

# THE SOUL OF PRAYER

1. The central task of the Christian life is to come into full union with God. Only in union do we fully know who we are. A life of union with God is one of great simplicity.
2. One of God's chief pathways to union with us is the practice of prayer. Prayer is a synthesis through which we not only learn to walk in his ways, but through which he enters into our ways. It is not enough to think about prayer. We must pray.
4. The actual practice of prayer causes us to respond to the depths of our own being and to the immanent presence of God. Regardless of the answers or outcomes of our prayers something is happening in us as we pray.

## I. PRAYER AND IDENTITY

1. Prayer has to do with the fundamental relationship of our lives, the relationship that we have as creatures with God, our Creator. The consistent practice of prayer helps us to realize the presence of God within us, not only as *a* reality, but *the* central reality of our existence.
2. The discovery of identity can only be made by spending time in prayer. **Col 3:3** *For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*
3. Finding our identity in God through prayer leads us to a sense of destiny, meaning, wholeness, and union.

## II. PRAYER AND COMPANIONSHIP

1. In prayer, we seek not just to think about God, but to be with God. The purpose of prayer and speech are not the same. **The purpose of speech is to inform; the purpose of prayer is to partake.**

**Rom 8:26-27** *And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for {us} with groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to {the will of} God.*

2. God is with us, in us. God is *intimately with us* and he is also *infinitely beyond us*. It is prayer alone that can reconcile these two polarities.

### **III. PRAYER AND WHOLENESS**

**1.** Prayer is not merely a matter of talking to God, but of listening to him and being with him. We need to be with him because without him we lack wholeness.

**2.** Romans 8:26 reveals to us that prayer is basically an experience of being filled with the Spirit. When you go to pray, you move into his territory. In Spirit-centered prayer, our conviction realizes his infinite capacity. **Eph 4:6** *one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*

**3.** As this sense of God's creative presence and redemptive power expands in our lives a marvelous thing begins to happen...we have a new capacity to be at peace in all things.

**4.** Finding God's immanent presence in prayer begins to heal the divisions within us. We feel accepted, affirmed, loved.

### **IV. PRAYER AND SELF-SURRENDER**

**1.** Prayer simplifies us. Empties us so that we can receive the fullness of God's *liberating truth* and *harmonizing love*.

**Ps 62:8** *Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.*

**2.** Prayer helps us to pay attention to God. Prayer is the process of polishing the mirror of our souls so that we can reflect more of God's light and love into the world around us.

**3.** In prayer, as we empty ourselves of our egos and ideas, as we come to wait before the creative and redemptive Spirit, we enter a void in which we are unmade. But in so doing we discover we are not *destroyed* but rather we are *awakened*. *In prayer we shift the center of living from self-consciousness to self-surrender.*

### **Conclusion:**

**1.** As a tree torn from the soil, as a river separated from its source, the human soul wanes when it is detached from God through the absence of prayer.

**2.** Without prayer, we are like the scattered rungs of a broken ladder. To pray is to become a ladder on which our lives and others can mount up to God. And he also comes down the ladder to us.

**3.** To pray means to bring God back into the world, to establish his kingship, at least in our hearts.