

## ENNEAGRAM REFLECTIONS for a THIRTY DAY RETREAT –Eileen Heaton

### WEEK TWO: IMAGINATION, DISCERNMENT & PRAYER

Let's begin with these words from St. Teresa of Avila:

Prayer is not just spending time with God. It is partly that – but if it ends there, it is fruitless. No prayer of *words* is dynamic. Authentic prayer changes us – unmasks us, strips us, indicates where growth is needed. Authentic prayer never leads us to complacency, but needles us, makes us uneasy at times. It leads us to true self-knowledge, to true humility.

This could also be an excellent description of Enneagram work. Spiritual Work that strips us of our certainty and helps us to identify where growth is needed by identifying where we are suffering and where we are causing suffering.

Intention toward prayer could be that the personality lens as described in our Enneagram will be actively relinquished to undiluted truth during prayer. That is something only Grace can do in us. And understanding and removing the obstacle of ego personality that prevents our sincere connection to the Sacred is what the Spiritual Map of the Enneagram can offer us.

Prayer is more than reciting words. It's about encountering aspects of ourselves we rarely if ever see, shifting our perspective and seeing things new, awakening our spirits and sense of wonder. Prayer is about connection, with ourselves, with a community of seekers, and with Someone or Something beyond ourselves, our Higher Power. Prayer brings alive our connection to Source. We have become so lost in our ego-personality, we begin to perceive ourselves as separate from the ground of our being. To defer and to appeal to our Beloved Source in prayer, is to humble ourselves before the force of consciousness at the Center of all things. We seek to remove our protective armor-ego, self-deception, rationalization, external and internal make-up, posturing-anything that keeps us from seeing ourselves as we really are. We're trying to experience our vulnerability at the place where we can forgive our self-judgement and find that spaciousness within where we are deeply loved and feel the most loving of others.

When I sort through the layered texture  
Of what clutters and claims my spirit,  
I find you, Deepest Good, in residence.  
You shine like a piece of gold inside of me.  
In that tranquil, secluded district of soul  
I discover my true, unblemished nature.  
Teach me that there is much more to "me"  
Than just my struggle and my failure.  
Absorb me in the jewel of your love  
Until I am fully One with your goodness. Joyce Rupp

There are many ways to opening our soul to authentic prayer:

- Learning/memorizing/repeating Traditional or written prayers can be a beautiful practice.
- Praying in your own words can help you speak your strongest and deepest desire.

- Listening* to our interiors and how the Spirit reaches us in *silence* can be affirming and enlightening, where we learn to “wait for God” in silence.
- Praying with the Imagination or Visualization for who we want to become. That’s why we pray with and bear witness to, a companioning great soul, someone who can show us the way.
- Using the Intimacy of dialogue or colloquy, that intimate opening of the soul that is surrendered to the inner landscape of our Beloved Creator.
- Staying with the sacred invitation to cease suffering for ourselves and others by living into our full humanity. Knowing what it is to be human.
- Praying the heartbreaking prayer of empathy called Tonglen in Buddhism.
- Praying the prayer of gratitude for the experience and alchemy of our humanity.
- Contemplative Prayer is simply trusting the wordless opening of self to divine presence.
- The prayer of Namaste. The God in me sees the God in you. This is the prayer we can pray without ceasing.

Here is a beautiful observation on faithful prayer from Eric Haarer:

Prayer begins as a practice and it is often the practice of prayer that gets us through difficult times when prayer is dry and seems useless. Our job is not to make anything happen but just to be there, present and ready. Whether or not we feel anything is not our business. Often when we do not feel God’s presence is when God is most active, and God is always present, even when that presence is experienced as absence. What is asked of us is to make the effort to be present to the one who is always present to us.

Doing any of those prayer forms can be transformational when the *ego is denied admittance to this sacred exchange*. Prayer can become the practice of resting and trusting and enjoying in the presence of Our Sacred Creator. The Glory of the Creator is in our full humanity. The good news is that we CAN reform our lives to become more fully who we were created to be---- Human. We connect heart to heart with the quality of our prayer and the awareness of our Enneastyle which allows us to become friendly with our souls and no longer judge any part of ourselves as bad.

Many of us pray a prayer of projection, which is a *want* completely absorbed by the needs and lens of the ego. We would be unable to sort through our behaviors, feelings, and thoughts without the guide of others and of our prayer life. Here is where the Enneagram can provide a map through the unknown territory of Soul and Personality.

Please have your Chart of Characteristics easy to access. Put your finger on the word that captures your avoidance. Say it out loud. Pay attention to your initial reaction to the word. I’ll give you a moment to consider your avoidance. (pause)

Now say a quiet prayer to come close to your avoidance. (pause) You will find yourself exposed in this kind of prayer, ashamed, or angry, or frightened. Whatever it is that you have strategized

to avoid your avoidance is what will keep you from an intimate prayer life. If you don't feel the horror of the avoidance, you may be mistaken in your Enneastyle or you may be covering it up with a strategy of your ego lens. (Pause) I'll use my Oneness as an example of how to pray with this powerful word, the avoidance. For E1, the word is error or imperfection. Can you see how easy it may be to identify with the ego strategy of clinging to perfection to defend against reality as it appears so imperfectly to an E1. "God is on my side." God must want what I want since what I have is a compulsion towards perfection (ugh!) So the avoidance interferes or protects me from my anger, or like avoiding failure for a E3 keeps the E3 from shame or deceit. Our prayer is to seek full exposure to our avoidance, to my environment's inner and outer imperfection. This takes me out of my power place, my sense of control and leaves me in my prayer of compassion and surrender. Whatever it is that you have strategized to avoid your avoidance is what will keep you from an intimate prayer life.

Once we can see the true self that is closer to God than to our breath, that Being inside of ego strategy and type, we realize that we need other people, because-it seems so obvious to state- we are other people, all made in the same image and likeness of our Creator.

Prayer brings us to our consciously actualized inner impulses deep within ourselves, the same impulses where we bear each other within. Try living entirely alone, using nothing produced by other people, and see how far you get. But it is even deeper than that. First, we are connected to others in essential ways: our heredity, our blood, even our air and our thoughts and language are not our own. Second, we are designed to live with others, for material, social, emotional, intellectual and what I might call "alchemical" reasons. Our very sanity, and our emotional balance depend upon the influence of others. They bring a food of impressions which we need to expand and enhance our narrow and habituated personality lens. Something of us enters into those people and objects as they enter into us. We need others if just to smooth off our rough edges. This happens in prayer.

A "continuing prayer", then, is one where *the attention is held by the praying*. Our attention will fluctuate. Yet, the person praying is influenced by the prayer itself, and the active elements of the prayer (aim, intention, wish, feeling, grace, silence) are augmented by a stretching of our attention. The better our prayer at a pure, spontaneous, un-strategized level, the better the chance of receiving *grace*, the power of a supernatural level of prayer.

The aim of the prayer, after all, is to connect us to our Source. We are required to pray with our complete humanness, all parts of us included, even what it is you have decided to avoid at all costs, belongs in your prayer.

Disrupting the coordination of the centers and making possible new physical, emotional, and intellectual experiences awakens that which sleeps within. So work with different prayer forms and see if you can avoid the trap of always praying with the Intellectual Center (words and ideas).

Here is some Enneagram wisdom from Gurdjieff: "Earth is enclosed and enwrapped in a great flame of radiant power. The same power is stored inside every living form, waiting for some shock that will set it free." Our various forms of prayer become our 360-degree review. The spiritual freedom from the first week of work precedes the depth of prayer. It is freedom that allows the prayer.

If we start with the understanding that Genesis is teaching us “I love you. Why are you hiding?” we can in prayer extend that same mercy to ourselves. I will be the last person to see the delusions in my character traits but Your Creator knew about your humanity before you were born and possibly intends you not to avoid parts of yourself but use your whole being for your own salvation. Your loved ones learned to see your fears, shame and anger before you did. We think we’re doing a great job of pretend but we are the only one we believe that we’re fooling.

I would like to remind you or refresh for you how the three centers can access the wholeness of prayer. Please consider these wonderful Prayer forms on the Pattern of Prayer papers we sent to you.

Our Enneatype reveals our blind spots, areas of hardness and confusion. The first way to look at our blocks and tendencies is to sincerely consider the Three Centers of Intelligence, remembering that 8,9,1 are body preference types; 5,6,7 are mental preference types; and 2,3,4, are heart centered types. The ego will identify with one of these centers and will prefer its lens. We have all three Centers and, to be whole, all Three awakenings must occur as One unfoldment.

### **8-9-1**

1) Let’s begin with ***the body type of prayer***, the prayer that teaches us to dissolve boundaries and pray the life of non-duality.

\*Being Inclusive which leads to freedom

\*Contemplative Prayer which relieves us of the need to know and leads us to Unity.

\*Prayer of Physical Awareness where movement of the body facilitates the loosening of the prayer of being.

\* Listening for the Nothing crying out to become some-thing. (Teresa of Avila). An Image born of God. Seek detachment, emptying, sinking into stillness, that which allows for the unknown, the uncontrolled, what we seek to disidentify with. These become the disruptors of the identity with Enneastyle.

### **2-3-4**

2) For those whose ego-lens is dominated by issues of the heart, we begin with drawing on self-presence instead of outer directed images and rituals. We find in our emotional intelligence that we are guided by the prompting of our own deeper nature. As we pray with our hearts, our experiences and their perceptions undergo refinement. Here is where we connect and learn to trust our spontaneity.

\*Allow your inner energy to come to balance with what’s “out there.”

\*Whatever your images, feelings, movements, distractions, and incompleteness, hold them in loving presence and let go of any judgment of yourself on your prayer. Allow your spontaneous prayer to rise.

\*Attend to prayers that rise in the quiet and trust this deep inner voice. Stay curious about how you function and how you are with your deepest self.

\*Where you and your Creator meet in prayer is a natural strength. Spiritual freedom comes in your ability to rest in the Beloved. The quality of your inner reality will reduce life's anxieties.

### 5-6-7

3)The energy and activity of the Mental or Head Center is compulsively rooted within. This ongoing mental activity is the major obstacle to contemplative practice. The challenge is to balance the input that arrives as we move of the obsession with our own ideas, thoughts, and concepts.

-Begin to trust the awareness that moves into your body as you open and relax your mind and allow feelings, sensations, and impulses to begin to speak to you.

-Instead of figuring things out, allow reality to speak to you, affect you, break you open.

-When mental energy is managed well, drawn outward and into balance with the other two centers of Intelligence, the mind will free itself and come into wholeness.

-Meditation in this Center has to do with a state of consciousness that is beyond the ordinary state of mind, bringing the meditator's deepest self to a richness of wholeness and balance.

We must approach our prayer life with humility and gentleness. We do not see ourselves as we are, we do not know ourselves as we are. We think we do, and as long as we think so, we can never see ourselves, let alone know ourselves. It may happen that we slowly begin to recognize a certain inconsistency, as if we were not quite a unity. Some extreme situation produces a reaction that we can only label as something like "that was not really me!" With persistent work, over the years, we begin to recognize almost everything as reaction, as automatic, unthinking, unconscious reaction. This vision, painful as it is, is a necessary preliminary viewing point to separating 'I' from 'not-I', and we come to see that we are not at all what we thought we were.

To truly pray is to fully inhabit our being and be in relationship with the divine. It may be that as we penetrate more deeply into our conscious being, we find that penetration more and more like prayer. That consciousness is prayer. Just as it is conscience, compassion, sincerity, and so on. The gem of many facets. The pearl of all color.

Continuing prayer is the "safe place". It is the philosopher's stone which converts lead to gold. This praying is inside us, "inside" means permeating me and my atmosphere. The prayer is not of equal and unvarying intensity: but the moments of prayer are united in their effect by the aim and the practice of the pray-er, which is continually initiated, lost, reinitiated, and so on.

All too often someone will feel that they cannot pray because they don't understand "*how it works*", or because they can't quite fathom whom they're supposed to be praying to.

But prayer is the most natural thing. In the stillness of our own heart, when we are deeply involved in liturgical worship, or when we are alone and quiet, our awareness rests in a stillness that is infinitely more than ourselves, however we might want to describe that. (Actually it might be better if we didn't try to describe it, at least to ourselves!) In our heart also are those we love,

whether personally or generally, as in awareness of those who suffer, friends who are ill or alone, the anguish of war or our anxiety for the planet. All our stillness becomes a place where the concerns of our heart lie in the greater stillness within which we worship, like pebbles on the floor of a vast, silent lake.

-Mike Farley

To end, here are the words of Anselm of Canterbury (11<sup>th</sup> c. Christian Philosopher):

Lord, my heart is before you. I try, but by myself I can do nothing. Do what I cannot. Admit me to the inner room of love. I ask, I seek, I knock. You have already heard my silent request; allow me now to receive. You have enabled me to seek; enable me to find. You have taught me to knock; open me to the closed doors of my habits and attachments. St. Anselm

### Colloquium—

**A conversation or dialogue between people is one of the *Foundational Ignatian insights*. An expression of this would be the 'Colloquium on the Ministry of Teaching' where teachers spend a number of days together exploring teaching as a ministry.**

Day ends, and before sleep  
when the sky dies down, consider  
your altered state: has this day  
changed you? Are the corners  
sharper or rounded off? Did you  
live with death? Make decisions  
that quieted? Find one clear word  
that fit? At the sun's midpoint  
did you notice a pitch of absence,  
bewilderment that invites  
the possible? What did you learn  
from things you dropped and picked up  
and dropped again? Did you set a straw  
parallel to the river, let the flow  
carry you downstream?

-Jeanne Lohmann