



Pearls from Day 9: Dispositions and Principles vs Technique and Method

Most human endeavors involve method and technique. A *method* is thought of as a system or recipe. And *technique* is a matter of style and skills. Method and technique are absolutely necessary to become great at human endeavors – playing an instrument, playing a sport, professional accomplishment.

Prayer, however, is about loving relationship and conversation. We know simply from our human relationships that they are not about technique and method.

The good news is that to be a world class person of prayer requires only that (1) you be you, (2) you make an act of faith to pray with God each day, and (3) you make a genuine effort to grow in virtue (love of God and neighbor).

Many bible verses speak to us about praying from the heart. That may sound easy at first “of course I’m going to pour out to God what’s on my heart. I have no problem being honest with God.” But there are different layers of honesty and self-knowledge. This is why scripture tells us “...for we do not know how to pray as we ought” (Rom 8:26).

This is also why there are certain dispositions and principles that are very helpful to enter into prayer relationship with God.

Dispositions and principles are entirely different from method and technique. By dispositions we mean behaviors and characteristics of our heart and mind (our higher spiritual powers). Thus, dispositions are related to Day 4 of the retreat (our role in mental prayer).

By principles we mean guiding spiritual concepts – particularly who the Trinity is and how we interact with them in prayer. Thus, principles are related to Day 5 of the retreat (God’s role in mental prayer).

The four dispositions we will develop for our spiritual journey: faith, purity of intention, humility, and fortitude.

And the three guiding principles: primacy of God’s action and the law of Love, Jesus Christ and our incarnational faith, and the indwelling of the Spirit.