How much more will the LORD, WHO is just, give us of HIMSELF more and more when we return to HIM again and again, dissatisfied with anything or anyone else.

We are taught by both word and example throughout Scripture that we are to pray without ceasing, and a simple misunderstanding is all it takes to cease our striving in this way and to remove the joy of this task with ease. We find it pure joy, however, when we understand that All-Prayer itself is not arduous. It is not a burden to carry, but rather a command to live, only to live nonstop in union with the will of Heaven. For thirty-three years upon this earthier thereabouts, All-Prayer was the life of Christ, ceaseless until He became sin for us, until He became the sacrifice on the cross for our sins. Unfortunately, we ourselves do not always pray without ceasing the way we were taught. We ourselves sin and demonstrated to its greatest degree of severity upon the cross, sin separates us from our FATHER. If prayer is what attaches us to the MAJESTY, then sin would be the polar opposite of prayer, the weapon that is held against our life of holding on to the MOST HIGH. Yet All-Prayer is also a weapon against sin. It is the weapon to stave off attack and the one to battle temptation, the world, the flesh, and the devil himself. And of course prayer is also a tool to re-attach ourselves to the LORD once we have strayed off from HIS care, to reattach us that HE may forgive us and that HE may once more be our strength and our reason to live a sin-free life.

All-Prayer is life, not the words we say but our relation to the LORD. This is what properly describes our prayer. It binds us to the Almighty and will not let us go, even and especially when all we want is out and away from our Savior. All-Prayer is the absolute Divine power given to us, HIS children, in this life, the power to live life here with HIM now as we will hereafter and forever in eternity. All that can break this connection with our loving FATHER is our own choices to give in to temptation and to surrender to sin. Constant devotion to prayer, however, shall ensure that sin and its master, the devil, are thwarted every time.

What All-Prayer does to drive off sin is to prepare the heart ahead of time. Because prayer is self-judgement and introspection, among other things, it reforms the inner self so that it may be always in right relation with the Almighty HIMSELF. It reforms and is always reforming, because the way of all things under the curse is to devolve, descend, and deteriorate into depravity, deviance, and disarray. The way of all flesh is entropy, to break down and to decay, to wane and fade and fall apart, to move away from the CREATOR into the darkness and to become lost to the horrors of our own making. Prayer alone is the weapon that pulls us back, holds us together, and attaches us back to the MOST HIGH through His Messiah. And there, prayer keeps us in both safety and joy in HIS mighty arms of warmth and light, those arms of peace that hold us together and prevent us from wandering off where we wish. The self judgement and introspection of All-Prayer will do the work to right us and keep us in right relation to the LORD, but we need not believe these forms of prayer are formed merely of speech.

The weapon of All-Prayer is not words alone, but it is words, and it is will, and it is work. It is all the ways in which we become, in and of ourselves, gradually and gratefully less and least and the MAKER, in our hearts, grows ever greater and more grand. All-Prayer is the weapon double-bladed to strike abroad against the enemy and yet also it is the tool to come home and clean house, to drive out the enemies selling their wares in our hearts. Prayer clears the Temple. It gathers all the images and puts them outside so that only the glory of the LORD may reside within. Prayer cancels personal preferences, emotions, feelings, and desires to make room for the Almighty of WHOM we desire a personal relationship. If the body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit as Christ has taught us in His Word, and if our bodies are the house that bears HIS NAME, then it is prayer that ensures that the NAME of the FATHER holds its rightful home. It is prayer that puts joy in that house, because we are not just told that we will have joy in the house of prayer, we are told instead that we will have joy and we will have it only because it is a house of prayer. Prayer brings us to our FATHER and HE is our joy. But we are HIS joy also. The joy found in the house of prayer is both our joy in the LORD and HIS joy in us who seek HIS presence. THE

MOST HIGH HIMSELF will have joy in that same House. When prayer governs our every move and guides our every motion, Heaven will be at home in our hearts, and then we ourselves shall be HIS joy. The Apostolic Father, Irenaeus said, "The glory of 'The LORD' is a person fully alive." And what greater way can we be alive than in prayer? What greater life can be had for any person than a life of bringing our blessed FATHER glory, bringing HIM joy by being HIS home. The LORD gains joy and glory, praise and worship, honor and power from our life of prayer, and yet this is only true in one aspect, that being the area of HIS delight. But over all, these concepts being gained by HIM are and always will be impossible.

Why do we pray? Is it that we're trying to give something to our SOVEREIGN? Does the KING of Glory, really gain anything by our prayer| or are we the ones who are meant to profit from it? How, after all, are we to give to the Almighty anything HE did not already possess? How can we even say that the Almighty should be able to "gain" something? If we pray, we glorify the KING of heaven, but if we refrain, if we refuse to pray, our KING remains ever as glorious as HE has been for eternity. Our own lack of prayer will not steal anything from Almighty Providence. It will not steal HIS worship, HIS praise, HIS honor, nor HIS power. "Can man rob the Elohim?" No, for all is HIS. Our prayer does not sustain HIM as surely as HE was Sovereign before we were alive and the Earth was formed. And were we to vanish, the LORD would remain eternal, the Master of all that is and all that is not.

If then our prayer does not profit our FATHER, why do we call to HIM? It can not be for HIS betterment for we know HE can neither gain nor lose. It must be then that we pray for our own betterment, for our own well-being. We do not call on HIM to give HIM life or anything, but our reaching to HIM gives us life everlasting. Our bodies, as it is written, are the Temple of the Holy Spirit and are thus the House that bears HIS NAME. And since HIS House shall be called a House of Prayer then our lives must be therefore one with HIM in prayer. And thus there shall be joy in my House of Prayer and in HIS house. Again I ask, why do we pray? If we can not use prayer to give the Almighty anything, then is it only for our own personal gain that we pray? Prayer will not alter the world to perfect it or even reduce the wickedness therein. And it can not reverse the curse of the Fall. It can not make, fix, or change anything.

So what is it good for and why then do we pray? Oswald Chambers said, "It is not so true that prayer changes things' so much as it is that 'prayer changes people, and people change things. '" This then is why we pray and why the life of prayer is so important, not for the LORD but for us, and not to change the world but to change ourselves within the world as well as our views of it. We don't pray for the CREATOR's sake nor for the sake of the world HE made. We pray to our FATHER for our own sake,

that we may come to know HIM, that through the power and blood of the Messiah, HIS Son, and by way of the ministering Holy Spirit, we may access the Throne of Grace, find mercy there, and be changed. We are not told to pray for HIS benefit but for ours. We have a deep need within ourselves to pray, because we have a need for the FATHER. HE does not have any needs, HIMSELF, yet has put needs within us to crave HIS presence. HE has told us of HIS own wants and desires also - among those are HIS desire for us to live a life of prayer so that HE can meet with us and live with us.

Not only does prayer clean house and give us an open connection to the LORD in Christ, but prayer changes who we are as people both collectively and individually. The life of prayer alters hearts, perspectives, and even character as a whole, turning all slowly and steadily into the attributes of HIM to WHOM we are bound in All-Prayer. Then transformed into HIS likeness and having HIS mind, we can face the things of this life both ordinary and outstanding, both welcoming and hellish, and we will be enabled to handle them for HIS glory. This changing of the aspects of life is both the life of prayer and the result of that life. Much in the way of the worship of the Living LORD is paradoxical and impossible to trace to its beginnings. Prayer itself is no exception. Prayer makes our lives represent Christ, and yet prayer itself is the Christ-like life. Prayer is what makes the LORD's House into a House of Prayer, and yet also prayer is what makes our regular human bodies of flesh and blood and bone into the House that bears the Sacred NAME of our FATHER. But whether it be beginning or end, neither is important, for as long as we continue to pray, we will find both, becoming the household of HIS NAME and a House of Prayer. All-Prayer makes us into both of these and all that Christ desires us to be.

The life of prayer is the weapon that drives out the idols that house themselves in the Holy Place. It drives them out and strives for holy living against all things ill-fitting for saints of HIS NAME, against all that is in the category labeled "Unholy". All-Prayer is a weapon but it itself is a collective, composed of many weapons, the many forms and fashions and functions of prayer. All-Prayer is all we have; it is our life and our arsenal, the power of our FATHER at our fingertips in a few deadly weapons, deadly to all things of darkness and death, deadly to all things of sin and evil. All-Prayer is the wonder weapon of holiness, the life in tune with the mind of the MAJESTY. It is power at the mercy seat. It is the benevolent bleeding business, going depth under depth to make reparation and to remove evil by way of more than words, by something stronger than language, namely, Life itself, and living it for Christ, not to us, not for us, but in, through, and for, our LORD.

Chapter 2 - The Wonder Weapon

We must take care never to discount any part of prayer. It is a well known saying in Christian circles (though seemingly attributed to no one in particular) that a church devoted to all Bible and no prayer is as bad as a church devoted to all prayer and no Bible. And to a point this general saying is true, but it shows how deeply and drastically we believers misunderstand our own activities as the Messiah's disciples.

We set categories for ourselves for all our doings, and we have neat little boxes to hold all our dealings, never imagining that our FATHER just may perhaps follow a different filing system. For example, we see prayer as one thing and the Scripture-reading as another, yet are they so separate and segregated? We decide we are going to be strict with our system and exact with our way of ordering our world, and we have in the process done exactly the opposite of our intentions.

On many levels, things like Scripture reading and prayer are identical in both form and function; prayer is not simply "talking to the LORD", but communing with HIM in both spirit and truth. Communion or conversation involves a give and take, both speaking to the MAJESTY (what we commonly think of as being prayer) and also listening to HIM (which may involve the reading and study of HIS Word).

These are just two aspects of All-Prayer, and therefore both are prayer. At a different point, I can also agree with the people who speak about all-Bible-no-prayer compared to all-prayer-no-Bible, seeing as their overriding purpose in speaking is synonymous with my own in this dissertation. The point of that saying is not to speak about the Bible and prayer in contrast, but in communion and even on a deeper level of reality to say that we must be all-inclusive in our Christian faith.

I do not mean to imply that we should open the doors to say everyone is a believer and that there are no distinctions between those of Christ and those outside of Him. But rather I mean to say that we must be opening the doors to all areas of our faith, as one faith not a puzzle of many unrelated pieces, a hodgepodge of randomness either disorganized or else organized into specific categories and divided up from each other. We as believers must begin to pray by first unpacking our boxes and de-constructing our own private filing system in order that we may allow our neatly separated facets to face each other and to fit together with other areas of our faith that which we could never imagine having connectivity. We limit our own potential to pray when we so limit our understanding of prayer to something so simplistic and limited as "talking to the LORD". When we see that it is in reality, "communing with the LORD"

and not just a matter of talk, then we broaden our own horizons to see prayer opportunities in every aspect of this life.

All-Prayer, being all-inclusive, includes all sacraments and sacred activities as well as every social action. Study of the Scriptures is a way of prayer. Partaking of the Lord's Supper is a way of praying, as is the act of Baptism. Singing is prayer and thanking the LORD when grateful. Prayer is praise when we are overjoyed, and it is blessing when we forgive. It is sharing with our FATHER when we offer gifts and grace to those in need. Prayer is the moment when we are excited, and it is the moment when we are still. It is when we exclaim and when we remain silent. It is pondering, meditating, forcefully focusing all our attention in all our intentions upon HIS Majesty in Heaven and upon all HIS attributes. All-Prayer is all of these performed all the time.

Most of us just get to the stage of prayer where we bow our heads, kneel by the bed, fold our hands, and close our eyes and ask for one thing or another, "Please bless this or that", "Please give me this or that", "Please help me with this or that". But this is not Christian prayer. This is the praying of a pagan to an idol god he hopes will hear him, an idle god which he does not really even believe is truly there or really even listening if he is, and one who couldn't even care if he was. We, on the contrary, have a real and true and Living Elohim Whom we can know, by a living hope, and Who resides within us present, caring, and compassionate. And therefore our prayer ought to reflect this kind of divinity. Truly prayer is for our benefit and not for the benefit of any deity, especially not our own FATHER, but to reap the benefits that are to be found in our LORD, we cannot come begging our every petty want and desire. Elsewise, every prayer will be selfish and sinful. Oswald Chambers said, "My goal is 'God' Himself." And this is the goal, purpose, and end of All-Prayer, that we should find our FATHER and that we should find HIM in our heart's desire.

We don't come to the CREATOR crying, "I want this" or "Give me that". Prayer is coming to the ALMIGHTY empty-handed without even a request except, "I want You, FATHER." and, "Give me YOURSELF." Prayer isn't the way to gather up more stuff. We have stuff enough, and the LORD knows what we need anyway; HE cares enough to provide things as HE sees fit. Benefits of all prayer are our FATHER and HIM alone. The way to what we currently desire is not in begging it from HIM, but it lies in begging HIS MAJESTY for HIMSELF, and when we have HIM, HE will meet all our needs, even though by that time we will care nothing for them and shall count them all trivialities.

All things become menial and meaningless when compared to true prayer. To live or even die is nothing if we can know now, here, today, the Almighty, through Christ our Lord. That said, we should

not discount any form of prayer, not even the stationary kind by the bedside. Though it can easily degenerate into detrimental pleading for personal pleasantries and whimsical wants and desires, this is not the reason for such a form. Stationary prayer is meant to slow us down, to calm us, and to humble us. It is a form of prayer that is most known in appearance and thought to be the most commonly understood. Yet it is mostly the heathenish groveling form that is really what is known and not the true form at all. Though for the sake of familiarity of form and appearance, this is the first weapon of All-Prayer we shall study in detail, and though least and lowest, it is possibly one that could grow most powerful of all if properly understood and performed.

The LORD tells us through the psalmist, "Be still and know that I am Elohim..." This was not some idle command or half-hearted suggestion. This is the centrality of sedentary prayer. It is the practice, purpose, power, thereof. Sedentary or stationary prayer is characterized by stillness. It is the departure from the normal flow of activity in life. It is designed to slow us down, to give us calm, and to make us humble before our Almighty FATHER. This specific kind of prayer opens the eyes of the heart and the mind in the moment to entertain grand thoughts of the Holy One or simply to entertain the knowledge that HE exists, that HE is EXISTENCE, and that HE is Who HE says HE is and Who HE promised HE would always be. In many ways then, this is the first or principal form of prayer, because it causes us to stop, to stay, and to acknowledge the KING of all the universe, HE Whom, on a daily basis, we rush past with breathless haste as we scurry about, striving endlessly to move our stuff about on our little world.

This is the purpose of sedentary prayer, to rid us of our reckless abandon to ourselves and force us to abandon ourselves to the FATHER. This itself would be wonder enough, but power there is also in stationary prayer not only to make us stop and stay, but to enable us to stand and obey, to enable us to obey the desire and command to know our CREATOR. The power of this form of prayer is the power of all other forms as well. The power of All-Prayer is the power to bridge the eternal gap between earth and heaven, the power to open a doorway to the throne on High, to establish the connection between the ever-loving LORD and HIS ever-sinning servants. What sets apart this form of prayer is its preeminence. Prayer itself may open the door, but without this form of prayer we will never reach for the knob, never turn the key, never walk through to find mercy. Without stationary prayer, we will hurry by the LORD of Glory, never even bothering to see if HE had something better in store nor even to know HE was ever there.

As it is written, "He that comes to Elohim must believe that HE is and that HE is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek HIM." The reward spoken about here in this Scripture is not some object or

currency as we may be so inclined to think of it. The reward rather is the end or purpose of All-Prayer, the acquisition of the Almighty HIMSELF. But first we must believe and know that HE is before we can come to HIM and way before we can diligently seek HIM. And in order that we may believe and know that the CREATOR exists in the first place, we must be still as the psalmist has said.

To that end, we practice sedentary prayer. In practice, sedentary prayer is a captivation of the body, a willful and voluntary binding of the physical self to force all the focus in one direction and toward one undivided end, acquiring the knowledge of the LORD. This kind of prayer is a discipline but not the kind that "diligently seeks HIM". This is long before that level of commitment is reached.

The last goal is the diligent pursuit of Providence, but the first step toward reaching the last goal is a disciplined stillness. It is that disciplined stillness, that quieting of the natural qualities which opens the door to knowing the LORD as our FATHER. The more stillness we enter and the more often we enter it, the better we recognize our Heavenly FATHER for Who HE is and then know HIM better later as we live. And the more we live in the knowledge of the LORD, the more we will learn to diligently seek HIM on a daily basis. Eventually, we will grow so strong in the LORD that our times of activity will become times of stillness before HIM. But to begin now with sedentary prayer...In order that we may perform it, we must shut down for a time the physical aspect of our nature in exchange for the spiritual aspect. We must force ourselves into inactivity of the body so that the mind and heart may be able to do the work of simply knowing.

In today's world of high-tech gadgets and fast-paced social networking, amid the hustle and bustle and rush to get things done before we die, it is harder than ever to slow and stop and to merely, for a moment, do nothing but 'be'. Yet now more than ever, it is so important because nothing else stops. For this reason sedentary prayer is designed to be so binding and restricting of movement. This is why we must learn to kneel down, in order that we will not be unable to walk away. Why do we bow our heads? So that we may for the moment be careless about our surroundings. We fold our hands for the same reason, so that we will not be inclined to pick things up and produce work. And we close our eyes to shut out the physical world and perceive with spiritual vision. It is complete self possession and complete self control, all the senses reigned in and restrained, restricted to one single purpose. Then, and only then, can we be still. Then and only then can we begin to know the MOST HIGH and His will..

When we are this stuck with nothing to distract, to distress, or to disturb our dedication, we can be quiet enough in mind and spirit to know the existence of the Almighty and to be overjoyed in its simplicity of fact and this by faith. Furthermore, the specific methods of self-possession involved in this

form of prayer have more significance than simply that of disrupting. They are also acts that demonstrate humility and further encourage submissiveness. Folding the hands in prayer is a sign of humility, because it signals a surrender of activities desiring our own accomplishment in exchange for a desire to accomplish only the desires of the Divine and for HIS kingdom and glory. Closing the eyes signifies a surrender of sight unto the Divine vision, a desire to see as our SAVIORS sees and only to see what HE sees. And kneeling down and bowing the head are the ultimate signs of humility and the most obvious. They are performed by servants before their masters and subjects before their kings. By bowing and kneeling in prayer to our KING, we acknowledge this as our station in life and our standing in relation to Christ. We accept our role, as it were, as subjects, servants, and sinners and our FATHER as our most merciful King, making us into saints. Not only are those actions significant in relation to what we are intending as our mindset in the moment but they also symbolize our intentions for the future. They show that we are not just humble and still focused upon the FATHER while we are on our knees, but we are intending to form life-long habits of humility, stillness, and holy focus in all of our daily doings and dealings.

The moment that stops us and gets us to be still is intended to make a change in the rest of our lives, the parts where we can't stop and stay. Thus, when we must move again, we find ourselves moving in the ways of the FATHER, bringing HIM with us wherever we go and going only in ways that are HIS. This is the form and structure of sedentary prayer, but how are we to act once in this position? What are we to do while down on bended knee? What activity are we supposed to be performing, or should we simply be focused on not moving for a given period of time? Once we have cut out the physical senses and cut ourselves off from the physical world, what then are we seeking to accomplish in the spirit? It is easy at this point to fall into the beggar's trap; by this, I mean the temptation to start asking for stuff from our FATHER just because we have nothing else to do at the moment. It becomes crucial to remember that at that point on our knees the reason we have become still in the first place. It was not to get things from the LORD, but it was to get to the LORD HIMSELF. Once physical obstacles are removed and we enter into the spiritual realm, the focus must be on the LORD.

Temptation will arise (as it always does) in the form of distracting thoughts and imagination, but we must not give in, lest we forget the reason for our being in that position to begin with. To avoid distractions, we are responsible to acknowledge the intrusion's existence, to accept it as fact and then discard it as contrary to our ultimate goal rather than spending our focus and our precious time of

stillness and quietness locked in a mind at war with itself and battling distractions. Once the CREATOR is the consumption of our focus, then we can converse with HIM.

At this point there are a few more mind traps and prayer traps we must remain wary of falling into, the traps of babbling, blubbing, and blasphemy. We must also take care not to tell the Almighty things HE already knows as if HE were not aware of them, and also of the trap of repetition. The temptation arrives once we reach this place in our stationary prayer, the temptation to talk without saying anything. Sometimes in the silence we can't think of what to say; rather than simply saying what's in our hearts, we ramble on about nothing and nonsense, about things we ourselves care nothing about and about which our LORD cares even less.

The pure presence of Providence can be daunting, and in that state of being awestruck, it is easy to lose the words our hearts were crying out. It is easy in that place of holiness to develop a spiritual stutter, too often wasting our time on our knees running over old dialogue, covering ground we've already covered and cultivated. Repetition for the purpose of Christian meditation and memorization is of unparalleled value, but that is not what we are addressing here. Repetitions are conscious efforts on the part of a praying person spoken over and over again to deliberately drive Divine truth home into our lying hearts and minds, to drive it home and imprint in there forever. The trap of babbling, however, is not the continual commitment to repeating the Word of the LORD or the promises HE has made or HIS infinite attributes.

Prayer-babbling is putting the focus on the wrong areas, doing something very important with all the unimportant things. It is the loss of control, but not to the Holy Spirit, not a surrender to HIM as prayer ought to be; it is instead a loss of control to the subconscious, a surrender to another part of ourselves. This is a loss of focus, coming before the FATHER to converse with HIM and yet ignoring HIM entirely, even if unintentionally. That is why it is a trap to the sincere prayer warrior.

When we become still before the throne, we must be sure not to become ourselves enthroned, nor further still not to enthrone our own desires and our own perspectives and possessions. This brings us to the second prayer trap just as easily fallen into – the trap of enthroning our own experiences above the Almighty, even though we are well aware of Who HE is and HIS superior relation toward us. It is easy, when our own personal circumstances become so overwhelming, to make of them our own personal the LORDs, and the LORDs we believe to be too great for the CREATOR to control. This second prayer trap is the trap of perception. Often we come to kneel before the Sovereign LORD in our sorrows and in our hard times in order that we may seek relief and release from our troubles, but once we get down to

the actual praying itself, we crown the problem and set its reign against our King. We can easily forget sometimes why we pray in the first place. Our original intent was not to come to the throne to raise a challenge to the MAJESTY, nor did we quiet our bodies with a mind to raise a racket in our spirits. We were coming to our FATHER in our trouble that HE might be our Comfort in times of sorrow.

We meant for the LORD to be the Solution to that problem through which we are passing. We meant to call on HIM, but too often that call becomes an accusation. This trap is one that challenges the MOST HIGH to solve our problems while simultaneously charging HIM with being the cause of every one. This trap does not beg from the Holy ONE but only blames HIM, glorifying not only our experience and deifying our perceptions with absolute authority, but also our feelings and emotions. It carries the allegation of, "How dare You do something that I don't enjoy?" And it carries that blasphemy directly to the MAJESTY. So far, this falls from original intent that it would be better if the person praying such a prayer had not come to the Almighty at all. This trap says, "How dare You..." but it also says, "You don't understand" and even worse perhaps, "You've never been there..." But this is again a loss of focus and a misplaced surrender - not to the Spirit of Sanctification but to the self, because it fails to recognize the Almighty as Sovereign and greater than all. It fails to see the Good LORD as greater than our problems, greater than our perspectives, greater even than our prayers. When we enter into the state of stillness that is sedentary prayer, we must remember why we are there, and blaming the Blessed FATHER is not the reason. We come to seek our SAVIOR and for only this end, that we may find relief when we do reach that ending. Not only must we remember that Providence is greater than our problems, but we must remember as well that we are wrong in our thinking that the LORD cannot sympathize or that HE has not been right where we are in our problems. In fact, such a thought creates yet another form of blasphemy in our prayer attempts, because it now charges the MOST HIGH with negligence, not simply treating HIM as "Problem solver", which would be bad enough, but also and more specifically, challenging the life experience of HIS Son, Whom HE sent to live as one of us and suffer in all ways as we have and worse.

At times in our stress and under our burdens, we forget that not only can the LORD lift them and bring us rest, but HE also already has. The KING of the Universe sent HIS Son, HIS Word to become a man, human as we are, born of woman as we are, and to live as humanly as we do yet completely without sin. Through HIS Son, the FATHER has always known loss. He has always known pain and sorrow and suffering. The Almighty has always felt what it is to be lonely, betrayed, or dying. Through infinite love HE provided HIS infinite Son to bear all these things and more upon His blessed cross, to bear all our hardships and all our horrors and to subject the lot unto infinite death there on the tree. We must not

make the mistake in our prayers of thinking that the Almighty does not understand or that HE does not care.

That is the trap of perception. We are limited in both sight and insight. We are of small minds and even smaller understanding, but the LORD of Always has known our every care and our every pain and has felt them HIMSELF forever and will also forever and ever. The trick, the trap, the trouble is to magnify the problem and in so doing to magnify ourselves, but the MOST HIGH has more of an understanding of our problems than we ever will and more experience with each of them than we ever could. The LORD knows each of our problems and always has, but we (oh how blessed we are) only need pass through them on our way to the peace and rest HE has provided and has promised to increase exponentially. We experience pain for a moment as mortals, but the ageless MAKER, the Ancient of Days, knows our every heartache for eternity before and after time. With this knowledge in mind, let us skirt around this trap of our own short-sighted perceptions and approach the Infinite Majesty with humble hearts for HIM Who knows our sorrows more intimately than we do ourselves. When we can come to our FATHER in our times of trouble and seek not relief nor fairness nor justice, nor a sound-board for our own selfish complaints but only the LORD HIMSELF in all HIS grace and glory, then we will find what we feel we need anyway. Then we will find relief, fairness, justice, a listening ear and all. We will find it, because we stop looking for it and start looking for the One Who already has it. We will find what we wanted, because we will know that the Almighty already knows all about every one of our needs. And for every problem, HE is ever present and ever ready to provide HIMSELF as the Solution.

Providing a third potential prayer trap is the blasphemies of the improper use of the NAME of our Sovereign, or the superfluous repeating of HIS many titles. This prayer trap is of a positive intent and of a verbal form. When we quiet our lives and still our bodies entering into a totally spiritual moment in sedentary prayer, we become tempted to bring challenges to the MAJESTY or to ramble on about nonsense in HIS presence, but we are also tempted to take as vain or to treat as common the NAME - above all other - names.

Once again, the surrender of the moment over to the LORD of Glory, though it feels as if it is a loss of the self, is often really a loss of the LORD to another part of the self. Perhaps this was how we were taught to pray. Perhaps it's only a bad habit that we picked up along the way, our attempt to express, albeit in an inappropriate manner, our ecstasy over being in the presence of the Almighty. Yet whatever the reason, when we call to the CREATOR, it is a trap to name HIM over and over again as if we fear a

“sending error”; as if our prayers would fly off erroneously away to Belial instead without a redundancy of direct address to Heaven by title or NAME.

The blasphemy trap is the compulsive need to repeat such titles as "LORD 'God'", or "Father 'God'", or "Holy LORD", and so on without end until the utterance of the word (the magic word as it were), "Amen". Do we truly wish to speak to our FATHER this way? We do not ordinarily converse in this manner, speaking the name or title of the other person in the conversation forty to fifty times or more every moment a new thought is spoken. And yet we do so so often in our prayers. Why?

Maybe it is an attempt at reconnecting with the Divine when our minds wander. Or maybe it is mistaken for deeper spirituality such as meditation. Whatever the reason, however, the reality is this: The NAME of the LORD or HIS titles over-spoken in prayer replaces what in ordinary conversation would be the sounds "ah" or "ahm" which itself indicates a pause for thinking.

In prayer, we substitute those pause words with "LORD 'God'" and "Father 'God'", dragging down the Majesty, however unintentionally, into vanity and baseness to indicate a hesitation in the conversation. This may be thought of by some as a way of meditating upon the LORD HIMSELF, yet it is nothing but debasement of HIS might, using the Almighty as an afterthought of what to say hereafter.

Few people view this as a major issue and would cry foul at the claim that it is a trap at all, but we must remember again why we were in the position of sedentary prayer in the first place. Was it just to speak at random, to hear ourselves talking, to say whatever came to mind? Or did we get on our knees to find our FATHER HIMSELF and to hold HIS NAME most sacred of all things, most honored, most holy?

We came to our CREATOR to believe that HE is, and that HE is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek HIM. We believe that HE is, and so we are on our own knees to diligently seek HIM. The key word here is 'diligently'. We come to the Divinity diligently. That means coming to HIM on HIS terms, coming to HIM by HIS way, not ours, coming to HIM seeking nothing but HIM. We do not come to the CREATOR to ramble at random. We do not come before HIS throne to complain. And we do not come to raise a challenge. We come to the FATHER to know HIM and that we may grow to be like HIM.

The entire purpose of stationary prayer is this: still the body so the spirit may be moved. Stop the body from striving so that the soul may seek out communion with the LORD. Once we have entered this state and avoided the typical traps that so easily ensnare our prayers, we may make our way to our MAKER by many means, that is to say through many forms of prayer which we will begin to explore and explain in the next section of this text.

This is only the opener, the beginning way to pray, the child's way, so to speak. Sedentary prayer, most often mistaken for All-Prayer itself, is important, yes, but in and of itself only a portion of true prayer. For prayer to be true, it must be long-lasting, longer than it takes us to kneel down and get back up. And it must be far-reaching and wide-ranging to stay with us when we go about our lives and wander through the world. It must mean more. It must have more quality than just the stillness of the moment, greater quality than merely quietness. Yet stillness and quietness must come first to make the basis of our prayer.

If we can learn to be still and know that our FATHER truly is *real* in all the ways that reality can be understood and even moreso beyond our understanding, then we can begin on our knees to know that HE is, and we can begin then to know as we stand that HE is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek HIM. And in that hope and joy, we may seek HIM diligently.

Chapter 3 - Wielding the Wonder Weapon

Quieting and stilling the business of our bodies is nothing in and of itself if it does not serve the end of connecting us with our CREATOR. Quietness and stillness, of their own accord, cannot acknowledge the Almighty, but they do serve as tools to assist that connection. And they may be important tools too, but tools, nonetheless, wielded through meditation and other prayer forms. The two are imperative to knowledge of the Holy ONE, but they do not equal knowledge of HIM. It is we who must practice meditation and every other prayer form to acquire that full knowledge. This mighty weapon wielded upon the knees during stationary prayer may express itself in a variety of aspects like meditation, Scripture memorization, written prayer, the utilization of prayer beads (not used so much among protestants but found useful for those who are learning to pray), or the simple remembrance of an attribute or attributes of the Almighty and their repetition. The exact expression we choose to use is of little significance, but what is of greatest concern or ought to be of greatest concern is that in all our prayer and in every form of meditation, the strong focus must be upon attaching ourselves to the MAJESTY on High. Whatever the form, meditation requires continuance and for that, repetition is the key. Memorized prayers as deep as the Lord's Prayer or as simple as the cry of the tax collector, "LORD, have mercy on me, a sinner", both require repetition. Why? Why must we repeat over and over truths about our LORD and HIS Word? Because human nature is stubborn, and sin nature is worse. To drive back human nature and to hold sin nature in the grave, we must brainwash our own minds (for lack of a better word) until such time as we ourselves become subject to the mind of Christ. Prayer can work, but only in this way. The goal of prayer being the mind of Christ and all our aim being attachment to the FATHER by way of HIS one and only Son. To this end, we therefore repeat the prayers that draw our hearts and minds closer into HIM.

For repeating a series of prayers, it may be useful to utilize prayer beads so as not to lose track of where we are in the given sequence. Pre-written prayers may serve those well who can voice what they feel better with pen and ink than with their mouths. But whatever the form and whether or not a tool is implemented to assist in attachment to the MOST HIGH, the best prayers are the ones from the heart that beg to be lost in the LORD, the ones that beg of HIM just to know HIM, the kind of prayer that demands of the Sovereign, only HIS own greatness above all and our own diminishing at all costs. To this end, when we enter into a state of prayer at the stationary level or any other, we are meditating upon the

attributes of the FATHER, and this repetition of facts serves to orient us in relation to WHO HE is and who we are by comparison. Such meditation will also help us to avoid the prayer traps we would otherwise so easily fall into or jump into head-first.

Wrongfully so, and unfortunately, meditation has been thought of as a pagan form of prayer synonymous with Buddhism, Hinduism, or other New Age religions. This however is not the form of prayer which we are studying here. While the pagans and new agers search the world for completeness and enlightenment and oneness with the universe, we who are complete and enlightened in “Jesus Christ” our Lord search in our meditation beyond the universe to be one with the KING thereof. In fact, I find that it is a lack of meditation among modern Christians that has led to a diminished understanding of our FATHER and who HE desires us to be as HIS holy people. It is a lack of meditation combined with a lack of care for Scripture that has led to a diminished understanding of prayer itself. If we misunderstand prayer, we will misunderstand the MOST HIGH and vice versa. The cycle is broken here, however, by our choosing to learn to pray the LORD’s way, to come to HIM on HIS terms, and the first and fundamental step in this direction is simple meditation. If we can dwell upon the FATHER’s character and infinite benevolence and eternal existence, power, and presence, then we can right our minds about the way to approach HIM.

Meditation shows us that the Sovereign is self-existent and therefore needs nothing, not even our prayers. So, prayer is not about making deals. It tells us the LORD is good and loving, and so we can know HE means us well and will hear our prayers. It tells us the Almighty is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent: so prayer is not about making requests, since what will be will be as HE wills it, regardless.

A simple acceptance of Christian meditation upon the attributes and attitudes and titles of the LORD and upon HIS one, true NAME, will erase all the nonsense we come up with to get answers from HIM that fit our previous desires. The faithful practice of meditation upon the FATHER will allow us to perceive that the only thing we can rightly ask of HIM by faith is that HIS own will be done. Saint Francis of Assisi was said to have mastered this aspect, sometimes staying all night on his knees saying over and over again only five simple words, “My El and my All.” Would that we all could come to this understanding.

Further still, the more we meditate upon the character of our Almighty FATHER, the more we will come to realize that we have so diminished within ourselves that HIS will is all we wish. As long as we live, as long as HE has HIS way, we will have our joy. And this we will understand meditatively, though not always while sedentary.

Extending beyond the moment of sedentary prayer, we find meditation as not simply the primitive form of prayer for beginner believers, but it is also the foundation of All-Prayer. And it is practiced both on our knees and on our feet. Meditation, like all other forms of prayer, begins with the stationary form and progresses from there as we go and as we grow spiritually stronger. We return again and again to this form, but stagnation will set in if we remain here always. One form of prayer must not be permitted to dominate our whole life, lest we have no life at all. We must not believe for a second that our lives will be lives of prayer if we do remain eternally stationary. Instead if we stay there at the beginning stage of prayer, our lives will be out of focus, all about prayer but not all about the ONE to WHOM we pray.

Prayer is the means by which we commune with our CREATOR, but if we get stuck either there at the beginning or on some other form along the way, we will be unintentionally making idols out of our tools. If life is all about one form of prayer, then life itself is not as it should be with All-Prayer being our whole life. Once we discover our FATHER in the stillness and quietness, it is imperative that we return to the world with HIM, or more accurately that we have HIM return instead, bringing us in tow.

Being a House of Prayer and having joy in that House which we are, requires that we pray without end as Scripture mandates that we must. And since we may not remain indefinitely on our knees in our quiet moments continuously but must work and play and live as well, then we must find a way to bring prayer out of the bedroom and out of the house and bring it into those parts of life where we reside most of the time or otherwise find a way to make them into acts of prayer.

In every action and every activity we undertake, the Word of the CREATOR commands that we do it "to the glory of the LORD". The way we do this is meditation as well. On our knees in sedentary prayer we begin our meditations upon the NAME of the LORD, upon HIS attributes, upon HIS gifts and upon HIS promises. We meditate upon the mind of the MOST HIGH, and we continue this in our life as we grow. We carry this into our dealings with our brothers and sisters, in our dealings with the outside world and in our dealings with ourselves in our private moments not spent in stationary prayer. What things we do in life done to the glory of the LORD, these are mature acts of prayer rather than the moments of prayer practiced by new believers.

When, in every situation, we can hold in mind and before our eyes the LORD HIMSELF and all HIS ways, then we will find ourselves mimicking HIS habits and HIS holiness. The reason we move will be due to our constant meditation upon the NAME of the Almighty and all HIS wonders. That is when prayer becomes real. That is the point at which Christianity becomes something more than a shallow

admonition for an ancient, crucified criminal. It becomes a faith and a strong affinity for the risen living Christ, and it becomes power to perform beautiful things in the world and in the congregation and in the individual life. In that moment, we realize that that power is infinite in prayer and that prayer in action equates to the good we do to honor the FATHER. It is in the good we do and the good things we make by bringing the CREATOR into every one of our creations.

A story is told (quite possibly apocryphal) about St. Francis was said to have once been visited by an unnamed Bishop who admired the hermit's beautiful gardens. The Bishop asked St. Francis how he was able to grow such beautiful flowers to which Francis replied that they grew by prayer. Baffled, the Bishop inquired further, "You are saying that you pray and [the LORD] takes care of the flowers?" Francis responded "No! I pray with a hoe."

Whether fictitious or true, from this little tale we may construe that prayer is the good we do. "Laborare Est Orare." (To work is to pray.) It has been said that we learn by doing, and in this way we learn prayer, by being one with the LORD in all we do, grabbing on and holding on to HIM and hanging on for dear life to our Dear Life carried away and taken off on a whirlwind adventure, a wild ride of faith held within every moment spent in prayer.

Prayer is meditation upon the Almighty so deeply and so truly that each thing we do and every circumstance or person we encounter becomes an adventure and an opportunity of a lifetime in which we come to know our Dear FATHER more deeply and more truly. And in that deep and honest knowledge: HE is not only all there moment by moment, but all we need forever and ever.

Prayer, for us, must be greater than mere words, something far stronger than language. It must transcend the normal and the natural. It must be more than conversation and common communication. Prayer must become for us communion, not simply an exchange of ideas and ideals, merely a relation of information. There is no give and take with the Good LORD. HE gives, and HE takes away as HE wishes. And we ourselves can neither give anything to HIM nor can we take anything from HIM.

So, on this basis only communion can be sufficiently synonymous with prayer as communication and conversation are rendered impossible. And like meditation, communion has both a sedentary and stationary form as well as the one that continues on without ceasing in our daily life and work. Communion, in its momentary form, is never commonly considered to be an act of prayer, though it is truly one of the greatest. Prayer, as communion with the CREATOR in the physical sense in appearance, is like the celebration of the eucharist.

Prayer in the moment of communion is what we call the Lord's Supper. On a level, the consumption of the bread and the wine is the greatest of all prayers, because it embodies the essence of All-Prayer itself which in turn is the essence of the whole of the New Covenant itself. Being the purpose of the New Covenant in Christ's blood, and being acquired via the vehicle of All-Prayer, communion does for us moment by moment what 'Jesus Christ' intended and provided for us in that everlasting moment upon the cross of Calvary.

It makes us one in spirit and one in desire with the FATHER, swallowed up by the Majesty through the communion process. As HE has said in HIS Word, "Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you." The LORD is our life, and this then is the hard lesson of prayer in communion: HE must increase, and we must decrease. In the physical realm, we eat and drink, and if done so to the honor and glory of Heaven, then this too becomes prayer.

After all, why do we eat? And why do we drink? We eat and drink, because we will die without sustenance. We are dying physically, cell by cell, every moment, and we consume in order to replace what has died with new and living organisms. Is this any less true of the spirit as it is of the body? In the natural, we are dying cell by cell and moment by moment, and we are dying the same way in the spiritual. While in the physical world, any variety of victuals will sustain our lives, we have but one source of nourishment for our spirit. Our starving souls crave continuous communion with our Creator and Sustainer.

In the moment of communion, which we call the Lord's Supper, prayer is the physical act of consuming food, the bread and the wine, which action itself signifies the willingness and the intention of reflective action in the spirit. When the Messiah said that we could not have life without eating His body and drinking His blood, He was not speaking of His physical body, but of His spirit. Although He did not mean that we should literally eat His physical being, the body in which He lived when upon the Earth some two plus millennia ago, (This would have been cannibalism for one, not to mention it would be tough for there to be enough to go around, and it wouldn't exactly keep throughout the centuries), Christ was intending instead to give a graphic illustration of the desperate demand of the soul to devour the life of the Divine, the life that was residing within Himself, the life that He alone could give and did for the hope of the world. Christ commands that for our souls to have life within them, we must take that life into ourselves. We must draw upon His life to sustain our own in the very same way in which we take food to fuel our bodies.

Our bodies are fueled by food as our souls are to be fueled by the Spirit. The moment of communion in which we partake of the bread and the wine is the symbol of new and unending life in

Christ. It is the moment of prayer in which we recognize our own mortality and Christ's eternal life which we by recognizing do so consume.

Communion prayer is a sign of the oneness we find in the FATHER by the body and blood of HIS Son, but it is also a promise of our adherence to that Covenant, a recognition of its existence, an acceptance of its truth, and a reception of its power into our hearts in the moment along with a true intention to bring it beyond that moment into our daily lives. Further still, at the moment we partake of the communion meal, we perform a self-examination to move aside our corpse-like self and to make room in our beings for the body of Christ.

Communion prayer kills us in away. We are dying already, to be sure, but communion life ensures a swift demise of our souls and all selfish ambition and self-reliance. It kills us in the moment and replaces our corpse with Christ Who is our life. This is why there is no conversation, no communication, but only complete and all-consuming communion with the CREATOR in prayer, because we are mortal.

If we die in the body then we are dead, and we go away from the world. If we die in the spirit then we are dead and go away from whatever our spirit was bound to that served as its world. If our spirit clung to self-reliance, then we must die and cling to the King of Kings. Yet if we have died to self and cling to the SAVIOR, it is possible, without constant communion with HIM, for our spirit to die to our LORD and return again to self-reliance. We must, therefore, by unceasing prayer, take hold of that life, which is truly life, the life eternal. We must take hold of Christ Himself and replace our dead self with His everlasting life. We must exchange our corpse self with His resurrected body, and only then may we live. But the life we then live will be His life not our own, for as it is written, "[we] died and [our] life is now hidden with Christ in Elohim."

Both communion and conversation involve two sides, interaction between two parties. Communion, however, is the kind of action that is not interaction but is really interior action in which there exists no give and take, no back and forth, no dialogue, no palaver whatsoever. Communion prayer is accepting that Christ's death is quite literally our own, and Christ's life is quite literally ours as well. Once we can be removed from the equation, replaced by the glorious righteousness of the LORD, then our oneness will be complete. And we will find that we ourselves are in perfect communion with the Perfect ONE.

When we can take into ourselves so much of the MOST HIGH that eventually there isn't even enough of us left to talk about, then that will be something worthy of communicating. Communion prayer does not end here, however. If it did, it would not be worthwhile at all being itself only an ideal,

potentially only reachable at the Resurrection. If this were all there was, communion as not but concept, then it would not even be real. Communion prayer, the consumption of the bread and the wine must become also and all the more communion life, which is us, not simply consuming bread and wine, but even more so, us consumed as bread and wine.

Prayer as always must be more than the surface ritual or performance or even intention. It must become all-consuming of our entire lives, going depth under depth to reach our hearts, conforming our actions and transforming our lives into broken bread and poured out wine. The communion of the New Covenant of Christ is as much about our being taken into Him as it is about taking Him into us.

Truly we do consume the Lord when we come to His table with voracious appetite; but we also must be willing when we come to dine, to instead be laid out ourselves to die and be garnished as our LORD's delicacy. And we must be willing beyond the moment at the Lord's Supper, to become ourselves comestible, willing in all things and above all things to be lost and swallowed whole by the CREATOR's all-consuming life - our death swallowed up by HIS life, and what life we had in and of ourselves swallowed up by HIS joy.

When our lives are swallowed up by the Savior's life and lost in HIS victory, then ours becomes the communion life, a willingness and a willfulness to lose our own desires until we desire only the Almighty in Christ. It is a willingness not only to replace the dying parts of ourselves with the whole living Messiah, but a willingness also to admit that all we are composed of is dying parts and to attempt to replace all of ourselves with all that HE is, to give back to the Almighty all that which HE gave to us in the beginning.

Communion life and communion prayer are the actions, both physical and spiritual, of taking the CREATOR into ourselves and of allowing for ourselves to be taken into HIM, to enter and live in the Holy of holies, by the power of the Body and Blood of the Lamb. Joy in that House of Prayer which is our body will only come when that House is not our House but HIS. In every action of our lives, if we have eaten and drunk of His holy Body and Blood also allowing ourselves to become edible, therein will reside the joy of the LORD. We will have joy, because in mind, heart, and body we will be one with the CREATOR of all these things.

Communion is only as good as its consistency and continuance, however, which is why we are told to pray without ceasing. Prayer, after all, is not like riding a bicycle. If we put it down or set it aside when bored or when we find something more attractive and shiny, we must not expect to retain our level of communion.

Prayer is like any other skill, knowledge, or relationship: if we don't use it, we lose it. This is hardly an argument for the loss of salvation itself, but if we do not put forth the effort in prayer, if we do not put it into practice in life, if we fail to exercise our faith, then we can expect and should expect nothing short of a loss of closeness, oneness, unity, and communion with our CREATOR. Prayer is not a thing to have handy for some rainy day to come, nor is prayer a weapon at the ready just in case we need to someday go on the defensive. No, prayer is not separate nor is it ever separable from life. And it most certainly is not a separate part of life. All of life is about all of prayer, and we ourselves are supposed to be living continually and constantly on the defensive. After all, are we not under continuous attack from the three great enemies of the spirit, i.e. the world, the flesh, and the devil? Against them all, prayer is the one and only weapon we have. If we do not wield it, then we have already been defeated before deciding whether to fight or to surrender. We are lost already to the sin nature within or the human nature without or the wiles of Belial if we ever cease to live a life of prayer. To be human is to be changing, and much like the rest of this faithless world, dying under the curse of the Fall, we are never naturally changing for the better. It is chaos theory, the natural course of all creation; however slowly, to submit to entropy. All things both physical and spiritual, if left alone to the whims of natural and supernatural law, will continually follow the process of degeneration, dissolving, devolving, and decaying from good to bad and from bad to worse. The man without prayer puts himself at risk of devolving in the same way as the man without the LORD, slowly wasting away and descending in quality and character, level by level from saint to man, from man to beast, and from beast to monster eventually preying upon his quondam kind.

Prayer has the power to halt this digression, but the wielding of prayer only ceases our descent. It puts a stop to our plummeting perpetually into chaos and madness, our downward spiral into sickness and sin. It does nothing, however, to stop the flow of change, because to be human is to be forever changing from who we were to who we are to whom we desire to be and whom we are destined yet to become.

Prayer halts the hollow digression of our own endeavors, interjecting the intentions of the LORD upon the imaginations of man and redirecting and pushing us toward propriety and progress in purity. Prayer pushes us to rising and increasing in faith, hope and love in the Spirit. The wielding of All-Prayer changes us until we are not who we were, until we are not even ourselves anymore. It changes us and turns our degeneration into the resurrection power of Christ.

Prayer attaches us to the MAJESTY and refuses to let go until that change is made. Yet another example from Scripture comes to mind as illustrating this point, an example admittedly not so obviously

connected to the subject of prayer. It is perhaps, however, the best example of Tefillah by far, the story of the wrestling match with HIS servant Jacob.

Most often this story is told in connection with struggle. It's a story thought to be illustrating for our benefit how to persevere to the end, to never give up, to fight through the walk of life no matter how hard it becomes, or even to get what we want out of faith or prayer. Yet the simple truth of the story of Jacob's bout with the LORD is not really some mystical allusion to struggle, but the perfect portrayal of prayer itself as being a struggle, a wrestling match, a great connection and even greater contest.

This is one of the greatest lessons of All-Prayer. Jacob spent his life wanting and working all manner of Lokian trickery to make happen what he wished, until he reached the ford of Jabbok and there contended with the Almighty. Unable to wile his way out of this bout and presumably unwilling to do so, Jacob held on to the LORD until the dawn came, and he was told to let go. Even then, however, at daybreak and with a hip forever put out of joint at the touch of the Hand of the Majesty, Jacob held on still demanding only one thing of the LORD - HIS blessing. The LORD gave it then to Jacob and changed his name to Israel which is the name borne by all his descendants thereafter. And Jacob called that place Peniel, because he saw the face of the LORD in that place and lived .

On the surface, this story seems an odd contest missing many details. Why did Jacob wrestle some random person who turned out to be the LORD HIMSELF? Why were they wrestling at night? Why does the LORD put out Jacob's hip when HE could have just walked away like Jacob wasn't even a threat? And on the questions go, but the answer to all these questions is this, that Jacob isn't really fighting, and the LORD isn't really fighting back; or at least that is not the point of the story.

The fighting and the grappling and the wrestling were two things in reality. In the spirit it was all prayer while in the physical that prayer manifested into physical aggression. All night they wrestled, not because Jacob was as powerful as the LORD and not because the LORD couldn't have won the physical contest at any moment during that night. They wrestled all night, because the winning or losing was on a spiritual level, not a physical one. This contest was not engaged in for the purpose of determining which person held greater strength, which had greater prowess. Obviously, the LORD WHO can move the Heavens and the Earth has the greater might, but this encounter between man and his Maker was pure and raw instruction. The entire match was the Master teaching Jacob the hard lessons of how to pray.

HE brought Jacob into contention with HIM so that they could have Communion. It seems, on the surface of things, that the LORD was rejecting Jacob, that HE was trying to get away from the man yet was (for some unknown reason) unable to do so. But knowing the Glorious ONE, as we do, would prove

this appearance to be pure nonsense. HIS apparent resistance must have been done to some other end, for some alternative purpose. As with most of the actions of the Almighty in Scripture, there is a hidden agenda HE has for Jacob, one only accomplished by the movements HE makes.

When the Sovereign LORD told Abraham to slay Isaac, his ‘only’ son, it was not HIS intention that the patriarch actually kill his boy, but instead that Abraham could understand the importance of the hierarchy of his relationships. When the MOST HIGH took everything away from Job, including the lives of his children and his own health, it was not because HE was gambling with the devil, though a bet was made. It was all to teach Job that righteousness before the LORD is exclusively in Communion with HIM, not in our own good deeds or good intentions. When the Holy ONE told Jonah to go to Nineveh and save the people he hated, it was not for Nineveh that he was sent. The LORD told Jonah exactly what he needed to hear to be set upon the path of his own redemption. The Almighty was attempting to win HIS prophet back. And when HE, by way of ‘Jesus Christ’, told Peter that before the ‘rooster’ crowed twice he would thrice deny knowing Him, it was not to make the disciple disloyal or to remove his choice to remain so. The Lord told Peter that he would deny his master before it happened so that when he did so exactly as predicted, Peter would then remember and be struck to the heart with sorrow.

The heart is what the LORD is always after in all HIS holy ones, and it was no different at the fords of Jabbok, when HE wrestled with Jacob. HE wrestled with Jacob so that Jacob could wrestle with HIM. The great moments are, after all, what prove our mettle, and this was Jacob’s greatest moment, by far his finest hour. This was the hour he could not swindle, trick, cheat, lie, or manipulate his way to victory; all he could do was to hold fast. To that end the LORD resisted him. But what possible good can be found in prayer to a Sovereign Who resists our struggle to hold to HIM? The same purpose as in the parable ‘Jesus’ gave us about prayer, the one regarding the persistent widow begging justice from an unjust judge. The purpose in the LORD’s resistance is really HIS assistance.

How easy it is at first to cling to something when it does not attempt escape from our grasp; yet this hold becomes tedious and tiresome after a short time of doing it. Thus Providence provides for us, as HE did for Jacob, motivation when our task grows mundane and our grip slacks. Motivation arrives in the form of resistance, a challenge to our clinging hands. Human nature does not enjoy its will to be affronted; thus when it determines to hold fast to another, it grows weary out of boredom or fatigue; and resistance by that very thing held is just the thing to encourage further effort on the part of the person praying. The judge in “Jesus’” parable gave the woman her justice, because she would not give up and let the matter go.

We know from experience and from Scripture that the LORD is just and that HE will therefore grant our pursuit of HIM with satisfaction and a fulfilling reward. It is the pursuit, however, the arduous process, the long night and the hard fight that shows to us how much we truly want the LORD of glory and for ourselves to become lost in HIM. Sometimes, to this end, when we approach our FATHER, we find HIM drawing back, and when we grab hold, we find HIM pulling away. We grab on like Jacob and demand like he did to be blessed, but the LORD demands that we let HIM go. Despite what HE says to us in that moment the LORD's true desire in that moment is not that we let go of HIM but that we hold on, hold fast and cling tighter than anything and tighter than ever. The command the LORD gave Jacob to let go was not so much a command as it was a challenge.

The Holy ONE gives HIS pursuers every possible opportunity to let go and fall off, to fall away and fail, that in this way we may have been put through everything, every circumstance, every possibility, every chance to shy away and shrink back, to draw back and to doubt. We overcame all and only then do we come to know the might of our true desire. The MOST HIGH does this to prove our mettle, not to HIMSELF (HE has always known our capabilities) but to prove it to us.

Not only this, but there is another reason the LORD resists. By the time we pass through the fire of the trial, by the time we rise to the challenge of the times, by the time we finally reach our retreating Redeemer, we are far away from where we were when we began our pursuit of HIM; and we are far away from who we were when we set out seeking. We are far away from being ourselves and deeper into being who HE is. By the time the fight is over, we are not who we were when it began. In the course of the night, we have become eternally changed. We began by seeking a blessing from the LORD, and by the time the sun rises on us again, we realize that in our struggle to gain some manner of perk from the LORD, we have instead gained the power to pray rightly. Teffillah prayer is about attachment to MAJESTY, a real and binding communion with the Sovereign LORD so much that we shall never again be who we were to begin with.

Our degeneration was halted and reversed in our pursuit of the Sovereign, so that like Jacob, we rise a new creation out of our night of prayer and communion. When Jacob wrestled with Almighty, the Holy ONE touched his hip and put it out of socket forever after, so that Jacob would always remember in his body his encounter with the MAJESTY. He would remember, with every step he took in life, the power of the LORD and his own altered soul. In his book "My Utmost For His Highest" Oswald Chambers said, "It is not so much that prayer changes things as it is that prayer changes people, and people change things."

Jacob entered into hard-core prayer and was changed in the struggle to hold on to the Majesty. Jacob went into a fight with the LORD, and died sometime during that battle, because he was touched by the Hand of Destiny. He did not physically die that night, no; but he did commune with the CREATOR and find himself forever changed. He entered the fight as Jacob but came out in the end as Israel. He went in unto the LORD as "a trickster" and emerged and returned to the world not entirely unscathed as "one who wrestles with Elohim". He only sought a blessing from the LORD but the MOST HIGH made of him a nation and the example of real and life-altering prayer and communion with HIM. When we get down to it into the reality of life, prayer is all about change and only in this way can we acquire the level of alteration which we desire, as Jacob did by wrestling with the LORD. Jacob's story is Tefillah in action. He grabbed onto the LORD Himself literally and held on for dear life for an entire night. Even when he was given every opportunity to give up, to let go of the LORD, he refused adamantly. "Not until You bless me. Not until You change me. Not until You make me Israel." All-Prayer can and will make that change in us today as well. If we are willing to judge ourselves as the trickster, to self-inspect, to find we are the deceiver, and to grapple with the Almighty to get HIM to change our nature, then we will be praying for real, and we will enter into that change to become more of Christ's likeness and less of our own. It is not without its sorrows, either. As it was for Jacob, it will prove for us also a painful experience, not only at the point of attachment to the LORD, but ever after as we walk in faith upon a hip touched of the hand of the LORD. Scripture says, and not without a sense of solemn honesty, that, "it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of a living Elohim." (Hebrews 10:31). To take that fall is what prayer is all about. It is painful, and it is fearful to let go of ourselves and whatever else holds us back from full surrender. It is indeed a petrifying experience to come to the CREATOR. Any simpleton can believe that a CREATOR exists; anyone who bothers to look about beyond himself and to simply pay attention, instead of causing tension, can see there must be a MAKER.

Yet it is not so simple nor so easy to diligently seek after HIM. After all, the walk of faith is far from a stroll down Easy Street. It is a rough road pitted and pot-holed. It is narrow. It is winding. And it is wearisome. The walk of faith is the hard way of pain and fear and hot pursuit. Prayer and the life that breathes from it and through it are the diligence of the way of that faith. And yet though it may be difficult, it is not entirely impossible, for as Scripture tells us it is the diligent seeker and the persistent pursuer who are the only ones promised to actually find FATHER Almighty in the end.

It is he who hungers and thirsts for righteousness who alone shall be filled. Righteousness meaning the LORD's own Being and not our own doing. This, then, is All-Prayer - holding to the LORD

as we pass through hell with every demon clawing at our hides trying to drag us away. And just like Jacob, just like the persistent widow, if we only keep holding on and if we only keep going on when tempted to give up, we will find the reward for our efforts. As the goal is the LORD Himself, so is our reward.

Chapter 4 - The Publican Prayer

To say that prayer does not change things but only people and that people then make the necessary changes around them, is not an absolute law for every aspect of reality nor every scenario. It is in some ways simply a matter of semantics. Many examples are given in Scripture where holy people prayed and the Almighty answered with immediate action to save, comfort, or restore. And furthermore, if prayer changes a person and that individual then changes his ways or makes a change in the world, then the alterations one and all should be to the credit of All-Prayer itself. Meditation is one form of prayer, and holy communion is another form. We cannot, however, negate any one part of prayer by over-indulging in another, nor make one part of prayer the whole entire endeavor.

Even the greatest and best parts must remain always part of something greater. Having learned to focus on the MOST HIGH in meditation and thereby becoming one with HIM in communion, we now must learn to convert the reality of these two aspects of prayer into pragmatic practicality for everyday application in life. All-Prayer has altered life as we know it, moving us into a new way of being. Prayer has indeed changed us from Jacobs into Israels, from deceivers of men to wrestlers with angels. Prayer has changed us, and now we must change things, things within ourselves and things within the world. Prayer has allowed for us to come to the CREATOR through meditation and has made us and is making us one with HIM through communion. Now through that unity with the Spirit we make reparations for our past while making preparations for our future in the Body and Blood of the Messiah. A life in communion with the LORD is one that will repair the broken pieces and remove evil from all its parts. The kind of prayer that drives out evil at its very core and keeps it from returning is the kind of prayer that keeps us in the communion we have found in Christ. At the same time, it corrals us and contains any self-willed wickedness that remains within the heart of who we are. The goal of this kind of prayer is to undo the damage we delivered upon ourselves and upon our surroundings prior to our being delivered ourselves. And eventually the purpose of this kind of prayer is ultimately to destroy the desires of our hearts, the desires that entice us to commit such offenses again best left in the past dead and buried with the Old Man. More than this, however, communion makes us one with MIGHTY ONE not only in our actions by making them HIS but also in our perspectives by making them HIS as well.

When we have changed our identity, our vision will be altered as well. We, as new men and women, will view the LORD in a new way, and as HIS new people, we will see all else HIS way. Prayer will

show us the world and ourselves as we truly are, the endless traps that ensnare us and keep us apart from the joy of our oneness with our Wondrous Saviour. We are allowed through communion to see ourselves as the LORD sees us. We are allowed, through this oneness, to be for once open and honest with ourselves, for once to be humble enough to admit our own fallibility. Communion enables us to cease striving, to not pursue perfection for ourselves but to accept our own failings and thus be open to the perfection offered to us in our Savior's grace. The communion life of All-Prayer is a life of acknowledging our failures, our faults, and our fallibility. It is coming before the Almighty as we are, with hands outstretched, palms up, as naked as the day we were born.

Communion life abandons pretenses and facades and fantasies, because such a life is one of confession. It is admittance of the fact that while having plenty to hide we have no place to hide anything from the all-encompassing sight of our Sovereign LORD. This is the life that says HE was right all along, and that we ourselves were wrong. It is knowing HE alone is righteous and holy. All-Prayer allows for us to be different, for us to be other than we were when we were scheming and sneaking about, when we were tricking and trying to hide dodging and deceiving yet only fooling ourselves.

The communion life has changed us into people who can't have or do or be anything that is not of Heaven without profound sorrow and discomfort. When we therefore, in our finite human sinful nature, do fall short and disobey our LORD when we find ourselves flat on our faces in sickness and sin, we are able then by prayer alone to return to be both heard and forgiven. As it is written in Scripture, "If we confess our sins, HE is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9-10). The LORD will be Who HE is, but we have to be Who HE is as well. When we approach the Almighty, whether it be coming to HIM for the first time or returning after running off and ruining our lives, either way, we are accepted just as we are, but we are expected to become just as HE is. HE will hear our prayer for mercy, after all, if we will be but meek and humble. This kind of prayer was demonstrated for us perfectly by Christ in His parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. As we know, both men came to the Temple to pray, yet each had a different reason to approach the Throne of Grace. The Pharisee came proud and boasting, thanking the LORD for how good he himself was of his own power. He told the LORD how much he had done for others and how much better he was than others, especially how much better he was than the lowly, low-down tax collector nearby. Yet by comparison, the tax collector could not bear to even raise his eyes to Heaven let alone utter a positive word on his own behalf. All he could do at best was to beat his breast and to beg for mercy from the MAJESTY. And of the two of these men, the Pharisee, seen as holy by all people, and the tax collector,

reviled by all Men, Scripture tells us which of the two walked away justified before the LORD. It was not the Pharisee, but the tax collector.

The Word of the LORD tells us that the Almighty is not only just but also the Justifier of all who hope in HIM, all who come to HIM humbly. If we then justify ourselves before the just LORD, HE Who knows our hearts will not hear our prayers as they are not only mere words, but also simple fantasies, lies breathed through silver. The LORD, the Justifier is also The LORD, the Gambler (not in the true sense of betting the unknowns since HE knows all things, but still. . .) The good LORD gambles for us on our behalf, because we are otherwise too preoccupied to ever begin to seek HIM.

HE plays for us, and HE plays for hearts. HE plays for us, and HE plays to win. Whether HE succeeds or fails is our own doing, however. The movements of the Majesty are designed to soften our hearts towards HIM, to make us into humble vessels ready to be filled and made whole. In the match with Jacob, it wasn't about physical victory, but there was still much in that battle being fought over, spiritually. And the LORD won, of course, because HE got the patriarch to submit... not to give up, but to submit. The LORD was fighting for Jacob's heart, and Jacob was doing his part to ensure the LORD had that victory. The result of that rumble was an absolute victory for both contenders. The LORD made Jacob into Israel, because he held on and humbled himself. Jacob knew all too well that he was a deceiver from birth and that only the MOST HIGH could change his true name. By humbling his prideful past and holding on to the LORD Who could bring it to pass, Jacob was able to be heard by HIM, his prayer being far more than just talk, words by the river, but real, deep, true, communion. In this way the LORD humbled one man and HE seeks the same for every one of us even today, the same humility, the same vulnerability, the same refusal to remain who we were and where we were, lost, lonely, liars in the darkness, righteous in our own minds and rebellious in our own lives. Saint Augustine said, "Woe to the lives of men, however holy they may be, should they be judged without mercy." And all of prayer comes down to this.

The heart of holiness is a heart after the LORD, not a perfect record and a solid past. It is the LORD Who Justifies, and HE will not justify the one who holds himself already as a just man. HE will not justify our claims but only our crushed spirits. HE will not give credence to our own words, but HE will give HIS Word to all who admit to being cretins. The Pharisee in "Jesus'" parable went from the Temple unjustified, because he prayed only in words, mere talk, "sound signifying nothing.'" He did not want the LORD but instead his own honor. He did not want to know the truth about who and what he really was. He wanted instead to dictate his own glory to a righteous LORD. Communion with this the CREATOR, he did not desire, but only his own boasting. Why, after all, wait for the LORD to justify us

when we can rubber stamp ourselves as righteous, our own petty deeds as being pleasing and justified. And to all this boasting, one can almost hear the Holy ONE in Heaven crying, "What a horrible noise?"

Throughout Scripture, the LORD reiterates how much HE despises pride. HE hates it, because it is more than a mere lie. It is a lie we tell ourselves and believe with all our hearts without hesitation. It is also a lie we then tell others, thereafter making a false life for us and one more plausible since we ourselves have bought our own hype. It is thus to this end that Scripture says, "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself shall be exalted." (Luke 14:11). And again the LORD's Word tells us, "Humble yourself in the sight of the LORD, and HE will lift you up." Over and over again we are told that humility is the key to life and all of the LORD's blessings . "Blessed are the poor in spirit," 'Jesus' said, "for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 5:3). And finally later in I Peter 5:6, we are told, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of Elohim that HE may exalt you in due time." For all things but especially prayer, this idea of humility is pleasing to the LORD. This is the prayer that HE will honor: "Have mercy on me, LORD Almighty, for I am a sinner." It's the opposite of the way we think holiness to be. We think it is in doing the right thing at the right time in the right way and for the right reasons, and this is true. But that right thing is humility, not perfection. It is confessing the standards as perfection, but out of humility, confessing also that we cannot meet that standard. Blessed is the one who knows he's not good enough. Blessed is the one who knows he is not deserving of mercy. Blessed is the one who knows he is lost without hope. Blessed is the one who admits before the LORD of Glory that it is so, and falls at HIS feet for his only saving grace. This is the prayer that is truly prayer, the kind of prayer the LORD will not only hear but delight in as the only form that's honest.

Honesty and humility are the only ways of praying that leave boasting behind and all manner of megalomania. The humble prayer of a tax collector, "LORD have mercy on me, a sinner," is in many ways the greatest of prayers as well as the simplest. It recognizes our FATHER as sovereign and ourselves as worthy of eternal perdition. It humbly requests, with no hope of its own, that the LORD not deal with us as we have earned and as we so deserve. Such humility in a prayer that not only can be meditated upon, but one that will also create a communion between us and Almighty and will make in us the changes we require to align our lives with our acquired holy status in the Savior. Part of the point of prayer is to avoid denial. We cannot come to the CREATOR and tell HIM we are okay as we are. We can't come to HIM play-acting perfection as if we have no sins nor problems. Such sanctimonious drudgery will get us exactly nowhere with HIS Majesty, and example after example throughout Scripture should show us this.

From as far back as Cain and Abel, the contrast can be seen. Cain brought the FATHER the fruit of his hands as a sacrifice for his sin. Yet Cain's very sacrifice was itself a sin, because the Almighty had already told him what to offer...it was not fruits and vegetables. Contrary to his brother, righteous Abel brought to the LORD a lamb as a blood payment for his law-breaking, the price that the Sovereign Himself had set. In this manner, Haman raised himself up in exaltation in the Persian empire and set himself to fight against the chosen people. He was himself raised up even higher by others when the king had him impaled for his crimes against Israel. Meanwhile, humble hero Mordecai took Haman's place of honor at the king's generous promoting. Nebuchadnezzar boasted himself the greatest of kings on earth, even exalting his honor above the Living Elohim. For lording his success over the LORD Almighty and for ignoring how this very same Deity had graciously granted him the kingdoms of the earth, the LORD drove Nebuchadnezzar out into the wild and forced him into a feral state for seven years to learn humility and regard for the gifts of heaven. At the same time, Daniel was, for his humble obedience to the Almighty Elohim, exalted by others higher and higher in the echelon of Babylon. And let us not forget Saul, the first king over the people of Israel, who found himself deposed and replaced by the shepherd boy, David and all because Saul refused to obey the LORD, thinking he knew better. When the LORD said to kill all the captives, Saul brought them back instead as servants and sacrifices. Yet the LORD said, "sacrifices and burnt offerings I do not require ... the sacrifices of 'the LORD' are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart HE will not despise." The LORD wants our hearts to be in our prayers, and through prayer, he wants to acquire our hearts, as being humble before HIM. If we come before the KING wearing a crown, we will likely be killed or rightly become the jesters of HIS court.

When we exalt ourselves in prayer, be it by our words or by our ways, we find nothing on the heights but the vanity of bragging victory. We find empty sky and echoing clouds when we exalt our own selves, therefore we must come to the Almighty, undeserving, willing that only HE can give us something of value, namely HIMSELF. The prayer that does hold high the heart, however, will find not only vanity and vainglory when demanding reception from the FATHER and recognition of its own righteousness, but it will find also a vast vampiric and vacuous expanse of emptiness unfulfilled and unfillable. He will find neither the glory he was giving to himself nor the joy he sought in his self-exaltation.

When we come to pray to the Almighty, we often misunderstand what we were expected to receive by doing so. We misunderstand what the requirements are for prayer, and so we subsequently misunderstand what was to be gained by way of its path. We think prayer is about being perfect, and so we claim perfection before approaching our FATHER; but how foolish this is when HE alone can bestow

upon a creature any semblance to HIS own perfection. The Almighty alone can give it, and HE knows HE didn't give it to us; yet we have stolen and returned with the goods to their rightful owner as if we had justly bought them. We play-act and pretend, living in denial in relation to the Deity, when all the while the LORD only wants our honest opinion of ourselves so that HE can then give us HIS own honest opinion of ourselves and moreover, HIS honest opinion of HIMSELF and that also of HIS Son. The standard for the ability to pray then is honesty. We are expected to be real with the LORD before HE will reveal HIS own reality within our hearts.

As bad as the ancient Egyptians were, they had a myth about the afterlife that illustrated this point most clearly. The heathen priests taught their people the way through the afterlife as written in various versions of their "Bible", they called the Book of the Dead. Upon dying, they believed a person's ba (their soul) would travel to the duat (the spirit world) where it would embark upon a perilous journey to reach the Hall of Judgement. There, the half-resurrected the idol of the underworld, Osiris, would preside over the process of assessing one's life. The person's heart would be taken by Anubis, the jackal-headed deity of the dead, and placed upon the Scales of Justice. Weighed against the heart was the perfect unbiased standard of honesty, a tail feather of the phoenix, the Feather of Truth. Beneath the scales awaited a monster called Ammit the Devourer, a creature with the back end of a hippo, the front end of a lion and the head of a crocodile. If the human proved wicked, Ammit would devour the heart and the person would be annihilated, but if the heart was good, then everlasting life awaited its owner.

The test of the heart's virtuous state was not, as it is commonly thought both then and now equally in heathenness and in Christendom, a test of good versus evil, of more benevolent deeds than villainous ones. In the old pagan stories, the heart was weighed against the standard of truth, not to prove it had never lied, but to give it the opportunity, in death, to be honest about the fact that it had been dishonest in life. This story is comparative to Christian teaching on honesty, even though we know this is not how our judgment will be carried out when we cross over.

The Holy ONE does weigh our own hearts on scales against tale feathers, nevertheless, by the standard of HIS Truth which is the Scriptures and HIS OWN perfect Son, Whom we have so named, "Jesus Christ". He does not reward us for our heart's virtues, nor does HE condemn us for the follies of our hearts, but as Scripture says, "This is the condemnation: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19). It is not because we have done evil deeds that we receive condemnation from Christ, but it is because our hearts love darkness rather than light. In other words, our hearts love to hide our evil deeds rather than to hold them out in the

open for the LORD and the world to see. If we hold our dark deeds up to the light of the LORD's Truth, we are confessing them for what they are and confessing that they are or at least have been a part or even all of our past. "If we confess our sins," as I John 1:9 tells us, "HE is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The virtue of a Christian then is in admitting himself to be the vandal. The good heart is the one that concurs with the LORD when HE says that it is evil and corrupt. "Everything exposed to the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible." (Ephesians 5:13). The willingness to reveal our wickedness in the light of the LORD's Truth is a readiness for HIM to remove said sin and to replace it with HIS own perfection and grace. Like with Christ's judgment, the heart in the myth was not weighed against perfection but against perfect honesty about our own imperfections. It was weighed against truth yet not with the expectation that it had always been true. The heart for which the LORD plays, for which HE fights, is a heart weighed against perfect honesty, not seeking the absence of evil, but speaking honestly about its offenses.

According to the myth, the heart that did not try to hide its sins, but held them up to the light of truth admitting they were wrong, that was the heart that was justified. In the same way in prayer, this is the heart the Savior seeks to justify and bring into HIS joyous presence and have communion with. It is the heart that accepts its own imperfection as inevitable, not finding joy therein nor glory but seeking out instead the perfection of the Living LORD. This heart and this prayer alone of all shall be received of HIM. After all, does not "Jesus" Himself say that there is more joy over the repentant than there is over the righteous. Why is this so? It is because it is a far harder thing to recognize our own empty-handedness than it is to take the next step of holding onto the LORD in Christ. That first step is always the hardest when beginning our pursuit of Providence, because once we've let go of our own vanity, holding onto the MAJESTY is the only logical choice. The first step is the one where we cease our denial and accept our reality that we can never be found nor rightly expect to be so, if we cannot first admit to ourselves and others that we are currently lost.

The prayer of the tax collector was unpretentious, but this is not always the scenario. Quite often the one who comes to the LORD for real, sounds synonymously like the pretender and vice versa. Most often in our experiences the Pharisee does not show up to the house of the LORD bringing boastful words, "Thank you LORD that I'm the best." This would be too obvious, especially since his attitude has been clearly outed in Scripture as self-exaltation.

Rather than this, the modern-day Pharisee will come disguised as the tax collector and will come to the temple boasting of his failures. Instantly, he will be received as pious and honest among the saintly

crowd, but he is as much the hypocrite as ever. The Pharisee will often work prayer as a way to gossip and slander his fellows and the saints, spreading about the problems of others under the guise of seeking the LORD to help them. The Pharisee will overemphasize the importance of specific times and places and ways to pray. He may demand it to be done first thing in the morning or last thing before bed. He may demand the prayer before eating, or one immediately to follow. He may demand prayer following the Canonical Hours or demand a specific number of times to pray per day throughout the day. One thing is certain however: the Pharisee will use prayer as an excuse for not performing other all-important Christian works such as loving-kindness and charity. Such a person will pray loudly in service for all to see or in public places to let everyone know he is different. He will be sure to be wordy and long-winded, yet always painted with the gentle humble color of the tax collector. Men will praise him for his holiness, but the LORD will hold every uttered syllable as condemnation against him on the day of judgment.

As in the Egyptian myth, the LORD's standard of truth is absolute, and in like manner to the Feather of Truth, the LORD's Word cannot be fooled by fancy speech, cunning, or cleverness. We may see a mighty prayer warrior in the Pharisee, but the LORD sees a bag of hot air and holes leaking noisily. True prayer, the prayer of the tax collector, is the kind nobody sees or hears, the kind that when seen or heard, is not recognized as being prayer. It is uttered quietly and in silence with humility and only a faint hope of being heard. Yet this is the only one that is heard, because this is the only kind of prayer that will be different and make a difference within the man's life beyond the Temple walls.

Another thing that further differentiates the Pharisee from the tax-collector is their understanding of the Temple in relation to their prayers. The Pharisee is consumed by appearances, with no real substance. For him, rituals and traditions and ceremonies are all-important, and thus for him, prayer can only be a Temple activity. He is one bound by times and locations for prayer, but the tax collector recognized in his state of humility that while stationary prayer is important in its own way, it was not what he sought to acquire at the Temple. He required a transformation, a change within himself, made by prayer that would enable him to pray daily in ordinary life beyond the holy walls. By coming the long, hard, humiliating road to reach the LORD where HE was to be found, the tax collector not only found HIM but changed himself and the way he could and would behave ever after. He knew he was not right the way he was when he entered the Temple and must therefore be changed by the LORD to have his ways be different), too. In his day, before Christ's death and subsequent resurrection, the Temple was thought of as the place to find the FATHER. Both the Pharisee and the tax collector knew this to be true, but only the tax collector saw the reality of the real Temple - what it was and what it would be. He viewed

beyond the veil to the spiritual truth of things and then begged for power from the Mercy Seat, the power of grace, power to become a House of Prayer.

The LORD, being an ever-present Deity, is able to be found everywhere, yet it is HIS desire that we come to HIM in the special way, in that special moment, and in that special place to find HIM as HE is and as HE desires to be found. It is important for our transformation into a House of Prayer that we understand the truth of this, that the LORD, though residing everywhere and everywhen, is not accessible anytime and any way we choose. To find HIM, HIS way, we must approach the Light-Unapproachable. We must be tested, tried, and purified before we can become a House of Prayer. We must be made humble before we can be made into a Temple and the House that bears His NAME.

How can we ever know the value of prayer if not tested? How can we ever know the limit of our endurance if we have not been forced to endure to the utmost end? Sometimes the LORD moves away from us when we approach HIS throne...and when HE does so, HE does so to provide us with the opportunity to draw nearer to HIM. He tells us, oftentimes, to let go, just to provide the challenge to hold on longer than we thought we could.

HE commands our humility to separate us from hypocrisy and to prove our reality in HIS life. By making humility the prerequisite of prayer, our Sovereign sets us apart from the Pharisees, setting those of us who seek the LORD in word and deed against those of fervent lips and evil hearts. The attitude of the tax collector is the same attitude that was the mindset of the Messiah, that of humility. It is the kind of praying mind to meet with, meld with, and become the mind of the MOST HIGH. Along with his own personal inadequacy, the tax collector spent his time in prayer meditating upon nothing but the greatness of the LORD and HIS sovereignty. The tax collector spurned his own personal glory for the LORD's glory and shunned his own private justification that he might obtain mercy in more than name only, but mercy that was real, and true and cleansing. He adopted the humble mind of the Son of the LORD and thereby had communion with the FATHER. And the untold results of this humility and unity with the LORD's mind, the results that undoubtedly came out of his real repentance were reparations and the removal of evil from his life and work. After all, if prayer is not carried outside beyond the Temple walls into the world where we live, it is of no value, no more than that of the Pharisee's rambling.

If it is not carried depth under depth into our heart of hearts, then it won't be anymore real, anymore meaningful than pharisaical grandstanding. We must be wary of telling the LORD who we are and what we have done for HIM. Does HE not know our real works and our true intentions and our inner selves far better than our own biased imaginings? We cannot fool the all-knowing One, so let us not even

try. Let us approach the throne of grace with boldness and with humble confidence, naked-as-a-jay-bird with no intention to run and with nowhere to hide. Let us come to the LORD without pretense, without excuse, without our petty efforts, and without our pride. Let us pray, approaching the LORD as the tax collector did, without so much as a name to call our own. And there, in the most holy place, in that state of stillness and quietness, as we meditate upon Whom the LORD is, let us commune with HIM and be changed. Let us discover who we are in discovering Who HE is. Then we can at least be real and in HIM alone have joy.

Location is not the most important requirement for prayer but condition is everything. Christ Himself said, "The day is coming and now is when the true worshippers will worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth." He was speaking of humility and reality within the heart of man. How we come to the LORD is far more pivotal than when we meet with HIM. Besides, are we not now the Greater Temple of HIS Majesty, greater even than the temple of Herod the Great, or that greater more glorious temple of Solomon the Wise? The LORD is willing to make HIS home in us, our bodies as HIS Temple, our hearts as the Holy of holies. HE is willing, but are we? Are we willing to be humble and to be humbled.? If we truly desire communion with the LORD, if we wish to be consumed by All-Prayer, if we wish to become lost in HIS love, then it is required of us to approach by way of the tax collector, knowing we will not be crushed for our corruption unless we hold it up as perfection. If we come to the LORD honestly, we will find HIM merciful and ready to make us new. If we confess our imperfection, HE will perfect our corruption.

Chapter 5 - Saying Grace

In his book, “What’s So Amazing About Grace”, Phillip Yancy said, “You can know the law by heart without knowing the heart of it.” Similarly, Charles Spurgeon said in his sermon titled, “The Man Christ Jesus” - “It is possible to be so true to the letter [of the law] as to be false to the spirit.” This was the Pharisee’s predominant problem in the parable ‘Jesus’ gave us. He, as per usual, had all the religious flair and fancy speech, but he didn’t have a clue why he was doing any or it, aside from boosting his own ego. He could not see the heart of the matter and moving blindly in its spirit and purpose he barreled forward with reckless abandon, stomping down the LORD’s grace and bludgeoning any and all those around, who would come humbly seeking the LORD’s mercy. The heart of prayer being entirely composed of grace, could not be understood by the Pharisee.

All-Prayer is entirely gracious and a gift of grace itself. It is grace, because we are able to approach the throne of a holy Elohim, in the first place. Furthermore, prayer enables grace to enter into our lives to change us, to make us gracious, and in turn bring grace to the world that we inhabit. Prayer changes people, and people change things. Prayer opens the gates of heaven for grace to flow forth into our lives, the lives of the disciples of Christ. Through us, as we pray and as we become open doors ourselves, grace will flow beyond our bodies and beyond our souls to touch the wrecked and wretched people of this fallen world. This is far more involved than words off the tongue. This is actions of truth spoken not by human speech, but done with the hands, good needs from the heart, with a heart for those in need. Actions and truth, two things the Pharisee could not understand. His actions were only words and his tongue knew only other words programmed by still other words, all the words of the law, yet none of its Cause. The Pharisee thanked the LORD that he himself was not a robber yet little did he know he was stealing the LORD’s praise as he spoke. He thanked the LORD that he was not unjust, never considering the fact that he himself had not served justice. He thanked the LORD that he did not commit adultery, and yet he was whoring around on his own faith. Twice a week, the Pharisee fasted, but never did he forego putting pride in his sacrifice. A tenth of all he had and a tenth of all his income he gave to charity, but he could not even once spare some compassion for the poor people themselves. In all his ways, the Pharisee was a pray-er of not but words and therefore he was a foregoer of prayer, lacking both the heart and the spirit of the rules for the LORD’s House.

The rules for the LORD's House are absolute and just, thus creating two ways in which to Obey them: the rules can be used to either crush the people who do not measure up, or they can be used to show mercy to those who know they can never measure up, and who, desperate for salvation, beg for a better Way. The Law creates the space for something more, for itself, but for graces also. Law being the LORD's perfect standard of holy living, unattainable by human kind, (not without failure at least) requires the existence of something greater than itself to give it purpose on earth. If there was only Law, there would be only sorrow and despair; there would be no glory, no joy, and no prayer. Law alone would render prayer powerless, as it would be impossible to ever reach the LORD as a sinner. And thus HE has given us grace; the way by which we can come to HIM imperfect.

We can approach the crown with a confession of sin and be transformed by the Word of the LORD into saints of His NAME. Prayer then is the proper application of the law of Moses, the road that provides purpose and redemption to all who own up to their transgressions of that perfection. The Pharisee, however, took the wrong road down the way of the law, attempting the path of oppression rather than grace. He tried to reach the LORD by way of law rather than using the law to find grace and through grace coming to the LORD. By his attempts to pursue the LORD through the law, the Pharisee forsook the path of prayer and thereby any semblance of grace.

In "My Utmost For His Highest", Oswald Chambers said, "He who casts off prayer in effect casts off all the worship of the LORD, of which prayer is the principal duty." The Pharisee could comprehend principles and duties, and he saw prayer as such. It was simply an obligation to him like any other. To him it was a sacrifice just like any other, like passing up a meal or a bit of money for the opportunity of saying that he did so. Prayer was an obligation and no more. For him there was only saying grace, but grace was no more than a word and of no more value or power than any other word he could have said. For the Pharisee, there was only saying grace but there was no saving grace and certainly no living it. But we ourselves can see in the tax collector's attitude that he knew that grace was in prayer and is in fact prayer itself. He knew also that prayer itself is the worship of the LORD HIMSELF, that prayer is both saying grace and living grace as well. And so we come again to the emphatic command to ceaselessly pray to our FATHER, the command to both speak and live the grace of Christ the Lord. Prayer is not only the gift of grace, but it is the LORD's greatest grace. Without prayer, we could not come to HIM nor could we even be called to come. Without the call to draw near and without the ability of All-Prayer to make us one with Christ, we could not reach the LORD nor commune with HIM. Prayer enables us to accept the sacrifice of Christ for our sins, without which the sacrifice itself would have been meaningless. In this respect,

prayer is the greatest of the LORD's gifts to us, HIS children. It is HIS grace that changes us so that we may be different than the demented world in which we live. HIS grace accepts us just as we are but expects us to become just as HE is. Prayer is that grace which Scripture says, "is not a matter of talk but of power." (I Corinthians 4:20).

Prayer is the power of the LORD in us, and so it is the power of the LORD in the world. It is the power to humble ourselves. It is the power to change into the image of Christ. It is the power to bind us to the LORD in every area of our lives. We begin with stationary prayer, but to stay there would be to play the Pharisee. As the repentant tax collector, we find ourselves moving out of the Temple, yet remaining in the Holy of holies. We are moving into the secular world and moving through the secular world yet turning every step into an act of prayer and making everywhere we go into holy ground. As we move away from being the proud and pompous Pharisee and enter life as the potential publican, we move from stationary prayer, from sedentary prayer into a life of portable prayer. Portable prayer is the aspect of All-Prayer that, by all appearances, does not portray itself as being in any way religious, nor in any way does it seem to differ from the common actions of everyday life. It is not that we intend to abandon the former form of praying, (We must practice this as well, as always) but we must add mobility to our practices and expand upon our additions as we grow in faith and spiritual maturity. This new form of prayer is mobile just as it sounds. Portable prayer is prayer on-the-go. It is portable, not kneeling by the bedside, not silent nor still, not momentary and not physically restrictive. It is prayer in the workplace. It is prayer in the classroom. It is prayer in our leisure activities. And its practice is exactly the same as that of stationary prayer.

As we grow in our maturity, we grow also in our ability to meditate. We begin to meditate in much the same way as when we first learned to kneel and captivate the mind and the senses in silence and solitude. As in our early days of prayer and meditation, when we curbed our focus redirecting our attention towards the LORD and our intention toward HIS glory, when we became still when we meditated upon the His NAME and upon HIS attitudes, upon HIS actions, and upon HIS attributes, as in those days so also now in portable prayer, we meditate the same way as we move about in this world. We meditate upon our CREATOR, upon HIS all-consuming power and preeminence as we encounter HIS Creation and interact with HIS creatures. We also ponder Scripture and our salvation and relation to the LORD. By meditating thus, just the same as in sedentary prayer, we enter into communion with the LORD through the body and blood of Christ 'Jesus', HIS Son, we come to the FATHER in the Name of

the Son, by the power of HIS grace Who is the Holy Spirit. In communing with the LORD this way, we have unity with HIS mind, HIS desires, and HIS requirements for our lives.

In communion with the LORD in the moment, we recognize who we are as fallible, mortal humans. Finding our identity in HIM, and having died, we place our corpses in HIS care and replace our decaying flesh with the body and blood of Him Who lives forever and ever. And out of this communion arises reparations, restorations, and the removal of all evil that we could do of our own lust and lowly sinful nature or that which threatens to tempt us from abroad. Thus altered to reflect the character of our Lord Christ, we may change our environment and everyone and everything we encounter therein to likewise if only slightly resemble HIS grace. This was the format for the stationary form of prayer, and it changes in its portable form simply by gaining momentum. Meditation is done every time the mind pauses and begins to wander aimlessly. It is performed deliberately when temptation arises in order that the mind and heart may be forced back toward Heaven and the grace that was given. Meditation is repeated for the continuation of progress in the holiness in our lives. It is the kind of prayer that transforms ordinary moments and ordinary lives into all day, everyday worship of the Almighty. After all, should not prayer to the Living Elohim be best performed through living?

We pray by having our agenda swallowed up in the LORD and HIS desires for us. And thereby, as with stationary prayer, if by meditation upon the LORD becomes our all-consuming desire, we can have communion with HIM by daily living out HIS holy desires. Bringing prayer out of the quiet moments and out of the closed up spaces, portable prayer creates for us a quiet life closed off from the noise and nonsense that drown out the call of the LORD. And yet as much as this kind of prayer closes our life off from distractions, it also opens up our life to both scrutiny of skeptics, as well as service for sinners and saints alike. Then every moment becomes communion with the LORD, yet communion without stopping to kneel. Every moment becomes some reflective aspect of Christ's sacrifice for sin. Every single moment is consumed by His body and blood as too are so consuming and being consumed by the same. All our moments, when spent in All-Prayer, combine to create that higher kind of Life, as all our life we are communing with the Lord to create a House of Prayer. That life then, one with and communing with the LORD, that mended life, repaired and remanded, restraining and refusing evil in all its parts, brings its power with it wherever it goes.

When we bring that kind of power into our daily living, refusing any longer to keep secular life and prayer life separate, but instead fusing the two into one in the unity of the life from Above, then not only does prayer accompany all the things we do, accomplish, and set our hearts upon and our minds

also, but everything we do, accomplish, and set our minds and hearts upon will themselves become acts of prayer. As Scripture mandates, "Whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your heart, as if for the Lord." (Colossians 3:23). Therefore, whether we are praying by way of good words or prayer by way of good deeds, we are most assuredly praying and performing the principle form of the worship of Almighty. In all things, we have been told to worship the LORD and to seek HIM in prayer, so would it not be most economical of our LORD to create the two as being one and the same? Whether we are saying grace or sharing grace, we are performing the worship of our Sovereign and praying simultaneously.

Portable prayer is prayer in motion, and it moves all of life also to worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness commanding it to do so, and changing us in order to move all things in this direction as well. We are commanded by the Word of the LORD, to be clear-minded and self-controlled specifically to the end of being able to pray. And unless we take the time to pray in words sedentarily from time to time, we will remain fog-brained and wild with our lives devoured by chance and disarray. Meditating on the LORD in the moment will bring us into that state of being, Biblically known as "the peace that passes all understanding" where in the life of the LORD may be lived out as we joyously perform good works to further our closeness with the Lord. Attaching ourselves to the LORD in prayer, binding our minds and hearts to HIM makes everything we accomplish or intend to accomplish bound to HIS glory also. Therefore in all things we worship and pray and give grace, all three being only given out of our close communion with the LORD. If we gave of ourselves, because we cling to Christ, then we have so worshipped His Name. If we have given of ourselves, simply because we desire to draw closer to our LORD, then we have also, by our giving, prayed. Sympathy and empathy, too, are forms of prayer. How we feel about, toward, with, and because of our fellow human beings is also a matter of prayer, though it is directed toward people and does not appear to go to the LORD. We share in this joy, pain, hope, and horror of theirs, and so we pray. We feel some of what they feel, for better or for worse, and so we pray ... "for in as much as you did to the least of these," 'Jesus' says, "You did it unto me." (Matthew 25:40).

All-Prayer itself contains the full worship of the LORD as it does also all grace, all charity, all forgiveness, and all thanksgiving. Rising in the morning to find a new day and to find ourselves still alive to greet it, we have witnessed the grace of the LORD. And the LORD of the grace is HE Whom we thank when we rise to face the sun. Our simple rising is prayer. Our dressing is prayer. Our shower is prayer, as is our breakfast and our drive to work, if we have, in all these activities of monotony and mundane ordinary life, moved with the worship of the LORD in mind. All things and all times and all ways are All-Prayer if they have been done to honor the LORD and to come into closer communion with HIM.

Granted, many actions of this life by nature are sinful and can never be done to the LORD's glory, but what thing will the LORD not honor that which creates in me more space for HIM? There can be nothing that lessens me and magnifies the LORD, that will not be known as prayer.

In prayer we reach for the LORD, and in so reaching for HIM, as we grab hold and hang on, we hold to nothing else, not even to ourselves, shrinking just a little more and fading just a little more into the cross and the body and blood of Christ. We began learning to pray stationary-wise, because our lives were too busy, full of too much hustle and bustle, far too full of noise, hassle and nonsense that made us who we were. We had to be silenced. We had to be stilled. We had to be made to cease striving, vainly, for our own glory. We had to be bound in the moment, to be lost in the body and blood of Christ, to be still, that we might come to know our LORD fully and for real. And now, now that we know our LORD, now that we have found HIM in the quiet moments and have so been changed thereby, we can do that which such knowledge was gained for in the first place. We may translate it all, the knowledge and the experience into portable prayer.

The quiet of stillness on our knees before the Living LORD has quieted us and calmed us. They have ceased our striving vanity and have driven us to strive for the LORD's glory. The stationary form of prayer translates into the portable form, which is the kind that keeps us in quiet moments and stillness before the LORD all our days and in all our moments. By turning the one form into the other, we may obey the mandate of Scripture only in this way, the mandate to "pray without ceasing", because life, which ceases not until eternity, will become our prayer. To keep portable prayer alive we must bring it continuously back to the stationary form, as well. Communication is not a natural occurrence for us after all, even though we have been born anew, reborn, that is, into a new nature. It remains our own responsibility to make it happen over and over. To speak grace is no less important than to give it by actions of goodwill. They are both of equal import, one being valueless without the other. If we act generously without prayer, then we become proud of our good deeds. Pride in our goodwill in turn makes of our actions wickedness, since they serve as ego-boosters rather than as worship of the LORD. Contrary-wise, if we give nothing of ourselves but the costless, tasteless words of our own boasting, then our words are wasted as they bounce off the ceiling unheard by the LORD of humility. Besides, when it comes right down to it, words themselves, whether proud or humble, are only hollow sounds of air and vibrations, utterly useless unless combined with and supported by resulting physical effort enforcing the spoken sentiment. Worship is thereby the combination of stationary prayer and portable prayer, our

words joined with our actions to form the honor of a Heavenly FATHER. One cannot replace either of these with anything else, nor can anyone separate them without forming therein a vacuum.

Prayer's purpose is to bind us to the LORD. It's practice is performed both on our knees and on our feet, in both the moment of quietness and also in a quiet life. And prayer's power is the power to change, not so much to change the circumstances, nor the problems, nor the pains we endure daily, but the power of the LORD to change us into the likeness of HIMSELF. All-Prayer, being the power of the body and the blood of Christ "Jesus", feeds our spiritual selves as physical food does our bodies, nourishing the new nature and ensuring the perpetual prosperity of the soul. Prayer's power acquaints us with our LORD and then begins to make us grow into a deep-seeded, sound, and developed understanding of and true knowledge of HIM. Around this communion is formed a life of perfect unity, oneness with the LORD in mind, oneness with HIM in heart, and oneness with HIM in lovingkindness and grace. As long as it is more than words, prayer removes our hearts from the vanity of the world and sets them upon the higher course of heavenly pondering and holy propensity. It prevents further indulgence into sickness and sin, contradicting and counteracting sin's counterproductive effects, as well as satan's old delusions.

By humble, honest confession of and repentance from our former sinful deeds, prayer will draw from the LORD strength and power to resist all future temptation to return again. Rather than a burden, prayer will become a pleasant duty, bringing light into our lives and causing us to shine with Christ upon a darkened world, by producing a life of His good works in us. Prayer will keep us upon the path of righteousness. It will keep us alive and awake in the Spirit of the LORD and in the light of life. Many wish to be like the LORD in this world, but prayer is a Christian's power to actually do it in all that HE shows us of HIS strength and goodness. Prayer is a disciple's power in this life to bring what he finds in the LORD back again into the world of heartache, power to bring hope to the broken. It is power not only to speak, but also to do, as one who will be judged by the law of liberty, as is spoken of in Scripture. Prayer is the power of the LORD to change us into little versions of HIMSELF and thereby to shine as HE shines "as a light in a dark place until the Day dawns".

Power in prayer is power to change and to create, power to form within the LORD's people a place to build the Kingdom of Heaven and to leave in the heart of every believer the materials with which to construct it. As it is written "the Kingdom of Elohim is not a matter of talk but of power..." (I Corinthians 4:20). Prayer that builds the kingdom is prayer that speaks and moves; it speaks to hearts and moves their owners to action. The heart of the law and the spirit thereof are the one truth that is the

humbling power of prayer, that we can approach the throne of grace and though we deserve death and receive instead the knowledge of HIM Who sits there upon.

SECTION #II - THE POWER OF PRAYER: THE ARMOR AND THE ARSENAL

Chapter 6 - A Few Deadly Weapons

The honesty of All-Prayer, the humility of it, and the poverty of spirit therein are the keys to the kingdom, opening the doors to the very throne room of the LORD's sacred Temple and ushering us in peace into the Most Holy Place. They are the basis for the power of prayer, the foundation and cornerstone of strength and stability. This vulnerability of the body serves to become the strength of the soul. It is painful and opens us up to suffering and shame, because it is the end of pretense and denial. It is the fall of the great facade and is the rising of reality in our lives. It's the acceptance of the truth, whatever that may prove to be. Painful though it may be, recognition of the reality that affects our lives is always more valuable than continuing to believe all is well when there is clearly something amiss.

There is a story we are told as children about an Emperor's new clothes, a story we forget to apply to our lives when we get older. In this tale, there is an emperor whose enemies were tailors. These tailors surrendered themselves to the emperor, offering to make the most exquisite garments for his majesty as a token of their allegiance. The tailors were put in a room with a great loom and were given the best material money could buy, along with gold and jewels to decorate the clothing with. As time passed, the emperor grew curious and visited the tailors, but when he checked on their progress, he discovered nothing had been done and there was no trace of all the fine materials and gems. When interrogated, the tailors gestured to the loom and the hooks on the walls, describing in great detail how beautiful the clothes were that hung up all about the room. The emperor's attendant, himself in on the scam, exclaimed first and loudly how wonderful the clothes were.

Another planted spy nearby amid the workers of the palace exclaimed also how excellent the clothes appeared to be. In this way, the emperor went along with the absurdity rather than appearing foolish before his court. The emperor then declared that he could see the clothes as well, complementing

the tailors on such fine work. Of course, once the emperor himself acknowledged the existence of the imaginary clothes, everyone else in the court had to play along as well, for fear of being subject to punishment otherwise. Eventually, the lie was told long enough that everyone believed in the beauty of the imaginary clothing, including the emperor himself. Finally, the emperor's birthday arrived, and he dressed in his fine new clothing and nothing else. He then set out in a parade through the city to show off his new clothes. To avoid punishment or embarrassment, those who did not believe in the clothes cheered and pretended they did. The rest of the people believed in the clothes and cheered for their beauty. But somewhere in the crowd, a young child who knew no better than to pretend began to laugh and exclaim that the man was naked. With that spark, a fire was set spreading to all the people, breaking the spell and their fears as well. As one, the world began to laugh at their naked lord. And while he was being mocked in the streets, the tailors and spies slipped away with all the wealth of the real clothes they never made.

True prayer in all its honesty will acknowledge and confess that what the LORD has said is true and was so all the while, that we are "wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked." When we fail to be humble and therefore fail to pray, we may be kings or emperors, but all glory is in the mind alone. We are without prayer, only the lords of our imagination, flaunting the golden clothing we do not wear and remaining ever uncovered and exposed before all the world. Prayer can be painful because it must first receive this reality before it can right it. It takes acknowledgement of reality, after all, before one can accept the covering of clothes, it not being the habit of most to dress while already adorned. Therefore the one who prays honestly dresses his spirit with the clothing of righteousness: Scripture says, "'clothe yourselves with compassion; kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.'" (Colossians 3:12). And it says to cover all these with a coat of love. Yet such a believer still remains vulnerable in the beginning even while dressed for spiritual success. He is covered and protected from shame and exposure, but he remains open to alternate forms of harm more deadly even than the gawkers and critics of his former indecency.

For prayer to be real, it must be humble and dressed for honesty, but once the believer has his clothes, more is still needed. As Scripture dictates, "therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin." (I Peter 4:1). This suffering comes first with acknowledgement of vulnerability and nudity, then with the acknowledgement that even clothing is not enough. We were not just naked before we had humility. We were naked on a Battlefield in the middle of a war. Now, by honest All-Prayer, we are dressed but

somehow still vulnerable. More is needed, more strength, more protection, more power. How then do we find this extra security? How do we stand on the battlefield, and in what might do we trust to guard us? The answer to these questions are to be found in Scripture where it is said, "Be strong in the LORD and the power of HIS might. Put on the full armor of the Elohim so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Herein lies the strength and power able to guard our souls from sin and satan and to keep us securely bound to the LORD and not only bound to HIM but bound in HIM also. These few deadly weapons are none other than the full armor of the FATHER which is itself the full measure of prayer. He who suffered in his body is done with sin, because he has denied himself and his own destructive imaginings, believing instead in Word of the MOST HIGH that danger was surrounding him, ready to strike. He who suffered in his body is done with sin, because he was covered up to guard against sin's attacks. Yet because we are told that our enemies are not of this world, because we are told that our enemies are not physical but are spiritual and powerful and ever aggressive, we who have suffered in our bodies are done with sin. We are done with it, because we do not cover up with physical armor nor physical effort. We are done with sin because we arm ourselves against it. We arm ourselves with an attitude: with knowledge, with facts, with understanding. We arm ourselves with remembrances of righteousness, with habits of holiness, and with the disciplines of discipleship. With constancy, we are armed, with vigilance and with endurance. With these we are armed and dangerous, with the deadly weapons of All-Prayer.

It is often mistakenly thought that these weapons of prayer are actual spiritual devices of destruction, the spiritual equivalent of what we wield in war on the physical plane. It is pictured as a knight in shining armor going about clad in helm, breastplate, sollerets, and tassets, bearing to battle both sword and shield. Much can be read into the Scriptures as explanation of our spiritual protection, but it should not be done. For two millennia, preachers of all confessions have expounded upon the various meanings of the variety of pieces of mail, even going so far as to read into why nothing covers our back. (They say the armor does not cover our back because we are never to be retreating. This is ignorance and nonsense to say nothing covers the back, however, because every armor piece was a full encasing protection. They all covered front and back. Moreover, a soldier that never retreats under any circumstances is a soon-to-be-corpse.) Much can be made about the apostle's emphasis on our need to put on the full armor rather than just some of the armor or even most of the armor. Yet all inlets to the subject have been by and large peppered with matters of misdirection. If we read into the meaning, we

will likely miss the point or the whole thing. So much has been said about the pieces of armor that the actual armor itself is not considered.

We are told to put on the belt of truth, but in actuality it is not a belt we are putting on, spiritual or otherwise, but Truth itself. When we are told to set the breastplate of righteousness in place, it is righteousness that is to be set in place, not a breastplate. We are not meant to shod ourselves with sollarers, but we are to stand at the ready and to walk in the way of peace laid out in the gospel of “Jesus Christ.” Neither is it the LORD’s intention that we should carry about a Sword and shield, but we will have the enemy on the run as we wield our faith and the FATHER’s holy Word in battle. The point of the armor is prayer and the attitudes and actions done therein. These are likened to physical weapons, but they themselves are the armor of the LORD and the power of prayer. We are not Roman legionaries nor medieval knights clinking about in the spiritual realm. We bear rather truth in the way a belt is worn. We bear the righteousness of the LORD as if it was a breastplate, the gospel of Christ in the way a foot-guard is worn, and faith and Scripture, we bear in offense - advancing against evil as one would in the physical realm with sword and shield. As we read also in I Thessalonians. 5:8, “Putting on faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet.” The virtues themselves are our armor and our arsenal. Prayer is our real protection, the true armor, the life of oneness with the LORD lived out in meekness and wisdom. And as the Saviour says in Matthew 11:19, “Wisdom is proved right by her actions.”

We have seen that the purpose of All-Prayer is to attach ourselves to our holy LORD, to bind ourselves inside of HIS life and within HIS holiness. This, in turn, is for the purpose of becoming more like HIM and for providing the power of resisting the crafty cravings of sin and our own evil nature of the flesh. This was true of meditative prayer and communion prayer and every other prayer form, and it is just as true of the power behind these different forms of prayer as surely as it is the power behind All-Prayer itself. Each piece of the armor of the LORD is a different form of prayer, one part of the whole suit. While collectively it serves to keep us within that power, the LORD has given it to us to keep us in connection and communion with HIM. The armor itself as a whole binds us into the LORD just as physical armor binds us inside of the protective metal mail. The suit of armor, whether spiritual or physical, will bind us, but will also protect us. The weapons of the enemies of our souls are not stopped by physical metal coverings and there is, as far as we know, no spiritual metals we could use to fend off attacks of a supernatural kind. Such opposition is thwarted instead by the truth and by those who walk therein in prayer.

Let us look at the first piece of armor decreed in Scripture, the belt of truth. Belts serve another form of honesty besides that of not telling lies. They serve our modesty and sexual truth, by keeping our pants on and up. Without such a spiritual equivalent, we would find ourselves in sins of the flesh and powerless in battle against the devil. We would also, if lacking the power of truth, find ourselves powerless to commune with the Living LORD. In the physical world, a belt is used to keep one's pants from falling down, but the more accurate translation of a belt is that of an athletic supporter. In the sense of physical armor, the belt, which is called a "tasse" (French for "cup") was none other than a groin protector, and spiritually speaking, the truth serves the same desired function. In the private moments and in the private areas of our lives, and the private areas of our bodies, there are few defenses, if any, and many temptations, all of which will separate us from full and honest obedience to the LORD, if we flinch for one second from following the truth.

What is to keep us honest before the Almighty and the world in our sexuality when no one else is around, to pressure us into persistent purity if not for this power of prayer? It is truth that is our guard, a dedicated attitude toward being honest in all things. The belt of truth is vigilance of virtue. It is continuous correctness. It is understanding and acknowledging falsehood and facade, the shiny things of satan, luring us away from good form and the righteous life that the LORD requires. Chastity therefore is the belt of truth. It is the proper use of all the gifts of the LORD's grace, use of these for HIS own glory not our own whimsical desires. It is the use of the LORD's gifts (sexual and otherwise) in a manner that would neither displease HIM nor detach us from HIS joy, nor sever us from HIS glorious presence. The power of truth is the power of prayer, and truth in all of forms and in all areas not simply those of a sexual nature, though they are the strongest and most stubborn. The honesty that powers our prayer and prevents us from falling in spiritual battle is the power of an honest life. It is speaking the truth and doing the truth. It is not honest to be pure sexually and yet be a liar, nor is it honest to speak the truth while persisting in promiscuity. Nor can a person steal or kill or covet and call himself honest just because lies roll not off his tongue, but off his hands instead. If lies don't come forth from us in words but yet are prominent in and through our deeds, what difference does it make? One who lies by his actions in place of his speech is not bound by truth and is therefore unable to pray to a Holy One. The belt of truth buckles the believer into an honest life and a trust-worthy conscience, binding him to the LORD of righteousness.

In like manner to the belt, which is really not a belt, the breastplate of righteousness is not really a breastplate. Yet like a breastplate, righteousness, which is the real piece of armor, guards the heart

against vile schemes. Scripture tells us to guard the heart as the well-spring of life, and yet Scripture also says that “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” (Jeremiah 17:9). If both of these statements are true of the heart, then it is all the more imperative that we guard it with all we have, offering it the best possible covering and care. If we are to possess the power to commune with the Living LORD in prayer, then we must make use of righteousness, not our own, but HIS, to guard the well-spring of life. If not, the well-spring of life will become corrupted and contaminated, spewing forth all manner of deceit and desperately wicked schemes, drowning out the life of Christ and flooding out the path of the LORD with perversion. It is not our righteousness but the LORD’s that protects us, yet the breastplate that we fix in place is, in fact, set there by us.

The power of prayer and the breastplate of righteousness is none other than an attitude and habit of holiness in intentions and in outcomes. It is practiced just actions and repeatedly right choices. When one’s will is inclined toward the will of the LORD, temptation is harder to surrender to, because we grow unaccustomed to giving up and giving in. For the breastplate of righteousness to be set in place, it is required of us that we perform the action to cease, not prayer, but striving. We surrender not to sin, but to the righteousness that is truly righteous, and that is the righteousness of Christ alone.

This returns us once more to honesty, for the action that ceases striving is that of confession. We agree with the LORD that HE was right all along when HE told us that we could not be righteous and that any good we could do was a worthless “waste-cloth”. As usual, we must admit we can only hold on to HIM and ask for HIS righteousness to be attributed to us. We can do nothing but attach to the LORD and allow for HIS holiness to cover our hellish hearts. The breastplate of righteousness, then is the LORD HIMSELF. It is HE Who alone is righteous, and standing thus in the protection of the Almighty, we are ready to examine our stance and our standing. Bound in honesty and covered by Righteousness HIMSELF, we are now prepared to ponder our footing. In what and on what must we stand, that our prayers may have power? We must stand in readiness, and we must stand upon the gospel of Christ, the gospel that which brings peace. This power is one of order and discipline. Readiness does not arise out of nature, but comes from constancy and diligence, hard effort to ward off weariness, laziness, and progressive, systematic degeneration. The Scripture says that the Most High “is not an Elohim of disorder, but of peace.” (I Corinthians 14:33), and the piece of armor in which we stand and that which is empowering us, is that very peace from that very Elohim. Peace is another thing held deliberately and painfully maintained, yet peace will prove to be the power of prayer.

The gospel of Christ creates that peace. It makes the peace of the soul and in life of the physical world also by forming an additional creation, that of preparedness, a sense of anticipation. Anticipation is not aggression, but it is a spirit of care and caution, suspicious of everyone and everything, expecting all possibilities and planning accordingly. The readiness that comes from the LORD's peaceful gospel is a readiness for war, a readiness for anything. As it was best said by the Roman writer Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus, the quote now recited as military dogma: "Si vis pacem, para bellum," meaning, "If you want peace, prepare for war." The piece of armor that guards our standing in the spiritual realm is a disciplined core self. The natural course for creatures is to prey upon the weak, and the devil would have us for his prey by making us weak and unaware rather than have us grow strong in the LORD and the power of HIS might, ready for anything. Then whatever comes, we can counter the attack with prayer and not find ourselves as the devil's prey. Standing in the readiness of the gospel of peace is furthermore a determination not simply to be strongest so as to ward off possible would-be predators, but to be the most sympathetic so as to protect and strengthen those others who would become prey. The gospel also makes us ready to do good in addition to strengthening us and helping us care. One who stands in the readiness will give no one reason to fear him and everyone reason to fear the LORD. He will harm no innocent person, nor shall he become the avenger on the evil-doer. He shall in all things be a peace-maker and a protector, himself unfallen and helping others to rise.

Lastly, the readiness of the gospel of peace is a readiness to call on the LORD. To be powerful in prayer, we must be continually prepared to practice it, ever ready to preach, pray, or die at a moment's notice. The gospel of peace is the good news that the LORD has made peace with us by the sacrifice of HIS Son upon the cross of Calvary. Since we have this peace, let us pray. Since we have this peace, let us approach the throne of grace and the LORD of peace there upon. We can, and we must be ready to do so. For peace to exist on earth, we must bring it, and we must become it. What can we bring, and what can we become if we have not first received it from the LORD? And what can we receive from the LORD without prayer? So we must be ready then to reach for this and for the LORD by faith. The penultimate weapon of our armor is none other than faith itself. The power of prayer is in our trust in the LORD, our belief in Who HE is. Scripture says, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen." (Hebrews 11:1). And it is this that is our strongest defensive weapon.

It is faith that shields us from temptation, the invisible that blocks the all-too-clear attacks of the devil. Faith lived out in constancy and steadfastly adhered to, this is the power of prayer and the assurance of a defense against outward evil threats. As Scripture says, "Without faith, it is impossible to

please Him...” (Hebrews 11:6). The Scriptures also tell us that without faith, no one will see the LORD, and is that not the entire goal of our prayer and search for power therein? Faith then is the key piece of defensive armor as it covers everything from head to foot. It protects us from without, but also shields us from within. The consistency of belief in the power of the LORD to aid us in our struggle against the three great enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil, becomes our own power when we hold to the LORD in our prayer. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, making our present defense therefore our trust in the LORD. We trust HIM for our future, security and also in point of fact that HE has already secured that hope. Or, alternatively speaking, HE has never needed to secure any hope for HE HIMSELF is our eternal hope and security, what and who we hope for. Our hope being eternally secure in the LORD and HIS Word, we can stand in the evil day clothed and armed with power from on high, praying in the mighty matchless Name of the Messiah, Who is Himself the Word of the LORD and the final piece of our suit of armor.

The Word of the LORD, the power of prayer, and the key offensive weapon of our arsenal, is none other than our Lord, Savior, and Master Defender, Almighty Yahshua, the Messiah, whom we have so named in the West, Jesus Christ. To put on Christ like one puts on clothes and to wield Him as one would a double-edged sword is the forcefully effective strength of All-Prayer. This mighty weapon is ‘Jesus’ Christ Himself, and yet it is also the Canon of Sacred Scripture. Behind and beneath and above and before all our words and actions, if we put the LORD’s holy Word, there then we move and speak not in our power, but His full strength. We are not told merely to be strong in power and might. We are told to pray by being strong in the LORD and the power of HIS might.

To stand in the evil day the saint of the LORD must be shielded from all angles by standing on the gospel, by walking in peace, by remaining diligent and disciplined in readiness, by guarding his heart with Christ’s righteousness, by remembering with perpetuity, his on-going state of salvation, and by thus setting himself apart from the dangerous devilish ways of the world. But all this is defensive, a consistency of avoiding danger and deflecting arrows. And while every piece of armor protects the believer from falling prey to sin, none of them thus far advances him further. We, therefore, raising the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of the LORD, strike out against the three great enemies, following the age-old adage, “The best defense is a good offense.” The Word of the LORD is both double-edged and multi-purposed. It strikes down the logic of the world, the would-be idols of both state and church, the bias of culture, political correctness, and the popular demands of peer pressure, commercialism, and materialistic vanity. The Word of the LORD strikes at the flesh, as well. That is to say that it hits home in

our hearts too. In reality, it isn't wielded to protect me, but to protect our inner souls against ourselves. It pierces, as Scripture says, "to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12). This powerful weapon is therefore meant to cut deep and to be able to target specific and small areas and is able to reach the important unseen issues at the core of a person's being. It is, after all, the sin nature in us that is the enemy of our souls and the enemy of our life and the source of that life, our attachment to the Majesty in Heaven. And so strikes the Word of the LORD, both at home and abroad, at home to create in us a holy Temple and a House of Prayer, and abroad to destroy the works of the world and those also of the devil set against us.

Disregarding the individual temptations and trials and trip-falls the devil sets and sends against us, the Word of the LORD swings by our words and our actions straight at the source of those attacks, the devil himself. Strike down the archer and the arrows cease to fly. Stop satan in his tracks and the temptations will not be a problem any further. Thus the sword of the Spirit, the offensive weapon of prayer, is obedience to the LORD's commands in Scripture, and it is clinging to Christ in all things, the one furthering the other. Obedience to the LORD is the wielding of this mighty weapon, this proverbial broadsword, cutting away at the remnants of the old faux self-righteousness and thereby creating Christ-likeness in our character and perfecting further still our skill with a blade. In this manner the armor of the LORD is to be worn and wielded by believers. These may be few, but they are deadly weapons, and they are the backing to our prayers; attitudes, that is what every piece of armor is. The power in our words and the power in our deeds is the putting on of the mind of Christ.

They say that it is the clothes that make the man, and this is true in this mindset. The clothes do make us who we are in Christ. By wearing compassion, we become the caring hands of Christ. By clothing ourselves in kindness, we become His friendly face. When we wear His humility, no task will be beneath us if it be holy. When we are garbed in His greatness, we will touch the world with amazing grace. And in the patience and love of Christ, we will endure the losses of this world, the scorn, the shame, and the pain that comes from discipleship with Christ. And hardened, battle-tested prayer power, we become who we are in Christ by honesty, by acknowledging our spiritual nakedness and by receiving the blood of Christ to cover us. We accept our need for Christ to cover us, the need for Him to be our covering, our clothing, and even furthermore for His attitudes, understandings, and attributes to become our protective armored clothing as well as the strength to back our lives of prayer. Prayer itself is an attachment to the LORD in all things whether in our words, or in our attitudes, or in our actions. The attitudes are these things of the inner self that power the outer life. They are our thoughts, our

meditations, our intentions, our opinions, and our imaginations. The words are those things between the inner life and the outer life, those things which proceed from the inside to the outside bringing the former out in revelation into the light of the latter world. They are the things that hold power only from our attitudes. They are the portrait of the invisible attitudes of the inner self. Lastly, the actions of prayer are those outward deeds that are themselves entirely external though rooted and grounded within the inner being. They are the final proof of faith and the reality of all that is believed and yet remains ever unseen. Actions are the end result of attitudes, because they reflect the truth of our every real thought and prove the legitimacy or falsehood of every uttered word. It is for this reason the power of prayer must first be found in attitudes.

Chapter 7 - A Cord of Three Strands

The power of prayer is the attitudes of that lofty quality which serves to dress and to protect our core selves. These attitudes of love, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience become for us more than fashion. These attitudes of righteous remembrance, constancy in peace, reception of salvation, meditation upon the truth, readiness of discipline, faith in Christ, and obedience to His Word, make up our identity. We know who we are in Christ, because by dressing to match Him, by dressing ourselves with Himself as our attire, we choose not to remember who we were without Him. Our adornment is our prayer if we put on Christ, and our prayer is our common bond with fellow believers. "The clothes make the man" as they say, and common clothing composes a uniform. And who requires the use of a uniform more than the soldier? Prayer therefore makes us soldiers of the Lord. No good soldier stands alone. He fights in an army of others like-minded and like-mannered, all wearing common outfits, and all pursuing one common end result. In the case of Disciples, that one common goal is the attachment of ourselves and all our desires to the LORD and HIS desires. The armor of the LORD is our power, yes, but it is still much more than this. The armor of the LORD doubles as our spiritual uniform. It is our identity as a soldier and as one of many like-minded men and women. The warriors of the LORD do pray, but we do not pray alone; nor is prayer designed as a solitary affair (even though solitary places and solitude itself are necessary in their time). Prayer is the life of a believer, and life is a constant struggle both physically and in the spirit also, requiring military precision in every one of our affairs.

We who pray identify ourselves with each other as those who call on the Holy ONE out of a pure heart. This identity is empowering us toward further holiness in Christ and binds us to our brothers-in-arms. As Ecclesiastes 4:9 says, "Two are better than one, because they get a good return for their work." And it is also written, "A cord of three strands is not easily broken." (Eccl.4:12). In other words, there is strength in numbers. The armor of the LORD, as the uniform of the Christian, serves as the power of prayer to protect the believer not merely from supernatural assaults, but by connecting him with superlative assistance. Prayer is, after all, not for the FATHER's benefit, as we do understand, but for our own. Our LORD needs nothing. HE gains nothing when we pray and loses nothing when we fail to pray. It is we, the believers, the people of the LORD who gain or lose by praying or failing to do so. Therefore it is all the better for believers to pray together as a group, as a unit, than as mere individuals eternally on our own. If prayer is beneficial for us then should we not gain greater blessings by calling on the LORD

as one voice, as not one lone soldier but as one strong army, fighting for knowledge of HIM. The LORD is just as sure to hear our prayers when we are alone as HE is to hear our cooperative call, but a group effort furthers our own ambitions to pray and to pursue the throne of grace. Group prayer introduces the added element of peer-pressure. No soldier gives in to temptation with his brothers-in-arms beside him goading him to carry on. No soldier will be lax in his duties nor abandon his post, nor become a deserter with his fellows by his side encouraging him in his duties, sharing in his burdens, and being faithful themselves toward him and toward their commander. This is why they say there is no such thing as an "island Christian," because the lone soldier will soon become numbered with the casualties or the missing-in-action. The power of the armor of the LORD resides in its ability to protect but all the more to identify. It unifies a random rabble of believers into disciplined disciples, a fighting force for Christ. In faith it binds and ties, giving us the sense of oneness not only with the LORD we are pursuing, but a sense of oneness with one another, a oneness in our common cause. The armor of the LORD, the uniform of the faith, identifies a believer as a member of a family, as one loved and cherished and as one fiercely defended and sorely missed if lost. The armor of the LORD is the power of prayer to make from many apostles from within the world, one assembly in the body and blood of the Messiah, HIS Son.

The attitudes that serve as our spiritual armor and those states of mind and heart that are our supernatural arsenal of faith make us into organs in the body of Christ, vital pieces necessary to the whole, more than merely one of many. Prayer has the power to attribute this kind of identity, this bond of closeness, otherwise impossible to find or form. As a soldier in an army, the believer must undergo intense training to ready himself in body and mind for combat and calculation. He or she must endure testing, endure hardship and heartache, suffering much to discipline the self. He or she must withstand the hazards of the elements, the wind, the cold, and the heat. He or she must overcome the terrain and natural predators. We must, after all this, also be subject to taking orders, no matter his personal feelings toward them, and to abide by the doctrines of war and the rules of engagement at all times. Lastly, a soldier must maintain his or her morale. We must neither panic nor lose heart on or off the fighting field. This is the power of endurance that stands behind and upholds our prayer.

In the spiritual world in which we live and fight by the weapons of All-Prayer, we do not have to endure wind and rain nor extremes of heat or cold. We do not have terrain to hinder our forward passage such as mountains and rivers and canyons. And yet, in the spirit, there are always roadblocks to our walk of faith, perhaps not the elements but certainly our circumstances, other people, our possessions, or those of others, and fear and worry above all things. We always face highs and lows in our faith as well,

heights and depths that seem impossible. Yet for us, as for soldiers, in the physical world, warring for king and country, there remains ever command and doctrine demanding our complete obedience, demanding that we overcome circumstances, people, things, and fear, and demanding our triumph over these impasses. It may appear impossible, but we must remember yet that the armor of the LORD is worn by us all; as one, we fight to conquer all as we were so called to do. Such is the militaristic power of prayer. However, prayer requires more than militaristic tactics and training. For this army to have the morals it requires, it must also be a family.

Morale is an army's most vital weapon, its reason for being. Morale is a purpose, it is a cause. It is the driving force behind all that is done. If an army loses its sense of purpose, if the people lose hope in their cause, then all other training and strategizing and planning and preparation is done in vain. It is morale that is most important, and the feeling of family gives an army, especially the LORD's army, the power to move forward. Numbers make up an army, but a family is formed by members, by people we know so well, so intimately that the loss of any one of them is as death to us all. An army that moves as a family, and not just a machine or a system, not only as a united mass of men, will find power to perform any conquest. Family members feel joy at the triumphs of other relatives. They feel sorrow at their losses. Family is a stronger bond than even battle can forge (though battle can strengthen the bond of family). It is a bond made by law in marriage and adoption, and it is also a bond made by blood in birth and in the old-fashioned rites like the blood-oath and making someone a blood-brother. In the spiritual sense of things, we who pray, we who have faith in Christ are family first by birth and blood exchange and secondly by the adoption and marriage. By enabling us to be born again, the LORD has brought us into the heavenly family as HIS children, as HIS naturalized sons and daughters. And by the giving of HIS only begotten Son to become for us the blood sacrifice for the removal of wrath and for redemption from sin, the LORD has brought us into HIS heavenly family as the blood-brothers of HIS true Son. Now that we are the LORD's children, and thereby HIS heirs of a better covenant, we are brought into the heavenly family by adoption and by collectively being the bride of the Messiah, we are brought into the heavenly family by the marriage yet to come. It is this, the law of liberty, and the blood of the Lamb, that has made us family in every possible sense of the word. Since we are brothers of the King, we are brothers also with each other, brothers and soldiers, the combination of which makes us also the assembly, the people who belong to the LORD, "spread out through time and space rooted in eternity, terrible as an army with banners," as C.S. Lewis phrased it in *The Screwtape Letters*.

As to the assembly of believers, we are indeed quite literally the people belonging to the Living LORD both brothers and soldiers, a close-knit family as to be likened to being a body with each of us as the organs that power its systems. When speaking of the people of the LORD, there really is no other way of imagining it. HIS assembly is not a building made by human hands, nor a larger series of structures raised by man. The LORD's people are not a system, organization, or institution. The church founded by Christ, bought by His blood and founded upon His body and not else is neither society, nor religion, neither rules, nor rights. Primitive Christendom, the House of the Father, is and always has been and ever will be none other than the people who belong to the LORD. Christianity is the soldiers, the brothers and sisters, the heavenly family all, earthbound and eternal, rightly relating to each other and reaching out to a wretched world. This fellowship is our strength, the power we put into our prayers. This bond of brotherly love is the supernatural sucker-punch that is thrown our enemy's way. It is the armor of our protection and the furtherance of our cause in Christ.

Until we as a people come to acknowledge and understand family as the true nature of ourselves and fellowship as the true nature of our strength, then our prayers will remain ever pitiful however pious, and they will remain proud however purely motivated. All forms of All-Prayer are profitable in their proper places and proper times, but no single form constitutes All-Prayer. In the same way, at least some piece of prayer will be found to be missing, should we seek ever and always to pray alone. The nature of the Christian life is to stand with other Christians in a life of like faith and confidence, not simply to be separate Christians living separate lives. In a full measurement of prayer, we understand that any other Christian is the brother or sister of every other Christian and thus family with one and all. If we master prayer in our rooms by our beds and we master prayer in our meditations and requests and thanksgivings, and if we master prayer in our deeds toward our brothers and toward the outside world, as we move about this "big blue marble" but yet we shun our commonality, communion, and camaraderie with our saintly siblings, then we have not understood prayer in the least. The power of prayer is in the bond of the faithful. In the same way Scripture tells us that if we lack loving-kindness, that it avails us nothing to have any other great power whether it be speaking in tongues, having the ability to prophesy, possessing mountain-moving faith, unmatched generosity, or unprecedented heroism. If we get everything right in life but miss out on love, then we get it all wrong. In like manner, we may master all forms of prayer, but we will most certainly find ourselves lacking in the end should we miss the form of community with the rest of our family. There is no religion without it, after all, no Christendom whatsoever. Without the

family backing, without the bond of fellowship in the adoption of the cross and in the blood of Christ, there can be no more strength to prayer than one person's feeble offering since there is no army.

A thousand people milling about does not constitute an army. It only constitutes potential and possibility. Even if they are all dressed for battle, they will remain an isolated mass within the fog of war. In prayer there must be solidarity more than solitude, strength in the armor and in the numbers of others wearing it as well, protecting us and us them on all sides. It is just as important, however, to be guarded by these attitudes as it is to be standing together protected by our brothers-in-arms. For what good would come from an army without mail or weaponry or matching clothing marching out onto the field of battle? They would be only carrion waiting for the birds. Our strength in life and our strength in prayer is in donning all the forms of armor, wielding every weapon, and practicing every form of All-Prayer. In life like in war, victory goes to the one who makes the next to last mistake, yet most often in both arenas there is room enough for no errors at all of any kind. And most often, the first mistake is the only one ever made, and a mortal one. And so we see that the power of prayer is entirely in our own attitudes toward our brothers and sisters. Prayer power is not some supernatural gift from the LORD that we can request and magically receive. It is entirely dependent upon the disciplines of the mind we develop from the Word of the LORD. The attitudes that serve to defend our right standing and attachment to the LORD are the knowledge of our state of salvation, our remembrance that the LORD is our righteousness and that we have none to speak of on our own, our continuation within the truth, our walk along the way of peace, readiness, and discipline born of the Gospel itself, and our constancy of faith in Christ for our everything. The attitudes that serve to our offense are these as well, but beyond these is our obedience to the Word of the LORD and our subjection of all our lives to its just and pure scrutiny. Wielding the Word also offends against the simple, delicate sensibilities of the world and cuts to pieces the fiendishly pathetic attacks of the devil and all his brood. Yet above all, family is essential to the assembly. To nothing she would fall and crumble, an aged ruin among the rubble of society, were it not for the hope and promise of camaraderie within the idea of the family unit. Without the bond of brotherhood, without the bond of Christian fellowship, without a united front of faith and will, what strength would our prayers hold, what might, what power?

Christ Himself promised strength in numbers when He said that whenever two or three people gather in His Name, and this throughout all ages gone and yet to come, He would stand in their midst. When we stand together in the Name of the Messiah, He promises to stand united with us also. Truly He lives within every one of us who have put our faith in Him through His death upon the cross in our stead

and by way of His resurrection from the grave, yet He promises to meet with us in a special way, backing our play, as it were, when we behave as one under His banner and His command. Furthermore, how important it is that we all should live and pray as one, is revealed to us in one of the very last prayers the Master uttered to the FATHER before His journey to Golgotha. The Lord prayed that His disciples would be one in the same way that He Himself is one with the FATHER and the Comforter. He also prayed the same for us today and all who would ever believe in Him through the Gospel, that we would be one as He is one with the Holy Spirit and one with the Father. We need each other just like we need holiness and the presence of the LORD in our lives. The LORD has made us inseparable lest we lose our power to pray and bring hope to the world. Prayer, apart from the strength of the Christian family, would simply be a lone cry in the dark, one soldier without a cause, without command, and without compatriots. For prayer to achieve efficiency and effectiveness, it must be backed by our attitudes and our associations, a unified people, one in spirit and in purpose.

SECTION #3 - THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER - THE PATTERN

Chapter 8 - The Disciple's Prayer

"This then is how you should pray ... " Our Savior says these words in Matthew 6:9 and follows after it with a formal pattern covering all areas of human concern and connection with the LORD. This is the pattern known as the "Our Father", or the "Lord's Prayer", as it was the pattern set down for our replication by the Lord Himself. The pattern is the very definition of the practice of prayer, the explanation of how to pray, not just the reason why, and a knowledge of prayer's power. Because the pattern serves to be repeated "world without end" by the disciples of the Messiah to this day, and since it was laid down for our own instruction, it ought to be more appropriately thought of as the "Disciple's Prayer".

As we have seen now over and over again prayer is for the glory of the LORD, but it is for the benefit of Man. We are responsible as such to own this pattern of prayer, to take possession of it and to apply it daily. When we don't know what to do, how to do it, or in what manner it should be done, we ought to turn to the pattern, as addressed in it is everything we need for life and for holiness. The pattern takes for granted that the individual who prays the prayer has knowledge of its purpose and more broadly that he or she has knowledge of the purpose of the whole entirety of All-Prayer. The design of the Lord's Prayer takes it for granted also that the person who is praying the prayer is aware at least on a basic level of the power behind it and behind All-Prayer which the pattern represents. For these reasons the Scriptures do not explain those issues here, but instead only state the facts in the pattern and nothing else.

The Disciple's Prayer can be subdivided so many ways: it can be cut into two groups – those things concerning the LORD and then those things concerning ourselves. It can be divided alternately into five groups nicely alliterated as the divine section, the daily deeds section, the dedication section, the deliverance section, and the declaration section. The prayer can also be divided up subject by subject and analyzed point by point to show us not only why we pray but furthermore how we are to use the prayer the

Lord taught us as the pattern for our lives. For our purposes, however, we shall look first at the facts of the pattern neatly divided up into the two sections.

Firstly, there are those things relating to the LORD and our need for HIM and our need for HIS exaltation over our own interests and over our hearts and all the earth. Secondly addressed are those things relating to our own personal life and the health and well-being, as well as our relation, to one another. The order of importance in these issues is properly expressed here as well and that by pure design. As Scripture says, "Seek first the Kingdom of Elohim and HIS Righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33). In all things, our relation to the LORD must come first. If we know ourselves apart from the LORD, we do not truly know as much as we think, nor do we know rightly as we ought. And apart from our relation with Christ, we will have no right relation to this world or to those who remain trapped therein. Without the primary knowledge of our precious LORD, we will remain trapped within the world ourselves, without reason to relate to our fellow man, for we would be one and the same as they. We must therefore know the LORD above all things even before our concern for our own lives and before the cares of our needs on this earth.

Each section of the pattern can be further divided into subcategories of three each: the first concern of the section regarding the LORD is that HE is our Heavenly Father, secondly; the prayer acknowledged the sanctity of HIS Mighty NAME; and thirdly the prayer calls for HIS Will and Kingdom to advance and triumph over heaven and hell and earth and all things now and in eternity.

With regard to the section of the pattern that is concerned with the disciples themselves, namely us today, the primary concern is for the most obvious of needs, our daily sustenance; secondly, the disciple is concerned with freedom from both condemnation and revenge by the cry for absolution for himself and others; and lastly the disciple seeks in his prayer the guidance of the LORD of lords to keep him from falling into trouble and also redemption to rescue him when he does fall into trouble, when he does fall prey to the schemes of the world, the flesh, and the devil. And all of these concerns are followed neatly by a brief explanation for why they should all be granted to us without hesitation.

The pattern serves us as not only a grandiose prayer to be recited repeatedly (though this is among its many useful functions), but it serves also and rightly should serve everywhere as the pattern for the formation of all our other prayers. Its simplest form of the LORD first and HIS desires before us and before our own wants and needs is the pattern for All-Prayer, but its more specific pattern should also be mimicked in all our other prayers as well, both those prayers that are spoken and those prayers that are lived out.

All-Prayer places the LORD always as Heavenly Father, HIS NAME alone and HIS Kingdom and Will as dominant over all things known and unknown, then All-Prayer concerns itself subsequently with our physical needs, forgiveness of sins, and deliverance from trouble and evil. In all our praying, we ought to reflect this pattern, or else we will find ourselves askew and our system of values misplaced, as well as our priorities being out of order.

The order in which Christ laid out the pattern is itself paramount, for to move or to rearrange any one aspect of it would be to undermine its entire form, structure, and function. To alter the pattern of the Disciple's Prayer in the slightest way is the equivalent of an alteration to All-Prayer itself. It would then cease to even be a prayer and would become something else entirely; it would become a wish or a dream, the crying and begging of one who doesn't truly believe. For an individual to pray through the pattern of prayer, he or she must understand, first and foremost, that the LORD knows everything. It may seem like an obvious fact of life that the LORD is omniscient, but it also happens to be one of the first things His disciples forget, when we come to HIM to pray. Therefore, Christ Himself reminds us of this very fact right before giving us the pattern when He said, "your Father knows what you need before you ask HIM." (Matthew 6:8). And so, we must pray through the pattern for prayer in the knowledge that we are not making any requests of the LORD. We are not, throughout the whole prayer, asking the HIM for anything. Not one thing!

The prayer pattern consists of a series of statements, not questions nor requests. Neither is the pattern a series of commands, on the other hand. Nothing in the prayer demands anything, either. By following the simple pattern from beginning to end, the disciple merely claims the promises already offered by the loving FATHER. It is an acknowledging of the promises of Scripture and an acceptance of the truths of the LORD's Word, that "every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the FATHER of the Heavenly lights, with Whom there is no variation nor shadow of turning." (James 1:17). The prayer of the disciples of Christ owns that "Elohim is true and every man a liar." (Romans 3:4). It owns that the LORD is good, and that HE gives good gifts to HIS children. We need not be showy or flashy, for the FATHER cares not for pretense and presentation. We need not be wordy or nagging to be heard by HIM, for HE heard our thoughts before we ourselves were thoughts in the minds of our parents, nor they themselves in the minds of our most remote ancestors.

The pattern for the disciples to pray is set with simplicity and succinctness, caught up in one thought alone, the recognition of the LORD above all, which is the whole end goal of All-Prayer in the first place. Unlike most of our prayers, the pattern of prayer for the disciples of Christ is one of surrender

completely unconcerned with personal gain or personal contentment. It is as Christ prayed in Gethsemane, "Not as I will, but as YOU will." (Matthew 26:39) That is the pattern's theme throughout, not that we may gain, but that we may gain regard for the LORD as glorious and give HIM His due honor in every area of our lives.

The LORD is WHO He is whether we like it or not, so it is best we get on board with HIS agenda, lest we find ourselves prey of all the devil's schemes, yet ourselves without a prayer. This is a thing beyond words and beyond time. This prayer is the prayer of the Christian disciple, but it is not limited to us alone, nor to our time, nor to mere speech alone. The pattern is simply the Saviour's summation of true prayer. It is His picture for our minds, hearts, and imaginations of real and lasting joy. And it is, of course, Christ's opinion that is to be considered over our own or one we were given by others.. This is not something to be said, but like All-Prayer, it is something to be lived. Speak it, yes. Repeat it, surely. But act it out in the world. This is the way of prayer and has always been so.

Like salvation itself, prayer did not change with the death and resurrection of our KingMessiah, but it was clarified as justification by faith eternally in the promises of the LORD of Glory. Faith from first to last has always been The Way of saving grace. The sacrifice of Christ in the giving of Himself for the completion of the Father's Will, made it perfectly clear and final that faith is to be grounded in the blood of the Son. .

In like manner, before the revelation of the Messiah and His establishment of the pattern of prayer in the "Our Father", the saints, who prayed to the LORD, did not pray differently from the true form of All-Prayer. They did not commune with the Holy ONE any differently than we ourselves do today, post- crucifixion and post-resurrection. They may not have prayed tO the FATHER in the Name of the Son, yet those who reached for, clung to, and became one with the FATHER Almighty before the prayer pattern was set forth, and prior to our Savior's sacrifice of Himself On the cross, did so as we do now and forever more, by setting apart the FATHER as first with HIS every want before their own. This they did in more than well-intended words. They ensured the LORD the throne of their lives, the number one thought in every action and the number one spot in every corner of their inner being.

The coming of Christ simply provided the clarity for this form of prayer. It was always the LORD above all, but Messiah made it specific, not just the LORD then ourselves, but a special recognition of the reality of the LORD and the reality of ourselves in relation to HIM. The pattern prayer of the disciples recognizes the LORD as the LORD in all things. It does not ask that HE do or give or be anything other than How, What, and Who HE is already, has been, will be, and is. The prayer is honesty and joy. It is

righteousness and humility. It is recognition and submission to the FATHER, as HE is and expecting HIM to do as HE will do. HE is the FATHER, and we do not ask for HIM to change. THE LORD is Holy, and we will glorify His Holy NAME. The LORD is right, and we are either in agreement or else wrong. The LORD is Provider, and our asking makes no difference. The LORD is Guide, and we are lost without HIM. The LORD is Deliverer, and we have only to wait for HIS timing.

We know from Scripture that the LORD delights in our perspectives, that HE delights in our persistence and commands that we be consistent. We know from Scripture that the LORD delights in our praises, that HE delights in our requests, and that HE delights in our thanksgiving. But while HE commands and demands our consistency in calling upon HIM, our practice in doing so is not for HIS benefit but for our own. Prayer may not be about ourselves, but it still remains a thing done for ourselves. It is for us about the LORD. When we ask the FATHER for anything, we are simply recognizing HIM as the Provider, the source of that gift which we seek. When we are thankful for anything, we are simply recognizing the LORD as the Giver, the One Who will not only provide, but the One Who has provided (and subsequently recognizing the LORD as the Gift as well, the true object of our desire and the true cause for all our joy at receiving it).

And when we, as the LORD's creations, offer to HIM both worship and praise in our prayers, we are simply recognizing the LORD as Glorious and Worthy. Understanding all these things, the disciple of Christ can know that it is necessary for him or her to see the LORD in these roles within his or her own life. He or she, once knowing the LORD in this way, can then understand that therein is found the beautiful benefits of praying. The LORD gains nothing if we pray, and HE loses nothing if we entirely ignore HIM. The LORD is complete and perfect and infinite within HIMSELF. He needs nothing, nor can HE be robbed. Therefore, while HE may delight in our prayers, HE does not need our prayers. It is we who believe in HIM, who need at our every hour to reach for HIM, to attach to HIM, to be found in HIM, and to find out, in HIM, who we are.

Thus it is to this end that we ask for anything, not that we are really even asking for an object or an outcome when we make a request of the LORD, but that we are reminding ourselves, at that moment of petitioning, that it is the LORD alone Who provides. Even if we earn it or build it or imagine it, nothing is possible without the LORD of all possibilities, and the LORD Who does the impossible everyday. So also when we offer praise, when we offer worship, and when we offer thanksgiving, we are not giving anything to the LORD, except our acknowledgement and acceptance of HIS position of supremacy and preeminence.

To put this into practice now in life, more than words, is the making of a House of Prayer, the making of a life with the LORD as its center and the pattern for discipleship as its prayer. And it is infusing that life with the joy that comes with perfect prayer and perfect communion.

Chapter 9 - Our Father

"Our FATHER Who art in Heaven." The address for the disciple's prayer pattern is as specific as one can get. We do not call on any old "somebody", not to some random "higher power" or some arbitrary "creative intelligence" nor some cliched "big man upstairs" even. Rather, as our Savior, Christ, has taught us, we are bold to say, "Our FATHER Who art in Heaven ... " Three aspects of the opening line of the pattern prayer are worthy of attention and exposition. The LORD is firstly *the* FATHER. HE is secondly *our* FATHER. And thirdly, HE is our *Heavenly* FATHER. The LORD is a FATHER, but not just any father. HE is *the* FATHER, the First, the Foremost, the One, and the Only. As the FATHER, HE is also LORD, Sovereign, and Authority. Of all reasons we should pray, the first is, because the LORD is the FATHER. HE made everything that is, was, or will be. All things come from HIM and of HIS own has HE given them to us. HE is First, Last, and everything in between the Best, the Greatest, the Superlative of everything good that can be called upon or named. HE started the Creation from nothing and formed all things seen and unseen by the Word of HIS Power, making HIM thus the Designer and Author and Maker. The LORD is wholly other, over, above, and beyond our highest and most creative imaginations. Nothing can ever enter into the mind of a man that could begin to grasp the greatness of this LORD. HE is perfect. HE is infinite. HE is everywhere and every when, all-knowing and all-powerful, without limit, without need, without origin and without end. And the LORD of lords is greater than all, the Sole One not made by HIS Creation. This is the FATHER to Whom we call, the High and Lofty King of the Universe. But there must be more to HIM than this. How could we begin to call upon such an awesome being, One Who is so far above us and so completely perfect, so completely holy and so completely different from us? We can, because the LORD is not only *the* FATHER; HE is also *our* FATHER.

The LORD is not merely the FATHER of all that is in general, but very specifically, specifically our FATHER by faith. When we call to the LORD seeking communion with our Maker, we are not calling upon HIM as the great ancestor, nor to some lofty cosmic giant, uncaring and unseeing. We call upon the FATHER in the role of our FATHER. Our FATHER is not just the One Who made *everything* but the one Who made *each* thing. HE is not just the King of the universe. HE is the High King seeking enthronement in every lowly heart of HIS universe. HE is not just the LORD Who knows everything, can do everything, and can be everywhere and every when. The LORD is also the One Who loves to delight

in us, to teach us to know HIM, to show us how to be like HIM, and to give us hope and mercy in every place HE is given room. The LORD, as the FATHER, prides in our triumphs, and as our FATHER, HE rejoices as we are victorious. The LORD, as the Father, punishes us for sin and for failure, and as our FATHER, HE forgives, corrects, instructs, and shows mercy. Were the LORD only *the* FATHER and not also *our* FATHER, we would not know the love of Messiah nor the FATHER's love for us, because HE would not have sent us HIS only begotten Son.

And in the truest sense, the LORD is not the FATHER of everyone after all. HE is the Maker of everyone, yes, but the FATHER only of those who believe by faith in the Word HE spoke of old and sent in flesh in the last days, He Who is the fullness of the FATHER and HIS very image within the world. After all It was the very death of this Word, the Messiah Himself that satisfied the Maker's wrath against us, HIS creations, and allowed us to see HIM as we do now, more than a stern Master ready to strike down those slaves who step out of line.

Now we can see our LORD as our FATHER, not just our Maker or our Master. Now we have a loving relationship with the Majesty, close, personal, and real. Lastly, the LORD is *the* FATHER, yes, and HE is *our* FATHER, surely, but much, much more so than this, HE is our FATHER *Who art in Heaven*. The LORD is everywhere, yes indeed, but Heaven is another level. Heaven is where the LORD presides. It is the place where HIS glory dwells. Heaven, as compared to the earth and the universe, is the only thing that is truly "real" in the truest sense. All else in juxtaposition to Heaven is but shadow and dream. It is the place of perfection made so perfect solely by the presence of the LORD, without Whom Heaven would be another earth, or perhaps hell itself, even. The LORD, as our Heavenly FATHER, implies that the ONE Who hears our words and the One Who sees our lives is holy, sacred, set apart in "light unapproachable." It is a title of goodness, purity, cleanness, and love to which we address His MAJESTY and with which we charge ourselves with reaching. By saying, "Our FATHER Who art in Heaven," we are attaching ourselves in our hopes and desires onto that level of glory and perfection and righteousness.

We ourselves are not trying to be these good qualities, but we are connecting ourselves to the only One to Whom the words Heaven or Heavenly can be attributed to, and we are accepting that this is fact. Calling the LORD "our Heavenly FATHER" also serves as a further distinction from "our earthly father". For good or ill, we are all born of man and woman. None are without our earthly parentage, nor without the example they set. By being absent or present, abusive or loving, our earthly father has given

us the image of what the word "father" should mean. This is why the "Who art in Heaven" phrase is of such important distinction. If our earthly father set us an example of love and of quality, then we have a minor-scale idea from our own experience as to WHO and WHAT the LORD is and is like. And yet also the opposite is true as well. If our earthly father proves to be harsh and cruel or absent or abusive, then though he has not shown us a miniature image of the LORD on High, yet he has shown us the pure contrast between our earthly father and our Heavenly FATHER. However evil our earthly father could have been and however unloving, our Heavenly FATHER is equally good and loving and infinitely more so.

The Fatherhood of the LORD shows us how to be fathers to our children and what manner of character our earthly fathers ought to have and have had. Therefore, to call upon the LORD as "our Heavenly FATHER" is to believe that HE is the FATHER we have sought for all our lives to call our own. HE is the FATHER we have always wished to imitate in our intentions towards our own children, and HE is the FATHER we always saw in glimpses reflected in our noble earthly fathers and by contrast in our ignoble fathers. We know that the LORD is awesome and terrible, that HE is dangerous and dreadful as is the nature of a father. No good father is safe toward those who are strangers, for he, in being good, will prove a fierce protector of his children. But toward HIS children, we can know that our FATHER in Heaven while not being safe HIMSELF, is in fact our safety and that HE HIMSELF is very good. And when we call upon the LORD, be it in our words or in our actions, when we say HE is our Heavenly FATHER, we are saying we belong to the LORD and thus also to Heaven. We are, when we say this, also saying that Heaven and its LORD belong to us.

Martin Luther said, "[the LORD] is mine, and everything is mine." This is itself a prayer. Not requesting that the LORD give of HIMSELF but claiming by promised offer of old the current birthright of a son. If the LORD is our FATHER, then we are HIS children. If we are HIS children, then Scripture declares that we are "heirs of Elohim and joint-heirs with Messiah." All that is HIS, and all that is HIS is ours by nature of our adoption through the blood of the cross. And so when we come to pray, calling on the NAME of "our Heavenly FATHER", we are laying our claim to all things in Heaven and earth as sons and daughters of HIM Who owns all things. There is, therefore, no asking for anything of necessity, because all things are ours by right. Yet so much does the LORD delight in our asking for things from HIM anyway. Truly the LORD wants us to call HIM our FATHER, our Heavenly FATHER, that HE may give us gifts from above as any good father would do for his child. HE wants us to ask so that we may better understand our relationship with HIM. The LORD wants us to ask things of HIM understanding

the relationship between us, knowing that all is ours by right of adoption in Christ, knowing that the LORD is good and will provide what we need for life and the holiness, and knowing that our own requests are not made for the purpose of receiving material things. As Scripture says in James 4:2-3, "You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

When we ask the LORD for anything, we ask HIM as our FATHER in Heaven. If we do not have any request granted to us, it is because we have not first asked the LORD as a child to a FATHER. If we ask and then not receive, it is because we ask for stuff from the LORD's bottomless goody bag. And we receive nothing because we do not know for what reason we were asking in the first place. Be it small or great, whatever concern prompted us to petition the LORD, it itself must not be our primary concern. To assure that we do not ask amiss but that we request rightly of the LORD, HE must be asked as our FATHER, and HIS pride in us should be our primary concern HIS pride arising out of our desire for HIM and for HIS will. If we do not ask, the LORD can not answer. If the LORD tells us things without being asked a question, even though HIS Word is perfect, it becomes unsolicited advice. HIS words are commands if we do not ask and HIS role is only that of a Master, if we do not rely upon HIM. Yet if we come to the LORD as children asking for gifts and asking for answers, then HIS role is clear as the FATHER, and HIS commands become that which we ourselves have requested.

When we pray the pattern prayer of the disciples of Christ, in word or in deed, in both saying and in doing we are directing it toward, "Our FATHER Who art in Heaven." Thereby we are affirming at the outset of our declaration of faith, that we acknowledge and accept and apply to ourselves the Fatherhood of the LORD. And yet to make this wondrous acclamation of ourselves as subject to HIS Fatherhood, is also to make the parallel assertion of the childhood of ourselves under HIS loving care. These two are both one and the same claim. If the LORD is our FATHER, then we are automatically HIS children. And yet it is not so obvious nor so easy a thought to have, because it is one of true and complete humility and submission. There is also so much more to our spiritual function as the LORD's children than merely to submit. Simply submitting is a slave's duty to his master, yet for us by calling on the LORD in our lives as "Our FATHER Who art in Heaven", we are given the opportunity to decide that it *should* be so rather than to submit that it *must* be so. We are offered the choice not as to what type of child we should be but that we should be a child at all. As Scripture tells us, "unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven." The conditions thus for our inheritance of all things and of

Heaven and of the LORD is to become children or more importantly, to *change* and become like little children.

Since the LORD is the Maker of all, all are HIS creations... yet not all are HIS children. We must become children by adoption and transformation. We must be changed from the adults we thought we were, lost in denial and childish ways of selfishness and sinfulness, and we must instead become young again, found in our FATHER's care and accepting ourselves as sons and daughters with child-like wonder and faith. G.K. Chesterton said in his book, *Orthodoxy*, "We have sinned and grown old, and our FATHER is younger than we are." We are but younglings who know not the way, but we make of ourselves grotesque antique babies, when we claim the years we think we are due. We become a ravaged horror of time when we do not come to the LORD as HE has instructed us to do, pleading, "Our FATHER Who art in Heaven." However, the LORD does give us a choice, to grow up if we wish, to set off on our own | to make our own fortunes in the wide and wild world. As the prodigal son was given the choice, so also are we given the chance to shine with our own light, for once not hiding in our FATHER's shadow. We may, if we choose, throw off the yoke of parental authority, wish our FATHER's ultimate demise (for whatever that's worth), demand of HIM our share of an unearned inheritance and runoff to waste it all away in our own wanton destruction. We may do as we wish, yet the end will always remain unchanged.

The prodigal son in the parable wanted to strike out on his own. He thought he had it all together; he thought he had everything all figured out. And off he went with the wealth that wasn't his to spend. He spent it all until he was spent himself and remembered his youth while lying there in the hog pit. The LORD gives us all the choice, and if we choose to grow up, we will all end up in the gutter with the garbage. Either metaphorically speaking or literally, we will end up in the gutter finding ourselves empty-handed, worn out and all alone.

At that point, some of us will remain in the pig pen and declare that it is paradise. The rest, in our despair, will then remember the loss, will remember from what heights we have fallen and will retrace our steps, along the road our lives have wandered, and been squandered. We prodigals then returning home in humble defeat to the One true reality of the universe, the One and only good thing we ever really had, will come back to our home and cry, "Our FATHER Who art in Heaven".

The LORD in HIS mercy longs to treat us as HIS children, not to belittle us as some would like to believe, but because in reality we are quite young. If only we would call upon HIM as FATHER, HE

will make it all possible. HE longs to give us gifts and to heal our hearts, to protect us and to care for us. HE longs to provide for us, but too often we are too eager to grow up.

All-Prayer begins with simple acceptance of the LORD as "Our FATHER Who art in Heaven," with this pure minor understanding and everything that goes with it. If we can decide to be child-like in our faith toward the LORD, we may begin to pray at last in spirit and in truth and ever without ceasing joy.

Chapter 10 - Hallowed Be THY NAME

The LORD is the FATHER, yes, both our *Heavenly* FATHER and our *personal* FATHER, and we must approach HIM always with a totality of childlike faith and not the typicality of childish folly. To begin to practice All-Prayer, we come before the throne of grace with a humble confidence, not begging, not demanding, not crying when we don't get our way. We come to the LORD full-grown in our bodies yet babies in our faith. We come to the LORD, and we say, "Our FATHER Who art in Heaven ... " taking it all on faith that it is so, then as a child running full speed ahead with no shadow of doubt in the incredible thing we have just said, we proceed on to proclaiming yet another wonder, "Hallowed be Thy NAME."

The LORD is my FATHER, and I am HIS child. This is a fantastic claim enough, and then we cry, "Holy". The LORD is not only *my* FATHER, but HE is also my *holy* FATHER. We do not question it. We do not doubt it. Simply because we are HIS sons and daughters, we know that HE is holy. And when we speak like it is so and live like it is fact, we are truly praying. We do not ask that it become so, nor do we demand it. We just know that it is, that HE is, and thus we claim it: our LORD is holy. HE is sacred and set apart. HE is high and lofty. HE is pure and good, absolute perfection and righteousness, and HE is our FATHER. All this truth in our FATHER and more, for to call HIM Holy is also to say that HE stands alone, the one and only LORD. Purity unimaginable, our LORD and our FATHER, and there is no other beside HIM or similar to HIM in any way. This we pray, again not asking that it become so, but affirming that it is so. Why then do we do it if we already know that it is true? Why must we declare the LORD's holiness when we know it as fact, a-priori, with nothing but faith to give confirmation?

It is in our minds that we know the facts of the LORD's hallowed nature, but the heart is tricky and evil and loves to forget the truth. "The heart wants what the heart wants," as they say, and our hearts long to remember our own greatly exaggerated greatness; the practice of prayer forces the LORD our FATHER to be enthroned therein and for our hearts to forget their jealousy of HIM. Prayer does not make our FATHER in Heaven into a holy Elohim. HE is holy on HIS own. HE is holy by nature of HIMSELF, by nature of WHO HE is. Prayer, however, makes this a fact understandable to us, a fact we allow ourselves to accept as a truth in our own lives. If our own FATHER is holy, how then ought we to

live in the world? We need to be holy also. Prayer may not make the LORD holy, but it does make HIM holy in our lives.

HE is set apart as wholly-other in our hearts and in our dealings. HE is set up as high and grand, as first and foremost in our lives. This does not mean that the LORD should be set aside as a relic of ancient days or set aside for weekend services or set aside for holy days and holy seasons. No. To set apart the LORD most glorious as holy is to set everything else high and low aside as secondary to HIS Majesty. To set apart for ourselves the LORD as holy is to move everything else out of the way, to shove it all over, leaving only room for HIM to be glorious in us.

When we pray that the LORD should be known as holy, we are declaring that we will be holy. If we are people of prayer then it is as much to say we are to be holy people as well, not holy when we go to church or on the holidays, but always. We are told, in Scripture, to pray without ceasing and as such we must be unceasingly holy, continually calling on the LORD and relying on HIS strength moment by moment until all our moments fade and pass over into the grave and on to eternity.

To rightly practice prayer, we must first see that the LORD is our Heavenly FATHER, so that we may understand why we are actually asking for things from HIM. And we must understand also that we are truly asking for the LORD Himself, when we ask for anything. Once we understand the nature of HIM in relation to us, then we must see HIM as truly holy the way HE is naturally related to HIMSELF. The LORD is entirely flawless, unchangeable, and incorruptible. HE is bound only by HIS own Being that which is all holiness. To fully understand all we can about the practice of prayer, we must fully understand all we can about the LORD. And one more thing remains to be addressed. The prayer pattern for Christ's disciples does not only say that the LORD Himself is holy; the pattern says, "Hallowed be Thy NAME."

The very NAME of the LORD is holy beyond anything. We do not pray to some random spirit, nor to any being with a claim to apotheosis. It is a specific Being and very personal Spirit to WHOM we call, a very specific PERSON Whom we can call by NAME. The LORD is not only bound by HIMSELF; HE is bound also by His NAME, a NAME that is the full and perfect definition of Who HE is, a NAME that is as sacred as HE. We may say the LORD is our FATHER, and we may say the LORD is holy, but to rightly pray, to rightly attach ourselves to HIM, to be the House that bears His NAME, we must call upon HIM as the only One with a holy NAME. We must come to understand the nature of that NAME, and we must come to know that NAME itself and to call HIM by it as HE commanded.

Proverbs 30:4 says, "What is His NAME, and the Name of HIS Son? Tell me if you know." We say to our LORD, "Hallowed be Thy NAME," but what is that NAME of Which we speak? The Son said in John 5:43 that He came to us in His FATHER's NAME And in 10:25 that His miracles were done in the FATHER's NAME. He said in 3:18 that the damned are condemned for not believing in the Name of the Son, and in 17:11-12, He prays that the FATHER will protect His disciples by the power of HIS NAME, specifying that the NAME of the FATHER had been given to Him, and that through the given NAME, He had been protecting His disciples all along. Finally, we are told in 20:31 that there is life in that Name given to the Son. And so in that light, we must ask the question of Proverbs 30:4 - "What is His NAME, and the Name of HIS Son? Tell me if you know."

One of the last things the Son commanded us before returning to the FATHER is to baptize all new disciples in the NAME as is written in Matt 28:19. What, then, is that NAME? We most often call the CREATOR "the LORD" and indeed HE is, but this is always a designation, not a NAME. It is comparable to calling a man, "mister" or "sir". It is true but an abstract title and no more, far from the closeness and personal intimacy desired by our Heavenly FATHER.

Proverbs 18:10 says, "The NAME of [the LORD] is a strong tower. The righteous run into It and are safe." Joel 2:32 says, "Everyone who calls on the NAME of [the LORD] will be saved." II Chron. 7:14 says, " ... if MY people, *who are called by My NAME*, will humble themselves and pray ... then will I hear from Heaven..." These are but a few of the literally hundreds of references throughout Scripture telling us of the might of this Great NAME.

The Bible tells us that not only is the NAME of the LORD holy, but it is also to be feared, declared, known, exalted, called upon, praised, stood in awe of, and proclaimed in all the earth. The Book says of the NAME that it is both from of old and yet enduring forever, that it is exalted above all things in existence and is itself very jealous. The NAME of the LORD is our protection, help, guide, strength, forgiveness, deliverance, joy, and ought to be the desire of our hearts. And so now of all that the Scriptures say of it, we must ask again, "What is this NAME?"

The NAME of the LORD is called the Tetragrammaton. This is not the NAME itself, but the name of the NAME (yes, that is how precious HIS appellation is, that It Itself has ITS own name). The word Tetragrammaton simply means, "the Four LETTERS", and it is the name of the NAME of the LORD, because HIS true NAME is composed of only Four LETTERS which are, in Hebrew, "Yod Heh Waw Heh." In English, we would write that out as "YHWH".

This is the NAME of the LORD as it was written in ancient times in the Scriptures, and it is pronounced in our day, (as closely as can be from the original), as YAHWEH. Often the Tetragrammaton has been rendered in modern times as "Jehovah," but this is an erroneous hybrid created from a combining of the word Adonai, meaning, "my LORD," with the four sacred LETTERS. The resulting ghost word, the bastardized formation was "Iahowah" and "Iehowah" until time and technical changes evolved the word to "Jahovah" and eventually, "Jehovah" with the invention of the "J" sound in 1565 and the hardening of the "V". The NAME of our LORD and CREATOR of us and all the universe is YAHWEH, and there is no other. We have, over time, given many names and titles to HIM, but HE has ever only given us one single NAME for us to call HIM. And it is only by that NAME that HE calls HIMSELF. We call HIM El, Eloah, Elohim, El Shaddai, El Tsidkenu, El Shalom, El Nissi, El Roy, El Olam, El Elion, El Shamma, El Yireh, and El Sabaoth, but all of these are our ideas to call HIM, titles and designations of our own human designing. But to Moses HE declared HIMSELF emphatically when HE said in Exodus 3:15, "Say to the children of Israel, 'YAHWEH, the Mighty One of your fathers, the the Mighty One of Abraham, the Mighty One of Isaac, and the Mighty One of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is MY NAME forever, and this is MY memorial; the NAME by which I am to be remembered, from generation to generation, for all generations.'

And so if the NAME of the Father is YAHWEH, and the Father gave the NAME to HIS Son, then what is the Son's Name? We would be straightaway tempted to say it is "Jesus", because we were raised in that Name, but the Son was not English. Yet the Name "Jesus" is an English name) no older than the 16th century AD. "Jesus" is transliterated from the Latin "Iesus" which itself was brought over from the Greek word "Iesous," the epithet for the Son found in the Greek New Testament. But "Jesus" being Hebrew, however, why would He have a Greek name, especially in a culture built by the Maccabean rebellion and hating all things of Hellenism?

He would not, and we know that the Name of Iesous is a transliteration of the actual Name of the Son, Yahshua, which literally means, "YAHWEH is Salvation". It was superstition and tradition that led to the suppression of the sacred NAME and HIS ultimately being ruled as ineffable. The LORD Himself, however, never made this ruling but only foolish men afraid of taking the Divine NAME in vain or otherwise trying to control the LORD by using HIS NAME. Such folly led to the use of substitute titles to be read in place of the hallowed NAME. In the "Old Testament" they would read "Adonai" meaning "my LORD" and in the "New Testament", "Kurios" also "my LORD", each being an improper replacement and not a translation of the Tetragrammaton itself, nor even a transliteration for that matter. And

therefore, this silly superstition was carried over into English and the word "LORD" written over and in place of where should rightly be read YAHWEH, as it is written some 6,823 times throughout the Bible. Minor logic, however, would have us ask, "If this NAME is so unspeakable, why would the FATHER give it to HIS children in the first place when HE could have simply kept it to HIMSELF? Secondly, why would HE tell the one person HE gave His NAME to to then go speak it to an entire nation? And lastly, if the NAME is so unspeakable, why does the LORD constantly use it in Scripture to refer to HIMSELF, or why does every Biblical person holy or otherwise call HIM by this NAME, and why is there no shadow of a commandment in the Book, nor even the smallest hint of an order not to vocalized the Tetragrammaton?

On the contrary, in modern times, names are most often no more than a series of sounds attributed to a person or a thing to distinguish it from other persons or other things, but in ages past a name was far more significant. Names were powerful and ruled a person's life. They told people who they were, and who they are, and who they would become. A name was used to inspire a person to greatness, to cause others to quake in fear or to bow in awe. Names said where people came from, who their people were, and to what economic class they belonged. The full essence of almost anyone could be grasped in a name, and names were guarded, shared with those most trusted and those most loved.

The LORD Almighty gifted the Tetragrammaton, YHWH, pronounced as YAHWEH, and meaning Existence or Presence, and commanded that it be spoken. So why is it important for us to know this? And what does it mean for us in regards to prayer? The church as a general rule seldom uses the NAME of the LORD except by indirectly saying " ... in the NAME of the LORD ... " and other innuendos. What possible use could be gleaned from us, HIS worshipers, knowing and understanding HIS NAME, especially since the church at large and down throughout the ages has failed, by and large, to see the benefits? The answer to this question is the same as the answer to another, one most commonly asked question of all mankind and of all time: "Why am I here?" In fact, the LORD's Holy NAME can be viewed in a way to be the answer to all questions whether simple or profound. Why "anything"? Because I AM.

The NAME of the LORD is YHWH, YAHWEH, meaning I AM THAT I AM, and HIS NAME is the only name that is holy. There are many names by which we believers over the centuries have attributed to our CREATOR, but only one NAME which HE has attributed to HIMSELF, and that NAME is the Tetragrammaton. This NAME is holy because it is the defining description (as far as can be spoken in the physical world) of WHO HE is, not merely another way of referring to HIM to differentiate HIM from other beings and other lesser lords.

YHWH, this is the Hallowed NAME, the very identity of our FATHER defined succinctly by HIM for us without flare, without rambling, and without justification. All by itself, the NAME tells us the attributes of the LORD, expounding upon both WHO HE is and WHO HE is not. A name in general tells us as much about ourselves and the world around us as it does of the thing that bears it, because it both binds like things and beings together, as well as dividing unlike things and beings together apart from itself. The NAME of the LORD is no different in this respect. The NAME is holy, and the holy shall cling to it in prayer. Those that are not holy shall shun it, and thus the LORD Who Names Himself, YHWH.

We wonder where we came from. We wonder why we're here. But we have only to know and understand the NAME of names to know the answers to these and all other questions of being and existence and purpose. These questions and all questions must be answered before we can pray rightly, because the House of Prayer must bear the NAME, YHWH; and this NAME must define that House and the children of the LORD who compose it as much as it does our FATHER Who art in Heaven.

As Scripture says in Isaiah 56:7, "MY House shall be called a House of Prayer." And it also says, "Just as HE Who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do." Bearing the NAME of the LORD makes us a House of Prayer and requires our self-representation to be one reflecting the holiness of that NAME and of our FATHER. We must define ourselves by that NAME, just as we also define the LORD by it. We must be defined by its holiness, by its depth, by its richness, by its fullness. We must be defined by the life of the NAME of the FATHER. The NAME of FATHER LORD must be defined by our character and conduct, by our ends and by our means, by how we live and by how we die.

It is often said by both believers and non-believers alike that all things have a beginning and all things have an end. But this is not the truth. It ought to be said, instead, that everything *that does have a beginning* does also have an end. We disciples of Christ have our beginning and our end in FATHER Himself, and the parameters of this life are His Holy NAME. We live and die by it and in it, and this is our prayer and eternal life. We begin and end in THE LORD, because HE alone is without beginning or ending, the only Infinite. Scripture says in John 17:3, "This is eternal life, that they know YOU, the only true Mighty One, and Yahshua Messiah Whom YOU have sent." The knowledge of this Mighty One is found in the NAME, YAHWEH, the only source of life, the only source of light, the only source of truth, and the only source of being, from which and from WHOM all else, all other life, light, truth, and being proceed.

That source, of course, is the Uncaused Cause of all that is, the ONE and only LORD of the Hallowed NAME. When the FATHER gave His NAME to HIS servant Moses, HE spoke the greatest statement ever proclaimed in the hearing of human ears, one simple phrase that encapsulates all of HIS Being. The LORD summed up for us the entirety of HIS existence in a single NAME and did not feel the need to justify HIMSELF. Without explanation HE Named HIMSELF for us, and HE did so without excuse as well. The FATHER reveals HIMSELF as “something” unfathomable within the minds of men, a thing that is really not anything at all, the one thing unlike anything else, a Being without beginning, beyond space, time, and even comprehension. By giving us the NAME, YAHWEH, He is telling us time-bound-mortals that HE of all things just is. HE simply exists, and it is from this declaration that we ourselves can declare our own existence and define our own being. It is from this facet of the Hallowed NAME that we find the answer to the question of, “Why am I here?”

Hearing this awesome proclamation of YAHWEH, we can answer “Why do I exist?” but also, “How did I come to be?” and all other inquiries we may have had in life. The LORD says, “I AM THAT I AM”, and indeed, HE is WHO HE is and will be WHO HE will be. And thus we are also. Because HE is, we are. We were not when HE was. We are now, because HE is. And we will yet be again, after we are not, because HE will still be. This is the awesome understanding of the essence of our FATHER revealed to us in that NAME He gave, the understanding we must first possess to be able then to practice prayer in its fullness. The FATHER just is, and Hallowed be the NAME that says so.

We pray, because the LORD is our FATHER, and we pray, because HE is heavenly. We pray also, because HE is holy, and we pray, because HE is WHO HE is and always was and always will be. We pray to the LORD because HE is, and because HE is unending. We who are not HIM must receive our life from HIM, our life and all our being. We must all have an ending since only One is without end: I AM THAT I AM does not end. What is being? What is existence? The LORD is Being. THE LORD is Existence. And yet we ourselves have a being. Is this then a fallacy, a contradiction of terminology? No. Understanding the LORD in order to pray is understanding that we ourselves are beings, but only because we borrow or rather are lent life and being from HIM Who alone is Life and Being. A being therefore ends while Being HIMSELF is without end.

For this reason, one who questions, “Where did I come from?”, “Why am I here?” or the worst of all, “Who made the LORD?”, is a person unable to pray, for he is a “double-minded man unstable in all his ways.” Understanding the nature of the LORD revealed within HIS Hallowed NAME keeps us from questioning HIS Nature (or Supernature) and coming before HIM as doubters. The LORD does

not wish for us never to inquire or to seek knowledge from HIS Mind, but HE will not delight in being questioned on HIS Nature or HIS Ways, nor will HE respond with joy to the dismissal of HIS Word. As Scripture says, "When he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts ... should not expect to receive anything from the LORD." How could the LORD have a beginning? This would defy the basics of logical thought. Were the LORD to have a source for HIS own existence, then that source would be the LORD and not the LORD Himself. The doubter would then require the knowledge of that LORD's origin and so on and so forth, ad infinitum.

To eliminate perpetual regression and to be able to say to the FATHER, "Hallowed be Thy NAME," we must be able, at the inception of our prayer, to agree with HIM that HE spoke truthfully when HE gave us the Tetragrammaton. When HE said, I AM THAT I AM, He said that HE was neither caused nor self-caused. And how can one be made WHO has no cause, no origin, no beginning of any kind and WHO will be forever without end. THE LORD is now as HE once was. HE was now as HE once is. HE will be then what HE used to be. And HE used to be what HE will one day be in the future. All time-bound statements are without meaning in reference to the LORD, because HE is beyond time. The LORD exists in what C.S. Lewis referred to as, "the Unbounded Now." The LORD, therefore, residing in eternity, is close to and present within all times, and for HIM all times are both soon and now. I AM THAT I AM. The LORD is just, and the LORD just is.

From a human standpoint, we view the world and the universe and the creation we inhabit ... and then we see the LORD. Yet this way is not prayer. We are so consumed by our own temporary perspective that we fail so often to remember the FATHER is unlike us and free from the constraints of us finite creatures. And in our ineptitude, we try to bring HIM down to our level where we remake HIM in our image. Then we wonder why we have a hard time praying. We make for ourselves such a tiny deity and then find ourselves in awe when HE's too small to take care of us. We try to make HIM manageable, to cram the LORD of glory into a cereal box that we may contain HIM and control HIM and keep HIM ever on-hand. Yet we find HIM powerless to come to our aid when we find ourselves in dire straits. We often find it far easier to limit the LORD than it is to obey HIS commands. It is far easier to pretend HE is on our level than it is to simply look up. And therefore we far too often find ourselves with our own personal pocket-sized idol who can not hear our prayers through the fabric of our pants.

We go to any length to avoid recognizing this one simple truth, "Hallowed be Thy NAME, " and to do it is to understand the nature and magnitude and magnificence of the LORD. To acknowledge that indeed This NAME is holy, is to cease striving for control over HIM, to cease limiting HIM and to cease

trying to understand HIM. Understanding the NAME must be enough, and it is the beginning of prayer. If we understand the NAME of YAHWEH, we will not long be ignorant of HIS nature. And of course, since to know HIM is to be like HIM, we will truly begin not only to accept the NAME of the LORD as holy, but we will be able to pray in that NAME. What does it mean to pray in the NAME of YAHWEH?

What would it be to pray to the FATHER in the NAME of the Son, to YAHWEH in the Name of Yahshua? Another way of saying it would be to say that we are praying the way the LORD Himself would pray. Or still put another way, we are to pray as if we wanted exactly the same thing as HE. HIS and our interests are both meant to be sacred and synonymous. The NAME of the LORD is not only holy; it is also pure power, yet power alone to those who recognize It as holy. To pray in that NAME is to come to the LORD in HIS own holiness and in HIS own power and bringing both aspects of the NAME back into ourselves and back into our own lives. The power of the NAME of the LORD serves to defend those who belong to it as well, and this power is again accessed by faith in the LORD. Claiming the Hallowed NAME, claims the affiliation of ourselves with all that the LORD is and will thus protect the one who trusts therein, aligning himself with that association. By claiming the NAME of the LORD over one's life, a person can defend against temptation; he can ward off fear and rage; he can cast off doubt and depression. and contrary to his feelings, in the NAME of the LORD, he can forgive.

Not by magically speaking the Tetragrammaton like an incantation can one ward away evil and free himself. No. That would be the opposite of declaring this NAME as holy. To keep HIS NAME as sacrosanct and receive power from on High, the believer must remember all that the NAME of the LORD means and accept it as true and the reality of his own life. As our Savior has said in John 14:17, "If you ask anything in My Name, I will give it." This is a commitment of total surrender, even of the very thing being requested, because we must only want what our LORD wants even if it ends up being the opposite of what we came for. And for this surrender, a massive quantity of faith is required. For this kind of power we require faith as monstrous as a mustard seed with which Scripture says we can move mountains if we must. The common thought is that this is a small amount of faith, yet how often do we see the mountains torn up and tossed into the crashing waves. If faith the size of a mustard seed can do such great wonders, then the average believer's faith must be atomic in size.

The power that is found in the NAME of the LORD comes from the holiness therein, and we access that power through faith. Faith is not the power of the LORD nor the power of His NAME, but it is the power the LORD has given to HIS children to attach ourselves to HIM and to bind ourselves to HIS mighty NAME. Faith is power granted by the LORD to be used by us, but it is we who must wield it. There is no

magic spell, nothing that will move the MAKER to obedience to us. HE is no genii. We can not keep HIM in a lamp and rub it every time we need a helping hand or a leg up. Neither is this the function of the LORD's NAME. HIS True NAME, which HE gave to Moses who passed it on to us today, does not compel HIM to do anything for us. The only significant use to which Its power can be put is in compelling us to do everything for HIM and the way HE would desire, and as HE Himself would do it. The NAME of the LORD is grasped, used, and lived by faith, making prayer the ceaseless process of living as the LORD would, were HE made man, and as HE did when HE became one. It is living every moment as Christ-like as we can be.

Holding the LORD's NAME as truly holy means putting it over all our possessions, using it to label all our actions, and working it into every fiber of our being, until we no longer can be called by our own titles or remember what they were, but only are seen and known by the NAME above all other names. And thus we will show the power of that NAME in our lives unto all the world. In all we do, let it be said and let it be true: "HIS NAME is YAHWEH, and Hallowed be Thy NAME."

Chapter 11 - Thy Kingdom Come

Once we recognize the LORD as "Our FATHER Who art in Heaven," and have then come to understand that HE alone is the LORD of the Hallowed NAME, we begin to approach the throne of grace and to attach ourselves to the LORD in prayer. Seeing HIM as HE truly is, as so far above us and so holy yet loving, caring, and nearby, we may then be ready to reach for the LORD and not for higher versions of ourselves and our own wants and needs. Prayer must always be the request, nay, the imperative affirmation that Christ made in Gethsemane in Matthew 26:39, "Not as I will, but as YOU will." Asking and pleading, these are wishes and wants from our own hearts intended to satisfy our own personal comforts. But they are not aspects of All-Prayer, because All-Prayer is wrapped up entirely in doing the will of the Almighty alone over and above our own. Prayer brings the life of Messiah into the life of a believer. It sets the mind of the disciple upon the higher things of Heaven, so that the concerns of the Majesty become the concerns of the man who calls upon HIM. Prayer is not just talking to the LORD but calling out to HIM, crying out for HIS presence, crying out from the summits, "THY Kingdom come."

Once we understand what the Most High meant when HE said I AM THAT I AM, we will have no problem demanding of ourselves the downfall of our little beach-front castles and the rising of HIS Kingdom over all we've built for ourselves amid the sand. If the LORD is our Heavenly Father and if His NAME is holy, then HE is also the only ONE with rightful claim to the Throne of the Universe. And HE has the right to not only this, but also the right to all thrones, dominions, and powers of all dimensions, seen and unseen. We begin to practice prayer here when we declare first and foremost that the LORD should be sovereign and should have HIS Way in *all* things by right of WHO HE is.

Prayer, by its very nature, is contrary to nature itself. Prayer itself demands to have the very opposite of what the person praying actually desires. And it does this until such a time as the believer's wants turn against the self to resemble those of the prayer that opposed him. The pattern prayer for Christ's disciples says, "THY Kingdom come, THY will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." *THY* Kingdom. Not *my* kingdom. *Thy* will. Not *my* will. "Thy" opposes "my" until no "my" remains. Prayer is a love for the LORD, a knowledge of HIM and an understanding of HIS nature so strong as to bring an end to the self-will we have always known and loved...but never understood. Prayer is the end of us and the beginning of the Kingdom of the LORD in our hearts.

So then what is this Kingdom? “Jesus” preached in Scripture, “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” Then He taught us to pray for its approach. He taught us to pray for the will of the LORD to be done as well, and He preached the same throughout all Scripture. So then what is this Will? Both the Kingdom of the LORD and the will of the LORD have been debated and puzzled over ever since the Messiah first spoke of them and before. All manner of extremes have arisen, from the great hereafter being the Kingdom and perfection being the LORD’s will to the earth being the Kingdom of the LORD and the LORD’s will being whatever we want at the time. Still others have decided to disregard the will of the LORD and HIS Kingdom in favor of a Heavenly Republic where all wills are heard and the majority is the Majesty. Yet thus far all attempts to comprehend the Kingdom and Will of the Most High have failed to grasp the entirety of its importance and its magnitude. The closest we can find in Church history is a single aspect of the wildly wicked crusades of the Middle Ages, which were heinous and horrifying, but for this one thought. Their single redeeming aspect was in their ultimate goal. There was a noble end to the crusading spirit, an honorable purpose inappropriately pursued. The aim was in the right direction, just not high enough as is evidenced by how far it fell short. The goal of the crusades was the capture and possession of the Holy Land and its defense against those deemed to be infidels. For the people of that age, it was the Holy Land of Zion that was seen as the Kingdom of Heaven. And in a way they were not wrong to believe it, but only in their course of action to acquire it. Jerusalem, the City of THE LORD, the Mountain of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD, these are the Kingdom of Heaven, but what is the Temple, the City, or the Mountain? What is Jerusalem?

The crusaders of old pillaged and burned, raped and murdered all under the banner of a blood-red cross and all on the way to the City of Peace. They cried, “The LORD wills it”, as they did what they pleased on the road to creating the man-made Kingdom of Heaven. That, however, is neither the Kingdom of Heaven nor the will of the LORD. Those people did not know the LORD though they called on HIM to justify their evil deeds, to approve of their offering like Cain. They did not bear Christ’s cross in their hearts though they carried His sigil into battle on their chests. They valued the Temple. They valued the City. They valued the Mountain. They valued the relics and the holy land, but they forsook the Kingdom of Heaven in pursuit of it. They did not realize that they themselves were meant to be the Temple, the City, and the Mountain of the Most High. In their zeal for their own idea about the LORD and HIS Kingdom, they cut down and destroyed the very thing they came to save: the people, themselves.

Scripture says in Isaiah 24:23, “YAHWEH Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders gloriously.” The Scripture says that praise awaits the LORD in Zion. The Word of

the LORD declares that HE Himself has set HIS foundation upon the Holy Mountain. And so we are right to think of Jerusalem as the Kingdom of Heaven in a way, along with the city, the mountain and the Temple that once stood there. But it is not the physical geography of which we speak, nor the architecture. Wood and stone are of little importance. The LORD's delight is blood and bone and soul. Therefore, we are right to think of Jerusalem as the Kingdom of Heaven, and we are right to think of ourselves as Jerusalem. As we are told in Scripture, "[our bodies are] the Temple of the Holy Spirit Who resides within [us]," and as such, we ourselves are found to be Jerusalem (in a manner of speaking) and so also the land where the Kingdom of the LORD will be built.

We the people, are the Temple. We are the City of Peace. We are the Mountain of Zion. We are the Holy Land. Yet this too is not the entirety of the LORD's glorious Kingdom. Scripture reveals a number of explanations for what the Kingdom of Heaven is and ought to be. We are the Temple and the Holy Land, only if we are holy, and we are the Kingdom of Heaven, only because we are occupied, inhabited, in-dwelled, and governed by the King of Heaven Himself. When the Messiah began His earthly ministry saying in Matthew 4:17, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is near," He was saying in that moment not that we were the Kingdom but rather that He Himself is the Kingdom. He was saying that He is the Kingdom and that we who repent can inherit this Kingdom, becoming a part of it.

The Kingdom of Heaven is also Heaven itself. It is eternity hereafter in the presence of the LORD. The Kingdom is the New Jerusalem to proceed after the end of the world and the judgment to come. And the Kingdom of Heaven is also an aspect of the physical world, one peculiar to the earth and its ways: namely those who believe by faith in the shed blood of the Savior. We as collective disciples of Christ are not merely individual temples, but together become the Holy House that bears His NAME. The entire fellowship is one House of Prayer and one Kingdom of the Most High. Likewise, everything this Kingdom touches becomes incorporated as well, as a province of that Kingdom.

This does not indicate that believers should settle down and make a home upon the earth, nor does it mean that we should strike out against the world to make an empire across the globe. No, rather it simply means that we must be golden in our quality as we move upon the earth, both individually and collectively as the assembly, so that everything encountered and everything we touch becomes better for the contact. If this is the Kingdom of Heaven, what then is the will of the LORD? It is most certainly not whatever we say it is. It is definitely not our own will loosely disguised as HIS, and it will never become so, no matter what happens.

The will of the LORD is three things. Firstly, it is Scripture. It is what the LORD has told us to do, what HE has told us we are, and what HE has told us about HIMSELF. Secondly, it is prophecy. It is what HE has told us will take place, whether it is what HE wants or not, the things that just happen from day to day, both good and bad alike. And thirdly, the will of the LORD is the very things that HE wishes to occur.

Looking at it another way, however, the will of the LORD can also be understood to be two things: HIS desired will and HIS decreed will. The desired will of the LORD can be disobeyed and most often it is. But the decreed will of the LORD is emphatic and absolute. It can neither be altered nor stopped. And both of these, the desired will and decreed will, are what we need to get behind and support, because in the end there will be only one, and we will have no more freedom of choice. "In the end there will be only two kinds of people," as C.S. Lewis put it in *The Great Divorce*, "those who say to the LORD, 'THY will be done,' and those to whom the LORD says, 'Thy will be done.'" So the pattern prayer for Christ's disciples tells us to call for HIS Kingdom to come and HIS will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven. What does this require of us, then? How do we put this into practice? Are we seeking self-promotion since we ourselves are the Kingdom of the LORD? No. We are the Temple, but a temple is ever only as useful or as powerful as the one to whom it is dedicated in name and in service, the one who inhabits its halls. If not ourselves, then are we to promote the Church at large and her spread across the globe by conversion or by conquest? No again. The assembly is only as useful or as powerful as the LORD whom she serves and whose she is. No. There is only one thing to promote. As it is written in Psalm 115:1, "Not to us, oh YAHWEH, not to us, but to Your NAME be the glory because of Your love and because of Your faithfulness."

To pray that the Kingdom of the LORD come forth upon the earth as in Heaven and for HIS will to be done in the world as it is in the world beyond, we are praying quite emphatically for our own destruction. We are praying that we should decrease so that HE may increase. We are again not really asking that it happen so much as we are declaring our desire that it should be so. And in the knowledge that Christ will be all in all, and in the knowledge that in the end, the LORD's way will be the only winning choice, we pray now that HIS Kingdom come and HIS will be done as an act of picking sides. To pray for the advancement of the LORD's Kingdom and will is an act of declaring our allegiance to that Kingdom and our submission to that will, even if we do not find ourselves walking ever in perfect obedience to both. It might be a promise based upon genuine love for the Lord "Jesus" or it might be an act of desperation to save ourselves from the destruction yet to come, so that we don't find ourselves the

masters of ashes left out in the rainstorm. Either way, the cry for the LORD's Kingdom and will is one of self-abandonment and of clinging to the Most High like HE is the only hope ... as indeed HE is.

Wishing for the Kingdom of the LORD and for HIS will to come to earth and be done here is much more than a desire of the heart. It is a declaration of intention. Practicing prayer calls for action in this matter; as it does also in all others. If we want the Kingdom of THE LORD to reign on earth, as it is in Heaven, then we must be willing to be that Kingdom. If we want the will of its Sovereign to be done on earth the way it is unquestioningly done in the Heavens, then we ourselves must live our lives doing as the LORD will. As it has been said, "Become the change you wish to see in the world," or as the Reverend Peter Marshall so poignantly put it when praying before Congress, "A different world cannot be built by indifferent people." We must be that thing we want to see. If we want to change the world, then we are the ones that first must change. We are not being naive either in saying that we will change the world. We are not out to alter it. This is not our goal, though it ought to be one inevitable outcome thereof. Our goal, as always, is the LORD Himself. We have set out to do and to make and to be the Kingdom of the Most High on earth, so that we may please HIS Majesty, and so that our FATHER in Heaven may be proud of us, HIS children, walking in the truth. And with such power moving in us, how could we be without effect upon our surroundings? Being the Kingdom of the LORD and doing HIS will does not allow us to conquer the world by force. We are not here to take by storm, like crusaders of old, those things which are not our possession. And yet we know that the LORD has declared us, HIS children, to be heirs of all things in His Son. As heirs, however, we are given all things as an inheritance for all eternity, and heirs don't take by strength of arms what is theirs by right of legacy. Yet being the Kingdom of the LORD and doing HIS will on earth does not require that we convert the whole world, either. We are not meant to try to save everyone, and we would not be able to if we did try. Besides, as Scripture tells us, we know that the LORD alone can move the heart, thereby HE alone can convert and conquer, destroy, or save, but it is not the place of HIS children to do the same.

We, as the LORD's children, are to change the world. We are to make it better, but not the entire globe. Being the Kingdom of the LORD is allowing the LORD to change us first into a house that bears His NAME. And once HE can have joy and pride in us, then we can become a house of prayer. Prayer is action, not just words, and it is thus by prayer that we change the world and make it better. Again, we aren't trying to alter the whole planet, but what we are doing is being the LORD's Kingdom wherever we are, and wherever we find ourselves that place will be better off for the presence of the LORD's Kingdom in us. This is the nature of the Kingdom and will for which we pray!! Everything it

touches turns to gold. Everyone who encounters the Kingdom of the LORD upon the earth will be forever improved and can not help but recognize the presence of the LORD, which they encounter within us. It's not a physical thing, the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a Kingdom of conscience and a Kingdom of hearts. It is the hidden life of Christ within all His people breathing hope upon all the rest of mankind. It is secret, but it is not a secret. It is as Christ has taught us, a Kingdom within, becoming visible only in and through our actions. It is like the wind in a way, present yet unseen, but though unseen, still affecting dramatically everything it touches and moving all things in its path. That is the meaning behind (Christ's declaration that "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." It is present here and now, and it is present within our presentations of Christ.

The Kingdom is not so much a thing as it is a motion, at hand, in hand, and on hand. The Kingdom of the LORD, and the will of the LORD are representations of the true religion, demonstrations of right deeds, from a right heart, done in the right way, at the right time, and for the right reasons. The will of the LORD and HIS Kingdom are shown to the world by the love of the people who claim it, for love is the foundation of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the cornerstone of the FATHER's will, as it is the strength and power of both. Therefore if we are to pray in truth, then love must be our ends and means. We must want what the LORD wants and not just want to want it.

Prayer places the responsibility on us, to declare the Kingdom of Heaven with the span of our years on earth. Prayer leaves it to us to ensure the coming of HIS Kingdom in the world, and prayer leaves it to us to ensure that HIS will is done in the world as well. This does not make us necessary or even useful to the Most High, since HE still needs nothing, yet it does afford us the wondrous opportunity to do what is necessary and to be of use. Whether we wish it or not, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and it will be established on this planet in due time, whether we like it or not. Likewise, the will of the LORD is as unstoppable. The choice is given to us by the Messiah to repent our stubbornness before the Kingdom comes and to repent it now until it is here. In our personal lives and in our public lives, when we pray, we acknowledge that the LORD is sovereign in Heaven, that HIS Kingdom is unstoppable and HIS will unhindered, and we are demanding that it be so in all the world. For others, we can not make it so, but we can make it a reality in our own lives. We pray that the Kingdom of the LORD comes about and HIS will be done in our heads, hearts, and hands. We are asking that the LORD's will be done, and HIS Kingdom come to pass in our minds and understanding, the way that it does in the Above.. We ask that this be true also of our will and our emotions, our core values and basic beliefs just

like it is true in heaven. And we do not actually *ask*, but we make it so for every deed we do that it would become the Kingdom and will of our FATHER Above.

The practice of prayer is the process of bringing Heaven to earth. It is living Heaven in the here and now. It is the Life of the LORD, the life in-dwelt by HIM and empowered by HIM to live the holy in an unholy world. It is the power to improve everyone we encounter and everything we touch, when we pray, "THY Kingdom come, THY will be done on earth as it is in Heaven". We are praying but we are not asking. We are deciding, and we are declaring when we pray. But we neither ask nor demand. We are aligning our lives with this fact, and we are requiring that fact to become the personal reality for our actions.

The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand and our FATHER has given us the opportunity to have a hand in its approach and advancement. Therefore, we are shouting it from the mountains and in every nation we make, "Not as I will but as YOU will," and for all we think, say, and do, "THY Kingdom come, THY will be done ... "

Chapter 12 - Give Us This Day

This portion of the disciples' prayer pattern, while being the most commonly practiced portion, is by far the most wildly misunderstood. Firstly, it is mistaken by the most well-meaning of people as being All-Prayer itself. Secondly, it is thought to be the part of the prayer pattern that begins to be concerned with us rather than the LORD. And thirdly, this part appears to most people to be making a request. All three of these assumptions are to one degree or another dead wrong, and form prayer errors that involve surface appearance rather than the reality of the depth beneath the simple statement, "Give us this day our daily bread."

When we truly trust in YAHWEH as "our FATHER", really believe HE is Heavenly, truly place our complete faith in His Hallowed NAME, and desire and demand the rising of HIS Kingdom on earth coupled with the completion of HIS will here and now, then prayer for us changes as we ourselves do also. Before, when we could not understand our LORD, we used to pray with an attitude of entitlement rather than one of gratitude. We came to the FATHER not to find out who we are in HIS Eyes nor to attach ourselves to HIM to learn from HIS infinite Wisdom, but we came to HIM to gain things for our pleasure and our own glorification. We came to the LORD of Glory without legitimate concerns as well as fears and woes, hurts and pains, etc., yet we did not seek the KING of Creation in this, but only our own comfort. We came to the FATHER so we could feel better, so that we could trust the LORD as the great Problem-Solver. But this was all we knew how to do in prayer. Knowing the LORD now, however, we do not approach HIM to gain stuff. We come to HIM to gain HIM, even when we come "asking" for things for ourselves.

Knowing the LORD, we understand that All-Prayer is all about HIM. It is always about HIM, and it is only about HIM. The LORD may not gain anything by our prayers, and we very well may gain everything; but there is no "us" in prayer, no "I" or "me" or "we". We and our desires are not the purpose of reaching for our FATHER. Instead, each of our personal desires is a means to an end, that end being communion with HIS Majesty. Prayer is so much more than just asking for blessings and pleasures from our LORD. Yet such desires are not without purpose as they do end up serving our pursuit of HIM by providing initiative and a primary reason to call out.. The desire for comfort and blessing also provides an avenue of approach. Our wants and needs open up the possibility for the FATHER to be not a Problem-Solver for us but to be our Provider, the difference being in our intentions

and our angle of approach. If we come to the LORD to gain temporal treasures, we treat HIM as a Problem-Solver, but if we come to HIM for HIS own sake, not seeking this or that material object or care, then we treat the LORD instead as Sovereign Provider.

This approach to the FATHER is real prayer. The LORD for the LORD's sake, not HIM for ours. We may ask things of HIM. This is not wrong, and it is commanded of us in Scripture. And our temporal material desires may very well be the things that prompt our asking. According to the pattern of prayer for us, we do not need to ask for anything in order for the LORD to give. If we trust that the LORD is our FATHER, then we ought to trust HIM to provide for us, HIS children, as the Best FATHER would. If we ask anything of HIM according to HIS will, HE says in HIS Word that HE will give it. But because we know that the LORD is our FATHER, we know HE will provide without our need of asking but simply for our own good and HIS own glory in caring for us, whom HE loves.

Throughout the entire prayer pattern, the Messiah never gives us one single question to ask nor request to make. Before He laid down the pattern, He began by acknowledging first and foremost that everything we could ever ask or need in life is known already to the LORD. So we do not need to ask for things in order to get them. The pattern does not say, "Please give us our daily bread?" Nor does it say, "May we have daily bread?" as if the Most High didn't know our health and well-being is at stake every day. Instead, the pattern says very succinctly, "Give us this day our daily bread." It does not demand or beg or make a bargain or strike a deal. It simply says, "Give", with all else unsaid and understood. If we know that the LORD knows our needs and cares for our well-being, why then do we mention anything. Why bother telling HIM to provide? We do so to remember where all things come from. We do so to maintain the attitude of gratitude, and we do so, because this again is prayer – attaching ourselves onto our LORD in yet another area of our lives.

This imperative gives the Almighty the opportunity to be relied upon, and it gives us the opportunity to be dependent upon His goodness. We are not asking the LORD to provide for us when we say, "Give us this day our daily bread." Instead we are accepting that the LORD is our Provider and trusting that what needs we have He will meet. We can venture out on our own into the world and acquire anything our hearts want and anything that our bodies need: food, clothing, money, a home, a spouse ... anything. All can be gained on our own and by our own might and merits. It is neither necessary nor prudent to remain sitting about awaiting for handouts to fall from Heaven. To be such a sloven would assure the absence of such abundance anyway due to our unholy appetites and efforts. Everything can be gained or achieved with the right amount of effort, and sacred behavior is not necessary for their

reception, as the sinners have them too and usually in more abundance. The heathen have these things aplenty, and they get them more often than not because of their wicked ways. Prayer then is giving the LORD the credit, not for the effort of our own hands and the hard work we've expended for our own earnings, but it is giving due credit to the LORD of all things for the things we do achieve anyway despite our best behavior and effort through no fault nor effort of our own. And giving Him due credit for the given ability to gain. We can work, but there is no guarantee that we will be justly compensated for our toils. We can earn our wages but can not help getting held up and robbed of them. We can build homes, but we do not make their structures stand, nor can we keep them perpetually safe from fire and flood. "Give us this day our daily bread," is the portion of the prayer pattern that trusts the LORD to be the Provider of all these needs beyond our control. And it is also gratefulness to the Almighty for the abilities HE has bestowed upon us to provide for ourselves: our senses, our intelligence, our health, and our bodily mobility. With the Almighty, all is gift, even our awareness of the fact that it is so. Even the day itself is a gift from the LORD, and gratitude for the light of the sun is prayer to our Father in Heaven. Not only is this prayer, but also gratitude for being alive to experience the new day. After all, each day is not promised but gifted with its every dawning.

Prayer is trusting that this day, the LORD will provide, and that the LORD has provided this day. The pattern does not simply say, "Give us our daily bread," but rather it says, "Give us this day our daily bread." we desire the bread, but what we are claiming more is the day itself in which we are given our bread and everything else. As James 4:15 says, "If the LORD wills, we shall live and do this or that." Our daily choices and our daily needs are not determined by the LORD so much as the very breath in our lungs and blood in our veins. We trust the good LORD to give us the day, and then in this day to be the Provider of all our needs, not just bread, but everything required for life and holiness. And trusting Him to provide and to be the Provider is a moment-by-moment commitment, prayer without end. The main reason the pattern says the words, "this day," and not "always" or "everyday" is because our faith must be continuous. "Give us this day our daily bread," acknowledges the LORD as Provider of our tomorrows, as well as our todays. We do not have reasons to worry for tomorrow as the lost do, because our LORD and FATHER is there already just as much our Provider then as HE is now. Tomorrow may never come for us, but we trust that if and possibly when it arrives to become today, our FATHER will be the one Who brought us to its beginning; and HE will be the LORD of that day forever. Prayer is this constant accreditation of the Most High, as the source of all our happiness and joy and the giver of all that brings us these pleasurable gifts. Asking the FATHER for this is good, and claiming what we were

promised is the pattern set down by Messiah; but whether we are asking for things or telling HIM to give, we are seeking always as all-important, not the thing requested but more so the imperative that whatever it is, that it come from HIS hand.

As Scripture says in Deuteronomy 8:3 and quoted by Christ in Matthew 4:4, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of YAHWEH." Our request is always right when asked for this reason alone. And our petitions become true prayer when we begin to understand that by asking for things from FATHER, we are really asking for the FATHER Himself. When we bring a claim to His promises, we are calling the LORD both GIVER and GIFT. We ask on behalf of our needs for today alone, and we do not hold back the gifts given today just in case we may need something tomorrow. In faith we go on believing, that the LORD is all we truly need, whether we live or die, and tomorrow HE is there already and has already made preparations to provide for and preserve us for many more tomorrows to come.

Chapter 13 - Forgive Us Our Sins ...

There is much to be said from Scripture on the subject of forgiveness, much also from tradition and much from popular maxims as well. There is an old adage, attributed to no one in particular, that says, "We can not know how to live until we first learn to forgive." And of course tradition tells us "forgive and forget." And from Scripture we are taught to forgive "seventy-times seven." In fact, it is the running theme of the entire Canon from both Testaments "Old" and "New".

The LORD offered grace in the garden of Eden to Adam and Eve, when He allowed them to live after eating the fruit from the forbidden tree. The LORD graced Cain with the mark of the murderer to keep others from killing him as he had killed his own kin. We can see the FATHER's forgiveness for Abraham's lack of faith, when he slept with his servant Hagar in an attempt to self-fulfill the promise of a son. We see the LORD forgiving Jacob for his Lokian nature as the trickster, when the patriarch is afforded the opportunity to wrestle the Mighty One for His blessing and new name. The LORD forgave Moses for killing the Egyptian who abused a Hebrew slave, and later forgave him for striking the rock to which he was ordered to speak. The LORD forgave the people of Israel numerous times during the course of their journey from Egypt to the promised land and numerous other additional times throughout history. The FATHER's forgiveness was given to David for his adultery. It was offered to Solomon for his idolatry as well. The Most High forgave Jonah for his rebellion and Elijah for his fears. HE forgave Thomas for his doubts, Paul for his persecutions, and Peter for his denials.

And it is not only the LORD Himself WHO demonstrates forgiveness throughout Scripture, but it is the LORD's children who set the example for us. Whether it be Joseph pardoning his murderous brothers, when their execution was within his power to command, or Hosea the prophet who married the harlot, Gomer, at the LORD's command, knowing she would cheat on him again and again, yet taking her back every time; whatever the example, the LORD's grace is clearly portrayed for our instruction and our imitation from the start of the Canon to the end.

So we can understand the level of importance our Father places upon this one virtue in particular, but it is entirely overlooked most gravely as an aspect of All-Prayer. We don't think of forgiveness as a form of prayer, because we are used too thinking that prayer is merely "talking to the LORD" and no more. It is hard for us to wrap our minds around the idea of prayer being an action more so than a conversation. Once we can do this, however, we find prayer in every one of the LORD's

commands. We have seen that prayer is attachment to the LORD, and what could be more binding and more connecting than for us to mimic the Majesty in His most profoundly awesome action of showing mercy? How could we bring ourselves closer to the FATHER than by doing what HE does best and what HE alone can do? Forgiveness is part of the LORD's nature, but, though we are His children, it is not natural for us. Therefore, forgiveness is the greatest dedication to the ideals of our FATHER; it is the highest reaching for HIS hand. To emulate our FATHER, we must imitate HIS grace. We must learn to pray in ways we would rather not.

The pattern prayer for us, as disciples, tells the LORD to "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." Other translations use the words "debts" or "trespasses" rather than "sins", but all will do nicely for the command. Again, even here, we are not asking, but telling the FATHER to forgive us for our sins, for our debts, for our trespasses. Forgive us all our ills. If we owe what we can not pay, if we have overstepped our boundaries, or made a mistake regarding the rights, freedoms, or personal choices of another human being, or even if we have offended against someone intentionally and held rancor in our hearts, LORD, forgive us. This is all well and good to say, but it will prove feckless if left with this end. To tell the LORD to forgive is without purpose. It is without reason, and without reason, we might as well be *asking* that HE do this rather than *telling* HIM.

The Creator will never move without a cause, and HE Himself can not be moved by anyone. He may not always give us HIS reasons, but He will never be without reason to do something. In this case, given to us in the prayer pattern, the reason, cause, or condition which must be fulfilled for us to then receive absolution is for us first to give out grace. This form of prayer puts the burden back upon our own shoulders, the responsibility to behave in a holy fashion before expecting the FATHER's forgiveness.

According to the Text of Scripture, this grace is to be dealt to three different types of people. We are commanded to forgive our brothers, firstly. Such offenses as can be charged to a brother are minor at most in the grand scheme of things. If the offense was great enough, the offender could not be said to be a brother, as the nature of brotherhood is love. This is also the reason why the smallest of wrongs hurt the worst, when they come from a brother. The fraternal bond amplifies the smallest infraction to appear to us as the worst possible offense, and it is because of this bond of brotherhood and the minute nature of the missteps made by brothers that our Savior and Brother, has told us we must forgive our brothers from the heart, seventy times seven times, which is to say that we should not be keeping count. To forgive seventy times seven times is another way of saying that our forgiveness must be complete and perfect.

We are firstly to forgive our brothers, and secondly we are to forgive our neighbors. The category of brothers includes those of the same blood, as well as those of the same faith. Those bound by common interests as friends should also be perceived in this way of thinking. Who then do we call our neighbors? Contrary to popular opinion, not all men are brothers, nor is the Most High the FATHER of all. As we have seen, the Almighty is the *Maker* of all, but *FATHER* only to those who believe by faith in His only begotten Son and who walk after His commandments.

In like manner, all men are brothers provided that all follow the same Faith. Everyone else outside of this relationship who is not an enemy is, according to Scripture, called a neighbor. A neighbor in our society is thought to be a person who lives near to another person's home, but the LORD is more specific in His counting of neighbors. In our thinking, a neighbor is one who lives near to our spiritual home, that is to say near to where we can bring help, hope and healing. It is the person that lives so near to the home of our hearts, that he or she could come by anytime to borrow a cup of sugar. A neighbor is someone we've never met. A neighbor is someone we see everyday, but have never really gotten to know. A neighbor is someone for whom we generally feel neither friendship for nor malice against, yet whom we love with the love of our Lord on High, as we were taught and aught.

The sins of these types of people are harder to forgive than those of brothers, because there exists no common bond tying us to them for life. If we never saw them again, we would feel no sense of loss, just as surely as meeting them was no cause for great joy. Neighbors are a neutrality, neither loved or hated by our emotions, and thus in a manner of speaking, they are a nuisance. Whether they are found to be in our way or not, it is of no consideration, since Scripture has mandated not only our love for our neighbor, despite our own unconcern but our forgiveness as well; and so we must. It is hard for one person to commit offense against another person whom he feels nothing toward by means of accident of nature or of folly. Yet such offense is difficult to bear without a natural inclination of fealty toward said individual. Feelings have little to no place in this, however, but only the command to do right by them. A neighbor may do us a good turn or offend us greatly, but such major motions on their part usually alter their standing as neighbors to the category of either friends or enemies.

Thirdly, we are commanded to forgive our enemies. An enemy is a person toward whom we feel hatred or rancor, or it is a person who feels similar enmity towards us. Such a person could have begun as a friend or as a brother, or he could have begun as a malevolent stranger, a neighbor of ill-intent. Either way, there is no natural hope of affinity in such a relationship as our feelings toward such people indicate. And yet, set against our vengeful desires are the Scriptures' commands that we love our enemies, and

that we forgive their sins against us. Unlike the natural inclination to love our brothers or the neutrality of the non-offensive neighbor, the enemy bears a natural bond of animosity towards us, making forgiveness an up-hill battle on ice-skates. Our feelings assist our ability to forgive our brothers, and they are conspicuously absent, when we are required to forgive our neighbors. But when forgiveness, or any positive action for that matter, is called for on behalf of our enemies, our emotions and our will become nothing more than adamant obstacles, endless barriers between us and the goal to do other than our desires. And so the challenge to prayer arises here, at the point in which the command confronts the heart of desires for revenge and even our desires for justice. Prayer is allowing for the LORD to be the enactor of revenge and the bringer of justice. Or even better still, prayer is the foregoing of revenge upon our enemies and the replacement of our justification with the unconditional offer of mercy. Prayer, even here in this instance, is attaching ourselves to the desires of the LORD and binding ourselves to His heart, rather than our own.

When it comes to this form of forgiveness, prayer is a complete disregard for personal feelings. Too much of the righteous life becomes muddled with the thoughts of our own minds and the desires of our own hearts. We are, therefore, the problem with our own prayer. And we need to be out of the way, because prayer isn't about us. It is done *for* us, but it is concerned *with* the LORD.

Prayer is about HIM getting HIS Way and us getting on-board or getting out of HIS way. The thing that moves us on this course is the act of offering forgiveness, our own working against our own way of working. Why must we offer forgiveness in order for ourselves to become the recipients of grace? Why can we not receive redemption and our enemies retribution? Is it because we are as wicked as they? Is it because we are worse than our enemies? This has, at times, been the situation. Or must we forgive our enemies for the same reason our Savior forgave His own enemies from the Cross, when He said, "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Do we have to forgive merely because our enemies are idiots? Simply since they are ignorant and insipid? Must we let them off the hook, because they are broken fools? This is not the Biblical concept of forgiveness and to believe so is to miss the whole reason why this section of forgiveness is even a part of the disciples' pattern of prayer. Such misconceptions regarding forgiveness stem from the traditional turn of phrase, "Forgive and forget." This saying carries a sense of simplicity and ease. It feels almost terse and trite, as if the offended party is somehow wrong for feeling offended. This phrase, "Forgive and forget" makes it seem as if the wrong done was nothing at all worth remembering and that if the person who was wronged chooses to

remember the harm that was caused to him or her, then he or she is the bad guy - making a big deal out of nothing. In reality, however, if we "forgive and forget", then we will live in regret.

No time will ever arise in which burying one's head in the sand is the most productive activity that could be performed regardless of the area this is. Nor will it ever be properly considered virtuous to pretend there's never been anything vile that we've endured. Knowledge is power, always, and the wise will do well to remember those who have proven faithless and violated trust. The wise will do well to remember those who have wronged them and to distinguish between those who can never be trusted again and those who can. As a wise man once said, "forgive your enemies... but remember their names."

Forgiveness does not require that we let someone off the proverbial hook. It isn't giving them a free pass for their trespass, and it most assuredly is not forgetting the wrong enacted, the damage inflicted, or the loss incurred. What is forgiveness then, if not forgetting the sins, debts, and trespasses of others stacked up against us? It is not *forgetting* but instead the exact opposite. Forgiveness is *remembering*. Forgiveness is remembering that we ourselves are not free from sins, debts, and trespasses against others. It is *remembering* the wrongs *we* have done, damages *we* have inflicted, and losses for which *we* alone are to blame. Forgiveness is remembrance to WHOM *all* sin is naturally and ultimately directed against. All sins are ultimately committed against the Most High, not us, even if we appear to be the target of their malice. This is why we can and must forgive, not because the offenders are ignorant fools, not because they are broken and inept, not because they just don't know any better, but we forgive because the *real* offense was directed against our FATHER, not toward us, and let's face it - the FATHER Above can fight His own battles. The real reason for every sin is enmity between a person and the LORD WHO made him. Enmity being the polar opposite of prayer, is responsible for the worst actions of human beings. Prayer is the child trying to come as close as possible to his FATHER, and enmity is the brat who thinks he's all grown up, running as hard and as fast as his legs can go to escape the Authority and HIS crushing, merciful embrace.

The disasters that happen in this villain's wake are known to the LORD and have been known to HIM for all time and all eternity. Never did the LORD think that evil would not be done, nor was HE even ever once unaware of how much the pain would hurt His heart and all innocent victims on the earth. On the contrary, He has known every pain far greater than we who feel it in the body. If ever we have known sorrow or any kind of heartache or wound, we can be sure our FATHER felt the same. And infinitely so. The closer we come to knowing Him in His fullness, and the closer we grow in relation to Him, the

better we will understand, not only grace, but the reality of pain, and the horror caused by our sin. This is why empathy and sympathy are forms of prayer, because they are the attempts at identification with the sufferings of others and so also thereby, with the sufferings of the Savior. All that is done to us was done to Him, as is said in Isaiah 53:4, that “He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows” and again as is written also, Savior said, “As much as you did to the least of these ... you did it unto Me.”

The LORD WHO feels the sting of every harsh word and the agony of every murder, the LORD WHO knows the sorrows of our hearts better than we ever could, and commands us to forgive each and every one. Therefore, forgiveness is remembering that the LORD has taken our rights even to our own justification. If Almighty FATHER feels our own pain more fully and intimately and infinitely than we do, and yet forgives the penitent offender, how then are we to be counted justified in demanding compensation for our woes, we who feel everything in the finite and the temporary. Our Creator commands in Scripture that we forgive our brothers, neighbors, and enemies, the last of which is hardest to do, and therefore to refuse to do so is itself sin on our part. If we will not forgive as ordered to do, we make ourselves into the greatest of hypocrites, sinning against the LORD as we demand HIS condemnation of those who sin against us. Forgiveness isn't supposed to be easy, after all. It is not as though we are required to begin in earnest sincerely feeling sympathy, wishing to pardon those who punished us unjustly. It would not be natural to be so inclined, not even human to do so, and it is, therefore, not so required.

Yet because we do not desire to forgive, we are required to do so. The greater the offense, the harder to pardon in our own power and absolve of our own accord. We begin to be lost in the lofty concepts of justice and equality, fairness and morality, making it even more difficult on ourselves to absolve the guilty party of their wrongs and ills. We consume ourselves with the idea that the offender just does not deserve forgiveness. Once tied down by this absolute truth, we must of necessity remain bound to it. We must continue to be consumed by it, demanding, destroying, and being devoured by the monsters into which we've made ourselves. When we refuse forgiveness to others that our LORD has commanded us to give, we will find ourselves playing the role of the Most High, rather than praying to Him. We will find ourselves more attached to the *idea* of justice as opposed to *actual* justice itself. And this idea will be our divinity, not YAHWEH.

Our infantile understanding of justice will be lacking much of the concepts of *true* justice, just as it is thought to be a separate concept from prayer. This is, again due only to our misconceptions of exculpation. We still think we are meant to *forget* sins and to overlook evil, but this is simply not the case.

It is *never* the case. Forgiveness applies to every single person and every single trespass, but it comes with baggage: two small contingencies. The requirement for the recipient of forgiveness is full-hearted and heart-felt repentance. An apology does not suffice in this situation. Anyone can say, "I'm sorry", and "Mea culpa's" are a dime a dozen but just like the rest of prayer, repentance is far more than words and homage. Repentance is backward action. It is a retracing of one's steps. For repentance to be real, it must involve a three-step process.

Firstly, the sinner must cease the sin. He must stop the offense, intending its absence to be his future course forever. Secondly, the offender must turn about "one-hundred-eighty degrees" to face the path he has trod. He must look upon the destruction he has caused, and he must own it. Sorrow should overwhelm his heart for the horror he has brought and for the villain he has been. His intent and his intense desire should be to heal the harms his hands have wrought. Thirdly and lastly, the newly reformed man must progress upon the holy path thereafter, performing every future action, not attempting to pay for his past sins, as they are too many and priceless to ever atone for, but instead in pursuit of a course of action diametrically opposed to his former diabolical corruption. Repentance is complete reformation of a sinner's entire self for no better reason than to begin to do the right thing and to become a better person. Forgiveness has not yet to ever have been offered, assuring the genuineness of the transformation, since the sinner knows not if he shall ever find redemption, though he became a new creation. Repentance is entirely unconcerned with self-interest and is consumed wholly with righting the wrongs of one's previous life.

The second requirement for the recipient of forgiveness is bloodshed. As Scripture has stated, "Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins." In other words, evil has the highest price, a cost that must be paid. We must pay for what we've stolen and replace what we've destroyed. Forgiveness is not without loss and is therefore also not void of consequences either. Something is gone. Someone is hurt. Something is broken, and there is a cost that must be paid. Forgiveness may be given but first must come the price; repentance and reparation and replacement. Thankfully, our FATHER has provided the latter on our behalf lest we die forever to pay an endless debt.

For every sin the wages of which is death, blood is owed, which is the life of the body. Each person may pay for their trespasses with their very own plasma, if they wish, which would mean dying for all eternity since the cost is total and infinite, or alternately he can allow the FATHER to pay the debt outright by the blood of HIS Son. This does not mean that further temporal consequences will not be demanded of him, ie. restitution, incarceration, or even execution depending upon the severity of his

offense, but for the security of his eternal redemption, repentance and the blood of Messiah will more than suffice.

These costs alone assure the difficulty of both giving and receiving absolution. Reception is hard, because repentance requires the death of all former things. And giving grace remains difficult, because it will never be earned nor ever deserved. If it was, it would not be forgiveness. Grace is the LORD gifting us with a blessing we do not deserve - our eternal salvation. And mercy is Him withholding from us the death we do deserve - perdition. These two, both grace and mercy, spit in the eye of our own ideas of justice, because we in our short lives and our short-sightedness cannot perceive the slate wiped clean by our Saviour. We hold on to the hurt to our own ruin, unaware that justice has already been served in the provision of grace and mercy.

The offender may not have paid, but the debt has itself been paid off. What is left to hold onto when there remains no debt outstanding? Herein arises the rest of forgiveness, the other half which is as much about us as it is about the sinner. Scripture instructs our forgiveness of others, as much for our own sake as for theirs, not only that they may have redemption, but also that we may have relief. The LORD wants us to be able to let go of our burdens and to bear His, to let go of ourselves and hold on to Him. Carrying the hurt and the hate is only us trying to get our own way. It's not forgiveness. It's not grace or mercy. And it is certainly not any form of prayer. Instead of reaching for our FATHER in Heaven, we are clinging to our petty problems and remaining in our own private hell. Forgiveness surrenders the things we think will save us and the rights we demand to have satisfied. It enables us to let go of ourselves and to cling to our Heavenly FATHER and to HIS Holy Word. As most prayer is, forgiveness is simply agreement with the FATHER. He told us to forgive, and so we can either concur that we should or else refuse to believe He spoke with understanding and our best intentions in mind.

As the story of the prophet, Jonah, illustrates over and over, a lack of forgiveness on our part comes from a problem within our heart. Jonah hated the people of Nineveh so badly because they were wicked and sinned against the YAHWEH, the Sovereign of Israel. And granted it is proper to hate what is evil and cling to what is good, as Scripture commands, but both must be in balance within the LORD's children. Jonah hated evil but could not cling to what was good, as was proved by his actions, when the Most High told him to go save Nineveh. Jonah's hatred for these people who sinned against the LORD, drove him himself in his blindness, to sin against the LORD too. Thus we see what we become when we will not adhere to the LORD's Word and give out, without prejudice, the relentless grace of Heaven.

Prayer, being the life of the believer, is consumed with reaching for our FATHER in Heaven, but it is also fully enveloped in the doling out of that Heavenly hope here upon the earth. How can we be beacons of hope while hiding in darkness, or with darkness in our very hearts? It's one thing after all to cast a shadow by living in the light, but it is quite another matter to become darkness when traveling through the night.

Everything changes us from who we were into who we are and into who we will yet become in the future. What change that will be, however, is entirely up to us. Holding onto our hatred will make us into the monsters we despise. But releasing our rights to our ideas of justice will bring us peace and make us peaceable people, the bringers of *true* justice and the one thing not found naturally among the people of the earth - grace. Nature is not merciful. It is not a normal thing to forgive offense, and the greater the trespass, the more bizarre the mercy placed upon it. In the strangeness of absolution provided by the people of the LORD, there arrives the presence of peace. Peace and forgiveness going hand-in-hand are both internally and externally applicable. Within ourselves, peace is the direct result of releasing our right to judgment. The maelstrom of the mind subsides to calm and ease, because the problem we were creating is a problem no more. Along with this inward peace is created also the broader peace in everything we touch and encounter. That outrageously contagious grace. And others we meet will know we *are* peace and that we *bring* peace, as they feel it in our presence, making them in turn more inclined to be peaceable also.

Both chaos and peace are contagious. Steadfastly and stubbornly refusing to absolve our offenders will only make more chaos in our lives, turning us, like Jonah, into judges with evil hearts. All things considered, according to the set pattern of prayer, ultimately we forgive others for one primary purpose: we ourselves wish to be forgiven.

If we refuse to forgive as we were instructed, we not only become judges with evil hearts, but we become liars and hypocrites. We say by not forgiving that we ourselves have no sin. We put ourselves on a pedestal, claiming a better standing with the LORD instead of letting HIM decide where we stand with HIM. Since we know that all sins are ultimately against the FATHER, and we ourselves have sinned and fallen short of HIS glory, then who are we to refuse forgiveness to others? They sinned against the LORD, and we sinned against the LORD. Why, then, beyond a false sense of entitlement, would we receive forgiveness and our enemies' condemnation?

This is why it is sin not to forgive, and nothing in the pattern would dictate another option. It says, "forgive us our sins *as we forgive ...* " There is no way to circumvent this. Plain and simple, either

we are going to forgive our offenders, or we are going to be blamed for everything we've ever done wrong. One thing clearly absent from prayer's pattern is any claim to easiness or swiftness in the process of forgiveness. Simplicity yes, but simplicity is not synonymous with easiness or speed. And forgiveness is, more often than not, a process. It may take no time at all or it could consume our entire lives. It is a process meant to consume us, and it is a thing completely unconcerned with emotions, feelings, and desires. It is strictly a choice of will, a matter of making it happen, likely with utter disregard for how we feel or why. We will most often want fairness and justice, nothing shy of hellfire for our foes, but thanks be to the FATHER of Mercy that He doesn't do as we desire in our ignorance. If HE judged by our standards, we ourselves would have perdition. I, for one, am grateful that while the FATHER is good, HE is most certainly not fair. HIS fairness would mean no grace for anyone, not even us, HIS children and thus no mercy for you and me. If we all had to eat our just-deserts, we would die as ghastly gluttons choked on eating-crow, devil's-food, and humble-pie.

No. No one wants to forgive their offenders, but we are not supposed to want to, at least, not at first. It is, however, not so much a matter of wanting to forgive as it is wanting to avoid the same punishment we would have dealt to our enemies. The blessing is forgiveness, and the one curse is condemnation. If we condemn, we will be condemned. If we forgive, we will be forgiven. We can not expect to do the one and receive the other. We reap as we sow, and we get what we give. According to the prayer pattern the LORD is giving us an opportunity here, a way of clearing our own record before Him. After all, we each have things we have done, of which we are ashamed, and for which we do not wish to answer for. We all have done things of which we alone on earth are aware and only our FATHER in Heaven, things which we would rather not remember and pray that the FATHER forget.

As an odd grace of prayer, therefore, the LORD gave us this portion of the pattern to show us how we may rewrite the record. No, it's not easy to do, and never easy to want to do, but offering redemption will remove our own condemnation. And that was what we wanted all along. If we can pay that price, then we can have it all. The cost is the same as that paid by our enemies, when they seek forgiveness, our own repentance and payment. As with the offender, who must repent before finding redemption for his offense, we who are called of the Creator and commanded by HIM to forgive as HE forgives, must also repent of our rebellious nature in stubbornly refusing to forgive from the start. And once we have repented, the blood of Christ is enough for us as it is for our enemies to cover the trespasses we have made against them by withholding their absolvment. All this is not a requirement for every man. We do not have to forgive if we do not want to do so. We may refuse if we wish, and we may

rebel. We may hold fast to unforgiveness until devoid of every favorable quality. We may withhold the LORD's grace, yet we will be without grace all the while ourselves. We will, in our vengeful spirit, draw away from the Spirit of the Most High, lost, alone, and abandoned as well. We do not have to forgive, but the LORD says in His Word that we have to forgive *if* we want forgiveness ourselves. That does not mean that everyone will be ready, willing, and able to receive this form of exculpation.

Forgiveness is offered *if* we want it, and it is offered freely by way of the shed blood of the FATHER's only begotten Son and by the repentance that applies His blood to the souls. However, we ourselves, if we do not pardon those who have wronged us or our loved ones and neighbors, are not repentant and prove such. And if we do not pardon, how can we pray? How can we call on Holy Providence out of a pure heart, when our heart is hateful and impure? The aspect of prayer that tells the FATHER to forgive us, His children for our sins, debts, and trespasses, if we continually forgive others theirs, acknowledges as Oswald Chambers so eloquently put it, "The only right a Christian has is the right to give up his rights." Forgiveness is the final surrender of the last vestiges of ourselves. Even here on the level that would seem to be the most personal and the most obviously righteous areas of our core selves, even here we must surrender, even here we must die to self-will and the dead nature of the "Old Man". Here at the crossroads, we must move in the way of the Cross, pardoning friends in kindness and forgiving enemies in charity, as we facilitate faith in the hearts of the hopeful and all who behold our grace for the praise and glory of the LORD.

We must forgive our brothers. We must forgive our neighbors. We must forgive our enemies ... we must forgive ourselves. And we must also forgive our Heavenly FATHER for holding us to the standard we hate by making us absolve others as the Way to our own absolution. We do not have to like it, but it is the Way of love and the Way of prayer. It is the attitude of remaining innocent, if not perfectly blameless if not faultless, the Way by which we remain open to criticism, and change, and to commune with the only ONE WHO is perfect and faultless.

SECTION #4 - SUMMARY & CONCLUSION: JOY IN MY HOUSE OF PRAYER

Chapter #14 - Lead & Deliver

There's a saying I rather enjoy, "If HE brings you to it, He'll bring you through it." It is a catchy and for once an accurate turn of phrase. Prayer requires a level of trust in Most High high enough to believe that this very statement is true. We trust the LORD so much that we know HE has our best interests in mind and will work all things out to good and positive ends for all of us who love HIM and do as HE desires. We trust the LORD to be our FATHER. We trust HIM to be holy. We trust HIM to do what HE wants with HIS own things, namely HIS Kingdom and HIS will. And we trust the LORD to provide for us every day our daily necessities as well as forgiveness for our sins and missteps. Yet even all of this is not all of prayer.

To pray rightly, truly, and fully, we must trust the LORD completely. This completion is found in the surrender of self-will, when we trust our FATHER not only to make rightly HIS own decisions and have HIS own way with our own things. It is the remembrance that we ourselves are HIS own things anyway, spirit, soul, and body and are thus already rightly HIS. The completion of All-Prayer is allowing the LORD to lead, allowing HIM to guide, allowing HIM to choose how we go and who we should be. This is not to say that we should hit the off switch on our minds and move through life in somnambulous style. No. We are not called to be automatons but to be awake and aware, to be making the decisions for ourselves. Truly it would not be childlike, but only childish, for us to concede all actions to our LORD so as to leave us be and to let us be lazy little ones.

Prayer, however, isn't making the LORD do all the work of picking things for us. It is instead making ourselves do all the work we as children do not want to do, all the work of holding on to our FATHER in order that we may always find ourselves where HE is, always let HIM take us where HE wants to go, and always be where HE wants us to be. The balance between doing everything for ourselves, on the one hand, and making the LORD do everything for us, on the other hand, is the medium of the

LORD's sovereignty. If we can allow Him in our lives as Sovereign LORD, then we have given HIM governance over our choices. We have set HIS will above our own, HIS desired outcome as the best possible end.

In this instance it is not the LORD who moves, but us. We are the ones who move about our lives, actively moving and making, doing and deciding, yet still with our FATHER, as our Sovereign, as our Leader, as our Shepherd. We do not move or make, do or decide anything according to our own understanding. As Scripture says in Proverbs 3:5,6, "Trust in YAHWEH with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge HIM, and HE will direct your paths." The LORD desires to guide us on the way, but HE can't steer us wrong. We must thus either go the way of HIS guidance, which is the way of walking in prayer, or else we will find ourselves lost along the road through the valley of death's shadow.

Throughout all of Scripture, our relationship with our FATHER is often described as the relationship between a shepherd and HIS sheep. Let's face it: sheep are dumb creatures. Like children, they require constant protection, constant guidance, and constant care. They are easily frightened and steadfastly independent. If one sheep jumps off a cliff to its death, the entire flock is liable to follow after in the same fashion and to the same fate. Sheep are notoriously both stupid and stubborn ... in exactly the same ways as we human beings. The LORD, as our Good Shepherd, tends to us constantly. HE lives with us in our fields. HE guards us from danger. HE guides us to fresh water and to new pastures. And HE keeps us safe from our own idiocy. Surely we would die otherwise. As dumb sheep, there is but one wise decision we can make, to know, remember, and trust that our LORD is Shepherd over our souls. In trusting the LORD with this position over us, we can rest easy in HIS care - safe, secure, and fully satisfied with HIM. No, again this does not mean we are meant to go through life without effort on our own part. We must move in our own power, but our moving must follow HIS leading. No shepherd carries his flock from pasture to pasture, but only takes up the position ahead of the flock that HE may be seen and followed. For our movements to be the motions of prayer, they must be both pursuant to our FATHER and our Shepherd, and they must also be our own movements. If we are being moved then it is not our will in action but that of another. If we are moving of our own will then we are choosing. Choosing the LORD is prayer and progression in HIS direction. Our life of prayer is well rounded out by this surrender, the all-encompassing trust in the LORD to do a better job of guiding and governing our lives, of leading us along the right course than we ever could ourselves.

The prayer pattern says, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." This is not a hope or a wish but a sure declaration of trust in the LORD that HE will lead us rightly. HE will not err, nor will HE ever deliberately mislead us either. Our FATHER does not trick. HE does not tempt. HE does not trap. Does this mean, then, that following the LORD will always be an easy way? Does this mean that nothing bad will ever befall us, because we believe in the LORD? Not at all! The MOST HIGH knows the best and safest route to travel, though to us they may be dark and rough and feel mighty fearful. The way of the LORD's leading may very well be through the valley of the shadow of death itself, but as the psalmist said, we have no reason to fear, for the LORD is with us and will be so all the way. "If He brings us to it, He'll bring us through it," as well.

This is the step between the LORD's Providence. In between, we find His presence with us in hard times, and HIS preservation of our bodies, minds, and souls all throughout our trial to the other side. The pattern of prayer leaves us with no delusions. There was nothing that the Messiah was attempting to hide when He spoke the words. He said, "lead us not into temptation". What does that mean? Temptation to sin? Yes, that is a part of it, but on the whole, this part of the prayer can also be translated and has been at various times, "save us from the time of trial". In other words, we are putting our trust in the LORD now as Savior from future testing.

We trust HIM to save us from hardship, to hold off sorrow, and to prevent the coming of pain. The LORD can keep us out of these difficult times, yet the prayer pattern does not end here with the words, "lead us not into temptation." The main body of the prayer pattern concludes with one final imperative, "deliver us from evil." If we truly trust the LORD to keep us from harm and pain, why then are we instructed to pray for deliverance? Does this second part nullify our first prayer for avoidance of suffering? Not at all. Rather it deepens our understanding of the Almighty in the knowledge that, should we fall into temptation, whether it be sorrowful or sinful, we are certain that our HE knew it was coming and has good reason for it, and furthermore that the temptation itself will end with the culmination of its purpose.

We can see by the phrasing of the disciple's prayer pattern that there is something unspoken yet understood between the two imperatives; Between, "lead us not into temptation" and "deliver us from evil" we can sense the silent phrase, "sustain me through suffering." It follows the natural progression of the prayer. We trust that our FATHER will ward off all danger, but we are not so foolhardy and naive as to believe we will never be harmed. We are certain that our hardships will not destroy us, but will grow us up in strength and character better equipped for further tasks. We know the LORD is with us in our

suffering and will free us as soon as the time is right. Through all our trials, through the LORD's leading, through HIS sustenance, and through HIS deliverance, we can see a deeper aspect of HIM, that while HE loves us, ultimately HE does what HE wants, not what we feel is best.

We trust HIM to lead, sustain, and deliver from bondage, but the prayer pattern does not promise, as an absolute guarantee, that we will ever be delivered, sustained, or kept from temptation. The pattern only indicates that *if* there is guidance, preservation, or restoration, it will come only from the LORD. Sometimes things just happen in life, and we may not like it. But as we can see now, Prayer is not ultimately about us. Prayer is not trusting the LORD to deliver even though we know HE is able. It is not about trusting HIM to keep us preserved through trials, though we know HE will and is able. And it is not about trusting the LORD to redeem us from the domain of darkness, though we know HE is ready and willing and able to do so.

Prayer is for us, about the LORD. It is entirely caught up with trusting HIM to be HIMSELF and to do all things as HE sees fit. It is trusting HIM to be HIMSELF and to change us, as we seek HIS Face, more and more; Prayer is to be like HIM ourselves, hence the last declaration of the prayer pattern, "deliver us from evil." In order for us to trust the LORD to "lead us not into temptation," we must first trust HIM to lead us, and we must come to understand the nature of that governance. Before we can trust our FATHER to "deliver us from evil," we must first understand the nature of evil, from which we are led away, the nature of the thing from which we are delivered.

Evil is both an outside malevolence that menaces the people of the LORD, and it is also an internal integral part of our natural selves. It is not always a thing that befalls the holy, but a thing the holy people often choose to entertain as part of themselves, thus becoming unholy. Evil is temptation that entices us to stray. Evil is sin which turns us against our FATHER. Evil is the way of the workings of the world. And evil is the devil himself, and every unclean spiritual force. All of these and each are set against our holiness and our holy purpose as children of the Most Holy LORD, but they are not a complete list of enemies.

We are but one nemesis short of a full roster, because our own names are needed to round it out. Sin and satan are powerful foes opposing our holiness and hindering our prayers, but the last and greatest enemy is the Self. Why are we our own worst enemy? Do we not want the LORD we serve? Do we not desire success in all our pursuits, especially our pursuit of HIM? Unfortunately, our wants and desires matter little in combat with these three great opponents of our souls. We may have a longing for the LORD, but this longing does not always match or outmatch the fleeting pleasures of the moment, the

cravings that claw at our weak areas in our weak moments, the call of independence and the allure of self will and the forbidden.

Satan tempts us to sin, and he knows what sins we crave. Sin appears most beautiful and calls us to indulge our hidden desires. The two know exactly how to hit us and when and where in order to make us fall. But ultimately they are powerless to do anything without the Self which is our greatest foe for wanting what is offered. Without our own demand for sin, our own desire for that shiny shallow thing offered our way, there would be no temptation at all. How could we be carried away without the will to wander off? How could we obey the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, if there were no lust or pride within us? It is, therefore, self that is the ultimate villain and the only real obstacle to our prayers, before all else. Self-indulgence is the problem. As George MacDonald wrote (According to C.S.Lewis' in his book *George MacDonald: An Anthology*), "The one principle of hell is, 'I am my own.' I am my own king and my own subject." The devil may offer and deviance may be appealing, but desire is what gives way in the end ... or else not. If we yield to evil, then we are alone to blame, not the one who gave us the option or enticed us to make us give in. We move ourselves, and we make our own choices.

Furthermore, the LORD has placed within us all the power to make any and every choice for good or ill. We are able to become heroes or to become monsters, and all by our own hand in what we do with the opportunities with which we are presented. Therefore, when we say, "deliver us from evil," we are recognizing the last piece of ourselves that still stands against our FATHER in Heaven. We are telling the LORD not just to deliver us from the evil that could be done to us, but also and more importantly that HE deliver us from the evil we are capable of doing to ourselves and to others. Deliver us, oh LORD, from becoming evil. Deliver us from the darkness of our hearts. Deliver us from the horrors of which we are adept.

The last piece of prayer to recognize is our own tendency toward the opposition, our own drive toward contrary pleasure, our own will to pursue at any cost our own agenda, even unto our own destruction. We as fallen creatures are drawn to commit fowler and fowler deeds. We crave vileness and depravity. We crave chaos and destruction. We crave pleasure at any cost, now, now, now. And so the pattern of prayer calls us to demand the LORD's aid against what we crave. LORD keep us from coveting. Protect us from sexual assault, and keep us free from lusting. Keep us from harm, and keep us from causing harm. Protect us from being murdered, and keep us free from rage. Protect us from being robbed, protect us from chaos, and keep us from causing distress. Deliver us from evil. Deliver us from ourselves...that we may pray and that we may do good and the LORD's will in the world.

This portion of the prayer pattern not only accepts our capability of falling into sin but also the actuality of its happening. We are sinful, and thus we sin. And thus also the need for the cry to the LORD before we've even done anything wrong that we may be delivered from it once it comes. We tell the LORD to keep us from committing wickedness, yet we ourselves often prevent the LORD's intervention. Most often we create the need for rescue out of the sin we've fallen into or more often still have jumped into whole-heartedly and headlong down the rabbit hole. We will surely fall. This is inevitability, as I John 1:8 has declared. "If we say we are without sin, we deceive ourselves and the Truth is not in us." Or again, it tells us in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of Elohim." We know we have sinned, and we know we shall likely continue to do so if left to our own devices, so long as we remain in the body. This is not a thing that blindsides our FATHER in Heaven. We alone are taken by surprise every time we find ourselves weak-willed and wallowing in our own wickedness. But our Heavenly FATHER, in HIS infinite wisdom and endless mercy gave us beforehand this pattern we may follow to be "saved", the pattern that, if followed, will prevent our falling, and, if not followed, will raise us back up again once we have sinned.

Prayer is not meant to prevent us from falling into sin. It is designed to ensure our rising to our FATHER's side. If we attempt to use its pattern to make us avoid sin, we are misusing the gift as it becomes a negative viewpoint. Attempting to avoid sin is not the same as attempting to please. Our FATHER by obeying HIM and attaching ourselves to Him. In most instances the effort to stop sinning is made into a devil's trap, distracting us from our real purpose of prayer, which is the flip side of the same coin, pleasing the FATHER. We are unable to prevent ourselves from sinning, and it is an aimless quest to even try, as the human mind is incapable of comprehending the negative. After all, the more we seek to avoid thinking about something, the more it is on our minds. If then our pursuit in all things is the pleasure of the FATHER instead of avoidance of sin, we are far more likely to succeed in both attaching ourselves to the LORD and in the process of doing so, avoiding evil as well. The best we can demand of the LORD then is to save us from being tempted and to rescue us when we fail.

This is how we should pray. This is the complete pattern of prayer for all of the Lord's disciples, laid out for us by Christ Himself. It is to be practiced in every area of life, used as a template for everything we endeavor. The pattern should be recited and known by heart and serve as the foundation for all our prayers both spoken and lived. In thought, word, and deed, we will practice All-Prayer by trusting Most High to be HIMSELF and to do HIS own will. The entirety of prayer is encapsulated in a supreme focus upon the FATHER, Him as all that is and all that matters. HE shall be all that we see. As

St. Francis was known to say, "LORD, You are good. All good. The highest good. The only good." And in like manner we find our only good is to gaze upon HIM with such perception that HIS perfection should consume all of our vision. In its most simple state, prayer is, as it is said of St. John Maria Vianney known as St. Cure d'Ars was often heard commenting on prayer, "I look at HIM, and HE looks at me. " Prayer is every moment when we simply and profoundly see our Heavenly FATHER, and we see HIM seeing us see HIM. This is the communion when nothing is said but everything is seen. This is All-Prayer when all we see is the LORD of Glory and all HE sees is us seeing HIM being all.

Chapter 15 - Now and Forever

We have now examined the main body of the prayer pattern, and we know now (if we did not before) the way we are to pray. We know what prayer is, what it encompasses, and what it requires us to be, to do, and to alter within ourselves. We have seen the capacity prayer has to make alterations within our minds and hearts, and we know All-Prayer will make all the necessary changes as it is allowed by us to work freely. We have come to better understand the power that is found in praying to our FATHER. We know the might in that communion, the strength of that sacred bond, and what awesome things it can accomplish both in Heaven and on Earth. Finally, we have witnessed the goal of prayer itself. We have learned the reason, the purpose behind what we practice. And yet knowing all we have learned and given all we have experienced, a question still remains. Why are we not required to ask, whenever we feel the need for higher assistance?

We know why we are to call upon the LORD, but we have no reason to know why HE responds. Why are we able to tell the LORD what to do in the imperative as the prayer pattern shows us? The answer is found in the pattern itself. All the main body of the prayer has been covered, but its closing has yet to be addressed. The conclusion to the disciples' prayer pattern is probably the most important portion of the entire writing, given that it holds the key to and the meaning of every other part. "For the Kingdom and the power and the glory are Yours now and forever. Amen."

It has been said that the difference between being a cook and being a chef is the difference between "knowing how" and "knowing why". The cook knows how to cook as does the chef, but the chef knows the reasons why, the purpose behind every ingredient, recipe, and style of preparing food. A disciple who knows the pattern of prayer is in a way like the cook. He or she knows what steps to take to reach the Most High, but understanding the conclusion beginning with the conjunction "for" is what separates him or her from the cooks, setting the disciple apart in his or her own category in like fashion of a chef, knowing the reasons for each point of the pattern.

Knowing the purpose furthers the disciple's mastery in the art of attaching to our Master. The reason why we do not need to ask the LORD for anything is found in Scripture just prior to the pattern Christ set forth. He said, "Your FATHER knows what you need before you ask HIM." Even though Messiah also said, "Ask anything in My Name, and it will be given to you," this does not negate the fact that the LORD knows what we will be asking. Then we are without reason to be asking except as we are

asking for the purpose of relying upon HIM. Why is the LORD our Heavenly Father? Why is His NAME considered hallowed? Why should HIS Kingdom come and HIS will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven? Why should the LORD daily provide for our necessities? Why should HE forgive us for our sins, and why should we first be required to forgive others their sins? Why should the LORD be leading us away from troubles, trials, and temptations? And why should HE be expected to lead us away from and deliver us out of the acts and consequences of our own self-willed wickedness? The ultimate answer to this and all other questions about the prayer pattern beginning with the question, "why" are answered in the pattern's conclusion: "For the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory are Yours, now and forever. Amen."

"What Kingdom?" One might ask. "What Power, exactly?" "What glory is Christ referencing in the conclusion to this pattern?" The answer is: ALL. "Jesus" is speaking of every kingdom, every power, and every glory in Heaven and on Earth both seen and unseen. All is the LORD's by right. And so we pray. This is the reason why we pray and the reason also why the Almighty answers prayers responding with communion, the reason we are able to pray and the reason we pray in the manner in which we do - declaring and claiming instead of asking and begging. All the purpose, the reason, and the value behind All-Prayer is found in the concluding clause. This line, if removed from its postern location, can be reinserted after any point during the progress of the pattern to show forth more forcefully how it answers every raised question.

The LORD is "Our FATHER Who art in Heaven ... for the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory are [HIS] now and forever. Amen." We tell our LORD all things based on this premise. "Hallowed be THY Name ... for the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory are Yours now and forever. Amen." "THY Kingdom come, THY will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven ... for the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory are Yours now and forever. Amen." "Give us this day our daily bread ... for the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory are Yours now and forever. Amen." "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us ... for the Kingdom the Power and the Glory are Yours now and forever. Amen." "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil ... for the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory are Yours now are forever. Amen."

This is as it has always been and is as it shall always be. All is the LORD's by right, as HE is the First and the Last, the Maker and Author of all things. To whom else would we turn? To what else could we attach onto and be grafted into? To what else could we call to and cling to and before whom else could we lay our claim? Our LORD is everywhere and over and through all things high and low. What more reason then should we need to call HIM our Father and to call for HIS glory and our blessing. And what

better reason should HE have for responding? This is why we can ask anything of the Majesty, because everything is HIS; and this is why we need not ask but may lay claim, because both now and forever, going forward and in reverse, it is already done before we have voiced our need nor even knew we were in need.

Knowing thus why we pray and why we are answered when we call upon the LORD, we may better remove ourselves from the equation firmly establishing the LORD as all-encompassing in our thoughts and minds and actions. The pattern's conclusion leaves us with only faith and no doubt. We will doubt our own merits and our own strength and abilities, but we will doubt not the Living LORD. The child-like life of prayer teaches us to doubt our doubts not our faith, to deny the reality presented to us by the world and substitute it with the living and enduring Word of Most High. The world tells us to stand on our own, but Scripture says to stand on the promises found therein. The world tells us we are alright as we are, but Scripture says that we're broken and lost and alone. The world tells us this is as good as it gets, but Scripture tells us that we may have hope, grace, life, and joy in the Lord everlasting, joy in HIS House of Prayer, now and forever. Amen.

We enjoy our tradition of prayer over and above true Prayer itself, because it is safe; and because it is sentimental; and because it is solitudinal and systematized. Traditions, even those without merit, are always more comfortable for us than change. It is hard to kick against the norm, even when the norm stands against the truth. After all, why rock the boat when we could coast quietly onto the shoals? Peace, in the eyes of most, even a peace not with villainy or baseness, is not worth breaking to right wrongs or to correct courses. Traditions, by their very nature, become personal. We grow attached to them, because we identify ourselves by them, and yet in spite of all these pleasant feelings, traditions, no matter how personally loved nor closely held, must be done away with, *if* countermanding the absolute authority of the Canon of Scripture.

Alternatively, a tradition, countering Scripture, may yet be saved by simple amendment, yet a challenge of some kind must be raised against the ordinary course. In this case, we are raising a challenge to our traditions of Prayer which hold fast against the FATHER's having all right and all authority and which adamantly plant themselves between our souls and attachment to "Our FATHER Who art in Heaven". We want prayer to be a momentary action. We want it handy, but we do not want it wholly. We want it separate and set apart but not in the sense of the sacred. We would have it be a part of our lives, but not life itself. Having a "prayer life" is easy, but living a life of Prayer is a daily uphill battle, one that requires constance, vigilance, and endurance to see through. It is far easier, is it not, to keep the LORD handy than it is to hand everything over to HIM - every thought, every feeling, every action of our lives.

Feelings themselves are momentary, but prayer is not a moment. Prayer is every moment, ceaseless in and of itself and demanding no less of us. Awake or asleep we must be bound to our FATHER or we aren't praying at all.

It is one thing only that prayer is about and that is finding the knowledge of the LORD and clinging to HIM. Prayer is attaching ourselves to the FATHER, becoming one with the Majesty in all our words, all our dreams, all our rituals, and in all our plans. Being unable to benefit the LORD by prayer, we do not seek to do so. While the FATHER loves for us, His children, to rely upon HIM for everything, HE Himself is not at a loss until we come to HIM. HE is not fed by our praises, though they bring HIM joy. We need to worship the MOST HIGH in order to become whole and complete as was the human destiny of old from Eden.

It is we who gain or lose by praying or not. And it is we who change or not by either praying or refusing to do so. The LORD of our prayers is unmoving, unmoved, and unmovable. As HE is unchanging, so too is HIS mind and HIS will. Thus it can be said truly that prayer does not make the Almighty do anything and is not meant to do so. As HE has planned for forever, so now shall HE do in time upon the earth, and never shall HE alter nor adjust anything. We can leverage our entire lives and our eternal souls, yet we shall never be able to move the mind of Most High. We can only move ourselves and allow ourselves to be moved by the Almighty into unity with HIS amazing mind. This is why the finale of the prayer pattern tells us that everything under the sun and light years away beyond it and all we can see or imagine, belongs to the LORD, both now and forever. And it tells us this is so with such surety, because this LORD alone is a surety, the one thing, the one being in all existence that will never be different than HE is at this very moment - because He alone of all is not a "thing" at all and He Himself is "existence" itself.

HE is the cornerstone on which all else must be assessed, the measurement of which is the fullness of Prayer. At its core, Prayer is the constant conscious effort to know this consistent Living Elohim, more and more, and to make HIM known in the world He made. This is not to say that we are out to change the world (indicating the entire planet). No. Instead we are praying to our LORD to change our personal world (indicating everything which we touch and encounter on a daily basis and those which encounter us as well). Truly our FATHER will hear us when we call to HIM from our bedsides as we humbly kneel before HIM. And it is truly a comforting thing to call this moment with the Almighty "All-Prayer", because tradition would tell us it is so and because the cost is but a moment of our time and sore knees. Yet, all-in-all, this comfort zone is the smallest part of All-Prayer and one that does not declare to

the FATHER, "the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory are Yours, now and forever. Amen." At times, we must approach our FATHER and King on bended knee, but this is never rightly the focal point for our prayer life. These quiet moments of reflection in genuflection are the sidebars, the afterthoughts, the extra effort of Prayer.

The main purpose of All-Prayer is not what we do on our knees, but instead what we do on our feet. It is as we are going and how we are moving and where we are headed and why we were destined for that place. These are the reasons and intentions that make up All-Prayer. More than merely talking to the LORD, prayer is moving along in HIS ways. Prayer is talking with the LORD using more than just words, and it is also listening, along with asking. And sometimes it requires us to be silent in order to hear HIM, silent and still. We pray by meditating, by focusing our thoughts upon the LORD and upon His NAME. We pray by searching Scripture to know HIS commands and HIS character. We pray by partaking in charitable service and fellowship and in the sacrifice of communion in which we choose against our own desires that we may be one with fellow disciples and one with the intentions of our LORD we all together serve.

Because all things belong to the Almighty, whether great or small, we thank HIM, we praise HIM, and we worship HIS Majesty, all the while calling this All-Prayer. As most things are, especially with the FATHER, prayer too is multi-purposed. Not only is it an attachment of ourselves onto our FATHER in Heaven, but it is a function that also furthers that attachment. And it is one that further bids the will to be bound to this LORD of the Lords. Prayer does this by self-judgement and introspection. It judges us but also makes us judge ourselves. It searches us, and makes us search out our own hearts to root out wickedness and everything cheap or base. Thus also Prayer alters our core selves and calls upon us to make the same excruciating effort on our own behalf. All-Prayer orders a life, but then calls that life's owner to further order it on his or her own. Once the heart is changed, inclined toward a pursuit of the LORD, the rest of us will follow after and then further our life of Prayer by willfully going on in this course set for us.

Prayer gives knowledge of the LORD and knowledge of ourselves by comparison. Prayer then tells us to make a relationship with the LORD out of what we now know. Prayer unites us with Him, then calls us to cut ties with the world. Prayer alters our perspective, then demands that we ourselves change our character, exchanging it for that of Christ. Prayer is not just the work of the FATHER for us, but it is also and all the more our daily work being done in HIM.

Daily, our Savior will give power and strength. Daily, HE will give grace and hope. Daily, HE will give us peace and joy. These are gifts of All-Prayer, the LORD communicating HIS love for us by bringing us every tool with which to work. Our part of All-Prayer is to use these gifts to turn our lives and everything that surrounds us into a thing that honors Him, Who gave. Prayer is using the tools that the LORD has given us to build a House that bears HIS NAME, to build a life, beginning to end, with our FATHER enthroned throughout. And whether we are praying by our bedside, or praying as we move through the world, the goal is ever the same: attachment to Majesty and oneness with HIM, ceaselessly and selflessly demanding, now and forever, the pure presence of the LORD in our lives and joy in the House we've built for Him.

Prayers

Prayers

Prayers

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