

Practicing The Presence of God In My Day

Step Eleven: We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

The entire 12 Step Program is designed to get us out of the "God role" and to put a loving, moral, and forgiving God back in control of our world. When we do this there is reality and sanity at the center of our lives instead of a flighty, scared person in denial, on a search for "who knows what" will make him or her happy. Step Eleven provides a simple, direct approach to getting to know God in the context of everyday living.

The Lord is my light and my salvation—so why should I be afraid? The Lord protects me from danger—so why should I tremble? The one thing I ask of the Lord—the thing I seek most—is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditating in His Temple. For he will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in His sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock. (From Psalm 27)

Using prayer and meditation as tools, we move from some vague hope or trust to beginning to invite the loving spirit of God into the deepest, most confused, most fearful, most painful, and most practical areas of life. We are not learning truths about God but learning the presence of God with which we live and interact. This sense of the presence of God changes the whole atmosphere of our lives -- from despair to enthusiastic hope.

Jesus said, "If you stay joined to me and my words remain in you, you may ask any request you like, and it will be granted! Ask me and I will tell you some remarkable secrets about what is going to happen. If you need wisdom—if you want to know what God wants you to do—ask him, and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking". And we can be confident that God will listen to us whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will. And if we know he is listening when we make our requests, we can be sure that he will give us what we ask for.

There is a sense in which the purpose of prayer and meditation in the program is almost entirely to help us learn how to hear God and to sensitize us to read the signs in our lives and in the world that can guide us toward knowing and loving life as God wants us to. We get in touch with God who is already at work changing our lives. We now stay in touch with Him and let Him teach us how to live. When we watch and listen to God in this way God will respond and reveal His will to us. This makes us much more attentive to our surroundings and to the people in our lives. God speaks into these situations and relationships and through His guidance and help we find new ways to live and celebrate God's many gifts.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

And now, dear brothers and sisters let me say one more thing as I close this letter. Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned from me and heard from me and saw me doing, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4)

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. How am I inviting God to be a conscious part of my daily living?
2. What does it mean to me to experience the presence of God?
3. What effect does living conscious of God's presence have on the way I live my life?
4. What does it mean to me to watch and listen to what God wants to share with me?
5. How do I get to know what God's will is?
6. How do I move from a point of knowing God's will to getting the power to carry it out?