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- *Prayer is simply your personal acknowledgment of God*
- *World peace is dependent on seeing the light in others*
- *Adaptation is a sign of strength*

Each of you walks in the light, the light for which you pray, the light you surround others by. It is a light that is seen, and most importantly for you, a light that is felt. The energy that we see is an energy that you can feel.

There are moments in the lives of each of you when you are intensely aware of an overwhelming peace and a seemingly unrestricted joy. It is at those moments that you are often able to turn your awareness toward the presence of God. You feel that presence, you feel it very concretely. It is an emotional feeling. It can also be a physical feeling of balance and well-being. It is precisely such feelings that you wish to be experienced by others, and it is precisely these feelings that you wish to experience yourselves when you are enduring moments of crisis and endless challenges with no resolution in sight.

You wonder about receiving a clearer understanding of prayer: what it is, how to engage in it, and what its impact may be. Prayer is, quite simply, your personal acknowledgment of God. That acknowledgment can take many forms. It can be meant in support of another, it may be meant as comfort for you, but it is always an acknowledgment of God. You cannot pray and at the same time refuse to believe in the reality of God, the presence of God. Belief and prayer go hand in hand.

You may question the beliefs you hold. You may wonder whether God is vindictive, whether God punishes, or whether God merely supports. You may wonder whether God takes sides in issues. You may wonder whether God recognizes what you call "evil." But despite these and many other questions you have about God, even wondering if God really exists, the fact that you pray is an acknowledgment that at some level you accept the possibility, the potential, of God.

Prayer then is an acknowledgment, first and most importantly. How a person acknowledges God with words or actions, gestures, music is always dependent upon the individual. But all forms of acknowledgment are valid. No acknowledgment has greater significance. If you dance because you are filled with faith, that acknowledgment is as affirming to God as crying out in the most impassioned manner possible the prayers you hold in your heart. There is no means of acknowledgement that takes precedence over another.

You can acknowledge while at the same time being fearful, frightened, desperate. You can acknowledge when you are filled with great joy and gratitude. You can acknowledge by thoughts. You can acknowledge by the way you behave toward others. You can acknowledge in the way you behave toward yourself. If you accept that prayer is acknowledgment, all else falls into its appropriate place.

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Recognizing acknowledgment, what is it that you should pray for? Is it for openness? Is it for peace? Is it for healing? Is it for winning? Is it for surviving? Is it only on behalf of another? Is it only on behalf of oneself? How do you direct prayer?

There is no one way to direct your prayers. Each individual and each moment contain the appropriate seeds for what is appropriate in prayer, what is appropriate in life, what is appropriate in relationships.

In acknowledging God, you do not instruct God. In acknowledging God, you do not instruct another. You cannot say to a person, "You must pray this way." There are those who share common beliefs about prayer, and if those common beliefs bring individuals together, then such commonality is appropriate. But when there is a desire to prescribe how prayer must be engaged when the purpose is to have control over another, such determination of what is appropriate for prayer is, in fact, inappropriate.

Acknowledging God is both individual and corporate. You acknowledge God in your own personal lives, but you can also find ways of sharing with others in common acknowledgment, and that is also appropriate. Formal religious beliefs organized into religions generally share common approaches to prayer. It may be the way the prayer is begun. It may be the position which is taken in prayer. It may be the way the prayer is ended. If such common approaches bring individuals together in a collective effort to acknowledge God, then those approaches belong and there is no difficulty in subscribing to them. But the truth is that there is no one way to approach prayer. What works, works. If it is effective in bringing individuals to an acknowledgment of a Spirit Center that you happen to call God, that is good. Most important is your conscious effort to connect an emotion, feelings, to the Spirit Center.

As long as there has been a form of prayer, there has been the question of its effectiveness—not the form, but the prayer itself. When you pray to God, you know there is a response, there is a reaction, there is a benefit. Prayer is always answered. The difficulty arises when you do not recognize the response that is God's, but every prayer is responded to. You pray for peace and yet conflict continues. You pray for understanding, and conflict continues. You pray for healing, and the conflict of the mind and the body continues. You pray for protection, and yet many are lost. You pray for the recovery of nations, and yet countless succumb. You pray for the protection of God to surround an individual, and yet you see evidence of no protection being offered.

Where is the response for which you pray? What difference does it make whether you pray or not? The response is the energy that comes from acknowledgment. The response is an awareness at some level of a power far greater than an individual. The response is an awareness of an ordering of what would otherwise be chaos. The response is seeing order in that chaos, and seeing a greater pattern created from the smallest details that in themselves appear meaningless. The response is seeing what is permanent and what is temporal. The response is accepting what is in the greatest

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interest of every individual, not just the greatest interest of all, for the response of God is a response to individuals.

It is not actually a response to millions or billions of people. God responds to you as an individual. Part of that response is your own interaction as individuals to life around you. That response is individually beneficial, and as a result, beneficial to all. What is important here is to recognize that evidence of God's response to prayer is in the individual, and that individual has an impact that surrounds that person—be it the environment, or other individuals. It is you, each of you as individuals, who give power and life to God's response.

The response we speak of is not the response held at bay until asked for. It is always present, always active, but your prayers enable individuals to become sensitized in their acknowledgment of God. Does that sensitivity arise immediately as the result of a prayer? No, it is a process. Are you suddenly aware of God? No, it is a process. That is true for every human being. The process begins and it evolves and matures, deepens. It is a process that takes much time. It takes patience. It takes a willingness to risk, and a willingness to learn.

When you pray for another, you are assisting another on his or her journey, a journey of acknowledgment. When you pray for yourself, you are assisting yourself on your own journey. What is the outcome of that journey? When is the outcome? The outcome is a full acknowledgment of God, and it only happens after enormous spiritual refinement and growth. In your terms, it is a long process. Indeed, this process of full acknowledgment is not generally achieved in one lifetime. It is for this reason that your souls are given multiple opportunities to learn, to grow, to mature, to deepen, to brighten, to heat up and ignite. Prayers are part of that lengthy process and they are necessary.

You grow even when you are not aware of God. The individual who denies the existence of God continues to grow, but that being the case, what benefit is there to devote a life to principles based on your current awareness of God? The benefit is that your lives take on meaning to you, and as a result you are more readily able to serve as reflectors of God's presence to the world around you. Again, that presence is to be reflected by human beings. You're all a part of that presence. You all belong to that presence. You are all enabling that presence to be felt.

We can say your neighbor has great light, but if you cannot see the light, if you cannot feel the light, knowing about it has little value. But if you are convinced that your neighbor is light, even though you cannot see it, even though you cannot feel it, you will respond to that individual much differently than if you proceed along your course of life ignoring that very neighbor. It is for that reason that you gather to consider these opportunities, these readings, these messages, for they remind you of the light of your neighbor, and knowing that, your response will always be appropriate. As has been said, you cannot kill what you know and love. If you acknowledge your neighbor's light,

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you cannot reject that person, for you are uplifting the very essence of what you share with that individual.

If you pray for peace worldwide, pray for an understanding of your neighbor's light. That is the first step, and it is the only first step that is necessary. When you pray for protection, when you hold someone in the light, that is a part of the process. It is a part of your own process, and it is an important part of the process of the one for whom you pray. Praying for protection does not mean no harm will come. It does mean that the life for which you pray is warmed by an acknowledgment of God as part of the long process of becoming God. When you pray for healing, healing takes place. It is *your* healing, for you are in the process strengthening your acknowledgment, and it is the healing of another as a similar process is engaged in and pursued.

All that happens in life is not directed by God's order. You are given life in part not to avoid what life provides, but to be strengthened in your ability to adapt to what you have been given. In your adapting, you are acknowledging. In adapting you are being strengthened, not weakened. Adaptation is a sign of strength. It is not an indication of defeat. Therefore in your lives, find ways to adapt. Find ways to acknowledge, recognizing that that adaptation and that acknowledgment will not be complete immediately, that both the adaptation and the acknowledgment belong to a sacred process of the soul as it evolves and becomes a part of the Spirit Center.

You are each blessed in your acknowledgments. You are each blessed in your abilities to adapt. When you are faced with disappointment, fear and concern, accept those as part of the process that leads to adaptation and full acknowledgment of God.

You are in the light. You are the light.

Amen.