

## FROM ILLUSION TO TRUTH

Parker Palmer suggests that the heart of prayer is the journey from illusion to truth. For many of us prayer is a matter of saying prayers, which, Palmer claims, is often “little more than [a] special pleading that God grant me some seemingly scarce resource before my neighbors gets it.” Prayer, he maintains, is a “life that returns constantly to that silent, solitary place within, where God is met and where the abundance of life becomes manifest.” (**Forty-Day Journey with Parker Palmer**, p.36.)

When I go to that place I find that the illusions that I operate with are torn away. The ways that I try to kid myself or others into believing that my life is all together are stripped away, are revealed for what they are: lies.

This is for me the trauma of prayer. Sometimes I would rather not face the truth. Sometimes I can hide from God (or so I believe) if I stay away from prayer. I am convinced that most of the distractions in this culture are means for us to avoid prayer, to avoid the truth—the truth about our loneliness, the truth about our deep pain. Perhaps if we can be distracted we won't have to face the truth.

The good news in all of this is the Christian claim that the deepest truth about life is love and grace. When we run or hide, when we live in the arena of illusion, when we stay away from prayer, we are avoiding grace and love. Perhaps the prayer of the band Styx is the right one: “Show me the way. Wash all my illusions away.” Perhaps to be stripped of our illusions is to be taken to love.

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