

**Q: About prayer—in your book *The Infinite Way*, on page 111, you say, “Before our enlightenment in truth we sought to gain some personal end,” and then you also quote Emerson on prayer. In the Bible, Jesus is quoted, “Therefore, I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them,” and “All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.”**

**A:** Now you can see that in both of those, you have the opportunity or privilege of interpreting it as you will. No one has the right to say, “Jesus meant this,” because Jesus isn’t around in our experience out here to tell us whether or not he meant what you think or what I think. Now, in my inner experience, in which and through which I learned about prayer, I have received the understanding of what he meant about these passages, but because I have, will not necessarily convince you. You yourself must come to a point of conviction for yourself.

Now then, you will also remember that Jesus said, “Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, or wherewithal you shall be clothed;” that “your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things, and it is His good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Seek ye only the kingdom of God; the things will be added to you.”

Now, he also called attention to the fact that the birds and the lilies don’t have to ask for anything, and what is ever clothed and fed as they are? Now, if you then were to take that particular passage, Luke 12:22-32, you would say, “Alright, in order to be guided by that, I must never ask God for food or clothing or housing, since He already knows that I have need of these things, and it is His good pleasure to give them to me without asking.” Well, if you’re going to acknowledge that about food and clothing and housing, then you might as well go all the rest of the distance and say, “What is the use of asking God for anything? If those three things are ruled out, let’s rule out all the rest and understand that God does know our need, and it is His good pleasure to give us the kingdom, give us the allness, everything of which we have need.”

Now, in that sense, then, what do we understand when we read, “Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them?” And I would say this—what is it really that we should go to God for? We should go to God for light, for enlightenment. We should go to God for spiritual guidance, for spiritual wisdom. God is spirit, then why not go to God for the things of the spirit? “Ah,” Paul says, “whatsoever things are of good report, whatsoever things are good, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are kind.” He says nothing about the things that are representing homes and clothing and money.

Now, God is spirit, and we, in our present state of humanhood, may be entertaining a sense of separation from God, and so we have to go to God. All right, since God is spirit, let us go to God for spirit; let us go to God for spiritual things, for spiritual wisdom, for spiritual guidance. If we like, we can ask for spiritual health and spiritual supply. That will

avoid the possibility of thinking of God as a Santa Claus.

You see, the moment you ask for money, or automobiles, or houses, you have turned God into a Santa Claus. Those are the things that Santa Claus ought to give us at Christmas time, but those are not the things that we should expect from God. We should expect from God the things of God—spirit, life, truth, love, harmony, peace, joy—and then watch how they appear outwardly as these needed things in the physical realm.

Now again, "and all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing ye shall receive." That again is the same thing. What is it that you should ask for in prayer? Ask for the realization of God. Ask for the consciousness of God's presence. Ask for God's grace. You remember it? "Thy grace is my sufficiency in all things." If God's grace is my sufficiency in all things, why should I ask ever for anything except God's grace? But let's be sure that over and over and over again, we turn to the Father within for God's grace, for the realization of God's grace.

Now, in the light of our understanding today, we cannot even *ask* for God's grace. We can only *declare* that God's grace is my sufficiency because—now, mark this well—the moment you ask God for anything, are you not acknowledging that God is sitting out here holding it back? And now you're expecting Him to loose it so that you can get it? Is not asking God for food, clothing, raiment, housing, as much as to say, "God, I know You've got these and can give them to me. Now, come on!" In other words, again inferring that there is a withholding sense in God. Now, there is no such thing! You might just as well pray to God for sunlight. I don't think God could give you sunlight this minute, not here in Hawaii. I think that even God would have to tell you to wait a few hours, and it'll come around to you.

I don't think that you can plant a seed in the ground today, even in Hawaii, and pick your fruit off the tree tomorrow. You can do pretty marvelous things with the ground here, but not quite that. And going to God won't change it. The answer from God would be, "It is in the ground. Be patient, and God will have Its perfect work, and this will appear in its time." I do not for a moment believe that God works in miracles; that is, that God upsets spiritual law. Oh, miracles appear to *our* sense, not miracles to God's sense!

Now, certainly, fish could be made to jump up out of the sea into Rickenbacker's boat, but it didn't appear that God could put a delicatessen store out there in the middle of the Pacific on that specific day. So God's miracle appeared as fish jumping up, or rain coming down, or birds coming down. In other words, even that was a miracle to sense, but it was not to God. But sending down canned delicatessens would have been the type of miracle that I doubt even God could bring about. No, you see, God is a law as well as love. And because God is law as well as love, God works according to law as well as according to love.

Now then, the thing that came to me in the meditation there was this: I wanted to start

right out and say that when you pray, don't pray as if there were anything that you needed or desired or wanted, because that would be seeking to influence God to bring it about for you. Watch out—I'm speaking now from the standpoint of The Infinite Way. I am not speaking from the standpoint of the Hebrew Church, or Protestant Church, or Catholic Church, although Bishop Sheen did tell his audience that they should get rid of petitionary prayer, that the prayer of petition is not prayer at all, or at best, it's secondary and not very good. And he also told them not to pray for material things but to turn to God only for spiritual things.

So you see, it isn't only The Infinite Way that is calling attention to this fact that God is spirit and God is law. That is now beginning to appear in other literature in the world. And it will continue to appear until the world's concept of prayer has changed. And I wouldn't be surprised if twenty-five years from now, people will be reading old prayer books and saying, "I don't believe it! I don't believe that anybody thought there was that kind of a God in the world!" And as a matter of fact, there isn't and never has been.

And so it is, in opening ourselves in desire—"whatsoever things ye desire"—let us purify our desires and be sure that the only thing we desire is God. "Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace." Our only desire should be to know God: "To know God aright is life eternal." It doesn't say anything about asking Him for something. "To know God aright is life eternal. Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace."

And so, let us forget the things of the world. Let us forget the conditions of the world. When I say forget, I am talking about in moments of prayer. And turn to God with only a pure desire to know God, to know Him aright, and then find life eternal; to get acquainted with Him and be at peace. Let our entire prayer have only one significance: "Father, reveal Thyself. Father, reveal Thyself. I need nothing. Thy grace is my sufficiency."

If you could take that mental attitude that "Thy grace is my sufficiency," you will find that you will be abundantly satisfied with every good thing necessary for human experience. You separate yourself from deific power and deific presence the very moment that you have a desire for a thing, or a person, or a place, because if that were in God's realm, it would be provided before you could express the desire. "It is God's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," even before you call. "Even before they call, I will answer." Yes, but many people have said, "That hasn't happened to me. I've called and called and called, and God didn't answer!" But they were calling for *things* instead of calling for God. That is why—where is it? Is it in the June letter?<sup>3</sup>—that the day must come when we go to God only for God and never for anything else. Never, never, never! There can be no exception to the rule.

<sup>1</sup>*This is in the chapter "Prayer" on page 108 in the current print version and Kindle location 599 in the current e-book version of [The Infinite Way](#).*

<sup>2</sup>*This copyrighted excerpt is from Recording 85A: 1954 Honolulu Closed Class, "Summing Up of Prayer." It is posted with kind permission from the Estate of Joel Goldsmith, which holds the copy protection on the recorded classes and the copyright on the transcripts. The full transcript of this recording is available from [The Infinite Way website](#) or by calling 1-800-922-3195.*

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<sup>3</sup>*This is the June letter, Chapter 6, in The 1954 Infinite Way Letters currently published as [The Heart of Mysticism, Vol. 1.](#)*