

PRAYER - PART FOUR

Before I move on to the real meat of these presentations, 'Praying Outside of Prayer Time,' I want to note a quote from a book by Marcus J. Borg, *The Heart of Christianity*. (The italics are his.)

Becoming intentional about our relationship with God: spirituality is about **paying attention to the relationship**. Though God is "Mystery," there is nothing mysterious about paying attention to our relationship with God. We do so in the ways we pay attention in a human relationship: by spending time in it, attending to it, being thoughtful about it. We pay attention to our relationship with God through practice, both corporate and individual: worship, community, prayer, scripture, and devotion.

A deepening relationship with God: in what is now a familiar theme, the Christian life is not very much about believing a set of beliefs, but about a deepening relationship with the one in whom we live and move and have our being. Paying attention to this relationship transforms us. This is what our lives are to be about: a transforming relationship to "what is," or "the More."

It is interesting that I came across that today. I find it a good summary and affirmation of what I have written so far, with emphasis on the bold above.

So **how** do we bring this relationship with God outside of our time of Prayer? How do we continue to relate with God while we are relating with the others, life, and the world? The answer is, we may be doing that already but are not aware of it, at least calling as prayer. Let me give an example.

When we listen to music, we find that it can stir our hearts, especially while we are listening or singing to ourselves. Music is powerful! Why...because it almost instantly involves our emotion. Give me the name of any musical composition that does not stir our emotions (except punk rock or rap). Even theological statements like in the Hymn "Holy God We Praise Your Name" the music draws us in and even attracts us. One connection is that all things are connected to God, and music connects us through its **goodness, beauty, and truth**. These are the *three top philosophical attributes of God*, in case you didn't know that, of which Plato, Aristotle and others have written about. God is goodness, beauty, and truth. We could also add the Christian attributes that God is Love, the Creator, and so on.

If these are God's attributes, and when we are invited by God into these same attributes, and one could say that we are invited to DANCE WITH GOD. When we **love** as God, we become like God, and are dancing with God. I use the verb, 'dance,' more to show an action rather than just a thought! When we see or hear **beauty** then we are dancing with God through God's *attribute of beauty*! That means when we go to an Art Gallery or Museum, we participate with God, or dance with God, through simply *observing the beauty of the artist's work*. That also means when we go to a Concert, we participate with God, or dance with God, simply *listening the beauty of the composer's music*. We don't even have to compose music or paint ourselves, even this would be great! It is certainly a more **passive** activity, but in the light of participating in God's attributes, we are **actively** dancing with God, just not taking the lead.

Art or music in this sense can be a form of prayer outside of the formal times of Public or Private Prayer. The more we remain committed to prayer the more we will find ourselves participating in this Dance with God.

The next section I want to refer you to my five part article on my blog shortandlongstories.net under the title: *READING ROOM – "The Spirituality of Bird Watching."* From that article I hope to elaborate a little more of the above connection of Prayer Outside of Prayer.