

Pray Until We Pray

In a set of rules drawn up on prayer by a great man of God was this simple rule, “*pray until we pray.*”

The habit of breaking off our prayers before we have truly prayed is as common as it is unfortunate.

First we need to spent time to get in a proper mood to pray effectively.

We may need to struggle with our thoughts to draw them away from where they have been scattered through a multitude of distractions that result from the task of living in this disordered world.

Matthew 6:6 [NIV] “*But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*”

The ideal is to have a special place where we can physically shut out this world and its distractions, or a time when the majority of people are still asleep.

In prayer, as with other spiritual matters, we must be sure to distinguish the ideal from the real.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 [King James] “*Pray without ceasing.*”

Ideally we should be living moment by moment in a state of perfect union with God that no special preparation is necessary.

But actually there are few who can honestly say that this is their personal experience.

Whatever idealism may say, we are forced to deal with things on the level of practical reality.

If when we come to prayer our hearts feel dull and unspiritual, we should not try to argue ourselves out of it.

Rather, we should admit it frankly and seek inspiration and a right attitude by reading and meditating on those Psalms which are actual prayers, many of them written by King David.

Psalms 8:1-9 [NIV] “*O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*”

Here we have our minds directed towards the greatness of the Creator God we worship.

Psalms 9:1-11 [NIV] “*I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. My enemies turn back; they stumble and perish before you. For you have upheld my right and my cause; you have sat on your throne, judging righteously. You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked; you have blotted out their name for ever and ever. Endless ruin has overtaken the enemy, you have uprooted their cities; even the memory of them has perished. The LORD reigns for ever; he has established his throne for judgment. He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice. The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you. Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.*”

Again a Psalm of praise towards the Creator God we worship.

Psalms 13:1-6 [NIV] *“How long, O LORD? Will you forget me for ever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death; my enemy will say, ‘I have overcome him,’ and my foes will rejoice when I fall. But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me.”*

This is a Psalm that brings us out of a mood of despair to one that praises our Creator God for His goodness to us. We can then go on to consider all the blessing we have in life and thank God for each one.

This is *“praying through”* until we find ourselves opening up our heartfelt thoughts to our God.

We cannot afford to stop praying till we have actually prayed.