Light for the soul 2.

Distractions:

When Moses appeared before God on Mount Sinai, he was told to take off his sandals because he stood on “Holy Ground.” He was before the Almighty, the “I Am” and it humbled him.

Today we usually wear shoes but the meaning is the same. Shoes in this sense, are the things we come into contact with in this world. These are the shoes of your mind. Take them off. Then gather in all the wandering thoughts that preoccupy you, and concentrate them on one point, such as the cross, or a picture of Christ.

This is an exercise of detachment from this world so you may remain attached to God. Lose that which distracts you from God so that you may concentrate on him. Withdraw from the busyness of everyday life and focus on God. Learn to be quiet! Stop your mind from roaming which makes concentration a difficult process.

Here is another exercise you can use to quiet your mind from unwelcome disturbances. Think of yourself as lying down in a small boat and it is peacefully sailing along a small river. Occasionally small waves lap up against the sides of the boat but do not spill over into it, rather they fall away and fall back into the river once again. Your mind represents that little boat, and the waves, the thoughts that can interrupt your concentration. Do not allow them in, let them fall away from you.

Here is one more exercise you may find helpful. When you become distracted and sense that your mind is beginning to wander, immediately say a favorite prayer or phrase or something from the Bible or a favorite religious quote. Repeat these words several times, the exercise will help direct your attention back to God. Some suggestions are: “Be still and know that I am God;” Abide in me, and I in you;” “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit;” “O Lord. My strength and my redeemer;” “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

The point here is to develop the means to clear your mind and heart of worldly thoughts and cares so that you may pray with joy and power.

It is important to close your eyes or focus them on some object of devotion, as stated above, the cross of Christ, a picture of him during his passion, his agony in the Garden.

Remember you are in the presence of God; He is there with you. Say the following prayers:

Teach me thy way O Lord, that I may walk in thy truth. Knit my heart unto yours that I may love thy name. Psalm 86:10-11.

This may seem elaborate but it will appear that way only to those who are unable to see beyond material senses. Once the habit of recollection (concentration of the soul on the presence of God) has been formed, prayer will cease being difficult. Learn to be mindful of God’s Presence. Be patient and attentive!

Almighty God unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of my heart, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, That I may perfectly love thee and worthily magnify thy Holy Name, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.