

Lesson 13: The 1st Essential of Holy Living: Prayer-1

Memory Verse: Philippians 4:6 "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

Introduction

Note: God has made a redemption plan to change human beings back into the perfect likeness of His own character. He has made a way to provide all the resources and power of heaven to meet every one of our needs, no matter what they are. The greatest goal that is given us is victory over all sin so that our character will become like Christ's.

But most humans doubt that it can be done. Others become confused in their ideas of how to receive the resources and power provided by the gospel and to let them operate in their lives for their perfect transformation.

Many struggle along without finding the way and give up in discouragement. Some continue struggling, hoping that somehow the way will yet be found. Others are continually advancing in their experience and daily drawing nearer the goal.

For 6000 years Satan has been saying that God is asking us to do the impossible. But if God is really God, He is not asking us to do something that is impossible. His plans are not imperfect, but will work successfully if they are followed. This brings us to the study of the daily experience which the Christian should have in order to conquer sin and perfect a holy character.

How do we co-operate with God to change our character so that we will fit into heaven? How shall we receive the power of God to make it possible for us to live a holy life? What is the experience through which we must pass by which we can become a child of God, receive the divine nature, become like God in character, and be saved in the kingdom of heaven?

Every Bible truth has just one object: to lead the believer through an experience which will restore the image of God in his soul and perfect his character. The attainment of this goal -- victory over all sin -- is the purpose of every doctrine of the Bible.

1. How does Scripture describe the Christian's experience? Proverbs 4:18

"But the _____ of the just is as the shining _____, that shineth _____ and _____ unto the _____ day." The Christian's experience is a growing thing. Every day he gains new victories. Every day he learns new lessons.

2. How does this experience progress? 2 Peter 1:5-7

"And beside this, giving all _____,

Add to your Faith _____;

And to Virtue _____;

And to Knowledge _____;

And to Temperance _____;

And to Patience _____;

And to Godliness _____;

And to Brotherly Kindness _____."

3. What are the chances of success if we follow this plan? 2 Peter 1:8-11

"For if _____ things be _____ you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be _____ nor _____ in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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"But he that _____ these things is blind, and cannot _____ afar off, and hath _____ that he was _____ from his old sins.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give _____ to make your calling and election _____: for if ye _____ these things, ye shall _____ fall:

"For so an _____ shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting _____ of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

4. God has a plan for restoring us to His image. He has given us principles that work. If we follow His plan, we will find that His plan is perfect and that it works in our lives.

2 Samuel 22:31-33 "As for God, His way is _____; the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all them that _____ in him. For who is God, save the Lord? and who is a rock, save our God? God is my _____ and _____: And He maketh _____ way _____."

So God has given us **7 essential principles** for our experience like the 7 colors of the rainbow. We are given these principles to **use** under the influence of the Holy Spirit so that we can follow **His way**, which is perfect, and co-operate with Him to make our way perfect because we are walking in His way. Let us look at these 7 helps one by one.

The First Essential – Prayer

I. What is Prayer?

5. **Psalm 55:16-17** "As for me, I will _____ upon _____; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I _____, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice."

Prayer is talking to _____. It is what connects us with Him.

Note: "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him." SC 93.2

"Prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence." SC 94.2

"In order to commune with God, **we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life.**" SC 93.1

II. Why do we Pray?

6. **Psalm 57:2** "I will _____ unto God most high; unto God that performeth _____ for me." God can do all things for us if we ask. We need Him.

7. **Psalm 86:1-7** "A Prayer of David.

1 Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me: for I am _____ and _____.

2 P _____ my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, _____ thy servant that trusteth in thee.

3 Be _____ unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee _____.

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I _____ up my soul.

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5 For thou, Lord, art _____, and ready to _____; and plenteous in _____ unto all them that _____ upon thee.

6 Give ear, O Lord, unto my _____; and attend to the voice of my supplications.

7 In the day of my _____ I will call upon thee: for thou wilt _____ me."

Here are given many reasons to pray:

- a. I need His help and guidance. (verse _____)
- b. I need Him to save me and to preserve me from sin. (verse _____)
- c. I need His mercy daily. (verse _____)
- d. He is the only one that can give us real joy. (verse _____)
- e. He is good and He forgives and has mercy for all that call upon Him. (v. _____)
- f. He hears my prayers. (verse _____)
- g. When I have any trouble, I can come to Him and He is there for me. (v. _____)

Note: "It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask." GC 525.2 This is because He does not force His help on us, but He freely gives it to those that ask Him.

III. For What Should We Pray?

8. For what are we to seek? **Matthew 6:33**

"But seek ye _____ the kingdom of _____, and his _____; and all _____ things shall be added unto you."

The first thing we should seek, or desire to have is His _____

9. How will we get the righteousness that we need? **Matthew 7:7-8**

We must _____, _____, and _____

When we do this, we are promised that we shall _____ and _____ and it shall be _____ to us. So the first thing to do is to ask and seek and knock for righteousness. If we don't ask for it, we won't get it.

Note: "If we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, and in humble, trusting faith make known our wants to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts. **Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite.** We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness." SC 96.3

10. What should we pray about?

Philippians 4:6 "Be careful for nothing; but in _____ by prayer and supplication with _____ let your requests be made known unto God."

1 Thessalonians 5:18 "In _____ give _____: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

We should pray about E _____ and T _____ Him for everything.

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Note: ☞ "Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. ...

☞ Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe.

☞ **Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice.**

☞ There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read;

☞ There is **no perplexity too difficult** for Him to unravel.

☞ **No calamity** can befall the least of His children, **no anxiety** harass the soul, **no joy** cheer, **no sincere prayer** escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. ...

☞ The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full **as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare**, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son." SC 100.1

11. What else should we pray about besides our needs? **Psalm 107:8**

"Oh that men would _____ the Lord for his _____, and for his wonderful _____ to the children of men!"

Note: "We need to praise God more 'for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.' Psalm 107:8. **Our devotional exercises should not consist wholly in asking and receiving.** Let us not be always thinking of our wants and never of the benefits we receive. We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. We are the constant recipients of God's mercies, and yet how little gratitude we express, how little we praise Him for what He has done for us." SC 102.2

IV. How Should We Pray?

12. What must we remember when we come to Him? **Psalm 111:9**

We must remember that His name is _____ and _____

13. How do we show reverence to God? **Psalm 95:6-7**

"O come, let us worship and _____ down: let us _____ before the Lord our maker. For he is our _____; and we are the _____ of his pasture, and the _____ of his hand."

14. How should we ask? **1 John 5:14**

We should ask for anything _____ to His _____

15. What can we know when we pray like this? **1 John 5:14,15**

We know that He will _____ us

We know that we _____ the _____ that we desired of him.

16. What should we do besides ask, when we pray? **Mark 11:24**

We must also _____ that we will receive the blessings we ask for.

Note: "When Jesus was upon the earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He directed them to **present their daily needs** before God, and to **cast all their care upon Him**. And the assurance He gave them that their petitions should be heard, is assurance also to us." SC 93.3

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17. What is Jesus' prayer for us? **John 17:15** "I pray not that thou shouldst take them _____ of the _____, but that thou shouldst _____ them from the _____."

Note: " 'I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world,' Christ continued, 'but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.' Christians should exercise every ability which God has given them in an effort to answer this prayer. They are to **ask God earnestly and frequently to keep them from the evil that is in the world.** Christ has charged His followers to pray without ceasing. Never fail to importune God in private prayer. Never cease to intercede with him; for **when you fail to pray, you are strengthless to resist Satan's temptations.**" ST, June 19, 1901 par. 3

18. What happens when we neglect to pray? **Matthew 26:41**

"Watch and pray, that ye enter _____ into _____: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is _____."

Note: "The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy **entice them to sin**; and it is **all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer.** ... Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching **we are in danger of growing careless** and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith **obtain grace and power** to resist temptation." SC 94.2

"If a Christian fails, it is because he does not obey the orders of his Captain. He is off guard; he is not Christ-like. **It will work disaster to the soul to neglect prayer; for you will be led to yield carelessly to temptation.** But if you do yield, do not therefore cast away your confidence in God; lose confidence in yourself, and **press closer to the side of Christ.**" RH, June 28, 1892 par. 5

"We should pray in the family circle, and **above all we must not neglect secret prayer, for this is the life of the soul. It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected.** Family or public prayer alone is not sufficient. In solitude let the soul be laid open to the inspecting eye of God. ... In secret prayer the soul is free from surrounding influences, free from excitement. Calmly, yet fervently, will it reach out after God. ... By calm, simple faith the soul holds communion with God and gathers to itself rays of divine light to strengthen and sustain it in the conflict with Satan. **God is our tower of strength.**" SC 98.2

19. Because of this danger what does it tell us to do in **1 Thessalonians 5:17**?

"P _____ without _____." We need this because Satan is always tempting us, but how can we be always praying?

Note: "We must learn to pray without ceasing. Wherever we are, our **thoughts** may be a prayer to God." ST, May 29, 1884 par. 9

"Look to Jesus when you come in and when you go out, and pray without ceasing. **You should realize that temptation is on every side.** Around you are those whose conversation is only chaff and nonsense. In the world pride and vanity are displayed, and you will be tempted to feel poverty concerning these things that the world admires, which can never satisfy the soul's hunger. **Oh, then pray, 'Lord, make me a jewel for thy kingdom.'**" ST, May 16, 1892 par. 4

"We are not always so situated that we can enter into our closets to seek God in prayer, but **there is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God.** There is nothing that can

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hinder us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God, and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before the king Artaxerxes. A closet of communion may be found wherever we are. **We should have the door of the heart open continually, and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in our souls.**" ST, Dec. 16, 1889 par. 2

"Although there may be a tainted, corrupted atmosphere around us, we need not breathe its miasma, but may live in the pure atmosphere of heaven. **We may close every door to impure imaginings and unholy thoughts by lifting the soul into the presence of God through sincere prayer.** Those whose hearts are open to receive the support and blessing of God, will walk in a holier atmosphere than that of earth, and will have constant communion with God. But those who reserve their thoughts of God, their earnest soul longings for purity and grace, for certain times, and places, and occasions, **will be overcome by temptation.** The thoughts will be impure, the promptings of the natural heart will be fulfilled, and the man will be worsted in the conflict; for he will be drawn away of his own lust and enticed. The injunction of the Saviour is, 'Pray without ceasing.' **The heart is to be continually going out in desire for the presence and grace of Jesus, that the soul may have divine enlightenment and heavenly wisdom.**" ST, December 16, 1889 par. 3

"**We need to have more distinct views of Jesus, and a fuller comprehension of the value of eternal realities.** The beauty of holiness is to fill the hearts of God's people, and that this may be accomplished, we should **seek** for divine disclosures of heavenly things. Brethren, **we should pray in all places, and under all circumstances.** Our petitions may be only broken ejaculations, or they may be but secret thoughts of the heart, but whatever we have opportunity for, **let the soul be drawn out and upward**, that God may grant us a breath of his heavenly atmosphere. Let the spirit groan after God, and mingle faith with fervent desire. We should encourage gratitude and praise, and always be found warring against every unholy impulse, crushing out of the soul every unclean lust. This is the warfare that must be accomplished. **We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts may turn to God as naturally as the flower turns to the sun.** The sunflower keeps its face sunward. If it is turned from the light, it will twist itself on the stem, until it lifts up its petals to the bright beams of the sun. So let everyone who has given his heart to God, **turn to the Sun of Righteousness**, and eagerly look up to receive the bright beams of the glory that shine in the face of Jesus. Thus we may educate the soul to press its way out of the corrupted moral atmosphere of the world, of sin and selfishness, into the atmosphere that is divine and health-giving." ST, December 16, 1889 par. 4

"**Place your feet in the path of God's commandments**, and be assured that your prayers will be answered. There is a great lack of earnestness, a great lack of vital interest in prayer. Yet we are exhorted to be 'instant in prayer,' to 'pray without ceasing'. We are to keep a spirit of intercession, and present all our wants to God. **We are to tell him about the smallest things of life**, – our cares, our business, our desires and needs. You can never weary the Lord by your importuning. **It is by beholding Jesus that you become changed into the divine similitude.** We may behold him by continuing in prayer, until we are not aware that we are praying; for our souls turn to the Sun of Righteousness as a flower turns to the light." ST, May 28, 1896 par. 3

20. What are we admonished to do in **Proverbs 4:23**? "Keep thy _____ with all _____; for out of it are the issues of life."

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How can we keep our hearts? **Psalm 119:9-11** "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking _____ thereto according to thy _____. With my _____ heart have I _____ thee: O let me not _____ from thy commandments. Thy _____ have I _____ in mine _____, that I might not _____ against thee."

Note: "Many are inquiring, 'How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?' You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You **cannot** control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; **but you need not despair. What you need to understand is the true force of the will.** This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. **Everything depends on the right action of the will.** The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You **cannot** change your heart, you **cannot** of yourself give to God its affections; but you **can choose** to serve Him. You **can give** Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. **Thus** your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him. SC 47.1

"Desires for goodness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of **yielding** the will to God. They do not now **choose** to be Christians. SC 47.2

"**Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life.** By yielding up your will to Christ, you **ally** yourself with the **power** that is above all principalities and powers. You will have **strength** from above to hold you steadfast, and thus **through constant surrender to God** you will be **enabled** to live the new life, even the life of faith." SC 48.1

21. Why is it important to "keep" our heart? **Mark 7:21-23** "For from within, out of the _____ of men, proceed _____ thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, _____, wickedness, _____, lasciviousness, an _____ eye, blasphemy, _____, _____: All these _____ things come from within, and _____ the man."

The only way we can be good and do good is through the strength of Jesus.

The only way to get the strength of Jesus is through prayer.

Satan is constantly trying to distract our minds from God, so that he can overcome us.

Note: "**In the work of heart-keeping we must be instant in prayer**, unwearied in petitioning the throne of grace for assistance. Those who take the name of Christian should come to God in earnestness and humility, pleading for help. The Saviour has told us to pray without ceasing. The Christian can not always be in the position of prayer, but **his thoughts and desires can always be upward.** Our self-confidence would vanish, did we talk less and pray more." YI, March 5, 1903 par. 3

"**The Lord will not leave his afflicted, tried children to be the sport of Satan's temptations.** It is our **privilege** to trust in Jesus. The heavens are full of rich blessings, and it is our **privilege** to have the joy of Christ in us that our joy may be full. **We have not because we ask not, or because we do not pray in faith, believing that we shall be blessed with the special influence of the Holy Spirit.** To the true seeker through the mediation of Christ the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit are imparted in order that the receiver may impart a knowledge of saving truth.

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Why do we not believe the plain 'Thus saith the Lord'? **Do not cease to pray under any circumstances.** The spirit may be willing but the flesh may be weak, but Jesus knows all about that. In your weakness you are not to be anxious; for **anxiety means doubt and distrust.** You are simply to believe that Christ is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us. What does intercession comprehend? -- **It is the golden chain which binds finite man to the throne of the infinite God.** The human agent whom Christ has died to save importunes the throne of God, and his petition is taken up by Jesus, who has purchased him with his own blood. Our great High Priest places his righteousness on the side of the sincere suppliant, and the prayer of Christ blends with that of the human petitioner. **Christ has urged that his people pray without ceasing.** This does not mean that we should always be upon our knees, but that **prayer is to be as the breath of the soul.** Our silent requests, wherever we may be, are to be ascending unto God, and Jesus, our Advocate, pleads in our behalf, bearing up with the incense of his righteousness our requests to the Father. **The Lord Jesus loves his people, and when they put their trust in him, depending wholly upon him, he strengthens them. He will live through them, giving them the inspiration of his sanctifying Spirit, imparting to the soul a vital transfusion of himself. He acts through their faculties, and causes them to choose his will and to act out his character.** With the apostle Paul they then may say, 'I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' Christ impresses upon the mind of believers the fact that they are to have the **glory** [character] which the Father has given him, in order that all who love and serve him may be **one with God.**" SSW, February 1, 1896 par. 3

22. What does it say in **Isaiah 26:3** about those who keep their thoughts on Jesus?

"Thou wilt _____ him in perfect _____, whose _____ is stayed on thee: because he _____ in thee."

It is a battle over your thoughts. Who will have your thoughts? Whose thoughts will you keep and obey? You are the one who decides who will win this battle: Jesus OR Satan **Note:** "But let every worker, whether a child, a youth, or a person of mature age, **put on Christ**; that is, **seek him in prayer**, and believe that his prayers are accepted of God, because he has charged all to watch and to pray without ceasing. Some pray during the week of prayer, and then suppose their praying may cease; and as they do not continue to pray, they do not continue to receive. **They must continue to ask, that they may receive.** Ask, and you shall receive. **Seek me, and you shall find me close beside you**, ready to shield, to help, to bless you. **I will lead the current of your thoughts away from cheap and frivolous things.** I will open for you subjects to contemplate that will **give you my peace, my joy, and consolation, that will take away your worries.** Our powers are not to be employed and worn out with responsibilities that belong to God, and not to any human being. Then let us **educate the soul** not to chafe and irritate and weaken its powers unnecessarily, but **keep itself in calmness and in peace.**" RH, May 9, 1899 par. 11