

Spirituality of the 12 Steps

Step 11: An Alternative Mind

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON
RICHARD ROHR'S
BREATHING UNDERWATER



Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood [God], praying only for knowledge of [God's] will for us and the power to carry that out. — **Step 11 of the Twelve Steps**

“Be still, and know that I am God.” — **Psalm 46:10**

“You must put aside your old self which has been corrupted by following illusory desires. Your mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution.” — **Ephesians 4:22–23**

“In the morning, long before dawn, he got up, left the house, and went off to a lonely place to pray.” — **Mark 1:35**



Prayer (Meditation) a code word for an entirely different way of processing life.

“the calculating mind,”

the lens of its own private needs and hurts, angers, and memories

vs.

“contemplative mind.”

see things as they are/Christ Consciousness



If you do not learn how to pray, and change “your mind...by a spiritual revolution you will try to process the big five human issues (love, death, suffering, God, and infinity) with utterly inadequate software.

Be Willing to Let God Change You

Not... God can help you get what you want...

But... Allow God to help you know what you really desire.

Learning how to pray is work: the work of emptying the mind and filling the heart.

Early-stage praying: no real “renouncing” of the small and passing self. (to win, succeed, and take control – with a little help from a Friend). It is not yet the **infinite prayer of the Great Body of Christ!**



Prayer is not about changing God, but
being willing to let God change us
(Step 11: “praying only for the
knowledge of his will”)

If you are able to switch minds to the mind of Christ, your prayer has already been answered!

That new mind knows, understands, accepts, and sees correctly, widely, and wisely. Its prayers are always answered because they are, in fact, the prayers of God too.

True prayer is about **Who is doing the praying?**
You or God in you?
Little you or the Christ Consciousness?

Basically prayer is an exercise in **divine participation** – you are opting in and God is always there!





Jesus says,

“When you pray, go to your inner room, and shut the door.” (inner room = unconscious)

“...do not babble on like the pagans do,”
the prayer of quiet

...the Our Father was in part a concession, probably a good one, to that understandable social need of ours (to have a public, group prayer to define our identities).

Jesus himself goes into silence, into nature, and usually alone when he prays.

“Do you not know, the kingdom of God is within you!”

“...how you pray determines how you finally live.”

Conscious Contact With God

Folsom & San Quentin prisons... (Albuquerque jail experience...Rohr and Step 7)

Thomas Merton: “The will of God is not a ‘fate’ but a creative act in our life that produces something absolutely new.

Our cooperation consists not solely in conforming to external laws, but in opening our wills to this mutually creative act.”

People’s willingness to creatively work with the hand that life and sin and circumstance and God have dealt them that is our deepest life of prayer and devotion: People’s willingness to find God in their own struggle with life—and let it change them—is their deepest and truest obedience to God’s eternal will.

The heartfelt desire to do the will of God is, in fact, the truest will of God.



Questions for Discussion

When you pray do you ask God to help you get what you want... or do you ask God to help you know what you really desire?

What insights do you find in the following:

Watch your thoughts; they become words.

Watch your words; they become actions.

Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits; they become character.

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

