
What Do I Give Away Today?

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by the Very Reverend Sam G. Candler**

My morning devotions have benefitted from that one simple question: "What do I give away today?"

For, I find my spiritual life greatly strengthened, not by what I am acquiring, but by what I am giving away. It is surprising how often my prayers are obsessed with gain—"good gain, to be sure"—but still gain. "O Lord, I pray for patience, for wisdom, for endurance, for kindness, for all sorts of things that I know to be good."

Those are all good things! But my soul grows when I learn to freely give things away.

What, then, do I need to give away today? How about the resentment I felt yesterday toward a colleague? What about giving away my fear? Maybe I need to give away that nagging worry. How about releasing my need to be the center of attention? Do I need to let go of some irritation? Some anger? Some hurt?

When I meditate truthfully in the mornings, I become aware of so many attitudes, so many obsessions, that are actually hindering my journey with God. They are the attitudes and obsessions that I need to let go of. That is why good prayer usually begins with honest assessment: where am I today? How is my soul? (A review of last night's dreams can be a good start.) Honest assessment often reveals the dispositions that I should give away today.

But "giving away" is a deeper exercise than just shedding unhealthy attitudes. There are actual, material things worth giving away, too. What object in my house should I give away today? Is there some item in my car, in my office, that I could give to someone else today? What about giving some money to someone?

Finally, there are good and positive powers to give away. I can also give away love. I can give respect. I can give honor. To whom can I give away my love today? Who needs my honor today?

And, then there is good old "paying attention." If good spirituality is the act of "paying attention" (what some people call "watchfulness"), then who actually needs my attention today? To whom can I give my attention? Ah, this may be the most important prayer exercise of all. All of us, from the most arrogant to the most humble, are accustomed to paying attention to ourselves—"paying attention either to our greatness or our lowliness. But, what if we learned to give away our attention to others? The world might become an awesomely honorable place!

Three self-examination questions, then, for your morning prayer:

1. What do I give away today?
2. To whom do I give my love?
3. To whom do I pay attention today?