

HOW SHOULD THE TEACHER OF GOD SPEND HIS DAY?

^{16:1} To the advanced teacher of God this question is meaningless. There is no program, for the lessons change each day. Yet the teacher of God is sure of but one thing; they do not change at random. Seeing this and understanding that it is true, he rests content. He will be told all that his role should be, this day and every day. And those who share that role with him will find him, so they can learn the lessons for the day together. Not one is absent whom he needs; not one is sent without a learning goal already set, and one which can be learned that very day. For the advanced teacher of God, then, this question is superfluous. It has been asked and answered, and he keeps in constant contact with the Answer. He is set, and sees the road on which he walks stretch surely and smoothly before him.

² But what about those who have not reached his certainty? They are not yet ready for such lack of structuring on their own part. What must they do to learn to give the day to God? There are some general rules which do apply, although each one must use them as best he can in his own way. Routines as such are dangerous, because they easily become gods in their own right, threatening the very goals for which they were set up. Broadly speaking, then, it can be said that it is well to start the day right. It is always possible to begin again, should the day begin with error. Yet there are obvious advantages in terms of saving time.

³ At the beginning, it is wise to think in terms of time. This is by no means the ultimate criterion, but at the outset it is probably the simplest to observe. The saving of time is an essential early emphasis which, although it remains important throughout the learning process, becomes less and less emphasized. At the outset, we can safely say that time devoted to starting the day right does indeed save time. How much time should be so spent? This must depend on the teacher of God himself. He cannot claim that title until he has gone through the workbook, since we are learning within the framework of our course. After completion of the more structured practice periods, which the workbook contains, individual need becomes the chief consideration.

⁴ This course is always practical. It may be that the teacher of God is not in a situation that fosters quiet thought as he awakes. If this is so, let him but remember that he chooses to spend time with God as soon as possible, and let him do so. Duration is not the major concern. One can easily sit still an hour with closed eyes and accomplish nothing. One can as easily give God only an instant, and in that instant join with Him completely. Perhaps the one generalization that can be made is this; as soon as possible after waking take your quiet time, continuing a minute or two after you begin to find it difficult. You may find that the difficulty will diminish and drop away. If not, that is the time to stop.

⁵ The same procedures should be followed at night. Perhaps your quiet time should be fairly early in the evening, if it is not feasible for you to take it just before going to sleep. It is not wise to lie down for it. It is better to sit up, in whatever position you prefer.

Having gone through the workbook, you must have come to some conclusions in this respect. If possible, however, just before going to sleep is a desirable time to devote to God. It sets your mind into a pattern of rest, and orients you away from fear. If it is expedient to spend this time earlier, at least be sure that you do not forget a brief period, - not more than a moment will do, - in which you close your eyes and think of God.

⁶ There is one thought in particular that should be remembered throughout the day. It is a thought of pure joy; a thought of peace, a thought of limitless release, limitless because all things are freed within it. You think you made a place of safety for yourself. You think you made a power that can save you from all the fearful things you see in dreams. It is not so. Your safety lies not there. What you give up is merely the illusion of protecting illusions. And it is this you fear, and only this. How foolish to be so afraid of nothing! Nothing at all! Your defenses will not work, but you are not in danger. You have no need of them. Recognize this, and they will disappear. And only then will you accept your real protection.

⁷ How simply and how easily does time slip by for the teacher of God who has accepted His protection! All that he did before in the name of safety no longer interests him. For he is safe, and knows it to be so. He has a Guide Who will not fail. He need make no distinctions among the problems he perceives, for He to Whom he turns with all of them recognizes no order of difficulty in resolving them. He is as safe in the present as he was before illusions were accepted into his mind, and as he will be when he has let them go. There is no difference in his state at different times and different places, because they are all one to God. This is his safety. And he has no need for more than this.

⁸ Yet there will be temptations along the way the teacher of God has yet to travel, and he has need of reminding himself throughout the day of his protection. How can he do this, particularly during the time when his mind is occupied with external things? He can but try, and his success depends on his conviction that he will succeed. He must be sure success is not of him, but will be given him at any time, in any place and circumstance he calls for it. There are times his certainty will waver, and the instant this occurs he will return to earlier attempts to place reliance on himself alone. Forget not this is magic, and magic is a sorry substitute for true assistance. It is not good enough for God's teacher, because it is not enough for God's Son.

⁹ The avoidance of magic is the avoidance of temptation. For all temptation is nothing more than the attempt to substitute another will for God's. These attempts may indeed seem frightening, but they are merely pathetic. They can have no effects; neither good nor bad, neither rewarding nor demanding sacrifice, healing nor destructive, quieting nor fearful. When all magic is recognized as merely nothing, the teacher of God has reached the most advanced state. All intermediate lessons will but lead to this, and bring this goal nearer to recognition. For magic of any kind, in all its forms, simply does nothing. Its powerlessness is the reason it can be so easily escaped. What has no effects can hardly terrify.

¹⁰ There is no substitute for the Will of God. In simple statement, it is to this fact that the teacher of God devotes his day. Each substitute he may accept as real can but deceive him. But he is safe from all deception if he so decides. Perhaps he needs to remember, "God is with me. I cannot be deceived." Perhaps he prefers other words, or only one, or none at all. Yet each temptation to accept magic as true must be abandoned through his recognition, not that it is fearful, not that it is sinful, not that it is dangerous, but merely that it is meaningless. Rooted in sacrifice and separation, two aspects of one error and no more, he merely chooses to give up all that he never had. And for this "sacrifice" is Heaven restored to his awareness.

¹¹. Is not this an exchange that you would want? The world would gladly make it, if it knew it could be made. It is God's teachers who must teach it that it can. And so it is their function to make sure that they have learned it. No risk is possible throughout the day except to put your trust in magic, for it is only this that leads to pain. "There is no will but God's." His teachers know that this is so, and have learned that everything but this is magic. All belief in magic is maintained by just one simple-minded illusion; - that it works. All through his training, every day and every hour, and even every minute and second, must God's teachers learn to recognize the forms of magic and perceive their meaninglessness. Fear is withdrawn from them, and so they go. And thus the gate of Heaven is reopened, and its light can shine again on an untroubled mind.