

The Principles of **Spiritual Practice**

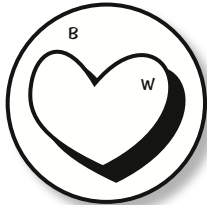


**Duplicating the Nature of Spirit
in Your Experience of Life**

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Our spiritual practice is the only thing that we can depend on to transform our lives. We can't depend on other people, because they often let us down. We can't depend on ourselves, because we frequently make mistakes. We can't depend on God, because God has already given us our perfection. Consequently, we can only depend on our *'spiritual practice'* to change us in ways that allow us to accept what God has already given.

My Spirit is Perfect

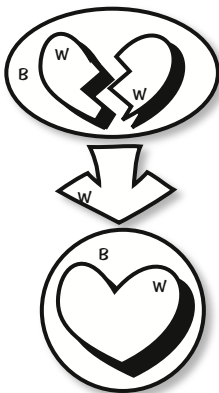


"God is a spirit."
...John 4:24

per·fec·tion • Lacking nothing essential to the whole.

Spirit is the one unformed universal activity of God which is perfect, whole and complete in its nature. It is a field of divine potential and infinite possibility which exists in a state of pure perfection prior to all human experience. Yet, It is the source of all human experience. It is the creative impulse of Life Itself. Because It is the creative source of our lives, It does not exist outside the realm of our own being. Spirit is the 'divinity that is within us' which serves as the creative impulse of our own lives. Ultimately, our highest realization of Truth must be that perfection lies not in the effects of creation but in its source, which is Spirit, and that perfection is within us all.

Practicing Makes Me Perfect



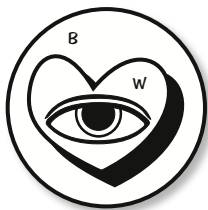
"Practice makes perfect."

prac·tice • To perform repeatedly in order to *perfect* a skill.

The old adage that 'practice makes perfect' contains great wisdom. Whenever we practice anything, our entire psycho-physical being reorganizes itself towards perfection of performance. Consequently, we will always become skillful in anything that we practice. This is because the Divine Intelligence within us responds to our willingness to change for the better, by changing us for the better. Our willingness for this change to occur is demonstrated by practicing. When we are unwilling to practice, we are unwilling to change, and the *'status quo'* will always prevail. Every great human achievement has come to those who have engaged in practicing the disciplines of their chosen endeavor.

Success is not an accident.

My Spiritual Practice Reveals My Perfection



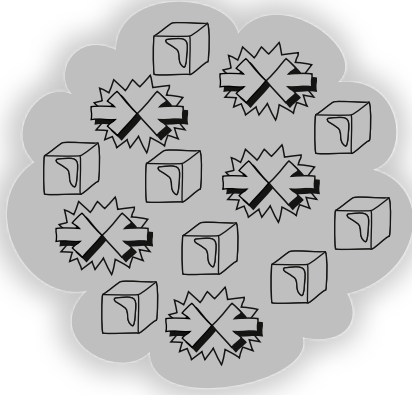
"Be therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
...Matthew 5:48

spir·it·ual prac·tice • The means by which we *reveal* the wholeness and perfection of our own being.

Spiritual Practice is the means by which we reveal the wholeness and perfection of God that is already within us all. The essence of Spiritual Practice does not involve adding anything to ourselves. It is the means by which we *'duplicate the nature of Spirit'* in order to dispel all of the *'psycho-physical behaviors'* that obstruct the expression of our own spiritual perfection. Ultimately, Spirit always favors the one who is prepared through the discipline of practice in their field of endeavor. The *'good news'* is that we can all be favored by Spirit simply by demonstrating our willingness to be changed through a program of daily dedicated Spiritual Practice.

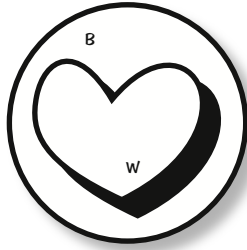
We duplicate the nature of Spirit by engaging in certain practices which are often referred to as *disciplines*. Consequently, when we begin to adopt these superior modes of thought and behavior we are confronted by a phenomena commonly referred to as the '*crisis of discipline*.' Following is a brief description of this process:

My Personal Patterns Tend to Be Un-Consciousness



Our personal patterns of our thoughts and actions tend to be undisciplined and unconscious. The collective effect of these patterns is represented by the irregularly shaped cloud at the left. As can be seen, it is also filled with mental blocks and emotional conflicts that tend to operate in the darkness of our subconscious nature. In this respect, our normal behavior tends to be limiting because it is based on a collection of unrecognized '*error beliefs*' that were born out of the ignorance of our past experiences in the world.

My Spiritual Patterns are Conscious



Spiritual behavior is superior behavior that simply duplicates the nature of Spirit. In this sense, it is disciplined, orderly and balanced. This type of behavior pattern is represented at the left by the esoteric symbol for Spirit, which is a circle. Furthermore, a spiritual behavior, or *discipline*, is always filled with light, or consciousness. Consequently, it is always based on Truth, and serves as a portal for the qualities of God to be expressed into our lives.

My Awareness is Curative



When we duplicate the nature of Spirit in the patterns of our thought and actions, we consciously superimpose a *superior* pattern over our personal patterns. This, in turn, brings to our awareness all of the *mental blocks* and *emotional conflicts* that lie hidden within our subconscious nature that are inconsistent with the new superior activity. By bringing these hidden causes into the light of our awareness, it is their undoing. As we engage a disciplined life of spiritual behavior, all of the limitations that normally lie below our awareness in our subconscious mind are examined and released so that we can begin to make new and better choices in our lives.

On the path to spiritual perfection, we pass through three distinct stages.

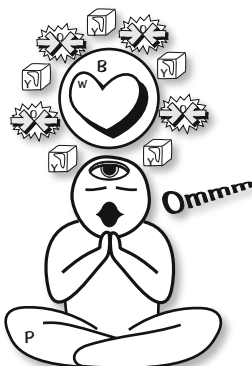
1. My Pondering Stage (Traditional Spiritual Practice)



The Talking School
"Seeking Answers"

We first come to engage spiritual practice by pondering the 'Principles of Truth.' We are usually lead to this activity by some form of suffering in our lives which moves us to search for answers to the mystery of life. As we begin to explore the greater possibilities of human existence we quickly become inspired and filled with hope. At this point, good things begin to happen in our lives, and it is our natural human inclination to want to share this "good news" of Truth. Consequently, we are inspired to do a lot of talking, as we begin telling others about our great discovery. However, we soon come to realize that there is always some unresolved life-long issue or great unfulfilled desire that draws us into the next stage of our spiritual practice.

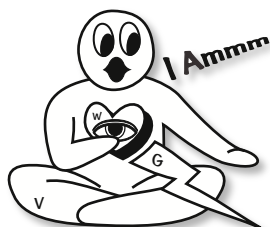
2. My Practicing Stage (Transitional Spiritual Practice)



The Walking School
"Getting Answers"

First we *'talk the talk'* now we must *'walk the walk'* of spiritual perfection. This is where we first encounter the *'crisis of discipline.'* It occurs when we actually begin to *'practice what we preach.'* It has been said that we never realize how crooked our own path has been until we begin to walk the *'straight path'* of Truth. Consequently, this is a very difficult stage. It is here that we encounter all that is unhealed and unresolved within our own consciousness. It is important to remember that all of the unpleasant thoughts and feelings that arise from within the depths of our subconscious mind are *'coming to pass'* away. Unless our false beliefs and hidden fears are released, they will continue to manifest themselves as unpleasant circumstances in our lives.

3. My Perfection Stage (True Spiritual Practice)

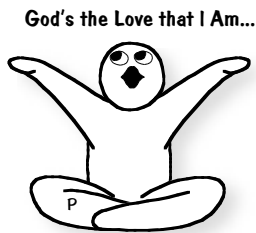


The Teaching School
"Getting Questions"

The final stage of practice is when we have fully *embodied*, and are *expressing*, the *perfection* of Spiritual Truth. In other words, when we have *realized* the *'divinity that is within us,'* we begin *revealing* it to the world in the form of divinely inspired actions. Even though we may *seem* very ordinary to those around us, they will frequently have an *intuition* of something very *extraordinary* about us. That experience is actually a form of spiritual teaching that exists as a *transmission* of Truth, which operates beyond the level of the senses. Consequently, we teach by example, more than by explanation. We do not teach others what to do, we teach them who they *are*, and this can only occur when we know who *we are*. Only a dedicated spiritual practice can bring us to this enlightened state of *Self-Knowingness*.

We cannot truly say that we love God if we are *unwilling* to change. Following are 15 spiritual disciplines that will change us in ways that will *please* God by revealing the '*divinity that is within us*,' so that we might become a blessing to the world.

I Worship God to Invoke My Good



"What we worship changes us."

To worship means to '*give our full attention to something*.' Because we are absorbed by what we give our attention to, we literally become what we worship. Consequently, when we worship God, we are absorbed by God, and in turn become more like God, which is the '*Good to which there is no opposite*.' It has been said that "*the solution to every human problem is to stop thinking about the problem, and to think about God instead*." We do this is by engaging in daily devotional practices. Our worship can take many forms, such as sacred chants, devotional prayers and the taking of various sacraments. However, the key ingredient to devotional practice is to engage in it with a mood of humility, and surrender to the Divine. This is the '*Golden Key*' to the spiritual transformation of our lives.

I Meditate to Clear My Mind



"Meditation changes our attitude about things."

The opening passage of the Dhammapada, which is the teachings of the Buddha, tells us that, "*Our lives are shaped by our minds*." Additionally, the Bible teaches us to "*be transformed by the renewing of our minds*." (Romans 12:2) Meditation is the time-honored technique for taming, training and transforming our minds. This essential spiritual practice encompasses a variety of forms, from playful creative visualizations, to purifying practices based on various '*mind-stilling*' techniques. It is through the practice of meditation that we clear our mind of '*mental blocks*' and '*emotional conflicts*,' in order to come into an enlightened state of '*Self Realization*,' which is our full awareness of the '*divinity that is within us*.' The benefits of meditation are only accrued through dedicated daily practice, which produces a gradual awakening of our spiritual nature.

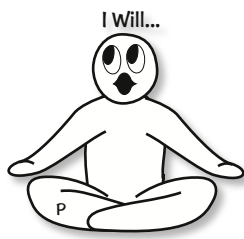
I Pray to Reveal My Good



"Pray changes things!"

Down through the ages, the '*masters of wisdom*' in every culture have always taught that nothing takes place on the *physical* side of life, unless it has first taken place on the *invisible* side of life. Furthermore, the most effective way to bring about changes on the *invisible* side of our lives is with *prayer*. For prayer is the means by which we *reveal* the '*divinity within us*.' There are many forms of prayer, from desperate beseechments made in times of peril, to complex esoteric incantations grounded in ancient wisdom. However, the most productive forms of prayer will always be based on the creative principles of faith, and founded on the '*Promises of God*,' as revealed through the Sacred Scriptures. Prayer is most effective when it is practiced on a daily basis, rather than waiting until we are confronted by some challenge, difficulty or disturbing condition in our lives.

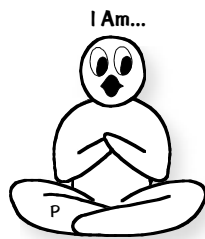
I Have Good Intentions for All That I Do



"What always manifests
is our intentions."

The purpose of having 'good intentions' about the expression of our lives, involves more than the mere acquisition of physical objects and experiences. The highest purpose of our intentions is to draw us into participation with the creative process of Life Itself. Furthermore, the commitment necessary to express our intentions develops *self-discipline* and increases our awareness of our own limiting and self-defeating behaviors. The true *gift* of our intentions is the knowledge, skill and wisdom that we develop in the process of their expression. While it is desirable to set personal goals in life, it is even more important to have *clear* intentions that will relate to the nature of our own *self-expression*. Always keep in mind that the real reason that we *want* anything at all in our lives, is to provide us with the opportunity to express the noblest qualities of our souls.

I Always Affirm What My Heart Intends



"God's the I Am that I Am."
...Exodus 3:14

The term *affirmation* is normally associated with a verbal statement that is made about something we are trying to achieve, or some experience we desire to have. However, the act of affirmation is really much more than this. It is an act of *faith*. It is the ability to put aside our doubts and fears in order to 'act as if' we already are that which we *intend* to be. In this sense, an affirmation can be any statement, act or symbolic gesture that affirms the *reality* of our intentions. Through the process of affirmation, we 'act as if' our intentions are *already* the reality of our lives. The highest form of affirmation is to simply duplicate the nature of Spirit in every area of our lives. This is how we build our faith, and reveal the '*divinity within us*.'

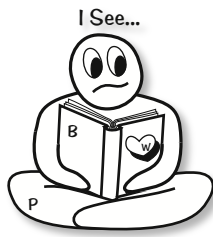
I Act With Patience in All That I Do



"If you don't have anything nice
to say, don't say anything at all."

Patience is defined as '*the ability to endure without complaining*.' It has been said that '*heaven is a place where there is nothing to complain about*.' Conversely, hell is '*the place where we go to complain*.' Therefore, the way that we bring heaven to earth, is by *refusing* to complain, criticize or gossip about the conditions, circumstances and relationships in our lives. To engage the discipline of patience, we must develop the capacity to "*walk by faith and not by sight*." (2 Corinthians 5:7) In other words, we should never say what we see, unless we are seeing something good. This includes what we see with our '*mind's eye*,' as well as our physical flesh eyes. Always keep in mind that, whatever we say today will cause us to see tomorrow whatever we *said* today.

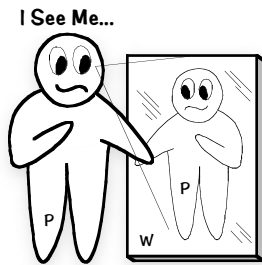
I Study the Teachings of Spiritual Truth



"Wisdom is the principal thing... with all your getting, get understanding."
...Proverbs 4:7

Each of us must become responsible for learning about the spiritual principles that shape our daily lives. In addition to the wisdom of Universal Truth, it is also necessary to acquire specific knowledge that relates to the effective management of our personal affairs. It is important to understand that practical knowledge is effective only because it is based on spiritual principles. Therefore, we must not shun, avoid or dismiss 'ordinary means' for developing a healthy, prosperous and abundant life. Our spiritual education program can assume many forms, from taking classes and reading modern books on metaphysics, to studying the Sacred Scriptures such as the 'Holy Bible' and the 'Bagavad Gita.' Additionally, we must also acquire worldly knowledge and practical 'life skills' as part of our educational program.

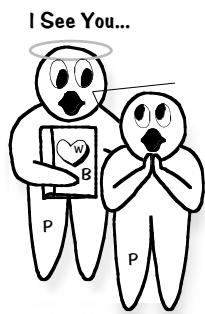
I Observe Myself to 'Know What I'm Doing'



"Awareness is curative."

One of the primary tools for developing a greater experience of life, is *self-observation*. It is important to recognize that the problems we experience in our lives are usually the result of our own misguided actions. By developing the capacity for *self-observation* we begin to 'wake up' to our own self-defeating behaviors. Once these destructive tendencies are *realized*, they can be released and no longer repeated. A primary tool for self-observation is a journal. When we make a commitment to record our experiences, we tend to approach them with a greater sense of *awareness*. However, it should also be recognized that any activity that produces greater awareness of how we live our lives is a form of *self-observation*. Therefore, it can also include such simple things as balancing our checkbook or going on a diet.

I Have Mentors to Show Me the Way



"When the student is ready the teacher arrives."

A *mentor* is described as 'a wise and trusted counselor or teacher.' Consequently, anyone whom we trust to teach us the ways of wisdom, is our *mentor*. In this regard, we all receive the loving guidance of the 'universal mentors' of humanity, such as Jesus, Buddha, Moses and Lao Tse, whose wisdom is recorded in the Sacred Scriptures. Additionally, we must also seek the guidance of 'personal mentors,' who can see for us what we cannot yet see for ourselves. Such individuals will always work with us on a 'one-to-one' basis in order to assist us in revealing our 'inner mentor,' which is our very own 'higher wisdom self.' The way to know that a 'personal mentor' can be trusted, is to test their teaching against the Sacred Scriptures, and then to simply notice if they practice what they *teach*.

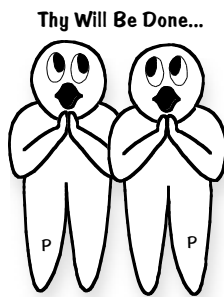
I Tithe to Release My Belief in Lack



"As you sow, so shall you reap."
...Galatians 6:7

Tithing is the ancient practice of returning 10% of our income to a person or place that makes us feel *grateful* for the Presence of God in our lives. In truth, we do not really give our tithes to individuals, or institutions. Instead, we are actually giving through them, back into the source from which all blessings flow, which is God. Because it is usually scary to give our money away, whenever we tithe, we are performing an act of *gratitude* in the face of our fear of lack. However, our symbolic act of gratitude will dispel our fear, and deepen our faith in God as the source of Abundance in our lives. Since money must obey our faith, the practice of tithing will always create prosperous conditions in our lives. This is because tithing is an act of *gratitude*, which is the 'anointing of increase.'

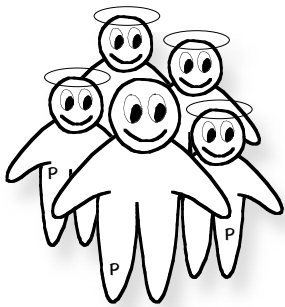
I Pray with Others to Deepen My Faith



"It takes two to speak the Truth...
one to speak it, and one to hear it."
...Henry David Theroou

God does not respond with greater favor to the prayers of two or more. However, when we pray with others, we develop a greater awareness of the Presence of God in our lives. For it is written, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20) It is this expanded awareness of God that deepens our faith, and allows us to accept more readily, all that God has given to make our lives more abundant. Consequently, we should always pray with friends and family as often as we possibly can. Additionally, most churches and spiritual centers have trained counselors and practitioners available to pray with us in our times of need. Sometimes all it takes is someone just to listen, and then to agree with what we have to say to God, in the form of prayer.

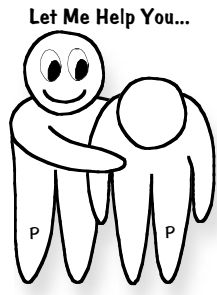
I Keep 'Good Company' in My Life



"Birds of a feather flock together."

It's always easier to engage in *right behavior* when we keep the company of others who share the noblest qualities of our souls. To periodically come together in a group can help to reinforce our own spiritual practice, and is always beneficial in keeping us from 'losing the thread' of our good intentions. There are many ways to keep 'Good Company,' from attending church, to developing personal relationships with other people who are traveling on the same path as own. It's always inspiring when we receive encouragement and support from others who stand in full agreement with the aspirations of our heart. This is why we are empowered, when we choose to participate in *communities* built on spiritual principles. It is especially true when we are having doubts about ourselves. Ultimately, we come to *realize* who we are by the company we keep.

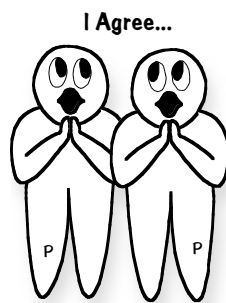
I Serve the World with Love



"The fruit of love is service."
.....Mother Theresa

One of the most important, and least understood, aspects of our spiritual growth is the concept of *service*. It is far more than just being a volunteer, or *'pitching in'* to help. Service is the activity of Love, which is the true *'works of faith.'* It is a form of spiritual practice, by which we express the *'divinity within us'* by *servicing* our awareness of Its presence in others. This is why, whenever we engage in *service*, we are always blessed and prospered in return. The more graciously we enter into the practice of serving others, the greater the blessings will be in our own life as well. Perhaps one of the greatest examples of *'true service'* comes from blessed Mother Theresa, who said, "I do not serve the poor. I serve Jesus Christ in the poor."

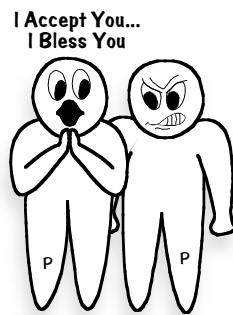
I Pray with Others for Our Good



"Quickly agree with
your adversaries."
...Matthew 5:25

One of the most powerful agents for change in the universe is the activity of *agreement*, which is the Principle of Covenant. Whenever we *agree* with others about anything, we create a Covenant with God to insure that it will come to pass. For it is written, "If two agree on earth... it shall be done for them by our Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 18:19) Therefore, we must always be diligent about what we tend to agree with in life. In this regard, whatever we give our *attention to*, we are agreeing with. This is why worshipping God, instead of our problems, causes our problems to fall away. Additionally, whenever we are in conflict with others, it is important to find some greater good that we can quickly agree upon. Keeping in mind, that *'God is the good to which there is no opposite.'*

I Love My Neighbor as Myself



"Do unto others as you would
have them do unto you."
.....The Golden Rule

We began this list of disciplines with the Golden Key of *Loving* God, and now we end with the Golden Rule, which calls upon us to *'love our neighbors as ourselves.'* (Luke 10:27) Unfortunately, most people don't really like themselves very much, which is why they don't like many of their neighbors. Considering that our neighbor is simply whoever we are giving our attention to in the moment, then every person that we encounter in our experience of life is our neighbor. Furthermore, our neighbors simply mirror back to us, everything that we like, and don't like about ourselves. The fastest way to accept and bless ourselves, is by loving our neighbors, as ourselves. The tool that we can use to do this is *forgiveness*. When we forgive our neighbors, we forgive ourselves. When we *praise* our neighbors, we *raise* ourselves into a higher state of being.

For those who have chosen to initiate their own spiritual transformation, there are three basic activities necessary to facilitate the revelation of their wholeness.

1. I Have a Daily Dedicated Practice



God's the Love that I Am.

'Daily dedicated spiritual practice' is the time that we spend each day exclusively devoted to developing a greater awareness of God in our lives. It is the time that we spend exclusively in meditation, prayer and spiritual study. Although it is desirable to bring a spiritual perspective into everything that we do, dedicated practice has no other activity mixed in with it. We must not delude ourselves with rationalizations such as, "I kind of meditate while I'm mowing the lawn." While this may be true, it is not 'dedicated spiritual practice.' The key to establishing and sustaining a daily dedicated spiritual practice is to decide when and where you are going to practice, and then *always show up!* God will do the rest, when we are *willing* to be changed.

2. I Attend a Weekly Gathering



"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."
-Matt. 18:20

A 'Worship Gathering' occurs whenever we come into the company of two or more other people for the purpose of formally worshipping God. The form of the gathering is not nearly as important as having an agreed upon purpose for coming together. Consequently, the reason for participating in such a Gathering should always be to set the concerns of the world aside, and to give our full attention to the source of our lives, which is the Presence of God as Love. The value of a Worship Gathering is the deepening of our faith that occurs whenever we come into *agreement* with others about the Presence of God in our lives.

3. I Arrange a Monthly Mentoring Session

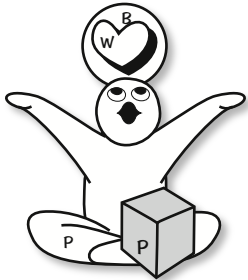


When the student is ready, the teacher will arrive.

A 'Spiritual Mentor' is a wise and trusted guide though life, who functions as both a teacher and advisor on spiritual matters alone. A 'mentoring session' should always be a one-on-one interaction, where we learn to apply the universal Principles of Truth to the unique situations in our own lives. It is important to consciously acknowledge the Mentor-Student relationship, so that an opportunity for a valuable lesson in life is not engaged as a casual conversation. This is most effectively accomplished by an exchange of financial consideration for the Mentor's time. This can take place in the form of an 'appreciation offering,' or a mutually agreed upon fee. Either way, it graciously establishes a right relationship between the Mentor and the Student, and places value upon their interaction.

We often think of prayer as a *'last resort'* for solving problems once we have exhausted every natural means. This is because we do not understand the purpose of prayer as a creative agent for change in our lives that operates at every level of our being.

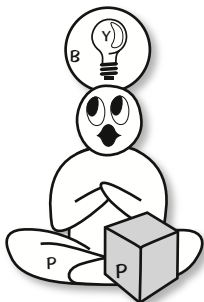
The Purpose of My Prayers is the Word of God



I Remember the Word of God

Prayer will change everything about ourselves, except for what is *changeless*, which is our Spirit. Since that which is *changeless* is also *nameless*, the closest we can come to naming the True Purpose of our prayers is the *'Word of God within us,'* expressed as a single word such as Love, Peace, Joy, Freedom, Wisdom, etc. When the Word of God that we are praying to express is supported by a *'Promise of God,'* the fulfillment of our prayers is guaranteed, when supported by our Faith.

The Purpose of My Prayers is Faith



I Realize the Word of God

Faith is the means by which we reveal the *'Word of God within us,'* and prayer is the first *'works of Faith'* that we must perform to bring forth this revelation. This is because prayer *changes* our minds, and tells our feelings how to feel, in order to produce a *'felt-sense,'* or *realization* of the Word of God that we are seeking to express. It is written, *"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."* (Rom. 12:2) Prayers of intention *renew* our minds, and awaken our Faith. Prayers of gratitude nurture our Faith, and *transform* our experience of life.

The Purpose of My Prayers is Newness



I Reveal the Word of God

Our day-to-day lives are in a constant state of change, and will conform themselves to whatever we give our *attention* to. With prayer, we give our *attention* to God, and our lives conform themselves to the *'unchanging newness'* of the Divine as an ever increasing revelation of all good things. Without prayer, our lives will simply conform themselves to the nature of the world, which is filled with doubt, conflict and despair. To be in this world, but not of it, we must pray everyday as a way of life.

The Enemy of My Prayers is Inertia



"This is not what I'm used to."

Inertia is defined as *'resistance to change.'* Since prayer is essentially an agent for change in our lives, our intention to pray will always be resisted by the inherent *inertia* of our flesh. This resistance uses *pride* to make us think that we don't need to pray when things are going well. On the other hand, when things are going badly, our inertia uses *doubt* to make us think that prayer won't help. This occurs because we did not pray our prayers of gratitude when things were going well.

The essence of productivity is the application of knowledge, in the form of principles. Prayer is no exception to this formula for success. The technology of 'Productive Prayer' involves the application of five basic principles which will cause us to deeply believe in the reality of what we are praying for. Consequently, we fulfill this important Promise from God: "Whatever things you desire, when you pray, believe that you have received them, and you shall have them." (Mark 11:24)

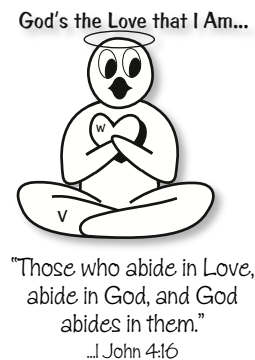
First, I Remember the Word of God



Remembrance - The act of 'knowing again.'

Whenever we pray, we must first turn away from existing conditions, and then remember a greater good that exists as a possibility for us. The greater the good we can conceive, the more powerful our prayer will be. Since the greatest good that exists is God, we must strive to remember the highest concept of God that we can. Such concepts are revealed to us through the written Word of God, and when we speak these concepts aloud they awaken a *remembrance* of the 'Word of God within us,' which is our own 'good intentions.' This first principle of prayer helps us to clarify our intentions, and to insure that they are consistent with the 'Promises of God.'

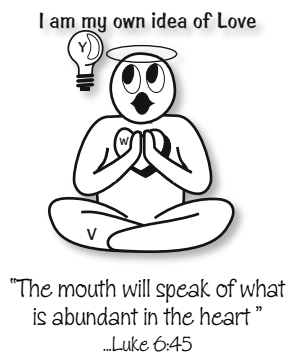
Then, I Identify Myself with the Word of God



Identification - The act of considering as similar or identical.

The principle of *identification* utilizes the power of Love, which draws us into an 'awareness of oneness' with the object of our identification. With this principle we identify ourselves with the concept of God that we have remembered and declared in the first step of prayer. This will produce a *realization* that we have been created in the image and likeness of God. This exalted state of being was expressed by Jesus when he said that "I and my Father are One!" (John 10:30) As we enter into this state of supreme identity we can pray in faith from the mountain top of Self-Realization, instead of from the 'valley of despair.'

Next, I Affirm My Intentions Based on the Word



Affirmation - A Declaration of Truth. (Latin - *affirmare*, to strengthen)

We use the principle of *affirmation*, to declare what we have *realized* to be true about the nature of the 'Word of God within us.' In other words, we affirm the good intentions of our heart, keeping in mind that our affirmations will activate our intentions to produce the fruit of Spirit in our lives. Consequently, this is where we begin to personalize our prayers so that the Word of God will *uniquely* benefit our own expression of life in a way that will make the world a better place to be. As we positively *affirm* what is true about God and ourselves, we set this Truth into vibration in our lives, and into the lives of others.

* These Principles were loosely derived from a highly effective form of prayer developed by Dr. Ernest Holmes. This particular type of 'affirmative prayer' is often referred to as 'Spiritual Mind Treatment,' and is widely taught and practiced throughout the spiritual organization, which he founded.

Now, I Release My False Beliefs with Forgiveness

I love my neighbors as myself.



"When you pray, if you have anything against anyone, forgive them so your Father might forgive you."
...Mark 11:25

Release - To unfasten, free or let go of. (Latin *-relaxare*, to relax)

Throughout our lives we have accepted many false beliefs and opinions which must now be released in order to reveal a greater Truth about ourselves. These old *'error beliefs'* continue to exist as *'hidden fears'* which are difficult to identify and release because they have been deeply suppressed in our flesh, and are often projected as *'accusations of wrongdoing'* onto others. Consequently, the fastest way to clear the path for the revelation of newness in our lives is by *forgiving* those whom we are tempted to criticize or condemn. Through acts of forgiveness we are able to release the *'mental blocks'* and *'emotional conflicts'* that would otherwise obstruct the highest expression of the good intentions in our heart. Furthermore, the practice of forgiveness will ultimately lead us into the experience of gratitude, which is the fulfillment of our prayers.

Finally, I Accept My Good with Gratitude

I am grateful
God is gracious.



"It's your Father's good pleasure to give me the Kingdom."
...Luke 12:32

Acceptance - To willingly receive, or agree to.

The Bible tells us that we will receive whatever we pray for if we *believe* that we have received it. (Mark 11:24) There is not a more powerful way to fulfill this Promise from God than to give thanks for what we are praying for, before we have received it. Consequently, the very best way to accept the fruit of our prayers into our lives is to always pray in a mood of gratitude and thanksgiving for the graciousness of God. Additionally, gratitude is the *'anointing of increase.'* Consequently, whatever we *accept* with gratitude, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem, it will find a way to increase in our lives.

A Productive Prayer for Abundance

Remembrance
(John 10:10)

It is written, *"I am come that all might have life, and have it more abundantly."* Therefore, I *know* that the nature of God is an *abundant* expression of Life.

Identification

Because I know that I am one with the Life that is God, I therefore know that I am one with Its infinitely abundant expression.

Affirmation

And so I affirm that the abundant nature of God is now flowing fully and freely through the faith of my being, and into expression in my life in the form of money, goods, services, ideas, opportunities, and whatever else might be required in order for me to know Life, and to know it more abundantly.

Release
(Forgiveness)

I now release any thought, belief, idea, attitude or suggestion that I might hold which does not conform with the Truth that I have spoken here. Furthermore, I am willing to forgive whoever I need to forgive, in order to reveal a more abundant expression of life.

Acceptance
(Gratitude)

With an open, gracious and joyous heart, I now accept the overflowing abundance of all that is good into my life, right here and right now! Amen!

In Truth, the activity of Spiritual Practice will always be quick, deep and comfortable. However, in reality, whenever we harbor *hidden* fears in the form of 'error beliefs,' our Practice can only embrace two of these qualities at the same time.

(✓ Check the two results most acceptable to you.)

My Results Can Come Quickly

We all live in a 'fast mood' society where it is difficult to sustain any sort of arduous effort over a long period of time. Consequently, any prolonged process that is excessively slow and tedious will not be well received.

My Results Can Be Meaningful

In order to produce meaningful results, we must initiate fundamental changes deep within our being. Consequently, any process that does not involve deep inner work will generally be fruitless, and is not likely to produce lasting changes.

My Process Can Be Comfortable

It is human nature to avoid any kind of experience that disturbs us emotionally. Consequently, we generally tend to avoid any process that contains elements of fear, conflict, or upset. The old adage 'no pain-no gain' is rarely put into practice by most people.

My Process is Quick and Comfortable, But Superficial

A process that is both quick and comfortable will be relatively superficial.

Consequently, it will be capable of producing only superficial results, if any at all. An example of such a process would involve the compiling of a 'Wish List' of desired outcomes. In order for these goals to be attained, we will have to put forth an arduous effort and be willing to face our fears in the form of challenges in the outer world.

My Process is Comfortable and Meaningful, But Gradual

A process that is both comfortable and meaningful will be relatively slow.

Consequently, meaningful changes will come about in a very gradual way that will not be upsetting to us. An example of such a process is when we continuously pray for a desired outcome over a long period of time. This type of process requires great perseverance, and we will face our fears primarily in the form of doubts that will challenge us to give up

My Process is Quick and Meaningful, But Uncomfortable

A process that is both quick and deep will usually be uncomfortable.

Consequently, meaningful changes will come about rather quickly when we are willing to face our hidden fears in order to release them. An example of such a process is when we face our fears by engaging in deep spiritual practices that clarify our intentions and reveals all that is *unhealed* within us. As a result of the deep healing that takes place, newness will emerge in the form of inspired ideas that will meet with relatively little opposition in the outer world.



Wisdom Alert: The discomfort of swift, meaningful Spiritual Practice is caused by our inherent resistance to change. The key to overcoming this resistance, is Love. Since Love is the reality of the Truth, it will lubricate the process of self transformation to insure that our Spiritual Practice will be filled with ease and grace.

Following are a number of 'frequently asked questions' (FAQ's) about Spiritual Practice.

What is 'daily dedicated spiritual practice?'

'Daily dedicated spiritual practice' is the time that is spent each day exclusively devoted to developing a greater awareness of God in your life. It is the time spent in meditation, prayer and *spiritual study*. Although it is desirable to bring a spiritual perspective into every activity that you engage in, dedicated practice has no other activity mixed in with it. Don't delude yourself with rationalizations such as, "I kind of meditate while I'm mowing the lawn." While that may be true, it is not 'dedicated spiritual practice.'

Why do I need to study?

Ideally meditation and prayer should be all that you need for a successful dedicated spiritual practice. However, when you study the Principles of Truth, your prayer and meditation will become more productive. This is because the essence of productivity is to apply knowledge to whatever it is that you are doing. Spiritual Practice is no exception to this principle. Additionally, whenever you read 'sacred scriptures' or the teachings of enlightened masters, you mysteriously connect with a universal transmission of Truth emanating from higher spiritual sources.

How much time should I spend each day?

Whatever amount of time that you are willing to spend on a daily basis is the right amount. It is better to start with a few minutes a day on a regular and consistent basis than to attempt to spend a large amount of time that will be difficult to sustain. The ideal would be to spend 10% of your day in dedicated spiritual practice. However, if you are willing to begin with a few minutes a day on a regular and consistent basis, your practice will grow naturally over time into a longer session that will be easy to sustain.

Does it all have to be at the same time?

Your total daily practice can be broken up into two or three sessions throughout the day. An early morning and an evening session would be highly desirable. However, all sessions should be scheduled at fairly regular and consistent times. Additionally, it is advisable to designate one of those sessions as your 'anchor practice' that you never miss without fail.

Where's the best place to practice?

Any place that is quiet, comfortable and relatively free of distractions. The actual location is not as important as the fact that you consistently go to the same place. It would be best if you could set a place aside that is used for no other purpose. What you will find is that, after a time, simply going to that place will immediately draw you into a higher state of consciousness. It is generally recommended that you do not attempt to perform spiritual practice in your bed, which is place of *sleep*. The purpose of spiritual practice is to 'wake up.'

Do I need any special materials or apparatus?

Not really, although you may find it beneficial to furnish you sacred space with various '*forms of remembrance*' of the Divine, such as sacred images, flowers, candles, incense, etc. However, it is important to remember that these objects have no power in and of themselves, except to remind you of the '*divinity that is within you.*'

Are there any special techniques involved?

There is no one perfect technique or practice that is right for everyone. A wide variety of specific techniques are available through the many excellent spiritual texts that are currently available to us in almost any bookstore. Ask your 'Higher Wisdom Self' for guidance and select those practices that *feel* right for you. Never do anything that seems bizarre or unusual. Look for ways to practice that are both challenging and productive. Be prepared to modify your practice as you spiritually evolve and mature.

Is Spiritual Practice hard to do?

All spiritual practice is inherently *pleasurable*. The only thing difficult about it is overcoming the resistance to doing it. Your greatest obstacle will always be the need to occasionally face your inner fears. However, it is much easier to face those fears in your '*prayer chair*' than out on the street in your day-to-day life. Either way, your hidden fears will continue to come upon you until they are resolved.

What's the most important aspect of practice?

The single most important thing is to just '*show up*' each day. This demonstrates your willingness to be changed. God will do the rest.

My Spiritual Practice To Do List

10

Go through the list below and check off (✓) each of the items that you are already performing. Place a 'slash' (/) through the check box of the items that do not apply to you. Next, go through the list again and circle (O) the 'check box' of two (2) new behaviors that you are willing to initiate. Once the new behaviors are established, check them off and circle two more. Don't forget to date them when you check them off. In making your selections of new behaviors, try to pick an *easy* one, and a *scary* one.

Worship

- Daily Chanting
- Daily Devotional Prayers
- Daily Partake of Holy Communion

Meditation

- Daily Visualizations
- Daily Meditation
- Daily Contemplation

Prayer

- Daily Prayers for Myself
- Daily Prayers for Others
- Thank God for All Blessings Received

Intention

- Develop a 'Life Purpose' and Vision
- Set Spiritual Intentions & Goals
- Set Personal Intentions & Goals

Affirmation

- Act in Accordance with 'Spiritual Principles'
- Act in Accordance with My Good Intentions
- Speak Well of Myself and Others

Patience

- Do Not Complain About Things
- Do Not Criticize Myself or Others
- Do Not Gossip

Study

- Read Scriptures & Teachings of Truth Daily
- Take Classes Based on 'Spiritual Truth'
- Teach Others 'Principles of Spiritual Truth'

Self Observation

- Keep a Journal of Meaningful Experiences
- Record & Analyze My Dreams
- Keep Financial Affairs in Order

Mentoring

- Working with a Spiritual Mentor
- Actively Seeking a Mentor
- Willing to Mentor Others

Tithing (10%)

- Regular Financial Gifts to Spiritual Source
- Working Towards Practice of Tithing (10%)
- Committed to Practice of Tithing (10%)

Spiritual Partnering

- Pray Regularly with Others
- Engage in Group Prayer Sessions
- Seek 'Prayer Counseling' When Necessary

Keep Good Company

- Attend Spiritual Services Regularly
- Participate in Spiritually Based Groups
- Socialize with Spiritually Minded Individuals

Service

- Serve My Church in Some Way
- Serve My Community in Some Way
- Allow Myself to Be Served

Agreement

- Always 'Keep My Word'
- Look for Ways to Agree with Others
- Agree with Others to Create My Good

Love My Neighbors

- Do Not Hold Grudges or Resentments
- Quick to Forgive Those Who Offend Me
- Accept and Bless Everyone I Encounter

Others

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Name

Date