



## PINOCCHIO AND THE SPIRITUAL LIMIT: A MODEL FOR PRAYER AND HEALTH<sup>1</sup>

### Spirituality

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### ABSTRACT

This article extrapolates the three transitions of Pinocchio from a wooden boy to a living boy without a conscious to a living boy with a conscious to the fourth transition: A boy with a conscious lifted into a spiritual state of being in effective prayer during which mortality is reduced along the Line of Spirituality and he is increasingly in the presence of God. The asymptote of this state of being is The Spiritual Limit, when all the evidence of mortality is lost because one's mind has been displaced by His Mind.

Effective prayer requires building a scriptural foundation for prayer, defining the closet of one's prayers, building a spiritual model, and utilizing at least one of three models of effective prayer. Greater spirituality reduces stress during and after the prayer session, thereby contributing to improved health. Human relationships improve by seeing others without flaws; and as we see others in this manner, we will improve our posture before God. Further, our intellectual abilities improve which are supportive of our professional activities.

The ideas in this article are empirical and inductively developed from many hours of effective prayer; they are not theoretical and deductive. Thus, my definition of spirituality as travel on the Line of Spirituality is taken from experience during effective prayer and not from abstract reasoning or a review of the literature. The purposes of these ideas are to reduce mortality, increase access to immortality, deemphasize adverse mortal events when they occur, and increase health, happiness, and productivity during mortal existence.

### KEYWORDS

Spirituality, Effective prayer, Children of God

#### I. Pinocchio and the real boy

"Pinocchio, you will not be a real boy until you have proved yourself to be brave, truthful, and unselfish. The choice is entirely yours and you must learn to choose between right and wrong and to follow the straight and narrow path. Your conscience, Jiminy Cricket, will help you to make this choice," said the Blue Fairy. And, indeed, Geppetto wished ever so much that this would come true so that he would have a living son.

The story of Pinocchio is now over 75 years old and is perhaps the most famous animation cartoon ever produced. It has provided a wonderful model for many generations of young children illustrating what occurs when one is governed outside the conscience of God. To be *real* children of God we, too, must make a choice that is entirely ours to make—a conscious choice to follow His commandments.

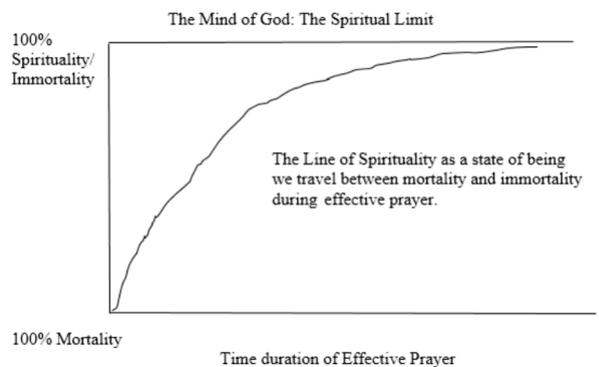
The purposes of this article are two-fold. First, we wish to show how each of us can improve our alignment before God to be His real children by building spiritual models for prayer that can heighten our spiritual awareness and introduce us to The Spiritual Limit. This is a very special state of being during which we increase our understanding of His healing power and reduce the power of mortality in our human existence. Second, we wish to show how spirituality can contribute to our health, improve human relationships, and increase our intellectual productivity.

Our journey will introduce a set of principles which are designed to heighten our spirituality in prayer, reduce stress, and improve health and intellectual achievements. We suggest a path of building a spiritual foundation from scripture, defining the closet of prayer, constructing a written spiritual model for management of closet prayer and our thinking generally, and establishing objectives for each session of closet prayer. Indeed, the wish of the Blue Fairy that one may become a *real* person by obedience to conscience is a reality available to us all.

#### II. Spirituality and The Spiritual Limit

Spirituality is defined as a state of being lying on the Line of Spirituality beginning with a full awareness of mortality which is reduced during effective prayer to increasingly greater awareness of the presence of God and The Spiritual Limit.

#### Illustration 1: The Line of Spirituality and The Spiritual Limit



The Spiritual Limit is that particular state of spiritual being at which our mind becomes coincident with the divine Mind and we lose our awareness of mortality; indeed, mortality is fully displaced with immortality and our mind will have been displaced by His Mind. It is the spiritual asymptote of a heightened spiritual awareness in which we feel only the goodness of God, and all error is temporarily destroyed. In essence, we become immortal and have access to an understanding of everlasting life and God's infinite Love. We have actual knowledge that "...the kingdom of God is within you."<sup>2</sup> Thus, we are governed by Divine Mind and discern that "In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,"<sup>3</sup> "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."<sup>4</sup> Revelations, incidentally, illustrates well the demonstration of The Spiritual Limit achieved by St. John in many of his visions as he traveled in the realm of the spiritual. Indeed, God and his spirit, Christ, is a singular state of receptive being. Stress is reduced as we travel The Spiritual Line and eliminated in The Spiritual Limit. This cleansing process contributes to stress reduction, improved health, and increased intellectual output.

Illustration 1 shows the change from mortality to spirituality during effective prayer on The Line of Spirituality. When one begins prayer, he or she is 100% mortal and aware of friends and adverse events during the day, with little or no awareness of God. As one proceeds along the Line of Spirituality, he or she slowly sets the awareness of mortality aside and increases his or her awareness of the presence of God. While the Line of Spirituality appears to be an asymptote approaching, but never reaching The Mind of God and The Spiritual Limit, unlike mathematical asymptotes, one merges with the Mind of God at The Spiritual Limit.

During this state of heightened spiritual awareness on The Line of Spirituality, one works with and creates new principles from scripture in a manner that improves and demonstrates our inherent spirituality. This improved understanding permits us to reflect God and recognizes that others, as children of God, are his reflections as well; Galatians 3:26 states "For ye are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

While individual error may indeed recur, its intensity should be reduced and continued spiritual work should lead to its end. In essence, we acknowledge the continuity of original creation in Genesis 1 to complete the symmetry of our being and satisfy the Blue Fairy's wish to be *real* individuals in our relationships before God and man.

The Line of Spirituality, The Spiritual Limit, and the effective prayer models I discuss in this paper are empirical models developed during effective prayer and are measures of one's integrated connection with God, with self, and with others hierarchically subordinated to one's relationship with God recognizing the long vertical line in the cross. This connection with God has a profound influence on our relationships with others, who we begin to see as spiritually perfect children of God supportive of "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."<sup>5</sup> This view that others are perfect is a necessary condition to assure we capture occasional perfection because we cannot claim perfection while seeing others as imperfect.

We all know that we can learn to add  $2 + 2 = 4$ , multiply  $7 \times 6 = 42$  and continue to work perfectly increasingly difficult problems in mathematics, statistics, physics, chemistry, and other scientific areas with academic training. And as we are helpful to and sincere in our dealings with others, see them without flaws and as children of light,<sup>6</sup> we improve our posture before God and become perfect for limited times during and after effective prayer.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, effective prayer has a circular definition with spirituality because it is defined as prayer that improves our spirituality.

### III. The Foundation for Effective Prayer

#### A. Principal strategic objective of effective prayer

The principal strategic objective of effective prayer is to eliminate all thoughts of mortality that separate us from God. This requires cleaning our mind of any thought that impedes our progress along the Line of Spirituality.

In order to satisfy this objective, we utilize positive Biblical and denominational scripture to displace the negative ideas of mortality. These negative ideas include what others do or say to us, difficult-to-satisfy expectations of others, financial problems, family difficulties, etc. The scriptural models we use emphasize positive ideas that promote harmony and displace notions of mortality. Thoughts of sin and error must be set aside.

#### B. Build a scriptural foundation

The first step in developing an Effective Prayer Model is to become familiar with Biblical and denominational scripture that promote harmony and a feeling of well-being. During this phase, one should begin to feel comfortable with specific scripture and should discover rules and principles that influence one's life in a positive manner—there must be demonstrable improvement in one's daily existence. Scriptural selections in the line connecting Genesis 1 (original creation), Genesis 2:17 (Do not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil...), Matthew 5: 3-11 ("Blessed are those..."), Matthew 5:48 ("Be ye therefore perfect as your father in Heaven is perfect"), John 17 (Life eternal and "...that they may be one, as we are."), and elements of Revelations are particularly helpful because they form a line of excellence, positive thoughts, and spiritual harmony.

#### C. Define the closet of your prayers.

The second step in developing an effective prayer model is to define the space and time dimensions of closet prayer. Jesus said: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to the Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."<sup>8</sup> It is clear that Jesus utilized silent and removed prayer. Luke 6:12 states "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps the best time of intense closet prayer is at end of day when one can review the day's blessings and errors. This permits us to apply

effective prayer model elements that show gratitude for God's gifts and cleanse elements of sin and error. While end-of-day closet prayer is the focus of this article because its objective is to discuss access to The Spiritual Limit, morning prayer is helpful to align one's thoughts for the day, during-day prayer assists in gaining spiritual nourishment throughout the day, and bedtime prayer prepares us for the path to the next day.

The duration of closet prayer varies dramatically, but the time that is devoted requires an adequate period for building a spiritual foundation and additional time to develop and understand spiritual principles and their application and demonstration. A suggestion may be about 45-minutes but this may vary widely up to several hours based upon human need. Indeed, human need is often a time of accelerated spiritual growth because we strive harder to build spiritual models that promote peace in our lives.

The place chosen for closet prayer should be one that satisfies the need for quiet privacy so that one can concentrate on the spiritual journey. This may be difficult to achieve in a setting of background disturbances; solitude is quite important to build spiritual models.

#### D. Establish a plan for each prayer session

The process one uses in each prayer session varies based upon an individual's needs. As one encounters more serious problems associated with employment, personal relationships, or health, it is helpful to set a plan for the use of scripture and individual model elements. One should expect that the greatest spiritual progress will be accomplished when the need is most evident. In solving human relationship problems, one should begin with model elements which change one's alignment before the universal Christ.<sup>10</sup> We must acknowledge that we are complete children of our Father in Heaven. "Complete" refers to our spiritual wholeness measured by our upright alignment before God and absence of error and imperfections.

If one is not facing severe problems, establishing a plan for closet prayer is a more amorphous process. In these cases, commencing closet prayer with readings from the bible and other supportive literature can be the beginning point to develop new model elements, to expand upon existing elements, and to improve the classification system in individual covenants of prayer.

### IV. Introduction to spiritual modeling

Spiritual modeling refers to converting Biblical and denominational ideas that promote harmony and peace into new principles that are more meaningful to us in dispersing mortality. For example, John 17:3 states "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom God has sent." Through repetition of parts or all of the preceding quotation, it may be converted into the Spiritual Model: "I have learned the principles taught by Christ Jesus, and now have access to everlasting life." This conversion from John 17:3 to our interpretation may take minutes, hours, days, weeks, or months of effective prayer in our closet to find this new principle.

"Model" refers to a two-stage process of (1) categorizing scriptural and/or spiritual ideas in full narrative form (e.g., "Confession is crucial to cleanse our minds") and (2) simplifying or reducing the full narrative model in which ideas are replaced with symbols (e.g., "C" for confession) for more convenient retention as shown in Cv(P<sub>i</sub>).

#### V. Effective Prayer Model #1

Effective Prayer Model #1 is defined as the sequence of Confession, Forgiveness, and Reformation. It may be expressed in reduced form as the first covenant of prayer, Cv(P<sub>i</sub>):

$$Cv(P_i) = \text{Confession} + \text{Forgiveness} + \text{Reformation} = C + F + R$$

The strategic objectives of working with these three elements are to remove the impurities of mortality and to promote coincidence with the Mind of God.

Confession begins with a critical self-assessment of one's thoughts and actions during the day, identification of one's sin or errors,<sup>11</sup> life style inadequacies that do not reflect His commandments, picking the most severe, and relaying this error to God. This one most severe error becomes a temporary proxy for all sin or error in that prayer session. Admission of this error before God is the first step towards the purification that is necessary to achieve The Spiritual Limit.

The second step in Model #1 is to ask for God's forgiveness of our mistake. The Lord's Prayer, "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," suggests the principal route to His forgiveness is forgiving another for his or her transgressions against us. Our forgiveness of another is necessary to satisfy the contractual requirement of consideration that we give up in exchange for His forgiveness. Thus, we must *precede* our request for His forgiveness by *first* forgiving another whom we perceive as having injured us. Forgiveness requires a sequence of regeneration that recognizes the one who has injured us as a child of God. Indeed, the spiritual asymptote of forgiveness tends to reduce one's *reception* of adverse behavior of others in general. And this reduces daily stress, improves mortal health, and our daily intellectual effort.

One of the most important targets in a critical self-assessment is identification of any negative thoughts we have towards others—these are among the most common and stress-producing emotions that require Model #1 application. Irrespective of the source of the problem—usually each person sees the other as the source of the problem—one must work with the notion that the other person is a spiritually perfect child of God under Genesis 1.<sup>12</sup> This process will assist in aligning our thoughts with Christ as the spirit of God conveyed to man.

The third step in Model #1 is to begin a process of Reformation in our prayers. This suggests developing additional model elements that characterize the attributes of God that we wish to emulate—wisdom, love, understanding, compassion, counsel, fortitude, kindness, knowledge, helpfulness, piety, and fear of the lord. All of these contribute to our path to purity, innocence, humility, mercy, and perfection in our dealings with others and in our posture before God. Thus, we demonstrate before God and man that we reflect the universal Christ.

Reformation also suggests listing those attributes of error that we wish to avoid in our lives such as pride, jealousy, dislike, covetousness, revenge, resentfulness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and laziness and asking for His assistance to remove these from our mind and behavior. Guidance to purify our thoughts may come from "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."<sup>13</sup>

Using the three elements of Confession, Forgiveness and Reformation should lead to peace, harmony, and perfection. "Perfection" is defined as the absence of measurable error using standards known to exist at the time of task execution. We know we can achieve academic perfection in mathematics, physics, chemistry, statistics and other scientific subjects with study. Further, perfection may be achieved in our relationships with others as we are helpful and sincere in our dealings with them and see them without flaws; these flaws are often constitutionally protected differences in racial, religious, or locational culture. Thus, as we gain the discipline for self-improvement and purity in effective prayer, our spiritual being becomes free of measurable error. Further, striving for spiritual perfection yields higher levels of personal and professional achievement.

Perfection, purity, and innocence, however limited in time, lead to a heightened state of spiritual awareness from the cleansing processes Effective Prayer Model #1 accords. The asymptote of this state is The Spiritual Limit, but is not available for each prayer session. It is available only when (1) the mortal senses have been silenced, and (2) special concentration is achieved. These two conditions are met most easily when desire is very strong because of a special human need when one strives for perfection in prayer and is able to build upon an already developed unified body of scripture.

#### VI. Effective Prayer Model #2

Effective Prayer Model #2 is an infinitely expanded illustration of spiritual modeling because there are no preconceived model elements as there were with Confession, Forgiveness, and Reformation in Model #1. Model #2 relies entirely on one's study of scripture in a particular prayer session, finding scripture that promotes peace and harmony, and utilizing it to build one's own model. Scripture in this context will normally be one verse, sentence, or phrase in the Bible or in denominational literature repeated several times until one begins to convert it into a new principle that has special meaning.

For example, the first phrase of the Hail Mary states "Hail Mary full of

grace..." By repeating this line several times and emphasizing the spiritual interpretation of "grace" we might convert it to "Virgin Mary, your grace is the movement of spiritual perfection through eternity." It took me over a year of occasional prayer to find this line to complete the conversion. About a year later, I completed other lines in the Hail Mary with the following spiritual conversions. Thus, it took me two years and many hours of effective prayer to complete this conversion—and remember, this is my conversion and yours will be dramatically different!

Hail Mary full of grace  
*Virgin Mary, your grace is the movement of spiritual perfection for eternity.*

The Lord is with Thee.  
*The Father has filled you with His presence and, thereby, you are Complete.*

Blessed art thou amongst women  
*You are the Queen and joint heir with God of all mankind.*

And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
*For the coming of The Christ has given you the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for *my spiritual perfection* now and at the hour of *everlasting life*, Amen.

#### VII. Effective Prayer Model #3: The prayer of spiritual travel

Effective Prayer Model #3 is based upon spiritual travel to a location described in the Bible, using an appropriate mode of travel, and performing an activity at the location that has Biblical relevance. The starting point for the prayer session is to gain spiritual purity from elements of Model #1 and/or #2. For example, one may begin with Confession, Forgiveness, or Reformation as a unitary whole or using any one of the three sub-models in Model #1. An alternative start is to work with a sentence or phase in the Bible or denominational literature which begins to convert mortality to higher levels of spirituality.

The second element is to pick a mode of travel to the Biblical location. This may mean joining with your favorite Saint and traveling with him or her to the location you have chosen and engaging in suitable conversation en-route. One delightful event is to be immersed in the cleansing water flowing from the Throne of God thus washing away any residual error.

The destination may be a mansion in the Throne of God or any location described in the Bible, denominational literature, or one self-created that promotes rapport with God or any of His representatives. When you arrive at the location, you might consider engaging in a suitable activity that improves your travel on the Line of Spirituality. All of these steps should provide greater peace, harmony, and access to the His Mind.

#### VIII. Application of spiritual modeling to stress reduction and relationship management

One of the objectives of spiritual modeling is to reduce stress. Stress may be measured by the deformation of and interrupted communications between and among cells, organs, and the immune system. One of the most important causes of these deformations is negative receptions we have of daily mortal events including financial, employment, and family problems. We interpret these in a manner that deforms bodily functions and causes stress.

#### Spiritual modeling reduces stress by:

1. Furnishing guidelines for effective prayer that change our state of being from mortality to increased spirituality thereby reducing or terminating endogenous negative thoughts and behavior.
2. Changing our opinions of others by seeing them as spirituality perfect children of God under Genesis 1 irrespective of the behavior of the other person. One must remember that negative thoughts toward others do not deform their cells and organs...they deform your cells and organs!
3. Understanding that a more peaceful state of mortality influenced by living on the Line of Spirituality permits one to find solutions to many problems. For example, improving one's opinion of someone who you believe has harmed you permits your cells and

- organs to be more receptive to admitting nutrients and eliminating wastes.
4. Engaging in a cleansing process that removes impediments to stress by reducing one's reception of the negative behavior of others.
  5. Understanding that the lowering of stress during effective prayer will continue after the session ends by adhering to the spiritual model used during such prayer.
  6. Knowing that end-of-day prayer lowers stress and leads to improved sleep and an energized awakening that makes one more productive during the next day.
  7. Recognizing that spiritually perfect creation in Genesis 1 is the standard against which we measure our daily behavior.

### VIII. Geppetto's real son

Many years ago Geppetto, a kind old wood carver, built a wooden puppet and wished that it could be his son. With the loving instructions of the Blue Fairy and the kind patience of Jiminy Cricket, Pinocchio came to life and learned to be brave, truthful, and unselfish, and, thereby, became Geppetto's *real* son. But we have already been created as *real* children of God, and through spiritual modeling and participating in the resurrection of Christ we can realign ourselves with the man that was created in Genesis 1—our original creation in the spiritual plasma of His synonyms and His attributes. And an understanding of this learned process will reduce stress and contribute to our daily health and intellectual accomplishments.

### References

1. I thank The Walt Disney Company for the use of the Pinocchio model within the fair use doctrine.
2. Luke 17:21
3. Psalms 19:4
4. Revelation 21:1
5. Matthew 5:48; "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." (Genesis 17:1)
6. John 12:36
7. Indeed, when I was in second grade, I asked my father "Do I always have to be perfect?" His answer without explanation was "No." But this question to my father became the genesis of this article. An early turning point in the application of the model of perfection came when I took high school algebra in summer school after eighth grade. I decided in the first class that I would work every problem perfectly and I came very close to achieving that objective. And that algebra class became the impetus to improve substantially my academic production in high school.
8. Matthew 6:6
9. See also Mark 1:35.
10. The "universal Christ" refers to the spirit of God conveyed to all men since the beginning of time. It has no denominational basis or time limitations.
11. The distinction between "sin" and "error" is that some believe sin to be an inevitable hallmark of man that cannot be corrected. Error is a mistake, perhaps quite severe, that can be eliminated or reduced in one's daily existence and eliminated during effective prayer using spiritual modeling (e.g., Model #1, #2, #3, or other self-designed models). The application of effective prayer is to eliminate all error through the one proxy error specified in Confession, and create purity and innocence before God as one travels on the Line of Spirituality.
12. Genesis 1 refers to God's creation of light (Genesis 1:4), Earth and Seas (Genesis 1:10), grass, herb, seed, and fruit (Genesis 1:12), light dividing the day from the night and the stars (Genesis 1:18), moving creatures, fowl, whales, every living creature that moveth (Genesis 1:21), beast of the earth, cattle, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth (Genesis 1:25), man in His own image (Genesis 1:27), and every thing He had made was very good. (Genesis 1:31) I interpret "very good" as original, perfect, permanent spiritual creation by God and Genesis 2 creation representing temporary, mortal creation. Thus, original perfect spiritual creation becomes the standard against which we evaluate our behavior, our ideas, and our mortality during our time on earth.
13. Genesis 2:17.