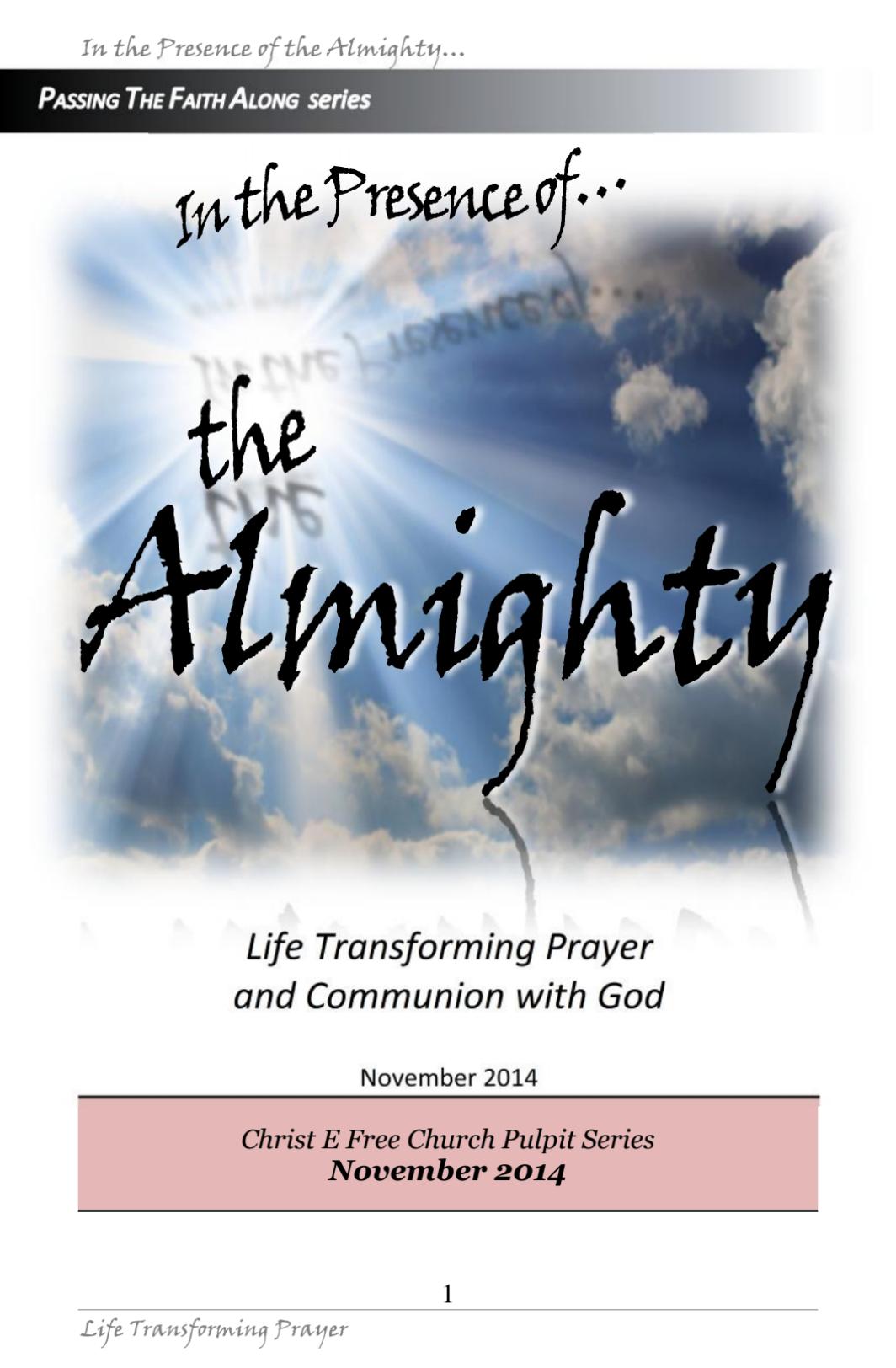


In the Presence of the Almighty...

PASSING THE FAITH ALONG series



In the Presence of...
the
Almighty

*Life Transforming Prayer
and Communion with God*

November 2014

Christ E Free Church Pulpit Series
November 2014

Jesus Christ,
Our Highest Calling
Our Greatest Purpose
Our Soul's Source and Joy and our
Our All-Consuming Passion

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide
in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, "My
refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

--Psalm 91:1-2

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INTRODUCTION

How satisfied are you with your own personal prayer life? Is it meaningful for you? Would you say it is *productive*? Is it something you enjoy and look forward to, or do you struggle like a kid taking bad medicine?

Too often our prayer life is not what we would like it to be or not what we think it *should* be, but we just don't know quite what to do to make it better. This booklet is meant to be a resource to help you get to the next level of meaningful, productive prayer.

If your prayer life is basically spent asking God for things, or is self-focused, or mundane and uneventful, then perhaps this will help you understand a higher potential in prayer. The ideas presented here, are no guarantees, but can present some helpful thoughts and steps for how you might achieve a deeper practice of prayer.

Before you go any further, remember this:

- Prayer is not a magical potion with a spiritual *spell*.
- Prayer is not a style of speaking or a matter of getting all the words right.
- Prayer is not even a means of asking for help for ourselves or for others.
- Prayer *IS* communication and communion between us and God.
- Prayer is a process of potentially bringing about life transformation.

I pray above all else, that through prayer, you experience renewed intimacy with Almighty God, life renewal as you grow in Christ, and fullness of joy and peace in the Holy Spirit as He fills, revives and changes each of us.

“Prayer and the Presence of the Almighty”

Text: 1 John 1:1-4

November 2, 2014

“that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you,
so that you too may have fellowship with us;
and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son
Jesus Christ.” --1John 1:3

The more elaborate our means of communication,
the less we communicate.

--Joseph Priestley

INTRODUCTION

Rev 19:6-16 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the **Lord our God the Almighty** reigns. (7) Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; (8) it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"-- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. (9) And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God." (10) Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (11) Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. (12) His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. (13) He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. (14) And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. (15) From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of **God the Almighty**. (16) On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Question: How do we sense “*the presence of the Lord*”? If we attend a meeting and someone says, “I could sense the presence of the LORD there,” what exactly were they referring to? We will be addressing that question throughout this series.

Today we take a look at...

THE THEOLOGY OF PRAYER

Note: Wayne Grudem's *Electronic Systematic Theology*

<http://www.thegravelperspective.com/blog/2013/9/29/grudem-systematic-theology-chapter-18-prayer>

The Definition of Prayer

If someone were to come up to you on the street and ask you what prayer is, what would you tell them? Could you define it? Throughout the Bible, prayer is not so much defined as it is demonstrated. We know it is talking with God, but it is far more than just talking with God. We could say, "prayer is my heart being united with Gods' heart and Gods Spirit bearing witness with my spirit."

** So we might define prayer as personal communion with God.*

Illustration: Imagine sending an invitation to some of friends, inviting them to come over to your place for some real quality time. Then, imagine one by one, they begin asking you to get up and prepare a pot of coffee. Another asks to borrow \$20. One friend suggest you make a platter of sandwiches. Another opens a bag and pulls out a pair of shoes and asks you to shine them for him. Another one asks you to go downtown and run a few errands for him. What would you think about that?

And yet how often do we use prayer for similar reasons?

*"Ultimately, prayer is not about getting what we want,
but about getting to know God for who He is."*

As we look at the definition of prayer, we must also consider...

The Purpose of Prayer (1Jn.1:1-4)

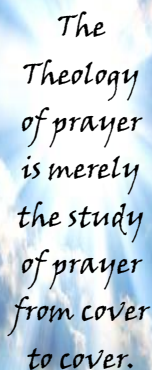
The Purpose of prayer must be understood as a means of allowing us to engage in personal communion with God Almighty. With that, we have to understand prayer to be more than merely making requests of God. It is a means of experiencing communion with God.

Communion is; to communicate together, or relate interactively; usually with profound intensity, deepest intimacy and with mutual interchange of thoughts; it is the sharing of feelings, ideas, interests, concerns, goals, or dreams; (dictionary.com)

Therefore, for the child of God, Prayer is more than making requests of God or instructing God in what we would have Him to do for us. Prayer is intended to be personal communion – or *quality time* with God.

Perhaps we limit our understanding of “communion” to an ordinance in the church or for some, a means of earning effectual grace into one’s life. We *take* communion, which is our reference to the Lords Supper. But we *have* communion with God through prayer.

1Jn 1:1-4 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life-- (2) the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us-- (3) that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have **fellowship** with us; and indeed our **fellowship** is with the Father and with his Son



*The
Theology
of prayer
is merely
the study
of prayer
from cover
to cover.*

Jesus Christ. (4) And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

John Owen, Puritan writer and Non-conformist, in 1600s, in his book, *Communion With God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, offers comments on 1Jn.1:3, stating that “Christians in those days were [more often] poor and despised and whose leaders were treated as the filth of the world. Therefore those who invited others to become Christians and to join in their fellowship (v3), would seem to be the height of foolishness.

And yet Owen presents an obvious question from the ranks of those being invited into their fellowship. “What benefit is there in communion with them? Is it anything else but to be sharers in troubles, reproaches, scorns, and all manner of evils?” To prevent or remove these and the like exceptions, the apostle gives them to whom he wrote to know...that notwithstanding all the disadvantages, their fellowship [may present from a worldly perspective]; yet in truth it was, and would be found to be very honorable, glorious, and desirable. For “truly,” says the apostle, “our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

Our communion, then, with God consists in his communication of himself unto us, with our [response] unto him of that which he requires and accepts, flowing from that union which in Jesus Christ we have with Him. [That communion] is Perfect and complete, in the full fruition of his glory and total giving up of ourselves to him, resting in ***Him as our utmost end***; which we shall enjoy when we see him as he is;”

So - as the Apostle John invites others to enter into fellowship and communion with them, he did not invite with the promise of the beauty of facility or their highly organized programing or their expertise and efforts tried and true; nor even of the blissful

experience or a more beneficial life. But John invites them into the ranks of those despised and rejected by their present culture, with the only perceived benefit being that of experiencing communion with God Himself. That was his only enticement!

Would to God, people would join us for that reason today.

The fellowship John was writing about is *koinonia* or communion. We have communion with one another – v.3. We have that, because we have communion with the Father and with the Son. Communion with God, allows us to have communion with one another. Those who do not have communion with the Father through the blood of Christ, cannot have true communion or fellowship with those who do have fellowship with the Father through Jesus Christ.

<p>Psa 103:1 Of David. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!</p>
--

We ***take*** communion which is intended to reflect what we ***have***. We ***have*** communion with God, therefore, we ***take*** communion or share in the Lord's table together, because it represents, or reminds us of what we share in Christ.

Communion includes communication.

In his book, *Understanding Scripture*, John Piper writes this about Communion. "Communion refers to God's communication and presentation of himself to us, together with our proper response to him with joy. We say "with joy" because it would not be communion if God revealed himself in total wrath and we were simply terrified. That would be *true* revelation and a *proper* response, but it would not be communion.

Communion assumes that God comes to us in love and that we respond joyfully to the beauty of his perfections and the offer of

his fellowship. He may sometimes come with a rod of discipline. But even in our tears, we can rejoice in the Father's loving discipline (Heb. 12:6–11). Communion with God may lay us in ashes or make us leap. But it never destroys our joy. It *is* our joy (Ps 43:3.”

The Practice of Prayerful Communion

We can say that Communion occurs when...

1) We Meditate on who God is.

Psa 145:5 On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

Think long, think quietly, think exclusively on Who God is. His character includes his love and mercy. His attributes refer to the fact that He is Almighty, holy and eternal.

2) We Meditate on what God has done.

Psa 143:5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done; I ponder the work of your hands.

Think long and hard about what God has done. This would be any of His works or His interaction with His creation.

3) We Meditate on what God has said.

Psa 119:147-148 I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words. (148) My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promise.

Think in depth and unhurriedly on God's word, His promises and his lessons to us. This is His Truth for all people and His promises for all times. His Word is His instruction to us.

This is some of the theology of prayer.

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ALMIGHTY

God's general presence refers to God being present everywhere, all the time. His central or localized presence may refer to our awareness of His workings and being affected by the character or moving of God. It would involve experiencing the manifest presence of God, such our heart being united with His heart and His Spirit bearing witness with our spirit.^[Rom.8:16]

Psalm 91:1-2 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. (2) I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

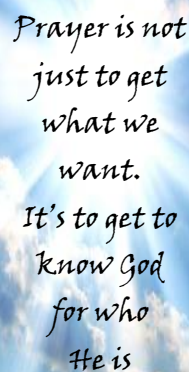
This is a direct reference to our awareness of the Presence of the Almighty. The shadow of the Almighty refers to the looming presence of the Holy God in our lives.

The presence of the Almighty can bring about...

Life Transforming Prayer (LTP)

The central focus of this series is not prayer that receives answers, and through those answers we are changed or renewed or even revived. That is a secondary focus of this series. The primary focus is the difference that prayer can make in the life of a true child of God, because we are children of God and as such, we have access into His presence. This is above all other things, the most supreme and most desirable of all other human experiences.

LTP Not to be confused with life changing *answers* to prayer. Life Transforming Prayer is not in reference to the answers to our prayers, but a reference to what Prayer actually does for us in accomplishing life transformation. LTP does not focus on the end result, but on the process itself.



Prayer is not
just to get
what we
want.
It's to get to
know God
for who
He is

1) In the New Testament, people knew the disciples had been in the presence of Jesus.

Act 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

They knew the disciples had been in the presence of Jesus, because He had changed them.

“Prayer is not meant as a means to get us what we want, but a means of changing us and transforming us into who God wants us to become.”

If prayer is not somewhat transformational, it is not really prayer, but simply telling God what we think He ought to do. And if that is where our prayer life is, then we are definitely in need of personal prayer transformation.

2) In the Old Testament, Moses face shown from being in the presence of the LORD.

Exo 34:28-30 So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. (29) When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. (30) Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

Being in the presence of God changed Moses' literal countenance.

Life Transforming Prayer in my Life

* An Evaluation of my own personal prayer practices.

1) LTP is Prayer that is not focused on the one praying, but on the one receiving, that is God Almighty.

2) LTP is Prayer which changes the heart and character of the one who is praying.

Rom 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Changing Prayer to Life Transforming Prayer ((LTP))

Life Transforming Prayer is focused on the **p-r-e-s-e-n-c-e** of the Almighty, rather than the **p-r-e-s-e-n-t-s** of the Almighty.

In other words, LTP is more about being in the presence of God, rather than about what I hope to get out of being with God, some gift, present or answer.

LTP should be characterized by Joy

1Jn 1:4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

How can their joy be made complete? What does this say to us? That fellowship with brothers and sisters and communion with God brings with it, a certain joy.

Psalms 16:9-11 Therefore my heart is *glad*, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. (10) For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. (11) You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of *joy*; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

In the presence of the Almighty, there is JOY. I believe Joy should characterize Life Transforming Prayer, because LTP involves communion in the presence of the Almighty.

LTP must be purposeful

This is because we are so programmed to pray otherwise. For some, prayer comes only in times of crisis. For some, prayer may be predominantly making requests to God. For some, prayer is so boring, mundane and joy-*less*, that we have come to consider that as how prayer is *supposed* to be.



So our question is, *does joy in God, characterize your prayer life?* Or is prayer dry, mundane, and scheduled, and anything but joyful? Time with God in prayer, communing with the Almighty is intended to instill joy in our innermost being.

Consider taking these steps:

1) Make a LTP Prayer list -- *Things I should & should not focus on in prayer.* Make a Life Transforming Prayer list. Write down what should be part of your communion time with God and what things should be kept out of that kind of prayer time.

2) Use this list to re-direct thoughts & focus of prayer

Consider fasting from making requests. Consider on feasting on praises to God. Attempt to re-direct your prayer time to focus more on praising God and communing with Him in His life changing presence.

3) Meditate on the Person, Works and Word of God Almighty.

Think extremely, deeply and exclusively on His works, character and attributes. Consider His loving-Kindness, Long-suffering, gracious benefits and merciful dealings.

4) Commune with God, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts

Meditate on the presence of God in your life. Commune with God and allow His Spirit of Holiness who lives inside you, to guide your thoughts and direct your prayers.

5) Seek the Joy of the Lord when communing with God.

Psa 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

If we reevaluate our purpose and change our focus in prayerful communion with the Almighty, we will see how He can begin to change us personally and transform our prayer life to a new depth and dimension.

“Prayer and The Father’s Hand”

- On Outcry of Dependency-

Text: Psalm 77

November 16, 2014

“Cast me not away from your *presence...*”
--Psalm 51:11

“For that again, is what all manner of religion essentially is:
childish dependency.”

--Albert Ellis

INTRODUCTION

In the presence of God is beauty and holiness and pleasure and sweet communion with our Heavenly Father. (Ps. 29:2; 2 Chron.20:21; 1 Chron.16:29)

Prayer, like other conversations, is intended to be a dialogue or 2 way communication. We speak and expect God to listen. Its only fair and reasonable to listen when God speaks to us. He speaks to

us through His Word, His Holy Spirit, Our conscience and even our circumstances. He impresses upon us thoughts and ideas for choices and behavior. And, Scripture tells us, His Spirit bears witness with our own spirit. ^[Rom.8:6]

Prayer, indeed evidences, not childish, but child-like dependency on God and strikes at the very heart of pride.

**Prayer is itself, an act of faith and a
*child-like dependency upon God.***

Heb. 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Prayer acknowledges the weakness of the one praying and confidence in the object being trusted and prayed to. “*In the Presence of the Almighty*” is about depending upon and praying to Creator God as our Hope and Supplying Source of all our needs. (Phil 4:19)

Today we consider the importance of the presence of the Almighty in the life of the growing Christian.

Gen 3:8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from **the presence of the LORD** God among the trees of the garden.

Gen 4:16 Then Cain went away from the **presence of the LORD** and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Sin lessens and minimizes our communing relationship and depth with God.

Psa 139:7-10 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your *presence*? (8) If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! (9) If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, (10) even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

The presence of the Lord is unavoidable and inescapable. And yet sin pushes us away from the intimate and Life Transforming presence of the Almighty. David understood the value of the presence of the Almighty when he recorded for us, this plea to God over his grief over his sin.

Psa 51:11-12 Cast me not away from your *presence*, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

How many of us are actually that concerned with the effect of sin on our relational communion with our Heavenly Father? We have three points focused on the presence of God and the change that prayer can bring to our lives.

PRAYER PRACTICES THAT TRANSFORM LIFE

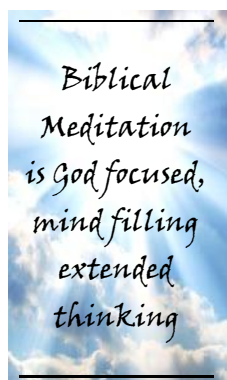
*These suggested prayer practices can transform our prayer life, but it can also transform our spiritual life. Prayer changes things, but most importantly, it changes us, if we allow it to.

One prayer practice that can transform our lives is....

Meditation and Communion

First lets clarify what meditation is NOT!

Meditation is not a New Age experience or a psychological exercise. It is by no means an



emptying of the mind, to open us to some universal oneness.

What Meditation is from a Biblical perspective.

* Biblical meditation is focusing the mind and filling the thoughts with the person, work and word of Almighty God, with the purpose of being personally and spiritually changed.

<p>Psa 63:6 when I remember you upon my bed, and <i>meditate</i> on you in the watches of the night;</p>

“Now, I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God, and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reproved, instructed; and that thus, by means of the Word of God, whilst **meditating** on it, my heart might be brought into experimental communion with the Lord.”
- *The Life of Trust*, George Muller

“*In the Presence of the Almighty*” is about allowing prayer to become communion with God, in order that life transformation might take place. So, to meditate on God and His word is not mystical or New Age. It is a thoroughly Biblical, and historical practice of the Christian faith.

LIFE TRANSFORMING PRAYER – A Proof Text

Please turn to Psalm 77.

Psalm 77:1-20 To the choirmaster: according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

A PSALM OF COMMUNICATION WITH GOD

1) He Offers An Outcry To God (Ps.77:1-4)

<p>(1) I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me. (2) In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is</p>

stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted.
(3) When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints. Selah. (4) You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

“*Crying out to God*” is an indication of a sense of desperation. And desperation gets God’s attention.

“*Meditation*”(v.3) –to spend extended time in focused attention, filling one’s thoughts on the person, work and word of Almighty God.

2) He Presents Question Regarding the Workings of God

This is not about the creative works of God but how God deals with mankind and works in the lives of His people.

(5) I consider the days of old, the years long ago. (6) I said, "Let me remember my song in the night; let me ***meditate*** in my heart." Then my spirit made a diligent search: (7) "Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable? (8) Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time? (9) Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" Selah.

Has He forgotten us? Has He forsaken us? Has the Almighty God ceased to be Almighty?

* **What are the answers he is anticipating?** He is expecting us to say wholeheartedly, “*No, of course not!*”

3) Meditating on the person of God (Ps.77:10-20

Psalm s77: (10) Then I said, "I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High." (11) I will ***remember*** the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will ***remember*** your wonders of old. (12) I will ***ponder*** all your work, and ***meditate*** on your mighty deeds.

(13) Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God?
(14) You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples. (15) You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. (16) When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; indeed, the deep trembled. (17) The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth thunder; your arrows flashed on every side. (18) The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook. (19) Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen. (20) You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

“To remember” is to reflect on his personal experiences with God in the past. This is an extended time of focused attention on the person, work and word of God Almighty. This is a full faith, not necessarily in what He will do, give or perform,; but full faith in who He is, what He is like and what He has done in the past.

What is clearly missing in this Psalm? *An Ending.* There is no ending. In the middle of his crying out, and questioning and meditating on God, - it seems he just lays down his parchment and his pen and quits writing, because, before he realizes it, he is Transformed through this time of prayer with God and his problems and troubles fade in the presence of the Almighty.

That is evidence and an example of **LTP**. Not an example of getting what we want through prayer; but getting to know God for Who He is and allowing His presence to change the heart and perspective of the one praying.



*Meditation is a prayer practice that can transform our life,
if we allow it to.*

Today, I hope we will get a glimpse of the...

Life Transforming Power of the Presence of the Almighty

There is a life transforming power of spending time communing in the Presence of the Almighty. Prayer and communion in the presence of the Almighty has the power to personally transform *us* inwardly, as well as change *things* outwardly.

There is JOY in His presence

* The Presence of the Almighty can turn *joylessness* into *joyfulness*.

Psa 51:11-12 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. (12) Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

In the presence of the Almighty – He is looking for the joy of the Lord.

Psa 63:3-7 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. (4) So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. (5) My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, (6) when I remember you upon my bed, and **meditate** on you in the watches of the night; (7) for you have been my help, and in the **shadow** of your wings I will sing for joy.

[compare **Ps.21:6** – “Joy in your presence”]

Verse 6, refers to a quiet, sleepless or otherwise boring time of life or work. These are times we might think extendedly and uninterruptedly upon the Lord.

Verse 7 refers to the “Shadow of your wings”, meaning is the presence of the Lord.

“my mouth will praise you with joyful lips” (v5)

“*in the shadow of your wings, I will sing for joy (v7)*” – that is in the protective custody of your looming presence. He has experienced the joy of prayerful communion with God, while meditating with focused attention, on His person, works and word. Some of his ponderings were focused on God’s faithful involvement in the life of Israel as a nation, and some were memories of God’s personal involvement in his own life. All of which bring joy to his heart. Meditation can turn an otherwise boring time into blessed time. It can transform quietness into joyful contemplation.

Joy - and where does this joy come from? From spending quiet solitude in the presence of the Almighty - “when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you” (v7)

Psa 89:15-17 Blessed are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O LORD, in the light of your face, (16) who exult in your name all the day and in your righteousness are exalted. (17) For you are the glory of their strength; by your favor our horn is exalted.

Spiritual joy is a powerful force in the lives of God’s people. That joy can be experienced by focused thoughts and a mind filled with the person, works and Word of the Almighty.

In the presence of the Almighty there is fullness of joy.

There is *HOPE* in His presence

* The presence of the Lord has the power to transform hopelessness into hopefulness.

Lam 3:19-26 Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! (20) My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. (21) But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: (22) The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; (23) they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (24) "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." (25) The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. (26) It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

"But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:"(v21) The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." (v24

Hope – Where does this hope come from? From spending time in the presence of the Almighty, pondering, contemplating, remembering and meditating – *Biblically*. He remembers his hardship, then contemplates God's goodness. IN this, *hopelessness* is transformed into *hopefulness*.

In the presence of the Almighty, there is fullness of hope.

There is PEACE in his presence

* The presence of the Lord has the power to transform *peacelessness* into *Peacefulness*

Php 4:6-8 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (7) And the *peace* of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (8) Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

So tell me again, the value in the 1 sentence prayer guides?
Remind me again of the life transforming potential of 5 minute devotionals in God's word?

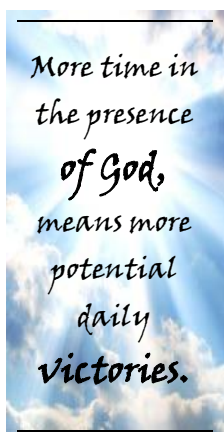
2Th 3:16 Now may the Lord of *peace* himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

How dare someone try and sell me something that in intended to lessen my prayer life and minimize my time with my Loving Heaving Father. How dare anyone try and tempt me to cheapen my devotional time with the Almighty.

There is **JOY** in the presence of the Almighty. There is **HOPE** in the presence of the Almighty. And there is **PEACE** in the presence of the Almighty. If we are lacking **JOY**, and **HOPE** and **PEACE** in our lives, then we must be lacking quite extended times of prayerful communion in the presence of the Almighty. All I can come up with is, when we shortchange our time in the presence of the Almighty, we are only shortchanging our own spiritual life and growth. We limit our time in communion with the Lord, we limit our joy, we limit our peace and we limit our hope – we limit our spiritual depth and stability.

Imagine being on a long road trip and you have hundreds of miles yet to travel. You discover you are “running on empty” so you stop at a gas station. You put the nozzle in and tank up with a quick \$3 worth of gasoline. You jump back into the car, fire it up and speed away.

One of the passengers notices what you just did and asks; “hey, you only put in \$3 worth of gas. What’s up with that?” And you



reply, “I’ve got too many miles to go, to waste too much time at the pumps.”

That sounds absurd. But is that not what we do? Is that not how we sometimes view prayer? I’ve got too much to do, to waste too much time sitting, quietly, and prayerfully communing in the presence of the Almighty. And so we find ourselves running on empty, in times when we need the fullness of the Lord in our lives. If we had only taken a bit more fill up time in the presence of the Almighty, perhaps our victories would be more frequent and our failures would be fewer.

** Do you know what hell will be like?? What do you think will be the worst part of hell?

2Th. 1:9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from **the presence of the Lord** and from the glory of his might,

The worst part of hell is that we are separated for all eternity from the presence of the Almighty. Some may hear that and think;-- “oh really?” Is that it?” As though the absence of the presence of God won’t be all that big of a deal. Yet we know that apart from the presence of Almighty God, there is no joy. Apart from the presence of the Almighty, there will be no peace. In the absence of the Lord there will be eternal hopelessness.

All that we consider meaningful and of utmost importance to the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual well-being of a person will be gone forever. That is, eternal separation from the presence of the Almighty. Only fools believe that hell won’t be all that bad. Only fools!! That is why David cries out pleading to God over the state of his own sin ---

Psa 51:11-12 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

David was aware of the life transforming power in the presence of the Almighty!

PRAYER AND THE FATHER'S HAND

* God does, what God does (1) for His own glory and (2) for our own good.

The Father Knows our Needs (Mat.6

* Before we pray, God already knows what we want and need.

Mat 6:6-8 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (7) "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. (8) Do not be like them, for your *Father knows what you need before* you ask him.

God is not looking for words and information in your prayers. He is looking for communion in His Presence.

The Father Gives Good Gifts

* The character and nature of the Father is to do good and to give good gifts to His children.

Matthew 7:9-11 'Or what man is there of you, who, if his son ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent! If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him!'

In his book, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, Andrew Murray says, "We find that Father-like Giving, is the divine response to child-like living."

The Father Desires Transformed Lives

* God wants to change our prayer life and our spiritual life.

Heb 12:6-10 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." (7) It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? (8) If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. (9) Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? (10) For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

* God does, what God does (1) for His own glory and (2) for our own good. Andrew Murray refers to this as "the Infinite Fatherliness of God" -that is, knowing experientially, first hand of the love and character of God, meditating on that, believing in that, resting confidently in the Father's hand and the Father's heart in our lives.

Read these 3 parables from Luke 15 and consider their Fatherly focus and the example of the Father heart of God.

Luke 15:4 – lost sheep or the Searching Shepherd

What does this tell us about the Shepherd and his interest in his sheep? _____

Luke 15:8 - Lost coin or the Worried Woman

What does this tell us about the woman and her interest in the coin? _____

Luke 15:11 – Prodigal Son or the Forgiving Father

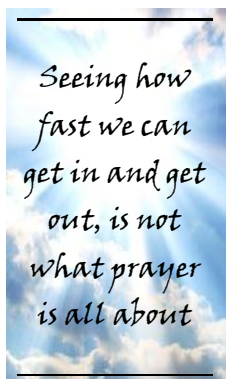
What does this tell us about the Father and his interest in His son?

****NOW** what do these 3 parables tell us about God and His interest towards each of us, AND towards those who are outside His family? _____

Prayers of the Bible and the Change that God wrought.

2Co 6:17-18 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, (18) and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

"Prayer and the Father's Hand" is Prayer in the Father's presence, love, concern and His joy, in absolute child-like dependence upon Him.



APPLICATION

- 1) PopCorn Praise
- 2) One sentence prayer Guides
- 3) 5 minute Devotionals in the Word

More and more, these seem designed to lessen the time in prayer, which will also most likely, lessen the time in His presence, thus minimizing the effects of prayer and the life transformation that

God desires to bring to each of us. Speeding in and out of the presence of God, like a NASCAR pit crew, seeing how quickly we can get in, and get out, is not what prayer is all about and certainly not what God deserves.

Do the opposite.

Like the body, our prayer life needs to be seriously exercised. Let's extend that prayer time. Let's Stretch that prayer life. Let's take more time to get the heartbeat of prayer elevated and sustained.

1) Begin to add time to your devotions. Add quiet solitude communing in the presence of the Almighty.

2) Occasionally take away your prayer lists. Focus your thoughts, and fill your mind with the person, work and word of the Almighty.

3) Meditate on the Person, Works and Word of God Almighty. Think extremely, deeply and exclusively on His works, character and attributes. Consider His loving-Kindness, Long-suffering, gracious benefits and merciful dealings.

4) Commune with God, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide thoughts. Meditate on the presence of God in your life.

Commune with God and allow His Spirit of Holiness who lives inside you, to guide your thoughts and direct your prayers.

In the Presence of the Almighty, there is fullness of joy, abundance of peace, unshakable hope and inexhaustible love. Short change God in prayer and you only short change your own spiritual growth and life transformation.

Is that what we want? Is it what God deserves?

In the Presence of...

the

Almighty

“Awe, Reverence and the Holiness of God”

Text: Is.6:2-5 / Rev.4:8-11

November 23, 2014

“In the Presence of the Almighty: Life Transforming Prayer”

Act 2:43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders
and signs were being done through the apostles

Let parents bequeath to their children not riches,
but the spirit of reverence.
--Plato

INTRODUCTION

When you think about the Presence of the Almighty, what comes to your mind? An emotional feeling? A theological concept? A relational connection with deity? In the Presence of the Almighty, there is something sacred and special. Greatness, but not just greatness. Deity, but not just deity. The presence of the Almighty,

places us in the presence of Holiness. Historically, with the people of God, there has been a sense or an awareness of the fear of God and reverence of His Holy name and presence. This morning, we'll examine those ideas.

In the presence of the Almighty, there is...

FEAR AND AWE (Ps.76, Rev.16:7,14)

As we learn about prayer, we remember that prayer is not meant as a means to get us what we want, but to change us into who God wants us to become. If you tend to find yourself making pleas to God for things you think He should be doing, you may be missing an important component of prayer in the presence of the Almighty. We may be missing that fear and awe that believers of old, experienced when spending time alone in the presence of the LORD.

I wonder if our culture today, knows what it means to be reverent in the presence of the Almighty? Does the church know what it means? Do we experience that? Is it possible this is something we have failed to pass on to our children? Consider the following perspective.

Parents have the responsibility to teach their children by their own example, the meaning and value of worship. Therefore, parents should want their children with them in worship, so the children can catch the spirit and form of their parents' worship.

Children should see how Mom and Dad bow their heads in earnest prayer during the prelude and other non-directed times. They should see how Mom and Dad sing praise to God with joy in their faces, and how they listen hungrily to His Word. They should catch the spirit of their parents meeting the living God.

Something seems wrong when parents want to take their children in the formative years and put them with other children and other adults to form their attitude and behavior in worship. Parents should be jealous to model for their children the tremendous value they put on **reverence in the presence of Almighty God**. (*The Family: Together in God's Presence*, January 1, 1995, Noel Piper and John Piper, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-family-together-in-gods-presence>)

In the presence of God, there is fear and awe because...

God Is Awe-Inspiring

Do we have a concept of what it means to stand in awe of someone or something? It may be that we are left speechless or astounded. We may feel overwhelmed or even fearful in the presence of something that is awesome, awful or awe-inspiring.

Years ago at Bible college, Knewt Larson, spoke at our school chapel. He spoke on God being Awesome. He described Awe like this. With hands lifted up so as to cover his face from a blinding light he uttered - "Ah-h-h!" "Oh-h-h-h!" "Ah-h-h-h-h-h-h!" It didn't really define "awe", but did effectively communicate the concept.

The Psalmists often wrote about the awe inspiring God they worshiped.

Psa 76:4-9 Glorious are you, more majestic than the mountains full of prey. (5) The stouthearted were stripped of their spoil; they sank into sleep; all the men of war were unable to use their hands. (6) At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both rider and horse lay stunned. (7) But you, you are to be *feared*! Who can stand before you when once your anger is roused? (8) From the heavens you uttered judgment; the earth feared and was still, (9) when God

arose to establish judgment, to save all the humble of the earth.
Selah.

Psa 89:5-8 Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones! (6) For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD, (7) a God greatly to be *feared* in the council of the holy ones, and **awesome** above all who are around him? (8) O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O LORD, with your faithfulness all around you?

The New Testament writers wrote about the early church experiencing that same sense of awe in the presence of God.

Acts 2:42-47 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (43) And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. (44) And all who believed were together and had all things in common. (45) And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. (46) And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, (47) praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Question: How does your time in the presence of the Almighty affect you?

God is Fear-Instilling

A god that we have all figured out, is not a god to be feared. A god we can tell what to do, is not a god to stand in awe of. The God

we fear and find awesome is the God that causes us to tremble in His presence.

On Mount Sinai as God was preparing to present Moses with the 10 commandments:

Exo 19:16 ESV On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.

The holy manifestation of the presence of God instilled a holy fear into His people.

When Jesus spoke of Christian obedience and persecution He stated:

Mat 10:28-30 ESV And do not *fear* those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather *fear* him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (29) Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. (30) But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

Fear God as He who determines our eternal destiny. Yet, trust in His loving compassion, as one who cares for the birds of the air and watches over the affairs of his people.

Reverence includes an awareness of being undeserving of life, and mercy, while being fully deserving of death, judgment and total annihilation.

Rev 16:7 And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God the **Almighty**, true and just are your judgments!"

Rev 19:6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of

mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the **Almighty** reigns.

Rev 19:15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the **Almighty**.

The presence of the Almighty is awe-inspiring and fear-instilling.



In the presence of the Almighty, we find that God is...

PURE AND HOLY

Before going into the promised land, God reminds Moses and the Israelites to be careful not to be led astray by false gods and idols from pagan lands. He states:

Deu 4:24 For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

If they failed to keep God first, they would surely perish.

In the Presence of the Almighty there is No place for flippancy in approaching God. There is No excuse for inappropriate, frivolous behavior in the presence of the holiness of the Almighty.

Our God is Holy

Another speaker at our Bible college was Bruce Wilkinson. He addressed this passage.

Exo 3:4-5 When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." (5) Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

He asked the question, "what made the ground suddenly become holy? Just seconds before, it was just common dirt. What

changed?" What changed, was that God showed up and the common ground, became holy ground. That is the change that God makes when we experience His manifest presence.

Isaiah experienced the presence of the Almighty and was humbled and convicted.

Isa 6:2-5 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (3) And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" (4) And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. (5) And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

As I read this, I get the impression that heaven knows something we don't. Moses got something we don't get. That God is holy. He is fear-instilling and awe-inspiring.

Rev 4:8-11 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" (9) And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, (10) the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, (11) "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

Heaven worships a glorious and holy God. What is your God like? A.W. Tozer once stated, "No people have ever risen higher than

their concept of God.” We might ask ourselves, what does that say about the church today?

Rev 19:6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Heaven worships a glorious and holy God and heaven proclaims that He is unmatched, unequaled, and unparalleled – the one and only God Almighty. And there is not God like our God.^[1Chron.17:20]

Our God is a consuming, purifying Fire

Heb 12:29 for our God is a consuming fire.

FIRE AND METAL

God will purify us

Mal 3:2-3 ESV But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's *fire* and like fullers' soap. (3) He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD.

God's Word is pure

Psa 12:6 ESV The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.

LIKE FIRE BAKES THE POT into a vessel to be used.

Jer 18:6 ESV "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

Like the kiln bakes the potter's clay vessel to make it useful, God prepares and purifies His people, as vessels of honor for His purpose.^[Rom.9:21] Our God is a consuming and purifying fire. He desires to purify those who are His own.

Our God is In the Fire

When God made a covenant with Abraham, the sacrifice was cut in two, and Abraham fell into a deep sleep.

Gen 15:17 ESV When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

God appeared to Him as the fire and torch. God is the fire. It was His localized, manifest presence.

Exo 19:18 ESV Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.

God appeared in the form of fire on the mountain top. God was the fire.

When the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness, God made His presence known to them.

Exo 13:21 ESV And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

God made known His localized, manifest presence through fire, as He led the Israelites. God was the fire.

So how does the Biblical description of God motivate us to live?



HOLY LIVING BEFORE A HOLY GOD

* So what does this mean for us as Christians? God's presence and His work in us and the new life in Christ, must evidence an ever increasing, level of life transformation. We do not compare ourselves with one another. But we do measure our spiritual life and growth by His presence changing us from the inside out.

The Spirit of Holiness

The Holy Spirit of God is the Spirit of Holiness. Holy Spirit is not just a title or label, but a description of his essence and character. It is His purpose to convict and change us. That is why the "Holy Spirit" can be translated, the Spirit of Holiness.

Joh 16:7-11 ESV Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (8) And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: (9) concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; (10) concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; (11) concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

It is the purpose of the Spirit of Holiness to purify the vessel in which He dwells. We are the vessel.

As God's Spirit of Holiness fills our lives and directs our thinking and choices, He controls us and changes us into the people He wants us to become. Prayer in the presence of God has the potential to be Life Transforming Prayer. This is a possibility, but not a guarantee. God's work also depends on our willingness. We are challenged to surrender to God and allow Him to guide and lead us.^[Eph.5:18] We are invited to allow Him to mold us into the image of His dear Son.^[Rom8:29]

Act 4:31 ESV And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

When we pray and experience the presence of the LORD, He can change us and empower us to do what we never dreamed we could accomplish. But His work is kingdom oriented. That must be our desire as well.

The Spirit of Holiness and Daily Living

Application--

So what does this mean for us as Christians? How does the holiness of God transform our daily living? We do know for sure, that God wants to change us.

Our Attitudes: This involves His perspective and His love. This also involves our perception of God, toward life and ministry and others.

Our Behavior: This involves His character and His dealings with mankind. The change will be our treatment of others as evidence of God's character in action.

Our Choices: This reflects His glory and is directed toward others and away from self. This is daily willful steps to honor our glorious, holy, Almighty God.

Submitted to God: This involves willingly allowing God to gain control of every area of our lives.

Jas 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Daily cleansing: This is a prerequisite for dwelling in His presence. God doesn't take up residence in a dirty dwelling. He will clean

house! In the presence of the Almighty, is a purifying consuming fire and Life Transforming power to change.

Does prayer in His presence really make a difference in our lives? Not a quick pitstop, but a gradual *increase* of the time we spend, prayerfully communing in the holy presence of the Almighty.

Heb 4:16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

True Christianity is not a stationary religion.

In the presence of the Almighty, Moses removed his sandals and walked on holy ground.

In the presence of the Almighty, God's people trembled before an awe-inspiring, fear-instilling God.

In the presence of the Almighty, Isaiah was convicted and purified of his own sinfulness.

In the presence of the Almighty, the early church was in awe of the presence of God and was changed into courageous, kingdom-focused, gospel-proclaiming people.

How is the presence of God changing your life recently?

“A New Guide for A New Prayer Life”

Text: Ps.37:4; Rom.2:4

November 30, 2014

“In the Presence of the Almighty: Life Transforming Prayer”

*“Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you
the desires of your heart.” -Psalm 37:4*

Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays.

--Soren Kierkegaard

INTRODUCTION

“In the presence of the Almighty”, is about change, personal purification and Life Transformation.

This kind of prayer is not about getting what we want, but getting to know God for who He is and becoming who He wants us to be. Life Transforming prayer is not even change as the result of answered prayers, but about change that is a result of time spent in the presence of the Almighty and the change that brings.

Cultivating & Developing Divine Affections is a foundational issue in abiding and growing in our relationship and intimacy with the Lord. The Holy Spirit encourages us to draw near to God with a sincere heart (Heb.10:22)

Time with God is relationship building. Relationships are like flowers. They grow, and we grow to appreciate them. Some people develop a taste for certain foods or nurture an interest in reading. Likewise a meaningful prayer life can be cultivated. Whatever relationship we may be talking about, they all need to be cultivated.

This series focused on time in the presence of the Almighty is made possible, through the blood of Jesus. For without His shed blood for our sins, we could never enter into the holy presence of God, nor commune with Him as we may now.

John 1:14, 16 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (16) For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

Jesus Christ is our source of fullness and from the fullness of Christ, His church receives grace upon grace. This is like a fountain that is pouring out an unending supply of water. But not only is the fountain outpouring, it is also overflowing onto whatever is nearby. God's grace is outpouring and overflowing, unceasing and affecting many, making us undeserving recipients of the unmerited favor and immeasurable benefits of God.

This is not judgment that motivates through threats. But is goodness that blesses is and draws us to Him and nurtures desire in our hearts.

Rom 2:4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

We often think that God's judgment that causes us to come to Christ, but the riches of His kindness can fill our hearts with love and desire for him, like judgment never can. His mercies provide escape from His judgment. That kind of kindness and grace should draw us to God, by desire to know Him better.

A guide for a new prayer life begins with...

A NEW KIND OF MOTIVATION - Desire

This is the desire for the presence of the Lord – longing, hunger, thirsting for renewed, deepening relations with the Almighty. A new kind of motivation does not stem from obligation or duty, where we do our devotions because that is what is expected of us as Christians. A new kind of motivation based on desire can cause us to actually want to spend more time with the Lord. This is a new kind of motivation and it can be nurtured.

The motivation of desire begins with...

Delighting in God

Scripture commands us to delight in God.

Psalms 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

This promise is self-dependent. Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. It indicates that He does so, because when we delight in Him, our desires originate from God focused joy, interest and delight.

Psa 16:5-11 The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. (6) The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;

indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. (7) I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. (8) I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. (9) Therefore my heart is *glad*, and my whole being *rejoices*; my flesh also dwells secure. (10) For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. (11) You make known to me the path of life; in your **presence** there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

These are not the words from someone who is motivated by duty or obligation. These are thoughts stemming from a heart of delightful joy in God.

This new kind of motivation begins with...

THE HEART'S DESIRE FOR THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD

Listen to these expressions of the heart.

Psa 42:1-2 As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. (2) My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

These are expressions of a heart that genuinely long for and desires the presence of the Lord and can be cultivated, developed and nurtured. This is Delighting in God and enjoying Him. Creeds and catechisms are often very theological in their content. But the Westminster Shorter Confession begins with this question and response:

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man? A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

How many of us consider that to be our chief goal of life? This is a new kind of motivation which can transform the life of prayer.

The Guide for a New prayer life begins with...

A NEW KIND OF PRAYER – Heaven focused

Heaven focused prayer desires His way, delights in His will, prays for His timing and seeks His direction.

The new kind of prayer has ...

A New Standard for Prayer

This is not prayer with lists of physical needs, or earthly desires. It is not prayer focused on temporary things, but is more heavenly focused.

A standard for prayer

Mat 6:9-13 Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. (10) Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (11) Give us this day our daily bread, (12) and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Also, a new standard for prayer has...

A New Source of Delight

A new kind of prayer life understands the importance *of* and cultivates a delight *in* the presence of the Almighty.

Assurance

Psa 139:7-10 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? (8) If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in **Sheol**, you are there! (9) If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, (10) even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

These are not the words of someone who is trying to escape the presence of God. On the contrary it is someone who is thankful that they cannot go anywhere where God is not present with him or her.

We know the story of Jonah who, when instructed by God to preach his message, promptly set sail in the opposite direction.

Jon 1:1-3 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, (2) "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." (3) But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

Adam and Eve hid from the presence of the Lord.^[Gen.3:8]

Cain, went out from the presence of the Lord.^[Gen.4:16]

Jonah, flees from the presence of the Lord.^[Jonah 1:3]

But God does bring him to his senses.

Jon 2:1-7 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, (2) saying, "I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. (3) For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me. (4) Then I said, 'I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.' (5) The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head (6) at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. (7) When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.

Before, Jonah's delight was not in the Lord, but in escaping His presence and His assignment.. But he could not. God provided circumstances that caused Jonah to change his direction and to actually come to God in prayer, seeking His presence and deliverance

A NEW PRAYER GUIDE

These are 5 F.A.C.T.S. that can nurture a Transformational Prayer Life.

A Familiar Guide

Faith praying: Nurture faith based praying, through building up the spirit of prayer, by remembering, recounting, and recalling the goodness of God.

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Prayer focused on professing faith in God, in our specific situations and for our needs. This is not simply faith that God will give you what you ask for. This is faith fully based on knowing God for who He is and trusting His character.

Adoration and Worship: This is nurturing a prayer time which includes expressing our adoration to God and worshiping Him for who He is. It implies bowing before the source and object of our prayer.

Confession and Repentance: Develop an attitude of trembling before the Lord of all of Creation. Develop the discipline of regularly confessing our sins to God and repenting from those sins.

1Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Confessing and realistically acknowledging our sin and thereby asking for forgiveness. This involves doing what we can to remove any obstacles and hindrances to our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and praise: This is nurturing an Amazing awareness of the goodness of God. This is an eternal focus, rather than an earthly focus.

Psa 100:4-5 Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! (5) For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Supplication and Intercession: This is nurturing a spirit of supplication and intercession. It involves resting in the Source and Wisdom and Power of the Almighty.

Php 4:6-7 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (7) And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Allowing the presence of the Almighty to change me, can change my prayer life into a more meaningful and more powerful prayer life.

A Familiar Lesson

* The Presence of the Almighty is not something that we lose by changing our location or running from Him.

* The Presence of the Almighty must become our primary desire and motivation above all other things.

* The Presence of the Almighty can and must be developed, nurtured and cultivated; for a new and meaningful prayer life; which can and will bring about Personal Life Transformation.

APPLICATION

1) Let us take steps toward or into the presence of the Almighty

Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord

Jas 4:8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Let us Flee into the presence of the Almighty.

2) Take time to dwell in the presence of the Almighty

Do not hurry. Do not minimize your time in His presence, in fact consider extending it. God is our Source and there are times we need to lengthen our time with Him, in order to be filled with more of His fullness. (John 1:14-16)

3) Allow God to align our heart with His.

It is clear that Jonah did not want what God wanted. He did not share the heart of God for the souls of those people. God had to change Jonah's heart.

4) Let us find ways to be humbly obedient, following the Lord and pleasing Him.

Remember; we only have access to enter into God's holy presence because of the precious blood of Jesus which has removed the sin barrier and opened the entrance into the holy presence of God.

Heb 10:19-23 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, (20) by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, (21) and since we have a great priest over the house of God, (22) let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (23) Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

We thank God for His dear Son. We thank Jesus for His precious shed blood. We thank the Holy Spirit for His work in convicting, leading, encouraging and pouring out the love of God in our hearts. “and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love as been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” --Rom 5:5

Don't close this booklet yet

without considering this all important question.

**Is Jesus Christ the Savior of your soul
and the Lord of your life?**

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
--Romans 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come
from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
not perish, but have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him
to die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
-- Romans 6:23

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of
Jesus Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were
still sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- Rom 10:13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God, - John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you
are truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your
sins and citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

The ABCs

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. *He already knows.*
- also Confess Jesus as you LORD.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:
Christ E. Free Church, PO Box 619, 19682 Hill Rd,
Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, www.christefca.org

We have a free booklet on:

Water Baptism: *The First Step of Believer's Obedience.*
and also

A New Creation: *Beginning Your New Life In Christ*

It is our prayer that you find Jesus Christ to be, your greatest purpose, your highest calling, your soul's source and joy, and your all-consuming passion.

Other Free Booklets downloadable at www.ChristEFCA.org

1 PETER, pt.1-2 (2Vol): *Suffering in Sojourning*
1 PETER, pt.3-5 (3Vol): *The Church God Always Wanted*
A NEW CREATION: *Beginning Your New Life In Christ*
ADVENT: *The Submission of Christ*
AMERICA ADRIFT: *A Culture in Crisis and the Challenges Before the Church*
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GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR THE FAMILY: *The Intelligent Divine Design*
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HOLY WEEK 2011: *Questions About Christ and His Resurrection?*
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WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER: *A Handbook for Pre-Marriage Considerations*
YOUR LIFE IS LIKE....: *The Challenge to Disciple A Community*



Life Line Resources

May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.

--- Downloadable free resources at: www.christefca.org --

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