

Episode 5

Communion

Maintain communion with God through meditation, prayer, thanksgiving, and worship. One of the primary ways we make spiritual progress and grow in spiritual character is to seek better and better communication with God. The Father wills that we ever grow in our contact with Him through meditation, prayer, thanksgiving, and worship.

Meditation. Meditation is the turning or revolving of a subject in the mind. It is mental reflection on a subject with close, continued, and focused thought. We move in our minds toward meditation when we seek more spiritualized thinking. Normally, material matters, and the demands of daily life dominate our minds. However, we may increasingly direct our minds to the contemplation of spiritual subjects, such as what God would have us do in specific situations. In this way we move our minds towards spiritual thinking and the meditative state. Religious meditation makes the contact of our mind with spirit. Our level of relaxation determines our receptivity to spiritual influence.

Jesus and meditation. Jesus meditated a lot. For example, after his baptism by John, Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness where he prayed and meditated on how he would proceed in his mission to proclaim the kingdom of God. And after the healing at sundown he went out to a lonely place to meditate

and pray. Two of my favorite meditations are Jesus' declaration, "I am the vine, you are the branches," (Jn. 15:5), and his invitation to, "Abide in me." (Jn. 15:4) We need to learn to meditate often and in the presence of the sovereignty of God.

Prayer. As God's children we have the great privilege of directly communicating with our Father through prayer. We should pray to God sincerely, earnestly, wholeheartedly, intelligently, unselfishly, trusting, and in the spirit. Paul advised us to, "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thess. 5:16) At all times we may call upon the Father by name; and as we believe in his name so shall our prayer be heard. We need to learn to pray for values not things. But we may always pray for wisdom and spiritual strength to guide and sustain us as we ourselves resolutely seek to overcome our problems. It is good to pray for the gifts of the spirit, such as love, faith, self-control, patience, endurance, forgiveness, joy, peace, and spiritual comfort. We should also pray for the welfare of our loved ones and the expansion of the kingdom. We are also instructed to pray for and bless our enemies.

Faith and prayer. Jesus urged us to *persist* in our prayer, he taught that we "ought always to pray and not lose heart." (Lk. 18:1) The greater the faith we can muster in our prayer, the greater the chance our prayer will be heard and answered. Jesus taught that, "If you have faith, you will say to this mountain: "Move from here to there, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you." (Mt. 17:20)

The one prayer that is appropriate at all times and in all situations is,
“Nevertheless, your will be done.”

Thanksgiving. A thankful attitude makes for true happiness. The prayer of thanksgiving for our many blessings is a wonderful habit that should be practiced daily. Scripture encourages us to ever be thankful. Psalms 92:1 affirms that, “It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord” and Psalms 100:4 instructs us to, “Enter his gates with thanksgiving.” In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Paul states, “In everything I will give thanks, for this is the will of God.” Praying to God with thanksgiving for the answer to our petition not only shows our gratitude, but also expresses our faith that He will hear us and answer our prayer. The prayer of thanksgiving is especially appropriate for group prayers. When we pray with thanksgiving we ascend from prayer towards true worship.

Worship. Prayer is a petition to God that involves a self-element, in contrast to worship, which is for its own sake and is self-forgetting; there is no self request or element of personal interest in true worship. This is the great difference between prayer and worship. The urge to worship is inherent in our human nature; our capacity to worship God is the great distinguishing mark that forever separates us from the higher animals.

The nature of worship. Worship is the tuning in of the soul to receive the broadcasts of the spirit. Worship is effortless attention, true and ideal soul rest, a

form of restful spiritual exertion. The strain of living should be relaxed by the restfulness of worship. Through worship we refresh our soul, inspire our mind, and renew our spirit. Worship tends to make the worshiper like the being that is being worshiped. Through worship we may exchange our weakness for God's strength, our fear for his courage, and the mind of self for the will of God.

The import of worship. Worship is our first duty and our highest privilege. It is a more essential form of communion than prayer. Prayer enriches our life, but worship illuminates our destiny. Through worship we aspire to be better and eventually attain the best. The spirit of the Father speaks best to us when our mind is in an attitude of worship. Worship is the measure of our soul's detachment from material realities and its simultaneous attachment to spiritual realities.

The highest form of worship. In God we live, move and have our being; there is nothing we can give to God other than the dedication of our personal free will to the doing of our Father's will. This decision of God's sons and daughters to do their Father's will constitutes the reality of that true worship that fully satisfies the love dominated nature of the heavenly Father. The attitude Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer, "Your will be done," and that he manifested in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Not my will, but yours, be done," constitutes our highest form of worship.

Unbroken communion. It is good to practice living as if we are in the presence of God. We should feel free to talk to God as we would talk to a loving and respected human Father. We need to choose to *share our inner life with God*. The sense of guilt arises when we feel that our inner communion with God is interrupted or lost. Our great goal should be to follow the Master's example and seek unbroken inner communion with the Father's spirit. The secret of Jesus' unparalleled religious life was his consciousness of the presence of God, and he achieved this ideal state by intelligent prayer and sincere worship--unbroken communion with God. If I choose to live as a son of God I will spend more and more time in meditation, prayer, thanksgiving, and worshipful communion. As God's son my part is to choose to *go into partnership with the Father's indwelling spirit* and share my inner life with Him.