

Communication With God

MEMORY TEXT: “This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him” (1 John 5:14, 15).

“Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

Suggested Reading: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 93-104. (At the bottom of this page)

1. A MODEL PRAYER

Sunday, March 26

a. Why is it so important to stay in touch with our Saviour? John 15:4–7; Proverbs 18:24.

John 15:4-7

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. **5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. **6** If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. **7** If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Proverbs 18:24

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

“Through nature and revelation, through His providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us. But these are not enough; we need also to pour out our hearts to Him. In order to have spiritual life and energy, we must have actual intercourse with our heavenly Father. Our minds may be drawn out toward Him; we may meditate upon His works, His mercies, His blessings; but this is not, in the fullest sense, communing with Him. In order to commune with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 93.

b. Since the disciples saw Jesus often in earnest prayer, what did they ask Him to teach them and what model did He provide? Luke 11:1; Matthew 6:9–13.

Luke 11:1

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Matthew 6:9-13

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. **10** Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. **11** Give us this day our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. **13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

c. Was this model prayer meant to be merely memorized and repeated over and over again? What other lessons can we learn from this instruction? Matthew 6:7.

Matthew 6:7

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

2. ADDRESS AND ADORATION

Monday, March 27

a. What do we comprehend by the words at the beginning of this model prayer “Our Father”? Romans 8:15–17; John 20:17.

Romans 8:15-17

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. **16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: **17** And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified

John 20:17

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

“Those who accept Christ as their personal Saviour are not left as orphans, to bear the trials of life alone. He receives them as members of the heavenly family; He bids them call His Father their Father. They are His ‘little ones,’ dear to the heart of God, bound to Him by the most tender and abiding ties. He has toward them an exceeding tenderness, as far surpassing what our father or mother has felt toward us in our helplessness as the divine is above the human.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 327.

b. What other important role does God have besides the friendly term, “Our Father”? Psalm 5:1, 2.

Psalm 5:1-2

Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. **2** Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.

c. According to the next section in this prayer, before asking God for help, what important point are we to express first? Psalms 140:13; 92:1.

Psalm 140:13

Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.

Psalm 92:1

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High:

“ ‘In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.’ 1 Thessalonians 5:18. This command is an assurance that even the things which appear to be against us will work for our good. God would not bid us be thankful for that which would do us harm.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 255.

d. In the example of Jehoshaphat, how is the importance of praise and thanksgiving revealed—even in the midst of battle? 2 Chronicles 20:1–30 (6–12, 21, 22).

2 Chronicles 20:1–30 (6–12, 21, 22)

It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. **2** Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazontamar, which is Engedi. **3** And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. **4** And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. **5** And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, **6** And said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? **7** Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? **8** And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, **9** If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. **10** And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; **11** Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. **12** O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no

might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee. **13** And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. **14** Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation; **15** And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. **16** To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. **17** Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you. **18** And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. **19** And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high. **20** And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. **21** And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever. **22** And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. **23** For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. **24** And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped. **25** And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much. **26** And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they blessed the Lord: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day. **27** Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies. **28** And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the Lord. **29** And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel. **30** So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about.

“We must gather about the cross. Christ and Him crucified should be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion. We should keep in our thoughts every blessing we receive from God, and when we realize His great love we should be willing to trust everything to the hand that was nailed to the cross for us.

“The soul may ascend nearer heaven on the wings of praise. God is worshiped with song and music in the courts above, and as we express our gratitude we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts. ‘Whoso offereth praise glorifieth’

God. Psalm 50:23. Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator, with ‘thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.’”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 103, 104.

3. PETITION AND CLOSING

Tuesday March 28

a. Even though we have our temporal needs such as our daily bread, what spiritual application is always to be our primary concern even over our temporal needs? 1 Kings 17:12–14; John 6:48; 14:13, 14; 15:7.

1 Kings 17:12-14

And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. **13** And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. **14** For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

John 6:48

I am that bread of life.

John 14:13-14

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **14** If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

John 15:7

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

“It is by receiving the life for us poured out on Calvary’s cross, that we can live the life of holiness. And this life we receive by receiving His word, by doing those things which He has commanded. Thus we become one with Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

“To pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works.”— *Steps to Christ*, pp. 100, 101.

b. Since the main purpose of prayer is spiritual in nature, what specific request can never be forgotten? Luke 11:4; Matthew 26:41.

Luke 11:4

And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 26:41

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

“Through being overcome with sleep, the disciples heard little of what passed between Christ and the heavenly messengers. Failing to watch and pray, they had not received that which God desired to give them—a knowledge of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. They lost the blessing that might have been theirs through sharing His self-sacrifice.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 425.

“God has always given men warning of coming judgments. Those who had faith in His message for their time, and who acted out their faith, in obedience to His commandments, escaped the judgments that fell upon the disobedient and unbelieving.”—*Ibid.*, p.634.

“It was in sleeping when Jesus bade him watch and pray that Peter had prepared the way for his great sin. All the disciples, by sleeping in that critical hour, sustained a great loss. Christ knew the fiery ordeal through which they were to pass. He knew how Satan would work to paralyze their senses that they might be unready for the trial. Therefore it was that He gave them warning. Had those hours in the garden been spent in watching and prayer, Peter would not have been left to depend upon his own feeble strength. He would not have denied his Lord. Had the disciples watched with Christ in His agony, they would have been prepared to behold His suffering upon the cross. They would have understood in some degree the nature of His overpowering anguish.”—*Ibid.*, pp.713, 714.

4. ANSWERS TO PRAYER

Wednesday March 29

a. What are some of the main reasons why prayer is not always answered as we hope? James 4:3; Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 28:9.

James 4:3

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Psalm 66:18

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

Proverbs 28:9

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

“If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions. Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 95.

“Oh, how many lose the richest blessings that God has in store for them in health and spiritual endowments! There are many souls who wrestle for special victories and special blessings that they may do some great thing. To this end they are always feeling

that they must make an agonizing struggle in prayer and tears. When these persons search the Scriptures with prayer to know the expressed will of God, and then do His will from the heart without one reservation or self-indulgence, they will find rest. All the agonizing, all the tears and struggles, will not bring them the blessing they long for. Self must be entirely surrendered. They must do the work that presents itself, appropriating the abundance of the grace of God which is promised to all who ask in faith.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 165.

b. What is necessary for prayer to be answered—and why? James 1:6, 7.

James 1:6-7

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. **7** For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

“When we do not receive the very things we asked for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears and that He will answer our prayers. We are so erring and short-sighted that we sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing to us, and our heavenly Father in love answers our prayers by giving us that which will be for our highest good—that which we ourselves would desire if with vision divinely enlightened we could see all things as they really are. When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 96.

5. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

Thursday March 30

a. In all prayer, what important point are we to always recognize and be ready to yield to? 1 John 5:14, 15.

1 John 5:14-15

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: **15** And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

“Our asking must be according to God’s will; we must ask for the things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal.

“For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God.”—*Education*, p. 258.

b. How often are we to pray? Daniel 6:10; 1Thessalonians 5:17.

Daniel 6:10

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray without ceasing.

“God does not mean that any of us should become hermits or monks and retire from the world in order to devote ourselves to acts of worship. The life must be like Christ’s life—between the mountain and the multitude. He who does nothing but pray will soon cease to pray, or his prayers will become a formal routine. When men take themselves out of social life, away from the sphere of Christian duty and cross bearing; when they cease to work earnestly for the Master, who worked earnestly for them, they lose the subject matter of prayer and have no incentive to devotion. Their prayers become personal and selfish. They cannot pray in regard to the wants of humanity or the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom, pleading for strength wherewith to work.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 101.

c. Are there special circumstances that demand the channel of communication always to be open and what should be our attitude when coming before our Maker? Nehemiah 2:4, 5; Hebrews 4:16.

Nehemiah 2:4-5

Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. **5** And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Friday March 31

- 1. What was the purpose of the model prayer that Christ taught the disciples?**
- 2. How important is adoration and praise to our Creator?**
- 3. Although temporal needs are important, what should take priority?**
- 4. What would be the greatest hindrances to prayer?**
- 5. How important is it to know God’s will before we pray for specific things?**

Through nature and revelation, through His providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us. But these are not enough; we need also to pour out our hearts to Him. In order to have spiritual life and energy, we must have actual intercourse with our heavenly Father. Our minds may be drawn out toward Him; we may meditate upon His works, His mercies, His blessings; but this is not, in the fullest sense, communing with Him. In order to commune with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life. **(SC 93.1)**

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him. **(SC 93.2)**

When Jesus was upon the earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He directed them to present their daily needs before God, and to cast all their care upon Him. And the assurance He gave them that their petitions should be heard, is assurance also to us. **(SC 93.3)**

Jesus Himself, while He dwelt among men, was often in prayer. Our Saviour identified Himself with our needs and weakness, in that He became a suppliant, a petitioner, seeking from His Father fresh supplies of strength, that He might come forth braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, “in all points tempted like as we are;” **(Hebrews 4:15)** but as the sinless one His nature recoiled from evil; He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and a privilege. He found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. And if the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer. **(SC 93.4)**

Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God’s heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith? The angels love to bow before God; they love to be near Him. They regard communion with God as their highest joy; and yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence. **(SC 94.1)**

The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven’s storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of

Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation. **(SC 94.2)**

There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers. One of the first of these is that we feel our need of help from Him. He has promised, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.” **Isaiah 44:3**. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who long after God, may be sure that they will be filled. The heart must be open to the Spirit’s influence, or God’s blessing cannot be received. **(SC 95.1)**

Our great need is itself an argument and pleads most eloquently in our behalf. But the Lord is to be sought unto to do these things for us. He says, “Ask, and it shall be given you.” **Matthew 7:7**. And “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” **Romans 8:32**. **(SC 95.2)**

If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions. Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance. **(SC 95.3)**

Another element of prevailing prayer is faith. “He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” **Hebrews 11:6**. Jesus said to His disciples, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” **Mark 11:24**. Do we take Him at His word? **(SC 96.1)**

The assurance is broad and unlimited, and He is faithful who has promised. When we do not receive the very things we asked for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears and that He will answer our prayers. We are so erring and short-sighted that we sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing to us, and our heavenly Father in love answers our prayers by giving us that which will be for our highest good—that which we ourselves would desire if with vision divinely enlightened we could see all things as they really are. When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon His sure promise, “Ask, and it shall be given you.” **Matthew 7:7**. **(SC 96.2)**

If we take counsel with our doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that we cannot see clearly, before we have faith, perplexities will only increase and deepen. But if we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, and in humble, trusting faith make known our wants to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts. Through sincere prayer we are brought into

connection with the mind of the Infinite. We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness. **(SC 96.3)**

When we come to ask mercy and blessing from God we should have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our own hearts. How can we pray, “Forgive us our debts, *as* we forgive our debtors,” and yet indulge an unforgiving spirit? **Matthew 6:12**. If we expect our own prayers to be heard we must forgive others in the same manner and to the same extent as we hope to be forgiven. **(SC 97.1)**

Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving. We must pray always if we would grow in faith and experience. We are to be “instant in prayer,” **(Romans 12:12)** to “continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.” **Colossians 4:2**. Peter exhorts believers to be “sober, and watch unto prayer.” **1 Peter 4:7**. Paul directs, “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” **Philippians 4:6**. “But ye, beloved,” says Jude, “praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God.” **Jude 20, 21**. Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God. **(SC 97.2)**

There is necessity for diligence in prayer; let nothing hinder you. Make every effort to keep open the communion between Jesus and your own soul. Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven. **(SC 98.1)**

We should pray in the family circle, and above all we must not neglect secret prayer, for this is the life of the soul. It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected. Family or public prayer alone is not sufficient. In solitude let the soul be laid open to the inspecting eye of God. Secret prayer is to be heard only by the prayer-hearing God. No curious ear is to receive the burden of such petitions. In secret prayer the soul is free from surrounding influences, free from excitement. Calmly, yet fervently, will it reach out after God. Sweet and abiding will be the influence emanating from Him who seeth in secret, whose ear is open to hear the prayer arising from the heart. By calm, simple faith the soul holds communion with God and gathers to itself rays of divine light to strengthen and sustain it in the conflict with Satan. God is our tower of strength. **(SC 98.2)**

Pray in your closet, and as you go about your daily labor let your heart be often uplifted to God. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. These silent prayers rise like precious incense before the throne of grace. Satan cannot overcome him whose heart is thus stayed upon God. **(SC 98.3)**

There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request

before King Artaxerxes. A closet of communion may be found wherever we are. We should have the door of the heart open continually and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul. **(SC 99.1)**

Although there may be a tainted, corrupted atmosphere around us, we need not breathe its miasma, but may live in the pure air of heaven. We may close every door to impure imaginings and unholy thoughts by lifting the soul into the presence of God through sincere prayer. Those whose hearts are open to receive the support and blessing of God will walk in a holier atmosphere than that of earth and will have constant communion with heaven. **(SC 99.2)**

We need to have more distinct views of Jesus and a fuller comprehension of the value of eternal realities. The beauty of holiness is to fill the hearts of God's children; and that this may be accomplished, we should seek for divine disclosures of heavenly things. **(SC 99.3)**

Let the soul be drawn out and upward, that God may grant us a breath of the heavenly atmosphere. We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him as naturally as the flower turns to the sun. **(SC 99.4)**

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." **James 5:11**. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." **Psalms 147:3**. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. **(SC 100.1)**

Jesus said, "Ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you." "I have chosen you: ... that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you." **John 16:26, 27; 15:16**. But to pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works. **(SC 100.2)**

God does not mean that any of us should become hermits or monks and retire from the world in order to devote ourselves to acts of worship. The life must be like Christ's life—between the mountain and the multitude. He who does nothing but pray will soon cease to pray, or his prayers will become a formal routine. When men take themselves out of social life, away from the sphere of Christian duty and cross bearing; when they cease to work earnestly for the Master, who worked earnestly for them, they lose the subject matter of prayer and have no incentive to devotion. Their prayers become personal and

selfish. They cannot pray in regard to the wants of humanity or the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom, pleading for strength wherewith to work. **(SC 101.1)**

We sustain a loss when we neglect the privilege of associating together to strengthen and encourage one another in the service of God. The truths of His word lose their vividness and importance in our minds. Our hearts cease to be enlightened and aroused by their sanctifying influence, and we decline in spirituality. In our association as Christians we lose much by lack of sympathy with one another. He who shuts himself up to himself is not filling the position that God designed he should. The proper cultivation of the social elements in our nature brings us into sympathy with others and is a means of development and strength to us in the service of God. **(SC 101.2)**

If Christians would associate together, speaking to each other of the love of God and of the precious truths of redemption, their own hearts would be refreshed and they would refresh one another. We may be daily learning more of our heavenly Father, gaining a fresh experience of His grace; then we shall desire to speak of His love; and as we do this, our own hearts will be warmed and encouraged. If we thought and talked more of Jesus, and less of self, we should have far more of His presence. **(SC 101.3)**

If we would but think of God as often as we have evidence of His care for us we should keep Him ever in our thoughts and should delight to talk of Him and to praise Him. We talk of temporal things because we have an interest in them. We talk of our friends because we love them; our joys and our sorrows are bound up with them. Yet we have infinitely greater reason to love God than to love our earthly friends; it should be the most natural thing in the world to make Him first in all our thoughts, to talk of His goodness and tell of His power. The rich gifts He has bestowed upon us were not intended to absorb our thoughts and love so much that we should have nothing to give to God; they are constantly to remind us of Him and to bind us in bonds of love and gratitude to our heavenly Benefactor. We dwell too near the lowlands of earth. Let us raise our eyes to the open door of the sanctuary above, where the light of the glory of God shines in the face of Christ, who "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." **Hebrews 7:25. (SC 102.1)**

We need to praise God more "for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men." **Psalms 107:8.** Our devotional exercises should not consist wholly in asking and receiving. Let us not be always thinking of our wants and never of the benefits we receive. We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. We are the constant recipients of God's mercies, and yet how little gratitude we express, how little we praise Him for what He has done for us. **(SC 102.2)**

Anciently the Lord bade Israel, when they met together for His service, "Ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee." **Deuteronomy 12:7.** That which is done for the glory of God should be done with cheerfulness, with songs of praise and thanksgiving, not with sadness and gloom. **(SC 103.1)**

"Our God is a tender, merciful Father. His service should not be looked upon as a heart-saddening, distressing exercise. It should be a pleasure to worship the Lord and to take part in His work." God would not have His children, for whom so great salvation has

been provided, act as if He were a hard, exacting taskmaster. He is their best friend; and when they worship Him, He expects to be with them, to bless and comfort them, filling their hearts with joy and love. The Lord desires His children to take comfort in His service and to find more pleasure than hardship in His work. He desires that those who come to worship Him shall carry away with them precious thoughts of His care and love, that they may be cheered in all the employments of daily life, that they may have grace to deal honestly and faithfully in all things. **(SC 103.2)**

We must gather about the cross. “Christ and Him crucified should be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion.” We should keep in our thoughts every blessing we receive from God, and when we realize His great love we should be willing to trust everything to the hand that was nailed to the cross for us. **(SC 103.3)**

The soul may ascend nearer heaven on the wings of praise. God is worshiped with song and music in the courts above, and as we express our gratitude we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts. “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth” God. **Psalms 50:23**. Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator, with “thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.” **Isaiah 51:3**. **(SC 104.1)**