

# *Pathwork™ Steps*

## **Prayer as Meditation**

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PL 36 & 194

**Week 1: The Spiral of Development**

**Week 2: Active Meditation**

**Week 3: Foreground and Background Thoughts**

**Week 4: Faith as Positive Creation**

### **Prayer PL 36 Part 1: The Spiral of Development**

For quite a long period at the beginning, it seems as though you are going around in circles, always encountering the same scenery and apparently not moving from the spot you have started from. This may be discouraging if you would not know that **this is an illusion**. It just seems that way.

Actually when you move in this circle, you are going on what I refer to as "the spiral" which is inevitable on the path. All your faults, errors, ignorances, and the resulting complexities create one big vicious cycle in your soul. This cycle consists of various points, namely these individual faults, etc., which affect and interact with one another and thus cause a chain reaction.

**In order to break this vicious cycle, you have to understand thoroughly the individual points constituting your vicious cycle.** You have to concentrate on one after the other so as to find the link of cause and effect within this cycle. The whole cycle cannot possibly be completely understood after having made the round once, so to speak.

**When you have completed the first round, you start all over again.** But each time you start the cycle anew, you gain a slightly profounder understanding of the various highlights and individual points in the cycle until you clearly see the whole cycle in your mind and understand the interdependence of all your negative qualities. Then you will cease seeing the latter as being unconnected. But until this point, you have to repeat the round quite often.

At the beginning, this seems to you like senseless repetition and lack of progress, but it is not! Without going through this most important part on the path, you cannot ever be free and reach the light, for you are chained in this vicious cycle. Only in this way can you break these chains.

Prayer PL 36

### **Prayer PL 36 Part II: The Need to Fully Experience Each Step of the Cycle**

You know by now that **all faults originally come from pride, self-will, and fear**. But it is not sufficient that you know this principle. It is essential that you clearly see and feel how each and every one of your faults comes from one and all of these three basic faults. Find the common denominator.

That is not so easy if it is to be emotionally understood. For that reason, you actually have to go through this cycle step by step, again and again; you have to follow it through until you are able to grasp it well enough that you can break the cycle at one point. Every time you conclude one round of the cycle and start the next round, you follow the upward winding spiral.

At the beginning, the upward slant is so slight that you do not even notice it and are under the impression you are repeating the same round. But later on, you will clearly feel that every time you start anew, you have gained a profounder insight into your problems, and you will not be discouraged anymore by an apparent standstill.

Prayer PL 36

## The Spiral of Development

Worksheet by Dottie Titus for the Pathwork Teachers Helper Database

In many lectures, the Guide talks about the “spiral” of spiritual development. Lecture #39 (Image-Finding) speaks to the importance of recognizing where you are on the spiral and of understanding why you feel differently at different points. He encourages us to view our new found knowledge “from various angles.”

### The Basic Spiral Shape



destination

different levels

starting point

There is a specific spiral configuration that applies to the development of your soul in this respect... As the soul begins to evolve and grow, it enters a new spiral phase or round. Each round of the spiral is a new layer, and at the entrance of each round a new and deeper commitment needs to be made. The rounds or circles are not closed, they have openings.

As you discover a new opening, you need to make a new commitment, on a yet deeper level: to let go and to let God; to give all of yourself to the truth -- to the truth of being -- to no longer hide from your truth.”

PL 235, Anatomy of Contraction

“You know that you are working with different levels and layers. You know about the spiral movement that seems to bring the same sequence up again and again.”

PL 255, The Birthing Process – The Cosmic Pulse

### The Circular Nature of the Spiral (viewed from the top)



“I just keep going in circles!”

“Not this again!”

## The Language of the Unconscious PL 124

### **The most powerful aspect in man's life is his unconscious.**

Everything favorable, pleasurable, advantageous, as well as his hardships, suffering, disappointments, unfulfillments, so-called "bad luck," the repetition of unfavorable patterns, all are determined by his unconscious thinking and feeling, his unconscious attitudes. This comprises a great deal more than is commonly understood.

When man speaks of his fate, the fateful happenings and nonhappenings, the truth of the matter is that it is really nothing else but the governing force of unconscious factors. That which is hidden from awareness continues to govern you without your being able through your reason to change the unconscious outlook. Hence it is of utmost importance to detect such hindering outlooks hidden within.

It is often forgotten that the unconscious does not only harbor petrified wrong conclusions, destructive behavior patterns resulting from images, and negative emotions due to unresolved problems, but **it also contains utter wisdom, divine truth**, and the most constructive elements in the universe, constantly building up in unending creativity and love.

Little by little, gradually as you begin to discover the strange, exciting, at times even slightly frightening, and yet exhilarating reality of your unconscious, you begin to have an inkling of the powerful facets that are buried in it. PL 124

### **Daily Review PL 28**

**Exercise:** Keep a record of incidents that disturb you. Focusing upon subtleties may help us from becoming distracted by exaggerating or over-dramatizing a situation. Notice feelings of discomfort, where you suspect you may be uninformed, ignorant, unprepared, or unaware.

Each week, see if you can relate with the sub-topic.

All you need is a ½ page of lined paper per day. Create 4 columns. At some point during each day, jot down brief notes about each incident (limit: 10 per day). Eventually, this can become a thought process. The Guide refers to Daily Review as 'spiritual hygiene'.

1. Two to three words to identify each incident (no details)
2. What feelings or emotional reactions came up
3. The judgments or conclusions you came to at the time

At the end of each week, read through your entries and complete the last column:

4. What do you notice today that you did not notice at the time? Are there patterns?
5. Using your preferred form of meditation (sitting, walking, or while doing 'mindless' chores) create a picture of desire fulfillment. What would you have to address in your current life to achieve this fulfillment?

## Week 2: Active Meditation

The higher the development, the more truthful and real an entity's thoughts and concepts are, the more powerful will be the energy with which the entity creates.

There is also a correlation between the accuracy of knowledge, visualization of new possibilities of expansion and experience, proper concepts, on the one hand, and receptivity of soul substance, on the other. When concepts are real and the limitless abundance of the universe is therefore perceived, attitudes will be positive and in accordance with the cosmic laws of truth and love; hence no defenses are required.

Meditation: Its Laws and Various Approaches PL 194

The hidden, feared, guilt-producing, and denied thoughts and feelings are more powerful in their negative creation than anything you deal with on the conscious level.

Man's Innate Capacity to Create PL 208

### Meditation Outline

Created by Alison Green-Barton and Margit Cologrande

#### 1. Pathwork Meditation

Meditating to experience a more meaningful life. Working with your Pathwork to deliberately create your life – to know you are of God.

Meditating to experience God. Cultivating “calmness” to know you are his manifestation.

Goal: Knowing God as 100% love, 100% truth, 1--% goodness.

#### 2. Control of your Thoughts (Positive Mind Control)

**Thinking:** Using your mind to concentrate on and think about your Pathwork – praying and meditating on your conflicts, misconceptions, emotional reactions, and obstacles, etc.

**Not Thinking:** Calming your mind. Being relaxed and calm when you are not using your mind to think about your Pathwork. Cultivating your connection to the state of being.

#### 3. Benefits of Thought Control

- a. The increased ability to make your Inner Will function
- b. A general power of discrimination
- c. Increased inner and outer vitality
- d. Better memory
- e. Clearer and stronger thoughts

#### 4. Process of Purification and Development (psychological work)

##### Thought Control

Observation of thoughts

Control of background thoughts

Calmness (finding spiritual nature)

##### Emotional Control

Pathwork search for negative aspects

Pathwork search for positive aspects

Finding spiritual nature

#### 5. Process of Purification and Development (spiritual work)

Mind control

Reason, Will, Emotion

All are Holographic, Multi-faceted

**Both psychological and spiritual work connect -- it's all spiritual work!**

## Prayer PL 36

### Part III: Learning to Concentrate

God's grace, God's help, and God's light exist all over the universe, and God does not decide to give it or to withhold it, my friends. **It is up to the individual man or spirit** to overcome the separating wall between his lower self and God's grace, God's strength, God's mercy, and God's love, as well as all the other divine attributes. And prayer is an essential part in order to achieve this goal.

You learn to concentrate when you pray, for instance, for your dear and loved ones -- first, by the mental process of thinking of them. And then you learn to concentrate so that from the mental process you bring your feelings and the depths of your soul into your wishes. So there are layers of concentration, or levels, just as in anything else. The same should be practiced with your enemies.

Of course, your thoughts will sway at the beginning. Of course, you will have difficulties to focus your attention, but that is the work to be done. If you do not let yourself become discouraged by these inevitable and initial hurdles, eventually, little by little, you will learn it better. Do not become upset when you find your thoughts wandering; just start where you have left off without any self-reproach, mentally and emotionally as relaxed as possible. It is a training that is part of your development.

### Part IV: Changing Our Frame of Mind

Aside from the benefit of concentration and discipline that prayer helps you to achieve, another very important reason is **that during prayer your frame of mind will automatically be different than when you do not pray**. And this will occur in more ways than one.

In the first place, by the mere fact that you decide to and follow through on devoting every day a certain period and a certain amount of effort on concentrating on others by uttering unselfish desires in your prayer -- that already creates a definite change in the organism of your subtle bodies as well as eventually in your physical body.

Furthermore, the majority of people are not capable of cultivating compassionate and good thoughts throughout their daily lives. Of course, the ultimate aim is that your whole life will be a prayer. You will think and feel at all times in prayer now. But that is a long way off.

### Part V: Prayer as a Means of Learning About Ourselves

And prayer is all the more necessary to find out the real truth about yourself: the chasm that exists between your world of thoughts and your world of feelings.

Furthermore, and this is perhaps the most important element of prayer, it is so necessary that you learn to focus your attention on yourself. Your attention should be focused not selfishly but constructively on yourself as well as on your problems from a spiritual point of view. This is necessary if you want to advance on your path.

In prayer, you will automatically tend to view yourself, your faults, your problems, and your experiences in a different light than you would ordinarily have done were you still affected by the often very unspiritual influences of your surroundings. You have to learn to centralize your problems.

## Week 3: Foreground and Background Thoughts

### Observing your Thoughts

From Suppression of Positive and Creative Tendencies PL 68

**Foreground thought: Voluntary.** If you want to think something, and follow it through, it is a foreground thought.

“The Universal Intelligence does not push itself on man unbidden.” PRS 6

**Background thought: Involuntary.** If thoughts come unbidden – if you are a victim of them – they are background thoughts. These are:

1. Symptoms of disturbed emotions, of inner conflicts that never express the conflict itself.
2. You re-experience events or conversations or impressions in snatches and fragments.
3. Wishful thinking

**Foreground thought is voluntary, background thought is involuntary.**

The first step, as always, is the recognition of what is amiss. Recognize your uncontrolled thoughts, their power over you, their significance, as well as their lack of significance. Thought process also occurs on different levels or layers. Broadly speaking, we can distinguish between foreground thoughts and background thoughts.

Foreground and voluntary thought is always clear-cut and concise as long as it remains foreground and does not slide unnoticed into background thought. If you want to think something, whether constructive or unconstructive, as long as you follow it through, it is foreground thought.

When you become calm and observe your thought process, you will soon begin to notice the importance of background thoughts. Background thought comes unbidden; it is disorganized and mainly unconstructive. You will also notice that the majority of background thought material is one of three kinds:

1. The first consists of symptoms of disturbed emotions, of inner conflicts that never express the conflict itself. They might bring the nucleus of the conflict to the fore if the symptoms are analyzed and properly understood. In order to do that, the vague, un-volitional background thoughts have to be made into foreground thoughts.
2. The second kind is you re-experience events of conversations or impressions in snatches and fragments. If these do not belong in the first category, they are completely without significance. Your mind has registered certain impressions, and it repeats them automatically like the rolling of wheels. As long as these thoughts remain in the background, as long as you harbor them without full awareness, you cannot distinguish in them what is important and what is utter waste. Repetition of impressions may not only be important because it is indicative of a symptom of conflict; it may also be important because a constructive impression may add something to your life, to your person, to your inner self. Only when these impressions and thoughts are consciously observed can you derive such benefit. In other words, you must make foreground thoughts out of background thoughts. But the stereotypical repetition that goes on in man's thoughts so much of the time is really waste matter to be eliminated.

3. The third kind of background material is wishful thinking. There are a few subdivisions in this category. You may reexperience a conversation; you go over how it might have been, how it should have been, what you should have said instead of what you did say. Or you build up a daydream of what you wish to happen in the future; but it is so vague, so unrealistic, so illusive, so unconnected with your real desires, or so inconsiderate of what the obstacles within your soul are. Such thoughts are entirely wasteful, if they are not made into foreground thoughts and analyzed as to their reality value. Such wishful thinking, as well as fragments of impressions and automatic repetitions make up, in the main, the material of background thoughts. These thoughts come unbidden. They come and go, they are not consecutive. They interrupt your voluntary thoughts, and they are unconstructive as long as they overpower your volition and keep you from taking the reins into your hands through learning to control your thought world.

Increasing awareness and raised consciousness is also brought about by such thought control. But instead of forbidding yourself to think, do the opposite. Transfer background thought material into conscious foreground thought; and first learn to discriminate as to the meaning of these vague background thoughts; and if when you find that they are insignificant, learn to discard them. This process will bring forth additional material about your unconscious conflicts and teach you to control your mind in a healthy and constructive way.

Moreover, it will release a great deal of strength in you which was formerly taken up by such background thoughts. You have no idea how much mental and emotional strength they consume. If enough mental and emotional strength is consumed, naturally it also has a physical effect.

#### PL 68 Suppression of Positive and Creative Tendencies

Suppressing or repressing the destructive forces will only make them fester underground.

To bring them to the fore may not mean that you can only eliminate them if you live them out. If you as an individual find hate in you, you do not have to act upon this hate. You can become aware of it.

But you often are not capable of not in some subtle way acting upon this hate. And if you do so, you become more understanding of what happens within yourself.

And it is the same with society as a whole. If the destructive forces, the evil in this world that exists, is so rampantly, flagrantly manifest, mankind will eventually as a whole grow faster than if this evil does not manifest.

Movement, Consciousness, Pleasure Principle as Essence of Life PL 119

Anything that is contrary to the laws of love and truth must make the organism unprepared to sustain the powerful energy of happiness. For happiness is indeed a powerful energy. It requires more strength than unhappiness.

**This strength can be acquired by everyone** by facing the truth and shedding illusion about the self and life. Any truth of yourself and the nature of creation results in inner security, trust, fearlessness. Ignorance creates fear.

Fear creates an inner atmosphere of closing, and your mind will not use the powerful substance to create more expansion, but rather more tightly shut defenses.”

Fear of Bliss vs. Longing for It PL 170

## Week 4: Faith as Positive Creation

### Prayer PL 36

#### Part VI: Prayer as a Daily Spiritual Practice

Another element of prayer that is of utmost importance to your frame of mind is that anyone who approaches God in prayer will automatically have a more humble attitude. Even people who have otherwise not learned as yet to be humble, who constantly accuse others and the world, the fates and the gods, etc., for their own miseries, at least during the time of prayer will change their way of thinking and become more humble. And gradually but surely, this attitude will really become their own at all times.

You have to learn the difficulties of making this daily cleansing process second nature to your personality. The more difficult it is to summon the discipline for this daily prayer, the more you need it! It is a well-known fact that whatever you neglect on your path, wherever you deviate from your life plan, the stronger the repercussions in your life!

On the other hand, the person who has reached the point already of making prayer a daily discipline without which one cannot live anymore must be careful of another opposite extreme, namely, the extreme of routine. This habit and routine is always the pitfall of many good things. ... You cannot possibly concentrate with equal strength on all the points in the cycle, particularly when you have not yet attained the phase where you can centralize a few major issues in this cycle.

So in order to adjust your prayer to the phases your development asks you to concentrate mainly on at any given time, you have to be wakeful from that standpoint in your daily life and think what the happenings and your reactions mean with regard to your inner vicious cycle. In that way, you will resist the temptation of making a routine of your prayer.

In order to keep your prayer alive, it is necessary that you take your daily needs (not material ones) into it and consider all happenings from your spiritual development, asking God for help and understanding. As much as you have to fight for this understanding, so much so is it necessary that you then penetrate your subconscious with these thoughts of new insight by forming the thought-form from various angles.

As a matter of fact, it is a substantial part of good prayer that you say to God each day what you know you have to learn and ask for His help. This will gradually impress your subconscious mind so that a good image can form within yourself. That amounts to an instruction of your subconscious. It keeps the idea clear in front of your mind's eye what your immediate goal is -- the goal you can see now. And it will give you a better knowledge of how much you still deviate from this goal when you observe yourself in your daily review.

**He who works in such a way is gradually removing the separating wall around his soul, and divine strength and help cannot fail but to flow into him. It just cannot be different, and you will feel and know it to be so!** But you have to do it first, my dear ones.

PL 36 Prayer

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Full text of this plus all other lectures may be downloaded from [www.pathwork.org](http://www.pathwork.org)

## Steps of Positive Creation

Worksheet on PL 194 by Susan Thesenga for the Pathwork Teachers Helper Database (PTH)

### CONCEPT

- ask for true concept (to replace images)
- Open to true concept
- Listen for confusion, inner conflict
- RE11JRN to work on obstructions...
- If no conflict between conscious and unconscious concept, then

### IMPRESS soul substance and BEING IMPRESSED

- Listen for possible resistance, fear, doubt, impatience...RETURN

### VISUALIZE positive new state

- Feel yourself in new state
- Allow picture to emerge and take root in the soul
- Listen for possible resistance, fear, doubt, impatience...RETURN

### FAITH

- cannot enforce faith as act of will (superimposing wishful thinking)
- REQUEST help from inner divinity
- REST in FAITH
- FAITH is not blind faith, but an openness to new possibilities, to seeing beyond current limitations (including any either/or limited options), (note "Faith and Doubt in Truth and Distortion" PGL #221)
- If lack of faith, investigate where you have decided not to be open; may be a childhood decision to not risk, etc.

Open to the "live process that is so profoundly meaningful and organic that nothing the intellect can think up can ever match it. You will recognize that such answers and the enlightenment that comes are pieces in a jigsaw puzzle, forming little by little a comprehensive picture. Eventually you will rely on this process as on nothing else. It is more real than anything can be in the material world. It is your own path that unfolds, and it eventually reveals the reason for your being here on this earth now, the meaning of your present incarnation. When this inner experience and certainly come, you have faith." PL 194

### Work on issues of faith:

- Work with childhood images of faith; experiences of religion (superimposed concepts about God/ truth, etc.)
- And with adult rational/ materialistic world-view (the modern Western "religion") .. rigid belief structure also.
- Work with prejudices against "primitive" religions of Brazil (African and Indian) and against Catholicism (pious priests, etc.)
- Moving toward real faith = inner knowledge/ experience.