

**The Samaritan Institute
at
The Sunshine Cathedral**

***Affirmative Prayer**

A Five Week Course

***Course curriculum designed and prepared by
The Reverend Dr. Durrell Watkins**

*"Here at the Sunshine Cathedral, we are
seekers and students of Truth, empowered
by Spirit, sharing the Light with the World"*

**Sunshine Cathedral
is
A Metropolitan Community Church
Affiliated with The Center for Progressive Christianity**

TSI is the educational arm of the Sunshine Cathedral

Rev. Durrell Watkins

“Affirmative Prayer”

Recommended Reading List:

Alter Your Life (Emmet Fox)

A Treatment A Day (Durrell Watkins)

Awakened Imagination (Neville)

Fairy Dust: Using Affirmations to Unlock the Magic of Life (Durrell Watkins)

Handbook of Positive Prayer (Hypatia Hasbrouck)

How to be Healthy, Wealthy, Happy (Raymond Charles Barker)

Nothing Is Too Good To Be True (John Randolph Price)

The Healing Light (Agnes Sanford)

The Law of Attraction: The Basics of the Teachings of Abraham (Esther & Jerry Hicks)

The Law of Mind in Action: Daily Lessons in Treatments in Mental Science (Fenwicke L. Holmes)

The Magic of Believing (Claude Bristol)

The Power of Positive Thinking (Norman Vincent Peale)

The Power of Your Subconscious Mind (Joseph Murphy)

The Truth About Matter: Idealistic Philosophy and How To Employ It In Healing (Fenwicke L. Holmes)

The Word is Your Wand (Florence Scovel Shinn)

Affirmative Prayer – Have you ever wanted to learn ways of enriching your prayer life? Have you ever wanted to feel as if your prayers really made a difference? Have you wondered how you could pray more effectively? Then this may be the class you’ve been waiting for!

Prayer is communion with the divine. In this course, we will explore a variety of prayer techniques, but your primary assignment is to spend time each day in prayer. Try the prayer techniques and keep a record of the results you get from your prayer work.

Lesson1:

What is most important in prayer is the FEELING that we get from it. This doesn't mean that prayer is a mere placebo that makes us think things are better even if they aren't, nor does it mean that prayer is itself relaxing and being relaxed feels good. Prayer CAN make us believe things are better or that they are getting better; and prayer CAN relax us and relaxation DOES feel good. But we mean something much more rich and profound when we say that prayer is meant to produce FEELING.

For clarity, let's look at the following passage:

“As I am feeling, I am attracting...See yourself as [a] magnet, attracting unto you the way you feel at any point in time. When you feel clear and in control, you will attract circumstances of clarity. When you feel happy, you will attract circumstances of happiness...When you feel loved, you will attract circumstances of love. Literally, the way you FEEL is your point of attraction.”¹

In prayer, we want to notice how we are feeling, and then intentionally raise the vibration of our feelings. We are learning to focus on the good, to be grateful for opportunities, to acknowledge possibilities, to trust the process of life, and to feel good about who we are. We aren't so much praying to an outside God to change conditions (which He or She presumably would not have changed without our begging), as we are “treating” ourselves to see things differently.

For example: If I FEEL like I need more money, how should I pray? If I pray for God to remove my poverty, I'm still focused on poverty. Focusing on poverty makes me FEEL poor (or scared or desperate, etc.), and if I FEEL poor, it will take longer for me to experience something other than poverty. So, rather than ask God to remove my poverty, I will want to prayerfully treat myself to FEEL prosperous. Rather than affirming lack (which is what I'm doing when I ask God to take it away...how could God take it away unless it were real to me), I want to affirm plenty. And so, I start to do prayer work so that I will FEEL abundantly blessed. If I FEEL prosperous, then I am, regardless of how much money is in my pocket (just as if I FEEL poor, I am, regardless of how much money I have in my pocket). My prayer is meant to help me FEEL blessed, because then my focus, my energy, my intention, my belief, my expectation, my gratitude, my thoughts are all on blessing

¹ Esther & Jerry Hicks. *The Law of Attraction: The Basics of the Teachings of Abraham*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2006 (163)

rather than on lack. And if I'm focused on blessing, I am more likely to experience blessing. "As I am feeling, I am attracting."

So, in this class we will focus on techniques that will help us FEEL blessed. It works the same when praying for others. There is no distance in consciousness. Consciousness is "non-local." So, whether you are next to me, across the room from me, or across the country from me, the distance only exists in perception, not in the energy-field of consciousness. I can touch you with prayer no matter where you are physically. So, when I pray for you, I want to FEEL good for you. I want to believe that you are already whole, blessed, and full of joy. I want to FEEL excited and grateful for the miracle that you are. My prayers will need to focus on your perfection, rather than on any appearance that seems to deny your perfection. "Where attention goes, energy flows." I want to focus on your GOOD, and then I want to FEEL good about the truth of your GOOD. That is the point of my prayer.

Whether I'm praying for myself, my church, my community, my world, my friends...whoever I am praying for, what I am really doing is treating myself to see the GOOD that is already present. I want to focus on the Good, claim it, celebrate it, give thanks for it, and feel good about it. Like attracts like, so when I focus on Good, I'm more likely to attract or manifest it. And, regardless of what happens in the world of affairs, I am already better off for feeling good! If I feel prosperous, then I am! The actual money may show up instantly or take days, weeks, or months to show up...but I am prosperous the INSTANT that I feel prosperous. I don't need money to feel prosperous; I just need to learn how to summon the feeling. And prayer can help me get that feeling. Of course, once I get and sustain that feeling, the money often shows up after all.

One additional note about *feeling*. As much as possible, we will want to be "detached" from the outcomes of our prayers. That is, let's imagine I pray the following: "Dear God, in your light and in your love and in your many names, I affirm blessings for Anna. I know she is a person of sacred value and that Life's best gifts are available to her now. And so it is that speak my word of hope and happiness for Anna. I declare that her life is now filled with peace, joy, and abundance and I know that all is well. Thank you, God! Amen."

I have seen Anna's sacred value. I have affirmed God's goodness and I have "felt" that nothing can keep that goodness from Anna. Now, I must release the prayer and allow it to work however it will. If I try to control the outcome, or fret about it, then I won't "feel" at peace. And if I feel anxious, I can't impart peace or hope to Anna.

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So, I affirm Good for Anna and I release the prayer and the outcome to God. Anna may win the lottery tonight, or she may struggle financially for months to come. Anna may experience dramatic improvement in her health, or she may experience decline. But I can trust that my prayer has SOMEHOW blessed her and that God is SOMEHOW expressing through her, doing wonderful things for her. I must keep that assurance and that peace, regardless of outward appearances. This is the most powerful way to “allow” Good to be made manifest in Anna’s life. I must detach from the outcome. I must “let go and let God.” If I’m hanging on to the outcome, I haven’t really given the issue to God. I must let go in order for God to do what is most wonderful for all concerned. So, when I say “amen,” I truly release the outcome to Providence so that I may FEEL peaceful no matter what.

Some of the techniques we will examine in the next three weeks include:

Tonal meditation, Silence, Affirmations, Poetry/Prose, Corporate prayers (praying in a group), Reading prayers, Using candles or incense, Walking Prayer, Driving Prayer, Showering Prayer, Journaling as Prayer, Mantras, Praying Scripture, Reciting learned prayers, Visualization, Asking friends (in this world or another) to pray with/for you, Arguing (persuading yourself that you deserve Good and there is nothing to keep your Good from you), Playing with images of God, Using “Steps”, etc.

Whichever method will help you FEEL close to your divine Source, or will help you FEEL that you deserve Good and that your Good is at hand, is the method you will want to use. You may find that a variety of methods work well for you.

The following prayer uses Affirmation, Prose, Reading, and Arguing. Sometimes the methods can blend together. If we say it together, it also uses the Corporate method. Let’s pray the following prayer together:

Knowing that God is All-Good and that God’s desire for me is to express and experience Good in my life, I choose now to turn away from fear, anxiety and worry. Negative thoughts and attitudes only get in the way of my Good, and I am ready to participate in the Abundance of Life right here and right now. And so it is that I now fix my mind on what is lovely and good and admirable. I trust God with my needs with a thankful and expectant heart, knowing that somehow, in some way, for my good and the good of others, my needs will be met and my good desires will

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be fulfilled. By faith I declare this to be my truth and I allow it to be. Amen.²

The following is another prayer for abundance. It is an example of using “steps”. The 5 steps used in this prayer are: Acknowledge God, recognize God’s presence with/within you, affirm your Good, offer praise or thanksgiving, and release the prayer to divine right action.³ Let’s pray together:

Dear God, you are the Source of my supply, and my Source is infinite. Filled with your Spirit, I have the power to overcome worry, distraction, anxiety, and the experience of limitation. With you, all things are possible, and from you all good things come. And so it is that I now relax and allow myself to contact my Good, the great Good that you have always had in store for me. I am open to receive my abundance, and I am willing to share my Good freely and gladly. I lovingly support my church with my tithes and offerings. I give to other good causes as well. I trade with worthy businesses. I tip generously. I pay my bills and my taxes happily. In every way, I share as if I have plenty to share and as if more will come to me as I need it. I choose now to believe this is true and I ask you, God, to bless all that I have, all that I give, and all that I receive. Let me now live as a prosperous child of an Infinite and Good God. Alleluia! Amen.⁴

Here’s another prosperity prayer. This one uses argumentation and affirmation. Let us pray:

When I freely give to something that blesses my life, I am opening channels of greater Good to flow to me and through me. My generosity helps build a prosperity consciousness, and my consciousness contributes to my experience of life. And so it is that I happily give and thankfully receive. Amen.⁵

To practice these prayer methods, you may want to write your prayers for a while. Write them out, and then pray them aloud. In this way, you will be learning how to pray these affirmative prayers; in fact, affirmative prayer will become part of you.

² Prayer composed by Rev. Durrell Watkins

³ This is the Religious Science method called Spiritual Mind Treatment

⁴ Prayer composed by Rev. Durrell Watkins

⁵ Prayer composed by Rev. Durrell Watkins

Here's a prayer of thanksgiving for sexuality:

*God of all creation, I know in this moment that you have created me in your image and likeness and have filled me with your spirit. I am a person of sacred value. My sexuality is perfect for me. I am who you have designed me to be. I am part of your family. I am one with all there is. Therefore, I rejoice and give thanks that I am who I am. I am grateful that I am what I am. I am pleased to allow you to express in and through and as me, now. Bless my life, my journey, my understanding of myself. Bless me to be a blessing to others. And as I embrace the reality of who I am, heal me of any prejudices I may have toward others. Let me now accept my brothers and sisters as they are, for we are all your children and we are all one; it is in your many names that I pray. Amen.*⁶

In closing, let's look at another instructive passage:

*"[A friend of mine has] a curious formula but I have practiced it and personally know that it works...The formula is: **Prayerize. Picturize. Actualize.** By "prayerize" my friend meant a daily system of creative prayer. When a problem arose he talked it over with God very simply and directly in prayer. Moreover, he did not talk with God as to some vast and far-off shadowy being but conceived of God as being with him [wherever he was]...The Presence [of God] came finally to dominate his conscious and ultimately his unconscious thinking...He lived by prayer...The second point is to "picturize." The basic factor in physics is force. The basic factor in psychology is the realizable wish. The [person] who assumes success tends already to have success. People who assume failure tend to have failure. When either failure or success is picturized it strongly tends to actualize in terms equivalent to the mental image pictured...First pray [about a thing]; then print a picture of it on your mind as happening, holding the picture of it firmly in consciousness. Continue to surrender the picture to God's will – that is to say, put the matter in God's hands – and follow God's guidance. Work hard and intelligently, thus doing your part to achieve success in the matter. Practice believing and continue to hold the picturization firmly in your thoughts. Do this and you will be astonished at the strange ways in which the picturization comes to pass."*⁷

Assignment: Pray each day for your own happiness, healing, success...whatever issue needs the power of prayer. Pray also for the people on the church's prayer list (or another prayer list, perhaps one of

⁶ Prayer composed by Rev. Durrell Watkins

⁷ Norman Vincent Peale. *The Power of Positive Thinking*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1952 (55-56)

your own making). “Affirm” that your Good already exists for you. Practice “feeling” good about your life and about those for whom you pray. Practice “detaching” from the outcome. Report next week any results you may notice.

Lesson 2:

REMEMBER: We are praying to FEEL good. “As I am feeling, I am attracting” and so we aren’t begging God to fix things that God otherwise had no interest in. We are choosing whatever method of prayer that will fill US with optimism, peace, contentment, and fulfillment. Those are the highest blessings, and once we achieve those, other blessings often follow. Below are a variety of prayers. Pray them with the FEELING that ultimately, all is well. Pray them with the FEELING that they are empowering you and blessing you (or the person for whom you are praying). Pray them with the FEELING that peace and joy are already available to each of us, and that they can be expressed in this very instant. We are treating ourselves to think and to FEEL positively; we then trust the process to unfold perfectly for the highest good of all concerned. We FEEL good and we detach from the outcome. We imagine our highest Good, and we allow ourselves to FEEL the joy that our Good brings. We release the prayer to divine right action and we go forth in peace and joy. FEEL the hope and the joyful expectation that will call forth miracles as you pray the following prayers.

For someone who is to have surgery:

*Dear God, please bless N. and those who care for her. May she receive the best possible medical care and may she know that you are with her at her point of need. Guide the surgeon’s hand and give wisdom to all the healing practitioners who tend N. in the days ahead. Thank you, God, for loving us and for hearing our prayers. Amen.*⁸

For someone who is recovering from an illness:

*Dear God, we are thankful for the miracle of the human body and for the ways our bodies constantly seek to renew themselves. We are hoping for N.’s body to be restored to good health and vitality. May N. receive the rest, the nutrition, the hydration, the medication, and the encouragement needed to feel better soon. Enfold N. now in your healing love, in which we trust and for which we are thankful. Amen.*⁹

For someone who has received a troubling diagnosis:

Dear God, we enfold N. in our prayers and trust his needs to your never-failing care. We ask that you calm his fears and help him to know how to take care of himself during this time. May he make wise choices and may

⁸ Composed by Rev. Durrell Watkins

⁹ Ibid.

*he receive excellent medical care. And in all things and circumstances, speak to his heart to remind him of your abundant love for him. Amen.*¹⁰

For someone who is grieving the death of a loved one:

*Dear God, you are with us throughout this life and you remain with us throughout eternity. Let your glorious light shine upon the recently departed and grant the comforting presence of your Spirit to N. who misses her dear friend [parent/child/partner/pet/etc.]. We thank you, God, that N. lived and now lives on in our memory and in your eternal realm; and we thank you that you comfort those who mourn. Amen.*¹¹

For someone who has gone through a break-up of a relationship:

*Dear God, you are present wherever love is genuinely expressed. Comfort N. in her time of discomfort, and in the perfect time, bring love again into her life. For now, grant N. the joy of friends and a happiness with herself. Amen.*¹²

For someone who has experienced a difficulty and who is seeking guidance:

*Dear God, N. seeks your wisdom, your guidance, your comfort, and the joy of your presence. Bring him once again to a place of happiness, fulfillment, and gratitude for all the possibilities of life. We give thanks, God, that you are with N. and have wonderful blessings in store for him. Amen.*¹³

For Acceptance of Personal Good:

*The Law says that what I accept, I will experience. I have accepted my Truth of Being with all my heart and mind, and I know that by Law, all that is good, true, and beautiful in life is rushing to me now. The Law is fulfilled and so am I.*¹⁴

For the Manifestation of Prosperity:

In the Pure Being I AM, and with Thought Divine, I speak the truth. I am the wealth of the universe in individual expression; therefore, I am very

¹⁰ Durrell Watkins

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ John Randolph Price. *Nothing Is Too Good To Be True*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2003 (133)

*rich. I always have abundance, for I am the Law of Infinite Plenty. I live the Abundance Ideal.*¹⁵

For the Manifestation of Perfect Health:

*In the Pure Being I AM, and with Thought Divine, I speak the truth. I am the wholeness of the universe in individual expression; therefore, every cell, tissue, and organ of my body is in a state of divine order and perfect well-being. I always enjoy radiant health for I am the Law of Purity and Perfection unto my body. I live the Body Ideal.*¹⁶

For the Experience of Success:

*In the Pure Being I AM, and with Thought Divine, I speak the truth. I am the success of the universe in individual expression; therefore, my every activity is completely successful, and I go forth each day to achieve and accomplish in accordance with my highest vision. I am the Law of Victory and Triumph. I live the Success Ideal.*¹⁷

For the Experience of Love and Harmony:

*Love is the greatest power in the universe, freely given to one and all. God loves me, and through God's love, I can love others. As I love others, I am loved. My harmonious thoughts are returned in kind. What I am feeling about another, I am feeling about myself. I choose to only feel peacefully and lovingly toward all. I practice harmlessness in thought and feeling each and every day.*¹⁸

For Peace:

*Let peace come forth in every mind. Let love flow forth from every heart. Let forgiveness reign in every soul. Let understanding be the common bond.*¹⁹

Let's hear the teaching of some accomplished prayer practitioners:
"Imagining oneself into the feeling of the wish fulfilled is the means by which a new state is entered...The future must become the present in the imagination...We must translate vision into Being, thinking of into

¹⁵ John Randolph Price. *Nothing Is Too Good To Be True*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2003 (133)

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. (134)

¹⁸ Ibid. (135)

¹⁹ Ibid. (136)

thinking *from*. Imagination must center itself in some state and view the world *from* that state. Thinking *from* the end is an intense perception of the world of fulfilled desire.”²⁰

We’ve said before, “Where attention goes, energy flows.” What we focus our thoughts on will create feelings, and feelings will motivate us to take certain action which will yield results. What we focus on we are drawn toward. What we focus on we invite into our experience. Prayer, then, isn’t about begging for favors from an invisible Santa figure; prayer is about refocusing our attention and our intention so that we will be drawn in the direction of our highest good. We choose the method of prayer that will help us imagine the best. Once we sustain a mental picture, a corresponding FEELING develops. And as we are feeling, we are attracting. It’s the way the mind works, and prayer is a way of training the mind to work for us.

“When your desires and imagination are in conflict, your imagination invariably gains the day.”²¹ For example, let’s say Mark is single, and lonely. He wants to find a suitable companion. His DESIRE is to be coupled. However, Mark is also afraid that he won’t ever find the right person. He imagines himself being continually alone (and lonely), and he FEELS desperate more than hopeful. He FEELS lonely. He FEELS sad and he can’t sustain a mental image of being happy, nurtured, and fulfilled. So, his mental pictures and his feelings are negative, even though his desire is for something good. Which will win out? His desire? Or his imagination? “

“When your desires and imagination are in conflict, your imagination invariably gains the day.” Our prayers are meant, then, to help us sustain a mental image of GOOD, and to help us FEEL good about the possibilities. As we consistently imagine our good and feel good about it, we are being drawn in the direction of fulfillment. And regardless of how circumstances turn out, as long as we FEEL good (loved, content, prosperous, successful, generous, fun, energetic, etc.), then that is our reality. The minute we FEEL blessed, our prayers have been answered. As we learn to live in the expectation of joy and fulfillment, the actual “things” we want will often show up too. But even if the specific blessing is delayed, the FEELING of happiness and well-being is the best blessing of all. And that FEELING can be achieved in an instant.

²⁰ Neville. *Awakened Imagination*. Camarillo, CA: DeVorss, 1954 (20)

²¹ Joseph Murphy. *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1963 (101)

Remember the words of Jesus: *Seek first the commonwealth of God and God's righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*²² We could paraphrase that in the following way: *Seek first the FEELING of GOOD and the RIGHT THINKING that will produce the good feeling, and every worthwhile blessing will come along as well.*

The power of prayer is the power to think and feel rightly, that is, to think and feel in ways that bless our lives and our world.

Let's put it this way: *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds...*²³ We don't have to conform to expectations of lack or conflict or weariness. We can be renewed by learning to think differently, by the renewing of our minds.

"[A seventy-eight year old man who] doesn't look more than sixty – who is a profound student of this subject...declares that he still orders his subconscious mind to 'get busy for him.' [He says,] 'I talk to it just as I might be talking to some individual to whom I was giving orders. And I never have any doubts or fears that it will not do as ordered. If I get an upset stomach, I simply tell it to be itself and act naturally; so with other ailments that arise. If I want to awaken at five o'clock in the morning without using an alarm clock, I peremptorily order my subconscious mind to awaken me. It has never failed in anything so far'"²⁴

I can't repeat this too often: Our prayers aren't meant to persuade God; they are meant to persuade US. Prayer is helping us take responsibility for our lives. Prayer is helping us believe the best. Prayer is reviving our hope. Prayer is helping us to see and seize opportunities we may have over-looked before. Prayer is transforming our minds and the power of our minds can then create the way that we need. God, the Divine Mind, has given us the power of our minds; prayer is how we unleash the power of mind which is God-given. Prayer is helping us form the mental pictures and attitudes that will work the miracles we need. God isn't saying "no" to us; we are learning to say "yes" to God. That's why we pray. God is saying, "I want you to have a life full of joy and abundance." Prayer is how we learn to accept God's good gifts. If prayer hasn't yet removed our fears, anxieties, and negative ideas, then we learn to pray more effectively. As we learn to remove the obstacles to our Good, the blessings flow naturally into our experience of life.

²² Matthew 6.33

²³ Romans 12.2

²⁴ Claude M. Bristol. *The Magic of Believing*. NYC: Pocket Books, 1948 (92-93)

Last week we looked at various prayer techniques. Now, let's examine a few more:

1. Tonal Meditation. This one is fairly easy. In the morning, take a few minutes in a place where you will be undisturbed. Imagine the good you desire...see it clearly in your mind, and while holding that picture, FEEL how wonderful it is to have the blessing (of renewed health, increased happiness, a promotion at work, whatever). As you are holding that picture and embracing that good feeling, simply say "Ah" and sustain that sound for several seconds. When you need a breath, take one and continue intoning the sound "ah." *Aaaaahhhhhh, Aaaaahhhhhh, Aaaaahhhhhh...* 10, 15, or even 20 minutes of this focused meditation will FEEL wonderful. Then, at the end of the day, take a few more minutes. Return to a quiet place, get comfortable, and recall all the wonderful blessings you enjoyed throughout the day. FEEL good and grateful for them. And while you are remembering your blessings and feeling good about them, intone the sound "Om." Sustain it and repeat it, as you did in the morning with "Ah." *Ommmm, Ommmm, Ommmm...* This form of prayer isn't about words; it's about mental pictures, attitudes, and universal sounds. Wayne Dyer teaches this form of meditation.
2. Silence. What could be easier? Simply go into the Silence. Sit comfortably, and focus on your breath. Don't force it, just notice how it goes in and out. Clear your mind of all discursive thinking. Just breathe and sit and be quiet. The Silence will become richer and richer, and you will find yourself feeling more peace or joy as you continue to practice. The psalmist instructed, "Be still and know that I am God..."²⁵ To be still and silent offers an opportunity to know communion with the Spirit of life. This simple prayer of Silence can dramatically impact one's life.
3. Denials. Take this wise counsel from theologian Thomas Shepherd, "Don't you see that consciousness is an interpretative choice? Try repeating a series of denials followed by affirmations in order to access the new consciousness you've seeking. These thoughts have worked for me: *'I deny that sickness, poverty or suffering has any power over me. I am a radiant, spiritual being*

²⁵ Psalm 46.10

filled with wisdom, peace and light. Repeat as often as necessary...²⁶

4. Affirmations. We've already been practicing this one. Simply declare that something is true. Even if it doesn't seem to be true, choose to know that it is true. It may not yet be factual, but it can be true. For instance, the fact may be that money is tight. The truth is that you live in an abundant universe and there is no scarcity in divine Reality. So, turn away from the impermanent "fact" and turn toward the eternal truth. Affirm that truth as if it were obvious in the present moment. *"I live in an abundant universe and I deserve to experience the abundance of life. Nothing can keep my Good from me. I claim it now and I allow my Good to be made manifest in my experience. I am abundantly blessed! I am prosperous, here and now. And so it is."* Say it until you believe it. When you believe it, you will FEEL it. When you FEEL it, you will experience it.
5. Poetry/Prose. These are the "pretty" prayers that we find in books. They may be a bit flowery or erudite, but if they make us FEEL good, then they can be powerful and it will be worth our effort to use them.
6. Corporate prayers. Praying in a group (like in church) may build confidence or bring comfort. Again, if it helps you FEEL good, then it is in some measure effective.
7. Incense/Candles. Some people will make a wish as they light a stick of incense and simply allow the burning of the incense to be their prayer. They imagine the smoke rising and perfume filling the air as being the power of prayer saturating the universe and attracting the Good that is desired. Others will make a wish and light a candle, imagining the flickering flame to be the energy of prayer continuously working on the behalf of the one who lit the wick. If these forms of action prayers make us FEEL good and give us hope and peace, then they are helping us to achieve our goals. The props can actually help make prayer very effective.
8. Walking prayer. Do you like to walk for exercise? Why not use the energy of your walk as prayer energy, too? While your body is energized and your mind is clear, notice how good you feel

²⁶ Thomas W. Shepherd, D.Min. *Good Questions: Answering Letters from the Edge of Doubt*, Unity Village, MO: Unity House, 2009 (59)

and affirm that you deserve to have your good desires fulfilled. Know that your good is at hand. Let every step be a confirmation that you are walking toward your lofty goals!

9. Driving prayer. You're alone in the car. Let it become a mobile chapel! Use the quiet time to make your affirmations or to visualize your Good.
10. Showering prayer. In the shower, notice how good the steam FEELS. Notice how refreshing the warm water FEELS. It's such a luxurious moment, why not let it be prayer? You're already feeling good, so affirm your blessings and FEEL them coming to fruition in your life. Let stress and regret be washed down the drain and feel your spirit being energized and renewed even as your body is cleansed and refreshed.
11. Journaling. Write your goals. Write your desires. Write your plans. Write your prayers. Write your affirmations. Write them down, and read over them. Notice how good it feels to get those thoughts organized. Keep a journal with the intention that your journaling is prayer.

Assignment: Try one or more of the above prayer techniques this week. Report on what the experience was like. Also, try writing a prayer in the affirmative. Use the prayer to tell your subconscious mind to get to work for you. Affirm your blessings. FEEL them already at hand. Imagine your GOOD as already accomplished. Pray the prayer at least once each day. Share your results next week.

Lesson 3:

Let's Look At A Few More Techniques

12. Mantras. A mantra is a word or phrase that we say, meditatively, over and over and over. The Eastern Church has a mantra it uses: "Dear Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me." They say that phrase over and over again. The Nicherin Buddhists have a famous mantra, "Nam Myoho Renge Kyo," which they say over and over. Other Buddhists might say, "Om Mani Padme Hum" as their mantra. The Rosary is a system of prayer where one says, "Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen." That prayer is said ten times in a row, and then after a few other prayers, is said ten more times, and so on (like a mantra!). One mantra is chanted three times at the end of a sacred text: *gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha; gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha; gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha*. If we know what the mantra is (perhaps just a word, like "one...one...one...one...one...one...one...one...") or a phrase, and it is positive and uplifting, then we are planting that message in our subconscious. But even if the phrase seems nonsensical, it is still useful because it is getting us out of our discursive thinking and into the serene presence of quiet, rich, stillness.
13. Praying Scripture. Scripture is full of prayers that we may simply want to borrow (The Lord's Prayer?), or we can use a line of scripture and pray it like a mantra ("Oh God, you are my God, eagerly I seek you" Psalm 63.1).
14. Arguing. Persuading yourself that you deserve blessings and that blessings are available to you!
15. Visualizing. Simply imagine your Good...hold the picture until you FEEL good about it, as if it were your reality.
16. Reciting Learned Prayers. When we feel "dry" and have no words, traditional prayers can carry us until we can carry ourselves again. They give us words when we have none. They also may remind us of a "holy" feeling time in our lives, which then ushers us into the divine presence. Once we are aware of the divine Presence within, we are already praying.

17. Asking friends to pray. This is a way of “letting go” and trusting that the love and optimism of friends are working on your behalf. These friends might be in “this” world, or saints in another realm. It doesn’t matter...the good is done when you release the anxiety and trust that a process is in effect that will ultimately bless you.

18. Playing with images of God. Spirit. Goddess. Mother. Father. Lover. Friend. Rainbow. Mighty Wind. Holy Breath. Divine Light. Holy Wisdom. Rock. Castle. Blazing Fire. Inward Light. Higher Power. Soaring Eagle. Gentle Dove. Playing with the images makes God more accessible and friendly in your imagination, and eventually you find one that inspires hope and faith and trust. When we are able to put our entire trust in Goddess/God/Spirit/Ground of Being/Higher Power...we are praying the prayer of faith and good things happen.

19. Steps
 - 19a. 5 Steps (Spiritual Mind Treatment...the Science of Mind method). Acknowledge God – Recognize your unity with God – Affirm you Good – Give Thanks – Release.

 - 19b. Three Steps. Ask – Believe – Feel Good! (Or, say: I am. God is, and all is well!)

 - 19c. Two Steps. God is all and all is well (or I’m in God and all is well, or God is in me and all is well, or God is Good and all is well, or God is Able and all is well...what FEELS powerful and right for you).

20. Centering Prayer. Sit in the Silence (see #2 from week 2). Simply “be.” If the mind wanders, focus on the breathing, or focus on a word or phrase, like a silent mantra, until you are centered and fully present again. Then simply sit in the silence some more. At the end of the centering session, conclude by slowly reciting a prayer, such as the Lord’s Prayer.

21. Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading). Read a passage of scripture (or some other spiritual text). Read it slowly and carefully. Notice any word or phrase that seemed to jump out at you as you read it. Reflect on that word or phrase for a minute or two. Then ask God as you understand God to confirm that you are getting from the reading what you need at the time, or if you are very confident that you have received some clear and helpful understanding, affirm that truth several times, silently, slowly.

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Finally, detach from all discursive thinking and just sit in the silence for several minutes. End your time of silence with an affirmation or some other form of spoken prayer.

22. Acknowledge your unity with the Divine. Say an affirmation, loudly, several times. Repeat the affirmation, softly, several times. Whisper the affirmation, softly, several times. Mentally, silently repeat the affirmation several times. Quietly rest in the conviction that the affirmation is true and will be perfectly expressed and experienced. (Technique taught by Roy Eugene Davis, direct disciple of Paramansa Yogananda)

Assignment: Try one or more of the above prayer techniques this week. Report on what the experience was like. Also, try writing a prayer in the affirmative. Use the prayer to tell your subconscious mind to get to work for you. Affirm your blessings. FEEL them already at hand. Imagine your GOOD as already accomplished. Pray the prayer at least once each day. Share your results.

Lesson 4:

Why Affirm Our Good (and Keep Speech Positive Rather than Negative)?

“If we share the nature of God...then every word we speak, whether we are shallow or deep, is a creative word. That is why we are told, ‘By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.’²⁷ Such is the fateful activity of the word we send forth into the universe.”²⁸ (Fenwicke L. Holmes)

“Often the habitually fearful have days of hope, and the habitually hopeful have days of fear. What all of us need to do, therefore, is to bring up the aggregate of our thinking for health, wealth, and love so that it shall outbalance any possible amount of negative thinking.”²⁹ (F. Holmes)

“There is no power in the world so great as an idea. Everything that [humans] do must first have been an idea. You who are weak, you who are filled with fear, you who think you can no longer fight the forces that seem against you – Do you know that YOU hold the secret of your own deliverance? You have the Key of Escape...Through all the ages [humans] looked at certain stars and said they were in one place and along came Einstein and proved they were in another...You must stop judging by appearances. The things you see are not the way they really are....the ‘material world’...is made out of immaterial stuff...We live in ‘an idealistic universe.’ Our world is to be judged not by the way it appears. As a matter of fact, ‘if you can see it, it isn’t so!’ Idealistic philosophy is the system of knowledge which explains the world as a system of ideas. It shows that nothing moves unless mind moves it. ‘Nothing exists apart from mind and without mind it has no meaning.’”³⁰ (F. Holmes)

“...think of [yourself] as a spark from a great fire, which is God. The spark is not the whole of the fire but it is part of it, and therefore of the same nature, and possesses, potentially, all the characteristics of the parent fire. It can ignite many things upon which it falls, thus producing another fire essentially of the same nature as the original fire, and this

²⁷ Matthew 12.37 (KJV)

²⁸ Fenwicke L. Holmes. *The Law of Mind in Action: Daily Lessons in Treatments in Mental Science* (1926)

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Fenwicke L. Holmes. *The Truth About Matter: Idealistic Philosophy And How To Employ It In Healing* (1944)

fire grows and grows, especially if it is stimulated by a breeze. This illustrates the growth of your soul, and the breeze which builds it rapidly is, of course, prayer.”³¹ (Emmet Fox)

“Here is one way of solving a problem by [Affirmative] Prayer...Get by yourself, and be quiet for a few moments. This is very important. Do not strain to think rightly or to find the right thought, etc., but just be quiet. Remind yourself...Be still and know that I am God. Then begin to think about God. Remind yourself of some of the things that you know about [God] – that [God] is present everywhere, that [God] has all power, that [God] knows you and loves you and cares for you, and so forth. Read a few verses of the bible, or a paragraph from any spiritual book that helps you. During this stage it is important not to think about your problem, but to give your attention to God...then claim the thing that you need...Claim it quietly and confidently, as you would ask for something to which you are entitled. Then give thanks for the accomplished fact...Do not discuss your [prayer] with anyone. Try not to be tense or hurried...You know that if you try to unlock a door hurriedly, the key is apt to stick, whereas if you do it slowly, it seldom does.”³² (E. Fox)

To summarize Emmet Fox's method: **Become Quiet and Still. Think about God. Claim your blessing. Express Gratitude. Relax/Let Go.** (Five Steps, very similar to the 5 Step method we've already discussed).

“The depressed mind is the sick mind, always. And the sick mind cannot unlock its own doors to the healing peace of God.”³³ (Agnes Sanford)

“There must have been many a lovely child, dead of diphtheria, whom God longed to heal. One can imagine [God] saying to a beseeching mother, ‘Yes, I want to heal your child. And I have provided in this world two means of healing her. One of them is anti-toxin and one of them is the even more powerful remedy of My healing vibration set free through [human-beings]. Let [humans] find one of them or both of them, and your child will be healed.’ God has made ample provision for our every need.”³⁴ (Sanford)

“There is nothing wrong with my peach tree...it's not bringing forth fruit yet, but it's growing. Your faith is younger than my peach tree, and it's growing too. But maybe the thing you want it to bring forth is too big for it.

³¹ Emmet Fox. *Alter Your Life*.

³² Ibid.

³³ Agnes Sanford. *The Healing Light*.

³⁴ Ibid.

If I wait two or three years, my tree will bear peaches. But in the meantime, if I want peaches I'll buy them at the market. If you wait two or three years, maybe your faith will be big enough to heal a [serious problem]. But in the meantime, if you want healing, you'd better get the doctors to help you."³⁵ (Sanford)

"*Amen* may be used as often as we wish when we pray...there is no reason that we should not say it after every affirmation...[It] means 'so it is, so shall it be, so be it.' It also means 'certainly' or 'truly,' and 'this is true.' When know what the word means, we can see why we can use it freely as long as we use it after a positive statement or prayer. Obviously, we would not want to add *amen* to words like these: 'God help me. I have no money and I am hungry.' These may be facts of a present situation, but we would not want say 'so it is' to the continuation of poverty and hunger. We need to be careful [about what we say in prayer]."³⁶ (Hypatia Hasbrouck)

Rev. Hasbrouck adds that we don't want to "ratify" the negative for ourselves. Affirm the best and say "Amen" or "And so it is" after positive statements only!

Assignment: Sit quietly in the Silence for 5 or even 10 minutes each day. After a time of deep Silence, come out of the meditative state by saying an affirmation over and over. Once you feel that the statement is absolutely true for you, give thanks and release it. Report to the group how this time of silence and affirmation benefits you.

³⁵ *The Healing Light*

³⁶ Hypatia Hasbrouck. *Handbook of Positive Prayer*.

Lesson 5:

Let's Use Some Affirmations (Let's Pray Affirmatively...Say these aloud several times each):

God is. I am; and all is well.

Right where I am, God is!

*I am centered & poised in the Christ-Mind and nothing can disturb the calm peace of my soul.*³⁷

*Christ, mighty in the midst of me, gives me victory over every limitation. I am happy, healthy, and prosperous, wise, loving and serene.*³⁸

*Mighty currents of God's healing love flow through me now, filling every cell, atom, and tissue of my body with radiant health and vitality.*³⁹

*The Spirit of the Lord goes before me to make easy and successful my way.*⁴⁰

*There is but one Mind, one Law, one Principle, one Substance in the universe and I am one with all there is.*⁴¹

{After repeating this affirmation several times, now make your declaration of Good as if it were already at hand, give thanks and release it to the God of your understanding.}

*I deserve Good in my life.*⁴²

*I am a magnet for miracles.*⁴³

*I accomplish my goals with ease.*⁴⁴

*I deserve success in my life; I am successful at everything I do.*⁴⁵

³⁷ Unity

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ College of Divine Metaphysics

⁴² Louise Hay

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

*I am wise and wonderful.*⁴⁶

*I am not moved by appearances, therefore appearances move!*⁴⁷

*I know God's Realm is within me and I experience this Realm to the degree that I become conscious of it.*⁴⁸

A prayer for someone who is a real pain in the butt:

*"God as Infinite Mind is now here, and I am a thinking center in this One Mind. I refuse to have what I believe is an unpleasant person ruin my consciousness today. I say to my false responses to this person, as Jesus said to Peter, 'Get thee behind me Satan; thou art an offense unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God.' I refuse to think that **N.** is a vicious and difficult person. I care not what evidences my five senses bring to me as supposed facts. I now only know that **N.** is a spiritual being, the perfect creation of a Perfect Mind. I behold him/her as God beholds him/her – honest, loving and cooperative."⁴⁹*

Rev. Barker goes on to say that after we pray such a prayer, we go through the day watching over our thought. He adds, "Each time the old reaction appears, stop it at once in your own thought and declare silently, 'This is not true of God, therefore it is not true of this person. I behold only God in action, here and now in this friend.'" Eventually, the contrary person will either seem more agreeable/pleasant to you, or he/she will quietly leave your environment/daily life. You don't have to pray for her/him to change, you only have to pray to see the best in the other person. What you think about you'll bring about, so as you behold good qualities in the other person, he or she will act more positively toward/around you or will peacefully move on. Either way, your experience will have improved without trying to manipulate, change, or control the other person!

*I am nourished by the Spirit within. Every cell in my body is filled with light. I give thanks for radiant health and endless happiness.*⁵⁰

*What is mine by Divine Right can never be taken from me. God's perfect plan for me is built upon a rock.*⁵¹

⁴⁶ Louise Hay

⁴⁷ Anonymous

⁴⁸ Ernest Holmes (adapted)

⁴⁹ Raymond Charles Barker. *How to be Healthy, Wealthy, Happy.*

⁵⁰ Florence Scovel Shinn

*I follow the magic path of intuition and find myself in my Promised Land, under grace.*⁵²

*There is no loss of memory in Divine Mind, therefore, I recollect everything I should remember and I forget all that is not for my good.*⁵³

*Seeming impossible doors now open; seeming impossible channels are free, in the name of Jesus Christ.*⁵⁴

*God's promises are built upon a rock. As I have asked I must receive.*⁵⁵

*My endless good comes to me in endless ways.*⁵⁶

*My supply is endless, inexhaustible and immediate and comes to me under grace in perfect ways.*⁵⁷

*There are no lost opportunities in [God's] kingdom. As one door shuts another door opens.*⁵⁸

Assignment: (1) Think of a problem you want solved or an issue about which you need guidance. Write an affirmative prayer for the issue and commit to using the prayer at least twice each day for the next week. (2) Think of someone or a group of people you wish to bless. Write an affirmative prayer for them and commit to using the prayer at least once a day for the next week. Email your affirmative prayers to your instructor who will offer you feedback and encouragement, also by email.

⁵¹ Shinn

⁵² Shinn

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

About the People Quoted in this Course:

Raymond Charles Barker – Leader in the Religious Science movement

Claude Bristol – Journalist who wrote about the power of mind

Emmet Fox – Divine Science minister (influenced Norman V. Peale)

Hypatia Hasbrouck – a Unity minister

Louise Hay – Religious Science minister and famous healer/author

Esther and Jerry Hicks – writers of the “Abraham” teachings

Ernest Holmes – founder of the Religious Science movement

Fenwicke Holmes – Congregationalist minister who later joined the Religious Science movement founded by his brother, Ernest.

Joseph Murphy – Divine Science minister

Neville – writer/New Thought Teacher

Norman Vincent Peale – a Reformed Church in America minister (Pastor of Marble Collegiate Church in NYC) and author of The Power of Positive Thinking

John Randolph Price – Spiritual Teacher/Writer

Agnes Sanford – daughter of Presbyterian missionaries and wife of an Episcopal priest, she became a writer and healer

Florence Scovel Shinn - artist and spiritual teacher

Notes

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