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How to Pray

Matthew 6:5-14

February 23, 2003

Peter Hiett

[Meaning of Life movie clip: Camera pans over rows of bored schoolboys listening to a theological lesson. Priest steps up to the altar facing the schoolboys and begins praying . .

Let us praise God.
O, Lord (boys echo: O, Lord)
O, You are so big (O, You are so big)
So absolutely huge (So absolutely huge)
Gosh, we're all really impressed down
here I can tell you
(Gosh, we're all really impressed down
here I can tell you)
Forgive us, O Lord, for this our dreadful toadying
(And barefaced flattery)
But You're so strong and well, just so super.
(Fantastic!)
Amen (Amen)]

I think they're mocking God . . . or us. Next they sing a hymn [singing]:

O, Lord, please don't burn us,
Don't kill or toast your flock.
Don't put us on the barbeque
Or simmer us in stock.
Don't braise or bake or boil us
Or stir-fry us in a Wok.
And please don't lightly poach us . . .

That clip feels so sacrilegious (unholy). But it's sacrilegious because it's true . . . not true about God, but true about us and human religion. Our *hearts* are sacrilegious. We may pray and sing different words, but the world gets our meaning: God is distant, arrogant, and aloof. So we pray in faithlessness and fear.

Today's sermon is on prayer, and I remind you that at the start of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

The Pharisees were prayer mongers. Just the ordinary Jew was required to recite the Shema (a collection of verses from Scripture) twice each day. It was also law that they prayed the 18 benedictions (Shemoneh Esreh) three times each day. It is a beautiful prayer (I printed it up off the Internet) *five pages long!* Three times each day, plus a slew of other prayers for various occasions. There were prayers for everything from seeing a lake to the use of new furniture.

I find that amazing, for when Jesus teaches on prayer, He's talking to folks who would appear to us "entirely prayed up." He's talking into a religious environment that reminds me of some Christian college groups I was a part of long ago . . . wherein it seemed like every talk was about having a Quiet Time. And the leader usually would say something like, "You know, Martin Luther used to say, 'I have so much to do this day, I must pray for four hours rather than two.'"

I always felt guilty about my prayer life. But, gosh . . . after a half-hour, I'd run out of stuff to say! I'd literally be *bored to tears* with my many words, and I'd fall asleep. Then I'd wake up peeling those tear-stained, onion skin, Bible pages off my greasy face, repent, and start over. (Oh, blessed communion, sweet hour of prayer!)

Well, it's into that environment Jesus speaks about the practice of piety. Last week we preached on "Discipline to Dance." God *is* a Dance, a Trinity called Love.

Does your prayer life feel like a dance?

Have you ever been to a church dance or a church party, you're having a great time, and someone (like the pastor) says, "Hey, everybody, let's just have a time of prayer." Outside you smile, and inside your heart says, "Shoot! No more bean dip, and one-half hour of standing in a circle with people impressing each other with their many and deep words."

Dance to discipline . . . happens in church all the time.

Jesus speaks to His Church in Matthew 6:5:

"And when you pray [“proseuchomai” in Greek: petitionary prayer], you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

Jesus teaches it's not about impressive words and public words. I don't think that means we can't pray in public (Jesus did), and I don't think that means we can't thoughtfully write out our

prayers (David did). But Jesus says, “Don’t be like the hypocrites”—the actors. “They act like they’re talking to God, but they’re not.” It’s impersonal.

You know, they have talking trash cans at the Taco Bell on Kipling and Belleview. You put your trash in, and it says, “Thank you.” Fine words, but *nobody* says, “You’re welcome.” Fine words, but totally impersonal and thus meaningless. Don’t be a talking trash can.

“And when praying, don’t keep babbling on like pagans.” The verb in Greek is “batta logew” — batta, batta, batta . . . on and on . . . You see, maybe I wasn’t the only one bored with the words of my macho man Quiet Times. Maybe God was too!

Jesus says, “Don’t keep babbling on like pagans. They think they will be heard for their many words” (“pollylogia”— “much word”). It’s like Jesus is saying, “God heard you this morning. Do you think He’s stupid? Do you think you have to twist His arm? Do you think He doesn’t love you? Do you think it’s magic like the pagans? Do you think two more times before bed will make it work?” Jesus slams the religious system of His day.

Do you ever get Internet prayers? Recently I’ve seen this one a lot: “The Lord has revealed to a prayer warrior that if 1 million pray for Saddam Hussein to abdicate, we can avoid war. Pass this on to ten others.” I think that’s a great prayer to pray. And I hope more than a million pray it! But I didn’t pass it on. I may be wrong, I really may be, but to me it doesn’t smell like Jesus. It smells like fear, shame, condemnation, and flesh. And I don’t want to perpetuate that religious system.

Pray, but not constrained by fear. I don’t think it’s a matter of many words or a particular set of words. Perhaps it’s a matter of many hearts. But hearts aren’t redeemed by fear or many words, but by one Word.

And I don’t know if Martin Luther ever said the thing about four hours of prayer, but I do know he wrote this:

The gentile delusion [is] that prayer meant making both God and oneself tired with yelling and murmuring. . . . [Those] who make it nothing but a work of drudgery, can never pray with gladness or devotion. . . . Prayers ought to be brief, frequent, and intense.

Well, Scripture says, “Pray constantly.” But Jesus says, “We won’t be heard for our many words.” Augustine writes, “Remove from prayers much speaking, but not much praying.”

“You won’t be heard for your many words. Don’t be like them, for your heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”

Prayer is not an information briefing for God. And it’s not about getting a bunch of information or teachings. We have so many books, classes, and seminars on how to pray, just like the scribes, Pharisees, and rabbis did.

In Luke 11, disciples come to Jesus and say, “Teach us to pray, like John taught His disciples to pray.” And Jesus says:

OK . . . When you pray say: “Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation”

Period.

They must have thought, “Are you mocking us? Surely it’s more complicated than that! What about Jabez and Hail Mary’s and the 18 benedictions? Jesus, that only took *15 seconds!*”

In Matthew 6, Jesus says, “Not babbling words, not many words; your Father knows what you need before you ask Him, so then pray” — ask. Your father knows what you need before you ask Him.

So why ask Him? Well, maybe *you* don’t know what you need before you ask Him?

The earthly minded person thinks . . . that when he prays, the important thing . . . is that God should hear what he is praying for. And yet in the true, eternal sense it is just the reverse: the true relation in prayer is not when God hears what is prayed for, but when the person praying continues to pray until he is the one who hears, who hears what God is asking for.

That’s Kierkegaard. In the words of Madeleine L’Engle, “Until I tell God what I want, I have no way of knowing whether or not I truly want it.”

“Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him, so ask Him” . . . and in asking, maybe He’ll tell you what you need.

Have you ever determined to say something to somebody (practiced your lines), but in their presence all your words changed? It happens to little children in the presence of their fathers.

Matthew 6:8: “ . . . *for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray:*

*‘Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’*

“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

Jesus says, **“Pray, ‘Our Father.’”** The way Jesus talked about God got Him killed. In John 5:18, the Jews sought to kill Jesus, for He referred to God as His own Father. The Jews referred to God as the Father of Israel, but Jesus referred to Him as *Dad*. Because the word is preserved in the Epistles, we believe Jesus used His common, native, Aramaic tongue in prayer and called God *Abba* . . . like Papa, Daddy. He called God *Dad*.

Jesus says, “Our Father”—
 “*Our Dad*”—
 “Your Daddy and my Daddy.”

This lesson on prayer is a big brother teaching his little brothers and sisters how to talk to their Daddy. Jesus is the only begotten Son of God—the *only one*! Yet He says, “Pray ‘*Our Papa*.’” How can that be?

“Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.” That is, “Let your name be hallowed”—respected—set apart.

In the temple in Jerusalem was the Holy of Holies. To enter spelled death. The Jews knew God was holy, distant, and other. But of what that holiness consisted, they just weren’t too sure. The Jews believed, as Ezekiel prophesied, that when the Messiah came, *He* would make God’s name hallowed among all peoples, and He would reveal the true nature of God’s holiness.

“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.” What we think we need and what our flesh really prays in fear is, “Hallowed by *my* name. *My* kingdom come, *my* will be done.” We don’t know what we need, but praise God He doesn’t give us what we ask for! For our flesh asks for Hell.

My kingdom,
 my will,
 forever alone,
 apart from the Great Dance.

The Jews rightfully believed the kingdom would come when the king came, when the Christ came.

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” In Heaven His will is done faithfully, joyfully, freely; not constrained by fear but love . . . like a *dance*.

“Give us this day our daily bread” — “epiousian” bread. “Epiousian” is an extremely rare Greek word.

- Some people think it means “daily” — “this day daily.” It’s a bit redundant.
- Some think it means “bread for tomorrow,” but in the next chapter Jesus says, “Don’t worry about tomorrow and what you are to eat.”
- Some think it refers to “manna,” God’s sustenance to Israel in the wilderness.

- Some have thought it refers to communion bread. “Epi” - above, and “ousian” - substance. Super substantial bread.
- Some argue it refers to heavenly bread, future bread, eschatological bread, bread of the messianic banquet.

“And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” To forgive a debt is to make payment for a crime, so that restitution and vengeance are transformed into a gift — no longer wrath but grace. The Jews knew only God could forgive, but what was the gift, the payment, the sacrifice to fund all this forgiveness?

It’s interesting that the sign of spirituality and efficacious prayer here is not fancy words, many words, or the length of your Quiet Time . . . or even miracles. It’s your willingness to forgive.

If you won’t forgive, don’t think you’re forgiven.

If you’re forgiven much, you’ll love much and you’ll forgive.

“Lead us not into temptation.” We hate praying that, for we love temptation. But still — what a strange thing to pray, as if God *would* lead us into temptation. Well, commentators point out temptation can also be translated trials, and trials are inevitable. So Jesus is saying, “Pray that you might not fall into the temptation in the trial.”

Whatever the case, remember that two chapters ago Jesus was led “by the Spirit” into the desert to be tempted by the “Evil One” (Satan), yet He did not fall into temptation. He conquered the Evil One. So stick with Jesus. And on His cross He conquered Satan forever.

“Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from the Evil One.” Believe me, the Evil One is not defeated with your impressive words, public words, fancy words, or magic, babbling words. He’s only defeated with one Word.

In the words of Martin Luther:

The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

It’s true. I’ve seen it! One, little word . . . but that Word is larger than all created reality, even though it’s smaller than a standard, Galilean manger.

The Word is the One teaching His little brothers and sisters how to pray. They don’t know what they need. Yet the Holy Father in Heaven is now sitting on a hillside telling them what they need: Himself. He is not distant, arrogant, or aloof.

Jesus said, “I and the Father are one.”

Two persons, one substance, one dance, Father and Son.

Jesus says to pray “Our Father.”

He *is* the only begotten Son of God.
We are adopted into the family (the dance).

James Hewitt tells about a Sunday School teacher registering two brothers for class. She asked for their birthdays. The bolder of the two said, "We're both seven. My birthday is April 8, 1976, and my brother's is April 20, 1976." "But that's impossible!" answered the teacher. "No, it's not," answered the quieter brother. "One of us is adopted." "Which one?" asked the teacher before she could curb her tongue.

The boys looked at each other and smiled, and the bolder one said, "We asked Dad a while ago, but he just said he loved us both, and he couldn't remember any more which one was adopted."

We become flesh and blood, and whether or not our Father remembers, Jesus prayed for us saying, "Father, you have loved them as you loved me" (John 17:23). So we pray, **"Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be thy name."**

When Jesus was crucified, the curtain in the Holy of Holies ripped from top to bottom. Something got in: us. And something got out: the Spirit of Christ, the holiness of God. Speaking of His crucifixion Jesus said, "When I am lifted up I will draw all men unto myself."

Jesus from the bosom of the father
is the Holy One of God.

He is the Revelation of God's holiness,
the Love of God poured out on a cross.

"Thy kingdom come." Jesus came preaching: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." "Thy Sermon on the Mount be done." That is, "Thy law upon Mt. Sinai be done." Jesus came to fulfill the law in us. Emmanuel: God with us.

"Give us this day our daily bread." "Bread for tomorrow, our manna, our communion bread, our messianic banquet bread." Give us all of the above; that is, give us Jesus this day and each day.

In John 6 Jesus says, "God gave them manna in the wilderness. But my Father gives you the true bread from Heaven. I am the bread of life. Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

Give me bread; give me Jesus.

And if you say, “Can’t I pray for bread? I mean toast, donuts, and cake?” Of course you can, “in Jesus’ name.” Do you not realize that every atom in every Krispy Kreme donut is continually held together by God’s Word of power in Christ Jesus our Lord?

“And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” When we pray for forgiveness, we’re praying for the gift of God. We’re praying for Jesus . . . for us, in us, and through us.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.” Deliver us, rescue us, help us! If I could sum up the Lord’s Prayer in two words, it would be, “God, help!” In Hebrew it became a name: “Yeshua” (God is salvation). In Greek it becomes “Iesous”; in English it’s Jesus.

We call this the Lord’s Prayer, yet it’s *our* prayer for the Lord. We come to the Father with all these words — impressive words, public words, informative words, babbling words (batta logos), and many words (poly logos). And God is helping us say one Word with meaning.

The Word—The Meaning—The Logos—Jesus.

We come with all these needs, and speaking to God in His presence He helps us realize we have only one need: Himself. We think we need bread, house, family, world peace, and the knowledge of good and evil. But we really only have one need: the heart of God — Jesus.

You *should* pray for bread, house, family, world peace, and direction. But pray to your Father, and He’s helping you see Jesus, pray Jesus. And I’m not saying we should only pray the audible name Jesus. I’m saying that in Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and giving you Jesus, the Father will give you all things. The “all things” is *easy* for God! But giving you His heart looks like a cross.

I suspect “all things”—“all creation”—exists for you to help you pray “Jesus” and desire Jesus and find Jesus . . . “in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow.” You are His Bride, and He is your Groom and your Father’s presence in this fallen world. He wants you to want Him. And you most need to *want* Him.

We come with all these needs, and God the Father in the Son helps us know our need and pray our need: Jesus Himself. And we learn to pray by praying to Him, like a child learns to speak by speaking to his father. A first word, or *the* first word, is “Abba” addressed to Father, for the child knows his father saves and helps (and likewise “Mama”).

We get so stressed out about prayer and babble in fear wondering, “Does God help? Where is God? Can I hear Him? Can I speak to Him?” We’re like babies in a womb wondering, “Where’s Mother?” We’re like an infant in his daddy’s arms babbling into space.

I used to babble on in fear, working through lists and formulas, wondering where God was and did He hear me, and then I’d fall asleep. I bet He enjoyed it when I shut up and fell asleep . . . in His arms. But even more, He enjoyed it when every now and then, out of the babble, I’d mumble, “Abba . . . Dadda . . . Father . . .”

We learn to speak from speaking to our Father. We don't learn from a class or seminar or book. We may learn a foreign language that way, but not our native tongue.

Children of God, prayer is not a foreign language for you. Through Christ it is now your native tongue. We learn to pray by praying to our Father, present to us in Christ Jesus. Through Christ, God is not distant, and He never *was* arrogant or aloof. In Jesus' name, say, "Abba." Pray in Jesus' name. That's more than an audible word, but His spiritual presence.

Jesus is how the Father gives meaning to your words.

Jesus is the Meaning—the Word—the Logos—the Truth—the Life.

He is how you pray.

Paul writes in Galatians 4:6, "And because you are sons, God the Father sent the spirit of His Son in to our hearts crying, 'Abba Father.'"

Richard Foster writes, "Hard as it may be for us to imagine, God is in everlasting communion with himself through our stumbling, bumbling prayers."

P. T. Forsyth writes, "When we speak to God it is really the God who lives in us speaking through us to himself . . . in self-communing love."

Son to Father in the power of His Spirit.

So "The Lord's Prayer" is our prayer for the Lord . . . but really it *is* the Lord's prayer for the Lord in us. We're being caught up in God's great dance of love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Wallace Hamilton tells of an archbishop in Paris at Notre Dame who used to tell a story of a young man who many years before had come into that very cathedral. The young man had been dared by some cynical friends. (They all thought religion was a sham.) They dared him to make a bogus confession to the priest. To win a few bucks he did it. His confession was a mockery.

The old priest, who listened to the false confession, sensed the man's arrogance and said, "Very well, my son. Every confession requires a penance, and this will be yours. I ask you to go into the chapel, stand before the crucifix, look into the face of the crucified Christ, and pray, 'All this you did for me, and I don't give a damn.'"

The young man had to do the penance to win the bet, so he went into the chapel and looked at the cross of Christ and began to pray his mock prayer. "All this you did for me and I . . . I . . ." He never finished his prayer. God's revealed holiness killed him. That is, he was crucified with Christ and raised with Christ — a new creation. He never finished the prayer, for God the Father

changed his words into The Word, and he became God's prayer. He never finished his prayer. At that the archbishop would lean forward and say, "Thirty years ago, that boy was me."

In the movie clip, the pastor faced the congregation. But when you turn around and face the cross, it changes your prayers.

Jesus said, "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father." God is not distant, arrogant, and aloof. He's here bleeding love for you.

In the clip, they sang, "O, Lord, please don't burn us, don't kill or toast your flock." The tune sounded familiar. Then I remembered the words:

The Church's one foundation
 Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
 She is His new creation
 By water and the Word.
 From heaven He came and sought her
 To be His holy bride;
 With His own blood He bought her,
 And for her life He died.

Same tune, entirely different meaning.

May all your prayers have meaning . . . way, truth, and life . . . Word . . . Jesus.

So on the night He was betrayed, having given thanks, He took break and broke it saying, "This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper He took the cup and said, "This is the cup of the New Covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it all of you, in remembrance of me." After the supper, according to Matthew, He said, "I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until I drink it with you in my Father's kingdom" . . . where everyone dances and everyone prays.

Some of you might be thinking, "You never answered my question. Should I pray every day?" The answer is, pray constantly. "No, I mean, should I have a Quiet Time every day? And is 15 minutes long enough? Should I recite the Lord's Prayer verbatim, or use it as a pattern? Should I use the Lukan or Matthean version? And should I include the textual variant: 'For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory . . .'? While we're at it, preacher, you never answered my questions regarding this Sermon on the Mount . . .

- Should I join the military or not?
- Should I give money to every beggar? Or food?
- Should I fast?
- Can I divorce my adulterous wife?
- Should I turn the other cheek when my kids are in danger?"

Let me answer definitively: *I don't know* . . . hey, maybe you could ask your Father. If you come to His table in faith, you know Him. You are His child. You say, "He doesn't speak to me." *Wrong*. He has and He does!

When God speaks, everything moves. So if you're going through your day, talk to Him. He's with you. If the kids are driving you insane, shut yourself in your closet and talk to Him. While you're talking to Him, if you feel like dancing, *dance*. If you're a guy like me and you think of girls spinning around with ribbons, then don't dance . . . go skiing with Him!

I think some of the best times I have in prayer with Jesus are downstairs lifting weights. I don't *think* they count, but they do. We have our Quiet Time, and we listen to Led Zeppelin turned up to 6! (Yes, sometimes we have to move to the next song if there is raunchy stuff . . .) Sometimes we listen to the Rolling Stones, sometimes we listen to Third Day, sometimes we listen to Handel's "Messiah." I find myself just talking to Him. Sometimes I have to stop and write down all the neat things I'm hearing, because He's with me . . . not distant, arrogant, or aloof.

He's your papa. Talk to Him. May you, in the name of Jesus, say, "Our Papa!" Amen.

Further Reading

He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." And he said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation.'"

Luke 11:1-4

Pray constantly

I Thessalonians 5:17

The gentile delusion [is] that prayer meant making both God and oneself tired with yelling and murmuring. . . . But the Christian's prayer is easy, and it does not cause hard work. . . . It presents its need from the heart. Faith quickly gets through telling what it wants. . . . And because He [the Holy Spirit, Rom 8:26] knows that God is listening to Him, He has no need of such everlasting twaddle. . . . Therefore the ancient fathers have said correctly that many long prayers are not the way. They recommend short, fervent prayers, where one sighs toward heaven with a word or two, as is often quite possible in the midst of reading, writing, or doing some other task. But the others, who make it nothing but a work of drudgery, can never pray with gladness or devotion. . . .

Martin Luther

Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 7:25

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. . . . What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?

Romans 8:26, 31-34

Before I can listen to God in prayer, I must fumble through the prayers of words, of willful demands, the prayers of childish "Gimmies," of "Help mes," of "I want . . ." Until I tell God what I want, I have no way of knowing whether or not I truly want it.

Madeleine L'Engle, Walking on Water

Our Lord brought all this suddenly to my mind and revealed these words to me: "I am the ground of your praying. First, it is my will that you have something, then I make you want, then I make you actually pray for it, and you do so. How then should you not get what you have been praying for?"

Julian of Norwich

What if he knows prayer to be the thing we need first and most? What if the main object in God's idea of prayer be the supplying of our great, our endless need – the need of himself? What if the good of all our smaller and lower needs lies in this, that they help drive us to God? Communion with God is the one need of the soul beyond all other needs; prayer is the beginning of that communion.

George MacDonald

"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" [just after Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer]

Luke 11:13

I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away. What other answer would suffice? Only words, words; to be led out to battle against other words.

C. S. Lewis, Till We Have Faces

They tell me, Lord, that when I seem to be in speech with you,

Since but one voice is heard, it's all a dream, one talker aping two.

Sometimes it is, yet not as they conceive it. Rather, I
Seek in myself the things I hoped to say, but lo!, my wells are dry.

Then, seeing me empty, you forsake the listener's role and through
My dumb lips breathe and into utterance wake the thoughts I never knew.

And thus you neither need reply nor can; thus, while we seem
Two talkers, thou art One forever, and I no dreamer, but thy dream.

C. S. Lewis

She felt frightened only for a second. For one thing, the world beneath her was so very far away that it seemed to have nothing to do with her. For another, floating on the breath of the Lion was so extremely comfortable. She found she could lie on her back or on her face and twist any way she pleased, just as you can in water (if you've learned to float really well). And because she was moving at the same pace as the breath, there was no wind, and the air seemed beautifully warm.

C. S. Lewis, The Silver Chair

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