

The Science of Prayer

Its ABC's

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Name: _____

Date: _____

LESSON 2

Solution-Centered Praying

Introduction

Years ago my wife and I learned an important secret. It had to do with prayer. We learned that the length of the prayer does not necessarily determine the degree of help one receives. We learned that many people spend a full hour or two a day in prayer. But at the end of a specified period of time, they have made no progress whatever. This is because they deal principally with their problems in their prayers. They should be visualizing solutions. Let us repeat it--they should be visualizing solutions in their prayers. This is what true Bible praying does.

This very week a most sincere lady came to us, inquiring how many problems she should pray about at one time. We suggested that she think about only one. But that this one (during a period of perhaps one week) would be solution-centered, not problem centered except just long enough to identify the problem. As soon as she had diagnosed the situation she should at once go into thought orbit around the positives, the solutions.

This is in keeping with the Word of God. The Bible does not say to give much thought to doubts, to go into orbit around your doubts. It says: ". . . add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." 2 Peter 1:5-7.

The way some people would seem to read this Scripture it would say: "To your problem of why you doubt so much, add the problem of why you are so impure in your thinking. Then add to this impurity of thought another question-Why do I know so little? Then add to this the problem of why I am an addict to so many bad habits. Then add to this problem-Why do I lose my temper? Then add this thought-Why am I so irreligious at times? Then add to this the problem of why I am so mean in my home. And then add to this--Why am I so uncharitable?"

NO! NO! God's way of praying is to be solution centered. We present it in this lesson.

If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature . . . II Corinthians 5:17

1. We gradually become like that on which our minds dwell.

". . . we all, . . . , beholding . . . are changed into the same image. ..." 2 Corinthians 3:18.

"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he. ..." Proverbs 23:7.

Several psychiatrists recently did an extensive research on suicide. It is reported that they all but one committed suicide.

When we were in grammar school a neighbor boy became adept at mimicking a fellow pupil who stammered. Years later we met the mimicker again. He was himself a confirmed stammerer.

One of our brothers was named after an eloquent minister. This minister limped. A young minister under the training of this older one was impressed deeply with his character and his ministry. He wanted to be like this great man. It was later observed that he also walked with a slight limp just as the older minister did.

2. The Holy Scriptures teach us to think on things which are lovely.

".. whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, ... whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. . . . and the God of peace shall be with you:" Philippians 4:8, 9.

When I was a lad, learning to ride a bicycle, I was filled with fear lest I ride into a tree or telephone pole. I glared in the direction of that tree and ran straight into it. Then I glared at the pole and smashed into it. Then my older brother, Lane, came to my rescue. He gave me a simple principle: it was to look in the direction I wanted to go, rather than to look where I did not want to ride. "Look right down the right lane of the road," said he, "and you will go there." I did. I never again ran into a problem tree or pole.

A friend of ours went to seek counsel of a professional man who insisted that she "talk out" her problem over an extended period of time. When she was through he frankly presented her with counsel to commit herself immediately to a mental institution. As she stepped out of his office and into her car, she exclaimed to her husband, "That fellow is crazier than I." She then went to a good medical doctor who presented before her mind the possibility of healing. This picture gave her hope. Today she is a good wife and mother, in average health, and even doing splendid gospel work in which many souls are blessed.

A happily married couple were advised by a friend that something very serious could take place unless they studied the faults of each other and then "talk them out." They had been looking at each other's virtues. Now they followed his counsel, watched for the faults appearing in each other. The next time they saw him they were on the verge of divorce. They decided that the first method was better--that of looking at the good qualities of each other.

A minister friend of ours is often invited to help restore marital harmony. He chats individually with each marriage partner. Quietly and diplomatically he draws out from each one the good, the worthy qualities and habits of the other. Then tenderly and wisely he enlists the attention of each to dwell on these lovely qualities. He has been used of the Lord to effect many reconciliations.

Before he officiates at weddings he follows the same principle of encouraging each to look for good qualities in the other. He even secures their pledge. There has not been one divorce according to the latest report.

3. Before any of us had a problem, a solution was already in existence.

Before we sinned there was a Saviour. ". . . the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Revelation 13:8.

Before death there was life. "In him was life. ..." John 1: 4.

Before sorrow there was happiness. ". . . when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Job 38:4, 7.

4. For every problem we have there is a solution awaiting our acceptance.

Peace is offered to the unhappy. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. ..." John 14:27.

This peace is to those who are Christ-centered solution-centered. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee. ..." Isaiah 26:3.

D. L. Moody declared that this promise is to those whose mind is stayed on Christ; therefore, the reason why so many do not find that peace is because their minds are stayed on dear self.

Every need is promised. ". . . my God shall supply all your need. . . ." Philipians 4:19.

The problem of salvation has a solution. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Isaiah 45:22.

Forgiveness, cleansing and eternal life are all promised to the believing, confessing sinner. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." 1 John 1:9; 2:25.

5. Scientific praying is solution-centered praying.

A centurion asked Jesus to heal his servant. Listen to his solution-centered prayer. ". . . but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Matthew 8:8. Jesus replied, ". . . and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. ..." Matthew 8:13.

A woman with the issue of blood was solution-centered. Listen to the solution she found in Christ. ". . . and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague." Mark 5:29. Jesus said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." Verse 34.

Jacob teaches how not to mull over problems, and to become solution-centered as he feared Esau would slay him. He identified his problem in 17 words. (See Genesis 32:11, last part.) He immediately claimed two solution-filled promises of his Lord. (See Verses 9-12.) The promises are found in chapter 28:13-15, and chapter 31:3.

He went into action around solutions in harmony with the promises he claimed. He sent 580 animals ahead of him to Esau as gifts and instructed his family to refer to him as Esau's "servant." These two solution-centered actions would aid Esau in realizing that Jacob was neither returning home as a beggar, nor to lord it over Esau. Jacob was highly successful. (See Genesis, chapter 33.)

King Jehoshaphat teaches us not to mull over problems, but to go into orbit around promised solutions and act out that faith. He identified his problem in three verses of Scripture found in 2 Chronicles 20:10-12. He then claimed solution filled promises of his Lord recorded in 1 Kings 8:33-37; 9:2. He then prayed a three-part prayer such as this I course of lessons teaches us: (1) He asked-2 Chronicles 20:4. (2) He believed-Verse 20. (3) He returned thanks that he had received by having his army choir sing the victory song before there was the slightest sign of victory. Verse 21. His victory was so fabulous it took three days to gather the spoil. Verses 22-25.

6. Try a simple, scientific ABC solution-centered prayer of reception.

The following plan of claiming Bible promises as solutions has proven to be wonderful! We receive letters from many parts of the earth containing numerous thrilling experiences.

As you go through Christ's simple ABC prayer, please think of the problem as being at your right. The solution as being at your left. Now picture yourself going through three steps of a scientific prayer of reception.

First Step: A-Ask. Matthew 7:7.

Jesus commanded us, "Ask, and it shall be given you. ..." Think of yourself, as you vocalize your request, facing the solution. Where is your back? Toward the problem. You have not ignored its existence. Rather, once having recognized and identified it, you have started looking toward the promised solution. Now you need no longer mull over the problem, going first to one person and then to another, covering the case history repeatedly. Instead you now begin talking about the solution promised.

Second Step: B-Believe. Mark 11:24.

"Jesus taught believe that ye receive . . . and ye shall have. . . ." Now you see yourself moving in the direction of the promised solution. You are actually vocalizing your faith by saying, "Lord, I believe." As you visualize yourself moving in the direction of the solution you may not be able to fully discern the solution at once. But you move in that direction by continually voicing your belief in God and in His promised gift. Keep right on voicing this faith. Keep right on moving even though you see no sign of the solution you have been moving toward. Remember "faith is ... the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1. The evidence is the promise. It contains the gift. This spoken faith is most pleasing to God. He is delighted. (See Hebrews 11:6; Proverbs 15: 8.)

Third Step: C-Claim, Or Receive. Matthew 21:22 and Mark 11:24.

Now picture yourself claiming the solution promised just as you actually take hold of your baggage at the baggage claim. Is it eternal life you are claiming? Then picture yourself doing what you have been taught to do- " ... lay hold on eternal life . . ." 1 Timothy 6:12.

Do you need wisdom? (See Proverbs 3:13.) "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: ..." Proverbs 3:18.

Is it light you need? (See Isaiah 42:16.) Then picture [Page 30] yourself putting "on the armor of light." Romans 13:12.

Is it healing? Then picture yourself touching "the hem of his garment." Matthew 9:20.

This, then, is the simple, scientific way to claim Bible promises. It is a new concept to those who have been taught that the way to find solutions is to be problem centered. You cannot see the Statue of Liberty by gazing toward Alcatraz.

Assignment

We suggest to you, our student, that you actually drill yourself on the three-step scientific prayer. Go through the plan and see for yourself what it will do for your own life. Why not do this several times in the period of one week between lessons.

NOT BY BREAD ALONE

Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Deuteronomy 8:3

A PERSONAL MESSAGE

Dear Student:

We wish to share with you the second secret of soul winning communication.

2nd Secret: THE JOY OF JESUS

Just the other night, as we were doing these lessons, a lady asked us an important question. We had just spoken to a group of teachers. Her question was, in effect: "Just how would you approach a young man who has lost his way?"

We would like to share with you what Jesus would do, how He would speak, and how He would act. Many people have the impression that He was not a happy man. They overlook such statements of Scripture as these: "In thy presence is fulness of joy." Psalm 16: 11.

". . . exceeding joy." Jude 24.

"The joy of the Lord is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10.

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; . . . Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Psalm 51:12, 13.

"Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded. ..." Jeremiah 31: 16, 17.

Probably one of the main deterrents to Christianity for John Doe was the solemn, sad, sorrowful countenances of those senior Christians who trained him. Their faces, their conversation, their lives produced nothing to cause John Doe to believe that Christianity had answers to life's problems. The very ones who sought to help him had turned him off.

Our Lord made everything to produce "after its kind." A sad, self-loving professed Christian cannot produce a joyful, vibrant, happy convert. To turn people on to joy we must be joyful. To turn people on to happiness we must be happy.

Learning how to ask, believe and claim Bible promises, Christ promised, would make our joy full. John 16:24.

3rd Secret-CHRIST'S HUMILITY

One of the best ways, said Christ, to turn people on is to "humble ourselves." "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," He promised. Luke 14:11.

Christ taught a priority in religion. More important than going to church, as important as that is, is the spirit of humble reconciliation. Matthew 5:23, 24. This takes place by our obeying the Scripture. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16.

To sit down beside John Doe and quietly, humbly ask his pardon for errors we have committed is an art. It is a Christian art. It is a healing art. Even if we have not hurt John Doe's feelings, still humility is essential in not appearing sanctimonious. It is important to be so humble that we will "esteem" "better than" ourselves others who may have become alcoholics or drug addicts. (See Philippians 2:3.) This is extremely important. We are all surrounded by different circumstances in life. Had the circumstances that were John Doe's been ours, we might not have done nearly as well as this alcoholic or drug addict.

The "holier-than-thou" attitude of those of us who try to communicate with John Doe must be broken. We must, within our own hearts, "Honour all men." 1 Peter 2:17. And, "Speak evil of no man." Titus 3:2.

Science of Prayer

No matter how righteous we feel ourselves to be, if we are to learn of our Exemplar--Jesus, we shall learn that He descended from the God level, Philippians 2:6; to the man level, verse 8; to the servant level in attitude, verse 7. He was born with beasts, and died between criminals. To win John Doe we never lecture him, preach at him, belittle him, or appear shocked at any sins he has committed.

Jesus was the purest, yet He did not appear shocked at the sins of the woman of Samaria who had had five husbands and was now living out of wedlock. He did not condone, but He did not practice sanctimony.

4th Secret--CHRIST'S FREEDOM OF CHOICE

"If any man ... open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Revelation 3:20.

"And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.

"Choose ye. . . ." Joshua 24:15

Christ invites. He does not high pressure. Christ answers when men ask. (See Matthew 7:7.) He doesn't force instruction on anyone. He inspires others to ask Him by asking them. (See Luke 2:46, 47.) It is a great art to be like Christ; that is, not to force instruction on anyone, but to do things to cause them to ask. Then when the answer is given it makes an impression never to be forgotten.

5th Secret--CHRIST'S FAITH

"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew 4:19. What faith to express in men, who afterward toiled all night fishing with no results! (See Luke 5:5.) His faith in them was rewarded. They baptized 3,000 souls in one day. (See Acts 2:41.)

To speak suspiciously is to create the very evil we seek to prevent. "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Romans 14:23, last part. But "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4. Christ's faith was so great in erring men that He promised them they could go to the entire world and He would never fail them. (See Matthew 28:18-20.) Let us speak out our confidence in the presence of John Doe. Never speak doubtingly of his sincerity. "Honour all men." 1 Peter 2:17.

And more than this, "Speak evil of no man." Titus 3:2.

6th Secret--CHRIST'S LOVE

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], . . . but the greatest of these is charity [love]." 1 Corinthians 13:13.

"We love him, because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19.

"With loving kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3.

"I drew them ... with bands of love." Hosea 11:4.

Christ's love was selfless. As stated in the first secret, He took an interest in the other man's interests. Selfless love does not try to bribe, saying, "I spent thousands of dollars on your education, so now you ought to respect my judgment or feelings." Selfless love says in effect, "I am interested in your happiness" and means it. If it is not meant, then it is hypocrisy.

7th Secret-CHRIST'S HOPE

"For thou art my hope, O Lord God." Psalm 71:5.

"We are saved by hope." Romans 8:24.

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Romans 5:5.

"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." Hebrews 6:19.

Hope is a blending of faith and love. (See Ephesians 2:8, 9 and Romans 8:24.)

Therefore, when we lovingly express faith in another, when we believe that he has a mission in life, when we believe he will yet fulfill that mission-this is hope. He will go to sleep at night and mull over this expression of faith that he has a mission in life.

A married partner expresses confidence that the marriage will be highly successful. This can be used mightily to save a marriage.

A parent expresses confidence in a son who is a drug addict, that he will lead many young people to a beautiful way of life. This is used miraculously to save him from drug addiction.

In every soul there are limitless possibilities. We are to draw forth from the heart of John Doe the confidence that these possibilities may be realized. But we are not to add, in a holier-than-thou manner, "You can only find such a happy life if you straighten up and behave yourself." No never! To give hope and yet break Christ's law of humility is to break the whole chain-the seven secrets of beautiful communication.

To Summarize

These seven laws of communication are to challenge us to draw near to Christ. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." Galatians 3:24.

In order to show faith, hope and love to a soul who seems beyond hope, one must have a personal indwelling of the power of God. (See Romans 1:16, 17.) Without his indwelling presence we shall use carnal weapons. (See 1 Corinthians 10:4.)

When we learn to prayerfully take on the attitude of our Lord Jesus Christ, John Doe will, in all probability, come to us. Then when he tells us of his problem, we immediately fix his gaze on the solution. We do not overly discuss the problem. We point to the solution.

Cordially yours,

Glenn Coon, Sr. Glenn Coon, Jr.

QUIZ ON LESSON 2

Kindly check or fill in the blanks below. You will find the corrected answers at the end of this e-book.

1. Do we solve problems by mulling over them repeatedly? Yes No

2. There are three parts to the Prayer of Reception. The first is summed up in the word" _____ ." Matthew 7:7.

Science of Prayer

3. As we do the first part of the Prayer of Reception in what direction are we to look? At the problem? _____ or at the solution? _____

4. The problem having been identified or diagnosed, the second part to the Prayer of Reception is summed up in ' the word " _____." Mark 11:24.

5. As we believe, our minds go more and more in the direction of the solution _____ or the problem _____

6. The third part of the Prayer of Reception is to claim, or _____." Matthew 21:22.

7. When we thank God that we have received, do we lay hold more tightly on the problem? _____ or the solution promised? _____

But Jesus took him by the hand, And lifted him up; and he arose. Mark 9:27

Correct Answers on Answer Sheet.