

# Suggested Aids for Emotional Healing and Spiritual Growth

By Philip M. Sutton, Ph.D.

1. Pray: especially Eucharistic Adoration and Meditate, Contemplate and Personalize Scripture.

2. Devotion to *Our Lady, St. Joseph, and other Saints.*

3. *Prayer breathing: The Relaxation Response plus the 'Faith Factor'*

Herbert Benson, M.D. *Beyond the Relaxation Response; Timeless Healing*).

Peter Kreeft. *Prayer for Beginners*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000. (Cf. Chapter 9: "Jesus"- *The Shortest, Simplest and Most Powerful Prayer in the World.*)

3. Meditation and Relaxation Audiotapes ([www.conradbaars.com](http://www.conradbaars.com)), also Mood Music/Natural Sounds. (e.g., *Speak Lord - An Aid to Meditation/Be Still - An Aid to Contemplation* (Scripture).

4. Count (list) our blessings; intentional gratitude.

5. *Journal* to self or the Lord- feelings, blessings, hopes, disappointments, etc.

*Write letters*- not intended to be sent- directly to the object of one's feelings- s/he about whom one thinks/feels/imagines distressing experiences- including the Lord!

6. Sacrament of Reconciliation: especially the 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Commandments (for help speaking the truth in love to and about ourselves and God!)

7. Experience Natural and Artistic Beauty.

8. Stress, Thought and Mood Management- If needed, with Counseling, Medicine:

\*\*\*David Burns, M.D. *The Feeling Good Handbook* (NY: Plume, 1999).

9. Seek or Maintain Physical Health: Balance in Diet, Sleep, Exercise.

10. Spiritual and Self-Help Reading (Sip, Savor, Pray Over; Feed the "Heart" not just the "Head"!) \*\*\*E.G., Baars, *Feeling & Healing Your Emotions*, Cf. Chapter 7.

11. Share feelings with mature, discrete, "safe" friends, mentors, spirit. directors.

12. Enjoy just *being* with others, e.g., children, friends, etc.

13. Everyone needs at least a Paul, a Barnabas and a Timothy (or a spiritual brother/friend, father/mentor, and eventually son/mentee), and perhaps more than one! Please remember Jesus to Peter: "And when you have turned, strengthen your brothers!"

14. Be Patient: with everyone, and especially with ourselves- and the Lord. For He will either shield us from suffering, or give us the grace to bear, stop, or avoid it, and to grow more virtuous, wise and holy through doing so. Be neither too elated with strengths or successes, nor too depressed/discouraged by weaknesses or failures. Respond to the first with simple gratitude, the second with repentance (~St. Francis de Sales).

## **Pray and Personalize Scripture:**

Psalm 139: 14, 28 - "I thank you Lord that I am awesomely, wonderfully made. ...Search me and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts."

Psalm 147:1, 3 - "Praise the Lord for he is good; ...He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."

Psalm 34:19-20- "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves. Many are the troubles of the just man, but out of them all the Lord delivers him." (34: 5, 10) - "I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears....Fear the Lord, you his holy ones, for nothing is lacking to those who fear him." (34: 9) "Taste and see how good the Lord is; happy the man who takes refuge in him."

Matt11: 28-30 - "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves."

Rom 5: 3-5 - "We even boast of our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance, tested virtue (proven character), and tested virtue produces, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

Phil 4: 4, 8, 13 - "*Rejoice* in the Lord always. I shall say it again, *rejoice!*...Whatever is *true*, ... *honorable*, ... *just*, ... *pure*, ... *lovely*, ... *gracious*, ... *excellen(t)*, ... *worthy of praise*, think about these things.... I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me."

2 Cor 12: 9 - "[The Lord] said to me 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' I will rather boast most gladly of my weakness, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me."

## ***A Prayer for Serenity***

*Lord Jesus Christ, Wonderful Counselor, and Healer of Body, Soul, Mind, Heart and Relationships.* Grant me the *humility* to accept what I cannot do, or ought not do, the *courage* to do what I can and ought to do, and the *wisdom* to know the difference. Help me learn to live one day at a time, take one step at a time, enjoy each moment at a time, and embrace any necessary or unavoidable suffering as my path to your *peace*. Help me learn to let go of the good that I once had, or that I want to have, and to accept the good that You are offering me here and now. Help me learn to love, as You do, each person and myself as we are, and as You call us to be. And help me learn to trust that You will make all things work together for our good, if I keep trying to do Your will. May I experience a measure of Your *peace* and *joy* in this life, and the fullness of Your *love*, when I am finally at home, with You, forever. AMEN

(Based on the *Serenity Prayer* by Reinhold Niebuhr, adapted by Philip M. Sutton)

## ***Prayer for Hope***

Lord, Help me to remember that in everything You are working together for my good. For You call me to receive and to give Your love, to You, to my neighbors and to myself. Help me to learn from any suffering, which is the natural or just consequences of my actions, to do what is right, to know and choose the greater good, and to walk humbly with, behind, and before You. Help me to trust that as I embrace any suffering which is necessary or unavoidable, that You are using it to produce in me, endurance, perseverance, tested virtue, and a hope which does not disappoint because of Your love which is given to me through Your Holy Spirit. Help me realize that you are always close to and heal the broken hearted, that You bind up our wounds, and that you save those who are crushed in spirit. Help me to remember that you promise me fullness of life and joy, a peace that the world cannot give, and the truth which sets us free. And, help me to trust that Your promises are true, that You are good enough and strong enough to keep them, and that they are my worth waiting for and cooperating with their fulfillment, in Your way and in Your time. Amen.

## **Exhortation to Self-Purification**

“We must begin by purifying ourselves before purifying others; we must be instructed to be able to instruct, become light to illuminate, draw close to God to bring him close to others, be sanctified to sanctify, lead by the hand and counsel prudently. I know whose ministers we are, where we find ourselves and to where we strive. I know God's greatness and man's weakness, but also his potential” (Gregory of Nazianzus).

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