



Introduction: Prayer in an Age of Superficiality

We live in a time where everything is reduced to instant experiences, fleeting emotions, and personal gratification. Social media, endless entertainment, and the culture of *likes* have even contaminated our spiritual lives. Many seek in prayer an “*emotional high*,” a comforting sensation, quick relief... but authentic prayer is not a consumer product.

Prayer is dialogue with God, not emotional self-therapy. It is surrender, not a quest for instant gratification. In this article, we will explore the true meaning of prayer, its history, its theological depth, and how to reclaim it in a world that has reduced it to mere sentimentalism.

I. What Is Prayer? A Definition That Transcends Feelings

1. Prayer in Sacred Scripture

The Bible shows us that prayer is, above all, an act of humility and faith:

- “*Lord, teach us to pray*” (Lk 11:1), the disciples asked. They did not say, “*Lord, teach us to feel.*”
- Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane prayed in agony, yet submitted to the Father’s will: “*Not my will, but yours be done*” (Lk 22:42).

Biblical prayer is not measured by emotions but by obedience and trust.

2. The Church’s Tradition: Prayer as Sacrifice and Covenant

The Church Fathers and saints understood prayer as a spiritual battle:

- St. John Chrysostom said: “*No prayer is genuine if it costs nothing.*”
- St. Teresa of Ávila taught: “*Prayer does not consist in thinking much, but in loving much.*”

Prayer is not an emotional monologue but a real encounter with God—even when we “*feel*” nothing.



II. The Modern Degradation of Prayer: When Faith Becomes an Emotional Consumer Experience

1. “Light Spirituality” and the Danger of Emotionalism

Today, many seek:

- *“Prayers that make me feel good.”*
- *“Worship music that moves me.”*
- *“Retreats where I experience something intense.”*

But if prayer depends on emotions, what happens when they fade? Faith becomes fragile and shallow.

2. The Deception of Spiritual Self-Help

Books and preachers promise:

- *“Pray this, and you’ll receive miracles.”*
- *“If you feel peace, God is speaking to you.”*

But prayer is not magic, nor a method of self-validation. It is an act of love—sometimes dark, dry, yet full of faith.

3. Social Media and Performative Spirituality

Jesus warned: *“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to pray standing in public to be seen”* (Mt 6:5). Today, many *“post”* their spiritual lives, seeking human approval rather than divine.

III. Recovering Authentic Prayer: Practical Advice



1. Prayer Is Discipline, Not Just Emotion

- **Fixed schedule:** Like meeting a friend, prayer demands consistency.
- **Silence:** God speaks in the intimate, not in noise (1 Kings 19:12).
- **Liturgical prayer:** The Rosary, the Liturgy of the Hours, the Mass.

2. Embracing Spiritual Dryness

St. John of the Cross taught about *“the dark night of the soul.”* Sometimes, God allows us to *“feel”* nothing to purify our faith.

3. Prayer as Surrender, Not Self-Satisfaction

- Do you pray so God will listen to you, or so you can listen to Him?
- Do you seek comfort, or do you seek to love?

Conclusion: True Prayer Is an Act of Love, Not Consumption

Prayer is not a religious product or a wellness technique. It is the heart of man speaking to the Heart of God. It may be joyful, painful, dry, or consoling... but it is always an *encounter*.

Today, more than ever, we need a prayer that does not depend on emotions but on faith. As St. Ignatius of Loyola said:

“Act as if everything depended on you, but knowing that everything depends on God.”

Let us pray without growing weary. Without chasing sensations. Simply loving.