

# THE DISCIPLE - LEADER

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# INTEGRITY

*Integrity comes from the math term "integer" meaning a unit of one*

*Integrity speaks of your "oneness "*

*Integrity is about being a whole, undivided person*

*Integrity is the centeredness of your character*

*Integrity is walking your talk*

*Integrity is meaning what you say*

*Integrity is saying what you mean*

*Integrity is looking someone in the eye and telling the truth*

*Integrity is being honest when honesty is difficult*

*Integrity is putting the well being of others before your own*

*Integrity is behaving in such a way that will make your Father in Heaven proud*

*Integrity is when you say to a child, "do as I do" and feel good about it*

*Integrity is being good when good isn't fashionable*

*Integrity is doing the right thing, simply because it is the right thing to do*

*Integrity is standing behind your word*

*Integrity is who you are when no one else is looking*

*Integrity is when you stand before God, and hear him say, "well done my child"*

*May you live your life with integrity*



SECTION ONE

**SECTION ONE**  
**THE DISCIPLE'S WALK**

THE DISCIPLE'S WALK



## Time alone with God

What a man is when he is alone with God is what a man really is. Therefore to be more real to yourself and others, you must spend time everyday with God. One of the first things we teach a new believer is how to set aside a regular, consistent, time to be with God. The old time theologians used to call it “the Quiet Time.” I still think it’s a good description. Do you have a daily “Quiet Time?” If not, then why not? It is impossible to be a public Christian without first being a private Christian. Your public behavior is a direct reflection of your time spent alone with God. In order to grow spiritually, every believer needs to structure his day around his quiet time.

### A Time

When is the best time to meet with God? If you are like King David, you meet the Lord before you meet the day. David said, *“In the morning, ‘O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you...”* This is sound advice. The Lord Jesus had his quiet time before he began the day. *“Very early in the morning while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place; where he prayed.”* **Mark 1:35** It occurs to me, that if Jesus needed time alone with His Father before he faced a busy demanding world, then how much more do we?

I don’t care how you do it, but do it! Schedule your devotional time first thing in the morning.

### A Place

Jesus went to a “solitary” place. He needed privacy, and so do you. Is there a place you can set aside, early in the morning where you can read your Bible and pray? Is this place private enough that you can pray out loud without waking others up? Yes, prayer is a vital part of a meaningful quiet time. Praying verbally is critical to your talk with God. Your ears need to hear what your heart feels. Using your mouth and crying out to God is a normal conversation between a sinner and his merciful Father. What do you need in your “God meeting place?”

- Your Bible
- Your notepad
- Your pencil
- Your devotional book
- A journal for daily accountability

### A Commitment

Now, promise yourself and the Lord that you will meet Him every morning for a set period of time. Can you promise Him a week? If so, then do it for a week. Probably, it will become such a joyful time for you you’ll want to continue. A warning: Satan will oppose you! He’ll let you go to church, sing in the choir, and teach a class, but the Devil trembles when he sees, the weakest saint upon his knees. Expect him to bring every kind of distraction to keep you from being alone with God! He hates and fears the believer’s quiet time.

### A Method

Now that you have it scheduled, and you have your tools, what do you do? A few suggestions might be helpful:

- Begin with prayer, using the four minutes with God
  - A= Adoration**, start praising God for 60 seconds.
  - C= Confession**, ask for forgiveness for 60 seconds
  - T= Thanksgiving**, praise God for all your blessings for 60 seconds
  - S= Supplication**, pray for the needs of others for 60 seconds

- **Select a passage of Scripture** to read for the week. Begin with something easy, like the 1<sup>st</sup> Psalm.
- **Read, Study, Meditate, and Memorize.**  
Using your notepad, begin to take notes on key thoughts and phrases. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth to you. You may want to put a column in your notepad for “what does this mean God wants me to do?” This is personal application.
- **Journal what the Father is saying to you**  
Keep a notebook, and daily make entries of God’s words to you from His Word. This is your private dairy, and will record your growth, struggle and victories. From it you may want to think on one thought for the day. Like, “today I will believe Jesus loves me no matter what comes my way.”
- **Take that one thought with you.** Write it on a card or piece of paper and look at it throughout the day. This is meditation.
- **Memorize a verse or two for that week.** Psalm one is so brief you can memorize the whole psalm if you chose.
- **End your time in prayer.** Pray now for yourself and God’s guidance for the tasks of the day. Pray the prayer of Jabez in 1st Chronicles 4:9. That’s a great way to start the day!



## Four Minutes with God in Prayer

Praying is not easy for beginners. Every new believer seems to struggle in knowing how to pray. However, Jesus in the Model Prayer (sometimes called the Lord's Prayer) gave us the guidelines for approaching The Father in prayer. By following this outline we can have a pattern for our prayer time.

In Luke 11:1-4 Jesus taught us:

### I. **Begin your prayer with ADORATION**

**"Our Father who is in Heaven, sacred is your name..."**

We approach the throne of God with praise and adoration. Begin your prayer by asking God for nothing, but praising Him for just being the God he is. Start "adoring" God by telling Him how much you love and adore Him. Scripture is full of the mighty names of God. You can praise Him by just saying His Names, or just a simple "I love you Lord for being the Loving Lord of my life". Take one minute to adore our Father in Heaven.

### II. **Continue your prayer with CONFESSION**

Jesus taught us to ask for forgiveness, *"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"* When we begin in adoration, seeing God as He is, we then see our self as we are. Now we confess our sins, knowing that in Christ there is no condemnation. We claim the promise of 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9 that, *"if we confess our sins, he is faithful to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us of all iniquity"* Take at least one minute to Confess all known sin.

### III. **THANK God for all His Mercy and Grace**

All prayer must include thanksgiving. Spend time expressing to God a grateful heart for his blessings. Take at least one minute to say, "thank you" Jesus for your kindness to me.

### IV. **Now SUPPLICATE for others**

There are friends and others who need you to pray for them. To "supplicate" is to intercede for others before the Throne of God. Take a minute to pray for others.

#### **ACTS= 4 minutes with God**

A=Adoration

C=Confession

T=Thanksgiving

S=Supplication

This little "ACTS" is an easy way to teach a new convert to begin to Pray. One minute in praise, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication, equals 4 minutes in prayer. This is a very good start to an effective prayer life



## The Laws of Spiritual Harvest

*“Sir we would see Jesus”*

John 12:20-25 *“except a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it abides alone...”*

This passage begins with some Greeks coming to the disciples and asking to see Jesus. These Greeks represent lost humanity, the non Jewish world for whom Christ will die. Phillip comes to Jesus to tell Him that there are Greeks who wish to see Him. Christ’s mystical & mysterious response to Phillip contains what some have called the Laws of Spiritual Harvest. We must be “Jesus” to a world that does not know Him. Only as we become seed in the soil of others can life come forth. The “harvest” represents our success in life, our legacy as a leader. You will not have a spiritual harvest if you do not become a seed Christian.

You and I will never make a difference in this world until we understand these laws of spiritual harvest, and live them out in our daily walk.

### **Truth #1 The Law of Urgency: The seed must get into the soil and die to bear fruit.**

In Kingdom living we are to be like a seed = you were Born to Reproduce. We are a seed planted in the soil of others. If we die to self, and are investing our lives in the soil of others we can have a harvest. However, it is urgent that we begin now. Seed in a sack on a shelf in a store does no one any good. It must enter the soil and die to be of any value.

1. Jesus was speaking of Himself, and His soon coming death [Rom.5:8; 8:29] He was God’s seed, dying for the sins of the world.
2. Jesus was describing His followers. We are to be seed for God to use. It is urgent that we begin now investing in the soil of others lives.

### **Truth #2 The Law of Life coming forth out of Death: The seed dies, and life is born.**

In Kingdom living life comes forth out of death vs. 24.

1. Jesus is speaking about Himself, *“the hour has come for the Son of Man to be Glorified”*
2. Jesus is describing the lifestyle of His followers, **Luke 9:23**

Only as we die to self and selfish ambitions can we produce life in others. Whoever would save his life must lose it. The Seed must die before life can come forth. We must become seed Christians to produce a harvest.

### **Truth #3 The Law of Quality over Quantity: The seed must be good seed.**

In Kingdom living, Quality counts more than quantity = it’s not what you have, but Whose you are.

1. Jesus is speaking about Himself= it’s the character of the seed that determines the quantity & quality of the fruit. Jesus was God’s good seed planted & raised to life to save millions.
2. Jesus is describing His followers, *“whatever you, do all to the Glory of God”*
3. We are to be good seed, men & women of character, commitment, & sacrifice so God can plant us in the soil of others. Good seed can produce much fruit.

### **Truth #4 The Law Of Imminence verses Permanence: The seed has its “hour”**

In Kingdom living, the principle is= it’s not how long you live, but how well. *“The hour has come...”*

1. Jesus is speaking about Himself; he knew His death was imminent. He did not live long, but He lived well and died a death that brought many sons to glory.
2. Jesus was describing His followers, *“to whom much is given, of him shall much be required”*  
*“Seek first the Kingdom...”* **Matt. 6:33; John 15: 5 & 8**

**“Except a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it abides alone, but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit.”**



## The Seven-Fold Work of The Holy Spirit

There are in Scripture seven different descriptions of how the Holy Spirit works in the life of a born again believer in Christ. These seven descriptions are not seven distinct different works of the Spirit. Some of them are but different ways of describing the same experience. The seven descriptions are:

**The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit**, John 14:17

**The Baptism of the Holy Spirit**, Ephesians 4:4,5

**The Sealing of the Holy Spirit**, Ephesians 1:13

**The Earnest of the Holy Spirit**, Ephesians 1:14

**The Gifts of the Holy Spirit**, Romans 12: 6-13, 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 14, Ephesians 4: 7-11

**The Filling of the Holy Spirit**, Ephesians 5: 18

**The Anointing of the Holy Spirit**, 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:27

### Six came as Birthday Gifts

Although there is some discussion and difference of opinion on the matter; most Biblical scholarship will agree that all but one of these works of the Spirit took place at the moment one is saved. A person receives Christ as savior and is born “from above” of the Spirit; and is indwelt with the Spirit of Jesus, baptized into the body of Christ, given spiritual gifts, filled with His Spirit, and sealed forever, which is the earnest of our salvation. Wow! What a marvelous thing it is to become a child of God. It is a supernatural transaction and transformation!

### We leak

So every believer has been filled with the Spirit at least once. At the instant of the new birth, the new babe in Christ is full of Jesus. The problem is many times we “leak” like a rubber inner tube on an old tire. We don’t stay filled. Through disobedience we can quench the Spirit. This is why Paul urges the Ephesians to “*keep on being filled day by day*,” **Ephesians 5:18**. Note that we have emphasized the tense of the verb, which is continuous action. Living the Christ controlled life, or the Spirit filled life is the result of our yielding to Christ, moment-by-moment and day-by-day.

### The Normal Christian Life

Being filled with the Spirit is not a second work of the Spirit, or even a “deeper” work of God in us. Being Spirit filled **is** the Christian life. Only Christ is “Christian” and only His life in us can live a life pleasing to God the Father. His filling us produces the fruit of the Spirit Paul wrote about in Galatians Five. The fruit of the Spirit is nothing less than the character of Jesus being lived out in our behavior. God wants every child of His to walk in the Spirit, filled with the life of His Son. The Spirit filled life is the normal Christian life. Anything less is subnormal!

### The Anointing

This brings us to the seventh work of the Spirit in us. The first five are completed works of God in the believer. The sixth began at salvation and is to be God’s work in us every day, (the filling is a process based on our obedience and yielding to the Holy Spirit.) Now we come to the seventh Holy Spirit work, the anointing of the Spirit. John the Apostle says, “*the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things...*” **1st John 2:27** The anointing seems to be a special, yes unusual, work of the Spirit which God bestows on a few chosen men and women.

### **The Anointing in Scripture.**

Even as the filling is for holiness and Christ-like living, the anointing is for power in service to God. There can be no anointing without the filling. Being filled, and totally surrendered to God is the prerequisite for the anointing. One need only look at the Old Testament to see how God from time to time anointed those whom He sovereignly chose to anoint.

- He anointed certain kings, like Saul and David.
- He anointed the prophets, like Elijah and Elisha.
- He anointed Samson.

We read how the Spirit of Jehovah God from time to time, “came upon them.” Then for various reasons the Spirit would leave them. Usually, he left for two reasons: 1) the task He called them to was done, or 2) the anointed person committed some sin and the anointing was taken away.

In the New Testament, we read of Jesus, “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor...” (See **Luke 4:18,19**) as He quotes Isaiah 61. Even Paul knew when this anointing was upon him. He describes his preaching as “*with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power.*” (**1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 2:4**)

### **Anointed Servants**

As you read of great men of the church you will hear them allude to the need for the anointing. They struggle to minister in their own strength, then comes a barren time and they know they need the Holy Spirit’s power.

Dwight L. Moody the gifted American evangelist of over 100 years ago once wrote, “Right there on the streets of Chicago, the power of God seemed to come upon me so wonderfully I had to ask God to stay his hand...I was filled with a sense of God’s goodness, and I felt I could take the whole world to my heart. I took the old sermons I had preached before without any power, it was the same old truth, but there was new power. Many were impressed and converted. This happened years after I was converted myself.”

Charles G. Finney, of the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century had a similar experience with the Holy Spirit coming to anoint and empower him years after he had begun his ministry. He describes it this way; “as I turned and was about to take a seat by the fire, I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought that there was any such thing for me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world. The Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me body and soul.” He says the results of this fresh anointing were seen the next day as every person to whom Finney spoke was deeply convicted or converted. In the evening of the next day, he had invited an atheist over for dinner and as Finney was blessing the food, the atheist was saved! This is the power of an anointing of the Spirit.

### **Billy Graham**

How else do you explain the mighty ministry of Billy Graham? His message is simple and direct, but certainly not eloquent or impressive. The results are because of the anointing upon him. God has chosen him and empowered him to preach the simple gospel message.

### **Have you this Anointing?**

So, can every believer have a special anointing for service in the Kingdom? Yes we can.

Because the Bible says we have this anointing (**1<sup>st</sup> John 2:27**), why don’t we see more of it? In fact, a better question is, do you have this anointing upon you and your leadership? Is there a freshness to your testimony and your witness? Are people’s lives being changed when they come in contact with you?

This anointing for service is not a permanent thing. In Acts the Disciples were filled with the Spirit to preach at Pentecost (**Acts 2:4**); then we see them in Chapter four in the upper room again praying for more Spirit power and for boldness to overcome their enemies (**Acts 4:31**). Peter was present both times the Holy Spirit empowered them and he was filled both times. This tells me that each task God calls us to, needs a fresh anointing to accomplish that task! The Disciple leader cannot live on yesterday's experience with God to do today's work for God. The question is, "have I this anointing upon me now?"

### **Wait, Tarry, Receive**

In Luke **24: 49**, Jesus tells his followers to do three things after He leaves them to ascend into heaven. He tells them to:

1. Wait till they are empowered by the coming Holy Spirit.
2. Tarry in prayer as you wait. This was for cleansing, surrender and humility.
3. Receive the Holy Spirit and His seven-fold blessing. They obeyed, waiting, tarrying at prayer, and they received the mighty power of the Spirit.

How unlike leaders today! We may organize but we seldom agonize! We may plan and prepare but we know little of waiting and asking for the anointing. But then we don't often see the results these early followers saw!

### **What is the secret of the Spirit's Anointing**

Let's examine how we can have this anointing upon our ministry. The steps are not mystical or magical. Assuming you are a yielded, Spirit-Filled leader already, then the steps are direct and effective. God wants to anoint your gifts and your calling, more than you want it. That's part of the problem.

1. **There must be an intense desire and thirst for the Spirit's power in your life.**  
**Isaiah 44:3**, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. For I will pour out my Spirit..."

**Matthew 5:6**, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

**Jeremiah 29:13**, "ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall seek me with your whole heart, says the Lord."

Remember when Jacob had an "all nighter" with the Angel of the Lord? Jacob holds on, desperate for forgiveness and a blessing. He tells the Angel, "I will not let you go till you bless me." Now what kind of a puny angel is this anyway? He is so weak he can't get loose from Jacob? Something's wrong with this picture! I have always felt this fight was fixed from the start! God wanted Jacob to struggle and desperately seek the blessing. God wanted him to have it more than Jacob did.

For the average leader in Christian work the prevailing problem is self and self-sufficiency. Until we are humbled and desire what only God can give, we'll never have the anointing.

2. **There must be prevailing Prayer**  
If we want to be endued with power, we must pray for it, just as those pre-Pentecost disciples did. Jesus said, "You have not because you ask not." All the great saints of God have travailed and prevailed in prayer till the power came. In **Acts 4:31** we read, " and

when they had prayed they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” Moody, Finney and R. A. Torrey all tell of long hours before the throne of grace seeking a fresh anointing for service.

### **Where the power comes from**

Many years ago, when Billy Graham was a very young preacher beginning his citywide crusades, he came to preach a crusade in Fort Worth Texas. A young student evangelist at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary there in Fort Worth, came to Billy Graham’s hotel room during the days of the Crusade. He knocked on the door of Billy’s room and asked to see Billy Graham. Cliff Barrows who told me this story, told the student, “Billy is busy now and cannot be disturbed.” The student was insistent saying, “I’ve got to know the secret of Billy’s power. How is he so mightily used of God? Cliff took the student to the bedroom door, opened it silently, and showed the student evangelist the secret. There on the floor, stretched out in agonizing prayer was young Billy Graham. Cliff Barrows shut the door and said to the student, “there is his secret, he does that for hours at a time, every day.”

### **Not begging God**

Understand that when we have a deep hunger and thirst for the anointing the work in us is probably already done. We don’t have to plead with God to anoint us; He is ready when we are. However, much prevailing prayer is to prepare the soul to receive what God is ready to give. Only as we wait before Him in prayer can He talk to us, prepare our hearts and get us spiritually ready for His glorious power. After the filling comes the anointing!

#### **3. There must be expectant Faith**

After the waiting and praying, there must be faith that the anointing will follow. Here we distinguish between the normal Spirit filled life, based on surrender and faith, for which there is no waiting or tarrying long in prayer, except for heart preparation, and the repeated anointings of the Spirit which come only as we tarry in prayer. The key to these repeated anointings for each special task is the word “until.” Jesus, before He left this earth, told the disciples to tarry “until” the power came. They did and it came! God must know that we believe Him and that He can trust us to give Him the Glory. When He sees that in us, the power will come. Are you willing to pay any price He may require of you to be used of Him? If so, then believe and pray till the anointing comes.

### **What are the evidences of the Anointing?**

How can you know God has answered your prayer? The evidences are very clear.

- There will be victory over sin in your life.
- There will be the Fruit of the Spirit in your life.
- There will be a burden for lost souls.
- There will be power in your service to God.



## Jabez: Living in the Path of the Blessing

God wants to bless us more than we want to be blessed. This is a fact of Scripture. From the loving heart of God flow forth rivers of Blessings. In the Old Testament is recorded the prayer of a man who believed this. His name is Jabez. We read his prayer in 1 Chronicles 4: 9 “*and Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother named him Jabez saying, “because I bore him with pain.”*”

Three things seem remarkable about this introduction to the man named “Pain” (Jabez). First, is that as you read the book of 1 Chronicles, you notice that it is very boring reading for the first four chapters. You notice it is just “begats” from verse to verse. Almost no comment, just line after boring line of “begats.” You might as well be reading the phone book! Then just like the Word of God, comes this insightful verse. In the middle of all the who begat whom, comes the phrase, “*and Jabez was more honorable than his brothers.*” He just jumps off the page at you!

The second interesting thing is that he has a funny name. Jabez means “pain” or painful. His mother seems to have had a difficult delivery giving birth to him, so she named him “Pain.” Wow! What a way to go through life with your Mom. Every time she calls your name you are reminded of how you pained her!

So, what are the life messages we are to learn from Jabez? It is so obvious the Holy Spirit wants us to learn from this man who alone stands out in the list of “begats.”

### **Jabez was an ordinary man**

Born in pain, Jabez lived all his life with adversity. The only thing extraordinary thing about him is his relationship to God. Can you relate to that? You and I can be special if we can be special to our Heavenly Father. Regardless of how you started out in life, you can live in God’s favor and stand in the path of His divine blessing.

### **Jabez was an honorable man**

He was more honorable than his brothers. Does that mean he was more honorable than all the generations before him, or does it mean he was more honorable than his “immediate” family or tribe? It really doesn’t matter! He was honorable enough to God that he could ask to be blessed and he got what he asked!

What about you? Are you the kind of man God can bless indeed? Notice the prayer of Jabez, “*Oh that Thou wouldst bless me indeed...*” He doesn’t just ask to be blessed; he asks to be blessed “indeed.” His prayer is for God to really bless him significantly! Some have found this request to be selfish, or materialistic. Not so! He was an honorable man. How can an honorable man pray a dishonorable prayer that God answered?

The lesson for us is that “*the eyes of the Lord go to and fro*” seeking a righteous man or woman that He can bless! The lesson is that obedience opens the doors to God’s blessing and favor. He loves us all unconditionally; however, He has a special place in His heart for the honorable man or woman.

Not everyone can be intelligent, wealthy, of noble birth, or physically beautiful and charming. However, we can all be honorable in God’s eyes. And, frankly that’s the view that matters most. How God views you is ALL that matters.

### **Jabez prayed the most unusual prayer!**

Listen carefully to his prayer’s four parts:

1. “*Oh, that Thou wouldst bless me indeed,*

2. *and enlarge my border,*
3. *and that Thy hand might be with me,*
4. *and that Thou wouldst keep me from harm . . .”* (1 Chronicles 4: 10)

Notice the four parts to his request of God:

**1. “Bless me indeed . . .”**

To some this seems a selfish idea. Why, the very thought of asking God to bless him, give him territory and such is just too self-serving. Yet, Jabez is an honorable man. It seems that because he is an honorable man, he feels he can ask God to trust him with more.

Have you ever felt you were on such intimate terms with God that you could ask Him to bless you, even really bless you?

This prayer is about the man’s relationship with God. He asks God to bless him because he knows God’s heart. He feels God is a blessing giving Father. Indeed, this is the picture of God we get from Jesus in Luke 11:9-11. Jesus tells us to ask, seek, knock, and the Father eagerly gives good gifts to his children. You and I have not because we ask not. Also, we have not because for other reasons we feel unworthy to ask the Father to bless us.

When you do not have an abundant blessing in your life, it tells us more about you than it does about God. An honorable man feels he can go to God and say, “bless me indeed.”

**2. “Enlarge my border”**

This request is more than a plea for more territory or property on which to graze his sheep. Jabez wanted to increase his influence for God and for Good in the world. He wanted more ministries, to give God greater glory. In his day, only those with land had great influence. (Proverbs 3:9-10)

This is not a selfish prayer from a vain, money-hungry man. He is available to God to enlarge the circle of his influence. This is an honorable man asking an honorable thing of the King of the universe. Too many times we ask to be blessed for selfish and material things only to waste the blessing on ourselves. (James 4:3)

Every disciple of Jesus should pray this honorable prayer, “God bless me indeed, increase and enlarge my influence, so I can in turn bless you and your kingdom.”

To enlarge your borders can mean to make me a better Father, husband, friend, witness, or disciple. It can mean to get you out of your predetermined “comfort zones” so God can lead you into relationships and blessings beyond your wildest dreams. Remember, that to him whom much is given, of that person shall much be required. It is a good thing to ask God to stretch you, and enlarge your influence.

**3. “Lay your hand upon me”**

This is a request for God’s presence and God’s power to be on him. Jabez needed to feel that God was with him and God’s anointing was there in all he did. Only an honorable man prays this kind of prayer. To ask God to lay His mighty hand on you is to volunteer for service in God’s kingdom work.

You need God's power to do God's work! We, just like Jabez can ask the Father everyday to lay his hand upon us. We can feel his presence, and go forth in His power.

Need we be reminded that to ask for this from our Holy God is to severely restrict what you do and where you go! God's hand on a man is an awesome thing! Only a life totally yielding to God's will can be blessed with the Power of God and the Presence of God.

Jim Elliot, the martyred missionary wrote in his diary:

"Father, make of me a crisis man  
Bring those I contact to decision.  
Let me not be just a milepost on a single road,  
But make me to be a fork,  
that men must turn one way or another after having faced Christ in me!"

In the spirit of Jabez, Jim Elliot asked God to lay His hand upon him.

**4. "Keep me from evil (harm)."**

Jabez, born in pain, and used to living with it, asks the God of his fathers to deliver him from pain. God answered his prayer! The final part of this wonderful prayer request is that he be protected from evil and pain. This is a prayer you can pray everyday for yourself and for those you love. It is a prayer for God's protection.

Peter at Pentecost quoted Psalm 16:11 when he said, *"I saw the Lord before my face, He was on my right hand that I should not be moved."* (Acts 2:25) Every child of God has God's protection if we only have faith to ask for it. He can and will bless you with victory over the Evil One.

See then the four parts to this prayer of Jabez:

- 1) Bless me indeed= God's provision
- 2) Enlarge my territory= God's purpose
- 3) Lay your hand upon me= God's presence and power
- 4) Keep me from harm= God's protection

What a challenge from God's word for us. This brief reference in Scripture to Jabez is there to inspire us to claim God's blessing in our daily lives. Seek to be a person God can bless "indeed." Ask Him repeatedly to empower, protect, and provide for you, that your influence may increase to His glory.



## Great Things to Know about Good Leaders

### **1. They know that leadership is influence.**

Leadership is many things, but essentially it is about influence and the ability to influence others. The English word, “influence” means literally to “flow into” others. A leader is a person who directly and intentionally “flows into” others. The greater the influence he has, greater the leader. You can measure your effectiveness as a leader by the number of persons you directly influence each day, week, month a year or a lifetime.

### **2. They know that leadership is a process.**

It has been said that leaders are born not made. This is only a half truth. Some are born with a temperament that can facilitate leadership skills, but the great leaders of the world know that leadership develops over time and requires discipline. Leadership grows daily not in a day; so busy yourself by sharpening your skills. The greater your skills the greater will be your opportunity to influence people. Moses begins by saying to God, “But Lord I stutter, how can I go to pharaoh and speak?” After God equips him, and faith moves him, Moses can lead a nation! He grew into the job. You can become more than you are if you set your mind and heart to do so.

### **3. They know that only you set the limits of your influence.**

John Maxwell calls this “The Law of the Lid.” How great a leader do you want to be? Whatever you decide will “cap” or determine your influence and your future as a leader. You can increase your skills and only you can decide how good a mentor you wish to be; it means you are as good as you set out to be. “Hitch your wagon to a star, open your eyes and there you are!” Many people of great potential accomplish little because they cannot hitch a trailer to a car, much less a wagon to a star! Don’t limit yourself or God’s purposes thru you, by being lazy, or indifferent to a high calling.

### **4. They know that the fuel of the leader’s drive is his passion.**

Leaders are passionate about their cause. Leaders have a fire in their belly that drives them to succeed. The leader is usually “consumed” with his vision or passion and he must share it with others. Leadership is as much caught as it is taught. Much of a leader’s ability is in his emotions as it is in his knowledge or ability. Give me a warrior who loves the battle any day over a soldier who has all the training but no heart for the fight. Passion wins over planning most of the time. Both are needed for success, but it is difficult to stop a passionate leader.

### **5. They know that leaders are Navigators & Visionaries.**

While flying my airplane I asked my wife if she wanted to “fly” the plane. She said “yes.” After holding the wheel for a few minutes, she said, “I can steer the plane but I don’t know where I’m going.” This tells us that most anyone can steer the ship, but only the leader can set the course. A leader is like the pilot who navigates. They have a vision, a direction they are going. To say a leader is the navigator, or pilot is to say that they are “big picture thinkers.” Usually leaders will leave the details to others. That’s why managers are not leaders. Managers must give attention to the details of the day to day. The Leader has a bigger vision than “our daily bread.” He is planning how to make enough bread to feed the world!

### **6. They know that leaders have learned to prioritize.**

Jesus told us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. [Matt. 6:33] This is the way great leaders think. They are good at putting 1<sup>st</sup> things 1<sup>st</sup>! Leaders have a unique ability to focus on the things that really matter. They don’t “sweat the small stuff.” The ability to prioritize your values, your time & energy is a good leadership talent.

**7. They know that leaders are servants not bosses.**

In the national best selling book, “**Good to Great**” we learn that all the really great companies have a leader who is a servant to his people. This is a Jesus principle of Leadership. In John 13 is recorded the experience of Jesus washing the disciples feet. He tells them, “Do you know why I have done this to you? I am giving you my example, that even as I have washed your feet, you must also wash one another’s feet.” A great leader will never ask his followers to do something he himself is not willing to do. Military people tell legendary stories of their commanding officers leading the charge into battle. Risking life and limb, their general leads the fight. Like Mel Gibson in “**Brave Heart**,” portraying William Wallace he fearlessly leads his men into the fray. Leaders are servants, not bosses. Great leaders are not so much “Supervisors” & over-seers as they are “under-seers” and supporters. They lead from the bottom up, not from the top down.

**8. They know that people will follow the man, before they will commit to his vision.**

Often a young or immature leader will be very passionate about his vision and will try to get others to accept his vision and follow it. John Maxwell calls it the Law of “buy-in.” However, when people don’t follow or “buy-into” his vision he cannot understand why. The reason is that men follow the leader before they accept and own his vision.

Think of how Jesus led his followers. He spent years with them letting them get to know Him, love Him, and eventually commit themselves to Him. Only then did He share His vision with them. Great leaders know that men follow a MAN of vision before they follow the vision. By being a humble servant, and a person of integrity & purpose, the leader is like a magnate drawing others to himself. Then he can compel them to follow his dream.

**9. They know that a leader must win your heart before asking for a hand**

Great leaders know that trust is a key to gaining followers. Men are not captured by ideas so much as by a man’s spirit. When people trust you they will follow you. Jesus knew this and before He asked his followers to do anything for Him like “take up your cross and follow me;” He first won their hearts. Far too often immature Christian leaders will ask others to support them financially, or to get involved in their projects, without first winning the trust and confidence of those they are asking to help them. For an example, some African pastor will hear that this “white guy” loves Africans and helps churches & pastors financially. So without so much as knowing the “white guy” he e-mails him his “vision” to build an orphanage. The white guy gets the e-mail proposal asking for money for orphans, and thinks, “Who is this African guy, whom I do not know, asking me for money?” I don’t know him and yet he dares to ask me to fund his work. Let me tell you Jesus would not do that. He would not ask for a helping hand without first winning your heart. A good leader will develop trust before asking anyone to adopt his vision.

**10. They know that people follow a man they respect.**

In Africa we call this the “Law of Mzee.” In Kiswahili language an “Mzee” is a wise older man. He is an older person whom many admire because of his life-experiences and wisdom. The African culture honors and respects the elderly. Our western culture tends to discount and devalue older people. However, a leadership principle is that people will not follow a man they do not respect. They may fear him, and come along, but they will not adopt his vision if they do not believe in him & respect him. Thus a good leader understands that it takes time and effort to win the people’s respect. His life message is the foundation of his leadership. It takes character to lead.

**11. They know that great leadership is about reproduction.**

A great leader can look at one man and see an army behind him. He knows that if he can inspire that one man, & train him to lead others, then he can multiply himself in his disciple. The Leader can do the math-multiplication is better than addition. To spread his vision he must reproduce himself in others. A truly great leader of Christian men, Dawson Trotman, used to say, “Activity is no substitute for production, and

production is no substitute for reproduction.” The apostle Paul, another great leader told his young disciple Timothy to reproduce himself in other faithful men. {2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:2}

Ask not what you have been doing, but ask yourself, “what are others doing because of what I have been doing.” Leaders are born to reproduce. Jesus looked at the twelve disciples and saw the whole world in them! He trained them then gave them the great Commission to “Go and make disciples of all the nations...” He understood a leader’s need to reproduce.

## **12. They leave a legacy.**

This desire to multiply your vision in the lives of your followers comes from a passion to leave a legacy behind you after you are gone. A great leader is not just living for the “now;” but rather is living for the next generation. In John 17 when Christ is praying for his disciples he prays, *“I ask not just for them, Father, but for those who will believe in me because of them.”* See, He was living for the legacy, for the future generations that would be saved thru the faithfulness of his followers. All great leaders believe that their cause, their vision is worthy to be perpetuated into the future. So leaders give themselves to investing their best time into their best people. They see a changed future; yes even a better future, lived out in their followers and their followers, followers. The leader’s legacy; you are either building yours now or you are neglecting yours now.





## The Birthmarks of a Disciple

There is a good deal of discussion about who is a true disciple of Christ and what the characteristics of a Disciple are. Our Lord Jesus gave us definitive guidelines on the lifestyle of his true followers. I want us to look carefully at three “birthmarks” of a Disciple. We call these birthmarks or the “marks” of a Disciple. You can recognize one of Jesus followers by these distinctive marks.

### The Mark of the Cross

First, we hear Jesus say in Luke 9:23; *“if anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.”* What are the implications of taking up the cross in the life of a disciple? Today this idea of carrying a cross has become ornamental in that we wear a cross for jewelry, rather than take up a cross in our daily living. A history lesson would help us here. Josephus the Jewish historian tells us that in about 12 AD there was a Jewish rebellion against the Roman occupation in Israel. Led by a rebel named Simeon, several thousand young Jews revolted against Rome and a civil war broke out. The Roman army quelled the rebellion, and to make examples of them, the Romans crucified two thousand revolutionaries along the road from Jerusalem to Nazareth. Josephus says the vultures darkened the sky as they came to feed on the dying bodies hanging on crosses along the road. In 12 AD Jesus and his future followers would have been young teenage boys. Those crucified revolutionaries would have been their family members, neighbors & heroes. So when Jesus says *“Take up your Cross daily and follow me,”* those words had great meaning. To take up a cross was to enlist for martyrdom. It was an invitation to die to self and even to die physically if need be.

In His classic book, The Cost of Discipleship, German Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote these opening lines; “When Jesus says ‘come and follow me’ He is inviting you to come and die.” The call to discipleship is a call to die. Bonhoeffer himself became a martyr because he took up his cross and followed Christ.

Let me visualize this for you. Suppose you are a new believer in Christ as your savior. You are a new convert, a young disciple. You may be saying to yourself, “Well, what do I do now?” My sins are forgiven and I’m saved for all eternity. What does Christ expect from me?” Then the next morning there is a knock on your door. You get up and go to the door. As you open the door you are shocked! There stands Jesus, and He has this huge 9 foot cross on his shoulder.

Christ then says to you, “Here I’m bringing this cross to you. I had it made just for you. There is not another one like it anywhere in my Kingdom. It is your cross and I expect you to carry it everywhere you go. As you go through your day, you carry this cross on your shoulder as a moment by moment reminder of who you are. You are my disciple, and your life belongs to me. This cross is for dying to self. It is yours just as I have mine.”

Now, what do you think of that? Can you imagine if a student went to school carrying her cross; or if a businessman went to the office carrying a 9 foot 80 pound cross on his shoulder?

I can tell you one reaction for sure; those who see you will know you are a Christian. The cross will define who you are and to whom you belong. The Cross will forever mark you as His disciple.

If you do not take up your cross, you can never call yourself a true follower of Jesus for He said, *“he who does not take up his cross and follow me, is not worthy of me.”* {Matt. 10:38}

### The Mark of the Yoke

Just about the time you have gotten used to taking your cross with you every day & everywhere; Jesus comes to knock on your door a second time. As you open the door you are amazed to see a very large, heavy wooden yoke standing there by your door. Then the voice of Christ says to you, *“Here, take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

{Matt. 11:29, 30} You realize immediately that this large yoke is neck collar for oxen. It has a hole in it just the size of your neck. Jesus says to you, "Here try it on for size." Then he lifts this big wooden apparatus and puts your head thru the hole and then screws it tight. By now you are staggering beneath the load. Get a good look at you now! With a yoke on your neck & a cross on your back you are ready to meet the world! You may look strange to all who meet you this day, but you do not look strange to God. To Him you are beginning to look like a disciple of His beloved Son. Just as you have a cross for dying to self, you must have a yoke for learning the deeper ways of God. The Yoke is for discipline, learning and submission.

You see, my friend, to be a disciple of Jesus means more than being a follower; it means also that you are a disciplined learner. The word "disciple" has a root idea of discipline. The Disciple must be yoked to Christ to learn the ways, the will, and the walk of Christ. Do you have His yoke around your neck? Are you willing to be like those oxen; all hooked up and harnessed up in such a way that you cannot so much as move without direction from the masters hand? {or his whip}

The yoke speaks to us of submission to the Master's will and to His commands. We are to be so yoked to Him that when our Lord speaks, we obey. Why, because we believe that His way & will is best. In it we believe we will find rest for our souls. He is lord and that is all a disciple needs to know.

### **The Mark of the Towel**

Now that you are willing to die to self everyday {the cross} and are willing to submit to His will and way with you {the yoke}; then Jesus come to knock on your door for a third time. Maybe a bit reluctantly you open the door thinking, "What will my Lord ask of me now?" Jesus says to you, "Congratulations, you are doing a good job of being my disciple. You seem adjusted to carrying your Cross and wearing my Yoke. Now I want one more thing of you. You are not dressed properly to be my disciple. Go disrobe, and then put on this bath towel and come back to me." So you do as Jesus says and return wearing only a towel wrapped around you. Then you pick up your cross & put on your yoke. Maybe we should take your photo! You look rather odd, but you for certain have the look of a follower of Christ.

You may ask, "Why am I wearing a towel?" Just as the cross is for dying to self, & the yoke is for submission; the towel is for serving others. In John 13, Jesus gave us the extreme example of being a servant. He laid aside his robe, and dressed only in a servant's "towel" He then washed his brother's feet. He served them so we could learn to serve others. Every follower of Christ must learn that the way up is down. We must learn that God is not interested in how many servants we have; but He is very interested in how many men we serve. All of Jesus' true followers must daily have a "towel" ministry of serving others. Messiah Jesus was a servant and the disciple cannot be greater than his Lord.

### **Leadership Principles**

Do you see it? The Cross, the Yoke, and the Towel are all leadership principles in Christ's Kingdom. This is how Our Lord led men and now it is how His followers must also lead men.

The Christian leader is to be a crucified, submissive, servant of Jesus. This kind of leader can change the world. Those early disciple's turned their world "upside down." We can too!

## NOTES

[illegible]

## NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

SECTION TWO

**SECTION TWO**  
**THE DISCIPLE – LEADER AND THE WORD**

THE DISCIPLE - LEADER AND THE WORD





## The Wheel Illustration

This simple but effective illustration has been used by Navigators for more than fifty years. It helps Christians understand what they are called to do as disciples of Christ. Each part of this illustration represents a crucially important component of a vital Christian life.

Use this illustration to gain understanding about important spiritual disciplines in your own life. What areas encourage you? What areas challenge you?

Why not sketch out "The Wheel Illustration" on a napkin or scrap of paper with someone you are discipling. Help challenge them to think clearly about how to be an obedient follower of Christ.



## The Volitional Dimension: How You Relate to Yourself; Your Will

### The Hub: Christ the Center

*See: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20*

Making Christ central in your life is an act of your will. Surrendering totally to Christ's authority and lordship may be at conversion or after some months or even years. God creates within you the desire to do what He wants you to do in order to express His lordship in your life.



### The Rim: Obedience to Christ

*See: Romans 12:1; John 14:21*

Some acts of obedience to God are internal. But even these internal acts of obedience, such as attitudes, habits, motives, sense of values, and day-to-day thoughts, eventually surface in relationships with other people. The proof of your love for God is your demonstrated obedience to Him.

## The Vertical Dimension: How You Relate to God

### The Word Spoke

*See: 2 Timothy 3:16; Joshua 1:8*

As God speaks to you through the Scriptures, you can see His principles for life and ministry, learn how to obey, and become acquainted with the Christ who is worthy of your unqualified allegiance. A vital personal intake of God's Word is essential for health and growth.





### **The Prayer Spoke**

*See: John 15:7; Philippians 4:6-7*

Prayer is a natural response to God as you hear Him speak to you through His Word. It is sharing your heart with the One who longs for your companionship and who cares about your concerns. Prayer unleashes the power of God in your personal battles and in the lives of those for whom you pray.

## **The Horizontal Dimension: How You Relate to Others**

### **The Fellowship Spoke**

*See: Matthew 18:20; Hebrews 10:24-25*

Learning from and encouraging others creates a chemistry pleasing to God. God has directed Christians to build each other up through inter-dependence and loving relationships with each other.



### **The Witnessing Spoke**

*See: Matthew 4:19; Romans 1:16*

The natural overflow of a rich vibrant life in Christ should be sharing with others how they too can have this life. God has given believers the privilege and responsibility of reaching the world with the Good News about Christ.

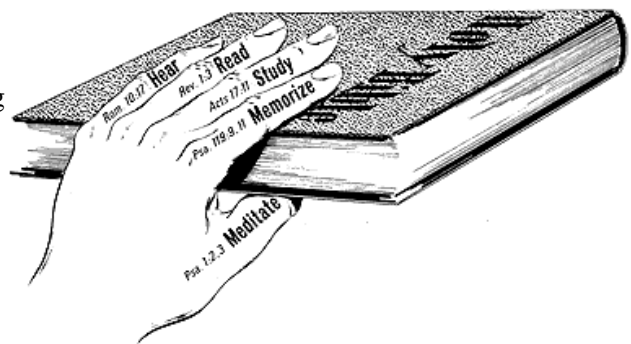
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## The Hand Illustration

The "Word Hand" shows the five methods of learning from the Bible.

Each of these methods is important. This is how we Get a "grip" on God's Word.



### Hearing

**Romans 10:17** *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Hearing the Word from godly pastors and teachers provides insight into others' study of the Scriptures as well as stimulating your own appetite for the Word.

### Reading

**Revelation 1:3** *Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

Reading the Bible gives an overall picture of God's Word. Many people find it helpful to use a daily reading program which takes them systematically through the Bible.

### Studying

**Acts 17:11** *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*

Studying the Scriptures leads to personal discoveries of God's truths. Writing down these discoveries helps you organize and remember them.

### Memorizing

**Psalms 119:9, 11** *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

Memorizing God's Word enables use of the Sword of the Spirit to overcome Satan and temptations...to have it readily available for witnessing or helping others with a "word in season."

### Meditating

**Psalms 1:2, 3** *But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper.*

Meditation is the thumb of the Word Hand, for it is used in conjunction with each of the other methods. Only as you meditate on God's Word--thinking of its meaning and application in your life--will you discover its transforming power at work within you.

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## Principles of Scripture Memory

*“Thy Word I have hidden in my heart...” Psalms 119: 11*

Is there anything harder to do than memorize? So many young disciples struggle with trying to memorize Scripture. For some it seems easy, and for others it's nearly impossible. We can all agree it's important and necessary to live a strong, victorious Christian life; but still have difficulty doing it.

### Getting a Grip

Remember the “hand illustration?” We can hear the Word, read the Word, study the Word, and even meditate on the Word, but until we go that last step and commit a biblical truth to memory, we don't really have a strong grip on that truth. Memorizing a verse of Scripture is like the “thumb” of your hand; that's where the grip is, in the thumb. So it is with memorizing a verse in the Bible. You don't really have the verse in your heart until you can quote it back when you need to.

### The Israelites did it

Those great men and women of God that we read about in the Bible, all had committed their Holy Scriptures to memory. This is especially true in Israel after the occupation of the Promised Land. As they settled in and the synagogue replaced the temple, it became the center of learning. There were no printed bibles, only the Torah that was kept by the rabbi in the synagogue. Children were taught to memorize the Law of Moses.

Moses says to the people: *“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols upon your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.” Deut. 6: 4-9*

This is how the children of Israel kept their sacred scriptures alive. The parents memorized the Law of God and taught their children to memorize it all the days of their life.

### Jesus memorized the Word

In Luke 4 we read of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. Each time Satan comes to our Lord, we see Jesus quote the Old Testament Scriptures to the Enemy. Where did Jesus learn those verses? He learned them as a boy in synagogue. He obeyed the teaching of **Psalms 119: 9,11** *“How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word...I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”* Throughout His ministry we see over and over again how often Jesus knew the scriptures by heart. He had spent the time to memorize God's Holy Word.

### Christ's Disciples memorized the Word

One need only look at the ministry of the Apostles to see how they were men, “mighty in scripture.” Peter can stand up at Pentecost in the Temple yard and quote whole sections of the Psalms and the Prophets. Where did he learn that? He didn't have a scroll in front of him; all he had was his memory and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. But it was all he needed!

### A Lost Art

In generations past, Christian parents taught their children to memorize God's Word. However, it has become a lost tradition in the last century of the church. Yet it needs to be restored in the daily life of

every disciple. The true disciple of Jesus needs to put on the whole armor of God that he may stand against the enemy. Memorizing the Word is a vital part of that armor. It takes time, work and commitment, but the rewards are great.

### **Some Practical Helps**

The Navigators organization in Colorado Springs Colorado, have done more to bring scripture memory back into the life of the church than any other force in the world today. They can be contacted over the Internet @ [www.navigators.com](http://www.navigators.com), they offer multiple aids to memorizing the Word. Using their model, let's make some suggestions on how to get started and then keep going with a systematic memory program.

### **Select a system and stick to it**

It is best to memorize topically. Put simply, it means you file verses in your mind, by naming the file. That's how your computer/brain likes to do it. For example: Years ago Dawson Trotman trained his men by devising the "wheel" as a basic set of topics to get his men started memorizing. (See **The Wheel** in section two of this manual)

Christ the Center = the hub of the wheel. This topic which shows that Christ must be at the center of a disciple's life has two verses that say what the topic describes. Learning the twelve verses that go with the six topics in the wheel is a great way to start.

### **Create a Topic**

You can create any system if you file the verses under a chosen topic. You may want to memorize verses on "Parenting" then find verses to say what the topic describes. Choosing a topic is the first step to success.

### **References "before and after"**

It is a proven memory aid that repetition aids the memory. The more times you say it, the easier it is for the brain to file it away. If your topic is "parenting" and your verse is Ephesians 6:4, then you want to get into the habit of saying topic and reference "before and after" you quote the verse to yourself or your accountability partner. This habit of saying both the topic and the reference before you quote the verse, and also after you quote it, will really make it "stick" in your memory. The verse gets "filed in your data bank" under the topic "parenting" and the reference gets associated with the verse in your memory.

### **Review! Review! Review!**

Repetition is the mother of learning. It certainly is the key to a good memory! You may be able to quote a verse you quickly memorized ten minutes ago, but if you don't repeatedly recite it over each day or at least several times a week, you will lose it from your memory. The only way to retain what we memorize is to review the verses, citing reference and topic many times over.

However, there will come a day when that verse is yours and you will not forget it. It becomes a part of you. This only happens with many repetitions over time.

### **The journey of a thousand miles**

Some one said that the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. This is true of scripture memory. You have to get started. Start with one topic, and one verse. Master it, before you add to it. Don't bite off more than you can chew! Or as they say in Africa, "you can eat an elephant one bite at a time." The secret is to do each verse and topic well, before moving on to others and getting discouraged. Memorize at a pace that fits you. Take pride in what you've memorized well, then go on to others. Being consistent is what pays off. Before you know it, your one verse and topic have become many. That's why we suggest you start with the Nav Wheel. It's simple, easy and helpful.

### **Write it out on a card**

You should write or type your verses out on a small card you can carry with you everywhere you go. It should look like this:

#### **Parenting                      Eph. 6: 4**

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

#### **Parenting                      Eph. 6:4**

By having your verses on cards, you can “redeem the time” by using your spare time as you go about your day. This keeps God’s Word in the center of your day and it doesn’t become a burden. You just hide the word in your heart as you go about your routine of the day.

### **Find an accountability partner**

Finally, try to find a person to hold you accountable as you memorize. Perhaps you and another person can memorize together. A two-strand cord is hard to break. You will encourage each other, and bond together as you study and memorize. Whenever possible, recite your verses to each other. This helps you be accountable to yourself, to God and your partner.

## How to Read, Interpret, and Apply Scripture

### A layman's hermeneutics

#### The Goal

In **2 Timothy 3:15-17**, our purpose in reading scripture is to be equipped thoroughly for every good work. To do this we must approach Scripture with the purpose to hear something from God that enhances my relationship to God thru Jesus Christ.

Thus the goal is to see Jesus in His Word to me, *“to make you wise unto salvation thru Christ” v15*

As you read Scripture, Scripture reads you, questions you, reveals your thoughts (Heb. 4:12) - and it leads to a Person, not just truths or principles. All Scripture points to Christ's death and resurrection; to God's forgiveness, thus leading you to a personal relationship with God through Christ.

Approach Scripture with a strong desire to be fully equipped to be what I am called of God to be, and to do what I am called of God to do.

- Don't leave the Word until like Jacob of old *“you have laid hold of that which has laid hold of you”*
- Wrestle with the text until it yields to you, and you find it to be honey to your taste & gold to your soul.

#### Six good questions the interpreter can ask:

##### 1. Where does the Text fit in the narrative of Bible history?

Each Bible text must be interpreted in light of God's bigger story of redemption & restoration. See the Bible not as many stories or stories within stories; but see it as God's BIG story. The Bible only has one story, a story of Father/God redeeming mankind and restoring what was lost in the Garden.

##### 1) Where does the text fit into this bigger Story?

On a time line, where does the text fit into the greater story of *“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” 2 Cor. 5:19*? Is it before the patriarchs-Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Is it before the Law of Moses or after? Is it in the Gospels and thus before the fullness of the Spirit in the Church age?

##### 2) Ask yourself, “What covenant was in effect when it was written”?

Is this text an old covenant truth (or promise) or is it a fulfilled new covenant truth. How you decide this, will greatly affect how you interpret the text.

##### 2. What would the original hearers have heard?

Without asking this question you will fall into speculation, allegory, and spiritualizing the text. Ask, *“How did the 1<sup>st</sup> recipients receive or view its meaning”?* In order answer this question you must read and understand the text in its original context. There are at least two kinds of context for a passage of Scripture.

**Literary context:**

The interpreter must have knowledge that the Scriptures include various kinds of literature and thus require different approaches to interpretation. First ask yourself, “What kind of literature is the book or the text”?

**Is it a narrative?** Many books in the Bible are narratives. A narrative is a story or a drama being told. This includes books such as Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Numbers, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, Acts, and others.

**Is it wisdom literature?** Books such as Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon are what we call “wisdom” literature. This type of literature is different from narratives in that it is often filled with poetic language, or prose that uses hyperbole, allegory, or repeated phrases for emphasis.

**Is it Prophetic literature?** The prophets enforce God’s covenant with Israel by asking, “why is God doing what He is doing & what will be the results of disobedience. This literature has its own features such as the “oracle” or “vision” which are unique to the prophets.

**The four Gospels:** These are Holy Spirit inspired biographies of Christ’s life, message and sacrifice. Each was written by different authors for different purposes, but all are telling the same story of Christ’s life, teachings, death, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven. The interpreter needs to know the gospel writers intended recipients and purpose to give correct meaning to the gospel he is reading.

**Example:** Luke was not an eye witness to Jesus ministry. He was a like a reporter collecting data from eye witnesses and writing them down. He wrote his gospel account to send to his friend Theophilus.

However, John the Apostle, an eye witness to Jesus life and teachings, tells us why he wrote his gospel. In **John 20:31** he says, “*but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name*”. This is why we call the Gospel of John-the gospel of belief. John wrote his gospel story of Jesus to non-Jews; yet, Matthew’s gospel is very much written to convince Jews that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah, the promised Son of David. The theme of Matthew’s gospel is “fulfilled”.

**Is it a parable?** A parable is a unique kind of literature. It is an earthly story with a heavenly (eternal) meaning. The details of a parable are often not meant to be taken literally. It uses illustrative, pictorial, and dramatic language. If the reader concludes this parable is literally truth, he will make great mistakes and misunderstand God’s true meaning.

For example, in Luke chapter 8 is Christ’s parable of the sower and the seed. This story is highly symbolic, not meant to be taken literally. In Luke 8:19, Jesus says, “*The seed is the word of God*”. You know don’t you that a farmer’s seed put into soil is not literally the same as the Holy Spirit putting God’s Word into your heart. It is the symbolic language of a parable.

**Is it apocalyptic literature?** Such is the book of Revelation, which is highly symbolic, requiring some knowledge of this type of literature to correctly understand its intended meaning. Its images of dragons, angels, demons, wars, and monsters with seven heads can be bewildering to those not familiar with this Jewish apocalyptic prophetic style.

**Is it an epistle?** The epistles are letters written to persons or churches. Letters from apostles Paul, Peter, James, and Jude are apostolic letters written to real people and churches, but written under the Holy Spirit's guidance and inspiration.

So, the literary context demands reading the text carefully, considering the words, sentences, and paragraphs preceding and following a passage. The literary context locates the passage within the larger purposes of a book.

**Example:** See **Luke 17:5** where the disciples said to Jesus, "*Increase our faith*".

The context will show this is not a prayer for more faith, but the opposite- it is a statement of doubt. If you did not read "*Lord, increase our faith*" in its immediate context you would miss its true meaning.

Notice also that a literary context looks for the place of the text in the entire book. Ask yourself, "What is the nature of the purpose of the Book"? Our goal is to discover the author's original intent.

**Example:** Any time you see a "therefore" in the writings of Paul, you must go back to the preceding paragraph, or even chapters, to see what the "therefore" is referring to. By doing this, you discover what the "therefore" is "there- for". It is there for a reason!

**Romans 12:1** begins, "*therefore, I urge you brethren...*" Here, Paul's "therefore" is based upon all God's mercies sited in **Romans 3-11**. Paul is saying that because of all that God has done for us in Christ, we therefore should present our life before him as a living sacrifice in service to His glory.

### Historical context

What is the historical background of a text that might either shed light on its meaning or culturally influence its interpretation? This must include the reader's knowledge of the culture, place in history, customs, idioms, family life, morals and social structures of the date and time the passage or book was written. Ask yourself, "How did the 1<sup>st</sup> recipients receive or view its meaning"? What did the author intend for them to hear?

A good example is the apostle Paul writing to the Roman church saying "*Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated*" (**Romans 9:13**). What does this mean? Surely God does not hate Esau? When Paul wrote this to his recipients in Rome they understood this quote from Malachi 1:21. The Jews in Rome to whom he was writing had knowledge of the Scriptures to understand the story of Jacob and Esau. This is why a serious Bible student needs the following study aids:

- A good Study Bible
- A Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia
- A scholarly Bible Commentary

(Many of these Bible aids are available on the internet for your use)

### 3. How does the Text relate to the Christ event?

Ask yourself, "How does this text relate to Christ- the Living Word of God"? Jesus told us to search the Scriptures looking for him on every page. He said in **John 5:39**, "*Search the Scriptures; it is these that testify of me*". See also Christ's teaching on this in **Luke 24:25-27**.

Thus every Scripture must be interpreted Christologically. This means that when reading a text or passage of Scripture, the interpreter is looking for how the text, especially an old covenant text, foreshadows the Messiah, Jesus, or the Church.

This is the meaning of **Hebrews 1:1-2**, “*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*”

#### **4. How does the whole of the Bible comment on the text and on the partial?**

The interpreter must let the fullness of Scripture unfold the partial. This is another way of saying that the BIG story of the Bible must always influence how we read and understand the smaller stories.

**Example:** In Exodus chapter 20 Moses receives the Ten Commandments. We need the new covenant teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount to rightly interpret the Law, and the teaching of Rabbi Paul in Galatians to tell us the purpose of the Law. Thus the new covenant fulfills the old.

#### **5. What in this text applies to me that I need to respond to?**

Scripture must not be read just for study or your personal knowledge. Since all Scripture is pointing to Christ, we read in order to worship, to serve, and to magnify Him. We must ask, “How does this ancient text relate to me today?”

The reader can ask himself four questions to help in application of Scripture to one’s life:

- What should I do?
- What should I be? (realizing who I am in Christ)
- Where should I go?
- How can I see?
- 

Here are some other questions you can ask to aid in the personal application of truth:

- Try rewriting the text in your own language seeking application to your life.
- How does being “in Christ” relate to my understanding of the text?
- What is required of me if I apply the meaning of the text to me?
- How can I take what God has said to me and give it to someone else?
- What action do I take based on this?

#### **6. How does God get His truth into us?**

1. He speaks eternally thru His inspired Word=the Holy Scriptures -**2nd Timothy 3:16, 17**

2. God speaks to us thru His Spirit- see **John 14-15**

We must always acknowledge the unity of the Spirit and the Word- we cannot understand truth apart from the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of truth. It is the Holy Spirit who can “rightly divide” the Word He wrote. You must prayerfully ask Him to be your teacher.

3. God speaks to us thru His Spirit in His gifted Saints.

Here are some of the ways the Holy Spirit gets truth into us:

- 1) The Holy Spirit gives us illuminated understanding.
- 2) The Holy Spirit can interpret His Word (which He inspired)
- 3) The Spirit will guide us to consensus thru the community of Believers. (Acts 15)
- 4) The Spirit has given the Church grace gifts thru whom He speaks.

The Holy Spirit speaks truth to us through spiritually gifted believers- pastors, teachers, prophets, evangelists etc.





## Preparing a Sermon from the Word of God

An expository sermon is a message from which the major points come directly from the Scripture under consideration. This is exegesis. Too many times preachers are more prone to eisegesis, than they are to exegesis. They read into the Word, rather than extract truth from the Word.

A good sermon is interesting to listen to. The three most important minutes a speaker is on his feet are the 1<sup>st</sup> three minutes and the last three! You have three minutes to get the crowds attention, or you may never get it! So begin with your best attention getter. This attention getter is to be related to the subject matter of the message.

Good Bible preaching is really an uncomplicated art when practiced consistently. Each major point in the message that comes out of the text itself will have three parts to it:

1. EXPLANATION
2. APPLICATION
3. ILLUSTRATION

For Example: Let's take a simple verse like John 3:16

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

Preparation: See if you can state the whole sermon idea in a sentence. For example, let's write a sermon on this verse called, **The Greatest Story Ever Told.**

**Key sentence:** This verse tells us the story of the greatest lover, the greatest love, the greatest gift, and the greatest choice the world has ever heard.

Now you create an outline that explains, applies and illustrates these truths.

### I. **The Greatest Lover...for God..**

**Explanation: (the Who, What, Where, and How of the message.)**

Here is where you answer some basic questions:

1. To whom was it written  
Look to the historical setting  
Why did God say this to them  
What was its meaning then?  
Note: Jesus says these words to Nicodemus, a ruler and religious leader. In the preceding verses Jesus uses an illustration (verses 14,15) of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness to show the cross as evidence of God's love.
2. What does the text say?  
Look at it in several translations.  
Review it in commentaries  
Look up key words in a concordance  
Cross reference verses
3. How did it happen?

**4. What does it say to us today?**

Look for the eternal principle in the earthly setting. In this verse seek to explain these things. Explain who God is. God is love (1<sup>st</sup> John 4:8.) Anything else that gives truthful information is put here. God is just, merciful, God is wrath, etc. but God is love. And love must have an object.

**Application: (the “so what” of the message).**

After explanation we come to application. Just as Explanation is the Who, What and Where of the sermon, even so application is the “so what?” of the sermon. In the application portion of the message the preacher applies the truth to his congregation. He answers the unspoken “so what” of the listener. He may ask, “What is your view of God?” “How do you see him?” The Kikuyu people of Kenya for centuries called God, “Mungo”, and believe he lives on Mount Kenya! The preacher may say, “Do you know that God is love?”

Application makes the message personal. Jesus and the prophets all did this. They applied the truth to their listeners. Peter at Pentecost, turned to those Jewish leaders responsible for Jesus’ death, and said, *“this same Jesus... you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.... and Peter said to them, “Repent...”* (Acts 2: 23-38)

The point here is that preaching must be applied truth. If a man cannot go away knowing what God wants him to do or be, then he either wasn’t listening or the preacher didn’t do his job very well.

**Illustration: (the visual “windows” of the message)**

Now we need a story, a picture to visualize the truth. The illustrations are the windows that let in the light of God’s truth to the soul. Long after a listener forgets the rest of your sermon, they will remember the stories. Jesus knew this and preached picture sermons so men could remember. Luke 15 is a picture sermon. He tells the Pharisees a story of a man who had two sons in order to teach them about God’s Grace and Love. In John 3:16 the preacher can give them an illustration to show that God is love.

**II. The Greatest Love...so loved the world..**

**Explanation:** there are different kinds of love. This word for love is “agape;” it means unconditional love. Only God can love totally unconditionally. Only God can look beyond your faults and see your need. Because we are guilty sinners we need this kind of love. This is GRACE from the Father’s heart. Notice that God’s love has an object, the entire human race. He loves the Whole world. None are excluded.

**Application:** Has God’s love reached your world? God can love you and your heart be closed to Him by your sin and unbelief. There is a God shaped hole in every human heart that only God’s love can fill.

**Illustration:** Now we need a picture again, a window to let in the Light. A good story, poem, saying, even humor to illustrate this truth.

And on it goes through each point, explanation, application, and illustration. This is a simple tool to create a Biblical sermon.

**ONE POINT-SEVERAL APPLICATIONS**

One more thought is helpful here. Not every sermon has to have three main points. It does not even need two points. Some sermons only have one main idea. For example, this John 3:16 verse can be presented

as one main idea- That is, “how much God loves the lost”. If you choose to use only one point, you can vary the three parts of your message by using Explanation, Application, Illustration, in different orders.

### **Mix it up**

There are times you can use two illustrations together, or explanation, then illustrate, then apply. You can mix up if it better serves communication. Your audience and how they “hear” you are vital to how you communicate.

**For example:** In African cultures the people are story tellers. Their ancestry is an oral tradition. Also, the African way of thinking is not analytical like the western mind. So, if your audience is African-use many stories (illustrations) then use the application to apply the stories to real life.

You can even use explanation to give biblical authority to your illustrating and applying.

### **The Conclusion**

Finally, every sermon needs **a conclusion**. The ending or conclusion is when you ask the hearers to respond, to take action. You want them to do something in obedience to God’s spoken Word. The Conclusion is when you tell them what they should do. Again, you should be brief, be decisive, and be clear about what you are asking for. The action is related to the body of the sermon. It states what the sermon said.

## NOTES

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SECTION THREE

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**THE DISCIPLE – LEADER’S WARFARE**

THE DISCIPLE - LEADER'S WARFARE





## **Overview**

Our relationship to God, like any interpersonal relationship, must have communication to be alive and healthy. This book shows you how to develop a genuine desire to talk to God. Included herein is instruction from the teachings of God's Word to help you pray effectively. In addition, you will learn to minister to others through intercessory prayer.

Barry Wood's careful explanation of Scripture reveals how you can have power through answered prayer.

This informative and motivating study guide gives detailed discussion on these and other subjects:

- Praying with power and confidence
- Spiritual warfare and our armor and weapons
- Binding and loosing with the keys of the kingdom
- Unanswered prayer and the will of God
- Fasting and prayer
- Prayer and evangelism
- How disobedience hinders the effectiveness of prayer
- The ministry of intercession
- Why we pray in Jesus' name
- How unforgiveness affects prayer

This section is designed to:

- Teach us to pray
- Motivate us to the ministry of effectual, fervent prayer

Do you know how to pray effectively? Do you sense you have power with God through answered prayer? Let's walk through this challenge together.

We'll cry out with the disciples of old, "Lord Jesus, teach us to pray."



## Introduction

*“What a man is in his prayer closet, that’s what the man really is.”*

—Robert McCheyne

Praying is the most difficult thing we ever learn to do as Christians. Prayer is hard work. It is trench warfare. You may think praying is easy, or even a joy. Yes, it can be! But, real praying, praying that reaches God and moves His heart to answer, is not easy!

Perhaps Jesus’ disciples thought prayer was easy, until they spent time with Jesus. They watched Him agonize with the Father and they cried, *“Lord, teach us to pray like that!”* (Luke 11:1 paraphrase). These Jewish men, who had been taught all their lives how to pray, realized there was more to talking with God than they had thought!

I have traveled much, speaking in many hundreds of churches and observing the lifestyle of many Christians. From my travels, I have become convinced that real praying is a lost art. This “prayerlessness” explains much of our “powerlessness” with God. Our prayer life is our lifeline to the Living God. A believer who doesn’t have “prayer power” doesn’t have “God power”. The test of a believer’s *walk with God* is his *talk with God*. The church preaches, teaches, holds conferences and seminars, and plans activities. We do many good things, but not the one essential thing—*praying!*

### What is Prayer?

Praying is talking to God. It is the speaking part of our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Christianity is, first and foremost, a personal relationship between an ordinary sinner and an extraordinary God. Like all interpersonal relationships, it must have a speaking part! If the relationship is healthy and alive, there is real communication. God is our Father; we are His children. Our family is in trouble if we don’t talk!

### Why Should We Pray?

1. Praying reflects a healthy relationship with God. Every believer should have in his heart a genuine desire to talk to God. When a person prays regularly, there is evidence of such a prayer life in his life and he has desire for more of God. If your relationship with God is good, the desire to talk to Him will be there. Later we will discuss how sin and rebellion destroy our prayer life.
2. Jesus commanded us to pray. *“Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart”* (Luke 18:1). We will “lose heart” if we do not pray “at all times.” Praying is an act of desire and obedience. We are to pray even when we do not feel like it.
3. Praying is characteristic of a healthy Christian experience. Jesus was continuously abiding in the Father through prayer. We are to abide in Him and in His Word so that our prayers will be answered (John 15:7). God needs our prayers, because the world needs the answers God gives!
4. Praying opens the door to supernatural power in our lives. Our prayers can put the Lord Jesus to work in our world. Praying with power allows God to do work He ordinarily would not do. Later in this book you will learn about prayer power and putting it to work!

Let’s explore together the “deeper things” of the Word of God. These truths fall into the categories of prayer, spiritual warfare, and intercession. May Jesus take you into the Holy of Holies with Him in prayer and intercession!



## How to Live Miraculously

*Prayer is a conversation between an ordinary human being and an extraordinary God, often about very ordinary things.*

Most of us feel at times that church, religion, and our faith are ineffective in producing change in our world. We could all use a miracle. If only we could walk with Jesus like the disciples did!

### Miracles Promised

God wants to show you His secrets to miraculous living. In John, we have a tremendous promise from Jesus: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father”* (John 14:12). There is a startling promise! Jesus says every true believer should do two miraculous things:

- Equal Christ’s ministry— *“The works that I do shall he do also . . . .”*
- Exceed Christ’s ministry— *“and greater works than these shall he do because I go to the Father.”*

Amazing! How in the world can the average Christian ever hope to *exceed* the works of Jesus? Such a promise seems ridiculous. Obviously, Jesus had something wonderful in mind, but, what and how?

### Two Keys to Miraculous Living

Our Lord intended for us to equal and exceed His ministry. He told us how this could be accomplished. In John Chapter 14, Jesus teaches two keys to miraculous living after He is gone from this earth:

- Praying in His name
- The coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell the believer

Jesus meant for the promise of verse 12 (to equal and exceed) to be accomplished by what He said in 13 and 14: *“And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”* The promise of verse 12 is to be fulfilled by the “asking” in verses 13 and 14.

Prayer in Jesus’ name is a key that unlocks the door to miracles in your life. The most common experience can be a key to miracles. Jesus continues in verses 15 and following to talk about the Holy Spirit to empower the believer. The Holy Spirit indwells us to give content and faith to our prayers. We have what we need to unlock heaven!

### Why No Miracles

Why do we not see more of the supernatural in the church or in our lives? Most Christians are ignorant of these truths. Jesus tells us to “ask anything” in His name and He will do it. If we know how to ask, He will perform. When a believer asks the Father in Jesus’ name, then Jesus goes to work, continuing His ministry. The more of us who pray, the more ministry He performs.

When you make a need known to God the Father, He turns to God the Son, and tells Him to go meet your need. Jesus gets up off the throne to go meet your need. You ask and the Father sends the Son. What a concept! What a promise! *My prayers put Jesus to work!*



## How to Pray in the Holy Spirit

*The biggest thing God ever did for me was to teach me to pray in the Holy Spirit. We are never really men of prayer in the best sense, until we are filled with the Holy Ghost. Therefore, Lord, teach us to pray in the Spirit.*

—Samuel Chadwick  
*The Path of Prayer*

Have you ever prayed “in the Spirit?” Most Christians have no idea what this means. Others fear this is some “charismatic” extreme and shy away. Yet Scripture commands us to pray “in the Spirit.” Paul urges us to “*pray at all times in the Spirit*” (Ephesians 6:18). The Holy Spirit earnestly desires to help us pray.

Our Lord Christ, in John 14, tells us there are two keys to supernatural living: prayer and the Holy Spirit. We must learn to allow the Holy Spirit to become vitally involved in our communications with the Father. Praying in the Spirit is described graphically in Romans:

*“And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God”* (Romans 8:26, 27).

Notice that the Holy Spirit *Himself* desires to intercede for us. The Holy Spirit’s very nature demands that He help us. He is the “*Spirit of grace and of supplication*” (Zechariah 12:10). The Holy Spirit is our helper in prayer, and praying *must* include His presence and power.

Indeed, **Jude 1:20** commands us to be “*building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit.*”

### When Are You Really Praying?

Real praying is praying in the Holy Spirit. Other “praying” isn’t true praying at all. It is only religious activity. It has no genuine effect on God or the one praying. This is why much public praying is only religious ceremony, meaningless, and monotonous! What a contrast is praying in the Spirit. It is prayer that is energized, empowered, quickened, and sustained by the Spirit of God Himself!

Why are we so surprised that the Holy Spirit should control our praying? We expect Him to empower our preaching, our witnessing, and our worship. Why not our praying?

The acid test of our walk with God is not our preaching, giving, doing, or attending; but our power in praying. Prayer is the barometer of our power with God.

Does God talk to you? Does He listen and answer when you speak to Him? More than this, does He personally energize, empower, quicken, and sustain your talks with Him? This is the real test of godliness.

### Praying “With” the Spirit

Scripture speaks of praying “with” the Spirit as well as praying “in” the Spirit. These two experiences are not the same. In 1 Corinthians 14:14-15, Paul describes praying “*with the Spirit.*” This is not a reference to the Holy Spirit of God, but rather he is referring to your human spirit. Praying with the spirit is praying

with an unknown tongue, wherein the mind doesn't understand what is being said. Many people call this praying in a "prayer language"; however, praying in the Spirit is a different thing. We are not commanded to pray in tongues, but we are commanded to "*pray at all times in the Spirit*" (Ephesians 6:18, bold emphasis added).

Praying in the Spirit is not a "charismatic" experience for a few select folks who belong to a special group or denomination who call themselves charismatic or Pentecostal. Praying in the Spirit is prayer, real prayer. It is for everyone.

### **Guaranteed Answers**

Have you ever prayed to God and really needed assurance that the answer would come? Or have you ever doubted whether you were praying according to God's will? What is the cause for such doubts in your prayer requests? Prayer in the Holy Spirit will guarantee your prayers are according to God's will, because God's Spirit will be giving you the content to your prayers. Note this truth: only a prayer prayed in the Holy Spirit will always be according to the will of God and thus assured a ready reply.

### **When a Lost Man Prays**

The leader of a major denomination raised quite a controversy years ago when, in a press interview, he declared that God would not answer the prayer of a Jewish rabbi because he does not accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Messiah. Many critical voices were raised in chorus against this religious leader. He was assailed as a bigot. Was he? That depends on your view of Scripture.

If we take Scripture seriously, then we see some interesting conclusions about prayer and unbelievers. Jesus teaches us to pray in *His* name, not Yahweh or Allah, or some other deity. He is our mediator to God. We come in His name. The Holy Spirit honors the name of the Lord Jesus. Therefore, a lost man cannot pray in the Spirit, because he does not have the Holy Spirit living in Him. He is "*devoid of the Spirit*" (**Jude 1:19**).

God only answers a lost man's prayers if and when He knows that the answer will move that person toward salvation in Jesus Christ. Acts 10 illustrates this in the experience of the Roman centurion, Cornelius. Scripture describes him as "*a devout man, and one who feared God... and prayed to God continually*" (Acts 10:2). In verse 31 we see that God heard the prayers of Cornelius and answered them! God does answer some pagan prayers; however, He only answers those that will lead a lost man to the Savior Jesus Christ.

### **Strong Assurance**

How blessed is the born-again believer! God's Spirit indwells him and desires to pray through him to assure his answered prayers. Let's turn our attention to Romans 8:26, 27, to learn more about this praying in the Holy Spirit. Paul says we "*... do not know how to pray as we should*" (Romans 8:26).

This is true of every believer. You and I start to pray, and before much time passes, we do not know what to say to our great God. Often we say the wrong things, praying "amiss," as James 4:3 says. At times, I've had to thank God for unanswered prayer, because I was praying for the wrong things from impure motives.

### **Our Helplessness in Praying**

Romans 8:26 reveals to us that we are so helpless in our praying that "we do not know how to pray as we should." Why are we unable to pray as we should? Notice that the Holy Spirit helps our "weakness" (Romans 8:26). The word *weakness* is the singular, not plural. It's not that we have many weaknesses or shortcomings in our prayer life, even though we do have many weaknesses; actually, we have one great



weakness. It affects every area of our lives, not just prayer. It is the weakness of the flesh. Our fallen nature, damaged by sin and self, is our crippling weakness.

In the “flesh,” we cannot please God (Romans 8:8). In our own strength, we cannot “perform” spiritual acts that impress or please God. Preaching, praying, witnessing, giving, serving that are done in our own strength cannot please God. This is our “weakness”.

I once heard this weakness stated as a spiritual axiom. It is an axiom that we must live by. Our weakness is “our total inability to do anything in the spiritual realm in our own flesh.”

This is why the Holy Spirit must help us. He must indwell us, fill us, control us, and live His life through us. When you and I come to the place where we realize our total inability to pray, then God has us right where He wants us—dependent on Him. As long as we try to help God, He can’t help us. Christ Jesus wants to be more than our Savior; He wants to be our life source. In our praying, His Spirit is to be our comforter to heal our infirmity and our strength to replace our weakness.

### **The Helper in Our Praying**

When we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, He can prompt us to pray and put the desire in us. If we lack the desire to pray, we need to get right with Him. Out of His Lordship over us comes the desire to pray. When the Holy Spirit is controlling us, we’ll want to pray and to do it frequently. Also, He will give us the content (words) of our prayer.

Praying in the Holy Spirit means that the Spirit does the praying and makes intercession through us. Using your mind and personality, the Spirit prays through you to the Father. That’s supernatural praying. Do you believe this is possible? Yes, the Holy Spirit can speak through other areas of the Christian life:

- When preaching—God can preach through a man
- When teaching—God can teach through a man
- When living—God can live through a man

Why not when praying? Cannot God pray through a man? Yes, He can. He greatly desires to do so. Romans 8:26 says He “groans” in us, so great is His desire to supplicate through the prayers of a believer.

### **Groanings of the Spirit**

These “groanings” are not always human words. They often are just the Spirit of Jesus in you, desiring fellowship with you. These groanings are just a burden or a divine impulse. Often there are no words; the Spirit just wants us to commune with Him.

How precious is our God to desire to share Himself with our sinful humanness. Too often, we speak rote prayers when we should *be still and know that He is God!*

### **Praying According to God’s Will**

There is one other thought in Paul’s teaching in Romans 8:27: “*He intercedes . . . according to the will of God.*” How can you guarantee that your requests will be answered? It’s really very simple: always pray in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit always prays according to God’s will and every prayer uttered according to God’s will shall be answered with a resounding “Yes.” First John 5:14 promises, “*And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*” Pray in the Spirit and you’ll get answers!

## Praying for Healing

Suppose someone asks you to pray for healing,<sup>1</sup> but you don't know if it's God's will to heal that person! What we usually pray is, "God, if it be Your will, heal this person." That's our escape clause. We put in a theological "if" to protect us. It takes no faith to pray an "if" prayer. This kind of praying does not constitute real praying. It's when we do not know the revealed will of God that we can pray for the Holy Spirit to help us.

## When We Pray

Let's look at some practical guidelines or steps of discipline that can allow God's Spirit to energize our praying before we pray:

1. *Confess every known sin.* Isaiah 59:2 tells us that, "your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear."
2. *Choose against self.* Submit yourself to God and His will. Declare Jesus as Lord of all. Just as you begin your prayer time confessing sin, tell God, "*Jesus is Lord of my Life; Lord Jesus, I'm Yours.*" This verbal confession confirms a commitment in your heart and thrills the heart of God.
3. *Commit your prayer time to the Holy Spirit.* Verbally plead your helplessness. Invite Him to pray through you. Ask Him to control your devotions.
4. *Wait on the Lord.* "*Be still and know that I am God,*" Scripture says. Wait quietly or read the Word a loud. God's Spirit will begin to commune with you. You may get an impression, a thought. Pray it verbally to God. You have every right to believe those thoughts are from God.
5. *Ask, Is it me or God?* You may wonder, "I don't know if the impressions that come are mine or the Lord's." Why does there have to be a difference between what you want and what God wants? If you have just declared Jesus as Lord, confessed every known sin, and asked the Holy Spirit to control your thoughts, then *your* thoughts and *God's* thoughts will be the same! Psalm 37:4 urges, "*Delight yourself in the Lord; And He will give you the desires of your heart.*"

## Praying When You Are Uncertain

Knowing God's will is not always easy.<sup>2</sup> At times, we must follow some guidelines in prayer:

- Pray until you get an answer.
- Pray until you get the assurance of an answer.
- Pray until God says "no."

You may question how God speaks in these situations. He does so through His indwelling Spirit. Scripture commands us to "*let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts . . .*" (Colossians 3:15). How can you have peace in your heart about a request? God's Spirit will grant this peace when He is allowed to "rule" in our hearts. The word *rule* is one of six Greek words translated as "rule" in the New Testament. It means to "act as umpire."<sup>3</sup>

God's Spirit will be our arbitrator in these times of uncertainty. Therefore, pray without ceasing. He will give you peace!

## Promised Answers

Praying for what God has already promised to provide in Scripture is a different proposition. The same Spirit that is in you also wrote the book He inspired. Claiming Bible promises is an act of faith. Pray:

- *Reminding God of His promise.* Quote His Word back to Him.

- *Bringing the need before Him.* “Tell God your needs and don’t forget to thank Him for His answers” (Philippians 4:6 TLB).
- *Claiming the answer by faith.* Jesus promised that “all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you” (Mark 11:24).
- *Praising Him continuously, believing the answer is on the way.* At this point we act as though we already have the answer. We then leave the when, where, and how up to our Great God, knowing, “they shall be granted you.”

In the following sections, we will further develop our understanding of the power of prayer.

## Resources

1. In a previous book, I discuss healing and prayer in detail. See Chapter 7 of *Questions New Christians Ask* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979), pp.76-86.
2. See Chapter 1, “How to Know God’s Will,” in *Questions New Christians Ask*.
3. The word is *brabeuo*; See W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1981), p. 307.



## How to Pray with Power

*The two key elements in authoritative praying is to know who He is to whom you pray and, second, to know who you are in Him. "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened." (Ephesians 1:18).*

Why does God not answer my prayers? Have you ever voiced this question? Who hasn't at one time or another? There are many reasons why God says "no," however, any believer can pray with the confidence that God will answer. Every believer should pray with boldness.

Hebrews 4:16 encourages us to *"draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need."*

### Knowing Who You Are

Confidence in prayer is the result of several factors, one of which is faith. The prayer of faith is the topic of the next chapter. Even more important than having faith in God is knowing who you are in Christ. Identification with Christ is what gives us the courage and confidence to ask boldly before the throne of a Holy God. Only a child of God who knows his or her position in Christ can ever hope to pray with authority. Yet it seems so few modern-day Christians fully understand what identification with Christ really means.

Boldness in prayer arises from the true knowledge of who God is and how He feels about you, His child.

### The Authority of the Believer

Every child of God has "throne rights." These throne rights are a result of what the Lord Jesus did for us on the cross. The believer's throne rights are his authority in Christ Jesus.

Paul the apostle describes our authority in Ephesians 1:18-23:

*"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.*

*These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.*

*And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."*

This passage is really a prayer. Paul prays that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know who you are in Christ. This paragraph is a very definitive passage revealing our throne rights. We are heirs through Christ. We have an inheritance (Romans 8:17), which was purchased for us through the completed work of Christ in His life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

### The Seat of Our Authority

*"Which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:20).* These words tell us that Christ has risen to the throne of

God. He is ruling the universe. This we all know, but did you know that you are ruling with Him in those same “heavenly places”?

Paul affirms this in more detail in two other passages: “*and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus*” (Ephesians 2:6); “*and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority*” (Colossians 2:10).

What a statement! We (all born-again believers) are seated “*with Him*”; we share in His victory. We are coheirs of His rule and power. We are “complete” in Him. Thus, everything that is true of our Lord’s victory of the world, the flesh, and the devil, is also true of the believer. We are at this moment “seated” with Him in heavenly places—not seated when you die, or when Jesus comes again for His church. You are there now, ruling and reigning with Christ far above all rule and authority and power (Ephesians 1:21). All of the power of God that is given to Christ Jesus is also given to the church, “*which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all*” (Ephesians 1:23).

### **Positional Truth**

These truths are what we call “positional” truths. In other words, God sees the church as complete in Christ. From God’s perspective, we have already made our enemies our footstool. God sees us as already in heaven with Him. We do not stand before a Holy God in a position of condemnation as guilty sinners, but we stand in a position of forgiveness, exaltation, and as co-heirs with Christ. God loves us through His Son. We are “in Christ” in our position before God.

### **Position and Prayer**

You may wonder what this has to do with boldness in prayer. Everything! How can you approach the throne of a Holy God with the guilt of sin before your eyes? The apostle John states it well, “*Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God*” (1 John 3:21). Does your heart often condemn you? Does guilt, failure, or lack of confidence keep you from praying and asking? Friend, this is Satan’s trick to condemn your heart. He puts you on a “performance” basis rather than a “positional” basis before God.

In our performance, none is worthy before God. However, in Christ, we are all encouraged to come boldly to the throne of Grace to find help in the time of need. As children of God, we are loved and accepted. We are not beggars coming to God’s back door, begging for scraps. We are rich in Christ, heirs with Him. We ask and receive, because of what He has done and who we are in Him!

### **The Source of Our Authority**

In Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 1, he wants us to see that this great inheritance and power to rule over every name that is named in this age or the age to come (the spiritual world) is given “*toward us who believe*” (Ephesians 1:19). Our faith in this revealed truth is the key to our boldness before God. God’s great power is toward those who believe.

Are you a believer? Not just a doctrinal believer of theology, but an experiential believer?

Paul prays that the “eyes of your heart” be enlightened—not the eyes of reason, or the mind, but the eyes of your heart. These truths of our position in Christ are not understood with the rational mind—they are revealed by the Holy Spirit to *your* spirit. Only the heart can perceive this truth. It is for those who *believe*. It is beyond reason, but *not* beyond faith. Faith is our source of power and authority with God. He has done His complete work in Christ. We must believe what He has accomplished for us. God’s power can be released through prayer when a believer knows in his heart who he is in Christ.

## Mountain Movers

This prayer of faith is what Jesus had in mind when He said:

*“Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you” (Mark 11:23-24).*

What a wonderful promise! Have you got any “mountains” that stand in your way? A “mountain” represents any obstacle that stands between you and the will of God. It may be the devil himself. Jesus says we have the power to remove *any* obstacle just by speaking our faith. We speak to mountains and they move! That’s authority, that’s real power. We have a direct line to the throne room!

## Moses and Joshua

A great illustration of mountain-moving prayer and intercession is found in the experience of Moses and Joshua as they encounter King Amalek and the tribe of Amalekites. God told Moses to possess the land of Canaan; however, obstacles are in the way. Amalek is a fierce pagan king. Moses and Joshua must drive him out. What does Moses do? He has a twofold battle plan. He will fight for God on two fronts—the physical and the spiritual. Joshua will go down to meet the army of Amalek. He will fight in the physical realm. Moses goes to the mountaintop to pray.

Exodus 17 records this strange battle plan:

*“So Moses said to Joshua, ‘Choose men for us, and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.’ And Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill” (Exodus 17:9-10).*

Now, if I had been Captain Joshua, I would have been inclined to argue with General Moses! I would have recommended that Moses go down and fight Amalek and I stay on the mountain and pray. That certainly sounds safer!

## Staff and Swords

Two battles, two enemies, two different kinds of weapons. Joshua fought Amalek with swords and spears, but Amalek was not the real enemy; Satan was the real enemy. Amalek was only Satan’s servant.

*“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).*

Moses fights the real enemy with spiritual weapons. He is interceding for Joshua. In his hand is the staff (rod) of God. This was once only a common stick used to herd sheep. Now since Moses met God on the mountain, this stick is a “rod of God.” This staff is the power of God committed to the hand of a man of faith; in Moses’ hand, this stick is the power of God. So, in faith, Moses on the mountain prays against the mountain that stands before the children of Israel: Amalek. When Moses raises the rod and prays, Joshua defeats Amalek; yet when Moses grows weary and his arms drop down and the rod is lowered, Amalek prevails in battle against Joshua.

What a fight! What a battle! What a war! Yet it was not being won with swords and spears. It was being won or lost in prayer! That’s exactly the way it is in our lives. Your enemy is not Amalek (or your boss, husband, or wife). Your enemy is the power behind that person.

Too often we've fought the wrong battle, with the wrong enemy, using the wrong weapons!

### Using the Rod

I once heard a fellow say, "I wish I had me a stick like Moses. I'd beat up on Amalek like Joshua did." Great news! You *have* a rod like Moses! Every Christian has a rod of God. With it you can part the waters, defeat your Amaleks, and claim the promised land. You have two rods! Our two "rods of God" are our position in Christ and our faith in the name of Jesus. Think again, what was the significance of Moses' staff?

It was the power of God committed to the hand of a man of faith. God has today committed this power to His church. He gives us two rods: our union with Christ and the name of Jesus. Because of who we are in Christ, God asks us to expect to move mountains. Jesus tells us to ask "*in My name.*"

The Williams translation of **Mark 16:17** reads, "*And the following signs will attend those who believe: by using My name they will drive out demons.*" The name of Jesus is the Christian's rod of Moses. By using His name (in faith) we can drive out demons. Each of us has some "demons," or an Amalek that stands in our way. We need to remove them.

We can do as Moses did, using the rod God has given us: the powerful name of Jesus. Our union with Him and our faith in that union give us authority over the world, the flesh, and the devil. That also gives us access to the Father (see Romans 5:2) at *any time of the day or night*. It is my prayer that we can learn to use the rod and begin to win mighty battles through prayer!

### Resources

1. Chapter 9, *Questions New Christians Ask* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979), pp. 93—102.



## How to Pray in Faith

*Faith is not believing God can, or that God will, but real faith is believing that God already has.*

Have you ever prayed a prayer, made some large request of God, then as soon as you said “Amen,” doubted the answer would come? Perhaps you’ve said, “He won’t answer that prayer.”

Well, I’ve done that—to my shame. At times, God has shamed me further by answering the prayer even in the midst of my doubting. He is a sovereign God! However, God does honor the prayer of faith. Faith is the key that unlocks the door to heaven’s treasure house. Faith thrills the heart of God. Listen to the promises of Scripture regarding prayer and faith:

And Jesus answered saying to them:

*“Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you.” —Mark 11:22-24*

Because God is our Father, it pleases Him for us to trust Him. He loves for us to take Him at His word. Nothing pleases Him quite as much as simple, childlike faith. Hebrews says, *“without faith it is impossible to please Him”* (Hebrews 11:6).

This is especially true when we approach Him in prayer. Our Lord stressed this so strongly in Mark 11:22-24. He commands us to have faith in God. He urges us to pray believing so we can *already have* the requests we make. These statements tell us something of the nature of God. He desires to give to His believing children!

### Begging, Shouting, and Apologizing

Jesus tells us to come to God and ask, seek, knock (Luke 11:9, 10). Do you come to pray with the simple trust of a child who knows his father’s love and goodness? Many people I know approach the throne with attitudes that are quite the opposite of faith and trust.

- **The Beggar.** Here’s one man who comes to God like a beggar. He pleads, begs, coaxes, urges, trying to “pry” a blessing out of the clenched fist of a stubborn God. This man, even though he may be a Christian, doesn’t know who he is in Christ, nor does he really know who God is. He is fearful of God, so he is a beggar, pleading.

This attitude is not what our Lord teaches, nor does it honor the cross of the Lord Jesus. It saddens the heart of God.

- **The Shouter.** This person thinks God is hard of hearing! Speak loudly or God won’t hear or answer. You’ve heard this guy in church—without a microphone! In John 14:14, Jesus said, *“Ask Me anything and I will do it”* (paraphrase). Notice He said, “Ask Me,” not “shout at Me.”

You and I do not need to raise our voices to God. He knows the thoughts and intentions of the heart. In contrite heart and simple faith, we “ask.”

**The Apologizer.** This pathetic saint thinks every approach to God should begin with an apology. “Well, God, here I am again. Yeah, it’s me, the original screw-up!” This fellow wears sackcloth and ashes to church and has a cloud of doom over his head for a halo. His favorite invocation is “Woe is me!” Now, guilt can be very real, and it is a terrible thing. Guilt is a thief that robs us of all joy in the Lord. In my book *Questions New Christians Ask*,<sup>2</sup> we have discussed the fact that the Christian does not stand before a Holy God guilty and condemned. Even the defeated, carnal Christian is not excluded from God’s presence (perhaps excluded from His *pleasure*, but never His presence).

### **The Believer**

When approaching God’s presence in prayer, our disposition is not to be that of a beggar, shouter, or an apologizer, but rather that of a confident believer. We do have access to God. Romans 5:2 states it well: “*By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand . . .*” (KJV).

There are two things about this verse that excite me. First is the word *access*. It means an “introduction,” like an introduction into the presence of royalty. It means a letter of recommendation, a *carte blanche*.

In Christ, we also have “access” into the throne room of the King of the universe. In Him, we have a passport that introduces us as worthy, because of our blood-bought relationship in Christ. Paul also says that we “have access.” The verb *have* is in the perfect tense rather than the more common present tense, the emphasis being that we have eternally complete access to God which can never be changed or revoked. We continuously stand in grace, loved by God forever! What a marvelous truth to live by! Thus, when we come to pray, we must believe we are welcome in His presence!

Thou art coming to a king,  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
His grace and power are such,  
You can never ask too much.

### **Different Kinds of Faith Not Just Wishing**

Because faith pleases God so much and allows Him to work in our lives, it is extremely important that we know what faith is and how it works. *Faith* is a term that means different things to different people. What is important is to know what *God* means by “faith.” A good learning tool is to state what a thing is not. Faith is not wishing or hoping. Nor is it to be confused with the power of positive thinking. Biblical faith is not just faith in faith. It is faith in God!

People often will say, “God can do anything,” and call this faith. Of course God can do anything, but it doesn’t take much faith to believe that. You cannot get to heaven on that kind of faith. What if the thief on the cross next to Jesus had said, “Jesus can save me.” Would that have saved him? No, it would not have. There is no trust involved, no asking to be received, and no dependence on God.

Others have the “God will” kind of faith. This is better than the “God can” kind of faith, because this person says, “God will meet my needs. God will save me from my sins some day.” However, a man cannot get to heaven on this presumptuous kind of idea. To believe God will do something is not the same as asking and claiming in faith that He has done it.

### **Biblical Faith**

Real faith is the “God has” met my needs kind of trust. This is the scriptural faith spoken of in Hebrews Chapter 11: “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (Hebrews 11:1 KJV).

Faith is not hoping; faith is *having*. The word translated “substance,” means reality, or real nature of, as it refers in Hebrews 1:3 to Christ being the substance of God Himself. Therefore, if I have faith in a thing hoped for, it becomes a reality in my life. If I believe it, I’ve got it! Amazing? Yes, but nonetheless true.

This is Jesus’ teaching in Mark 11:24: “*All things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you.*” The moment I truly believe, the answer is on the way. The language of the original text is so strong that the *New American Standard Bible* rightly corrects the Authorized Version from “you *shall* receive” to the correct tense, “you *have* received.”

Thus, the moment you truly believe, you have already (past tense) received! I didn’t say it—Jesus did! Faith is receiving. Someone defined scriptural faith this way, “Faith is acting like it’s so when it’s not so, and it shall be so.” Faith is turning things hoped for into reality.

### **Faith and God’s Will**

Jesus told us to have “faith in God.” That includes God’s plan and purpose for your life. He is sovereign, and His will is supreme. All the faith in the world will not change His sovereign will. People with cancer have believed God would heal their sickness, and yet they died. First John 5:14 qualifies this clearly when it says, “*if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*” Verse 15 assures us that when we ask (in faith) according to His will, “we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

When we know the revealed will of God as clearly stated in Scripture, we can claim it as a promise. God always makes provisions for us before He makes promises *to* us. We can live or die by the promises of God. Prayer is simply turning God’s promises into daily provisions.

### **I’m Untouchable!**

I once spent two weeks in Romania. Everywhere I went I was followed by the secret police. The pastors with whom I was working lived under continuous threat to their safety. I asked one of these courageous men how he could sleep at night. Did he not fear for his life? With an angelic smile, he replied, “I’m untouchable. As long as God has work for me to do, the police cannot harm me.” Tears filled my eyes. I was made to feel both shame and pride. I thought of David’s words, “*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?*” (Psalms 27:1).

This dear man of God was like Daniel in the lions’ den, but his heart was not troubled, because God had promised to close the mouths of the lions. We need to remember this when we pray. Anything God has promised in His word, we should claim as our provision. Faith is simply taking God at His word and expecting Him to do what He says He will do.

### **Faith is Seeing**

Are there things you hope for, wish for, or dream about? How can you make your dreams come true? First, remove those things that are not God’s will but only your selfish desires. Secondly, believe a simple promise such as **Philippians 4:19**: “*And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus*” God hasn’t promised to give me all my wants; He *has* promised to meet my needs. Hebrews says faith is “the evidence of things not seen.” Suppose you have a need, a real and genuine need. How can you “see” the evidence of this hoped-for need being provided?

### **God’s Miraculous Provision**

When I was a college freshman, I began to see God’s miraculous provision. The rent was due on my apartment. My roommate and I were both broke. Where was the rent going to come from? We were nearly a month behind. We finally gave up trying to figure out how to earn this money and, as a last resort, began to pray. I was 19, a young, would-be preacher seeking the rent from my Heavenly Father!

That week, I got a letter from the United States Forestry Service in which was a check for the rent! Well, not for the rent, but it was for me! The previous summer, I had been “drafted” one day to fight a forest fire in Oregon. We had worked all day and night fighting that blaze. What I didn’t know at the time was that the government *pays* you for fire fighting! So, months later, here comes a check in the mail, the very week I prayed and asked God to meet a very real need!

Faith is seeing the needs you hoped for. When we believe God and ask Him, He is honor-bound to keep His word. Christian friend, we have not because we ask not. Believe and ask so God can provide. Anything we need, we can have if we believe it is already provided.

### **Seeing is Believing**

There are two groups of people with two kinds of faith. The first group is the “seeing is believing” group. In John 20:25 (KJV), Thomas said, *“Except I shall see . . . I will not believe.”* He had to see a resurrected Lord before he would believe in a resurrected Lord. Thomas had sense faith. We say, “Lord, You give me victory, then I’ll believe I have it.” THAT’S NOT FAITH! That’s why Jesus said you’ve got to believe you’ve already got it and *then* you’ll have it.

Jesus did not compliment Thomas. He said, *“Blessed are those who never see, and they don’t need to see—they just believe!”* (John 20:29, author’s paraphrase). That is scriptural faith. We need to move out of the realm of the senses and move into the realm of the Scriptures. Here is where we discover that “faith is seeing what I hope for.” If I have the conviction that I have already received what God has promised, then I shall SEE what I hoped for! Again, this is saving faith. You didn’t see Jesus die and rise from the grave the third day; you just trusted the Word. It was all the evidence you needed. You believed the Word, and then you saw Jesus and experienced His forgiveness. Faith is acting like it is so when it is not so, and it will be so!

### **A Leper’s Faith**

Luke 17 describes 10 lepers who came to Jesus crying, *“‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’ And when He saw them, He said to them, ‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’ And it came about that as they were going, they were cleansed”*. A cleansed leper had to show himself to the priest to be approved that he was really healed. Jesus told the lepers to go to the priest *before* they are healed. What if they had said, “Lord, we can’t go to the priest—we’re not healed yet”? Jesus, in effect, said, *“Act as though it is when it isn’t, and it will be so.”* They believed and started toward the temple, and *“ . . . as they were going, they were cleansed . . . And He said to him, “ . . . ‘Your faith has made you well’”*.

### **Victory and Faith**

I John 5:4 equates victory in life with faith in God. *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”* Do you see this fantastic truth? We already have the victory if we have the “God has” kind of faith. “Has overcome” is in the perfect tense in the original text. It could be translated *“and this is the victory that overcame the world, is overcoming the world, and will overcome the world— our faith.”* Thus, victory is *already* provided! You have the victory by *believing* that Jesus Christ has already won it (I John 5:5).

You say, “Do you mean I have the victory over every problem just by believing I have the victory?” That’s right! That’s exactly right! You say, “I don’t believe that!” No, and you don’t have victory either! Believe it, and you will! Faith is victory! Jesus Christ has already won the victory over every foe: the world, the flesh, and the devil (Hebrews 2:14; Colossians 2:14, 15; 1 John 3:8, 4:4). You don’t have any victories to win. Jesus won them all 2,000 years ago. Once you believe it, stand on it, and claim it. His victories are your victories!

This kind of “God has already won the victory” faith provides salvation. You must believe God has

already provided salvation in and through Jesus Christ. The lost sinner must come to God and accept God's provision by repenting of sin and saying, "Thank You, Jesus, it is already done." The way you received salvation is the same way you receive daily victory and guidance. If you have faith, you have the substance. Whatever your need is, just believe it is already yours, and it is yours.

May God add to your asking-believing.

"Lord, teach us to pray in faith, claiming what is already ours in Christ."

**Resources**

1. See Luke 11:9-13.
2. Chapter 4, "Can a Christian Lose His Salvation?" discusses the problem of guilt and forgiveness in detail.



## Why Do We Pray in Jesus' Name?

*Praying in the name of Jesus is a believer's carte blanche to God the Father. Our faith in that holy name is our access to the throne room.*

When I was a small boy, my parents began to expose me to religion by enrolling me in a Roman Catholic school. My first three years of schooling came from this parochial education. The first prayer I ever remember praying audibly was a memorized “grace” at the lunch table in this school.

Many Catholic children have recited this little prayer to God before eating: “Bless us, O Lord, in these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

That was my first prayer, and not a bad one at that. However, that last phrase used to intrigue me—“...through Jesus Christ our Lord.” As I grew older, I began to hear others “sign off” their petitions with “in Jesus’ name. Amen.” My curious mind pondered the “why” of this practice of praying “in Jesus’ name.” I was an adult before the real truth of this common verbal exercise was driven home to my heart.

### A Simple Request

Jesus was giving His disciples profound teaching on obedience, the Holy Spirit, and prayer in John 1:16. In the midst of that teaching, three times our Lord told His followers to ask things of God “in My name”: “Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you *in My name*. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full” (John 16:23, 24, emphasis mine). Christ had already urged this in chapter 14 and again in chapter 15 (John 14:13,14 and John 15:16). This repetition was no doubt used to drive home this simple yet profound principle: the way to God’s heart is through His Son’s name.

### Nothing Asked, Nothing Received

This teaching was unique and new to these Jewish followers. Never before in history had a Jew prayed to Jehovah God in the name of a man! That’s why Jesus says, “*Until now you have asked for nothing in My name*” (John 16:23). This is revolutionary teaching. It lies at the very center of Christian theology. Jesus says there is a new path to God’s throne that has never been traveled. There is a new phone number to God’s private line that has never been used—dial it! “*Until now, you’ve never come to the Father in My name. Now do it, and My Father will give you whatever you ask,*” says the Lord Jesus.

What a paradox! Until that time, no one had ever prayed to God “in Jesus’ name.” Probably this was not done by the early followers of Christ until after Pentecost. It took the prompting of the indwelling Holy Spirit to get the early church to pray in Jesus’ name.

Today, millions pray daily prayers, often by rote and then casually close their prayers with a meaningless “in Jesus’ name.” Once the church understands the power and potency of the name of Jesus, our prayers will bring Pentecost again. It was faith in the power of that Name that ignited the early church, and it can ignite faith and fire in your heart when and if you understand why God honors the name of Jesus.

### In My Name

Why pray in Jesus’ name? Why not Buddha, or Allah, or some other great religious teacher or prophet? To pray in Jesus’ name is to acknowledge that our access to God’s presence is through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Just as the Jews could not enter the Holy Place in the temple without blood atonement (on Yom Kippur), even so the sinner cannot enter the presence of Holy God without the shed blood of Jesus

Christ. Only through His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension can we have a Father-Child relationship with God. A sinner without a savior has no hope of forgiveness.

*“Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.... For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Hebrews 9:22) and, “therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus” (Hebrews 10:19).*

That’s why we come to God’s throne in Jesus’ name. It is asking on the merits of His righteousness. It is as if we say to God, “God, I ask these things, not because of who I am or because of my goodness. I ask because Jesus told me to come to You and to tell You He sent me. He said You’d answer my prayer for His sake, not mine.”

### **When Father Owns the Store**

Suppose you need groceries. You go to the supermarket and buy everything you ever needed in the way of food and household commodities. You come to the checkout stand with ten cartloads of food and other merchandise. The checker rings up the total on the register. The register tape reaches to the floor; it’s an enormous amount of money. The checker looks at you in wonderment and with a bit of suspicion. Let’s say the total comes to \$5,000. Now you say to the checker, “Let me have that tape; I’m just going to sign it.” The checker is astonished. “Sign it? Who do you think you are, the owner?” You reply, “No, as a matter of fact, I am not the owner, but my father is. I am the owner’s only son, heir to the fortune.”

This is what Jesus means when He tells us to ask the Father in His name. Everything that belongs to God the Father also belongs to His only begotten Son. Jesus is co-owner of the store. He has told His Father that we can sign the ticket in His name. The Father is honor-bound to answer your prayer in Jesus’ name just as though *Christ Himself* were doing the asking. The believer is so united to Christ that our asking is His asking through His Spirit in us. Incredible truth!

### **Using the Rod of God**

We’ve seen Exodus 17 and Moses’ “Rod of God.” We saw that our rod is faith in the name of Jesus. In Mark 16:17, Jesus tells us to make use of His name, even to putting demons to flight. It is exciting to watch the disciples practice what Jesus preached.

After Pentecost, Peter and John were on the way to the temple to pray. Jesus is gone back to the Father, but His Spirit now indwells these two men. Outside the temple, Peter and John met a crippled man, begging for money from those on their way to the temple. A thought crossed Peter’s mind—no doubt prompted by the Spirit of Jesus in him: “Peter, use your rod. Make use of My name. Ask the Father. See the miracle.” Impulsively, Peter said to the cripple, *“I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!”* (See Acts 3: 1.)

There, for the first time, one of the twelve did it. They took Jesus at His word, made use of His name, and moved into the miraculous. Later, when the Jewish authorities questioned Peter and John as to how the man was healed, they joyously replied, *“on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man”* (Acts 3:16). Put your faith in the name of Jesus and God will put His power in it.



## What is Spiritual Warfare?

*Satan has the power to hold the answer back—for a while to delay the result—for a time. He has not the power to hold it back finally, if someone understands and prays with quiet, steady persistence. The real pitch of prayer therefore is Satanward.*

—S.D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Prayer*

The Christian life is a life of warfare. The Christian is a part of an eternal struggle between good and evil. To be a child of God is to fight against the forces of evil all the days of your life. Yet, so very few are truly aware of this spiritual conflict.

Most church members act as though the enemy is dead and they are at last in Zion. Someone has said that the old ship of Zion is not a luxury liner on which we sail leisurely into heaven's harbor; it is a battleship, a man of war in which we engage the enemy daily.

What then is this spiritual warfare? Who is the enemy? What are our weapons? How is this war ever fought? These are the questions for which we shall seek God's answers from His Word.

### The Enemy

Paul, writing to the Ephesian believers, describes spiritual warfare and the nature of the enemy: "*Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places*" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

Our enemy Satan is a mighty foe, a fallen archangel whose heart is full of hatred toward the Lord Jesus and His kingdom. Satan is the spirit ruler of a kingdom of darkness. He leads "world forces of spiritual wickedness." Whether or not you believe in a Satan and demon forces is vital to your victory or defeat in this conflict. To pretend there is no enemy is to guarantee your defeat. Folks who do not believe the devil exists are those who have more devil in them than anyone else!

### A "Spirit" War

Notice Scripture describes this warfare as "spiritual" in nature. We are not fighting in the physical realm—"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood." This is an invisible war fought against invisible foes—Satan and his minions. Many believers are losing this war by default because they simply have not shown up for the war. Satan wins unopposed, because the Christian refuses to fight in this "spiritual" battle. Mark it down: *this war is spiritual, not physical* Church buildings and budgets will not win this struggle.

Church committees and charities will not defeat "spiritual wickedness in high places." The point we must understand is that our daily problems are not physical in nature. They only seem to be. Behind every physical problem, there is a deeper, truer, spiritual problem or reality. The physical is only the tool of the spiritual. Matthew 16:21-23 illustrates this truth for us. Jesus has just foretold His coming death in Jerusalem. Simon Peter speaks up, saying, "*God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You*" (verse 22). Now, notice the rebuke Jesus gives, "*Get behind Me, Satan! . . .*" Our Lord does not rebuke Peter, but he rebukes the spirit power behind Peter's words. Satan had spoken through Peter's mind and voice. The problem was not Peter, but the power behind Peter: Satan. Often the problem is not in the physical at

all, but rather spirit forces at work behind the scenes manipulating the physical realm.

Daily we fight a spiritual, unseen war. In Ephesians, Paul describes our “struggle.” The King James Version translates this word as “wrestle.” The idea of this word is hand-to-hand combat. This war is your own personal battle. To be saved is to be involved in struggle against these world forces of darkness. Christian, you are involved whether you like it or not. Sadly, so few Christians are even aware of this conflict. Satan is very determined to defeat each Christian, and naturally he prefers to do so without the believer even being aware of his presence.

### **Spiritual Weapons**

If we are to fight a spirit warfare, we shall need spiritual weapons. Our armor and weaponry must be adaptable to the enemy and his tactics. Paul describes the Christian’s armor when he says:

*“Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”* (Ephesians 6:13-17).

Here is a picture of you and me dressed in battle fatigues, armed and ready for battle. The belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, marching boots, a shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit; these are your weapons. What armor! You are equipped for hand-to-hand combat with the devil himself. You are ready: show me the battle, take me to the front lines. Let’s get it on! Okay, here is the war; listen to Paul’s words in the next verse: *“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints”* (Ephesians 6:18).

### **Prayer is the War**

Now, can you beat that? You are dressed in battle gear, ready to fight, and Paul tells you to pray! Pray? That’s right, pray. You see, disappointing as it may seem, prayer *is* the war. The armor is merely preparation for prayer. The Christian warrior is a prayer warrior. This spiritual warfare is fought by an army marching on its knees. Our enemy is spiritual, so we must use our greatest spiritual weapons against him. Prayer is the means whereby we enter the spirit conflict. Here is where many churches and Christian leaders are missing out on the war. We have thought that our problems were lack of funds, facilities, or organizations. If only our church had this or that, then we could do great things for God. God help us! We are never going to defeat the devil with buildings, budgets, or bombs. If and when we overcome the Evil One, it will be through the power of prayer. This has always been God’s way.

### **The Evangelist and Revival**

I am an evangelist and I have preached in hundreds of churches around the world. Seldom has a church truly believed that prayer is the battle. To prepare for a week of preaching, the average pastor will put ads in the paper, on TV, and posters in business places, announcing the coming crusade. He will promote attendance with gimmicks and gadgets to get people to the crusade. All of this is good and proper, but these are physical efforts; the battle, though, is spiritual!

Seldom does the church put on the armor and go to war in prayer. I am talking of real intercessory prayer. This type of prayer causes us to “get down in the trenches” and “wrestle” in hand-to-hand combat until the victory is won. It’s much easier to go hear the evangelist preach. It is much harder to kneel in prayer believing God for a blessing or revival. When we leave out this important step, we then wonder why there is no great moving of God’s Spirit among the people.

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Years ago I preached in Romania. There, in a communist country, we preached to crowds of three to four thousand every night in a building that seats only eight hundred. There was no advertising in the paper, no television, and no posters. There was no promotion, because it is illegal in the communist system to promote religion. What a blessing! I almost wish it were illegal in the West. Then maybe we couldn't depend on the flesh and we would be forced to depend on the Lord. In Romania, the believers face the Prince of Darkness every day. They are in a struggle for survival. Prayer is their one resource, and they are using it as a mighty weapon to tear down satanic strongholds. Thousands are coming to Christ in the midst of great opposition and persecution. Prayer is the war. When we don't pray, we lose by default.

### **Prayer and Evangelism**

Evangelism is a spiritual warfare won by intercession. When a lost person is born again into God's kingdom, you can count on it: someone prayed for that person. Someone "stood in the gap" for that lost soul. Only when we drive the enemy off the battlefield of the human heart is the lost man free to respond to God's grace. Preaching, witnessing, programs, and all other church work are good and necessary, but these are not the real conflict. Satan fears us most when we take our spiritual weapons and use them against him in prayer.

Earlier, we cited the example of Moses and Joshua fighting against Amalek. The battle is recorded in Exodus 17:9-16. As Joshua was fighting the battle down on the plains, Moses was praying for him up on the mountain. Moses was fighting the real battle against the spiritual forces of evil that were empowering the idolatrous King Amalek. Moses intercedes and Joshua prevails against Amalek. You see, Joshua might as well have been a third-string quarterback called in at the last quarter when the Israelites were ahead 100 to 0. As long as Moses was doing battle, it was easy for him to move in and "discomfit" Amalek (Exodus 17:13 KJV).

### **Satan Opposes Our Prayers**

When a Spirit-filled, believing child of God begins to pray excitedly, Satan trembles. He knows that such praying is supernatural. It puts God in the fight. He cannot win against such weapons. This is why Satan will actively oppose your prayer life. Have you observed how difficult it is to spend time in prayer? We find time for every other "religious" activity; we attend church, Bible class, and even witness now and then. However, when it comes to prayer—real communion with God—it seems every conflict imaginable will occur. This is Satan's work. He will hinder your prayer life whenever possible. Prayer is warfare, make no mistake about it!

Dr. Stephen Alford was for many years pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in New York City. I once heard the great man describe how Satan would oppose his prayer life. He said that for many years he could not understand why his thoughts would ramble in prayer. Often vile, hateful or lustful thoughts would enter his prayer time. Finally, he discovered the warfare. He came to realize that these thoughts were "fiery darts" shot from Satan's bow to destroy his intercessions and prayers.

Praying is more than meeting God. It is also the time we engage the enemy. This is not to imply that in praying we address the devil. God forbid! However, he is there to oppose us, we must deal with him. In a later chapter, we will discuss this matter of dealing with the devil through the "binding and loosing" mentioned in Matthew 18:18. For now, it is enough to know that Satan does oppose our prayers. He can even delay the answers to prayer.

The clearest illustration that prayer is a spiritual warfare is found in the Old Testament. **Daniel 10:13** describes young Daniel the Prophet spending three weeks in fasting and prayer. After this period of intense spiritual conflict, an angel arrives, sent to Daniel in answer to his prayer. Now, God has never sent an angel (that I could see) to answer one of my prayers, but then I've never prayed and fasted as earnestly as Daniel did! When the angel speaks to Daniel, he says a most remarkable thing, "*Do not be afraid,*

*Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words” (Daniel 10:12).* Notice the phrase, “from the first day.” The angel started to come to Daniel from the first day he prayed. Why did it take him three weeks to get there? In the next verse, the angel explains his delay: *“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for 21 days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me....,”*

This is mind-boggling! Here Daniel is praying, and in the unseen, invisible world of the spirit, a battle begins. God sends an angel (messenger) to answer Daniel, but the prince of Persia (an ancient allusion to Satan) opposes the angel. For 21 days the angel battles Satan himself, all because Daniel is praying and fasting! The angel is no match for Satan, so God finally sends Michael, the archangel, to end the conflict and victory is won. Satan was preventing the answer to Daniel’s prayer.

Whether you take this passage to be symbolic or literal, one fact is clear: Praying puts us into the realm of the spirit where the real fight exists. Prayer is warfare, and it is so vital to God that it can even put angels to work. Your prayers, lifted up in faith and sincerity, can activate the hosts of heaven. Scripture tells us that God’s angels are ministering spirits sent out to render service for those who touch the supernatural with their prayers (Hebrews 1:13-14).

### **A Call to Arms**

Genuine praying is at the heart of the church’s ministry. Praying is so much more than saying thanks to God, or asking Him for things. Prayer is a call to arms. It is very serious business. Through prayer, we touch heaven and attack hell. It is not for the faint of heart or weak in faith.

Most of the remainder of this book is devoted to the “deeper things” of intercession and warfare. You may think we’re already so deep we are in over our heads! Again we join with Paul in his prayer “that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.” Lord, teach us to pray.

## Becoming a Prayer Warrior

*There is a serious deficiency in the outworking of the spirit filled life if it does not issue in a revitalizing experience in the realm of prayer.*

—Arthur Wallis, *Pray in the Spirit*

Each Christian has the right to pray and the ability to pray. However, not every Christian is prepared to enter into spiritual warfare. The deeper things of intercession and prayer are reserved for those who are equipped. Like a young soldier going to boot camp for basic training, the Christian must “*put on the full armor of God*” before being “*strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might*” (Ephesians 6:11, 10).

### The Boot Camp of Prayer

The armor Paul speaks of in Ephesians 6: 1-17 is really preparation for prayer. Because prayer is where we meet God and also encounter the enemy Satan, we must be prepared by putting on God’s full armor. The Apostle Paul gives us sound advice on preparing for a ministry of prayer. He tells us to pray by:

- “Standing firm.”
- “Using the “sword of the Spirit.”
- Praying “in the Spirit.”

### Pray Standing Firm

We are encouraged to stand fast against “*the schemes of the devil*” (Ephesians 6:11) by putting on the full armor of God. What Paul means is that our foundation for prayer must be the completed work of Christ. We stand on the victory He won at the cross. Also, we are to live a holy and obedient life before God. We are armored with the breastplate of righteousness; we have marching shoes on to show our obedience, to go where He commands. So we pray from a position of strength. We can pray with boldness.

In the next chapter, we will see more about our victory over the enemy when we discuss the weapons of our warfare.

### Pray With the Sword of the Spirit

“*And take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*” (Ephesians 6:17). An effective prayer warrior uses his weapon of the Word of God. The sword of the Word is an offensive weapon in a praying Christian’s life. Persons who pray effectively use the Bible in their prayer life. Power in prayer and knowledge of the Bible are inseparable. Do you know how to use the Word in your prayer life?

### Hold the Word up to the Lord

Use the Word when you talk to God. Remember, the Bible is a book of promises the Father has made to His children. We can expect God to keep His Word. Hold Him to it in faith. Quote it back to Him in prayer. Often, when I’m praying, Scripture will be a large portion of the context of my praying. At times I’ll begin my time with God just by reading it to Him, I especially like to read the Psalms aloud in my praying. The value of holding the Word up to the throne is that the biblical promises are like an “IOU” from God to us. We are co-heirs with Christ, so everything that belongs to Christ is our inheritance also.

Praying with the sword is claiming your new birthrights. The believer comes to the throne of God and says, “Father, I am Your child, and You said that You would supply all my needs [Philippians 4:19], and I am going to hold You to Your Word today.”

### **Hold the Word up Against the Devil**

When you pray, use the sword of the Spirit against the enemy. Satan hates and fears the truth of God's Word. Use it on him—it cuts him to shreds! The sword of the Word can drive Satan off the battlefield and into retreat. There will be times in prayer that Satan will attack you with evil thoughts, desires, or destructions. He will do all in his power to hinder your prayer time. Hold the Word up to him. Isaiah 54:17 says, "*No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper . . .*"

The devil knows he is a defeated foe, but he runs a bluff much of the time. You must let him know *you* know he's defeated. Quote the Word to him. Often I just rebuke him to his face: "Satan, you are a liar." The Bible says, "*. . . the Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil*" (1 John 3:8). Satan cannot withstand the truth of God's Word; he will flee.

### **Hold up the Word to Lift the Soul**

At times, you may not feel like praying. Quote the Word out loud for yourself and God. Often the Holy Spirit will use the Scriptures to lift your soul upward, to prepare your heart for prayer and intercession.

### **Pray in the Spirit**

Paul then tells us to enter this spiritual warfare by "praying at all times in the Spirit." You and I cannot become prayer warriors without these three preparations. We learn to pray standing firm on the completed work of Christ, praying with the Word of God as our offensive weapon, and praying in the power and infilling of the Holy Spirit. Real praying is Holy Spirit infused. It is praying that is God breathed and sustained. Only as we are yielded to the Spirit of Holy God can we hope to become holy warriors in prayer. We've mentioned the sword of God's Word as a weapon in prayer, but now I want to turn our attention to two other mighty weapons of prayer warfare: the cross and our identification with Christ.

## Using the Weapons of Spiritual Warfare

*From strength to strength go on;  
Wrestle, and fight, and pray;  
Tread all the powers of darkness down,  
And win the well-fought day.*

—Charles Wesley

Praying takes many forms—it can be worship where we communicate praise to God. Prayer can be work! The “hardest” praying you will ever do will be in intercessory prayer for other people. And, prayer can be warfare. When praying is of the Spirit, from the heart, it will always engage the enemy.

Because there are times when prayer is spiritual warfare, we’ll need spiritual weapons to defeat the “spiritual wickedness in high places” that we will encounter.

### A Battle Plan

Every Christian needs a basic understanding of how spiritual warfare is fought and the weapons needed to overpower the enemy. Jesus’ disciples once came against a demon-possessed boy and could not cast out the demon. The father of the boy brought the lad to Jesus, who immediately cast out the evil spirit. Later, the disciples asked our Lord why they had not been able to cast out the demon. Jesus replied:

*Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you. [Then, some manuscripts add the following words:] But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” (Matthew 17:20-21)*

We are much like those early disciples. We become powerless against the demonic forces we face every day. We have the resources to move these mountains if only we had the faith and understanding to apply our resources. Let’s study the weapons God has given us to live victoriously and to pray powerfully.

### The Weapon of the Cross

In Ephesians 6:11-14, Paul tells us repeatedly to “stand firm.” In other words, “hold your ground.” The “ground” he was referring to was the ground Jesus Christ won for us when He died and rose again. Calvary was a spiritual battlefield in which Jesus conquered enemy territory for God and a lost world. In His victory, He conquered the world, the flesh, and the devil.

In Colossians 2:13-15, we have two beautiful “word” pictures describing our Lord’s victory won at the cross and empty tomb. Paul says,

*And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.*

The “certificate of debt” that Paul refers to is an allusion to the Roman law of Paul’s day. When Jesus Christ was crucified, the soldiers nailed an inscription above His head on the cross. It read, “King of the

*Jews.”*

This inscription was a certificate of debt, a legal charge brought against Jesus by His accusers. In Roman times, it was common for a legal charge to be brought before a judge. The judge would then rule guilty or innocent. If guilty, the accusation or certificate of debt would be attached to the cell door of the imprisoned, or in our Lord's case, nailed to the cross. Therefore, all could see and know the legal charge for which the guilty was accused. Jesus was accused of treason against Rome as King of the Jews; hence the inscription over His head.

Paul says in Colossians 2:14 that when Jesus died He blotted out the “certificate of debt... which was hostile to us.” Notice, this legal charge or certificate was “against us,” not against Christ. Thus, there was another certificate of debt on that cross; it was invisible, but there nonetheless. It was a debt we owed that Jesus paid by His death.

Satan is the accuser. He has a sin list on every sinner. He brings his accusation against the sinner at the throne of God. Satan presents his certificate of debt before God. We sinners are guilty as charged, and “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Now, what did God do for us? He took the certificate of debt, nailed it to the cross, and blotted it out with the precious blood of His only Son. God settled our case out of court, on the cross.

### **Satan's Only Weapon**

The truth of this for us to apply is that Satan's only weapon to use against us is our sins. Jesus has blotted out, totally removed, our sins. Satan has no legal claim on us. Jesus died for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Therefore, by His death on the cross, Jesus defeated the devil. That's the first word picture Paul used in Colossians 2.

### **Colossians 2:15**

The second word picture is from Roman military conquest. Jesus made an “open disgrace” of the devil through His cross. This “open disgrace” is a reference to Caesar's conquest in battle. When the Romans defeated an army, they would disgrace the enemy by disrobing the defeated king or general. When this person was disrobed, he and his conquered army were made to march behind Caesar's chariot (or the Roman commander) in chains and stripped of armor and weapons. When the Romans marched back into Rome, the people mocked the defeated slaves who walked wearily in chains behind the victorious Caesar. When did Jesus disgrace the devil? At the cross! When did Jesus *openly* disgrace him? When He rose from the grave! When Jesus conquered death, He “*disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them*” (Colossians 2:15). Satan has no weapons to use against the blood-bought child of God.

### **Using the Cross as a Weapon**

How does this relate to spiritual warfare? In every way this war is fixed. We have already won. The victory is appropriated when we pray! Satan has no claim on us or on those for whom we pray. When we pray using faith in Christ's completed work, we bring Calvary's victory to our situation!

In praying for lost people, I remind the devil that Jesus has already redeemed my lost friend. I command Satan to release his hold on that person for whom Christ died. I “plead the blood” of Christ against him. Revelation 12:11 says, “*they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony.*” We can overcome him the same way. The words of Martin Luther's great hymn come to mind: “. . . *we tremble not for him; . . . one little word shall fell him.*”<sup>2</sup>

### **His Victory, Our Victory**

I want to stress this principle of our total identification with Christ. His victory was for us—we share in it. We are “in Him” and He is in us. Therefore, that which is historically true can be made experientially true



in our daily lives. Living victoriously as a Christian is not that complicated. It is simply resting in the victory of the cross. It is, by faith, bringing Calvary up to date in our lives.

Once I wrote to a pastor friend who was to go on trial in Romania. The charges against him were false and unjustified. He faced a two-year prison sentence. When I returned home from Romania, I notified many friends to pray for his upcoming trial and release. We sent letters and telegrams to let the authorities know this pastor had friends in the West. Our ultimate weapon was prayer. I personally gave him to God for protection. I also rebuked Satan and commanded him to “cease and desist” harassing this dear Romanian brother. I brought the cross of Jesus into the fight. Shortly thereafter, word came to us that the charges had been dropped and the trial dismissed. Praise the Lord!

We must not let Satan bluff us, blackmail us, or in any other way deceive us. We are the victors, not the victims. We in Christ are winners, always and at all times. Believe it, act like it, and pray accordingly.

*“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)*

### **Prayer Weapons**

These verses tell us what our prayer weapons are to be used for. They are “mighty through God to the puffing down of strong holds” (v.4 KJV). What are these strongholds we are to destroy with our prayer weapons? This phrase probably has reference to areas of bondage (sin habits) in people’s lives. Many folks have satanic strongholds of guilt, doubt, fear, rebellion, and overt sin. These are the result of years of habitual sin. These areas of bondage hold people captive to do Satan’s will. Through intercessory prayer, we can set captives free.

Suppose you have a friend who is in bondage to a sin habit such as drugs or alcohol. As a prayer warrior, your task is to go to battle for your friend. In prayer, you can pull down those strongholds by forbidding Satan to harass, impress, or tempt that person. Command Satan in Jesus’ name to loose his grip on that person’s will, mind, or body. *Real* praying can be a fantastic ministry!

### **Conclusion**

In prayer, we use all our weapons. First, through our position in Christ, we can come to God boldly claiming His promises. Then we have the weapons of the blood, the cross, the Word, and the mighty name of Jesus to enter into intercession for others. These weapons are mighty in the hands of a Spirit-filled believer who walks in faith and obedience. In the following chapter, we will study further the authority of the believer as he uses his prayer weapons.

### **Resources**

1. The King James Version translates the phrase as “handwriting of ordinance.”
2. “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” by Martin Luther.



## What are the Keys of the Kingdom?

*“Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.”*

—Matthew 18:18-20

I once led a Bible conference for some college students. A young woman in the conference asked a very challenging question: “What did Jesus mean by this statement in Matthew 16:19, when He told Simon Peter: *‘I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven’?*”

Her question was really a two-pronged question. What are the “keys” to the kingdom of heaven, and second, what is meant by the “binding and loosing” in this statement? These are good questions, and a simple answer is not possible because there are some complicating factors.

I have quoted two texts—one in the chapter epigraph, the other in the student’s question—both of which repeat the idea of binding and loosing. Jesus stated this principle on two different occasions, both remembered and recorded by Matthew. Matthew 18:18 records this statement in the context of church discipline and prayer, while Matthew 16:19 records it as addressed to Simon Peter and the other disciples at Caesarea Phillipi in extreme northern Galilee.

What Jesus meant by this teaching is very important to us today. It has enormous value to us in prayer, especially prayer for other people, yet few believers today have any idea what these words mean.

### **Roman Catholic Teaching**

My early church training was Roman Catholic. The verses in Matthew 16:18-19 are an important part of Roman theology. Catholic theologians take verse 18 to refer to Peter as the rock foundation on which Christ built the church. They say these words of Jesus mean that Christ gave to Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven. These keys are the power to forgive sin; therefore, Peter and his papal successors have the power to tell heaven whom to forgive and whom not to forgive.

As evidence of this fact, you can visit the Vatican in Rome, and in St. Peter’s Cathedral there is a life—size marble statue of Peter kneeling before Christ. There chiseled in stone beside the kneeling statue is this verse: “I will give unto Thee [meaning Peter] the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever Thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Thus, Roman theology uses this verse to teach the ascending of Peter and his power to forgive sin.

This is not the interpretation of these verses that I find to be accurate. I have no quarrel with the Roman Catholic church except to say that such an interpretation of the words of Jesus is misleading. It doesn’t take a serious Bible student to discover this. In fact, there is a threefold error involved.

First of all, to whom were these words addressed? To Peter alone, or to the church in general? Those who say Jesus gave the keys to Peter face a difficult textual problem. This is true for two reasons. First, Peter is not the “rock” foundation on which Jesus built His church. Jesus Himself is the foundation of His church. The word for Peter in Greek is *Petros*; which means “a stone or little rock.”

The word translated “rock” in the same verse (Matthew 16:18) is another Greek word, *petra*, which means “bedrock,” massive rock, or foundation rock. Peter is only a *petros*, a piece of the *petra*, not the *petra* itself. The Greek language used here is very specific and distinctive.

Most modern scholars agree that the “rock” foundation on which Christ has been building His church is the divine revelation revealed to Simon in verse 16, that Jesus is indeed the Christ. This divine revelation comes to every true believer. When the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the human heart, that individual must do as Simon did - confess what the Spirit revealed. That is how people are born again into the true church. That is how we each become a “piece” of the rock. Each believer is a *petros*, part of the *petra*.

### **Peter or the Church**

The second reason for rejecting the idea that Jesus gave to Peter (and, thus, his papal successors) supernatural power to forgive sins is much less complicated. The Lord Jesus repeats this statement about the power to bind and loose in Matthew 18. Here, the context is remarkably different. Here Peter is not addressed at all. These words are used in connection with prayer. Jesus says, “*if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven*” (Matthew 18:19). Notice, “if any two of you agree,” you can ask and receive. How general can He make it— “any two of you”? Thus, any two of you can bind and loose here on earth.

Christ speaks these words to the church in general. The preceding verses deal with the church disciplining its members. Jesus tells us how to reprove a brother “caught” in a sin. His conclusion to that statement reveals our greatest weapon: if just two Christians can agree on God’s will, they, through prayer, can “bind and loose.” This is extremely important. Matthew 18 teaches us that this power to “bind and loose” is a prayer weapon to be used by the church. It is *not* a special power given to a select group of clergy who are in some way mystical descendents of Simon Peter.

### **What is Binding and Loosing?**

The third error has to do with the meaning of Jesus’ words, “You shall bind on earth” and “You shall loose on earth.” Did Jesus mean to imply that Peter or anyone else could actually forgive sins? I think not. Neither pope nor priest has that divine prerogative; only God Himself can forgive sins. This can be easily demonstrated; a careful look at the text in Matthew 16:19 and Matthew 18:18 reveals this fact. The King James Version of the New Testament, known as the “authorized” version for 350 years, translates these verses: “ . . . and whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

These verbs are translated as though they are a simple future tense. If this were correct, the translation would also be correct. The meaning then would be that “heaven” is waiting for “earth” to tell it what to do. Heaven takes its cue from earth. Thus, anything that I here on earth forbid (bind) or permit (loose), then God must obey by binding or loosing. This is the position taken by those who teach that man can forgive sins. This error has occurred by a failure to translate correctly the tenses of the verbs used.

The verbs are not future tense, but rather, they are a complicated future passive periphrastic perfect indicative.<sup>1</sup> In fact, in both verses, the first verb is aorist (past tense) and the second is the perfect passive. Neither is in the future tense. The *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*<sup>2</sup> translates the Greek perfect as “shall having been bound” (or loosed).

The New American Standard Bible correctly brings out the sense of the perfect periphrastic construction by translating the verbs “whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” Notice the “shall have been” emphasis. This is the correct rendering of the text. It means that what Jesus really said is just the opposite of how the King

James Version reads. Heaven does not take its cue from earth! Never! Earth takes its cue from heaven. We can only bind and loose what has already been bound and loosed. Whatever Jesus has already forbidden or permitted, we can claim in prayer. This binding and loosing is our authority in Christ, not to forgive sins, but rather to take authority over the enemy in intercession. Binding and loosing is a prayer weapon.

### **Hog Tie the Devil!**

Have you ever wished you could hog tie the devil for just one day? Wouldn't it be great just to command him to leave you or your loved ones alone? At the heart of Jesus' teaching on binding and loosing is this principle—our power over the evil one! Because Jesus has already rendered the devil powerless (Hebrews 2:14), we share in that victory. We look to heaven, see our Lord's victory; then, we, by faith, use our "keys" to command Satan to loose our lost friends, or command him to be bound from oppressing them. Every day in prayer we can forbid and permit binding and loosing. These "keys" are our mighty weapons to the pulling down of strongholds spoken of in 2 Corinthians 10:4.

### **Setting Captives Free**

"Setting captives free" is a marvelous principle that lies at the very heart of intercessory prayer. In a previous book, we discussed how to pray for lost people.<sup>3</sup> In that chapter it is emphasized that a lost sinner is held captive by the devil. He is in spiritual chains. He is blinded by the evil one so that he cannot see the truth of the gospel. Satan has both blinded and bound the lost person. He needs emancipation and illumination. It is the task of a believing church to pray him free. Once we have driven the enemy off the battlefield of the human heart, then that unsaved person is once again free to make a moral choice regarding Jesus Christ.

When you meet a godless sinner, you should pity that person. He is in the "snare" of the evil one (2 Timothy 2:26). Without our warfare in his behalf, the sinner is hopelessly lost, yet with our persistent intercession, Satan will loose him and he can choose freely to come to Christ. This does not imply that each person we pray for will be saved, but many would be saved if the church could believe and take authority over the enemy. Jesus has given us the keys to the kingdom of heaven—let's learn to use them! The gates of hell cannot stand against a praying church.

### **Resources**

1. A. T. Robertson, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol.1 (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1930), p. 149.
2. *The International Greek-English New Testament* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1964).
3. Chapter 16 in *Questions Non-Christians Ask* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1977), pp.145-53.



## What is Intercessory Prayer?

*Much time spent with God is the secret of all successful praying. Prayer which is felt as a mighty force is the mediate or immediate product of much time spent with God. Our short prayers owe their point and efficiency to the long ones that have preceded them.*

—E. M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*

Previously we have referred to the term “intercession.” To some people, this is a new concept. Let’s look at expanding on this idea of intercessory prayer. Much of the remaining pages of this section concerns the ministry of intercession. What is intercession? We are told in the Old Testament that when the Messiah comes, He will “make intercession” for the transgressors (*see Isaiah 53:12*). Jesus was, and is today, the great intercessor.

Hebrews 7:25 tells us that Jesus is this very moment living to intercede for us before the throne of God. The word *intercession* comes from a very old Greek word, which was a technical term for one who approaches a king, thus it was used to describe prayer as approaching God. Our English word *intrude* comes from this Greek word. To intercede is to intrude on someone in behalf of another. An intercessor is a “go-between” who pleads the case of someone else. To intercede is to be a mediator.

### A Special Kind of Prayer

Prayer takes many forms, but perhaps the praying that is closest to the heart of God is when we pray earnestly in behalf of others. Intercessory prayer is sacrificial prayer. It is not selfish requests for personal wants, but rather it is prayer at its selfless best. Intercessory prayer can be a powerful weapon for good. It just may be the secret weapon of the church.

I once heard intercessory prayer described as God’s intercontinental ballistic missile. It can be aimed anywhere on earth; it always hits its target, traveling at the speed of thought. At times, it may even have a delayed detonation in that it may be answered years after it was “launched.”

The Lord Jesus launched a missile with your name on it two thousand years ago, when in **John 17:20** He prayed, “*I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word.*” The day you were saved, God answered the prayer of Jesus prayed for you ages ago. What a tremendous weapon is intercessory prayer. I believe every time someone is born again, God has answered the prayer of Jesus again. Usually, when anyone is saved, it is in answer to an intercessor’s efforts.

Parents have a secret weapon to use in defense of their children. When you pray for your children, you are storing up a history for that child. I have offered up prayers for my own children years ahead. When they were small, I prayed over their teenage years. This is planning for their future by putting God in their future. God will answer those prayers, years after I’ve prayed them. What’s marvelous about this is that Satan has no weapon against this “stored up grace.”

This is also true when we pray for a lost person. The lost person may not listen to you when you witness to him about God. He may not attend church with you or read the Bible you bought him. However, when you intercede for him and ask Jesus’ Holy Spirit to knock on the door of that lost man’s heart, Satan has no defense against your prayer. Jesus *will* go to that person and speak to him. Knowing this, should we not be launching our missiles daily? I fear the great sin of the modern church is our lack of intercession. We need the heart of Samuel the prophet who cried out, “*Far be it from me that I should sin against the*

*Lord by ceasing to pray for you” (1 Samuel 12:23).*

### **A Parable of Intercession**

Jesus told many wonderful stories, but none more simple and moving than the story of the persistent neighbor who came knocking at midnight. Jesus told this parable to illustrate how God feels about intercessory prayer.

*And He said to them, “Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and from inside he shall answer and say, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. And I say to you, ask and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened.” Luke 11:5-10*

### **Bold Praying**

If there is one central point to be learned from this story, it is the principle of boldness, daring, and authority! Here comes this very rude guy, banging on his neighbor’s door at midnight. He just won’t quit knocking until the head of the household awakens and comes to the door to meet his demands. How rude, how persistent, how very stubborn this intruder is. Our Lord’s disciples have just asked Him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). In this parable, Jesus is clearly saying, “Come to God’s throne boldly. Be daring in your requests.”

### **You Cannot Ask Too Much**

Our intercessions should be daring in the size of our requests. Notice the man comes and asks for *three* loaves, not just one. In those days, one loaf of bread was an entire day’s supply of food! Amazing, yet that’s how we are to come to God. Sadly, though, I’ve heard well-meaning people tell me you should not bother God with requests for “things.” After all, God is too busy to bother with our everyday problems! Now, doesn’t that sound spiritual? It may sound pious, but it is not biblical. I’m so glad our God isn’t really like that. He wants us to ask big prayers. I’ve quoted it earlier in this book, but it needs to be shared again.

*Thou art coming to a king,  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
His grace and power are such,  
You can never ask too much.*

Anything that is a genuine concern to you is of genuine concern to God. He wants to supply *all* your needs.

The fellow comes knocking at midnight, and he is not only bold enough to ask for three loaves, he also is stubborn. He will not give up. In verse 7, Jesus said the head of the household will not come to the door until the man just keeps on knocking. “I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.”

Why did he give him as much as he needed? It had nothing to do with friendship. It was because of what the King James Version calls his “importunity.” What in the world is importunity? This now less-familiar word was used to translate the Greek word for shamelessness. The *New American Bible* more accurately renders the word this way: The man was “shamelessly persistent”—he kept on knocking and finally,



because of his persistence, the man arose from bed and gave him what he needed. This is how we are to repeatedly approach the throne of God in intercession. When praying for others—their salvation, protection, health, wealth, or whatever—Jesus said we are to ask and keep on asking, seeking, and knocking.’ Then God will give it to us.

### **Begging a Reluctant God?**

A natural question arises here. Are we trying to “pry” things out of the clenched fist of a reluctant God? No, not at all. We must remember, this is a special kind of praying we are dealing with here. We are interceding for others, in such praying, until God answers one way or another. At times, God waits to answer because there is much spiritual growth to be had in the struggle of prayer itself. Recall Jacob wrestling with the angel of the Lord at the brook called Jabbok (**Genesis 32:2-29**). Throughout the night, Jacob struggled with this divine visitor. The angel pleaded for Jacob to release him as dawn approaches. Jacob demanded a blessing before he would release the angel. Reluctantly, the angel blessed Jacob, and Jacob released the mysterious visitor.

We could possibly get the impression here that there is something “fishy” about this all-night wrestling match. Since when can a man like Jacob wrestle with a mighty angel of God and pin him down and force a blessing out of him? It sounds to me as though that fight was fixed! I believe that angel was thoroughly enjoying the tussle. That angel was in no hurry to get loose. It was like a father wrestling with his little boy. It’s as though the angel were saying to himself, “Hold on Jacob; I’m going to bless you if you’ll just hold on a little longer.”

God has much to teach us during our seeking, asking, and knocking. Our faith is stretched and our character is molded and hardened into persistence. What we learn in intercession is often more valuable than the answer. Praying for others builds in us humility and selfless love.

### **Intercession Demands Sacrifice**

Another vital principle in the story is the sacrifice made by the man who knocked. At midnight, he went out seeking food for his friend. His friend is hungry, but he has no means to feed him, so he totally identifies with his friend’s hunger. He could have said, “If you are so hungry, you go out and wake up the neighbors, let them get angry with you.” But he didn’t do that. Instead, he so identified with the hunger of his friend that it became his problem. That is the heart of the intercessor: identification.

Have you ever felt that way for an unsaved friend? Has his lostness so consumed you that it became your burden? You put yourself in the place of that lost sinner and begin to carry his lostness in your very soul. His need is your need.

The great reformer, John Knox of Scotland, cried out before the Queen of Scotland, “Give me Scotland or I die!” I see young David Brainerd kneeling down in the snow outside an Indian village, pleading to God to save the savages in those forests of New England during the years of 1743-1747. Young Brainerd would pray for those Indians until he fainted from exposure and exhaustion.

It took years of prayer and witness, but finally Brainerd broke through and God opened the doors of evangelism. His sacrifice broke his health and cost him his life, but David Brainerd became the first real missionary to that area, and his life has inspired thousands to a ministry of intercession and witness.

Real intercessory praying and living demands the sacrifice of time, talent, even life itself. Only when we identify with the needs and hurts of others will we ever be prayer warriors for them. When we bleed, we bless; it can be no other way. May God give us the concern of Moses, who prayed,

*“Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But*

*now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou hast written!” (Exodus 32:31-32).*

That’s the spirit of identification and sacrifice.

### **Desperate Praying**

As we study further the subject of intercessory prayer, we’ll see again and again the element of urgency in those who are true prayer warriors. The prayer warrior is often a desperate person. Indeed, the parable we are studying here just breathes urgency. The man comes at midnight, begging for food because he is desperate for help. He says, “a friend of mine has come to me..., and I have nothing to set before him” (Luke 11:6). The man had come to him and was his responsibility, and he took it seriously.

I pray more Christians today would assume responsibility for the task God gives each of us! Parents, your children are *your* charge to keep. God holds *you* responsible for their spiritual growth. It is not the church’s job to raise your child. It is your inescapable responsibility. Your first and foremost privilege is to pray daily for your children. How God longs to hear parents pray for their children! Tragically, we often do not pray until trouble comes, and then it often is too late. Until we are desperate, we’ll not pray urgent prayers.

The man in the parable was desperate because he had no food to give his visitor. Often, we do not pray faithfully because we think we have adequate resources within ourselves. As long as we have health, money, a job, or other material means, we tend not to depend on God. Just let those things evaporate, and we quickly discover our inadequate resources to cope with life. This is especially true in the spiritual realm. When we face problems that money and things cannot solve, then we are ready to pray.

The true intercessor *knows* that only God can meet the real needs of our lives. He knows “I have nothing” so he instinctively goes to *his* Heavenly Father, who has everything.

### **The Ministry of Intercession**

Perhaps the greatest need in our world today is more true intercessors. Such people believe in a God who answers prayers. These people are willing to identify with a hurt and dying world. These people will not let go of God until He blesses them. In the pages to follow, we’ll go even deeper into this ministry of intercession, which is so urgently needed.

### **Resources**

1. “Keep on” asking, seeking, knocking correctly translates the sense of the present tense of the verbs.

## Does Disobedience Hinder Your Praying?

*Prayer is like an intercontinental ballistic missile launched from the platform of our lives. The prayer is no more effective than the life from which it issues. It's the life that prays.*

—Ronald Dunn, *Lifestyle Ministries*

Does disobedience interfere with prayer? The answer to this question is so obvious, it seems redundant to consider it, yet it presents us with a topic that needs consideration. Often we are overly concerned with the content of our prayers, worrying if we are praying the right words in the proper religious tone. We need to be reminded that God always looks beyond our words to the motive of the heart. Praying must always be more than words spoken to Deity.

I've seen people write out beautiful public prayers, and oh, did they sound good. Is that necessary? Does the word choice and structure somehow greatly influence God? I think not. In fact, here is a spiritual principle worth learning: *It's the life that prays*. Always, first and foremost, it's the life that prays.

The psalmist said it clearly: *"If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear"* (**Psalm 66:18**). The Lord Jesus stressed this principle in John 15:7 when He said, *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you."* You see, our "abiding" influences His answering. It's the life that prays.

### Two Conditions for Answered Prayer

Did you ever wonder why some people's prayers seem to get ready answers and yours don't? Some people just seem to get through to God. Why is this? It seems to me that there are at least two key factors that govern God's answering our prayers.

First, the prayer request itself must be according to the word of God. First John 5:14 tells us this very clearly. No matter how much faith you have or how persistent you are, it will not help your prayer to be answered if you are not asking according to God's word.

Secondly, the person offering the prayer must be living according to God's will. God looks at the life of the one doing the praying. Prayer is launched, heavenward, from the platform of our life. It truly is the life that prays. The abiding influences the answering.

### Quality and Acceptability

To some, this may sound strange, but in God's economy of things, the *ability* of the asker determines the *acceptability* of the prayer. Jesus emphasized this in the Sermon on the Mount:

*"If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering"* (Matthew 5:23-24).

Do you see how God looks at things? To Him, the quality of the giver is more important than the quality of the gift. The worshiper is more important than the act of worship. God looks at us before He considers the request.

Many years ago, Robert Murray McCheyne said, “*What a man is when he prays is what a man really is.*” I believe that’s true, especially if you mean when we pray in private, not in public. In public praying, we tend to “fake it” at times. When we are alone with God in prayer, the real person shines through. Therefore, no man’s personal life is greater than his prayer life. It really is the life that prays.

### **Disobedience and Praying**

When we are living in sin, we lose boldness and faith in prayer. A condemned heart cannot reach out in prayer. I John 3:20-21 says, “*. . . in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.*”

What happens when our heart condemns us because of sin? We lose fellowship with God, quench the Holy Spirit, and we lack the boldness to pray. Satan will come to you and lay a cloud of guilt over your head to keep you from looking upward. What a tragic state of affairs to lose precious prayer power over some petty sin—“*If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.*”

### **Wasted Lives and Unoffered Prayers**

What a sad day, Christian, when at the judgment seat of Christ, Jesus tells you that there were people He wanted to save through your prayers, but because of some besetting sin of yours He couldn’t pray through you. Your life so condemned you that the Holy Spirit could not intercede through you. My friend, nothing in all this world is worth losing power in prayer. James 5:16 says, “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” Notice, it’s the praying of a *righteous* man that gets the job done.

### **A Life Abiding**

Returning to our Lord’s words in John 15:7, “If you abide in Me... ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.” Are you an “abiding” Christian? Are you living a life that is so abiding in Christ that He guarantees the answers to your prayers? To “abide” is to dwell, reside, or live in fellowship with someone. In this context, Jesus uses the figure of a branch and a vine. To abide in Christ means to be to Jesus what a branch is to the vine. The branch is totally available to the vine. It is dependent upon the vine for its life. The branch has only one purpose: to so abide in the vine that it must bear fruit.

If only you and I could be as unconditionally available to God as the branch is to the vine. Only Heaven knows what fruits God would produce through us. Are you living a life that is unconditionally available to God for service and sanctification?

### **The Guilt Trip**

Many times in my life I feel really guilty because I am not doing more for Jesus. Maybe I have one of those days when I’ve neglected prayer, Bible study, or witnessing. Believe me—I have those days! Then I really feel lousy. I want to make up for it in a mad religious frenzy of “doing.”

Suppose I come home and I have a conversation with the water faucet in my kitchen. I see a sad look on my faucet and I ask, “Faucet, why so blue today?” “Master, you haven’t used me all day. I wanted to quench your thirst, wash your hands, help you wash the dishes, but you haven’t turned me on all day.” I reply, “You foolish water faucet, I could have turned you on any time I chose. I knew you were there and available. I don’t want you turning yourself on; all you would do is waste water and probably make a mess of things.”

God has shown me that He is the vine, I am the branch. I am to be unconditionally available. We are not to measure our faithfulness by our activity, but by our *availability*. To be truly abiding is not easy.

To be unconditionally available to the Holy Spirit is a result of a life that is a broken vessel before God. That is one reason there are very few real intercessors in church today. True godliness comes from a

yielded life.

### **Abiding in Jesus' Words**

Our Lord mentions a second condition for answered prayer. *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you."* Notice, "and My words abide in you." There is a direct connection between our prayer life and our *abiding* in the Word of God. When the words of Jesus' teaching get into our spirit, some really exciting things happen. Abiding in His Word means that Christ's Word begins to dwell permanently in you. Your heart has welcomed God's Word to dwell and abide there. As the Word gets into our hearts, it begins to control our behavior, shaping and guiding us.

For many of us, our heart is more like a hotel for the Word of God than a home. Checkout time is noon Sunday. Ask yourself: *Does God's Word so permanently reside in my heart that it controls my life?* That's what Jesus means by abiding in His Word.

### **Obedience and Prayer**

As we abide in His Word, our praying becomes more effective: *"And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight"* (1 John 3:22). Can you think of a commandment you are willfully disobeying? If so, your praying becomes ineffectual. Holiness of life and fervent praying go hand in hand.

Earlier, we spoke of the praying of David Brainerd, that early missionary to the North American Indian. E. M. Bounds, in his wonderful little book *Power Through Prayer*, says of Brainerd:

*"Let us often look at Brainerd in the woods of Amenia, pouring out his very soul before God, for the perishing heathen, without whose salvation nothing could make him happy. Prayer, secret, fervent, believing prayer—lies at the root of all personal godliness."*

Any time you see a man mighty in prayer, that man will also be mighty in the Word. The cleansing, controlling work of the Word will produce a life that will pray. Jesus said, *"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you"* (John 15:3).

### **Pruning and Praying**

God's Word in your life can so cleanse your life that God can empower you for service and prayer. Using the analogy of the vine and the branches, Jesus speaks of the pruning that is necessary for a healthy vine. Any vine dresser knows that to get a healthier vine, you do not add more branches, but, instead, you make the branches you already have healthier by pruning.

Some of us have much wood in our lives that needs God's pruning! The more He prunes, the more fruit we'll have. The pruning and cleansing is not just the removal of sin, but the pruning of so-called good things that can keep you from *God's* things. Television, sports, church, and a hundred other things can keep you from prayer. We can become so burdened with a busy schedule that there is no time for us to pray. The Heavenly Father may need to do some "pruning" on you to make time for effectual prayer. It is the quality of your life that God considers. Are you willing to be the righteous one He can use as an effectual, fervent prayer warrior? Can you be as available to God just as the branch is to the vine?

### **Resources**

1. E. M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), p.24.



## The Greatest Hindrance to Answered Prayer

*Nothing hinders prayer like unresolved conflicts. Anything that is an issue between you and your fellow man is an issue between you and your God. "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble . . ."*

—Hebrews 12:15

Because God looks at the life of the one making the request before He considers the request itself, it is crucial that we continually be living a life He can use. There are many hindrances to answered prayer. We have already discussed a number of them, such as sin or unbelief. However, the words of Jesus in Mark 11:24-26, show that the failure to forgive is probably the greatest hindrance to answered prayer:

*"Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions. [But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.]"*

### A Forgiving Spirit

These verses come as a shock to some people. Of all the things our Lord could have listed as hindrances to answered prayer, why does He stress lack of forgiveness? Several times our Lord shows how God feels about an unforgiving spirit. In verse 25, He reveals that a forgiving spirit is a prerequisite to answered prayer. It is obvious that anything that becomes an issue between you and your fellow man is also an issue between you and God. Our horizontal relationships are the key to our vertical relationship. We must be "right" with each other before God will even carry on a conversation with us!

Have you ever before considered that your power in prayer is conditional upon your relationships with other people? This is why the writer of Hebrews urges us to *"Pursue peace with all men, . . . See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled"* (Hebrews 12:14-15).

Nothing in this world is worth losing power with God in prayer. Prayer is your lifeline. Therefore, anything that hinders prayer is just not worth the price. Because God will not forgive you if you do not forgive others, then you must never allow an unforgiving spirit to "bind" you up.

### Continuously Forgiving

When Jesus commands us to "forgive" in Mark 11:25, the word He uses is in the present tense of the verb. It carries the idea of "be continually forgiving." Let forgiveness be your life-style, your manner of living. Do you carry a grudge against those who wrong you? Jesus says that if you do, you forfeit your right to pray. Nothing hinders prayer like bitterness and resentment.

Keep your forgiveness current. Make forgiveness the daily characteristic of your life. You never know when you will need to pray and need an immediate answer from God. When a child is taken ill and you need to be able to intercede for him, you don't have time to run all over the country, forgiving people and asking them to forgive you. You need to pray now! It's too late to "bury the hatchet" and stop resenting when an emergency arises. Forgiveness must be current and continuous.

## Deciding to Forgive

Often, people have said to me, “Barry, if you knew what that person did to me, you wouldn’t ask me to forgive him. I just cannot forgive what he did to me.” Well, what is forgiveness anyway? Some people have the mistaken idea that to forgive someone for a wrong means that you have to forget what they did to you and go on as though it never happened. This is not what forgiveness means. God does not say “forgive and forget.” He just commands us to “forgive.”

The root idea of the word that Jesus uses here is to “send away, or get rid of.” Thus, if I am to forgive you, I am to send away the emotion of hurt, bitterness, or resentment that I feel toward you. I cannot change the thing you did or said to me. That is history. It cannot be undone. However, I can change my response to it. This is what forgiveness is about.

## Ridding Myself of Resentment

I decide to forgive you. I decide to “send away” that hatred and bitterness. I once heard forgiveness defined as “tearing up your IOUs.” An IOU is a slip of paper, signed by a debtor, indicating an indebtedness to be paid. The holder of the IOU has a lien on the debtor; he holds him “in debt.” The indebtedness and the IOU is an issue between them. Forgiveness is tearing up your IOUs. Many of us hold IOUs on people. In our hearts, grudges, resentments, and hatred have built up over the years. These things are standing between us and true love and fellowship with those we have not forgiven.

True forgiveness is when I tear up my IOU, when I decide that the debt is paid; it is no longer an issue between us. Now, neither of us may ever be able to completely forget what happened, but we can determine that, as for how we will *respond* to the hurt, it is done and finished. This is forgiveness. This is what God requires between us. In that beautiful model prayer that Jesus taught us, He prayed, “*And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us*” (Luke 11:4).

## Absolute Forgiveness

If you and I want fellowship with God and power in prayer, then we must be certain that there are no unresolved conflicts in our heart. Jesus said, “whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone.” Our Lord expects our forgiveness to be absolute and universal. We cannot pick and choose *whom* we will or will not forgive. Nor can we be selective as to *what* we will or will not forgive.

Our forgiving is to be absolute as to the offense (anything) and as to the offender (anyone). This is very difficult to do. People hurt us, wound and abuse us. It is easier to resent conflict than to resolve conflict. We must remember, Jesus never said that continually forgiving others was easy. This going the “second mile” and forgiving “seventy times seven” is not for the weak and shallow of faith. Only those who have the love of God down deep in their souls can forgive absolutely and universally. “To err is human, but to forgive is divine.”

## A Delivering Force

A single woman told me the tragic circumstances of her divorce. Her ex-husband had really hurt her deeply. As I listened, my heart began to rage against this man who had treated his wife so cruelly. It was obvious why she hated him so. When I told her that she must forgive him, her eyes flashed with anger. “I can’t,” she replied. “Never! Never will I forgive him!” I took great pains to explain to her that the hatred in her was not hurting her ex-husband, but rather it was destroying her.

Forgiveness benefits the one forgiving as well as the one forgiven. Hate, rage, anger, and rejection are negative, destructive forces in our lives. God wants to deliver us from these demons so that we can be healed and get on with the living of our lives. This is why God commands us to forgive. He doesn’t just request it, He requires it. He loves us and desires our own mental health and happiness. But more than that, He wants fellowship with us. He wants nothing to hinder that fellowship. He knows a man cannot



love God, whom he has not seen, if he cannot love his brother, whom he has seen (1 John 4:20).

### **The Key to Peace**

Forgiveness is the indispensable element in human relations. There can be no peace among men without it. Often, we hear people say, “I’ll forgive him if he says he’s sorry. Whenever he asks for my forgiveness, he can have it.” Have you ever felt like that?

Forgiveness is not passive; it is active. God teaches us that we are to forgive unconditionally. None of this, “if he says he’s sorry” business. That’s not how God deals with us, and it’s not the way we are to relate to others. What a mess the world would be in if God had decided to wait for sinful man to “say he was sorry” before God chose to forgive us. Let’s not forget that “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

When we were not seeking God or His forgiveness, He unconditionally loved and forgave us. Christ died for His enemies! Forgiveness precedes repentance. Had God not demonstrated His great love for us, we would never have had the courage to believe we could be forgiven. The Son of God, dying on the cross, saying, “Father, forgive them”—that’s what brings us back to God. That’s the way we must love others.

We forgive, whether they desire or seek our love and forgiveness. So many times I’ve seen it happen: when the offended one reaches out in love to the offending one, the offender’s heart is changed and peace results.

### **One-Sided and Unconditional**

*“Whenever you stand praying, forgive . . . .”* These are the strong words of the One who demonstrated it can be done. How precious to know that He who was “despised and rejected of men” has loved us and forgiven us.

Following Christ’s example, we are to give one-sided, unsought-for forgiveness. Whether those who offend us desire our forgiveness or not, we cannot afford to carry the offense in our breasts. We will send it away, rid ourselves of it, for peace of mind and peace with God.

### **The Results of Unforgiving**

To demonstrate the tragic results of an unforgiving spirit, the Lord Jesus gave some vivid examples that illustrate this truth. The fact that He places so much emphasis on this subject tells us how crucial this issue is to God. Bitterness and resentment have at least a two-fold tragic result.

### **Putting Yourself in Jail**

One result of unforgiveness is taught in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:23-26, Jesus states:

*“If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Truly I say to you, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid up the last cent.”*

What a graphic illustration! When you come to worship, and God reminds you that your brother has something against you (because you’ve done something to him!), Jesus says to go to him immediately and ask his forgiveness. What happens if you refuse to be reconciled? You, my friend, will put yourself in jail. In verses 25 and 26, Jesus concludes that if you do not agree with your adversary “quickly,” then you’ll put yourself in jail and won’t come out until you pay your debt. What is the debt you owe? Forgiveness!

Refusing to forgive or reconcile is such an issue between you and God that it keeps you away from God and puts you in spiritual prison. So many Christians are in spiritual bondage, refusing to pay what they owe. How tragic!

### **Putting Others in Jail**

Jesus tells another story that illustrates another tragic result of people refusing to forgive:

*“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. And when he had begun to settle them, there was brought to him one who owed him ten thousand talents. But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. The slave therefore falling down, prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will repay you everything.’*

*‘And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denari; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe.’*

*“So his fellow-slave fell down and began to entreat him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you.’ He was unwilling however, but went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. So when his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. Then summoning him, his lord said to him, ‘You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow-slave, even as I had mercy on you?’*

*“And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.” (Matthew 18:23-35)*

This parable is one of the longest and most detailed ever recorded in the gospels. It is very severe in tone. A wicked slave, who has been forgiven an enormous debt of ten million dollars by his master, has refused to forgive a fellow-slave a tiny debt of \$18. He has that fellow-slave put in prison for that unpaid debt.

What a thankless, unmerciful man this slave was! He has been forgiven, but he refuses to forgive others. Sound like anyone you know? This hits close to home, doesn't it?

When you refuse to forgive someone, you put that person in jail, which means you have so bound him up that he cannot be your friend. He cannot bless or help you because of your condemnation of him.

### **Getting Down on People**

Have you ever gotten down on someone over *nothing*? Have you gotten angry with someone and refused to like or accept him, all because of some insignificant thing. You just make an “issue” over nothing. What happens? That person is in jail because you put him there. People do this with their pastor. He does something they just do not like or something they do not agree with. Can that pastor then minister to them? Can he preach God's Word to them? Absolutely not! You've got him in jail! You have bound him up so that he cannot minister to you. He may not know of your feelings and be unaware he is in jail to you!

How we need to heed the words of Jesus: *“So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”*

### **On Praying Ground**

May God teach us this great principle again and again: we cannot be right with God and be wrong with each other. When we won't talk to each other, God won't talk to us. Believe this, know this, do something about this. Let nothing hinder your position before God and your power in prayer. "When you stand praying, forgive!"

### **Resources**

1. Verse 26 is enclosed in brackets or placed in the margin in *The New American Standard Bible* because it does not appear in several early manuscripts of Mark's gospel. However, Jesus teaches this principle elsewhere, as recorded in Matthew 6:15 and 18:35.



## When God Doesn't Answer My Prayers

*The great prayer problem of the modern church is not unanswered prayer, but unoffered prayer. We have not because we ask not.*

Here is *the* most asked question regarding the subject of prayer: Why does God not answer, when I think I am doing His will? So frequently, even the most godly of saints goes to God in prayer, only to find that the Father just doesn't seem to hear. This can happen even when you are claiming a promise from Holy Scripture. Sometimes, all of the theology you've learned and all the attention you've given to praying "correctly" still does not produce *your* desired results. What do you do then? Jesus told a prayer parable that I think lies at the heart of this question. It is recorded in Luke Chapter 18: 1-8:

*Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying, "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God, and did not respect man. And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.'*

*"And for a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, lest by continually coming she wear me out.'"*

*"And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?"*

This story has an unjust judge who does not fear God nor respect man. He is a real scoundrel, yet he is a judge. He does not have a soft heart for widows, but when this persistent, stubborn widow just will not give up, he relents and, "lest she wear me out," meets her need and gives her justice before the law. What amazes me in this parable is that God is compared to this unjust judge. We are to be like the widow. We are to pray and not faint or lose heart.

We are to keep coming before God in prayer with the same bulldog tenacity that this widow had before this cruel judge. Of course, God is unlike this judge in every way, except two: First, God honors persistence in prayer the way this cruel judge did who was worn out with her coming. Second, God will bring about "justice" when we persist and request it earnestly.

### Keep On Keeping On

Many times, what we thought were prayers that God did not answer were prayers that ended too soon. We lacked persistence. We did not pursue justice as this stubborn widow did. This is true in praying for lost people. We are to pray *until* they are saved. This is true in praying for anything that is in line with God's revealed will in Scripture.

Jesus said, "Shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?" (Luke 18:7). These words imply God's desire to answer and deal justly. However, there are circumstances in world affairs that require that God delay His reply and also require that His people tarry long in prayer.

## Prayer and the Sovereignty of God

I once was with a tour group in Israel. We visited the Jewish Holocaust Museum. Several Jewish people in our group were very disturbed by the slide program showing the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps and the systematic extermination of the Jewish people. Some became very angry. As we talked in the lobby, one Jewish woman from Florida said to me, “Where was God when the Jews needed Him in Europe?” That’s the kind of question that rocks us! Surely millions of dying Jews prayed to Jehovah God—their God. Where was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? He allowed Hitler’s madmen to brutalize His chosen people. Our heart cries out, “Why? Why? Why?”

Hindsight is better than foresight! History has confirmed for us the sovereignty of God in His faithfulness to the Jewish people. He heard their prayers and delivered His people. He has dealt justice to the Jewish people. Some would question the accuracy of that statement, but it is true, nonetheless. God, in His permissive will, allowed the Holocaust to take place, to achieve His perfect will for the nation Israel.

As we stood in the Holocaust Museum, I said to that angry Jewish woman, “Have you ever looked at it this way: if there had never been a Holocaust, there would never have been a nation Israel. Those Jews who survived in Europe had nowhere else to go; they were forced to go to Palestine. Now there is a national homeland for the Jewish people.” She looked at me in wonder and said, “I never thought of it that way.” I said, “God often works good out of evil, particularly when it fits His divine purpose.”

## He Is Just

As you and I ponder why God isn’t working on our timetable, or why He doesn’t answer prayer the way we think He should, remember that God sees the “big picture,” while we see only the “little picture”. God looks through a wide-angle lens while we peep into a microscope. We must believe “Father knows best” and that He will always *do what’s best*. We must be like that widow who came before the judge, demanding “justice,” while at the same time trusting and resting in His sovereign will.

Jesus concludes this parable of the unjust judge by asking, “*However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?*” (v.8). In one sense, not all of our prayers for world peace, love, and brotherhood will be answered until the Son of Man comes. Then, *every one* of those prayers will be answered! We must believe that His will is being carried out *in answer to our prayer*. We should “wear out” the Judge of the Universe who just happens to be our loving Heavenly Father!

Other reasons exist as to why prayer is not answered or why the answer is a resounding “no” from heaven’s throne. In another book, I wrote on unanswered prayer based on James Chapter 4 where we learn at least three other reasons why God doesn’t answer our prayers. When it seems God isn’t answering, look in these directions:

- *Outward*. Examine your prayer. James 4:3 says, “*You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.*” God cannot answer a wrong prayer with a right answer. Sometimes we are not praying according to His Will.
- *Inward*. Examine your life. Sometimes the life is wrong. In James 4:4, he calls his readers “adulteresses.” Remember, it’s the life that prays.
- *Upward*. Look to God. He may be answering your prayer and you don’t even realize it. He may either be delaying the answer or answering it differently than you expect.

## Resources

1. See Chapter 9 in *Questions New Christians Ask* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979), pp.93—102.

## Learning to Pray for Lost People

*What is evangelism? It is merely walking out on the battlefield after the war is won and picking up the spoils of war that were won in answered prayer.*

Have you been to church lately and heard a church leader conclude his public prayer, “Oh, yes, Lord, and if there are any unsaved people here today—save them all. Amen!” Such praying is very much like hearing a young child saying bedtime prayers: “And, God, save all the people in the world. Amen.”

Somehow, both of those requests leave something to be desired as concise, Spirit-led intercessions! Is there a special skill involved in praying for the salvation of others? Learning to pray with biblical understanding can greatly increase the effectualness of your interceding. God desires to save the lost and He eagerly awaits our prayers in their behalf.

### A Reluctant God?

Some people teach that our praying does not influence God. If this is so, then this book is a waste of time. Others feel that praying for the lost is a matter of begging a reticent, reluctant deity to arbitrarily save those for whom we plead. However, this is not the picture we see of God in Scripture.

Just as Abraham interceded for Sodom until God was willing to save that wicked city if only ten righteous souls could be found, so Jesus tells us He was sent by a loving Heavenly Father to seek and to save those who are lost. Paul describes God as the One “*who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:4). Peter again affirms God’s love for the lost when he writes that “*The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance*” (2 Peter 3:9).

### How to Pray for the Lost

Praying for the lost is a special kind of intercessory prayer. Those of us who pray for our unsaved friends should know that God is more willing to save the lost than we are to pray for them. We believe God is willing to save, and we stand on that promise. However, we must pray according to knowledge. We must use the tools that God has given us. He has given us the keys of the kingdom to set captives free. The job of “binding and loosing” is ours to perform.

Praying for the lost is more than urging God. It is spiritual warfare in the truest sense. Therefore, we must deal with the devil as well as pray to our great God. Thus, we will aim our prayer missiles in three directions: first, to launch a warhead toward Satan; second, to send a request to the Holy Spirit to release His convicting power; and, third, to deliver our petition before the mercy seat of God.

### The Enemy and His Captive

Satan, our enemy, is target “A.” He is the adversary who opposes the salvation of the lost. It is he who holds lost people captive. The condition of the lost sinner is such that Satan has both blinded and bound him. He is blind to the gospel and lives in spiritual darkness. He needs illumination to see the light of the gospel. He is also in chains, bound by the enemy, his will held captive. He needs to be emancipated.

The lost person is blinded to the truth: “*. . . our gospel is veiled . . . to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ . . .*” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

Furthermore, the lost person is a captive slave to the enemy: “ . . . *if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will*” (2 Timothy 2:25, 26).

What a horrible condition to be in! Our lost friends are like we were—bound and blind. This ought to explain why the unbeliever is not interested in spiritual things. He is blinded to truth. He just can’t see it. First Corinthians 2:14 tells us that spiritual things are foolishness to him. Only Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit can open his eyes to the truth. This is why we must not condemn lost people. They are to be prayed for, *not condemned*.

The unsaved person’s eyes are blind and his will is bound. He needs revelation—his mind is darkened, blinded. It is our privilege and responsibility to help change his condition through the power of intercessory prayer. Indeed, our witness will be ineffective until the sinner’s condition is changed. He will not “hear” our words or decide for our Christ until he has been delivered from Satan’s control. Prayer that precedes evangelism can change the condition of the lost.

### **The Victory**

We are not to fret and hopelessly give up. Our unsaved friends can be rescued. They have already been redeemed. Remember our teaching on Colossians Chapter 2. Jesus has defeated the devil; He has taken away his only two weapons: our sins, and the wages of sin, death.

**1 John 3:8** tells us, ..... “*The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*” Our task is to use that mighty victory as our weapon in prayer. Even though Satan has been defeated through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the lost are still lost. They are still captives. We must appropriate their deliverance through intercessory prayer. Satan will not release them until he is commanded to do so in the name of the conquering Christ.

It is our daily, persistent resistance against him that will eventually drive Satan off the battlefield of the human heart and will. Let us again use the keys of the kingdom, our prayer weapons, and claim the lost for Christ. “*For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses*” (2 Corinthians 10:4).

### **Claiming Our “IOU”!**

As you rebuke the devil, remember that you have every right to demand that he release your lost friend. Jesus has purchased redemption for all men. The lost are no longer Satan’s property. So, rebuke in faith and with authority, assaulting the gates of hell, demanding that Satan release the property that belongs to Jesus. Sign your command, in Jesus’ name.” Satan must honor that IOU. Believe it! Claim it! Pray it!

### **More Than Just Rebuking**

Praying for the lost is more than rebuking the enemy. It includes beseeching the throne of God. When I pray for the lost, I like to ask God for two things. Once I have driven the devil off the battlefield for that day, I daily ask God to send a witness to my friend. First, I ask Jesus Himself to go to that person. The Holy Spirit can and will go in your behalf upon your request. Ask Him, daily, to reprove, rebuke, and convict the sinner of his need. Second, I ask God to send someone into my unsaved friend’s life to share the Gospel with him. It may be a television show, a tract he picks up, or a stranger who will share with him. That’s God business, but we can ask Him to send forth laborers into the harvest (Matthew 9:38).

This is not very complicated. It’s only a matter of praying “according to knowledge.” Let me give you a suggested outline for interceding for the lost:

1. *Rebuke the adversary.* Pray, “Satan, I come against you in behalf of my friend,



\_\_\_\_\_. In the name of Jesus the Christ, I command you to loose him today. You have no right to him. He belongs to the Lord Jesus, and I am claiming his salvation in Jesus' name."

You must do battle day after day until salvation comes. Take heart; when Satan realizes you mean business, he will back off. However, he will not obey if your faith is weak and your intercessions are not continuous.

2. *Request the Holy Spirit to convict.* Ask Jesus to come to your friend this day. Pray, "Lord Jesus, I ask You to knock on the door of his heart. Show him your love; open his eyes to the truth. Speak to him today."
3. *Request God to send believers.* Pray, "Father, send a witness today to my friend. Surround him with Your love. Bring some human influence into his life that will bring him closer to You."
4. *Thank God for his salvation.* Claim **1<sup>st</sup> John 5:14**. Believe your friend *is being saved*. Thank the Father in advance for saving your friend. Leave the *when* and *how* up to God. Let God do it His way and in His own time—but ask and keep on asking, knock and keep on knocking, and the lost will be saved.



## How Can I Become an Intercessor?

*The true intercessor has learned and lived the laws of Spiritual Harvest: Life comes forth out of death. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abides alone: But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit."*

—John 12:24

Over 50 years ago, Dr. S.D. Gordon penned these words of challenge:

*The great people of earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet, those who can explain about prayer; but I mean these people who take time and pray. These are the people today who are doing the most for God; in winning souls; in solving problems; in awakening churches; in supplying both men and money for mission posts; in keeping fresh and strong these lives far off in sacrificial service on the foreign field where the thickest fighting is going on; in keeping the old earth sweet awhile longer.<sup>1</sup>*

What a wonderful paragraph! Did you notice that it is the intercessor who is “keeping the old earth sweet awhile longer”? Not government, education, culture, or anything else man might achieve; only vital intercession truly “sweetens” this old planet. Do you really want to be one of those great people whom God uses in prayer to hammer out His eternal purposes on earth? Not just reading about prayer, or talking about prayer, but really praying?

As we have discussed earlier, prayer can take many forms. It can be simply *communion* with God the Father. Prayer as communion is the truest form of worship. It is meeting God in the quiet place, just to be with Him, to praise and adore Him; even just to listen for the still, small voice that can make each day a God-directed day. Second, prayer may be *petitioning* the Father. Prayer, often, is asking God for your own needs. It is the sinner humbly asking God for his daily bread, for forgiveness or strength. Prayer can be communion and petition, but it also can be *intercession*. Intercession is the highest form of service that one person can render to another. Those who enter the ministry of intercession have entered the Holy of Holies, where God lives. To be an intercessor is to identify with Christ in His love and compassion for a lost and dying world. Communion prayer is subjective—it *affects me*. Prayer as petition is also subjective—its *reach is within*. However, intercession is the objective, outward influence of prayer—it *affects a world!*

S.D. Gordon calls intercession the climax of prayer.<sup>2</sup> He means that through our communion with God (worship) and our petition, God is able to so reach us that through us He is able to reach a world. Through communion and petition, God fills a life with power. This power then manifests itself in a life given over to praying for others.

We cannot be an intercessor without first having been to the mountaintop to meet God. Having met God, a man will share God’s passion to reach a world lost in sin, because God Himself is interceding for our world. To be close to God is to share His burden for the wayward planet. Those who enter into the ministry of intercession are those who “have seen a great light” and it has illuminated their very soul to see a world in darkness.

### Becoming an Intercessor

Can just anyone become an intercessor? The answer, it seems to me, is both yes and no. When we look at

Scripture, we are taught to pray for others. Paul tells us to pray “. . . *on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority . . .*” (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Any Christian can and should pray for “all men.”

The intercessory prayer is to be a part of every faithful Christian’s life-style. Yes, every Christian can be an intercessor. However, not many Christians will ever become prayer *warriors*, living truly committed lives yielded to God for the *ministry* of intercession. There are those few choice souls who will become so identified with our Lord for a lost world that intercession becomes their life calling. This calling is not for the faint of heart or weak of faith.

### **A Select Group**

The ministry of intercession is a very select “club.” Its membership is restricted, yet among its membership are both the famous and the unknown. Moses was a charter member of this select group. What a life Moses offered to God! Moses “stood in the gap” for a nation. He was willing to give his life, if it would stay the hand of God’s anger against the rebellious Israelites. Praying with his life on the line, he pleaded, “*Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written*” (Exodus 32:31, 32 KJV). Moses was an intercessor.

Paul, the beloved apostle, qualifies for membership. Paul carried the burden of a lost Jewish nation upon his shoulders. He confesses in Romans, “*Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation*” (Romans 10:1).

*“I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh”* (Romans 9:1-3).

There it is again—a man who so identified with the lostness and hurt of others that he gladly laid down his life for them.

This is the very heart of intercession, the climax of prayer. Paul was a great intercessor. In Acts 20:31, he reminds the Ephesians that “*night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.*” Paul was many things—teacher, missionary, apostle, writer, and evangelist. However, these all were secondary to what he truly was—an *intercessor*.

### **Jesus, the Intercessor**

Those who follow the Master begin to become like Him. Centuries before Jesus was born, Isaiah described Messiah as an intercessor:

*“Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors”* (Isaiah 53:12).

Jesus our Lord was that promised Messiah. He was truly the great intercessor. All of His life was an intercession: living, loving, praying, and dying for others. In Luke 22:32, Jesus prays for Simon Peter, whom he knew was going to betray Him. He said, “*Simon, I have prayed for you, that when you are converted, you will feed My sheep*” (author’s paraphrase).

In John 17, we find what we actually could call the Lord’s Prayer, for it is the prayer of our Lord for His disciples. John 17 is a high priestly intercession by Christ in the behalf of His church. He intercedes for His disciples and for us who would be saved through the centuries as a result of their witness.

Jesus prayed for you, my friend, and Jesus prayed for me. He was an intercessor, not only in His life but in His death. He was numbered with the transgressors and made intercession for them. As He was dying on the cross, Jesus prayed to God, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34 KJV) Our great intercessor prayed for others even as He died on the cross.

Jesus Christ is an intercessor right now at the right hand of God! Hebrews 7:25 makes this statement about the Lord Jesus, "*He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him since He always lives to make intercession for them.*" At this moment, the activity that preoccupies the mind of Christ is the activity of intercessory prayer. Jesus is praying on our behalf at this very moment. He lives for the very purpose of interceding for us. Jesus is *the* intercessor!

### **Lives and Lips**

Do you faithfully pray for other people? The ministry of intercession and intercessory praying is a very difficult thing to do, for we are basically self-centered people. Intercessory praying is the result of intercessory living. It comes from identifying with another person's hurt. Parents will pray for their child because they care about the child; and if you and I care enough about other people to identify with them in their pain, then we will pray for other people. So intercessory praying is the result of involved intercessory living.

### **Identification**

Moses prayed the way he did because he was totally identified with the people of Israel. The Hebrew children, wandering across the deserts of Sinai, were Moses' personal responsibility. He identified with their transgression, their rebellion, and their need, so he prayed for them. The Lord Jesus prayed for you and me, because as the Messiah Savior, Scripture says, He was numbered with the transgressors. That simply means that Jesus was totally identified with the sin of humanity.

In His baptism (Matthew 3:13-17), when Jesus the sinless Son of God came to John the Baptist and requested to be baptized, John, in all sincere humility, said, "*Master, You come to me? I have need to be baptized of thee.*" But Jesus said, "*Allow it to be so, John, for thus it becomes us to fulfill God's righteousness.*"

In his baptism Jesus identified Himself with the sins of humanity. He was so close to the sinner that His baptism was a symbol of His total identification. It was representative of His death on the cross when He took on our sins. First Peter 1:18-19 says we are justified, not with the perishable things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Intercessory praying is the by-product of intercessory living. The life controls the lips. Until I identify with others in their need, I will not pray for them. When I was in college, a tragedy occurred that shook the evangelical world. Several missionaries were martyred in South America. One of those young men who died at the hands of the Indians with whom he was trying to share God's love was Jim Elliot. When Jim was a student at Wheaton College near Chicago, Illinois, he kept a diary. He had a great heart for missions. It was the burden of his young life that he become a missionary. His goal was to go and share Christ with people who had never heard the name of Jesus. Jim and his friend, Nathaniel Saint, heard of a tribe of Indians in the jungles of Peru who had never heard of Jesus Christ. Long before he ever went to South America, Jim Elliot began to pray daily in his diary, asking God to allow him to go and tell these forgotten people about his Savior.

One day Jim wrote, "*God, make of me a crisis man, bring those I contact to decision, let me not just be a milepost on a single road, but make me to be a fork, that men must turn one way or another, having faced Christ in me.*"<sup>3</sup> Jim Elliot was an intercessor. His life was identified with the hurt and lostness of a whole tribe of people. This prayer burden was translated into action as he gave his life to share the gospel with the Quechua Indians.

Intercessory praying is the result of intercessory living. You will not have a ministry of intercessory prayer until your life is a ministry of caring for others. If you are not willing to be involved in the hurt, need, and pain of other people, then you certainly will not pay the price to pray for other people.

### **More Than Prayer**

The ministry of intercession is open to all who seek it and pay the price for it. A ministry of intercession is not to be confused with just intercessory praying. Norman Grubb, in his foreword to *The Intercession of Rees Howells*<sup>4</sup> quotes Howells as saying (during a crisis time of World War II), “Prayer has failed and only intercession will take us through.” Notice the distinction—intercession is *more than* prayer.

How many times have you and I tried to stir up a concern for people and temporarily get involved in ministry or temporarily get out a prayer list and pray for people? Soon we find that we lay aside the concern and become indifferent. The result? We could not sustain that high spirit of concern and compassion in prayer. Intercession is a lifestyle, not a temporary burden nor an occasional concern. Intercession is the result of a broken heart. It is the result of walking in the Spirit and abiding in Christ.

In Zechariah 12:10, the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of intercession or the Spirit of supplication. In other words, it is the very nature of the Spirit of Christ who indwells the believer to pray in behalf of other people. In Romans 8:26, the Scripture says that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us on our behalf with groanings that cannot be uttered by the human tongue or heart. The Holy Spirit *is* the intercessor. Jesus, when He was on this earth, lived an intercessory life in behalf of sinners, died an intercessory death, and prayed intercessory prayers. When Jesus abides in us and is allowed to control our inner being, then His nature becomes our nature, and we receive from Him this intercessory heart and this intercessory lifestyle. Because Jesus ever liveth to intercede, then when He lives in us and when we are yielded in obedience to His Spirit, we can have this intercessory ministry.

### **Rees Howells and John Hyde**

In the history of the church, many people have been so identified with intercession that their very name speaks of this ministry. John Hyde spent his life in India as a missionary. So great was his burden for the lost and so great was his prayer life that he became known as “Praying Hyde.” It was said of Hyde that, “He proved that prayer was an evangelical force in India when, by faith, he claimed one soul a day, then two, then four.”<sup>5</sup>

Such, too, was the life-style of Rees Howells of the Bible College of Wales. Heaven alone knows the impact of the prayer warfare of Howells. Mention his name to those who know anything about a praying church and they’ll tell you Rees was an intercessor. Although he died in 1950, the impact of his life and prayers will continue for eternity.

Intercession is a high road, and few, very few, can walk it. The air is too thin up there for most of us. If you desire to become an intercessor, you must so become one with Christ that His Spirit has control of your life. Intercessory living is the result of abiding in Christ. When you care about people, pray for people, even are willing to sacrifice time and other activities to pray, then it is because Christ is interceding through you.

### **The Intercessor Knows Victory**

When we are abiding in Christ, it is also true that you and I can have the assurance that our prayers are going to be answered. The intercessor is able to ask and claim ground for God. He is a mediator, fighting for God and man. The intercessor takes the place of the one he is praying for. He feels for, aches for, the one for whom he prays. He is standing in the gap. He will stand there, doing warfare until he knows he has won the victory. “*If we abide in Christ and His words abide in us, we can know that what we ask will*

*be given*” (John 15:7).

The intercessor stands on this firm ground with God and has won! May God grant to His church more and more folks who can pray like that. The door to intercession is open to all who have the courage to walk in and claim this ministry. Many hundreds of churches continue, week after week, year after year, and there is not one true intercessor among the membership.

Where are those who are willing to pray until the Lord of the Harvest comes? Are there people whom you pray for on a consistent daily basis? Is there anyone for whom you share such an overwhelming burden that your heart cries out, “God help this person, or I think I’ll die”? Have you ever just totally “stood in the gap” for anyone? The ministry of intercession is for those who will take up another’s burden.

I thank God almost daily for those faithful few who pray for me and the worldwide ministry God has given me. There have been many times when I have felt the prayers of God’s people on me as I preached, ministered, and witnessed around the world.

I once traveled three weeks behind the Iron Curtain, ministering in Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Often I was in difficult situations, followed by the secret police, or under police harassment or surveillance. So many times, I saw the power of God work miraculously in answering prayer. At very difficult communist border crossings, God protected me and got me through! Many of my friends were “standing in the gap” for me. Their prayers paved a highway for me.

In the ministry of intercession, I believe God honors the prayers of a Spirit-filled believer and that when a Christian is yielded to Christ, abiding in Christ, *that* Christian can affect his world and touch his world. He can bring God into the fight, through the power of intercessory prayer. I would to God that He could call you out, dear reader, to a life of intercession.

You can have a supernatural prayer ministry that will change your world. Your prayers can make *the* difference. Together, interceding, we can “sweeten this old world” till Jesus comes.

## Resources

1. S.D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Prayer* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1980), pp.13, 14.
2. Ibid., p.43.
3. Elisabeth Elliot, *Through the Gates of Splendor* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1981).
4. Doris M. Ruscoe, *The Intercession of Rees Howells* (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1983), p.9.
5. Francis McGaw, *Praying Hyde* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Fellowship, 1970), p.9.





## What is Fasting and Its Relation to Prayer?

*How can we recover apostolic power while neglecting apostolic practice? How can we expect the power to flow if we do not prepare the channels? Fasting is a God-appointed means for the flowing of His grace and power.*

—Arthur Wallis *God's Chosen Fast*

Does fasting have any rightful place in the life of modern, 20-century Christianity? My guess is that at least 95 percent of Christians have never experienced even one 24-hour period of scriptural fasting. Few believers today have a real understanding of prayer and fasting.

### What is Fasting?

We must not assume that everyone understands what we mean by *fasting*. Some think fasting is dieting! Others think fasting is only ancient asceticism and has no place in the modern church. What do we mean when we urge believers to “*fast and pray*” (Matthew 17:21)? The Old Testament Hebrew word means to “cover the mouth.” The New Testament Greek word means “not to eat,” or to abstain from eating. However, fasting is more than not eating for a stated period of time.

Bible teaching on prayer and fasting was a neglected subject in the churches I attended as a youth. I do not remember the subject being taught or practiced among Christians I knew. The first person I met who practiced fasting was a rather strange, “way out” street preacher named Arthur Blessitt.

### Chained to a Cross

In the spring of 1969, I became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Beverly Hills, California. Those were the days of the youth explosion that later became known as the hippie movement. Sunset Strip in West Hollywood, California, was the gathering place for thousands of runaway youth. My little church was just a few hundred yards from Sunset Strip. It was there on the street, witnessing to these misguided young people, that I first met Reverend Arthur Blessitt. Arthur ran a Christian coffeehouse-type ministry on Sunset Strip. His life and ministry touched thousands of people for God.

In the midst of this great ministry, Arthur's lease on his building was revoked. The owner of the building wanted Arthur and his strange Christian army out of his property and off Sunset Strip. Christians witnessing for Jesus were bad for business, especially when your business happened to be prostitution, drugs, homosexual bars, and strip joints. A property owner's cartel was formed, and none would rent a suitable building to Arthur Blessitt. In protest against his being evicted from his coffeehouse ministry, Arthur chained himself to an eight-foot cross and sat down on the sidewalk in front of a famous teenage night club, “The Whiskey A Go-Go.”

He leaned against a telephone pole, with a chain around it, and the other end of the chain locked to his own wrist. He witnessed, prayed, and fasted for 28 days! He ate no food and drank only water and juices. My initial reaction was typical—I *thought he was crazy!* Worldwide publicity was turned Arthur's way during those four weeks. The hot California sun was an exhausting experience. However, God was in it. Great spiritual results were obtained. As crowds came to come and look at the “Jesus freak,” many hundreds came to know Christ. Christians rallied around Arthur, supporting his protest. God was honored, and lives were changed. One of the lives that was changed was mine!

Arthur's experience forced me to go to my Bible and see what God had to say regarding fasting. My

research overwhelmed me! I was amazed that I had overlooked this vital teaching. One cannot live a life of prayer and intercession without the ministry of fasting. I challenge you to just look in any Bible concordance for the words *fast or fasting*. It will shock you to see how much God includes this ancient practice as a normal part of the obedient Christian's lifestyle. I want to share with you what I have discovered about fasting and prayer.

## **Two Types of Fasting**

Fasting can be described in two categories: the secular fast and the spiritual fast.

### **I. The Secular Fast**

The secular fast could take one of two forms. It could simply be dieting to lose weight for health purposes. Doctors know the physical benefits of such fasting. Doctors often prescribe a partial fast for their patients. Fasting may be to not eat certain foods for a period of time for health reasons. Some people mistakenly think fasting is starving oneself to death. They see it as an unhealthy, negative thing to do. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Certain kinds of fasting have great health benefits. Fasting helps to purify the body of excess wastes and impurities. When the stomach and colon are emptied, the body then begins to feed upon itself, removing first of all those wastes, impurities, fats, and so on, that the healthy body does not need. Fasting as a secular practice can have tremendous health benefits, especially when supervised by a doctor or health nutritionist. Even a simple 24-hour fast, drinking only water, can destroy sluggishness, give vitality to your life, and free your spirit for spiritual activities. We'll talk more about the spiritual benefits of fasting.

Another type of secular fast may be religious in nature, but it is not the same as the scriptural fast we are about to discuss. For many pagans, religious fasting is an integral part of worship. The pagan worshiper fasts to mortify the body to gain the favor of his deity. This may include actually harming the body (nails, pins, and so on) as an act of worship. Now, this is not biblical fasting. The body is not an evil thing that needs to be punished.

### **II. The Spiritual Fast**

In God's Word, fasting is for spiritual reasons. We go without food or water (or both) because we are seeking deeper fellowship with God. A scriptural fast is not dieting to lose weight, nor is it to punish the body. Granted, a Christian may be overweight, and fasting can be a call from God to seek freedom over slavery to physical appetites. Biblical fasting always has a spiritual rather than a secular motive.

## **Why Fast?**

Many Christians have gone to church for years, lived what they consider to be a normal Christian life, and have never entered into covenant with God to fast. The obvious question arises, "Why should I fast?" May I suggest to you as to why fasting (not eating) may be necessary for each believer from time to time.

We have all heard the expression that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. This statement is truer than we might think. Our physical appetites are the door to the heart. The five senses are the avenues through which we reach the soul. Satan knows this better than we do.

Throughout the Bible, we see Satan reaching a man's heart through that man's stomach. He reached Eve in the Garden of Eden through her physical appetites. Genesis records that she saw that the fruit was good to eat. The fall of the original two was through their physical senses. The body is the doorway to the soul.

Satan also used this approach with Noah after the flood. Genesis 9 tells us that Noah became drunk from the wine of his vineyard and his sons found him in his nakedness. It was a sin of physical appetite that

defeated Noah. Recall Esau and Jacob, the sons of Isaac. Esau sold his birthright to his brother for a bowl of soup! Satan uses the physical appetites to reach the soul and spirit of a man. Now, what does this have to do with fasting? *Everything!*

The Bible teaches us that the physical appetites are from God and not evil in and of themselves. It is the misuse and abuse of the body that is sinful. We must discipline and control our physical desires. We “subdue” the body and make it our servant so that our spirit rules the body, not vice versa.

### **In the Wilderness**

In Matthew 4, it is recorded that the Lord Jesus fasted 40 days and nights in the desert. For these 40 days He ate no food. After this period of time, the Bible declares, “then He became hungry.” It was then that Satan came to tempt our Lord. What appeal did Satan make first? The enemy tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread—an appeal to His fleshly need for food! However, Jesus’ fasting had made Him “mighty in spirit.” The body was His servant. Our Savior was hungry, but for Him the way to His heart was *not* through His stomach.

There is a relationship between a man’s physical appetites and his spiritual life. How you discipline your body often reflects your spiritual discipline. (This is not always true, of course.) Fasting is one means of breaking the “hold” that physical desires have over our will.

Fasting is indeed beneficial and taught in Scripture. Why, then, do so few of us practice fasting as a part of our Christian experience? You may be like an overweight preacher friend of mine who adamantly declared, “It’s not for me!” Well, why not?

### **Reasons Fasting is Neglected Today**

Briefly, let me suggest some reasons fasting is neglected today:

#### **Legalism**

Some people are afraid fasting will become a religious tradition or law that you *must* do. They see it as putting people under law and not grace. Many people are just afraid of that kind of bondage. Why is it that we feel that way about fasting, when we don’t feel that way about prayer, witnessing, or tithing? Any Christian activity can become legalistic, can’t it? Tithing can become legalistic, but we evangelicals sure haven’t neglected the teaching of tithing!

#### **Asceticism**

Secondly, fasting has been neglected for fear of asceticism. During the Middle Ages, when the Roman Catholic Church began to emphasize asceticism, the monastic life, the cloistered life, fasting became a very real part of asceticism. Just what is asceticism? The ascetic often is one who mortifies his body, who buffets his body; it’s the idea of subduing, torturing, or punishing the body for spiritual reasons.

Many pagan religions today are ascetic in nature. One occasionally reads of somebody who has either been sticking pins in his body and fasting, or starving himself to death, to gain the favor of his god. Perhaps, many modern Christians have rebelled against that kind of fanaticism and that kind of extremism. But fasting in the Bible is not asceticism.

#### **Liberalism**

Fasting is being neglected simply because some preachers and teachers have taught that fasting does not apply to us today. Some say it belongs to ancient Judaism but is not a part of the Christian experience in our day. All the great saints of God in the Scriptures fasted as well as prayed, witnessed, and preached.

## Old Testament Intercessors

Moses, the greatest man of the Old Testament, is also our greatest example of the connection between prayer, intercession, and fasting. Moses is the prime example of an intercessor who used fasting as a means of spiritual communion.

On two occasions, Moses fasted 40 days, going without food or water. Such a thing is physically impossible without supernatural intervention. Moses went 80 days without food or water. A man will die if he has no water after about 15 days. What Moses did is miraculous. Elijah fasted 40 days. Queen Esther fasted for three days and nights, pleading with God to spare the Jews from the edict of her king.

All of the biblical saints David, Nehemiah, Ezra, Daniel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, to name a few—were men and women who practiced fasting along with prayer and intercession.

## Jesus' Teaching on Fasting

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives us basic teaching regarding the practice of fasting. In Matthew 6, Jesus deals with three religious duties—almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. He spoke of the abuse of these things. In Matthew 6:24, he talked about the giving of alms, or giving money or gifts to the poor:

*“When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”*

Jesus teaches the same principle about giving. He says, “*when you give.*” It is Christian to give, right? Jesus did not say, *if you give*; He assumed we would give to the poor. He says, “*when you give*”; then He tells you *how* to do it. He says don’t boast about it; don’t do it in public; do it in secret; and do it just for the sake of doing it, not for the glory that will come to you. Then, in Matthew 6:5-15, Jesus talks about prayer.

Prayer is a God-given ministry. Praise the Lord for the ministry of prayer! But prayer can be abused. Jesus talks of the abuse of prayer. He talks about the model prayer that is given to us at the beginning of verse nine. He says, when you pray, pray this way: “*Our Father who art in heaven, . . .*” and He describes the model prayer. Through verse 15, He talks to us about praying and forgiving others lest our Father not forgive us.

Jesus assumed that the Christian would pray. He didn’t say *if you pray*; he said, “*when you pray.*” Now, the third religious duty He talks about is found in verses 1-18—the duty of fasting!

*“And whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance to be seen fasting by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face so that you may not be seen fasting by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”*

What’s significant about that? Jesus said, “*when you give,*” “*when you pray,*” and “*when you fast.*” The question isn’t if you should fast; the question is *when you fast*. You can see that Jesus put fasting in the same category with praying and giving.

There’s no question that a Christian ought to give. There is no question that a Christian ought to pray. Then why is it that we have questioned this matter of fasting? Why have we rejected it? Jesus said, “*when you fast*” not *if you fast*. He assumed that the believer would make fasting a part of his Christian ministry and his Christian experience. Jesus assumed we would do something most of us are not doing!

Some people have said, “Well, was the Sermon on the Mount meant for all believers of all times?” There are those who have said you cannot take the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount because that was before Pentecost, and it represents the old dispensation of the law. They point out that the Sermon on the Mount is very Jewish, and that Jesus is talking to Jewish believers. Therefore, they say, this passage on fasting isn’t for today. I do not accept that explanation because I believe the Sermon on the Mount is timeless. It applies to all true believers in Christ. However, Jesus taught us elsewhere about the place of fasting in the life of the church.

Matthew 9:14 says, “*Then the disciples of John [the Baptist] came to Him, saying, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?’*” The Pharisees fasted twice a week. They were not commanded by God to fast twice a week; there’s only one commandment in the Word of God to fast, and that’s on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. That’s the only fast God declared. But the Pharisees had become so legalistic that they fasted twice a week, and they abused the biblical injunction of fasting.

The followers of John the Baptist fasted, but the followers of Jesus did not. Jesus had never taught His disciples to fast, and so these followers of John the Baptist were confused. Why didn’t Jesus’ disciples practice fasting? Jesus, seeing their confusion, explained,

*“The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bride groom is taken away from them, and then they will fast”*  
(Matthew 9:15).

When Jesus was with the disciples, there was no need for mourning and fasting. The bridegroom was still with the wedding guests. The party was still going on. It was a time for joy, not sorrow; a time for feasting, not fasting.

The idea of mourning was associated with seeking the Lord. They had no reason to seek the Lord. He was with them. It was a time of rejoicing, happiness, learning, and growing. Jesus was saying, “*I am with them; this is a glad time. They’ve got time enough to fast after I’m gone. Then they will fast; then they will seek Me.*” Today the bridegroom is gone. He will not return until His second coming when He comes for His bride, the church. Between the time He left us and the time He returns, Jesus says, the church will fast.

That’s a clear biblical teaching from Jesus about fasting. Because the bridegroom is gone, the early church practiced prayer accompanied by fasting. Saul of Tarsus, after he met the Lord on the Damascus road, spent three days in an absolute complete fast of no food nor water.

Cornelius, in Acts 10, fasted and waited for Peter to come in response to the vision. In Acts 13:2-3, the church in Antioch fasted and prayed, “*and while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting [this is the whole church], the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for Me Barnabus and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*” The sending out of Paul and Barnabus as the first missionaries was preceded by prayer and fasting. (Acts 14:23: “*And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*”) After Paul and Barnabus went out and started preaching the gospel in Asia, they would come to a city, raised up a church, and then as they were leaving that church, appointed elders. How did they determine which elders they would leave behind? They sought the Lord through prayer *and* fasting.

### **Different Types of Fasts**

Four kinds of fasts are depicted in the Scriptures.

## **I. The Partial Fast**

Daniel 10:3 describes a partial fast. *“I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth.”* Daniel ate only vegetables in his partial fast. The partial fast is one in which the person would give up delicacies or some other item—that word *delicacies* literally means “cakes,” or extras.

So, if for spiritual reasons you go on a partial fast, you may only eat one meal a day, or maybe you would give up certain things and only eat vegetables, as Daniel did. That would be a partial fast: when you eat some food, but in a limited, restricted diet. You do this because God has called you to do so.

## **II. The Popular Fast**

The next step would be what we might call a “popular” fast. Because it’s the most popular fast in the Bible, some people call it the normal fast. The normal fast would be one in which you give up food but you continue to drink water. That’s the most common fast in the Scriptures, where one eats no food but continues to drink water or juices. This is what our Lord did in Matthew Chapter 4, when He fasted 40 days and nights in the desert.

The Bible says after 40 days and nights He became hungry. Did you notice it didn’t say He became thirsty as well? And Satan tempted Him to turn the Stone into bread, but Satan never tempted Him where thirst was concerned. Perhaps it is an argument from silence, but I assume our Lord practiced a normal fast, in that He had water during that 40 days. If He did not have water, He had supernatural help from God to survive.

## **III. The Perfect Fast**

Moses went on the perfect fast or the “complete” fast. The perfect fast would mean no food or water for a prescribed period of time. Moses would have died if God had not intervened: no one could do what Moses did without supernatural intervention. And here we have the longest fast in the Bible: two successive fasts of 40 day—80 days of fasting without food and water!

Many instances occur in the Bible where people experienced a complete fast for three days. It seems to be a significant time of fasting. Paul had a complete fast, a perfect fast, for three days no food or water prior to his being baptized (Acts 9:9). Ezra sought the Lord by proclaiming a fast for the children of Israel. For three days and nights they fasted by the river Ahava. Ezra 8 records, *“So we fasted and sought our God concerning this matter, and He listened to our entreaty”* (Ezra 8:23). In Esther 4:16, Esther called her people the Jews to prayer and fasting, lest they be annihilated. As they were under threat of annihilation, she called her people to an absolute perfect fast of no food nor water for three days, while she and her maidens did the same.

## **IV. The Prolonged Fast**

The prolonged fast, of more than three days, is mentioned throughout the Bible. A fast of 15 days, 20 days, or 40 days is a long period of fasting. I have never fasted more than five days, but I have known many friends who have fasted for 20 days. I watched Arthur Blessitt, on Sunset Strip, drinking only water or fruit juice, fast for 28 days. Later, in Washington, D.C., he fasted for 40 days. This is the prolonged fast, normally drinking water only.

## **Persons Who Fast**

Is the practice of fasting only for the mystics or misfits of the church? Is there a place for it in every Christian’s life? There is a place for fasting in my life. However, fasting is not commanded by God to the church today. He does *call* us to a ministry of prayer and intercession. This ministry will nearly always include fasting to discipline our spirit for the warfare at hand.

2 Chronicles 7:14, even though it doesn't mention fasting, is a call to prayer and mourning over our sin-sick nation: *"If . . . My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray . . ."* Notice, "humble themselves." Nothing humbles quite like fasting.

There may come a time when you have a great need to pray for someone, and you feel called of God for a certain purpose, for a certain need, to set aside a period of time to do without food or water. You will do this for spiritual reasons, for 24 hours or for some period of time, as God directs.

### **Reasons to Fast**

Let's look at some spiritual reasons for fasting. And, what are the spiritual benefits to fasting?

#### **Fasting to Seek God**

In the Bible, the purpose of fasting is always spiritual. Scriptural fasting is always to seek God. When God is leading me to fast and He calls me to fast for a specific reason, I have never had trouble fasting. I have never gotten hungry, I've never had any trouble with it, and, have sometimes fasted for five days, and have never had any problem with it. However, when I decided I was going to fast without God's direction, wow! To me that is just like dieting. All I think about is food. I'd rather God call me to fast forty days than for me to try to diet, because all I do is think about food all day.

When fasting is a call from God, its purpose is always spiritual in nature, and it will be a great blessing to you. That's why the Bible talks about the fast that God shall choose, God's chosen fast (*see* Ezekiel 58). You are only to fast when God leads you to do so, and He will lead you to do so for spiritual reasons.

#### **Fasting for Contrition**

First, there is the fast of contrition. Fasting can be a tool to repentance, humility, or to seek God. It has a tremendous power to humble our spirit. It's an aid to spiritual discipline. And, it can help lead to repentance and seeking the Lord.

In Psalms 35:13, David said, *"I humbled my soul with fasting."* Again, David said, *"When I wept in my soul with fasting"* (Psalms 69:10). Ezra tells the people they will declare a fast by the river of Ahava to humble their souls before the Lord (Ezra 8:21).

#### **Fasting to Humble the Spirit**

Fasting to humble the spirit has been practiced by nearly all of God's special servants. One of my heroes of the faith is John Wesley. In Wesley's famous sermon on fasting he concludes:

*"First, let it be done unto the Lord, with our eye singly fixed on Him. Let our intention herein be this, and this alone, to glorify our Father which is in heaven; to express our sorrow and shame for our manifold transgressions of His holy law; to wait for an increase of purifying grace, drawing our affections to things above; to add seriousness and earnestness to our prayers; to avert the wrath of God; and to obtain all the great and precious promises which He hath made to us in Jesus Christ.... Let us beware of fancying we merit anything of God by our fasting."*

God calls us to fast to humble us, that we may seek His Holy face. Fasting is for us *and* for Him. Every thought of food is a call to pray, to seek God. Fasting shows us the frailty of our life. We are dependent creatures. We must have daily bread to survive. Fasting humbles the soul; it reminds us that we are dust and only God is our source. Fasting can break the bonds of the flesh and free the spirit to soar with God.

Fasting can do away with pride. It is interesting how many times the Bible talks about how when "their bellies were full," they committed adultery. The Bible says that the people of Sodom fed their bellies full

with eating and drinking and then they went off into sexual sin. They became proud in their hearts—and it's interesting to see how, when people are physically fat in the sense of being overindulgent, pride becomes associated with such affluence.

In the Bible, fasting has to do with humbling because it can make a proud spirit contrite before God, and it can free the soul to seek the Lord as the body is disciplined and mastery is gained over it.

Fasting can be a part of mourning. In Matthew 5:4, Jesus talked about how blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. In Matthew 9:15, the words *mourning* and *fasting* are almost interchangeable in the thinking of Jesus. Mourning is almost interchangeable with fasting, and so it has the ability to humble our spirit before God.

### **Fasting for Consecration**

Have you ever had a time in your life when you wanted to see the Lord? You just desperately needed a closer walk with God, and you needed to know more of Him, to know more of His Word? Did you know that throughout the Bible, fasting is associated with seeking the Lord, with consecration, and setting yourself apart for God? Why do you think Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days? It was just prior to His public ministry. Jesus fasted to seek the Lord for His life and for His ministry.

Fasting is many times given to a Christian just prior to some great calling or some great task to seek an infilling of the Holy Spirit. To seek the Lord for consecration and for ministry—that's what we have in Acts 13 when they set aside Paul and Barnabus to send them out as church missionaries. The church prayed and fasted; then they laid hands on Paul and Barnabus to send them out, dedicated to Christ.

Fasting can also be associated with seeking a revelation from God. Maybe you are just trying to find God's will on a certain matter, and you don't know what God wants you to do. The Bible shows where you can seek the Lord through prayer and fasting, to just completely give yourself to God—spirit, soul, and body—so that you bring every thought captive to God. When you fast, do it unto the Lord. In Acts 13:2, the church fasted unto the Lord.

Too many times as Christians we ask, “why should I fast?” or “what can I get out of this?” Fasting is unto the Lord. Anna, the prophetess, in Luke 2 worshipped with fasting. Worshiping with fasting is an act in which you seek God with *all* your being.

### **Fast of Concern**

Fasting is associated throughout the Bible with praying for others. Let's talk about prayer and fasting. Fasting is never to be an end in itself. Nowhere in the Bible are we led to fast just for the sake of fasting. Fasting is always linked with another purpose and some other goal.

The Bible talks of praying and fasting, watching and fasting, worshiping and fasting, and seeking the Lord and fasting. Fasting is *always* associated with something else. It is linked with prayer because it creates in the believer an atmosphere for praying, for reading the Word of God, and for seeking the Lord. It frees the soul to seek God. This has been proven scientifically—that when people are fasting, their minds have greater alertness and their eyes have greater sparkle.

Your mind is more alert when you're fasting than any other time. When the body is being cleansed, your spirit is free to pray and to understand spiritual truths. I have received some of the greatest truth from God's Word in periods of prayer and fasting. Through prayer and fasting, God's Word has come alive to me. And, in times of prayer and fasting, my fellowship with God has become dearer to me than at any other time.



## Prayer and Fasting

Below are three areas where fasting is linked with prayer.

### I. Fasting and Intercession

Fasting and prayer can be for intercession, for praying for others. That's what we have in the book of Esther, where Esther called her people to pray for the Jews that they might not be annihilated by the king. And through prayer and fasting they were praying for the nation.

This is also in Ezra 8 that I mentioned earlier: God's people praying, humbling their souls, that He might spare their nation. In the story of Jonah and Ninevah, the king of Ninevah called the city of Ninevah to national prayer and fasting, so that God would not destroy them. All through the Bible, fasting and prayer is associated with intercession, praying for others.

### II. Fasting and Revival

I oftentimes hear church people and preachers talk about revival. We need revival in our churches and we need revival in America! America will never experience revival—you will never experience revival—without fasting. All through the Bible, revival and renewal are associated with prayer and fasting.

Show me a church that gets desperate for God and show me a Christian who gets a God-hunger and I will show you a person who is seeking the Lord so desperately that he has no need for food! God will indeed honor such a church and such a person!

Prayer and fasting is *intimately* linked with revival. Satan has blinded our eyes to this tremendous spiritual avenue for gaining access to God.

### III. Fasting and Deliverance

Prayer and fasting may also be offered for deliverance of other people. The Bible says we can deliver other people from bondage through prayer and fasting. Now what kind of deliverance is this?

In Deuteronomy, Moses prayed for the nation of Israel. Moses prayed; he says, *"I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you had committed..."* (Deuteronomy 9:18). Moses fasted for someone else. He stood in the gap as an intercessor, literally laying his life down for Israel. His intercession delivered an entire nation!

We can also stand in the gap for persons in bondage. You know people who are sick—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. They need deliverance; especially those who are sick because of sin. The alcoholic, drug addict, or those who are spiritually oppressed because of sin: these in bondage need to be set free. How can they be liberated?

A great lesson on prayer and fasting is taught in Matthew 17: 1 - 21. A man's son was "moonstricken" (as the Greek reads). The boy was continually having seizures and would throw himself into the fire or water, trying to kill himself. The disciples knew his problem to be demonic. Satan was trying to kill this boy. The disciples tried to set the boy free but were powerless against the demons that possessed him. The father comes to our Lord and tells of the disciples' failure.

Jesus had the boy brought forward and commanded the demon to release the boy; he was delivered immediately. The disciples later came to Jesus privately and asked, *"Why could we not*

*cast it out?"* Jesus then rebuked His disciples by saying:

*"Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you. But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:20-21).*

Jesus wants us to know that persons in any kind of spiritual bondage can be set free. All that is required is for someone with faith to stand in the gap for that person. An intercessor who will fast and pray until the victory is won is all that is required.

Andrew Murray, commenting on this passage, says, *"Faith needs prayer for its full growth. And prayer needs fasting for its full growth . . . Prayer is the one hand with which we grasp the invisible; fasting, the other, with which we let loose and cast away the visible."*<sup>2</sup>

Satan will resist us. He is not easily defeated. It is the church's task to "bring every thought captive to Christ," and to tear down Satan's strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Prayer is many times not enough. Fasting and prayer add more than our words on the line—it lays down the life. It says to God and to the enemy, "I will not eat 'til the battle is won."

Fasting is a prayer without words. It is the intercessor's statement of resolve.

Arthur Wallis, in his wonderful book *God's Chosen Fast*, quotes Andrew Murray:

*"Fasting is, before God, a practical proof that the thing we ask is to us a matter of true and pressing interest, and inasmuch as in a high degree it strengthens the intensity and power of prayer, and becomes the unceasing practical expression of a prayer without words. . . "*

### **When You Fast**

As you have read these teachings on prayer and fasting, you have come to see that for you, as a follower of Christ, the issue is not "if" you should fast, but rather *"when"* you fast.

Set aside a 24-hour period, perhaps from noon to noon. The body grows accustomed to fasting by degrees. During a brief 24-hour fast, your body will experience no real hunger, only psychological hunger. The stomach may "growl" because it is used to being fed at regular intervals. During the times you think of food, use these moments as a call to prayer; a time to seek God. Determine to fast "unto the Lord." Use this time to dedicate yourself to Him.

Have a definite purpose for fasting—one of contrition, consecration, or intercession. Fast and pray to stand in the gap for others. I have often fasted and prayed for a country, or for a Christian in ministry whom I know in a foreign land.

Should your fast be complete or partial? You may decide on a complete fast—no food or water. That's between you and God. Perhaps, you are fearful, anxious, or uncertain that you can do this. Be assured: when your Heavenly Father calls you to fast, He will sustain you, bless you, and thrill you with His presence. The joy of the Lord will be your strength.

Persons who desire to truly be prayer warriors must "break through" onto holy ground. Fasting then becomes as natural as a soldier loading his rifle. It is a weapon we use and welcome.

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,  
Grant us the strength to labor as we know,

Grant us the purpose, ribbed and edged with steel,  
To strike the blow.

—John Drinkwater<sup>4</sup>

### Resources

1. John Wesley, quoted in Arthur Wallis, *God's Chosen Fast* (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, Inc., 1968), pp.34, 35.
2. Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1965), p.74.
3. Wallis, *God's Chosen Fast*, p.55.
4. Quoted in Wallis, p.84.



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## NOTES

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SECTION FOUR

**SECTION FOUR**  
**THE DISCIPLE – LEADER’S WITNESS**

THE DISCIPLE - LEADER'S WITNESS



## **EvangeCube: Unfolding the Answer to Life's Greatest Puzzle!**



## EvangeCube Strategic Evangelism Training

**Now that you have experienced a shortened version of the EvangeCube Strategic Evangelism Training, we would like to challenge you to be used by God as a Trainer.**

**EvangeCube Strategic Evangelism Training (ESET)** exists to serve and mobilize the church to go and make disciples beginning with their own neighborhood or city and also around the world. The first part of making disciples is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that produces faith decisions and salvation.

The EvangeCube training is a proven effective tool to this end. Many people know how to share the Gospel, because it is so simple, *but few know how to bring someone into relationship with Christ*. It is highly probably that many Christians do not evangelize because they have not learned how to be effective in their evangelism. The ESET is designed to encourage the Trainee in their evangelism through this simple tool that will keep them focused on the Gospel message and to give them illustrations from which to share.

The ESET trainer's function is to be an organizer, a teacher, a disciple-maker and a mobilizer.

An ESET is most effective within the context of a local church. So you will need to **organize** in your area the churches that you want to offer this evangelist mobilization seminar.

An ESET trainer is also a **teacher** of the Word of God. How does that apply to EvangeCube training? As a teacher of the Word you have the opportunity to encourage the Body of Christ to evangelize effectively and mobilize them outside of the church to begin evangelizing the people in the church's target area. The goal is to challenge the trainees to have an evangelistic lifestyle, so that they will share the life changing Gospel with those around them.

An ESET trainer can also **disciple** those whom he trains and mobilizes. So in relation to the ESET, **a disciple-maker is one who is multiplying a ministry into others**. The more that we can disciple into a mentality of disciple-maker the more workers we will have in the Body of Christ to complete God's purposes.

Another important reason that ESET exists is to **mobilize** the normal Christian from the church pew to an active evangelism ministry. A mobilizer empowers others to do the work of an evangelist/disciple-maker for the purpose of seeing **God's glory** go from his region through out the whole earth.

If you would like to join us in the role of Trainer, please contact us with the following information:

For information about our International ministry opportunities, EvangeCube Training in your local church or to know more about the EvangeCube Global Strategy, please contact us by phone or by email.

**This is an example of a card that we would like to pass out in the training. We will send that to you at a later time.**

## **EVANGECUBE TRAINER REQUEST FORM**

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**Name of Church**

---

**Contact Person**

---

**Number of Members**

---

**Address**

---

**City**

**State/Province**

**Phone**

---

**Email Address**

- ☐ **Yes, I would like to be an EvangeCube Trainer**
- ☐ **Yes, I will share the Gospel with 100 people over the next year.**

## Learning To Share Your Testimony

One of the most effective evangelism tools a disciple can possess is the skillful use of his personal testimony. Jesus called us to be His witnesses, and being a true witness means not only sharing the Gospel, but also sharing your personal experience of salvation. One need only look at the ministry of the Apostle Paul to see how the Holy Spirit can use a well-presented testimony.

### Your Story

Three times in Scripture Paul tells the story of his experience with Christ. The Apostle tells his story in Galatians 1:13-24. He does so to refute those who were distorting the Gospel of Grace, and by telling his story he sought to validate his calling and his “Gospel.” There is authority and power in any man’s story. Your personal experience of a life event is hard to refute. This is why in a court of law; we call “witnesses” to the stand to testify. A witness is expected to simply tell what he saw or experienced. It is difficult to deny the power of one’s own story.

Every believer has a story and needs to learn to tell it well. Christ has changed his life forever and it is always exciting to hear that good news. The Apostle Paul’s testimony is found in Galatians One, in Acts twenty-two, and again in Acts twenty-six. What I notice in Paul’s testimony of his encounter with Christ is how he seems to have thought it out, organized it, and learned how to share it effectively.

### Before, How, and Since

Look closely at Paul’s use of his testimony and you will see a pattern to it.

1. His life **before** he met Christ.  
In Acts he describes how he violently opposed Jesus and His followers. Paul had a past life, before Christ presented Himself to him on the Damascus road. He shares what he was like before he met Christ.

Even so, when you sit down to write out your story, it would be well to begin with a description of your life before you met Christ. What were you like without Christ? Have you ever thought it through and written it down? Carefully think it out, what was missing that the world, friends, money, education, or sin could not give you.

2. Then he shares **how** he met Christ.  
In Acts 26:12-18, Paul vividly shares the details of how Christ confronted him on the road to Damascus. He leaves no doubt that there has been a time and a place where he met Christ.

Every Christian has had a moment of decision where he yielded heart and life to Christ. It is so powerful to tell the details of that encounter. When you write it down be visual, describing where were you, what were the circumstances, and how you personally received Christ as Savior and Lord.

3. Finally, he describes his life **since** he met Christ.  
In all three recorded uses of Paul’s testimony, he tells us the difference Jesus has made in his daily life. God changed Saul the radical Jew to Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. He was now a different man.

Since Christ has come into your heart, are you a better person? Has He helped you overcome and cope with life’s pressures? If so, that’s a vital part of your story. People

want to know if being “saved” really works. Does it benefit in daily living? Take time to write down the change Jesus has made in you since you met Him.

### **Brief and Non Religious**

Now here’s the challenge. See if you can tell your story in 150-175 words or so. You’ll have to re-write it a time or two, but brief is better than long. You see, you’ll need to share your testimony “as you go” and “on the go.” God will give you many opportunities to share in the strangest places; at the market where you shop, in the street, or on the bus, wherever people are. By practicing sharing in 150 words you’ll open doors to hungry hearts. As God wills you may get to sit down and share Scripture and the full plan of Salvation later.

Secondly, don’t be too “religious.” By that I mean, many people who are lost do not share the Christian’s vocabulary. We tend to talk “Bible talk,” by using words that outsiders to the church have never understood. Words like “born again,” “repented” and “saved” are better explained than used. Try to write your story by putting your self in the place of the lost person, writing it so he can easily understand.

### **Practice on a Friend**

Finally, when you’ve prayerfully crafted your encounter with Christ, using the outline of **Before**, **How**, and **Since**, ask a Christian friend to listen to it and help you perfect it by making suggestions. Maybe you and your friend both write your testimonies out and you memorize and practice on each other. Now that’s a good idea!

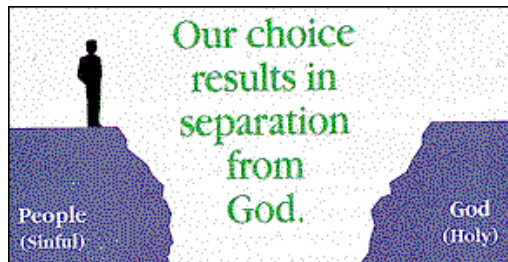
### **One Final Word**

As you become comfortable sharing your story, you can begin to add a few Bible verses to each section of your story. For example, in the “before I met Christ” section, as you are describing your feeling of need for purpose in life, you might quote Isaiah, *“all we like sheep have gone astray”* to illustrate that feeling. There are so many great verses to use along with your story, and the Word of God is *“quick and powerful and sharper than a two edged sword”* (**Hebrews 4:12**). God will use His Word to re-enforce your words.



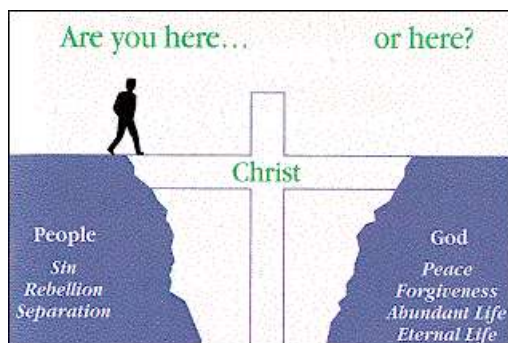
## The Bridge Witness Method

One of the advantages of this presentation is that it is effective cross-culturally and can be drawn on a piece of paper, then left in the inquirer's possession to review what may have transpired. On a sample piece of paper draw two horizontal lines about two inches apart, then



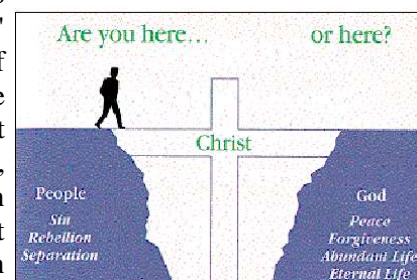
Begin by writing GOD on the right line and PEOPLE on the left line. State that in the beginning God made each person to have fellowship with him, but each person chose to go his or her own way, turned his or her back on God, rebelled against him, and so fell into sin. This caused a separation between people and God (draw the two sides of the cliff on God's side and people's side).

We know that a great separation exists between God and individuals because the Bible tells us that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Write the word SIN vertically between the two sides of the cliff, and write Romans 3:23 under the side of People, noting under it, "All have sinned," then circle the word "all." Now quote Romans 6:23, write it down under the People side, and note under it, "Sin earns spiritual death." Then quote Hebrews 9:27, write it down, and put down, "Judgment is coming." Then say, "This is the BAD NEWS, and write it down at the bottom. At this point a person is in a hopeless and helpless condition with no way of crossing the chasm.



Then quote Romans 5:8, and, as you are quoting it, draw the cross over the term "sin" by drawing the lines starting from God's side. Write down Romans 5:8 and "Christ died for us" underneath the side of God. Now quote Ephesians 2:8-9, write it down, and note,

**Rom 10: 9-10**



"Redemption is a free gift." (God's grace is absolutely free.) Then quote John 1:12, and as you are quoting it write "Believe" on the left side of the cross and "Receive" on the right; write the reference down on God's side with this notation under it: "We must believe and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior." Then say, "This is the GOOD NEWS, and write it on the bottom of that side. This now is the *only* way a person can cross the chasm of sin that separates the individual from God.

The sinner then believes (puts his or her total trust in) that Jesus' death on the cross paid the penalty for the individual's sin, then receives Christ into his or her life through a prayer that invites him to come in and take over. The result of this "transaction" is that Scripture now gives us assurance that a person then becomes a child of God. When a person confesses Christ as Lord and Savior and believes in his atoning

work on his or her behalf, the person is saved - quote Romans 10:9-10, and write it over the whole illustration.

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## NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## NOTES

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical margin lines or other markings on the page.

# SECTION FIVE

## **SECTION FIVE THE DISCIPLE – LEADER’S WORK**

THE DISCIPLE - LEADER'S WORK



## **Sermons We Can See**

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.  
I'd rather one should walk with me  
than merely show the way.

The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear.  
Fine counsel is confusing, but examples always clear.

And the best of all the Preachers  
Are men who live their creeds,  
For to see the good in action is what everybody needs.

I can soon learn how to do it if you'll let me see it done.  
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.

And the lectures you deliver may be very wise and true;  
But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do.

For I may misunderstand you and the high advice you give,  
But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

**Edgar A. Guest**





## The Servant Leader

I once saw a cartoon of a boy scout leader who took his troop of boys hiking, got lost and said to them, “anyone bring a compass?” The very first quality of a leader is that he has the ability to lead! When the Apostle Paul gave his various lists of Spiritual Gifts, one of those gifts of the Spirit is “leadership.” **Romans 12:8** says, let “*he who leads, lead with diligence*”

We can learn much about how to lead by watching Jesus lead his disciples. In fact, the gift of leadership is nothing less than Christ the leader living out his leadership in and through the life of a gifted child of God.

It has been said that leaders are born, not made. For the Christian leader this is really true. He is born again and gifted with the spiritual gift of leading. He was reborn to lead.

### Leading through Character

He who would lead others in Christian service can learn from Christ. He led by principles, not by His strong will, or by dictating or by intimidating. Jesus showed the Twelve how to lead by Godly virtues and Biblical principles. Jesus’ character was his greatest mentoring tool. Out of His character, he taught eternal principles to live by.

### How Jesus Led Men

Christ’s true genius as a leader of men is that he was a servant-leader. His style was to lead by serving others. His humility, love, and servant heart won the affections of those he mentored. Jesus did not measure the greatness of a man by how many servants he has, but rather the greatness of the man is how many men he serves.

Indeed, Jesus fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy that the messiah would be “*meek and lowly at heart.*” (**Isaiah 53**) The Messiah is to be a king, but he is a servant-king! Paul tells us that Christ came “*in the form of a servant,*” (**Phil. 2:6, 7**) This then is the “mind” of Christ, it is his set attitude and lifestyle. He leads others by being a servant leader.

### Washing Feet

**John 13:4ff** records the great life-message Jesus gave his men in the last hours of his earthly existence. He washed the disciple’s feet. He is training them by his example. They will never forget this example of the King of Glory down on His knees, humbly washing the feet of those men He loved. Let’s learn some eternal principles from Christ’s example of washing dirty feet:

#### 1. Humility is the Key to Servant-Leadership

Seeing King Jesus washing their stinking feet was an object lesson in humility. Jesus, dressed only in a towel, like a common slave washes their feet to show them that the way up is down! The path to great leadership is humility. The leader is willing to do the most menial task to inspire others to service. A leader must not ask others to do what he himself is not willing to do. The Christ-spirit in you will give you His humility to fulfill the words “*Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.*” (**1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:6**)

#### 2. The Servant-leader doesn’t wait to be asked to serve

The image of Jesus wrapped in a towel, washing feet is that of a volunteer spirit. No one asked Him to do this humble task, but He chose to do it. He sees a need and meets it. The disciples would never have dreamed of asking Jesus to wash their feet. That is why great leaders are volunteers. They inspire others

to volunteer by their example. The fact that Christ was a volunteer (even on the Cross!) inspires us to be like Him.

### **3. The servant-leader does not pick and chose whom he will serve**

Remarkably, Jesus washed the feet of Judas, knowing full well that Judas was a traitor! There is great love and mercy in that act. Like Jesus, great leaders are willing to serve whomever needs it, regardless. Servant love is unconditional. We can learn from Christ's example.

### **4. Servant-leaders wear Khakis**

Wearing a towel, Jesus is ready for the dirty work that needs to be done. This is love in action. It reminds us that *doing* is always a stronger lesson than just *telling*. Leadership is more about what we *do* than what we *tell* others to do. Jesus was "among" His men, being a part of their daily lives. He mentored them by serving them every day. A leader is willing to do whatever is needed to make others around him better. Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart stores, became famous in Bentonville Arkansas the Headquarters of Wal-Mart, because after he had become one of the richest men in the world; he still drove to work in a ten year old pickup truck. He said he drove the old pickup because it reminded him to stay humble and remember where he came from. Leaders wear khakis.

### **5. Servant-leaders give with no thought of return**

Jesus did not ask the disciples to wash His feet. There is a lesson to be learned here. The Servant does not demand to be served in return. This is not about getting from others by giving to them. Great leaders have the greater good in mind, not personal gain. They see the "big picture" not just their own little world.

### **6. Servant-leaders must learn to receive as well as give**

Peter comes forward and says, "*Lord you shall never wash my feet!*" This sounds noble, but it is also prideful. That is why Jesus corrected Peter. Christ wants us to know that leaders must accept service from others. We need the humility to let others be in control, and let them do for us as we do for them.

### **7. Servant- leaders are most like Christ.**

After washing their feet Jesus said to the twelve, "*Do you know what I have done to you? I have given you an example (life-message) that if I your Lord and Teacher has washed your feet, then you ought to wash one another's feet.*" (**John 13: 14,15**) The lesson is clear to all who will apply it. We are most effective as leaders when we behave toward others as Christ did. He is the model of Christian leadership; He led men by His example. He didn't just tell them to love their enemies; He actually loved His enemies. He made a disciple out of a Roman tax collector! He ate dinner with despised Zaccaeus. He forgave the woman caught in the act of adultery. His example was as strong a teacher as his teaching.

### **Servant-leaders are Pace-setters**

The Greek word for leader literally means, "he who stands before others." A dictator tells others to do what he himself is not willing to do. Not so with a true leader. He is a pacesetter. He says, "Follow me, and my example, do as I'm doing. I'll show you how. That is Christ's way of leading others. He tells you to take up a cross daily, and then He goes and dies on the Cross for you! No wonder men loved him and still follow Him. We must also be Pace-setters by our example of servant leading.

### **Leaders are Visionary**

Jesus saw the Kingdom of God and He willfully asked His followers to join in on the vision to bring it to reality here on earth. In fact Christ saw the potential in the twelve men He called. He had our salvation in mind when He called them. (see **John 17:18-20**) By leading them he planned to win the world unto Himself. Robert Coleman in *The Master's Plan of Evangelism* sees this vision as part of Christ's leadership style. Every good leader must also have an end in mind.. Leaders see what others cannot see. He doesn't get lost in the details. This is the difference between leaders and managers or administrators.

Managers are into the daily routine; they are not leaders of men. They are managers of personnel! There is a huge difference.

### **Wrong jungle**

A great illustration of managers and leaders is the group who go on safari. The group is in the jungle in thick underbrush taller than an Elephant. The manager is organizing the group to cut a path through the jungle. He is handing out machetes, he offers water to the exhausted workers, and is very much in charge as they try to cut their way out. The manager of men is consumed with the details. Then the leader shows up. He climbs a tall tree looks out over the landscape and tells the manager, "Stop chopping! You are going the wrong direction." That's a leader, he sees the big picture, and leads accordingly.

### **Servant-leaders are Committed**

Jesus was totally committed to His vision. He gave the Father all He had for all His days. It is a characteristic of a good leader that he is not easily distracted from his calling and vision. He plans his work, and he works his plan.

He is a man possessed, because there are many who would distract him and discourage him. A leader believes in what he's doing when no one else does. The leader must ask his followers to be as committed as he is. Jesus will say to His men, "If you love me, keep my commandments."

We are talking about accountability. Leaders expect those around them to be accountable to the vision, program or calling. He is accountable and wants the same from you.

### **Servant-leaders are committed to Excellence**

A leader is focused. Jesus our example was a focused man. He was forever about two things: 1.) His Father's business (see **Luke 2**). 2.) Pleasing His Father. (see **John 8:29**) We too must be captured by this concept of doing the will of God and doing it well. Excellence is the by product of a heart's desire to please our Heavenly Father. Excellence is about giving your very best effort to the things God calls you to. This is why we must train young men & women early in life to be people of excellence.

By beginning early to train servant leaders we can develop a generation of leaders to shape the world.

Here is a pattern of growth we find in leaders:

- Emerging leaders= Tend to be 18-25 years of age
- Energized leaders= Tend to be 25-40 years of age
- Established leaders= Tend to be 40 years old or older.

### **Your Life Message**

Finally, Jesus modeled the profile of a leader. His life was the message. Long after the crowds forgot His words and deeds, they still remember the Man. His disciples wanted to be like Him. That is the ultimate compliment. We must be "Christ" to others as they see Him in us.

You cannot lead one way and live another way. You must walk your talk. What you are speaks louder than what you teach. The true leader says, "follow me, I've been there." He has lived what he asks others to do.



## The Power of a Vision

*When God's man catches on fire, the whole world comes to watch him burn.*

### Stars and Bars

Two men were in a prison cell with only one small window high up on the wall. One prisoner, very discouraged, would look up at that window and see the bars across the small window and think only of the bars that entrapped him. He would see those bars and become more & more bitter and hopeless. The other prisoner however, would look at the window at night and see the stars beyond the bars, and say, "see, how beautiful are the stars!" By seeing the stars beyond the bars he had hope and vision of a future. Stars and bars, it's all in how you view life. Some people see the glass of water half empty, while others see it half full! Your perspective is very important. Some men are positive, while ours are negative. Some see beyond and through the bars and can see the possibilities. God wants us to see the stars.

Throughout the Scriptures, God urges us to be people of vision and possibility. In **Proverbs 29:18** we read, *"Where there is no vision the people perish."* The prophet Joel in his Messianic prophecy says of the last days, *"and it shall be in the last days, God says, 'That I will pour forth my Spirit upon all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.'"*

### The Power of Vision

We must never minimize the power of a vision. Men and women of vision change the world. Ask yourself right now, "What is my God given vision?" Am I this moment captured by the power of that vision?" If you are not, then you are seeing only the bars! You are living beneath your potential and your calling.

### What exactly is a Vision

Vision is foresight, based on hindsight. Someone said that a vision is an informed bridge from the present to the future. Notice Joel said that young men are more apt to see visions and old men more prone to dreaming. What does this mean? Dreams are based on a past experience; they are always about the past. However, vision is about the future. Dreams are about what was, the vision is about what can be! Old and young are relative terms. There are young men who see only the bars, and are focused on the problem. Their thinking is old and backward. The visionary is a possibility thinker. The Christian visionary leader sees the stars and believes he and God can be a force for change. A God given vision is always about change. It sees a bright future.

### What is The Purpose of a Vision

The Leader goes about his day with a preferred future in mind. His vision sets the direction of his day and its tasks. The purpose of a vision is to set God's direction for your life.

- Vision from God gives direction to a man.
- Vision from God gives direction to a family.
- Vision from God gives direction to a City.
- Vision from God gives direction to a Country.
- Vision from God gives direction to the World.

Mind you, not everyone has a preferred future in mind. Many see only the present and it's obstacles. In any given company there must be both leaders and managers. What's the difference? It's like the story of the team of explorers hacking their way through the Jungle. The "manager" in the group will organize the team, assigning knives, saws and axes to chop through the dense growth. The manager will see the present problem and chop away. The leader will stop the team, climb a tree and scout the area. From the

top of the tree he will shout, “Stop! Wrong jungle! We are going the wrong direction.” That’s a leader. He is interested in direction and a preferred future.

God has always had his men and women to lead his people out of the jungle. Moses, Nehemiah, Esther and Paul were visionary leaders. They set the direction and determined the future by following God’s vision for their lives.

### **Direction & Boundaries**

The vision God gives you will not only set the direction of your life, it will set the boundaries of your life. Vision narrows your focus. You cannot lead if you think you have to do everything; leave that to the managers. It’s their calling, not yours. Your vision limits the scope of your time, interests, and pursuits. The man of vision has been captured by the vision. He is consumed with his God given goals. Jesus was like that. Many times his calling would make him say, “I must needs go...” or “the son of man must...” It led him to a Cross and He is still conquering the world through His faithfulness to His vision.

Your vision limits your choices. The future is in the heart of the leader and he can see it by faith. He doesn’t know how to get there, but he will only pursue those things that move him in that direction.

- The visionary is disciplined
- The visionary is seen as narrow
- The visionary is committed
- The visionary is focused

### **Own your Vision**

Your vision may not be mine, or even like mine. Only you can do what God calls you to do. His purpose in and through you is His vision for you. You must see it, believe it and claim it as your own. Embrace your vision as God’s special gift to you. He is willing to share His purpose with you. Isn’t that a marvelous thought? The great God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob wants to fulfill His will and purpose by calling you! Amazing! It’s so amazing; Satan and the world will try to discourage you from carrying out your vision. Even friends and family may try to stop you. Every leader in the Bible had the same conflict. He had to explain his vision to those who could not understand. Paul continually had to defend his apostleship to the gentiles. Many did not accept it, and sought to hinder him. Paul had to own his calling when others would not validate him. Being a leader can be lonely, and at times a solitary existence.

### **Vision Accomplished**

Stick to your vision. The world may not understand it, but the world needs it. Allen Richardson says of the word “vision” in **Proverbs 28:18**, “a vision is that declaration of God’s will without which community, even civilization is impossible.”

### **The Death of a Vision**

Years ago Bill Gothard used to speak of the “death of a vision.” He described how men and women of God would go through a dark time when the fulfillment of the vision seems impossible. Like Elijah, hiding under a bush, hiding from the wicked queen Jezebel. God had showed Elijah his power on Mount Carmel, but somehow the frightened prophet has had amnesia! He has lost confidence that God is going to do what God said He would do. Every leader seems to come to an emotional place where he or she wants to give up. He dies to the vision. That is a crucial “faith crisis.” All you have is the reality of your vision. Was it from God, you ask yourself? Was I mistaken? All the leader can do is trust God and believe his instincts. Somewhere in the midst of this dark period, if the visionary holds on to God, then God will empower the vision. At times He seems to want to test your resolve. Paul the apostle went through this. In **2nd Corinthians** he speaks of “*having the sentence of death*” within his spirit. He was so depressed he

wished to die. Yet, he found grace and comfort in Christ to move on. So it is with many of us. You may have to “die” to your desire for this vision, give it back to the One who first gave it to you! It was His, before it was yours. Then He can empower the vision again.

### **The Power of The Vision**

When we say God will empower your vision, this is only true if He can be glorified in it. He will not empower your flesh or your agenda. The gifts and the callings are His doing. So is the power to accomplish the vision his doing. When God’s man catches on fire, the whole world comes to watch him burn! Through submissive dependent faith we must ask The Father to empower His vision in us. Remembering, “*it is not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord.*”

The empowering of a vision will be about accomplishing what seems humanly impossible. “*For what is impossible with men, is possible with God.*” The visionary leader sees the solution by faith. He is a problem solver. He sees the Stars, not the Bars! The visionary has God’s perception and God’s super-vision. Proverbs says, “*But a man of understanding will draw it out.*” (**Proverbs 20:5**) God shows him what is not obvious to the naked eye. He sees God’s solution to the problem.

### **When God Empowers**

The empowering of the vision will be about God encouraging you the leader. You will feel helpless and hopeless at times. The Holy Spirit will encourage you. He believes in you. When we are like stuttering Moses before the vision of the Burning Bush; crying out, “who am I to go before Pharaoh?” God will empower you with His boldness and courage. What the Father initiates, He provides for. He will never ask you to do anything He is not willing to equip you to do.

### **What is your Vision?**

What is it God has been calling you to accomplish? Are you listening? Do you see the stars, or do you see only the bars? If you have no vision, then the people perish, and you have missed the opportunity to see the supernatural hand of God upon your life. If you have no God given vision, you are not a Christian leader. A true leader will bow down, yield to Him and move out looking at the Divine possibilities. Be that person God can call and use. “*Here am I Lord, send me.*”

### **How can I know my vision?**

1. Make yourself available to God = *Report for duty.*  
80% of leadership is just showing up!
2. Seek God’s will through prayer & fasting = *surrender to Him.*
3. Spend time in the Scriptures = *God speaks through His Word.*
4. Seek wise counsel from other leaders = *There is wisdom in many counselors.*
5. God sometimes speaks through your life-circumstances = *God divinely changes circumstances.*
6. God will give someone a “word” just for you to define your vision = *a Prophetic word.*
7. Walk in faith as God confirms your vision.= *Trust & obey.*





## Fulfilling Your Vision

Anyone can sit around and dream, but it takes work, discipline, and determination to make your dreams come true.

Without a game plan and goal setting nothing worthwhile is ever accomplished. Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal. Goal setting is when you decide **what are** your worthy ideals. Action planning is the progressive realization of those goals.

### Why Set Goals?

A person without goals is like a ship without a captain. The Ship may have the finest equipment and structure, yet without a Captain to steer and chart its course, it goes nowhere or it may **even** end up on the rocks. He who aims at nothing is guaranteed to hit it every time. To fulfill your vision you need to set goals you can aim at and achieve. Success in anything requires planning and direction. **Goal setting is the initial cause of which Success is the final result.**

### How to Set Goals

Goals must be:

- **Achievable** = It is worthy of your effort, for it will “stretch” you; but you can do it.
- **Believable** = Your heart tells you can do this. If you don’t believe it’s possible, it’s not!
- **Measurable** = You can see the end of it. You can measure it.
- **Deadlines** = It will require that you set schedules to accomplish the task.

### Three Kinds of Goals

Three kinds of goals are needed to fulfill a vision:

- Short-range Goals
- Mid-range Goals
- Long-range Goals.

For Example: you have a vision of yourself being Mighty in Scripture like someone you admire. How are you going to become Mighty in Scripture? You feel that learning to memorize Scripture is one of the keys to accomplishing your goal. So you set out to memorize Scripture as a part of your disciplined walk with God. How do you go about it?

### Have a Plan

Memorizing anything takes time, work, and lots of repetition. So, you need a plan. Let’s use the Navigator Topical Memory System as the plan and break it down into manageable goals.

The Wheel = 12 verses **Short-range goal** = one verse a week.

**Mid-range goal** = 12 verses in 12 weeks

**Long-range goal** = To review these twelve verses every week and to add one new verse a week, and add it to the review list until at the end of a year I have memorized 52 verses in a Topical organized game plan for a year.

### Work your Plan

You can eat an Elephant a bite at a time. Fulfilling your vision is about focus and discipline. If becoming mighty in scripture is your goal then do it one day at a time. Be consistent. Be faithful. Be available to do it. Have a plan, and work your plan. Scripture memory is about repetition, repetition, and more repetition.

It can be monotonous! Stay with it and soon the words of Scripture are in your heart, then in your spirit. You must add to your goal a daily time in God's word to read, study, and meditate on the Word. Those men and women you & I know who are Mighty in Scripture didn't get that way by taking short cuts! They have paid the price in diligence over the years. Many days and hours have been given to *"hiding Thy Word in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee"* (Ps. 119:11) The time alone with God each day with an open Bible, a notebook for your journal, is the laboratory where a godly man is formed.

Whatever your Vision is, you'll need a plan to reach those goals. Goal setting is so practical and beneficial.

- Short-range goals can be for a week, a month or two months.
- Mid-range goals are for ninety days to six months.
- Long-range goals are for a year to a lifetime.

### **A Life Goal**

When you come to the end of your life and look back on it, will you feel you were a success? A friend once said, "if you get where you are going, will you like where you're at?" It may not be good grammar, but it is a great question. To assure that you "like where you're at" there needs to be a LIFE GOAL to keep you on track. The Lord Jesus had a life goal. He said, *"I do always those things that please the Father"* and *"I have finished the work thou gave me to do"* ( John 8:29, 17:4)

Many years ago, I determined to have the following as my Life-Goal:

**"To know, love, and Glorify God; and to be used of Him to raise up qualified laborers in significant numbers, to help fulfill the Great Commission in my lifetime."**

Having this goal written in the front of my Bible, my journal, and in my heart has kept me focused all these years. It would be good if every person who wishes to lead others spiritually had his own God directed Life-Goal.

## Born to Reproduce

*Activity is no substitute for production, and production is no substitute for re-production.*

Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators, once wrote a little pamphlet entitled, *Born to Reproduce*. I first read it in about 1960. In it Dawson Trotman stresses the concept that we are saved to be disciples and then commissioned of Christ to “go and make disciples.” (**Matthew 28:19, 20**) It is an enormous folly to think that when Jesus gave this challenge to take the message of salvation, “to all the nations,” that He did so without a plan. Indeed, how was it possible that this little group of followers could hope to make disciples of all the nations of the world?

There are those of us who think the great commission is in itself the plan. It contains Christ’s strategy for world conquest. Look at the instructions carefully:

- **Go** = the call to witness & evangelize.
- **Make Disciples** = the call to equip believers
- **Training them** = the call to reproduce ourselves in those we equip
- **I am with you always** = the promise of His power

Actually, all of Jesus’ time on earth with His disciples was spent preparing them to go forth in His name to tell the world the good news. He was enrolling them in the school of discipleship.

Robert Coleman’s classic work, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, shows us vividly that Christ had a plan & purpose in all that He did with the twelve. Coleman’s book outlines Jesus’ method as follows:

- Selection
- Association
- Consecration
- Multiplication

### Selection

Christ’s first method was to select the right men. Have you noticed that Jesus was very selective in the men He chose to be His “twelve?” He didn’t call everybody, or just anybody. He only called a select few. They were not much to look at from the world’s perspective, but they were men who would follow Him. They were “fat” guys- faithful, available, and teachable. There was a plan in Christ’s choosing of those twelve men. They were not perfect or even supermen as the world values talent, but Jesus saw their potential and built His purpose into them.

Even so we are to “go” and witness to all who will listen. We are to then baptize that new convert. The next step is to make a disciple out of him. Here is where we can learn from Christ. Even Jesus could not make a faithful follower out of Judas. Being selective is important to the plan. Find the person who will follow you and learn from you. A Pastor can lead a congregation, but he cannot disciple a whole congregation. What he can do is what Jesus did. He can prayerfully select two or three.

### Association

His second method was the “with Him” principle. Coleman in his book makes much of this strategy. He says it was Christ’s plan to keep the Twelve near Him those first three years. Long after they might forget where they went, or whom they met, they would always remember Him! This being associated with Christ would forever change these men. The command to “follow me” was a deliberate plan and purposes to mentor the Twelve. They “caught” as much as they were taught. Just being with Christ intimately day in and day out, won their hearts. They would eventually die for Him. Christ understood the “with Him” principle of leadership.

We too, must adopt the “with me” strategy. You cannot reproduce your life and lifestyle in another person without spending much quality time with him. This is true in raising children and it’s true in rising up spiritual disciples. Parents who spend long hours with their child will forever imprint themselves in the soul of the child. Discipleship is “caught” as much as it is “taught.” It was said of the early disciples, “they took notice of them, that they had been with Jesus.” He who would lead others must be as available to his disciples as Christ was to His. Spiritual reproduction is a birthing process, and takes time and painful labor.

### Consecration

Jesus’ plan included getting those men He called to “*seek first the kingdom*” Priorities are primary to the disciple. In Luke 14, Jesus parables are all about counting the cost. Three times in Luke 14, our Lord says, “*you cannot be my disciple,*” unless you love me more than people, places and things. His plan calls men to a holy, disciplined walk with Him. Over and over again during those three years they traveled together, Jesus let the disciples see His commitment to God’s Kingdom and He challenged them to be as He was.

We too, must live consecrated lives in order to lead others. It is a spiritual principle of leadership, that you cannot lead others where you’ve never been. You cannot lead others out into the deep, when you yourself cannot swim. You cannot lead another man to live any closer to God, than you yourself live. Why? Because he spends much time with you and he will “find you out.” If you tell him to pray, but he does not see and hear you pray often, then he will not believe he should make prayer a priority. Do you think the twelve ever forgot their hours in prayer with Jesus? Never! When Jesus prayed to His Father, those men hungered to know God like that! Leading others to be disciples is about “being” a disciple first, then telling others about it.

### Principle of Multiplication

It is amazing to think that Jesus could look at that odd collection of men; fishermen, tax collectors, Zealots, and common men, and see the Kingdom of God in them. He saw what no one else could see; he saw the world being saved through their witness. Not one of those men had ever traveled a hundred miles from home, yet Jesus commanded them to tell “all the nations” about Him! He must have had a plan. He did. His vision was for each man to win one other man, and train that man to win another. The plan is spiritual reproduction. It is the principle of multiplication.

How does this work, and does it work? It is so simple that few have really tried it. It works like this. If a disciple wins one person to Christ and spends the 1<sup>st</sup> year training that person to win another; meanwhile the disciple is also winning his second person. The convert that he has trained now wins his 1<sup>st</sup> person to Christ. So, at the end of a year there will only be four of them.

This doesn’t sound like a very successful plan to win the world. Few pastors could build a church this slowly. You might think this will never win the world.

Think again. Now the **second year**, there will be eight disciples, because each disciple is winning and training one each year. In **ten years** there will be 1,024 disciples doing the same strategy. In **twenty years** the world will have 1,048,576 followers of Jesus. This isn’t so bad is it? Then if just each one will win and train one, in **thirty years** there will be 1,073,741,824! In one generation, **forty years**, over 1 trillion will come to Christ in salvation! Think about the Master’s plan for a second. This figure of 1 trillion people is such a staggering number the church has had enough time since Jesus gave us this plan to win the world a 100 times over! The church could have fulfilled the Great Commission in the first generation through those twelve men. It’s not a bad plan; it’s just not been tried very faithfully.

Now, we all know there are flaws in this idea of spiritual multiplication. Not every person you train will be faithful to win one each year. However, they should. It isn’t too much to ask, is it? Is it Unreasonable?

Certainly not! The Apostle Paul multiplied his life in Timothy, Luke, Silas, Titus, and Trophimus. He by himself was an evangelist, and won many. However, through those he trained he won multitudes. He says of the Thessalonian believers, *"you became imitators of us. And of the Lord...and so you became a model to all the believers... in that the Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia- your faith in God has become known everywhere."*(1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 1:6-8)

It is critical that we understand the Master's plan for bringing in the Kingdom. We are not called to make converts, whom we baptize, put on our church roles and then forget them. We are not to be about getting numbers of converts, but we are to be about growing disciples. Dawson Trotman said it well, *"Activity is no substitute for production, and production is no substitute for reproduction."* Christ calls us to "make disciples, and train them." We are born to reproduce ourselves in others. Jesus did it with His chosen men and we are to follow his example.

### **What are you doing?**

Are you committed to the Master's plan? If not, you've misdirected your energies. One day you will look back on your life and look for some lasting difference you made in this world. Jesus told us to pray, *"that you bear fruit and that it would remain"* (John 15) He himself prayed for His disciples "fruit" when He prayed for those who would believe through their witness. (See John 17:20) In effect Jesus was praying His followers would become disciple makers!

When I was a young man, a spiritually mature leader challenged me. When I saw him at a conference, I greeted him, "how are you doing?" He responded, "I'll not ask you how you are doing, but how are others doing, because of what you've been doing?" I was stunned! His words penetrated my heart. That question has stayed with me all through the years I've served the Master. This is the lifestyle we as followers of Christ are to live. What are others doing, because of what you've been doing?" That is our Lord's question to every true disciple. Are you reproducing fruit that will remain? Can you point to your "Timothy" and say, "There is my effort to help fulfill the great commission in my lifetime? These men and women are my life's work.

### **I am with you always**

Finally, we go forth in His name, filled with His spirit, and anointed by His power. Jesus gets excited when we try to fulfill His plan. He will go before us, get behind us and speak through us. You have his promise of that blessing. *"Go and make disciples, teaching them to do what I've commanded you to do, and I myself will be with you"*



## The Disciple Maker's Methods

Sometimes it is helpful to define what we mean by disciple making. In our Lord's last words to his followers he told them to "*go and make disciples*".

Now, just what is meant by "*making disciples*?" Some think this means evangelism, winning the lost to Christ. No, that is the "go" of Christ's command. We are to:

- Go
- Baptize
- And make disciples.

Is teaching Sunday school making disciples? Is preaching a sermon on Sunday morning making disciples? Well, these things are good and helpful but they fall far short of what our Lord intended. Teaching and preaching are not sufficient to making disciples.

### The Master's Plan

Think of it this way. The Lord Jesus called out a few men to be his disciples. How did they become what he called them to be? He had a method in the training of these men. F.F. Bruce in his classic book, *The Training of the Twelve*, shows us how Jesus made disciples of this rag-tag group of guys! Robert Coleman's *The Master's Plan of Evangelism* also shows us Jesus' method. The essence of making disciples is in the word "training." Christ trained the twelve to take over when he was gone. Let's take a look at how he trained them.

### The Master's Training

Training and teaching are not the same. Training will include teaching, but teaching may not include training. To train a man is to "on purpose" have a plan and a goal in mind. Jesus certainly had a plan and a purpose with the twelve. He was "with them" for the purpose of training them.

Training will include these five elements that the disciple maker uses to make his young convert into a disciple:

#### TELL HIM HOW

Tell him how to pray, how to witness, how to share his testimony, how to read his Bible, and how to memorize Scripture. This is the "teaching part of training. Teaching is needed and necessary, however it is only the first step in growing a new believer to maturity.

#### SHOW HIM HOW

This is where most teachers and preachers fail. They stop at the teaching and preaching and say, "Now go do it". The true disciple maker will do as Jesus did and show him how to do it. The disciples asked our Lord. "*Lord teach us to pray.*" He taught them the model prayer (Luke 11) but he then showed them how to pray. Being "with him" those three years they over and over time and again listened to Jesus pray! He SHOWED them how! True mentoring happens when the leader literally "shows" a young convert how to do a new life skill.

#### GET HIM STARTED

The disciple maker is a "hands on" teacher. Showing is better than telling any day! For example, I can teach you how to witness, and even show you how to witness, but until I get you started doing it for yourself, you are not yet witnessing! If I am with you and little by little get you started, watching me witness, before too long, you'll be doing it on your own! This is Mentoring! This is training others.

### **KEEP HIM GOING**

This is the hard part. The leader of men must have the patience of Job. Young disciples get distracted, and discouraged. They need encouragement. Paul in speaking to the Thessalonians said, “*we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly caring for her children*”(1<sup>st</sup> **Thess. 2:7**) This is the maker of disciples task. You must keep him going. Your young convert will stop memorizing, stop his quiet time, and stop reading his Bible. Satan is at work. However, you are there for him! You are the Leader of your man. You must build character and discipline in him. Stay after your faithful man until he is faithful on his own.

### **TRAIN HIM TO REPRODUCE**

This is the maturing final stage. Show him that he must teach and train someone else just as you have taught and trained him. He must not break the chain. Train him how to train another. The disciple makers greatest joy is in seeing your faithful man reach another and train him. That’s a blessing! The best way to get him to reproduce is by giving him a transferable concept or tool that he can give to another convert.

Finally, you can see that making disciples is hard work. That’s why so very few men do it well. However, those who invest their time in men reap great rewards. This kind of expedient growth is how God meant us to win the world.



## What is a Faithful Man?

*Where is your “man?” The early church leaders were always training their man. Barnabus had Saul, Paul had Timothy, and Peter had Mark. Where is your faithful man?*

*2 Timothy 2:2 “and the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”*

This is a remarkable insight into the Apostle Paul’s strategy of making disciples. Notice the four “generations” of disciples:

- Paul to Timothy
- Timothy to faithful men
- Faithful men to others also.

In God’s economy of reaching the world with the Gospel, we can see the different levels of leadership in the church.

### **The Convert**

This is the newborn babe in Christ (see 2 Peter 2:2) he/she needs the basics of how to “feed” himself. He needs “How to” skills in quiet time, Scripture reading, prayer, fellowship, and obedience.

### **The Disciple (D)**

This is the growing Christian learning to walk with Christ (see Luke 14:25-35) he/she has basic skills of walking in obedience with Christ, but needs encouragement and direction in his vision to make a difference in his world. He needs to be learning to “make disciples” of others in his realm of influence.

### **The Disciple Maker (DM)**

This is a man like Timothy. He has come to the place of leadership in his walk with Christ. He is born to reproduce. He like Paul before him gathers converts & disciples who are “faithful men”. He/she has a Great Commission mentality and compulsion.

### **The Leader of Disciple Makers (LDM)**

Very few reach this level of maturity and vision. Paul was such a man. In our day there are those who lead the leaders, and create the vision that impacts the world for Christ.

### **Finding a Faithful man**

All “going forth and making disciples” begins in finding those men who are deemed worthy of the time and effort it takes to mentor others. Who are those “faithful men? What did Paul envision when he tells Timothy to teach faithful men? Proverbs raises the question, “*most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness, but a faithful man who can find?*” ( **Proverbs 20:6**)

In essence I think Paul is urging Timothy to find men who are like himself. Timothy was a faithful man to Paul. I see at least three elements in looking for a faithful man, or in being a faithful man.

Someone said the faithful man is a “FAT” man.

**F= faithful**

**A= available**

**T= teachable**

Let’s look at each of these characteristics:

**I. The man you can train is FAITHFUL**

He has come to the place in his life that he wants the will of God to be done in his life at any cost. He is dedicated, motivated and consecrated. He has a heart for God. He is faithful to God and is willing to be faithful to you. Not every man is willing to be your faithful man. Timothy allowed Paul to mentor him. Demas forsook Paul, having loved this present world. Even the great apostle could not mentor Demas. Also, John Mark left Paul to eventually follow Peter. You must find men who will follow your lead and submit willingly to your spiritual leadership. He is loyal to you. You are his disciple maker. He is faithful to you as you follow Christ.

**1. Will he follow you?**

Faithful doesn’t mean just faithful to Christ and the kingdom. You and your faithful man have a leader/follower relationship. He so admires and respects your walk with God that he will follow you in order to learn from you.

**2. Will he be willing to follow transferable conduct and concepts?**

A basic principle of leading another in disciple training is that you have a plan. This plan is your strategy to give your faithful man transferable concepts. What is a transferable concept? It is when you teach another how to do a task the same way you are doing it. It is telling him how and then showing him how repeatedly by your disciplined behavior. You as a disciple maker must never ask a disciple to do something you yourself are not willing to do. He must see you doing it. You are a servant leader to your disciple as Jesus was to his disciples. Training a faithful man is “caught” as well as taught. He must want to be like you and to do what you do.

For example: you teach your faithful man the Navigator Wheel as a method of Scripture memory. He sees that you are memorizing the Wheel and using your verses to live your life. If he is willing to do as you do, to learn the 12 verses in the Wheel, then that means he is “faithful” to follow your training. However, if he refuses to do the Wheel and its verses, but goes off on his own, and memorizes other verses, then he may be faithful to God, but he is not faithful to you! He cannot be your disciple.

**3. He has an appetite to learn, and is willing to learn from you.**

He must have a love for The Word of God. The prophet Jeremiah said, *“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart”* ( **Jeremiah 15:16**)

There is a saying, “you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink” I would add to that, “and you cannot make him drink from your trough” When the disciple maker looks for a faithful man, be careful to not only look for a loyal man, but also to look for a hungry man! Your faithful man must be starving for the Word of God! There is a fire burning in his belly to learn and grow. He will let you feed him from your trough.

## II. The man you train is AVAILABLE

He has a servant heart. He is a potential servant-leader. Jesus never measured a man by how many servants he had, but rather by how many men he served. Your faithful man must be willing to follow you and serve Christ.

Your faithful man feels called of God to be available to you for mentoring. He has committed his TIME for the very purpose of learning transferable concepts from you. He is available for a quiet time, journaling, prayer, and training. He is available for Scripture memory, and will allow you to hold him accountable. For a set amount of time he is available to learn the “things you have learned from me in the presence of many witnesses.” He understands that he is not to be a “cul-de-sac” but a conduit. There is another potential Faithful man out there waiting on him to come train him also. He is available.

### 1. He is available to learn

He does not have an independent spirit. He can live under authority.

He is at a place in his life where he will make his growth as a follower a priority. He is available to his mentor. It will require sacrifice on both your parts. It takes time to grow a disciple. He is available to you! He is faithful.

### 2. He is able to teach others

Not every person the disciple maker trains has the strong ability to teach others. I suggest that the disciple leader give his best quality time to the best people. Seek a person to follow you who is “apt to teach” as Paul describes him. By training your faithful man you may be winning and training thousands through him. Always pray and ask God to send you those who will in turn be able to take the training to “others also” (2nd Timothy 2:2) Your faithful man may be a follower to you, but he can be a leader of others. God through you is his future leadership! God in and through him can multiply your witness many times over.

## III. The man you train is TEACHABLE

Not every Christian you meet has a teachable spirit. The faithful man has a God hunger to learn. Also, he is willing to learn from you! By teachable we mean open to your leadership. He is Meek before God and his mentor. He does not have a proud spirit. He is humble enough to learn from his mentors. More than anything your faithful man is willing to let YOU teach him. This is crucial. The disciple maker soon learns that he cannot mentor everyone. Paul could not mentor John Mark until the last days of Paul’s life. Find a man or men who respect your Godly walk so much that they hunger for what you have, and will submit to you to get it!

He is teachable to your methods and transferable concepts. He must understand that by teaching him you are teaching those whom he will teach also. The strategy is critical. You are preparing him to prepare others. Your faithful man must be willing to be a part of this kingdom process.

As the Disciple grows in his desire to reproduce his skills and life in others he must prayerful seek those “FAT” men and women who manifest these qualities. Put quality time into quality people.

Someone observed that the faithful man is a man of faith! If you take the word “faith” and break it down you’ll see the characteristics of the man you can grow to maturity.

F = faithful

A = available

I = initiator (self starter)

T = teachable

H = heart for God



## Bringing Men to Maturity

What are your objectives as you disciple another man/woman? What Christ-like qualities should the disciple-maker (DM) focus on? The Disciple-maker (DM) must work toward the goal of spiritual maturity in his disciple. Paul spoke of this in **Ephesians 4: 13**, *“until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”* The DM must have a “game-plan” to present his disciple complete in Christ.

- ***The DM helps his disciple fulfill his/her God-given Vision.***

You will work on helping him/her fulfill God’s call on their life. His Vision is his heart passion, his energy. The DM must build into that Vision.

**Warning:** Your man/woman’s vision or calling may not be what you choose for him, but it is what God has called him to do. Support what God is doing in your disciple’s life.

- ***The DM Helps his disciple grow in their Faith Walk***

Work on the disciple’s trust in God to meet every need, especially as it relates to the calling & vision. Focus on Bible truth’s that strengthens the faith walk. Verses like: **Hebrews 11:6;**

**Jeremiah 29:11 & Philippeans 4:19**

- ***The DM seeks to develop Consistency in his disciple.***

Because we are God’s “lights” in the world, the disciple must be trained to be consistent in his lifestyle. Hold him accountable to be consistent in prayer, Quiet time, soul-winning, and faithfulness to the call of God in his life. **Matthew 5:16**

- ***The DM Helps the disciple become a Prayer/Warrior***

Nothing strengthens faith like real praying. Work on getting him to walk by faith, not sight, by helping him claim God’s promises thru prayer. He must spend time with you praying as he observes your faith and dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

**Philippeans 4:6, 7; Proverbs 3:5, 6**

- ***The DM Stresses the importance of Integrity & Accountability.***

Weekly give your disciple opportunities to be responsible, on time, and to keep commitments. Integrity is learned over time, and it must be focused upon as a Christ-like characteristic.

**Proverbs 11:3, Titus 2:7**

- ***The DM works on the Apostolic qualities that Paul built into his disciples.***

From the Scriptures, search out with your disciple the qualities Paul expected of Timothy, Titus, and others he mentored. List these character Qualities by chapter & verse, then memorize verses that stress these qualities.

**For Example:** Paul says to Timothy, *“Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.”* **1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 4:12**

- ***The DM works on the disciples leadership/multiplication skills.***

Those who lead others are pacesetters, and are not afraid to stand alone for Christ if need be.

Your disciple must forever be challenged to lead and reproduce his life in others. Take him soul-winning, review his follow-up methods, and hold him accountable to use transferable concepts with those he disciples

- ***The DM encourages the disciple to be light & salt in his own family.***

Pacesetting begins at home. Your disciple, if married, must be challenged to lead his family in discipleship. Time must be given to helping him/her apply to his family the truths he is learning. Reproduction starts @ home. **Ephesians 5:23-28**

## NOTES

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## Beginning to Disciple a new Convert

### **Assumptions:**

This guideline is written in very simple style & content. It assumes you as a Disciple Maker are working with a new born babe in Christ. This new born “babe” needs only baby-food; he cannot digest strong meat. So we are assuming the new believer knows NOTHING! We must both teach him & train him as you would a new born baby.

- *Teaching* him has to do with doctrine & his belief system
- *Training* him has to do with developing his Skills as a disciple.

Your new disciple may know some things, but we will assume we are at the beginning. We must teach him how to:

- feed himself the Word
- have a quiet time
- journal his walk with Christ
- talk to God
- share his testimony
- witness to others
- become a reproducing disciple

### **Week One: 1<sup>st</sup> meeting-** Does the new believer have a readable Bible?

We can disciple him without his owning a Bible, but with very limited results. We cannot bring him to maturity without him owning a Bible; preferably a complete Bible-not just a New Testament.

1. Show him how to find the Gospels-Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.
2. Explain to him that these were Jesus’ disciples whom God used to write the story of Christ’s life. We cannot grow in our faith without knowledge of Christ and our mission as His followers.
3. Assignment: He is to read chapter one of the Gospel of John before you & he meet again. He is to read John chapter one with a notepad & pencil by his side. You want him to take notes of his insights and questions so the two of you can discuss them when next you meet.
4. You tell him you will not meet with him until he has read & completed this assignment in John 1. When he is finished he can bring his notes to share with you.
5. Review with him how to pray-using the A-C-T-S {Four Minutes with God} in the Disciple Leader Manual  
A= Adoration  
C= Confession  
T= Thanksgiving  
S= Service or supplication.  
You must pray with him using this four minute model- you show him how to pray by praying with you.

### **Week Two: 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting-** Begin “quiet time” skills

1. Review John chapter one with your Timothy.
2. Encourage him to use notebook or a spiral bound writing pad for storing his notes.
3. Begin showing him how to APPLY the Word to his life, by asking himself questions from God’s Word.  
Example: John 1:1 says “*and the Word was God and was in the beginning with God*”



**Question:** What does this tell me about Jesus Christ? Do I believe that Jesus Christ is creator God? See John 1:10 & Colossians 1:15-17

**Example:** John 1:12 says those who receive Him become sons of God simply by believing in Him. What does it mean to “receive Christ?” Has he received Christ & become a child of God? See John 3:5-7 & 3:16 & 36

4. Encourage him to memorize John 1:12 by next week. Memorize it topically

**Topic:** Must receive Christ- John 1:12. Encourage him to memorize it word perfect, just as it is in his Bible.

5. Assign him to read chapters two & three of John’s gospel and to write his meditations in his notebook.

### **Week Three: 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting** –Continue developing his time alone with God.

Question him about his quiet time. How consistent was he? Did he meet God everyday?

1. Review his Scripture memory verse- John 1:12. Can he quote it with the topic {Must receive Christ} reference & verse?

2. Review his prayer life using A-C-T-S {Disciple-leader Manual- Section one}

You must stress praying this “pattern” for prayer.

**Adoration**- Helps him learn to praise the Holy Father- We enter His courts with Praise

**Confession**-Show Him 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:8-9, encourage him to accept God’s forgiveness thru the blood of Christ

**Thanksgiving**- an essential part of prayer is being thankful for God’s blessings. Encourage him to list the many provisions God has made in his life.

**Supplication**- praying for others. Get him to list in his notebook the people he is praying for. He is to pray for the salvation of others in his family or sphere of influence.

3. Review his time in the Word- John chapters 2 & 3. Is your Timothy developing some meditation skills by writing his insights & questions in his journal {notebook}? If not, hold him accountable. Do not allow laziness or undisciplined behavior to start. He must follow your instructions in order to “earn” your time with him. Do not meet with him again until he does his “homework” assignments.

4. Assign another memory verse from John chapter 3. 3:7, 3:16, 3:18, or 3:36

Use a Topic for your memory verse- Salvation by Faith-John 3:16 & 36

### **Week Four: 4<sup>th</sup> meeting**- Begin Doctrinal Study

1. You could begin with him in the New Life in Christ booklet, assigning your “Timothy” one Chapter a week. When you meet, you review the Chapter with him and memorize a verse on each Chapter topic.

Example; Chapter one of NLIC is Assurance of Salvation. Memorize 1<sup>st</sup> John 5: 11-12.

2. The next week review Eternal security and memorize a verse on that topic.

Note: Each week when you meet with your Timothy, always spend some time reviewing your verses- review, review, review! That is the method of learning Bible verses.

### **Week Five: 5<sup>th</sup> meeting**- Review! Review! Review!

You now have a continuing pattern for each week:

1. Review memory verses

2. Go over Quiet time assignments & application.

3. Encourage him to be consistent in his disciplines of being a Christ-follower

4. Continue each week in the New Life in Christ booklet, memorizing a verse for each chapter topic, until you have completed the 13 lessons in NLIC.

5. Finally, become a pray partner with your Timothy- sharing burdens & victories as God answers prayer.

### **Weeks 6 & 7 meetings**- Train your Timothy to witness to others.

As your Timothy grows in faithfulness to the Lord & to your disciplines of growth you can begin to develop him as a soul-winning witness.

1. Train him to share his testimony by writing it out and then speaking it to you & then to others. He can learn to do this by reading the lesson on sharing your testimony in the Disciple Leader Manual.
2. Begin to train him in the use of the Evangecube as a witnessing tool. There are at least 6 verses of Scripture that go with the Evangecube. Begin memorizing these verses & the panels they match on the Evangecube.
3. On a regular basis take your Timothy witnessing with you. This “field training” will greatly advance his confidence as a witness. Soon he will be doing it on his own.

### **Week 8 meeting- Born to Reproduce**

Now you return to the regular disciplines of quiet time, prayer & Scripture memory & review.

Each meeting you can deepen his knowledge of Christ thru Bible study together

1. Born to reproduce: about now is time to talk to your Timothy about reproduction. Soon he must win someone to Christ & begin the process of discipling that new convert. He must see that each disciple is to reproduce himself in others.
2. When he begins his own “one on one” meeting with his Timothy; he can review with you the same methods you & he use. Walk him thru the week by week schedule with his disciple.
3. Continue to take him witnessing whenever possible to keep him focused on evangelism.

## NOTES

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# RESOURCES

## RESOURCES



## Christian Ministry Internet Web Sites

### Quiet Time Sites

- **Our Daily Bread**  
[www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb.shtml](http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb.shtml)
- **My Utmost For His Highest**  
[www.gospelcom.net/rbc/utmost](http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/utmost)
- **Henry Blackaby Ministries**  
[www.henryblackaby.com](http://www.henryblackaby.com)

### Bible Study Sites

- **Sermon Central**  
[www.sermoncentral.com](http://www.sermoncentral.com)
- **Bible Crosswalk**  
[www.biblecrosswalk.com](http://www.biblecrosswalk.com)
- **The Navigators- Navpress**  
[www.navpress.com](http://www.navpress.com)
- **Liberty University Bible Tools**  
[www.biblecrosswalk.com](http://www.biblecrosswalk.com)
- **Christian Downloads**  
[www.allchristiandownloads.com](http://www.allchristiandownloads.com)
- **GospelCom.net**  
[www.gospelcom.net](http://www.gospelcom.net)
- **Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**  
[www.menfak.no/bibel/vines.html](http://www.menfak.no/bibel/vines.html)

### Selected Ministries

- **Dr. Carl Baugh**  
**Creation Evidence Museum**  
[www.creationevidence.org](http://www.creationevidence.org)
- **Dr. James Dobson**  
**Focus on the Family**  
[www.family.org](http://www.family.org)
- **Dr. Tony Evans**  
**The Urban Alternative**  
[www.tonyevans.org](http://www.tonyevans.org)

- **Dr. Billy Graham**  
**Billy Graham Evangelistic Association**  
[www.graham-assn.org](http://www.graham-assn.org)
- **Dr. Jack Graham**  
**Prestonwood Baptist Church**  
[www.powerpoint.org](http://www.powerpoint.org)
- **Pastor John Hagee**  
**John Hagee Ministries**  
[www.jhm.org](http://www.jhm.org)
- **Dr. Jack Hayford**  
**The King's College & Seminary**  
[www.jackhayford.com](http://www.jackhayford.com)
- **Bishop T. Jakes**  
**The Potter's House**  
[www.tdjakes.org](http://www.tdjakes.org)
- **Dr. James Kennedy**  
**Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church**  
[www.coralridge.org](http://www.coralridge.org)
- **Max Lucado**  
**UpWords Ministries**  
[www.maxlucado.com](http://www.maxlucado.com)
- **Joyce Meyer**  
**Life In The Word**  
[www.lifeintheword.org](http://www.lifeintheword.org)
- **Dr. Charles Stanley**  
**In Touch Ministries**  
[www.intouch.org](http://www.intouch.org)
- **Chuck Swindoll**  
**Insight For Living**  
[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org)
- **Tim Timmons**  
**New Community Church**  
[www.timtimmons.com](http://www.timtimmons.com)
- **Barry Wood**  
**Barry Wood Ministries**  
[www.barrywoodministries.org](http://www.barrywoodministries.org)



**Bible Prophecy Sites**

- **Bill Koenig**  
[www.watch.org](http://www.watch.org)
- **Hal Lindsey**  
**Oracle House Publishing, Inc.**  
[www.hallindsey.com](http://www.hallindsey.com)

[www.jvim.com](http://www.jvim.com)

- **Yacov Rambsel**  
**Messianic Ministries, Inc.**  
[www.yacovrambsel.com](http://www.yacovrambsel.com)

**Apologetics**

- **Josh McDowell**  
**Josh McDowell Ministries**  
[www.josh.org](http://www.josh.org)

## NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## NOTES

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## NOTES

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