

Spirituality of the 12 Steps

Step 7 **Why Do We Need to Ask?**

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON
RICHARD ROHR'S
BREATHING UNDERWATER



Humbly asked [God] to remove our shortcomings.

— **Step 7 of the Twelve Steps**

“Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness, in your great tenderness wipe away all my faults, wash me clean of my guilt, and purify me from all my sin.” — **Psalm 51:1–2**



“If there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with thanksgiving; and the peace of God, which is much greater than understanding, will guard both your thoughts and your heart.”
— **Philippians 4:6–7**

“In your prayers do not babble on as the pagans do, for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them; your Father knows what you need even before you ask him.” — **Matthew 6:7–8**



Mystery of asking.

Why is it good to ask, and what is really happening in prayers of petition or intercession?

We ask not to change God but to change ourselves.

We pray to form a living relationship, not to get things done.

Prayer is a symbiotic relationship with life and with God, a synergy which creates a result larger than the exchange itself.

Jesus says all prayers are answered... the answer to every prayer is one, the same, and the best: the Holy Spirit! (See 11:13.) God gives us power more than answers.

Keeps Us From Entitlement:

The death of any relationship with anybody is to have a sense of entitlement.

Any notion that “I deserve,” “I am owed,” “I have a right to,” “I am higher than you” absolutely undermines any notion of faith, hope, or love between the involved parties.



Jesus told us all to stay in the position of a beggar, a petitioner, a radical dependent, which is always spiritually true, if we are honest.



Truth: Our real truth has to do with how we situate ourselves in this world. “the natural habitat for truth is in **interpersonal relationships**,” (Josef Pieper). Vs. **an idea on paper**. It is who we are, more than our theories about this or that.

Prayers of intercession or petition are one way of situating your life with total honesty and structural truth Vs.: our self-made, can-do, and climbing culture. What has been lost is honest relationship with the earth and with one another, and a basic humility too.

We can never engineer or guide our own transformation or conversion. God has to radically change the central reference point of our lives.



You have to let God

- (1) reveal your real faults to you (usually by failing and falling many times!), and then
- (2) allow God to remove those faults from his side and in God's way.

Then your old shortcomings are not driven away, or pushed underground, as much as they are exposed and starved for the false program for happiness that they are.



Spiritual desire is the drive that God put in us from the beginning, for total satisfaction, for home, for heaven, for divine union, and it just got displaced onto the wrong object.



A daily and chosen “**attitude of gratitude**” will keep your hands open to expect that life...

Questions for Reflection:

Why do you say prayers of petition?

Do you have an experience of entitlement?

Have your prayers of petition been answered?