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- *Spirit energy compared to candles and mirrors*
- *Relationship of thoughts and prayers*
- *Value of corporate prayer*
- *God's response to prayer*

The light that is God's light is also your light. The light that you seek is actually the light that you have. Each of you seeks wisdom, but the wisdom that you look for is already within. We are not talking about academic wisdom but rather a vision of spirit. That wisdom of spirit, that vision of spirit, belongs to every human being. It makes no difference what country or religious belief one may have or identify with. That vision is the same for all. It is the same for the young and for the old. The vision that you are given, you are given before birth, you are given before your own human creation, and that vision remains beyond the span of human life.

Your vision of spirit is much like a mirror. A mirror reflects and multiplies the energy of light. One candle surrounded by many mirrors produces more light than one standing alone. So it is with the energy of spirit vision. You have a vision of God within. You have the light of God within. That light is not diminished in any way, and yet it becomes more powerful when it is shared with others, for those others serve to be mirrors, mirrors of your light as well as their own.

You wonder about the strength of prayer and the presence of thought, how one relates to another. In many ways they are the same, for when you acknowledge another, you acknowledge the value of another, even if you strongly disagree with the action. The fact that someone else matters to you, whether that energy is positive or negative, cannot deny the reality that that person does matter. So your thoughts and your prayers are much the same.

Where the difference becomes noticeable is when you share those thoughts with others. When you let your light be reflected through the presence of others, the combined reflection is greater energy. When ten people pray for an increased awareness of God's presence within the greater society, there is more energy that brings that presence into reality than when only one prays alone, acts alone. You increase God's effectiveness, you increase God's energy, and you increase God's light in your world in concert with others who share that light with you.

Many religions in the world are formed initially because of an understanding of corporate prayer, group prayer, group consciousness, or group intentional thought, and there is a truth to that. This is not a matter of numbers specifically. If ten people pray for one outcome, one kind of an awareness, and twenty people pray for a different outcome or different awareness, this is not a competition of who can belong to the biggest assembly of corporate prayer. It is only to say that God's light, which is your light, is multiplied many times through the reflection of others.

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Your impact on thought or prayer is not diminished if you are alone, but it is important for you to recognize that no matter what you seek as evidence of God's presence, there are others who share those same objectives. The response that you are aware of that you identify as God's response refers to that God response as you perceive it.

The reality of God's response is one of broad application. When you pray for peace, there are many ways of defining that peace. You may feel that as you define peace, the God response may seem very quiet, and you may feel God responds to another set of wishes rather than yours. The truth is your wishes, your prayers, your intentional thoughts are being responded to equally, but it is up to you to grow in your perception of that response.

It is easier to see God's presence when in the company of others who seek that same evidence. If you work for peace, surround yourself with those who share a similar sense of peace. If you pray for peace, regardless of the words, you pray for a sense of justice, balance, fairness, and mutual dignity. Some who pray for peace are not quite ready to accept mutual dignity but rather define peace as the absence of tension. The absence of tension is not a reflection of God's objectives. It may be part of the whole, but it is not the entirety.

What is truly needed is mutual respect and acceptance of the dignity and sacredness of all. That's the true response of God, but that response cannot be given voice except through you. You cannot assume that God will guarantee mutual affirmation when you would deny it. God's response therefore is yours. That strength, that vision that is God's vision, belongs in each person.

There is no human being who has no care about whether he or she is respected, valued, loved. There are those who claim not to be seeking affirmation, who claim to exist only for some self-identified purpose, but all wish an affirmation of value. All wish to be respected. All wish for the benefit of dignity and respect as human beings. All have that desire, and it is because of that that the germ of seeking mutual affirmation and respect can take root and grow, evolve and strengthen, until finally there is a total acceptance of the value of another independent of action.

This vision each of you has. Therefore, whatever you pray for that is in keeping with God's presence is already a part of your own lives, and that must ultimately be accepted and acknowledged. You can be criticized, you can be offended, and yet deep within, you have the capability of examining yourself, accepting yourself, respecting yourself, honoring yourself.

You have known of individuals who have been the subject of great criticism, yet despite that criticism they reflect a part of what it means to you to be a reflection of God. There is no human being who is missing this component of vision. There are many who refuse to open their spiritual eyes to that vision, but that spark, that presence, that light, that illumination, is found in all.

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When you pray for tolerance, there is a part of you, as there is a part of all human beings, that recognizes the importance of tolerance. The problem comes not with tolerance but in how it should be exercised. Everyone knows the essential meaning of tolerance, for everyone hopes that others will be tolerant of them. No one goes through life saying in effect, "I really don't care if people tolerate me or not." They may say that, but they cannot feel that. So tolerance is not the issue. It is the exercise of tolerance that is the issue. You already know, everyone already knows, the value of tolerance, and yet you find yourself, at one point or another, praying that there be more tolerance, that God change the course of human life so that it becomes more tolerant. But you see, it is you who are willing to exercise that tolerance, and it is you who are capable of being tolerant.

You pray for a loving community. You know what love can mean, and you can choose to exercise that love. The themes of your prayers, therefore, lie within you. Then you can feel that there is a justification for being a part of all that you pray for.

Give to others as you can give. Exercise toward others precisely what it is you seek in your own lives. Find ways of sharing what you pray for with others, so that you can be a mirror for their prayers, their light, and they become mirrors, reflectors, for your light. Your light becomes stronger through your reflection with others. Human life is meant to flourish with others. It is not meant to exist on an island. Love is meant to be shared. It is not meant to exist on paper as something to be read about.

You contain all that you pray for. You contain all that can be responsive to the prayers of others. Accept your own candle. Accept your ability to reflect and to multiply that light to intensify its presence, and be thankful, not only for the candle but for the mirror.

You are surrounded by our love, for our love reflects back to you your own light. You are empowered as you reflect. You are empowered as you illuminate. Be blessed in your spirit vision in the knowledge and confidence that each of you contains all for which you pray.

Amen.