Prayer

By Andrew Murray (1828 – 1917)

"...Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:6).

The spiritual life with its growth depends a great deal on prayer. My life will flourish or decay according to how much or how little I pray, if I pray with pleasure or from duty, and if I pray according to the Word or according to my own inclination. In the word of Jesus quoted above, we have the principal ideas of true prayer.

Alone with God – that is the first thought. The door must be shut, with the world and man outside, because I am to hold communion with God undisturbed. When God met with His servants in the olden time, He took them alone. Let the first thought in your prayer be: God and I are here in the chamber with each other. The power of your prayer will be in accordance with your conviction of the nearness of God.

In the presence of your Father – this is the second thought. You come to the inner chamber, because your Father with His love awaits you there. Although you are cold, dark, sinful, although it is doubtful whether you can pray at all – come because the Father is there, and He looks upon you. Set yourself beneath the light of His eye. Believe in His tender, fatherly love, and out of this faith prayer will be born.

Count certainly upon an answer – that is the third point in the word of Jesus. "Your Father will reward you openly." There is nothing which the Lord Jesus has spoken so positively about as the certainty of an answer to prayer. Review the promises. Observe how constantly in the Psalms, that prayerbook of God's saints, God is called the God who hears prayer and gives answers.

It may be that there is much in you that prevents the answer. Delay in the answer is a very blessed discipline. It leads to self-searching as to whether we are praying improperly, and whether our life is truly in harmony with our prayer. It leads to a purer exercise of faith. It draws us into a closer and more persistent relationship with God. The sure confidence of an answer is the secret of powerful praying. Let us always keep this as the chief thing in prayer. When you pray, stop in the midst of your prayer to ask, "Do I believe that I am receiving what I pray for?" Let your faith receive and hold firm the answer as given. It will turn out according to your faith.

Beloved young Christians, if there is one thing about which you must be conscientious, it is this: secret conversation with God. Your life is hidden with Christ in God. Every day you must, in prayer, ask from above and by faith receive what you need for that day. Every day personal communion with the Father and the Lord Jesus must be renewed and strengthened. God is our salvation and our strength. Christ is our life and our holiness. Only in personal fellowship with

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the living God is our blessedness found.

Christian, pray much, pray continually, pray without ceasing. When you have no desire to pray, go just then to the inner chamber. Go as one who has nothing to bring to the Father, to set yourself before Him in faith in His love. Coming in that manner to the Father, and abiding before Him, is already a prayer which He understands. Be assured that to appear before God, however passively, always brings a blessing. The Father not only hears; He sees in secret, and He will reward openly.

My Father, You have so certainly promised in Your Word to hear the prayer of faith, give me the Spirit of prayer so that I may know how to offer that prayer. Graciously reveal to me Your wonderful, fatherly love. Make me aware of the complete blotting out of my sins in Christ, by which every hindrance in this direction is taken away. And reveal to me the intercession of the Spirit in me, by which my ignorance or weakness cannot deprive me of the blessing. Teach me with faith in You, the Trinity, to pray in fellowship with You. And confirm in me the strong, living certainty that I receive what I believingly ask. Amen.

Note: The principal thing in prayer is faith. …To arrive at this faith we must take time in prayer. We must take the time to set ourselves silently and trustfully before God, and to become awake to His presence. We must take time to have our soul sanctified in fellowship with God. We must take time for the Holy Spirit to teach us to hold firm and to trustfully use the Word of promise. No earthly knowledge, no earthly possessions, no earthly food, no conversations with friends can we have without time – sufficient time. Let us not think to learn how to pray, how to enjoy the power and the blessedness of prayer, if we do not take time with God. …Prayer is conversation and fellowship with God, in which God has time and opportunity to work in us, in which our souls die to their own will and power and become bound up and united with God.

– Taken from *The New Life*.

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