

O. Hallesby: On Prayer

Notes on O. Hallesby, "Prayer" (Augsberg Publishing House, 1931)

by Jai Kyung

Prayer is not what I do. It is what Jesus does.

- All I have to do is to open the door when Jesus knocks at the door of your heart. Then Jesus enters quietly into our heart and does his blessed work. (Jesus vs. I who does the work)

Prayer is giving Jesus access to your heart when He knocks.

- Prayer is nothing more than lifting your eyes looking onto Jesus.

Prayer is not words. It is a condition of mind and an attitude of heart.

- Prayer is going into the sun and lying down in the sunshine of grace. All you have to do is to go into the sun. It is the sun that does the cure. (But you have to go into the sun.)

Two conditions for prayer:

- (1) helplessness; and
- (2) faith.

As your desire for holiness increases, so does the temptation for sin within you.

- When you realize that, you know that you are helpless.

Honest soul struggles against the dishonesty of their being.

- They feel helplessly lost and the prayer freezes on their lips.

Your realization and feeling of helplessness is your prayer.

- Then it calls from your heart to the heart of God.

As a mother dedicates her life to the care of her child, God dedicates himself to care for you.

- Your awareness and admission of helplessness is the most powerful plea to God in your prayer.

Thank God for feeling helpless – it is the essence of prayer.

- Helplessness is the real secret and the impelling power of prayer.

Your view of your prayer (earthly view) and God's view (heavenly view) of your prayer are different.

- He is perfect: since he created me, his plan for me is also perfect even when I do not understand.
- You know his plan for you through prayer.

Your rebellion => anxiety => paralyzing fear => helplessness => prayer.

- Learn to endure it while relying upon Him and resting in Him.

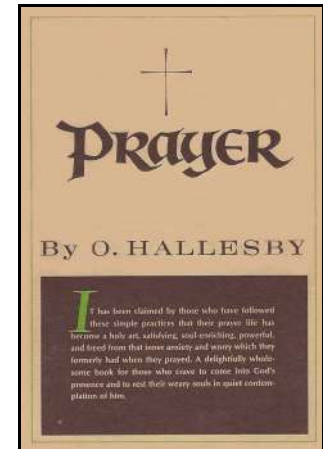
We are impotent to struggle against our sinful desires.

Faith and doubt are struggling for the mastery of my soul.

- My heart is the battle ground.

We very often pray without believing answers to our prayer before, during, and even after the prayer.

It is blasphemy to turn to God in prayer and not believe in answers to prayers.



Think of the man with a demented son and Mary at the wedding in Cana.

- All they did was to come to Jesus with plea.

If you have faith to pray, you have enough faith to believe in answered prayers.

- We have enough faith when we turn to Jesus in our helplessness.

The essence of prayer is to coming to Christ and opening the door when Jesus knocks.

- It is not helping Jesus how to answer our prayers with details of supplication and how.

Know the difference between unbelief and doubt.

- **Unbelief is refusal to believe – and Jesus condemned it.**
- **Doubt is faith-distress, faith-anguish, faith-suffering, and faith-tribulation, which Jesus helps you with it.**
- Mark 9:9-14-30 – the father of a demented child
 - **“I believe; help my unbelief.”**
 - Jesus saw this as doubt, not willful unbelief.
- Mark 6:5-6 – “He marveled at their unbelief.”
 - Jesus saw it as willful unbelief.

Focus on the requirement of answered prayers.

(1) **You abide in me;**

(2) **My word abides in you.**

No time with Jesus grieves Him.

- **Neglecting prayer grieves Him.**

Sin is a sin not because of its negative consequences.

- **It is sin because Jesus says so.**

Just as using a tool and musical instrument in a wrong way make it hard, strenuous and resultless, wrong way of prayer makes prayer hard, strenuous and resultless.

Just like any artistic effort, the holy art of prayer takes practice and perseverance.

Pray for the spirit of prayer because without it you cannot fulfill his calling.

Most common mistakes in prayer

- (1) **God does not need your help to fulfill your prayer.**
- (2) **We use prayer to command God.**
- (3) **We forget to pray in Jesus’ name.**

At the wedding in Cana, Mary told the situation to Jesus and he did the rest (John 2:1-11).

God does not need your help in fulfilling your prayer.

- **Your job is to pray for what;**
- **Forget about how: that is God’s job.**
- **Then your prayer life will be restful, not filled with anxiety and suspense.**

Knowing Jesus in this way is a prerequisite to true prayer.

- **As we know Jesus this way better, our prayer become quiet and confident and a blessed conversation with Him, leading to peace and serenity.**

When you pray...

- **Trust His time because you trust Him;**
- **Trust His way because His way is infinitely higher and better than yours.**

Is your prayer life a delight or struggle?

Know **this law of prayer**, then just go to Him in your helplessness with faith.

- (1) **“What” is your job**
- (2) **“How” is His job**
- (3) **“When” is His job.**

Know that His answer is always not only the best, but also the richest.

Jesus is on his knees for you. He is beckoning you to kneel along with Him.

Why do we need to pray in Jesus' name?

- Because the name of Jesus gives unholy people access (admission or pass) to Holy God.
- Because only in the name of Jesus, we can come to the throne.

There are heavenly (true) prayers and there are heathen prayers.

- Heavenly prayer is just to go to Him.
- Heathen prayer is trying to manipulate God to get your way.

Is your prayer a struggle or a rest for your soul?

Is your prayer chamber a battle ground or a resting place?

Why is prayer hard?

- (1) Because it is so important and central to our spiritual life, Satan directs all his effort to thwart it.
- (2) Even though God gave you new nature (New Adam, holy nature), Satan still has confederate in our own bosom (Old Adam, sinful nature) as a stealth tempter, raging a stealth war against God and new nature in you.

Satan/ old nature β God/ new nature,	Satan/ old nature à God/ new nature
<u>Losing battle</u>	<u>Winning battle</u>

Take this battle with alliance between Satan and my old nature to God.

This is the real hindrance to prayer.

The outward hindrance to prayer (priority, time and distraction) is a veiled hand of Satan in **complot** to mask the real hindrance.

- Take it to Jesus.
- Jesus rebuked the raging storm.
- Jesus can and will rebuke the raging storm in your soul.

The way to collect a distracted mind and roaming thought is to center in Jesus.

Prayer is not for my sake but for God's sake.

- The purpose of prayer is not to get what one wants from God, but to glorify Him through answered prayer.

Pray for prayer.

- Pray for the spirit of prayer.

Pray the scripture.

- We need both regular, disciplined prayers as well as instantaneous, spirit-led prayers.
- They both work in harmony and in compliment.

Since we are not all spirit, with dependence to outward condition, we need time and place for unbroken fellowship with God, in quietude and solitude with inward composure.

Do not make prayer an activity but rather a quiet time of fellowship for the following reasons:

- (1) My telling Him what is ailing me (symptom); my job**
- (2) His examination/ diagnosis (x-ray); His job**
- (3) His treatment (light treatment); His job**

Do you ignore or listen to his diagnosis when you do not like it?

- **Do you acknowledge your secret alliance with Satan/sin?**
- **Your praying chamber can be a resting place or a battle ground depending on what you do.**

The most difficult thing for us is to listen what He has to say about our sinful habits.

- **You cannot say no to what Jesus' diagnosis and continue to pray.**
- **If you continue to say no to Jesus, your prayer life will cease.**
- **That is why it is so important to listen to Jesus' diagnosis even when you do not like and you fail to correct – it will sustain your prayer life if it is not willful disobedience.**

If you continue to wrestle with the spirit of prayer, He will eventually depart from you.

- **This is the most dreadful consequence.**

There are two major components in prayer:

- (1) Praise and adoration for who He is à Him focus**
 - (2) Praise and thanksgiving for what He has done for me à Me focus.**
- **These are complimentary and overlapping with each other, but it is important for us know the difference because it tells us the focus of your prayer: Him or me.**
 - **Praise lies upon a higher plane than thanksgiving.**
 - **When I give thanks, my thoughts still circles around me. But in praise, my soul ascends, seeing and praising only majesty and power of God, His grace and redemption.**

In wrestling while praying, our striving is not a struggle with God, but with ourselves.

- **With our selfishness (a cause of lack of intercession); and**
- **With our love of ease (a cause of slothfulness, and lack of perseverance and fasting).**

We resort to fasting so as to...

- **set us free from a worldly mind and distracting environment;**
- **have the spirit to search our whole inner being;**
- **speak with the spirit what is grieving him;**
- **reestablish unhindered communication with Him and greater influx of His divine power.**

Life circumstances that require fasting:

- (1) during special temptations; to deal radically with temptations that has power over us;**
- (2) making a decisive choice;**
- (3) in planning and carrying out exceedingly difficult tasks.**

Fasting is:

- (1) a large conduit of power from heaven;**
- (2) a greater inner sense of spiritual penetration;**
- (3) cleansing of our soul of impure motives concealed in our heart.**

Hallesby: “I would rather that the miracle be not permitted to take place than that I by taking honor unto myself should defile your name and desecrate prayer. But if you can perform the miracle without my disturbing or desecrating anything that is yours, then grant it, Lord.”

We are used to think that everything is created to bring gratification to our selfish desire, and God is no exception.

- We try to use God with prayer as another mean to meet our ends, which leads to temptation and to the misuse of prayer.
- As a result, we pray in direct contradiction to the idea of prayer.
- Jesus, however, corrects us in a firm, but tender tone of his voice.

Only when you know God well, you can pray in confidence.

Through prayer, we give Jesus access to our souls, our bodies, our homes, our neighborhood, our countries and to the world.

Pray for a greater simplicity of our mind.

God is merciful even when He declines the things we ask for.

- **Remember that even Jesus prayed prayers which God did not answer.**

Prayer is a condition of mind, an attitude of heart, which only God can recognize as prayer whether it is quiet thinking, a sigh or audible words.

- Prayer is an untrammelled conversation between two, you and God, with free and natural expression of heart.

Forms of prayers

- (1) Supplicatory prayer
- (2) Prayer of thanksgiving
- (3) Praise
- (4) Conversation
- (5) Wordless prayer

Children ask for many things, but they seldom thank.

- **That is what we are with God.**
- God has a sensitive, tender heart.

Jesus' teaching on thanksgiving.

- **Only one leper out of ten came back to thank Jesus. "Where are the other nine?"**
- **Jesus will not forget even one cup of water given out of grateful love of Him.**

In prayer, you tell God not only what you need, but also your experiences.

- **He wants conversation with you.**
- Then the sense of His nearness will fill your soul.
- Everything becomes different when the Lord is at your side.
 - Our work becomes easier.
 - Our difficulty does no longer frighten us.
 - Unpleasantness at the hand of others no longer disturbs our peace.

Prayer is a breath of our soul, the profound secret of daily renewal.

Life, in its final analysis, is inexpressible.

- As two lovers can converse in quietness without words, you can have conversation with God without words.
- **"I have nothing more to say, but I love to be in your presence. I just want to rest in our arms."**

In the Fall the whole wiring system was destroyed.

- **Jesus restored the wiring system, but you need to turn the switch on to make the new wiring system to work.**

In pagan prayer; you pray to God to get what you want.

- In Christian prayer; you praise God because He has already know what you need and given it to you.

Do you pray believing prayer, semi-believing prayer or non-believing prayer?

Prayer is learning to be attentive to God's presence in our midst.

Prayer is learning the relational language of heaven, and let it become the language of our heart.

Prayer is entering the life of God with our heart and body, encountering flesh love of the Father as He speaks hope and love for us.

- **As we do so, we are set free to accept our weakness and limitations.**

The beauty of prayer is that we never have to have it altogether to be in relationship with Him.

Prayer is not the privilege of the strong, but the cry of the weak.

In prayer, we begin to think things He thinks, to desire things He desires, to love things He loves, and to will things He wills.

When we pray in our weakness and desperation, we are neither shamed or rejected because the Spirit helps us with our weakness.

His love for us is so deep that He invites us to relationship with Himself and sustains us when we are too weak to respond.