

Look at Prayer and Meditation

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I. Introduction.

A. Has anybody ever asked you if you know the Lord? (John 17:3)

B. What does it mean to know the Lord?

1. You only know a man when you share a blanket with a man in a blizzard while in a tent.

2. Knowing someone is the result of sharing experiences with someone - lives overlapping.

C. The degree to which God knows us is the degree to which God has entered into our own lives.

II. Union with Christ is actualized through prayer and meditation.

A. David made a record of shared experiences with God through the Psalms.

B. Most leave too much out of prayer and meditation.

1. Learn to pray and meditate by method, but do not become a slave to the method.

2. There should be a specific preparation.

a. Preparation.

1) Probably read a specific portion of Scripture.

2) Do this early in the daybreak. (Psalm 130:6)

3) Stop for prayerful composure before important events. (Psalm 42)

4) Our greatest need is God Himself.

5) Our first prayer should be for God Himself. (Psalm 73:25)

6) All the life of a good Christian is a life of desire and we should desire the Lord.

b. Adoration is the next great need. (Psalm 29:2)

- 1) Use the word “worship” if you do not like this.
- 2) If prayer is lifting up the soul to God, we need to exercise the affections toward Him. (Revelation 4:11)
- 3) The imagination ought to come into play. Stephen saw the heavens opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. (Acts 7:55-56)
- 4) Unlike thanksgiving, adoration is not directed towards me.
- 5) Throughout the Gospels, adoration is depicted in the declaration that Jesus is the Son of God. We also declare to Him what He has done in praise to Him.
- 6) We distinguish between Christian activity and non-Christian activity because the former is an act of adoration.

c. Our experience is that of Isaiah - we see God’s holiness and our own sin. Therefore, confession is necessary. We ask God to search our hearts. (Isaiah 6:1, Psalm 139:23-24)

- 1) We are to seek perfection. (Matthew 5:48)
- 2) Everything is created for a purpose and in fulfilling that purpose we reach perfection.
- 3) We were created for good works. (Ephesians 2:10)
- 4) This purpose is not fulfilled because we are accustomed to treating sin as something we put on our prayer list and pray about instead of acting upon it. (Colossians 3:9)
- 5) We are too pleasure focused. Evangelical poverty is a necessity to spiritual growth.
- 6) We must cast out imaginations through Christ. Pride unveils itself in all areas of life. It is a confidence in the area of the inerrancy of our own opinions. (1 Corinthians 10:5; Ephesians 2:3)
- 7) Having gotten the victory over the world and the Devil - our spiritual battle is just beginning because we still have to deal with the flesh.
- 8) One of the reasons that we have not progressed in maturity is because of a lack of perception concerning ourselves.

9) In prayer the Christian is exercising a priesthood considering the needs of the universe and creation and the eternal will of God to satisfy those needs.

a) If the soul becomes so absorbed with self it will become hardened and calloused.

b) Our job is to be Christ to others. We imitate what we love.

d. Thanksgiving.

e. Petition and Intercession. One has to be careful not merely to talk to oneself here. It is easy to get absorbed in the problem rather than God.

f. Resolution. We want what happens in prayer to set our hearts on fire.

1) The danger is formalism - but we cannot use this as an excuse.

2) We cannot expect the Lord to show up every time. We cannot force the soul to a realization of God's presence. We look to progress and thank Him when He comes.

Application questions.

1. What were the five areas that the speaker divided prayer into? Which was most helpful? Why?

2. How do exercising these different practices in prayer create a shared experience with God?

3. What areas of your prayer life need the greatest attention? In light of the message, what steps can you take to strengthen the weak portions while maintaining the areas in which you are consistent?
