



Prayergram[®]



Challenging Christians to Pray — January-February 2019

The Hidden Power of Solitude

“He went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when evening was come, He was there alone” (Matthew 14:23).

Today, more than ever, people in general, are involved in endless activities but no time for intimate fellowship with God. The kingdom of God is **“hidden and obscure;”** and only those who understand the inner-working of God are able to find it. Jesus knew what the world was all about and no wonder, He had to get away in order to seek the face of His Heavenly Father, and furthermore; He understood the importance of solitude,

HAYDEN, the famous composer was asked, “What was the method he used to rest and relax from the exertions of life.” He said, “In my home I have a small chapel, when I feel wearied, because of my work, I go there and pray. This remedy has never failed me.”

Today, many, including some Christians are afraid to be alone with God; their lives are buried in religious activities to the extent that they have no time for solitude. Remember friend, in solitude and silence we tap into the reservoir of God. **MADAME GUYON** wrote many years ago, **“I love the lovely creative hours with God.”** Someone has wisely written, **“A calm hour with God is worth a whole lifetime with men.”**

As a society, we’re moving and drifting, like a “tumble weed”, always landing in unexpected places. Drifters have no purpose, no goal whatever. Drifting is an unconscious effort and those who are in the habit of drifting are unaware of their condition, but others can see it. How do we translate our theology into actual reality; only by personal intimacy with our heavenly Father? **ANDREW MURRAY** was right when he said, **“Oh, the thought to have God all alone to myself, and to know that God has me all alone to Himself!”** Sad to say, in our world of technology and hype, we have lost the art of listening and waiting on God!

The immortal words of **DIETRICH BONHOEFFER** come to mind, **“Christians who can no longer listen to one another will soon no longer be listening to God either; they will always be talking even in the presence of God. The death of the spiritual life starts here, and in the end there is nothing left but empty spiritual chatter and clerical condescension which chokes on pious words. We should listen with ears of God, so that we can speak the Word of God.”**

Spiritual discernment does not come to the noise-makers or rabble-rousers, but those who wait upon God with expectant silence. Think of our Savior before the mocking crowd, being struck, spat upon, and yet answering never a word—*never a word*. In spite of all the insults, Jesus remained calm and composed while exhibiting the example of perfect silence and self-control. Silence is the missing jewel in our modern-day worship services. How can we receive a word from the Lord when we do not respect His house and reverence His presence? We need to listen to His gentle, still voice and stop rambling on with our social diatribe. ***“Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth” (Psalms 46:10).***

In our culture of busyness, people are hungry to be heard and understood, and no wonder, they seek escape in all the wrong places, hoping someone or something could fill their empty soul. **Our society remind me of the Simon and Garfunkel song:**

***“People talking without speaking,
People hearing without listening,
People writing songs that voices never share,
And no one dare disturb the sound of silence.”***

In my humble opinion, much of modern living is unexamined living and much of our conversations are hurtful and downright mean. **“The unexamined life is not worth the living,”** says **SOCRATES**. To live a satisfying life with *“real purpose and meaning,”* one must decide what is relevant and central in life. **Someone describes this life as a “rat race, but when it is all over, who wants to smell like a rat?”** The current approval of obscenity on national television and social media illustrates an embarrassing trend: the subjugation of wholesome language and plain decency to a vociferous and outspoken few whose vocabulary is very soiled and limited. Computers, Internet and social media are useful, but are they jeopardizing our relationship with God—and our common humanity? In many ways, technology has taken over our lives. **Social media is doing irreparable damage to the psyche of this nation. Oh, how few give themselves to “solitude and meditation” in our culture of “hype and adulation!”**

Someone has said, “He who guards his lips guards his heart.” The Word of God tells us in Ecclesiastes 5:1-2, “KEEP thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.”

In our culture of rowdiness, idle-talk has gained much notoriety. Whatever has happened to real silence, real stillness, and really biting one’s tongue? **The profound words of THOMAS A. KEMIS** come to mind, **“No one speaks more confidently than the one who gladly remains silent.”** The Word of God tells us, **“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Proverbs 25:11).** **Let’s not cannibalize the use of wholesome language for social approval!** Morals and decency are the bedrock of any civilization, and without it, we are like a ship without a rudder!

Solitude is not known to this generation. Oh, the rush, the hurry, the clamor, the noise, the nervousness, the hyper activities, all point to a life of *‘trauma and turmoil’* as society plunges into a bottomless abyss. Inner strength does not reside in *“bluster and noise;”* It lies in solitude and

quietness. **For example, lions and eagles are solitaires, lions hunt alone and eagles fly alone and they do not flock. The Word of God tells us, “...in quietness and in confidence shall be thy strength...” (Isaiah 30:15). A great saint once said, “All things come to him who knows how to trust and be silent.”** It seems that we have lost the capacity to sit at the feet of our master in hallowed silence. Those who walk with God do not believe every gossip-bearer; for they know humans are prone to evil and how easy to slip in speech; and currently, we are witnessing the horrendous folly of such behavior through social media. There is something majestic about being in the presence of the Almighty which theology cannot explain and mere words cannot describe, but a humble believer knows even he does not comprehend it altogether.

All through the history of the Christian faith, men and women who were able to find solace in a place of solitude. *For example, **Daniel had a special place in his house (the upper chamber or his private Olivet), where he knelt and prayed three times a day (Daniel 6:10). Peter had his own private chamber on a “housetop in Joppa; and MARTIN LUTHER had his “upper room” at Whittenberg, which is still held sacred.*** Beloved, do you have such a sacred “place of prayer” in your home or office? If not, why not? **All believers should have a sacred place next to their bed which is often wet with tears of intercession!** Once the smoke clears, the words gone out of our lips; the applause dies out, then what? **Moses said, “If I have found grace in thy sight, show me thy glory” (Exodus 33:13). Have you seen the glory of God lately?**

Millions of words are spoken daily worldwide; much of what we utter is unnecessary, hurtful and just plain rude! But on the other hand, what is useful, inspiring and uplifting can be said in a few thoughtful words without hurling insults on others. **We need to master the tongue; and loose lips always cause problems.** Ours is a generation that tries men’s souls. Consequently, character breaks down; hope dissipates, and faith vanishes. No wonder disillusionment and cynicism flourish; moral standards collapse and spirituality evaporate before our eyes and men cry, what’s the use?

The divine voice is not always expressed in mere words; it is made relevant and meaningful as a heart consciousness. The human being cannot maintain a restful life unless he retreats daily into cessation, quietness, stillness and above all, communion with his maker. May we listen quietly, act circumspectly, and think deeply! **Cultivate solitude; because God speaks in solitude.** Silence is simply too powerful to blithely wish away. I know it is a tall order in a culture that drowns out meditation and prayer. Always remember that “wholesome speech” is a source of healing to all those who hear it. **So make speech your servant, not your master. Silence is often more eloquent than speech. Rely less on words and more on deeds. Someone has very wisely written, “The tongue is a window to the heart.”**

May I close this article with the immortal words of GEORGE MATHESON, the beloved and blind preacher of Scotland, and only he (MATHESON) could write such ‘soul-stirring and poetical words,’ “Practice that solitude, O my soul! Practice the expulsion of the crowd! Practice the stillness of thine own heart! Practice the solemn refrain ‘God and I! God and I’ Let none interpose between thee and thy wrestling angel! Thou shalt be both condemned and pardoned when thou shalt meet Jesus alone!” Lord, deliver us from the desire to be seen and heard always, and from self-importance!

“He who has graduated in the ‘science of silence’ is himself a wise man.”

A Tribute to George Muller

As a young preacher, I was deeply challenged and influenced as I read of the blessed life of **GEORGE MULLER** of Bristol, England. Oh, how I praise my Savior and Lord for steering my life in the direction of such a godly influence at an early age! **If integrity and godliness, faith and prayer are requisites to passage through the corridors of heaven, Mr. Muller will be among the saints.**

Although millions of dollars had passed through his hands for service to the orphans, **MULLER** left only a few simple articles of furniture and the clothes he was wearing. **Before his death, MULLER testified, "God, God alone became my portion. I found my all in Him. I wanted nothing else."** That is Christian integrity in a nutshell! Few men have triumphed in their personal "faith and prayer" as Muller did without any fanfare. He was one of the rarest and best, one of the wisest, the most unarrogantly trustworthy, and the most Christ-like men of his day. No wonder, he left a legacy of "faith and prayer" for generations to come."

IMAGINE, GEORGE MULLER, God's humble servant, urging the believers of his day to use their credit cards or asking permission to draw certain sum each month from their checking account to support the work of the orphanage that was entrusted to his care! **To walk with God at any age, one needs a sense of candor and unmitigated passion for spiritual truths. Beloved,** we can depend on God and He is always on time with manna from on high. So let's trust Him without the smallest admixture of doubt and fear! **Faith is trust without reservation!** We are blessed beyond measure! Isn't God grand? **I know so by personal experience, and you do too! Let's remember the immortal words of THOMAS BENTON BROOKS, "If we love Christ much, surely we shall trust him much."**

Heavenly Father, I thank thee for the life of thy humble servant, GEORGE MULLER, a role-model to believers everywhere! — Matthew Skariah

Tribute to a 'Praying Father'

My father was not a theologian or a preacher, but a very quiet and humble believer who developed a powerful prayer life that became his legacy. He rose up very early every morning to light up the 'prayer furnace' in our home, and I can still feel the strength of his 'prayer-influence' in my life.

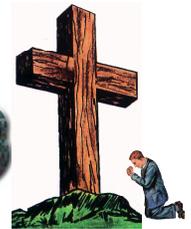
God knows our prayer habits are not what they should be in private or public. The best way to teach on prayer is to pray on bended knees. Examples are better than lectures and sermons. When it comes to prayer, a seeking soul should avoid all technicalities and excuses. Be earnest in prayer. Today, there is no shortage on 'stuffy theological discussions' on the topic of prayer but when it comes to *kneel in prayer*, there is such an aversion on the part of many Christians.

Prayer is the spiritual glue that holds families together in times of social and moral upheaval. Prayer transforms a house into a home where Christ is loved and worshipped preeminently. It is the responsibility of the father to lead his family into a prayer chamber like our Master did. Never doubt the "spiritual impact" of a praying father on his family! Indeed, it has proven many times over. When fathers take charge of the "prayer leadership" in their family...expect a spiritual revolution.

Fathers need to be humble and prayerful. Fatherhood is more than biological—it is emotional, moral, social and spiritual.



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