Pathwork Lecture 35: Turning To God

This lecture is given in an expanded poetic format, what I call a Devotional Format of the lecture, and in that sense this is my interpretation of the intent of the lecture. I may have interpreted portions differently from you, and I ask you to ponder the words for your own interpretation. I did this Devotional Format so I can take the words into my heart, phrase by phrase, much as I would in reading poetry – that is, devotionally.

The blessings to me in developing this format have been truly profound, and my wish is that this Devotional Format will be a blessing to others. I invite you to slowly read and ponder this format of the text – with an open heart to experience the Guide’s Presence and Love emerging from among the words such that the wisdom comes to LIVE you.

For clarity: The original text is in bold and italicized. [My adds of commentary/clarification/interpretation are in brackets, italicized, and not bolded.] To learn more of my Devotional Format and see the lectures I have done in this way, go to https://www.garyvollbracht.com/pathwork-lectures/pathwork-lectures-devotional-format/

Gary Vollbracht

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| 03 | Greetings  
in the Name of the Lord.  
Blessings  
for all of you, my friends. |
| 04 | It is just about a year ago – as humans measure time – that this group was formed [Note: Lecture 1 was given on March 11, 1957: 34 lectures were given in the first 18 months of this group that would become Pathwork].  
And it has been a productive year, from our spiritual point of view. |
Since all
  • thoughts,
  • endeavors, and
  • feelings
create
  spiritual forms,
such a group [i.e., such a group as yours]
striving sincerely
to get nearer to God
is building
  a veritable temple
  in the spirit world.

By temple [i.e., By temple in the spirit world]
  I mean
  a house to
  worship
  the Lord.

I said to you that
  • the temple foundation
    was laid,
  • some of the walls
    were erected,
but
  • the roof
    was still missing,
as were
  • various other details.

The building of this temple
has been continued
by all of you
who contribute
  not only through
    • the tasks you fulfill
      for this group,
  but also through
    • every effort you make
      toward
      your own purification process.
So the temple construction has advanced considerably.

The roof is almost finished.

And the coming year promises continued development of this beautiful temple, perhaps finishing touches can be added, all in the honor of • the Lord and in the honor of • the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Occasionally, I will tell you about the progress of your temple.

Now I should like to express the joy all of us share in the progress some of my friends have made.

I think that I can promise you that a fruitful season is ahead of us, one that will bring much joy.

Enough of the basic structure of your temple is secure for such a prediction to be made, even though we cannot foresee an occasional individual setback.
You will come to feel in your heart and soul the reality of the temple you are helping to build, each one of you.

We are not concerned with a large quantity of people who may sit and listen and not really benefit spiritually.

• The overcoming of a single fault,
• the full recognition of a single shortcoming, contributes more to • the building of your temple and • the Plan of Salvation than a large crowd at these sessions.

Spiritual progress in one individual • means more to us and • makes us happier than lukewarm participation by the many.
Now I should like to ask a favor of you.

Always
  glorify
    • God;

donotever
  glorify
    • me.

For I am only
  a servant of the Lord,
    happy
    in my task.

When you
  experience
    enlightenment
    as a result of
      the help I am allowed to give,
thank
  • God
  and only
    • Him!

Never forget
  that
    • it is
      God
      who is responsible,
  that
    • without His
      • strength and
      • grace
    none of His creatures
    could lift a finger.
Many people seek God in the wrong way.

I will try to explain what I mean.

On this earth sphere there is a considerable amount of disappointment.

Sometimes human beings turn to God only because contact with other human beings proves to be unsatisfactory.

Perhaps not enough love is forthcoming; perhaps fear and caution cloud the expression of the innermost divine spark.

• Contact with other human beings can be experienced as hazardous, not bringing the blessings you seek.

You may be hurt.
The person
in frustration
often turns to
God.

The feeling is,
"God
• will not disappoint me.
God
• has enough love.
God is
• far away and
• intangible:
  I risk
  nothing
  by loving Him.

From human beings
I experience
only
• disappointment and
• hurt."

Now this [i.e., Now this “turning to God only in frustration” because I experience only disappointment and hurt when I turn to fellow human beings in my frustration],

my friends,
is the
wrong way
to seek God.
• It [i.e., This turning to God only in times of frustration because others can’t help] is infinitely better than the primitive reaction of blaming God for:
  • one’s disappointments and
  • the failures of others;

• the most primitive reaction [i.e., the most primitive reaction to times of disappointment or the failures of others] is to:
  • doubt or
  • deny
    the existence of God because of
    one’s personal disappointments.

    The human being who does so [i.e., The human being who doubts or denies the existence of God] has not even entered the school of life.

• To turn to God because this [i.e., because turning to God] is less:
  • disappointing and
  • hazardous
    represents
    the first grade of elementary school.
The way to seek God
is out of the fullness of your life.

The fullness of life
means
• to enter life
  without cowardice,
• to open yourself to
  everything life may bring:
  • hardship and
  • joy,
  • unhappiness and
  • happiness,
  • periods of
    darkness,
  • periods of
    light,
  • disappointments in other human beings, and
  • unwaveringly
    trust
    again
    and again,
    with an understanding heart.

Most of all,
never,
never
be afraid
of
• your own feelings and
of
• life as it is.

That [i.e., All of that]
is entering
the fullness of life.
But if you turn to God because it is "safer" and because He represents a last resort, or second best [i.e., or second best resort, that is], a refuge, He will have to show you that love does not work in such a way.

Your tests will be many.

Perhaps you are not consciously aware of reacting negatively to life.

Test your emotions and your fears of other people, the hazards and risks of life and love as you know them, and then ask yourself whether your striving for God does not amount to using Him as a substitute [i.e., as a substitute for living the fullness of life].
This [i.e., This using God as a substitute for living the fullness of life] is not the only motive in your desire to find God.

Motives can be mixed; they often are [i.e., motives often are mixed] in your state of development.

The pure motive will be
  • conscious to you;
for the impure motive, you must
  • search within your soul.

"If we are disappointed," you may ask, "should we not then turn to God?"

Yes, you should!

But it depends again on how you go about doing it [i.e., depends upon how you go about "turning to God"].
If you pray to God in your disappointment, asking Him,

"Father,
   help me find out
      what it is
         within myself
            that made such defeat inevitable.

What can I learn from it [i.e., What can I learn from such a defeat]?

Help me to overcome
   my cowardice.

Let me meet life
   with all its pains
      courageously."

Then you do
   the right thing.

But
   • if you withdraw
      from other people,
   • if you withdraw in fear
      from your own feelings
         while you are
            trying
               to believe
                  that
                      the reason for such inner action [i.e., reason for such
                         inner action of withdrawing from other people] is that you can
                            find God
                               better
                                  by
                                      "renouncing the world,"
then you are misdirected in two ways:

   • God is really a substitute for you [i.e., God is really a substitute for
      living the fullness of life while in the world];
   and secondly,
   • you are lying to yourself [i.e., you are lying to yourself by telling yourself
      that you can find God better by “renouncing the world” than by “living the fullness of life while in the world”].
It is not easy to find out the truth about how you pray and seek God – whether rightly from the fullness of life, or wrongly, either by making God a substitute for living from the fullness of life or by telling yourself that “renouncing the world” is a better way of finding God than is living the fullness of life while in the world.

These [i.e., These emotions connected with how one prays or seeks God and how one does or does not live in the fullness of life] are

• subtle and
• hidden
  emotions,

and

only the most
• severe and
• sincere
  self-testing
  can teach you
  the truth about
  your [unconscious] soul-reactions.

Do not be deceived by the part of you that seeks God in truth;

look for the hidden part [i.e., the unconscious part that lives in the soul] that does not [i.e., that does not seek God in truth].
Do not ever forget, my dear ones, that your emotions are mixed.

The conscious part that is • right and • pure does not eliminate the possibility of a hidden [i.e., the possibility of an unconscious] wrong • reaction, • emotion, and • motive.

So test yourself.

The best way to find God is always by learning to love other people.

As you know, this [i.e., this learning “to love other people,” “to open to the fullness of life,” and thereby “to find God”] is a long road.

We • have begun to work and • are continuing to work on this [i.e., to work on learning “to love other people,” “to open to the fullness of life,” and thereby “to find God”].
Nothing but

• love of your fellow creatures
  can open you to
  • the fullness of life,
  which alone is
  • the proper basis for
    finding the Lord.

Looking upon humanity,
we of the spirit world
often become sad.

We see so many
  struggling men and women
    longing
    • to be loved
who do not know that
what they
  actually long for is
  • to love.

It is just that
  they do not know it [i.e., they do not know that what they actually long for is
  TO love; they actually do NOT long for BEING loved].

• The coarser matter of their soul,
• the layer that lies
  between the
  • divine spark
  and the
  • physical body
  translates
  the longing
  • to love
  into
  a longing
  • to receive love.
In this layer [i.e., In this coarser matter of their soul, in this layer that lies between the divine spark and the physical body]

exists

the ego

with all its

• vanity,

• pride,

• fear, and

• ambition.

This ego layer believes

that the best thing is to receive love without taking the risk of getting wounded;

it [i.e., this ego layer] thinks

• remaining aloof [i.e., remaining aloof and not taking the risk either of getting wounded by daring to open to receiving another’s love or of getting wounded by daring to love and not having one’s love received] is a

• desirable state.
In other words, you want to cheat:

- you want to
- receive without
- giving fully.

- You set limits.
- You calculate.
- You extend yourself only to receive love.

And then you are bitter – because it [i.e., because setting limits on and controlling love, wanting only to receive love from others and never wanting to love others] does not work;

it [i.e., setting limits on and controlling love, wanting only to receive love from others and never wanting to love others] cannot work.

Even if occasionally this strategy [i.e., this strategy of setting limits on and controlling love, wanting only to receive love from others and never wanting to love others] seems to work, you are not gratified by the love bestowed upon you.
Think about it [i.e., Think about times when love was bestowed upon you even though you were setting limits on and controlling love, wanting only to receive love from others and never wanting to love others].

Has it not happened in your life that other people loved you as best they knew how, but since you were • incapable or • unwilling to love, their love was more of • a burden than • a cause for happiness?

Something within you knows that you do not deserve love, and so you feel guilty.

The more love is given to you, the unhappier you become if you are not able to overcome • your ego, • pride, • fear, and • the cowardice that allows you to cheat.
If you
• overcome a weakness and
• begin to give some love,
even before
  you are capable of giving
  real love,
your act of
  unselfish giving
  will bring you
  a feeling of
  • happiness and
  • security
  that never comes to you
  when you
  receive
  • selfishly and
  • greedily.

I realize
  that these are
  old truths
  you have heard many times.

You have to
  experience
  the same truths
  again
  and again
so that
  they [i.e., so that these truths that you have heard many times before] may become
  • a living reality
  and do not remain
  • mere words.
My friends,

one of the most important practices on this path is the daily struggle to make or to receive enlightenment out of words you already know.

• "Oh, I knew that already," you say.
• "It is nothing new,"
and a door automatically closes within yourself.

In this way you do yourself great harm.

You should understand better.

Do you
• feel
and
• live what you think you know?
To know
  in your brain
  is only the beginning.

You have
  a considerable amount of
  knowledge in your
  • brain
    that
      from our standpoint
      we do not consider
      knowledge.

The knowledge you have in your
  • soul,
knowledge that
  • penetrates your being
    through and through,
    forever a part of you,
    is comparatively
    small.

Now I want to say a few words about
  prayers.

We observe you
  as you pray.

You say
  • the right kind of prayers;

you are praying
  • ardently,
  • untiringly,
even
  • patiently
    for the things
    you
    should
    pray for.
Yet
   it often happens
       that
            when your prayers
                are answered,
            you
            do not know it.

You do not realize
   that
    events
       that appear to you as
          • disagreeable tests
             are nothing less than
                • answers to your prayers.

You need to
   go through these tests
   before
      that for which you pray
          can come to you.

But you do not know it [i.e., But you do not know that you need to go through
   these tests before that for which you pray can come to you];

you think
   that
      the answer to your prayer
          should come in a certain way.

You fail to consider
   that
       • if you
             lack a fulfillment,
          or
       • if
             any kind of hardship
                exists in your life,

   it is because
          you have violated
             some spiritual law.
Therefore [i.e., Because you have violated some spiritual law, a violation that has caused some lack of fulfillment or some kind of hardship that exists in your life]

a block
exists in you
that does not allow
the fulfillment
to come to you.

God answers your prayer
by making you
conscious of
the specific difficulty [i.e., making you conscious of which specific block or of which specific spiritual law it is that you have violated and that is, therefore,]
standing in the way of
your fulfillment.

You could not become conscious of it [i.e., You could not become conscious of the block or spiritual law violation that stands in the way of your fulfillment]

unless
the difficulty [i.e., unless the difficulty caused by the block or spiritual law violation]
manifested
in your physical surroundings.

You could not
• become aware of
and
• eliminate
  the self-created obstacle.
We have friends here
to whom
such a thing has happened [i.e., to whom the difficulty
caused by the block or spiritual law violation manifested].

But it does not occur to them
that
the unpleasant experience [i.e., that the difficulty that manifested]
was the very answer
to their prayers.

Without this occurrence [i.e., Without the occurrence of this
unpleasant experience or difficulty]
they could not have removed
the obstacle
they had planted
between
• themselves
and
• the infinite bliss
that God wants
all His children
to enjoy.

Before I turn to your questions,
there is one announcement I want to make:

We would be very happy
if you and/or your group
would start
a new activity.

Whenever a friend
• has a problem and
• needs advice,
offer your help
regardless of
whether this person works privately with me or not;

a meeting should be arranged
with the friends of the inner nucleus.
At this opportunity [i.e., at this meeting with the friends of the inner nucleus] the friend in need should present his or her problem as honestly as he or she knows how.

And the group should deliberate on it, each giving an opinion from the point of view of what it means [i.e., what the friend’s problem means]

- spiritually,
- emotionally, and
- psychologically.

Ask yourselves

- what can be learned from it [i.e., what can the friend learn from this problem] for the purpose of purification;

- what spiritual laws might be violated by this problem;

- what might be the best way to handle it;

and so on.

Essential at the start of such a meeting would be for all to join together in sincere prayer asking for

- divine guidance,
- inspiration, and
- enlightenment.

We have many good reasons to wish for the proper organization of such a service.
We spirits of the world of God encourage humans to become independent.

We do not like to be asked at the first sight of a problem,

• "What should I do?"

• What would be the right thing?"

Those of my friends who work with me privately will have noticed that I discourage such questions.

If I were to tell you

• what you must do and

• how you must do it,

it would weaken you.

What I always do, however, is to show you first

• how to understand

• the inner causes responsible for

• the outer effect.

I show you

• how to go about searching for such understanding.

To achieve this purpose [i.e., to come to an understanding about the inner causes responsible for the outer effect of your problem], it is essential that you talk openly about your problems.
This [i.e., This talking openly about your problem] in itself will
  • shed a new light on the conflict in question
  and
  • bring you deeper insights necessary for spiritual growth.

To ask and to obey [i.e., and to obey me blindly] is better than nothing.

But to ask
  • how to find one's own violations
  and
  • how to change inner currents

indicates the
  • true and
  • mature spirituality
  that we want for you.

Only in this way [i.e., Only by learning how find your own violations and how to change inner currents] can you
  remove the obstacles for your independent channel to open to
  • receive God's will and
  • hear God's answers.

You do not have to be a medium for that [i.e., You do not have to be a medium in order to receive God’s will and hear God’s answers].
Every human being
on the right road
can receive answers from God.

It is our job
• to train you [i.e., to train you about how to open your channel and receive answers from God],
• not to
  • make you dependent [i.e., not to make you dependent on us]
  and
  • have you coming to us with every decision you have to make.

Opening a channel
requires
• training and
• practice.

What I have suggested
[i.e., namely, that whenever a friend has a problem and needs advice he or she should work with the friends of the inner nucleus to discover what the problem means spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically with the goal of opening one’s own channel to discover inner causes responsible of outer effects and become increasingly independent]

will afford a very good opportunity for everyone exploring the
• causes and
• solutions of the
  • inner and
  • outer conflicts on the path in the right way.

It [i.e., This approach to your problems] will strengthen all of you.
Such activity is another form of "knocking"
in order to receive
divine inspiration.

After you have proceeded
as far as you can
among yourselves,
I shall be willing
to give you advice
to show you the way.

Such an activity
will bring the friends in the group
closer together,
which is very important.

The law of brotherhood
will be furthered.

It is so healthy
for your soul
to open itself
to your brothers and sisters on this path
with
• generosity and
• courage.

Those who
• listen,
• advise, and
• deliberate
will gain strength
not only from
• what they themselves are able to learn
but also from
• their
  • helpful attitude and
  • unselfishness.

So this will work
only
for the good.
Not one of you should feel shy.

If your shyness stands in the way, a good part of your vanity has not been overcome.

If you cannot bring yourself to the point of discussing your problems with friends
   • who are seriously endeavoring to advance on this path of purification
     and
   • who honestly desire to help,

divine grace will not come to you in the measure it would
   if you were to make the effort to overcome such
     • vanity and • pride.

• All faults bar the way to divine grace;

• every effort to overcome the slightest fault opens a door to grace.

It is pride that makes you shy.

• I cannot stress it enough, my friends, and
  • I cannot beg you enough to do what I suggest
    if you are in difficulty.
Come to the friends of this group.

Convince yourself
how much God likes you to do that.

You will receive
the fruits of it [i.e., the fruits of coming to the friends of this group when you are in any kind of difficulty]
slowly
but surely.

A great many blessings
will come
to the
• group
  who helps in that way and
to the
• person
  who seeks this help.

Such regular service
will strengthen the group as a whole
tremendously,
my dear friends!

Be in peace.

Be in God!

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