

# new wine

APRIL 1975  
THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE  
DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH



## PRAYER

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## "DECEPTION" HELPFUL

I have just finished reading Ern Baxter's "The Deception Decision" in the latest *New Wine*. Praise the Lord for such a straightforward, easy-to-understand statement of our responsibility! And the truth that we can overcome by "simple" obedience — what encouragement!

Alvin Overland  
Puyallup, Wash.

Your issue on "Deception" is the best ever! We have fallen into so many traps because of ignorance and this issue has cleared the air so well.

Before we heard the Gospel, we were Baha'is, and have been very vulnerable ever since. But praise God, we are becoming more knowledgeable due to the efforts of our brothers and sisters. We thank God for *New Wine*.

Mrs. Wendy Wetzel  
Spokane, Wash.

I would like to thank you for your recent edition on "Deception." It came at a time when we really needed it. It helped show us where we had been wrong, and we have, with God's help, righted the situation.

R. Whitman  
Spring Lake, Michigan

Thanks so much for the article in your February issue entitled, "Deception — A Testimony." I have two sisters who are members of Moon's group and my parents and I don't really know what to say to them. Your article has helped us a lot to know what we should do about it.

Wayne Schmidt  
Albuquerque, N.M.

I want to thank you especially for the editorial in the February issue on "Deception." As stated, to avoid deception, we must be properly related to a shepherd who teaches the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Ray Bagget  
Oberline, La.

Thank you for the blessed thought in "Deceived? Who Me?" that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is in reality God's draft call to warfare!

Mrs. C.A. Robinson  
Rock Hill, S.C.

# Letters to Editor

## MISINTERPRETATIONS?

I would like to see more articles on the Christian application of authority and discipline (or discipleship). There seems to be some who have taken the pharisaical approach, making people fearful of insubordination if they offer any suggestion, give any opinion, or ask any questions.

This approach actually puts people in bondage rather than giving freedom to honestly and eagerly seek Jesus and all His promises. It's possible that some have misinterpreted Christian discipline by applying authority and discipline in a worldly manner. There also seems to be a lack of Bible background, which may be the source of the seeming problem.

M.R.

Much of what is written in your magazine is wanting in the main ingredient in God's relationship to man — GRACE! Often the writer emphasizes what man should be doing for God — and how we dare not fail. God's grace is not dependent upon man. If it were it would fail.

If you are truly interested in giving principles of a balanced life, as you stated in your editorial, then I would suggest that you broaden your base and include more charismatic teachers for a more balanced understanding of the word "grace."

Mrs. Bonnie A. Weaver

## LORD OF THE DOLLAR?

In reading the January issue of *New Wine*, the article "Lord of the Dollar" was of particular interest. The term "tithes" was mentioned as basic knowledge of any believer. The scribes and Pharisees kept the law to the dot to show their righteousness, yet our Lord said we should exceed these in our righteousness (Matt. 5:20).

The needless worry of giving 10% as under the law is shameful when aligned with the total spectrum of Christ's lordship. It seems an invaluable lesson for each believer to accept Christ's total lordship and our position as stewards (Matt. 16:24; 25:14-30).

Leif Leaf  
Chico, Calif.

## SCRIPTURAL "HOW TO'S"

Thank the Lord you are all available for scriptural "how to's." I especially felt De Vern Fromke's explanation of the aspects of lordship in the January FORUM were good: Honor and obey — don't just obey; rejoice in the stewardship you do have — don't worry over its size or wish it were larger; and lastly, express the lordship of Christ in your life by acts of obedience and expect the acts to become a new way of life, a whole new attitude to live from. This really explained the dynamic quality of Christian life to me.

Mrs. A. P. Gromko  
West Covina, Calif.

The teachings that have been most helpful are those dealing with the "practical aspects" of daily Christ-centered living. We need more teaching on how God wants us to be rightly related to one another in Christ and our relationships to nonbelievers.

Ken Mitchell

## CAUTION! NEW WINE AT WORK

It would be difficult to find one month's magazine that doesn't have one article that just fits the situation I am facing right now! It is a NOW magazine!

Mrs. Lois A. Robbins  
Corpus Christi, Tx.

Needless to say *New Wine* deals sweetly and in depth. The heretofore dark corners are being dug out so plainly before us.

V.J. Boutwell  
Boise, Idaho

*New Wine* is the one Christian magazine I look forward to receiving. It is most enjoyable — even when it "hurts"!

Margaret Borreggine  
Bronx, N.Y.

# Editorial

During the past few weeks, the Lord has been speaking to us concerning diligence. Because we have so geared our lives to seek comfort at the expense of self-discipline, many of us tend to shun any activity that demands diligence or personal sacrifice. At the same time, God has been talking about prayer. Few of us really understand prayer, even though we may know all the scriptures that explicitly command it. For most of us, it is a frustrating and ineffectual area simply because we lack the discipline to pray earnestly and consistently. But when we see that Jesus sacrificed food, sleep and companionship in order to spend time in prayer, we begin to realize how important diligence must be if we are to grow in our prayer lives.

2 Chronicles 7:14 tells us, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." God places the responsibility for earnestly seeking Him directly upon *us* as His people.

The Scriptures repeat that responsibility in 1 Timothy 2:1,2: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

In the past few years, whenever we have applied ourselves to diligently obey the call to pray, we have witnessed God's sovereign intervention in the affairs of men. Certainly then, as the pressure of our age intensifies, the emergence of the Kingdom of God will be all the more dependent upon the prayers of God's people. We cannot remain undisciplined and still be faithful to the exhortations in the above scriptures. Let us diligently apply the Word of God and heed His command.



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APRIL 1975

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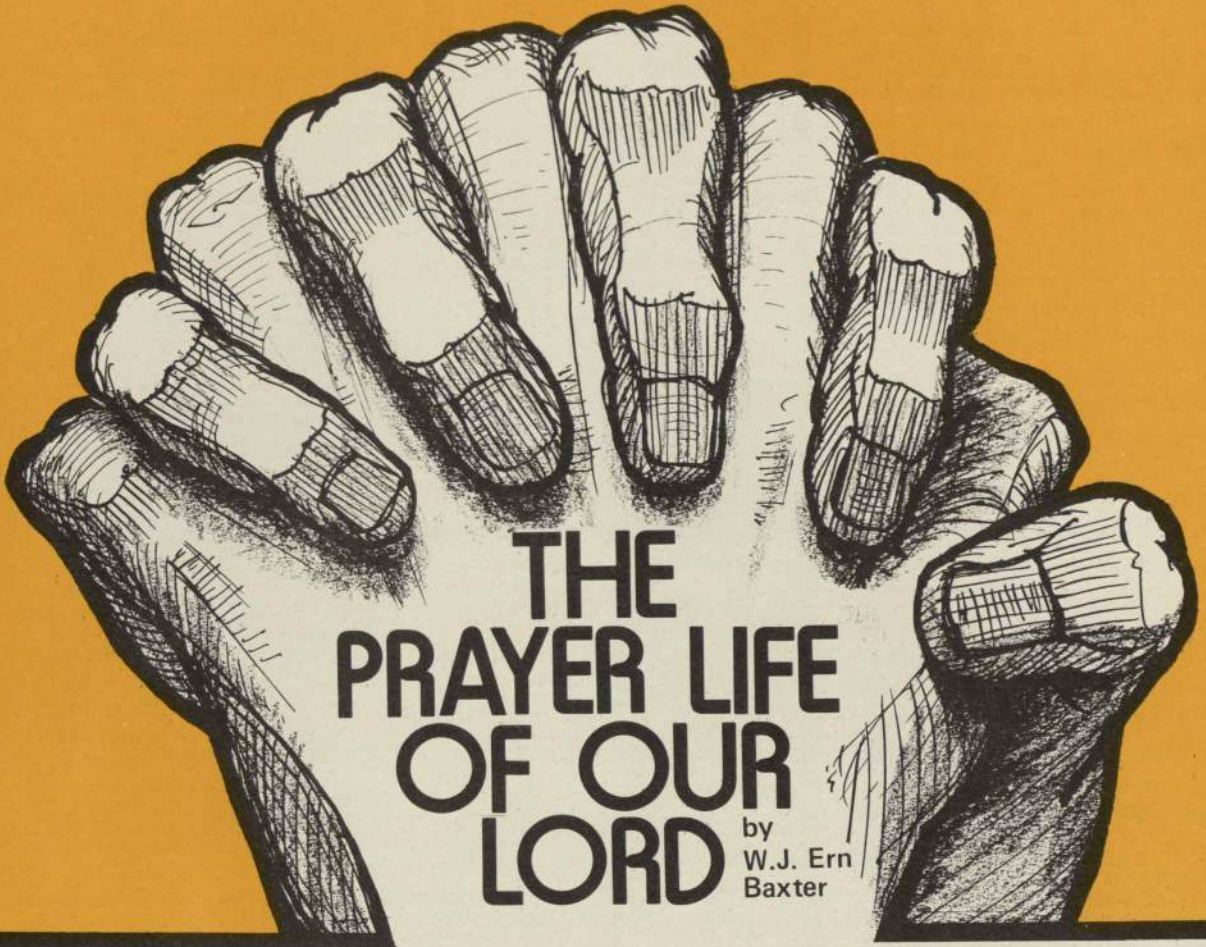
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## READER SERVICE CARD

Our reader service card is now included on the inserted envelope. For change of address or new names please refer to this envelope.

Our pattern for constant prayer fellowship with the Father.



**J**esus, the Christ, was the only perfect man that ever lived. He was a pattern person, God's singular Son. The maturing of His humanity was processively attained, and consisted of undeviating obedience to the will of God. Such a relationship was enabled and maintained on the human side, through prayer (Heb. 5:7,8). "Having been made perfect He 'qualified' to become 'the author of eternal salvation.' " The Man-Redeemer fulfilled His God-appointed task through obedience, and left "us an example that we should follow in His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Since prayer was such an important part of His perfecting, it is essential that we who are "going on to perfection" (Heb. 6:1) should consider the prayer life of our Example. If we can determine the place prayer had in

His life we can learn something of prayer's intended purpose.

#### BEGINNING IN PRAYER

Jesus was reared in a devout home, and His mother and Joseph are said to have "performed all things according to the law of the Lord" (Luke 2:39). In this atmosphere then "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him (Luke 2:40). The

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following verse tells us of the consistency of our Lord's parents in their devotion to the things of God saying of them that, "his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover." So our Lord in the years prior to His ministry enjoyed a home where God and His word were held in high and holy esteem. His public ministry was commenced with His baptism by John (Luke 3:21-22). At the time of His baptism we read "... that Jesus also was baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, 'Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased.' " And so Jesus' ministry was introduced by submission to baptism and communion with God in prayer.

Prayer was prominent at the very beginning of His ministry. As a result of obedience in baptism and His communion in prayer, there followed a series of significant happenings. "The heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended . . . and a voice came out of heaven," acknowledging Jesus to be God's "beloved Son."

As our Lord commenced His ministry in prayer, prayer was to become the pattern of His life. Not only the beginnings of His ministry, but the pattern of His life. Not only the beginning of His ministry, but the beginnings of all heaven-ordained undertakings were immersed in prayer, as were all His ongoings, and all of His conclusions. His ministry began in prayer, and on the mortal side concluded with the significant prayers of Calvary. His entire life was a life bathed in prayer.

### CONSTANTLY IN PRAYER

In the days of His flesh, when He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and who was heard because of His piety, although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:7-9).

We shall be considering a number of scriptural passages on the prayer life of our Lord, but this particular one serves to give us a general view of His reasons for prayer, and the extent of His comprehensiveness of the issues which were at stake in His praying, and the manner in which His prayers were ultimately answered. We are told that "Jesus the Son of God," is "not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities [have fellow feeling with our weaknesses' - Rotherham], but was in all points tempted like as we are [one who has in every way been tempted, exactly as we have been' - TCNT] yet without sin [without committing any sin' - Goodspeed]" (Heb. 4:15).

Here we see the reason for our

Lord's personal prayer life. Being a man, and subject to all creature temptations, He found the strength to withstand the lure of these temptations through maintaining constant relationship with the Father in prayer. It is at this point that the writer to the Hebrews urges us to "come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

As we go on into chapter five we are told that prayer was the constant practice of our Lord "in the days of His flesh" (Heb. 5:7). This phrase is variously translated as "in the days of His earthly life" - (TCNT); "during His earthly life" - (Weymouth), and "during His mortal life" - (Vincent). The statement here indicates that during His lifetime He prayed much, because prayer is a necessity if mortals are to walk in victory over sin.

Quite often Hebrews 5:7 is used to refer specifically to the prayers offered by our Lord in Gethsemane. However, as we have seen, the prayers referred to here, were offered "during His earthly life," of course including the Gethsemane prayers. They were emotion-filled prayers being described as offered with "strong crying and tears." The extent of the emotions involved in such praying is brought out in other translations as "mighty outcries and tears" - (Rotherham); "in desperate prayers and the agony of tears" - (JBP). The reason for the vehemence of His praying is described in the next phrase, where it is said, these prayers were offered "unto Him that was able to save Him from death."

The writer goes on to say that He "was heard in that He feared." If our Lord prayed "unto Him that was able to save Him from death and was heard," then apparently His being saved from death does not mean that He was saved from Calvary, because He did die on the cross. The apparent contradiction however seems to be resolved by translating the passage "out of death" (marg.) rather than "from death." This could mean that our Lord was praying that He would be brought "safe out of death into a

new life." Undoubtedly the prayers of Gethsemane were involved, but the general nature of the whole passage points to our Lord's times of prayer in facing temptation triumphantly, thus qualifying Him as the perfect man and as our Savior, who could experience death and be delivered out of it. He would not have been delivered "out of death" had He not "prayed through" temptation and emerged from each confrontation "without sin." Having successfully walked in His mortality, free from sin, He was able to experience "victory over death the fruit of sin."

Our Lord knew that to be the Savior of men He had to walk sinlessly to qualify. Such sinlessness derived from His constancy in prayer fellowship with the Father and in obedience to the revelation of the Father's will. And "though He were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all those who obey Him." To successfully fulfil His destiny as "the author of eternal salvation" it was necessary to maintain a consistent prayer life, which many times because of the intensity of the confrontation, caused Him to engage in "mighty outcries and tears." Praise God, "He was heard," and not only triumphed personally, but became our Savior as a result of His triumph, and afforded us an example of the manner in which victorious living can be enjoyed.

We should observe the reason why He was heard. He "was heard in that He feared." The word "feared" means "to act cautiously, beware, fear." "The image in the word is that of a cautious taking hold and careful and respectful handling: . . . Christ in His prayer took account of all things, not only His desire, but His Father's will" (Vincent). He knew that He wanted to be saved from death the fruit of sin, therefore His mortal life consisted of prayer and obedience. How the Father would save Him out of death was a matter of the Father's will. He would do His part, and He knew the Father would do His part. The Father heard

Him and responded to Him, both in life and resurrection, because "He feared." Dean Alfred's translation at this point is very interesting, "having been heard by reason of His reverent submission." Thank God He was heard during the days of His earthly life, and He was heard as He submitted to Calvary, in that God raised Him from the dead.

## OUR LORD'S PRAYER PRIORITIES

*Prayer Had Priority Over His Social Life.* "And when He had sent the multitude away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone" (Matt. 14:23).

As we look at this picture we see our Lord turning from the normal and legitimate relationships of social life to give priority to prayer. He not only "sent the multitude away," but in verse 22 we read that He "constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and go before Him unto the other side." He must pray! He was in a time of crisis as the multitude and His disciples wanted to make Him the kind of king that He had not come to the earth to be. He must get to the Father about this matter and therefore must forego the society of friends and intimate disciples. Desirable as it might be to take time after a long day for social intercourse with those near Him, He realized that prayer must have priority.

The way of less disciplined humanity would probably be to try to forget the problems in the society of friends, or to meet with a few intimates, such as His disciples, and discuss it. We probably all relate to this human way of dealing with our problems. We would rather do anything but pray about the crisis at hand. But with our Lord, prayer had priority over His social life, and when He faced a crisis, He would forego the pleasant relief found in social relationships, to seek the face of the Father.

*Prayer Had Priority Over His Physical Rest.* "When it grew late He was there by Himself . . ." (Matt. 14:23, JBP).

As we consider this particular event, we find that He appeared to His disciples "about the fourth watch" which would be sometime between 3:00 and 6:00 A.M. Assuming that He went to prayer about 7:00 P.M. and prayed till between 3:00 and 6:00 A.M., it would mean that He spent nine or ten hours of the night in prayer. In Luke 6:12 we read that He "went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Again in Mark 1:35 it is recorded that "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Thus we see that our Lord would deny Himself physical rest if the time was needed for prayer, rising up "while it was still dark" or praying all night.

*Prayer Had Priority Over Appetite.* ". . . Master, eat. . . I have meat to eat that you know not of. . . hath any man brought Him ought to eat? . . . My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me. . ." (John 4:31-34).

God's will, including prayer, was more important at times than food. There is nothing wrong with social life, physical rest, or eating, but in the life of our great Example, all of these legitimate things must take second place when the will of God commands a higher priority. Therefore eating, which is a legitimate, and enjoyable, and a constant aspect of physical life, was often foregone in order that He might respond to a higher priority. We would not infer that this was necessarily a hardship, for our Lord had said, "I delight to do thy will." He set us an example of a higher and more satisfying life: a life spent in doing the will of God. It has been, and is, the testimony of God's devoted servants, that our Lord's priorities, when pursued, invariably afford the greatest satisfaction.

## OUR LORD PRAYED WHEN UNPOPULAR

[The scribes and the Pharisees] were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do with Jesus. And it

came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God (Luke 6:11,12).

He prayed during the days of popularity and success, and He prayed when unpopular and facing the angry death-designs of His enemies. He could not face the rage and fury of men who were plotting His murder without divine aid. The satanically-inspired religious opponents were more than a match for His unsupported humanity. He could not, would not, and did not, meet these dark powers on His own. In the midst of such jeopardy He went to His source of strength and direction, spending the entire night in prayer.

Again the example is obvious. If He, the Perfect Man, with all His nature functioning in perfect obedience to God, would not attempt to meet the combined fury of His enemies apart from intense and prolonged prayer to the Father, how much more we, who move from a position of human nature in the process of restructuring, need to spend much time in the Father's presence to enable us to withstand the fury and rage of satanically-inspired enemies who would seek to destroy us. This is no place for false bravado, but rather for sober and sound evaluation of our restricted abilities. Without Him we can do nothing. And certainly without Him we cannot withstand the dark powers that are constantly arrayed against us.

## OUR LORD PRAYED WHEN JOYFUL

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee Oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight (Luke 10:21).

Life is complex and various, and consists of many situations with their corresponding emotional expenditures, and character responses. We probably do not find it hard to pray when unpopular or when suffering, or in crisis, but do not think of praying when all is well. We are inclined to

share our burdens with the Father, but fail to include Him in celebrating our joys. Not so our Lord. When Jesus saw His disciples excited because of the operation of divine authority in their lives, and responding to His adjustive teaching, His heart was thrilled. It was in the midst of this joy that He turned to the Father to express in prayer His joy over what He was seeing in His disciples, and also His delight in the Father's principle of operation, as divine truths are being hidden from the proud, haughty, wise, and prudent men of worldly wisdom and lifeless religion, and being revealed to men who according to human standards were but "babes." The fact that ordinary, unlettered men such as Peter and John, more familiar with boats and fish nets and the rugged vernacular of a common and limited vocabulary, should be recipients of divine insights, was cause for great joy to our Lord.

It is becoming obvious as we consider our Lord's life patterns, that every area was covered by prayer. He shared the total life with the Father, holding it before Him for scrutiny, adjustment, or reception.

### OUR LORD PRAYED WHEN SUFFERING

And being in *an agony* He *prayed more earnestly*: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke 22:44).

We have already made reference to Gethsemane's agonizing prayers in the early part of our article. The passage in Hebrews, chapter 5, makes clear that suffering is essential to the development of Christian character. If our Lord learned obedience through the things which He suffered, then certainly we who are "predestinated to be conformed to His image," (Rom. 8) should expect the same character-building situations to eventuate in our lives. In the type of tests and divine confrontations intended for our maturing, we can only successfully endure such, as He did — *spending much time in prayer*. For it is in prayer that the Father is able to give

strength to endure, and the understanding of the whys of our suffering. It is only in prayer that we are able to incorporate into our lives the lessons to be learned, which are to become a part of our mature character. It is in prayer that we maintain the tenderness and sensitivity of spirit, that enables us to appreciate the divine intention in the trials designed for the strengthening of our faith.

### OUR LORD PRAYED IN CRISIS

*... continued all night in prayer to God.* And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples and of them *he chose twelve*... (Luke 6:12,13).

Our Lord maintained a constant attitude of prayer and it seemed to be habitual for Him to spend nights in prayer. It is quite obvious that He entered into an intensity of prayer when making crisis decisions. In choosing the twelve who were to become the foundation of the new order, He spent an entire night in prayer, and the following day chose the twelve disciples whom He called Apostles. Undoubtedly our Lord had observed the disciples, and felt directed to those who should serve in this special relationship. He did not however depend alone on His judgments and evaluations, but held them before the Father in an all night of prayer for divine approval. He apparently came away from that time of intimate relationship with the Father, confirmed in His mind as to whom He should choose.

It is extremely important that we follow our Lord at this point. Crisis decisions can have such long range effects. How often we have made decisions quickly, thoughtlessly, and certainly prayerlessly, only to regret the decision made and suffer the continuing results of our precipitated action. So often the demands of a crisis throw us into a state of apprehension and fear, which is certainly not the mental and emotional state in which to make a crucial decision. Our Example shows us that an extended period of prayer

in a time of crisis will provide us with divinely directed conclusions, enabling us to face the crisis with calm, courage, and conviction as to the course to take.

There is a phrase that has become traditional among God's people, and we feel that it has some merit. We speak of "praying through." We may not all mean the same thing when we use this phrase, but we suggest that there is a place in prayer where we know we have heard from the Father concerning the matter we are sharing with Him. This may not come at once, but as we wait on God holding the matter before Him, ruling out all self-gratifying motives, we find the answer coming into clear focus. The time involved in this prayer exercise may not only have to do with getting an answer in that particular crisis, but may also have to do with the refining process in our own nature which the Father undertakes, using that particular crisis as the occasion for the larger and more extensive sanctifying operation.

As we survey the prayer patterns of our Lord's earth life, it becomes obvious that prayer was the foundation upon which our Lord built a life of perfect obedience, and from which He derived inspiration and enablement to successfully and ideally endure the variety of situations that are common to all humanity. "Tempted in all points like as we," He nevertheless, through maintaining unbroken fellowship with the father in prayer, and depending entirely upon the eternal Spirit as the source of His life and energy, was able to leave a record of complete victory in every life situation. From this it is hoped, we will experience a renewed desire to give prayer a larger place in our lives, not as some kind of a legal "must," but rather as a blessed divine provision to enable us to experience the fulness of God's intention for our redeemed humanity. How wonderful to be able to have access into the presence of the same God who directed the man Jesus in the days of His earthly life. His father is our Father. As He prayed so may we. Let us pray. 🕊

The first in a series of three articles  
on "Personal Relationships."

# BEING GOD'S PEOPLE

by  
John Poole

The community  
of God in the midst  
of the kingdom  
of darkness.

**G**od has a sovereign purpose for His creation, and He is steadily moving today to accomplish His objective among very common ordinary people like you and me. Before the world was, He planned that

through His Son, there would be on this earth a people who, under no coercion, in the face of an open choice, would choose to love and serve Him, allowing His glory to be reflected in their lives, as opposed to

serving Satan and becoming the replica of all that is evil.

Because God desires such a people, everything that has happened since creation has been linked to the production of that kind of a people. The

*JOHN POOLE is the senior pastor of The Gospel Temple in Philadelphia. The emphasis of his ministry is to see the Church come to maturity and unity under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.*

calling of Abraham; the raising up of Israel, delivering them to Egypt, bringing them out; the production of the Messiah; the rise of the early church; the falling away; the restoration; all of this is geared to one end — that in every nation under heaven, God might have a company of people who would demonstrate by their lives that there is a quality of life under the reign of Jesus Christ far superior to anything else that can be found anywhere on this earth.

It is significant that God describes such a people in His Word as a nation, a Body, a Church, a generation. His purpose is not just for a *person*, but for a *people* — a company of individuals developing and maturing together as one unit. And that, in a word, means relationship. It is only in the context of close fellowship and community that God can cause us to check, strengthen and correct each other in order to come into full maturity. Relationship causes growth.

The purpose of becoming God's people begins with some preliminary measures that God requires us to undergo, to adjust and prepare us. There are three main scriptures that outline these initial steps: (1) Galatians 1:3-5, "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (2) Colossians 1:13,14, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his own dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins . . ." and (3) Romans 12:1,2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your

reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

### FREED FROM SIN

We read first in Galatians chapter 1 about God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ *who gave himself for our sins*. That is a tremendous thing! How many of you know something of the power of guilt, what it does to you physically, and the tension it brings into your body? Do you know something of the burden of shame that people carry when they have that kind of guilt inside and all of a sudden feel that they are probably the worst person in the world? That is the condition we were in because of sin.

God sent Jesus that He might give Himself for our sins. He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Jesus became the answer for the sin question. He sacrificed Himself for our sins, and when a person accepts that and is willing to admit that there is nothing he can do about his sin, but there is something that Jesus has done about sin, guilt and shame can go and freedom can come. And what a psychiatrist may not be able to do in fifty visits at \$35.00 an hour, Jesus can do in a moment of time.

He can set you free from guilt and shame, because the Gospel, the Good News, is the power of God. In Romans 1:16, Paul says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God." When the Good News is preached and that word is received, God's power is ministered to individuals, and there can be a breaking of chains, a destroying of yokes, a lifting of the burdens of guilt and shame. Jesus Christ gave himself for our sins.

Now the tragedy is that many of us have stopped there. The danger in Christianity is stopping anywhere! For anyone who has stopped at the principle of salvation, let me say that the idea that God saves you *only* to forgive your sins is something that

deserves a very decent and proper burial. My brother and sister, that's not the stopping place; that's the beginning point. Paul told us in Philippians chapter 3 that God had a reason, a purpose, why He laid hold of us. From the time Paul met Jesus, his goal was to apprehend that for which he had been apprehended. Now that's a little play on words, but he said, "God laid hold of me for a reason. Now I want to lay hold of the reason why God laid hold of me."

### THE REASON

Galatians 1:4 says that Jesus was given "for our sins that He might deliver us out of this present evil age." This isn't the total picture of why God sacrificed His son, but it is certainly a part of it. Now I believe in the coming of the Lord, and I believe there are many scriptures that refer to the fact that Jesus will appear a second time. This scripture, however, has nothing to do with the coming of the Lord. Paul is not talking about the day when Jesus will come down and take us out of this present evil age; he is talking about a people who will be delivered out of this present evil age now. *Now!*

Jesus' prayer in John 17 was, "I don't pray that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them in it." Not that the Father might come and take them all out of it, but that He might keep them in the middle of it. That is where the glory is! The glory is being kept in the world. The glory is to be holy around unholy things. The glory is to be righteous when you are surrounded by unrighteousness. The glory is to live straight when everything else is crooked.

This is God's purpose in the here and now. You know, some people have an idea that it's either the sweet by and by or the sour here and now. I really don't think that's the way God wants it to be. Jesus gave himself that "he might deliver us out of this present evil age."

Now, to confirm that, let us again look at Paul's writing in Colossians 1:13, "For He delivered us" or "He hath delivered us." Galatians 1:4 was:

"He gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us." That was the purpose, what God wanted to do. Colossians 1:13 looks at it from a past standpoint: "I want you to rejoice because the God who wanted to deliver us *has* delivered."

"He hath delivered us!" He has done it. It is something that He has accomplished, transferring us from the tyranny of darkness into the kingdom of His own dear Son. Now, that is contingent on the fact that you have received the proper Gospel in a proper way. I don't want to split hairs, or minister any kind of doubt or condemnation. But I trust that you understand we are not talking about some kind of an emotional response to an emotional meeting or some kind of intellectual decision to an intellectual, philosophical presentation. A genuine response to the Word of God, the Gospel, which is the power of God to produce something, causes a person to know from the depths of his being, "He gave himself for our sins that He might deliver me, and He *has* delivered me out of the kingdom of darkness into His Kingdom." God's desire is to form a people who are living in a new Kingdom.

### THE KINGDOM OF THE SON

Christians are people who are living under the benevolent reign of good King Jesus. Aren't you glad you have a Sovereign like the Lord? This realization so gripped the hearts of early Christians that they even began to talk about themselves with terms that are foreign to you and me. They became so conscious of that Kingdom that they described themselves as aliens in this kingdom. They called themselves foreigners, strangers, wayfarers, citizens of another land, some of them even stepped into a little higher rank of boldness and said, "I'm an ambassador of that land, seeking to reconcile you to the King."

But most of that is lacking from our ideas and our way of thinking. We are very comfortable where we are. Most of us feel that because we have made certain outer adjustments and changes

in our lives, that this is basically all that God is looking for to mark us out as a different people.

In the epistles of Paul, as he talks about putting off the old and putting on the new, you will notice that very rarely, if at all, does he mention outer habits. He deals with inner attitudes. When God talks about a generation of people who are living in the Kingdom of His Son, He is not talking about a people who are merely distinguished by where they go, what they do, or how they dress, but a people who are distinguished by attitude — by something that's happening within the heart. That is why Paul says to the Colossians over in the 3rd chapter, put away immorality, impurity, passion, greed, abusive speech, anger, malice, slander, and put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love, peace, thankfulness. When he distinguishes between old and new, that's where the distinction comes.

### DOING VERSES BEING

God is interested in a people who will *be* something. Now, I am much more interested in *doing* than I am in *being*. It's much easier to be a doer, because that is when folks can *see* the good works you are performing. But who can see you when you are just being? Like one fellow said, "If you really want to know how a man is doing spiritually, ask his wife." At home is where he is *being*. In church is where he is *doing*.

If we go back to Exodus 19:3,4, God, speaking to Moses as he is bringing the people out of Egypt, says: "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I *did* to the Egyptians . . . Now if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant then you shall *be* . . ." God said, "I'll do the doing, you do the being, and we'll get along fine," and from that day on, God's greatest concern for Israel was that they *be* His people. He said, "You just *be*; I'll *do*."

Who knocked down the walls of Jericho? Who opened up the river

Jordan? If we will just be the people God wants us to be, He will do all the doing that needs to be done.

Throughout church history, we have relegated God's ability to do to the past. What has been uncovered today is that the God who used to, *still does* now. God's burden for us is that we simply become the people He is calling us to be. That means our attitudes have to be dealt with and deep inner changes have to take place. We are not talking simply about God cleaning up the outside, although that will undoubtedly happen. We are talking about God getting deep inside of us, right down where we live, so that our wives and our children and our closest friends begin to see that something is happening to us.

### DON'T BE CONFORMED

In Romans 12:1,2 Paul says, "Present yourselves a living sacrifice to God, which is your reasonable service, and don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." In our three scriptures, Galatians 1:3-5, Colossians 1:13, 14, and Romans 12:1, 2, there is a progression. Galatians 1 says Jesus gave himself for our sins that He might deliver us. Colossians 1:13 says that God has delivered us out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of his own dear Son. Romans 12:1,2, while not negating the fact that we have been delivered out of the world, urges us not to allow the influence of that from which we have been delivered to mold us into its particular form. Now I believe beyond any shadow of doubt that God meant exactly what He said in Romans 12:2, when He said, "Be on guard lest that from which you have come influence you and conform you to its mold."

A few weeks ago, our family had the privilege of going to England, and to the country of Wales where we are from. One of the things I try to avoid when I go to another country is to look like a tourist. I said to my wife, Lorraine, as we were packing, "I don't want to take any clothes that are extravagantly American. I don't want

to look like some kind of American evangelist flying in from Hollywood, California, with white shoes and a white suit. I just want to be me." How many of you know that you can be transferred to another kingdom and still be influenced by the one from which you came. I went to Buckingham Palace wearing white levis and sneakers, with a camera around my neck, and I somehow got the impression that everybody knew I was a tourist. There wasn't a whole lot I could do about it, because in being myself, the influence of where I had come from was upon me, even though I had transferred locations.

I think one of the most difficult places in all the world not to be influenced by the pressure of this world is Western civilization. Why? Because the pressures of this world as we see them are more subtle than they are in other cultures. If, for example, you go into a country of Asia or Africa, you might see there the absolute, bald-faced confrontation between the God of the universe and the gods of this world. In some countries, idols are publicly displayed, sometimes on the roadsides or in homes. The gods are there and the choice is obvious: you either serve these gods or you serve the unseen God of the Christians.

But in our culture, not just America, but Western civilization in general, things are more subtle. For our gods, though they are just as real, are hidden gods. Our idols are more hidden, and they come with different names — names like Thunderbird or Mustang, or a certain section of suburbia, or the brand name on your suits, or the fact that you only buy the best in the best places. That kind of god or idol seems to us to be a little more acceptable.

But we forget that there is as much anti-Christ spirit in everything in this world that appears on the surface to be good as there is in those things that are overtly evil, for the whole world lies in the lap of the wicked one. And if he can't use drugs or booze, or any of those type things to snare you, he might try to get you with nice things:

*anything* that will compete with your affections for the unadulterated pure worship of the living and true God.

When God talks about His people being delivered out of this present evil age, yet exhibiting in the midst of the world's corruption the quality of life lived under Jesus' lordship, He is talking about a people who must view themselves in exactly the same way as early Christians viewed themselves: aliens, strangers, foreigners, citizens of another land, who are not influenced or molded by the societies of the world.

What I am saying is that we must get back to a Gospel that is like the Gospel Peter preached. When they repented and were baptized and were filled with the Holy Ghost, Peter's first words to them were these: "Save yourself from this perverse generation." Not just the perverse boozers, nor the perverse cigarette industry, nor the perverse people in Hollywood. He said, "The whole thing is corrupt."

Paul told the Philippians in the second chapter of his epistle, verse 15, that the will and purpose of God is that you shine as lights in the middle of a wicked and perverse generation. He didn't just single out part of it. He said, "It's the whole thing you have to watch out for." Jesus said the same thing in Matthew 17:17: "How long will I be with you, faithless and unbelieving generation." That is what we are dealing with; that is what God is dealing with. Out of that generation, God is going to produce a people whom He has delivered and released from the influence of the world in which they live. Released from the fear of what people think, released unto what God thinks. Released from the compulsion to do exactly the right thing at the right time in the right place. Released from the attitudes that surround us all over the world. Do you think that is possible? It has to be possible, because that is what God is after — that kind of a company of people.

### GROWING TOGETHER

Now, here is the clincher. Here is the thing that God's Word says that all

of us at one time or another are going to have to learn. I can never become the person that I have just described, the kind of person that has been delivered from the world and is being delivered from its influences past and present — I cannot become the kind of person God wants me to be *alone*. *Never!* I cannot become that kind of person in some nicy-nice, goody two-shoes fellowship.

"How are you?"

"Fine."

"How's your wife?"

"Good."

"How are the kids?"

"Wonderful."

"How's the puppy dog?"

"Fine!"

"Isn't it grand that we can have this nice fellowship in the Lord?"

"Yes, Amen."

"Well, see you in church next Sunday."

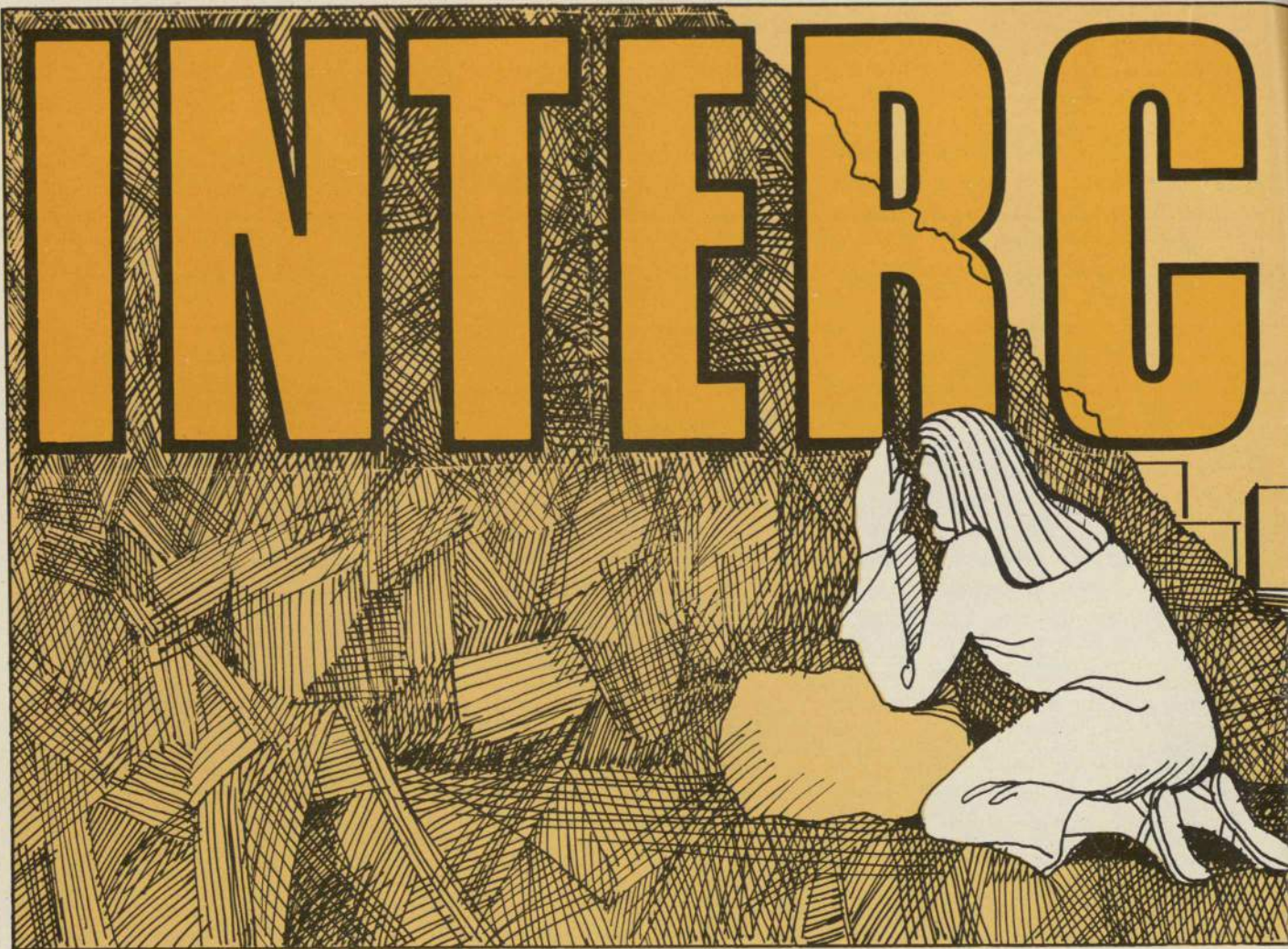
We are not going to make it alone, and we are certainly not going to make it in some kind of "I scratch your back, you scratch mine" kind of fellowship.

I'll tell you something else. We are not going to make it in some knock-you-down, drag-you-out kind of legalistic fellowship either. "Well, we certainly are glad to see you in this fellowship, and in about four weeks we'll get you straightened out!" As the Church of God, we have not been called to hurt, but to heal. We have not been called to injure, but to make whole. What we are talking about is loving, supporting, yet honest, confronting kind of fellowship. That is essential if you and I are going to be the people that God wants us to be.

It has taken me a long time to learn that regenerate John Poole can't be fully trusted. I need people around me. There is something about being in relationship with God's people and being in their presence, that helps me to keep my heart and my mind fixed on Jesus. Fellowship with one another is supporting and helpful, but also that kind of confronting thing that causes us to grow.

Can't we begin to face up to the

*(Continued on page 22)*



**I**xhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men" (1 Tim. 2:1).

Paul tells us that the first priority of a Christian assembly is prayer. He mentions various forms of prayer, of which one is intercession. To intercede means literally "to come in between." The intercessor is one who comes in between God and those who deserve His just wrath and punishment. The intercessor lifts his hands to God and says, "God, these deserve Your judgment; You have every right to smite them; but if You smite them, You will have to smite me first, because I am standing in between You and them."

In the Old Testament we find various accounts of cities and nations being spared divine judgment through

the ministry of an intercessor. We will study some of these examples, but first, let us consider the ministry of intercession in the life of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

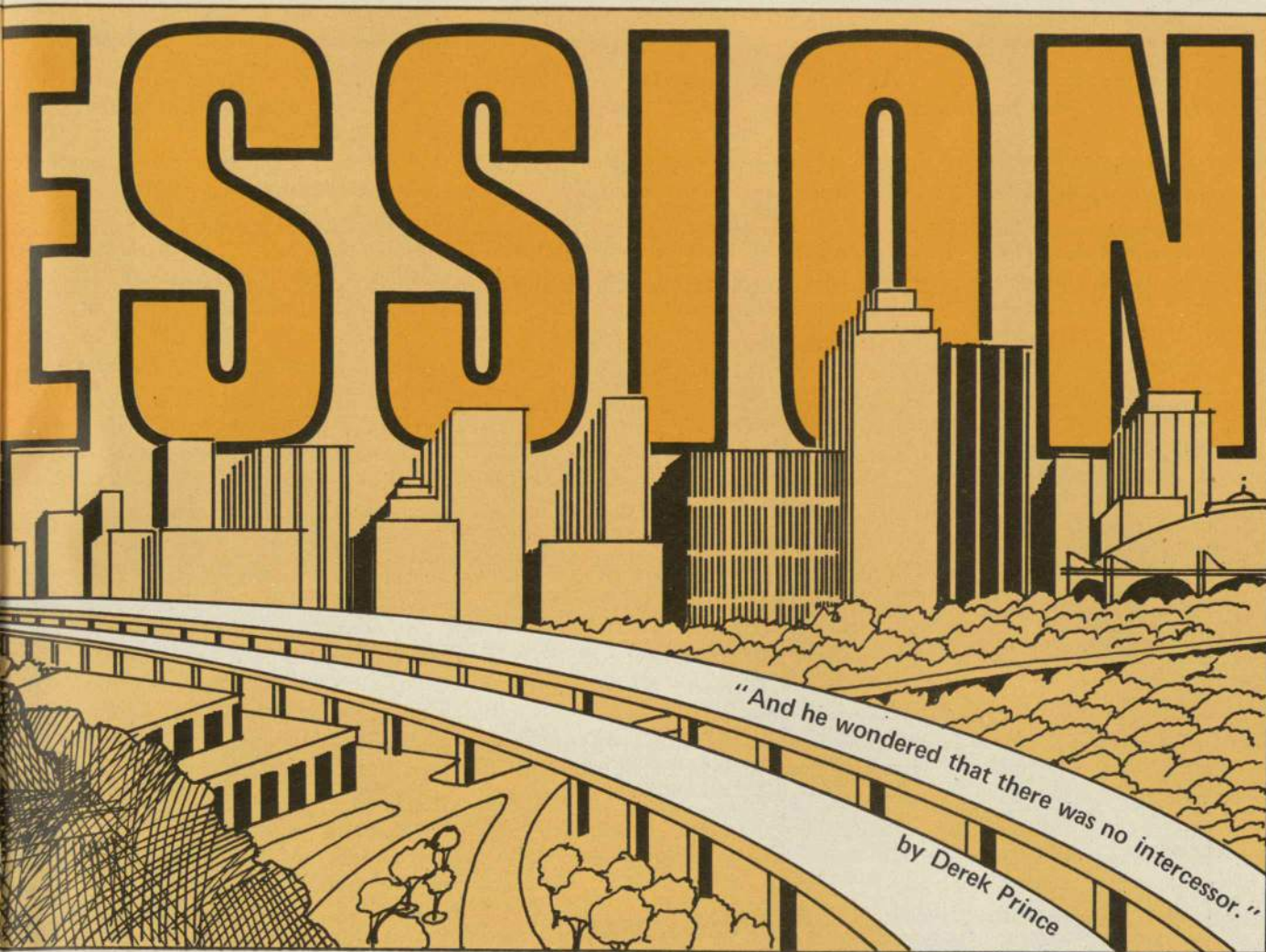
#### INTERCESSION IN THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Intercession was one of the great marks of the ministry of Jesus. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah gives a description of His atoning work. The concluding verse says:

Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors: and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

There are four things recorded there of Jesus. First, *He poured out his soul unto death*. Leviticus 17:11 says that the soul of all flesh is in the blood, so Jesus poured out his soul unto death when he poured out every drop of His blood. Second, *He was numbered with the transgressors*; He was crucified with the two thieves. Third, *He bare the sin of many*; He became the sin offering for us all. Fourth, *He made intercession for the transgressors*; He did this from the cross when He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He was saying, "The judgment that is due to them, let it come upon Me." And it did.

Hebrews, chapter 7, speaks of Jesus after His death, resurrection and ascension. We are told that Jesus is our high priest at God's right hand. Because He has an unchangeable



priesthood, one that never passes from Him, "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth *to make intercession for them*" (Heb. 7:25).

If we do a study of the life and ministry of Jesus, we arrive at a rather interesting time comparison. We discover that He spent thirty years in obscurity, in perfect family life; three and one-half years in dramatic public ministry; and nearly two thousand years in intercession, unseen by the natural eye. That is what He has been doing since He ascended — interceding for us before the Father.

#### OLD TESTAMENT PATTERNS — ABRAHAM

I believe the greatest saints were often the greatest intercessors, for

they were the men who were the closest to the heart of God. The Old Testament contains examples of some great intercessors. Our first example is Abraham.

In Genesis 18 we find the Lord, with two angels, coming to visit the tent of Abraham. Abraham kills the calf and entertains his guests with great hospitality. At the end of this scene the Lord says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" In other words, the Lord sees Abraham as His close personal friend with whom He will share His thoughts and plans. And then the Lord unfolds to Abraham his purposes: "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me;

and if not, I will know" (Gen. 18:20–21).

Abraham was much concerned about Sodom because his nephew, Lot, was living in there. Abraham knew that if judgment came upon Sodom, Lot and his family would be part of the judgment.

The scene continues: "And the men [angels] turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but *Abraham stood yet before the Lord [to hold Him back]*. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the

wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (vv 23-25).

It took some courage for Abraham to speak to the Lord in that manner. However, Abraham knew the divine principle behind his argument — that it would be totally out of keeping with the character of God, and contrary to His justice, to let judgment fall upon the righteous.

Psalm 91:7-8 sets forth this principle: "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked." Whatever comes as "the reward of — or the just judgment upon — the wicked" will never touch the righteous. The righteous may be in the very midst of such judgment — a thousand may fall at his side — but it will not come upon him.

Note, however, that there is a difference between judgment and persecution for righteousness' sake. The Bible says the righteous will experience persecution. The difference is that judgment for wickedness comes from God upon the wicked; whereas persecution for righteousness comes upon the righteous from the wicked.

So Abraham comes before the Lord reminding Him that his justice is pledged that judgment shall not fall on the righteous. With holy boldness and intense conviction that God has to be absolutely just, he sets forth to challenge the Lord upon this principle. "Lord, if there are fifty righteous in that city, will you spare the city?" The Lord answers Abraham that He will spare the city if fifty righteous persons can be found. "What about forty-five? Will you spare it for forty-five righteous?" And the Lord says He will spare it if forty-five righteous persons could be found in it. And so goes the conversation . . . forty . . . thirty . . . twenty, until finally Abraham arrives at his last challenge: "Suppose there are only ten righteous persons in that whole city. Will you spare it for the sake of ten?" And the Lord says He will spare it for ten righteous persons.

That is a tremendous revelation! If my calculations are correct, I believe Sodom was a major city with a population of no less than 10,000. For the sake of ten out of 10,000 persons God was willing to spare the entire city. That is *one out of a thousand*!

Job 33:23 records this same proportion: "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, *one among a thousand*, to shew unto man his uprightness . . ." Ecclesiastes 7:28 similarly records: "Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: *one man among a thousand*."

One out of a thousand! The Bible apparently uses this phrase to single out a man of outstanding righteousness. God says, "If I can find in Sodom one such righteous person in every thousand, I will spare the whole city."

Shall we apply this proportion to modern America, with its population of approximately 210,000,000? It would require 210,000 persons of outstanding righteousness to obtain mercy for the whole nation. Would you qualify as one of those 210,000? Would I?

### THE INTERCESSION OF MOSES

Our second example of an intercessor is Moses. Turning to Exodus 32 we find the story of Moses ascending Mt. Sinai to receive the covenant from God. After he had been gone many days, the people became impatient and turned to Aaron and said, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him" (v 1). So Aaron took all their golden earrings, melted them together and made a molten calf, around which Israel began to dance and worship.

As this was occurring in the camp, God spoke to Moses on the mountain and said, "Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I

commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it . . ." (vv 7-8).

Even at this tense moment, with the fate of Israel hanging in the balance, there is a note of humor in the ensuing conversation between God and Moses. Speaking to Moses of Israel, God calls them "thy people." But Moses, unwilling to accept this responsibility, casts it back upon God and says, "thy people." Neither God nor Moses wished to be held responsible for Israel at that moment! Meanwhile, at the bottom of the mountain, Israel continues to dance around the calf — completely unaware that their fate is even then being settled by this dialogue between God and Moses.

God then declares His intention to destroy Israel: "Now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them. . ." (v 10). Note that God would do nothing unless Moses would allow Him to. He says, "Get out of my way, Moses, and let me deal with these people as they deserve!" But Moses would not get out of the way. As an intercessor, he remained standing between God and the people.

Finally, God states how He will use Moses to redeem His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He had promised to make a great nation out of their descendants. He now says to Moses, "I will make *of thee* a great nation." Would that not appeal to Moses' ego? Why not let God start all over and make of him a great nation? After all, these people had been nothing but a burden to him since leaving Egypt. But Moses did not react that way.

And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt . . . ["They are not mine," Moses says. "They are yours."] Wherefore, should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people (vv 11-12).

Moses' concern was for God's reputation, not for his own ego. He said, "God, if you bring these people out and they perish in the mountains, the Egyptians will say you had evil intentions against them when you brought them out."

We see this same concern over God's reputation in Numbers 14:13-16. The people provoked the Lord by refusing to believe the positive report of the two spies sent into the Promised Land, choosing instead to believe the negative report of the ten. God was so angry with their unbelief that He again sought to destroy them and to make of Moses a great nation. But Moses here reminds the Lord that the nations which have heard the fame of the Lord will think that He was not able to bring this people into the land and therefore slew them in the wilderness. Moses' concern, in both instances, was not for personal reputation or stature; his only concern was for God's glory and reputation in the earth.

Returning to the close of Exodus, chapter 32, we find the consummation of Moses' intercession. After he had returned to the camp and set things in order, he speaks to the people:

Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord, peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord and said, 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 (vv 30-32).

That is intercession! "God, they deserve your stroke; forgive them. But if not, Lord, let their judgment come upon me." The intercessor is the one who stands in between God and the object of His just wrath. Psalm 106 provides a divine commentary on this incident:

They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; Wondrous works in

the land of Ham and terrible things by the Red Sea. Therefore he said that he would destroy them, *had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them* (vv 19-23).

Moses stood in the breach made by the sin of God's people and said, "Lord, I am stopping the gap. Your blow cannot fall upon them unless it first falls upon me."

Numbers 16 records another example of intercession. Here it is Moses and Aaron together who are the intercessors. God had sovereignly dealt with the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram by causing the earth to open and swallow them alive. But the people turned against Moses and Aaron and blamed them for the incident: "But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord. And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces" (vv 41-45). That is the position of the intercessor — prostrate on his face before God, knowing that judgment is about to fall.

Personally, I marvel at the grace of Moses and Aaron. The people had turned against them without any reason. Yet for these who criticized them, they were now willing to offer intercession — even at the risk of their own lives.

Moses speaks to Aaron and directs him:

Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath

gone out from the Lord; and the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people, and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. *And he stood between the dead and the living;* and the plague was stayed (vv 47-48).

The language in this passage emphasizes the *urgency* of intercession. Moses said to Aaron, "Go quickly . . ." Aaron did not walk, he "ran." Every moment of delay cost lives.

The word "plague" suggests something highly infectious, transmitted by contact from one person to another. To make atonement, as Moses had commanded, Aaron had to deliberately expose himself to that contagion. He risked his own life. Standing there he swung the censer; and as he swung it, the beautiful, fragrant smoke rose up in a white line and divided between the dead and the living. And where that white smoke went up from the censer the plague stopped. That is intercession: coming — at the risk of your own life — between the dead and those who are due to die, then offering up fervent prayer and supplication, like that white smoke from the censer, until the plague ceases.

### THE LACK OF INTERCESSORS

Ezekiel 22:23-31 records for us a different scene. The scene is not unsimilar to the last two in that it portrays the sins of God's people. However, in one aspect it is different — there was no intercessor found to stand between the sin of the people and God's judgment.

And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto her [the land of Israel] Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof . . . Her priests have violated my law . . . Her princes in the midst thereof are like

wolves . . . The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy . . . *And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.* Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them . . .

All sections of the population had utterly failed — prophets, priests, princes, people. Each of these stands for a certain element in society. The “prophets” are those responsible to bring a message direct from God. The “priests” are the leaders of institutional religion. The “princes” are the secular rulers. The “people” are the rest of the population, the common people. The order in which these four elements are listed is significant. The process of decay began with the spiritual leadership; then the secular government was corrupted; finally the whole nation was affected. (This has been the order in modern America — and many other nations.)

Even though every section of society was thus corrupted, the situation was not yet hopeless. God looked for one man, an intercessor, to stand in the gap and make up the hedge so that He could spare the whole nation. But because He could find none, He poured out upon them His indignation and consumed them in the fire of His wrath. One man — one intercessor — could have saved an entire nation from final judgment! (Dare we believe that this too applies to modern America?)

Isaiah chapter 59 presents one of the most fearful pictures of failure and backsliding to be found in Scripture. Yet the people described in it are essentially *religious* people. Here is their confession:

For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And

judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. *And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor* (vv 12–16).

Mark the climax: “There was no intercessor.” Even God Himself wondered at it! It was the final, damning evidence of unbelief and selfish indifference in the hearts of His people.

### THE NEED FOR INTERCESSORS

The United States is surely overripe for divine judgment. The Bible reveals that judgment is according to the light that has been granted. The greater the light, the more severe the judgment. When we consider the media by which the truth is being spread today — television, radio, books, tapes, etc. — I would say that in all the history of the human race there has never been a generation on the face of the earth that has had greater spiritual light made available to it than this generation in the United States.

Four years ago I became an American citizen. I carefully weighed my decision, realizing that when I became a citizen I was identifying myself with this nation for good or for evil. I saw the tremendous possibility of divine judgment falling on the nation. But God had spoken to me audibly in 1953, when I was still a pastor in England, and said: “There

shall be a great revival in the United States and Great Britain.” For this, God laid down one basic requirement: obedience. I believe that great revival is coming — if God can find intercessors to stay His judgment and call down His mercy.

In closing let me give you four qualifications that I see in every true intercessor. First, an intercessor, like Abraham, must have an absolute conviction of God’s righteousness: that God will never bring judgment on the righteous, which is due only to the wicked. At the same time, he must have a crystal clear vision of the absolute justice and inevitability of God’s judgment upon the wicked.

Secondly, he must have a deep concern for God’s glory, like Moses, who twice declined God’s offer to make him the ancestor of the greatest people on earth. God’s glory was more important to him than his personal reputation.

Thirdly, an intercessor must have an intimate acquaintance with God. He must be a person who can stand before God and talk with the utmost frankness, yet with reverence.

And finally, an intercessor must display great personal courage. He must be prepared, if need be, to risk his own life, like Aaron who ignored the contagion of the plague to take his place between the dead and the living.

There is no higher calling than that of an intercessor. When you become an intercessor, you have reached the throne. Man will not see you because you will be out of his sight, beyond the second veil; but in the Kingdom of God your life will count for time and for eternity. 🍷



### OCTOBER ISSUE REPRINTED

Due to the number of requests we have had for the October issue of *New Wine*, we are reprinting this issue. Single copies are available at 50c each. Bulk order prices are listed on page 3 under “Subscription Rates.”

# ECHOES OF THE SPIRIT

Significant events in the Body of Christ.

For your informed prayer consideration, we present this report from *Asian Outreach* — January and February 1975.

## REVIVAL IN KOREA

Explo '74 clearly indicated the size and power of the Korean Church. A million people at a time sitting on hard tarmac in the open air to hear the Gospel was just one indication. Those who were there learned that not only was the Korean Church large and growing rapidly, but that it was a vigorous, Christ-centered Church that could well set the pace for churches everywhere. Lay involvement is characteristic of the Korean Church.

## CAMBODIAN REVIVAL

There is without question, a genuine spiritual revival in war-ravaged Cambodia. Rev. Cliff Westgren, of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, has recently returned to Hong Kong from eleven days in Cambodia. He reports that the present growth of the Church in Cambodia is totally unprecedented.

He also reported that the spiritual move seemed to cross all social and racial barriers. The lower classes, as well as the upper classes, were responding. The Chinese church of Phnompenh is full to capacity in spite of a mass exodus of Chinese to other areas of Asia. With the natural mind, the political and military situation appears hopeless. Money has inflated from 35-1 to 1600-1. God is the only hope for Cambodia. Only a miracle of God can protect the rapidly growing, largely infant Church of beleaguered Cambodia.

## CHINA AWAITS THE INEVITABLE

Everything that has happened on the political scene in China during 1974 reflected the inevitable death of

Mao Tse-Tung and Chou En-lai. No progress was made either to the left or right. The status quo was preserved. The rationale behind the repeated compromises worked out in the party, the army and the administration was each faction's willingness to wait. The real battle for control of China lies somewhere in the unavoidable future.

## NOTES OF INTEREST

... Christmas '74 in China was not as openly celebrated by Christians as it was the year before. The few public services permitted in '73 were apparently not permitted this year.

... China has the third largest proven oil reserves in the world, following Saudi Arabia and America. China's oil reserves are estimated at 300,000 million barrels. Compare that with 356,000 million barrels in the Middle East and you have a further indication of China's bargaining power in the future.

... We have ended the final quarter of the twentieth century. If God permits us to enter the twenty-first century, the world, just twenty-five short years away, will be quite different. In fact, it is most probable that Asia will by then be the center of world business. Of an estimated global population of 3,860 million, some 2,204 million, or 57.1 per cent, are Asians.

... The latest unofficial population figure for China is 899 million. Population growth is only 2% per year, but that's equal to 15 million per year — or one new "Canada" every 18 months!

## HONG KONG RETURNS REFUGEES

One of the saddest news stories of the year 1974 occurred on November 10th. On that day, Britain sent back to China five young freedom swimmers, thus marking the commencement of a new unforgiveable government policy. These freedom swimmers, some 7,000 in 1974, have put their lives on the line in the effort to escape the Mainland. Moral issues apparently don't count. Since November 10th, hundreds of refugees have been put on a bus, not told where they were going, and delivered into the hands of the Peking authorities.

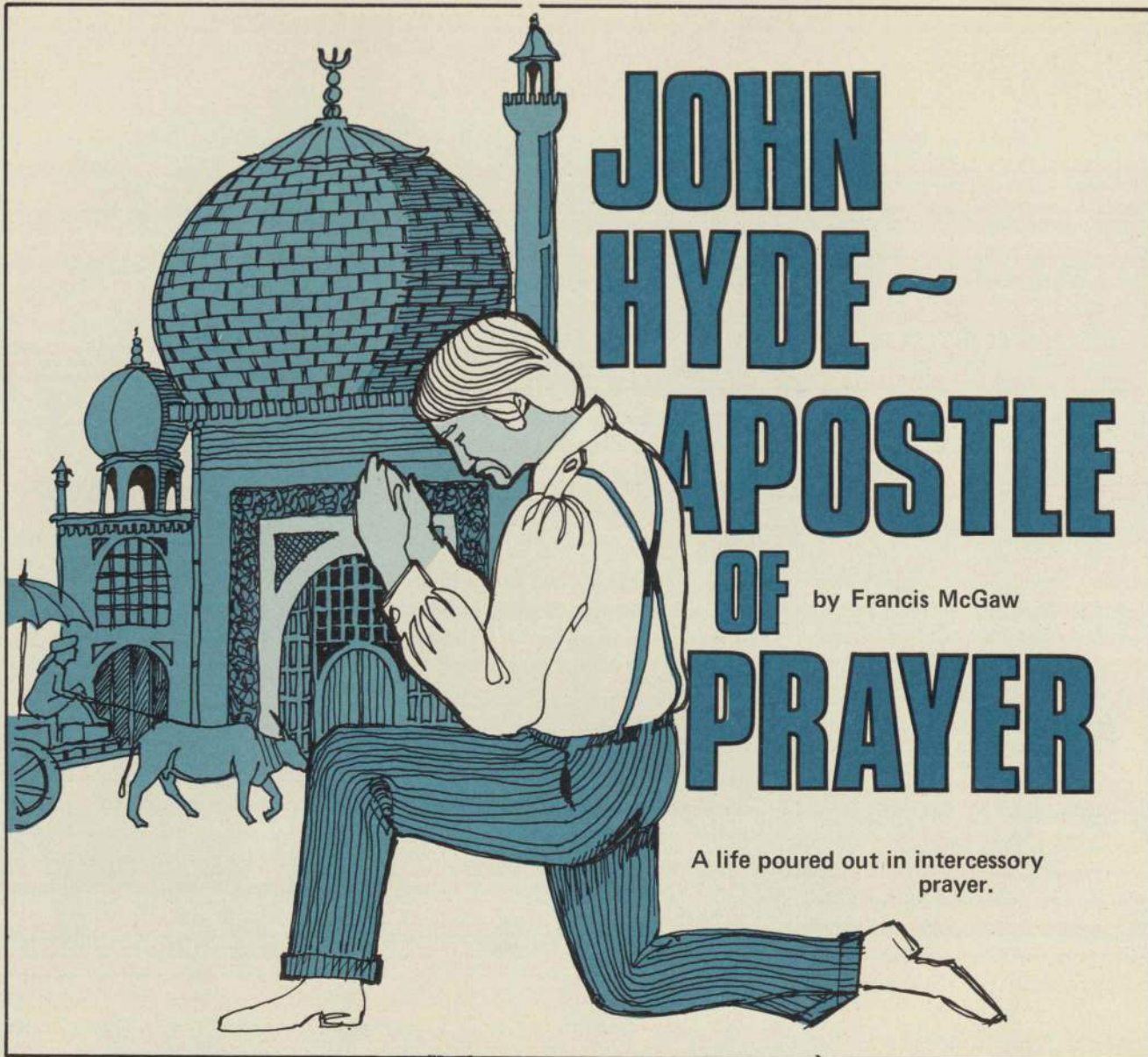
## THE STORY OF ONE TRACT

A young bar girl, returning from work in the early hours of the morning, contemplating suicide, was given the tract, "The Rocky Road." She responded to it and enrolled in an initial Bible Correspondence Course. Through that Course she found Christ as her personal Savior. She quit her job and took a 1000% reduction in pay because of her new life. She began attending church and is now an active vibrant Christian in Hong Kong.

## BURMA BLESSING

A reporter friend recently spent eight days in Burma covering the anti-government riots. He reported that the government has apparently permitted the country to virtually deteriorate. Nothing is being built or even repaired.

On the spiritual scene, however, there was much activity to report. He expressed belief that Burma is more ready for a nationwide spiritual revival than any country he knows. He reports rapid growth among most Christian groups throughout the country. Some church groups did appear too timid to cope with the troubled times.



In the Tabernacle of Moses there was one room so sacred that only one man of all the thousands of Israel was ever permitted to enter it; and he on one day only of all the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year. That room was the Holy of Holies.

The place where John Hyde met God was holy ground. The scenes of his life are too sacred for common eyes. But near the prayer closet of John Hyde we are permitted to hear the sighing and the groaning, and to see the tears coursing down his dear face, to see his frame weakened by

foodless days and sleepless nights, shaken with sobs as he pleads, "O God, give me souls or I die!"

Sometimes we speak of prayer as a privilege. Other times we may speak of it as a responsibility. In John Hyde's life the need of prayer and the privilege of prayer came together as one. He knew that men could share the authority of God and release the work of God in the lives of those who need salvation and deliverance. Through intercessory prayer, Mr. Hyde was able to make a highway for God to work in conventions, churches, and in personal lives.

John Hyde explored new territory in the vast ministry of prayer. I think

we are safe in saying that John Hyde was an apostle of prayer.

#### EARLY YEARS

John Hyde was reared in a home where Jesus was an abiding guest and where the atmosphere was one of prayer. John's father, Smith Hyde, D.D. was a noble man of God who frequently prayed, both at his family altar and from the pulpit, that the Lord of the harvest thrust out laborers into His harvest. It is, therefore, no strange thing that God called two of his three sons into the Gospel ministry, and one of his three daughters, for a time, into active Christian work.

In his last year in seminary, John Hyde felt the call of the Lord to go to the foreign field. His decision was partly precipitated by his elder brother's death a year earlier. Edmund had been preparing to preach and was also a student volunteer for the foreign field. At the time, John wondered if it were not God's will for him to step into the gap left by his brother's death.

In autumn of 1892, John sailed for India. At first he was not a remarkable missionary. He was slow of speech and his hearing was slightly defective. His disposition was gentle and quiet and he seemed to be lacking in the enthusiasm and zeal which a young missionary should have.

On arriving in India, he was assigned the usual language study. At first he set to work on this, but later neglected it for Bible study. He argued that he had come to India to teach the Bible and he needed to know it before he could teach it. And God, by His Spirit, wonderfully opened up the Scriptures to him. Nor did he neglect language study. He became a correct and easy speaker in Urdu, Punjabi and English; but away and above that, he learned the language of heaven, and he so learned to speak that he held audiences of hundreds of Indians spellbound while he opened to them the truths of God's Word.

## THE FIRST SIALKOT CONVENTION

The Church-life in Punjab (as indeed in all India) was far below the Bible standard; the Holy Spirit was so little honored in these ministries that few were being saved from among the Christless millions.

It soon became apparent that there was a need for a yearly meeting for Bible study and prayer, where the spiritual life of the workers, pastors, teachers, and evangelists, both foreign and native, could be deepened. Sialkot was the place selected for the meeting.

God laid a great burden of prayer upon the hearts of three men — John N. Hyde, R. McChenye Paterson, and George Turner — for this wonderful

convention. For twenty-one days and twenty-one nights these three men prayed and praised God for a mighty outpouring of His power! Three human hearts that beat as one: yearning, pleading, crying and agonizing over the church of India and the myriads of lost souls. Three renewed human wills that by faith linked themselves as with hooks of steel to the omnipotent will of God. Three pairs of fire-touched lips that out of believing hearts shouted, "It shall be done!"

Another missionary, who was present at the convention, relates the events of one of the evening men's meetings led by Hyde. On this particular evening, Hyde arrived quite late and sat silently before them for a considerable time before he spoke. "When he spoke he told us very quietly and simply some of the desperate conflicts he had had with sin and how God had given him victory. I think he did not talk more than fifteen or twenty minutes, then sat down, bowed his head for a few minutes, and said, 'Let us have a season of prayer.'

"I remember how the little company prostrated themselves upon the mats in the Oriental manner, and then how for a long time, man after man rose to his feet to pray, how there was such confession of sin as most of us had never heard before and such crying out to God for mercy and help.

"It was very late that night when the little gathering broke up and some of us know definitely of several lives that were wholly transformed through the influence of that meeting."

## BROKENHEARTEDNESS OF SIN

The next year at the annual meeting of the Punjab Prayer-Union, which had been organized prior to the first Sialkot Convention, God laid on hearts the burden of a world plunged in sin. Those present were permitted to share to some extent in the sufferings of Christ. It was a glorious preparation for the convention in the fall.

At this convention John Hyde was constantly in the prayer room day and night. He was the principal speaker,

but it was from communion with God that he derived his power.

At one time John Hyde was told to do something and he went and obeyed, but returned to the prayer room weeping, confessing that he had obeyed God unwillingly. "Pray for me, brethren, that I may do this joyfully."

He went out after that and obeyed triumphantly. He re-entered the hall with great joy, repeating three words in Urdu: "Ai Asmani Bak," — "O Heavenly Father."

What followed who can describe? It was as if a great ocean came sweeping into that assembly. Hearts were bowed before that Divine Presence as the trees of the wood before a mighty tempest. It was the ocean of God's love being outpoured through one man's obedience. Hearts were broken before it. There were confessions of sins, with tears that were soon changed to joy, and then to shouts of rejoicing.

At the convention the next year, in answer to prayer, God poured out by His Holy Spirit a burden for lost souls. The same "brokenheartedness" for the sins of others was felt. None felt this more than John Hyde.

About this time John Hyde began to have visions of the glorified Christ as a Lamb on His throne — suffering such infinite pain for and with his suffering Body on earth. As the Divine Head, He is the nerve center of all the body. He is indeed living today a life of intercession for us. Prayer for others is as it were the very breath of our Lord's life in heaven. It was becoming increasingly true of John Hyde.

## SUMMER SEASONS

The next two summers John Hyde went to a friend's house in the hills. Here he came for very real intercession with his Master. His friend wrote of Him: "It was evident to all that he was bowed down with sore travail of soul. He missed many meals, and when I went to his room I would find him lying as in great agony, or walking up and down as if an inward fire were burning in his bones . . .

"John did not fast in the ordinary

sense of the word, yet often at that time when I begged him to come for a meal he would look at me and smile and say, 'I am not hungry.' No! There was a far greater hunger eating up his very soul, and prayer alone could satisfy that. Before the spiritual hunger, the physical disappeared."

It was into the life of prayer and watching and agonizing for others that he was being led step by step. One thought was constantly uppermost in his mind: that our Lord still agonizes for souls. With all the depth of love which he seemed to be sounding with his Lord, there were glimpses of its heights — moments of heaven upon earth, when his soul was flooded with songs of praise, and he would enter into the joy of his Lord.

In those days he never seemed to lose sight of those thousands in his own district without God and without hope in the world. How he pleaded for them with sobs — dry, choking sobs, that showed how the depths of his soul were being stirred. "Father, give me these souls or I die!" was the burden of his prayers.

During those times of intercession, John Hyde laid hold of God in a very definite covenant. This was for one soul a day, not less. Not inquirers simply, but a soul saved, ready to confess Christ in public and be baptized in His name.

He returned to his district with this confidence, nor was he disappointed. It meant long journeys, nights of watching unto prayer, and fasting, pain and conflict, yet victory always crowned this. His sheep were being gathered into the fold and the Good Shepherd was seeing of the travail of His soul and being satisfied. By the end of that year more than four hundred were gathered in.

Was he satisfied? Far from it. How could he possibly be so long as his Lord was not? John Hyde seemed always to be hearing the Good Shepherd's voice saying, "Other sheep I have, other sheep I have." No matter if he won the one a day, or two a day, or four a day, he had an unsatisfied longing, an undying passion for lost souls.

## A LIFE OF PRAYER

At the next convention John Hyde again laid hold of God with a definite and importunate request. This time it was for two souls a day. At this convention God used him even more mightily than ever before. Through him God revealed glimpses into the divine heart of Christ broken for our sins. It is not our broken heart, it is God's we need. It is not our sufferings, it is Christ's we are partakers of. It is not our tears with which we should admonish night and day, it is all Christ's. The fellowship of His sufferings is His free gift for the taking in simple faith.

Paterson penned of John Hyde: "What was the secret of that prayer life of John Hyde's? This, that it was a life of prayer. Who is the source of all life? The glorified Jesus. How do I get this life from Him? Just as I receive His righteousness to begin with. I own that I have no righteousness of my own — only filthy rags and I, in faith, claim His righteousness.

"Now, a twofold result follows. As to our Father in heaven, He sees Christ's righteousness not my unrighteousness. A second result as to ourselves: Christ's righteousness not merely clothes us outwardly, but enters into our very being, by His Spirit, received in faith, and works out sanctification in us.

"Why not the same with our prayer life? Let us remember the word '*for*.' 'Christ died *for* us' and 'he ever liveth to make intercession *for* us,' that is, in our room and stead. So I confess my ever-failing prayers (it dare not be called a life), and plead his never-failing intercession. Then it affects our Father, for He looks upon Christ's prayer-life in us, and answers accordingly. So that the answer is far 'above all we can ask or think.'

"Another great result follows: it affects us. Christ's prayer-life enters into us and He prays in us. This is prayer in the Holy Spirit. This is the life more abundant which our Lord gives. Oh, what peace, what comfort! No more working up a life of prayer

and failing constantly. Jesus enters the boat and the toiling ceases, and we are at the land where we would be. Now, we need to be still before Him, so as to hear His voice and allow Him to pray in us — nay, allow Him to pour into our souls His overflowing life of intercession, which means literally: face to face meeting with God — real union and communion."

John used to say, "When we keep near to Jesus it is He who draws souls to Himself through us, but He must be lifted up in our lives: that is, we must be crucified with Him. It is self in some shape that comes between us and Him, so self must be dealt with as He was dealt with. Self must be crucified. Then indeed Christ is lifted up in our lives, and He cannot fail to attract souls to Himself. All this is the result of a close union and communion, that is fellowship with Him in His sufferings!"

## ENLARGING HIS HEART

The eight hundred souls gathered in since the last year's convention did not satisfy John Hyde. God was enlarging his heart with His love. Once again he laid hold on God with holy desperation. At length he got the assurance of four souls a day.

On those days when four souls were not brought into the fold, at night there would be such a weight on his heart that it was positively painful, and he could not eat or sleep. Then in prayer he would ask his Lord to show him what was the obstacle in him to his blessing. He invariably found that it was the want of praise in his life. So he would exchange his ashes for Christ's garland, his mourning for Christ's oil of joy, his spirit of heaviness for Christ's garment of praise, and as he praised God souls would come to him, and the numbers lacking would be made up.

He went still deeper with Christ into the shadows of the Garden! Praying took the form now of confessing the sins of others and taking the place of those sinners, as so many of the prophets did in old time. He was bearing the sins of others alone with

his Lord and Master. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." According to that law we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. This John Hyde was doing.

About the time that the confession of sins of others laid hold of John Hyde's heart, he was taught a very solemn lesson — the sin of fault-finding, even in prayer for others. He was once weighed down with the burden of prayer for a certain Indian pastor. So he retired to his inner chamber, and thinking of the pastor's coldness and consequent deadness of his church, he began to pray: "O Father, thou knowest how cold . . ."

But a finger seemed to be laid on his lips, so that the word was not uttered and a voice said in his ear, "He that toucheth him, toucheth the apple of Mine eye."

Mr. Hyde cried out in sorrow: "Forgive me, Father, in that I have been an accuser of the brethren before Thee!" He realized that in God's sight he must look at whatsoever things are lovely. Yet he wanted also to look at whatsoever things are true. He was shown that the "true" of this verse is limited to what is both lovely and true, that the sin of God's children is fleeting; it is not the true nature of God's children. For we should see them as they are in Christ Jesus — "complete," what they shall be when He has finished the good work He has begun in them.

Then John asked the Father to show him all that was to be praised in that pastor's life. He was reminded of much for which he could heartily thank God, and spent his time in praise! This was the way to victory. The result? He shortly afterwards heard that the pastor had at that very time received a great reviving and was preaching with fire.

### BURNING OUT FOR CHRIST

John Hyde was called upon to help in revivals and conferences in Calcutta, Bombay and many of the larger cities. A friend writes about him during one

of these meetings. "He stayed with us nearly a fortnight, and during the whole time he had fever. Yet he took the meetings regularly, and how God spoke to us through him, though he was bodily unfit to do any work!"

"At that time I was unwell for several days. The pain in my chest kept me awake for several nights. It was then that I noticed what Mr. Hyde was doing in his room opposite. I could see the flash of the electric light when he got out of bed and turned it on. I watched him do it at twelve and at two and at four, and then at five. From that time the light stayed on till sunrise.

"I shall never forget the lessons I learned at that time. Had I ever prayed for the privilege of waiting upon God in the hours of night? No! This led me to claim that privilege then and there. The pain which had kept me awake night after night was turned into joy and praise because of this new ministry which I had suddenly discovered, of keeping watch in the night with the Lord's Remembrancers."

This same friend relates how Mr. Hyde grew worse physically and was finally persuaded to see a doctor. The

doctor's report was that John Hyde's heart was in awful condition. "I have never come across such a bad case as this. It has been shifted out of its natural position on the left side to a place over on the right side." When the doctor asked, "What have you been doing with yourself?" Mr. Hyde said nothing. He only smiled. But those who knew him knew the cause: his life of incessant prayer day and night, praying exceedingly with many tears for his converts, for his fellow-laborers, for his friends, and for the church in India! His prayer that he might rather burn out than rust was being answered.

### HOME AGAIN

The next spring, John Hyde started home a very ill man. He had arrived in India in the autumn of 1892, less than twenty years before. But surely they were nineteen beautiful years!

When he arrived in England he went to visit some friends in Wales. While there he heard that Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman and Mr. Charles M. Alexander, on their worldwide evangelistic tour, were holding a meeting at

## ESSAY OF THE MONTH

We again invite our readers to submit articles on the theme of the month. One essay per theme will be selected by our editorial staff for publication.

The theme for July/August is "The Local Church." Deadline for receiving July/August manuscripts is May 2. The theme for September is "Serving." Deadline for September essays is June 20.

Essays should be written from the writer's own experience and observation and should be 1500 to 2000 words (or 4–6 typewritten, double-spaced pages). Please include a photograph and short biography of yourself.

Send all manuscripts to *New Wine* Essays, P.O. Box 22888, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33315. If you wish to have your manuscript returned, enclose a self-addressed and stamped envelope.

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Shrewsbury. With two of his friends he went to the opening of this campaign. After that service the burden came upon Mr. Hyde and he engaged his room at the hotel for the following week to take up the burden of prayer for Shrewsbury.

Later Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman was to write: "God has been graciously near to us in all these long journeys around the world, and we have learned some things which have increased our faith. We believe in prayer as never before. I have learned some great lessons concerning prayer. I know that all great revivals are born of prayer.

"At one of our missions in England the audience was extremely small. Results seemed impossible but I received a note saying that an American missionary was coming to the town and was going to pray God's blessing upon our work. He was known as 'Praying Hyde.'

"Almost instantly the tide turned. The hall was packed, and my first invitation meant fifty men for Jesus Christ. As we were leaving I said, 'Mr.

Hyde, I want you to pray for me.' He came to my room, dropped on his knees, waited five minutes without a single syllable coming from his lips. I could hear my own heart thumping and beating. I felt the hot tears running down my face. I knew I was with God. Then with upturned face, down which the tears were streaming, he said: 'O God!'

"Then for five minutes at least, he was still again, and then when he knew he was talking with God his arm went around my shoulder and there came up from the depth of his heart such petitions for men as I had never heard before. I rose from my knees to know what real prayer was."

When John Hyde arrived in New York, he went at once to Clifton Spring, N.Y. His purpose was to obtain relief from a severe headache from which he had suffered much before leaving India. An operation revealed a malignant tumor, diagnosed as sarcoma. He rallied from this operation, and in September went to his sister at Northampton, Mass-

achusetts. But soon after New Year's he began to have pains in his back and side. He thought it was rheumatism, but the physician knew it was the dreaded sarcoma again. John Hyde passed away February 17, 1912.

I have set watchman upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are the Lord's remembrancers take ye no rest and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth (Is. 62:6,7).

There are some who know that God has chosen and ordained them to be watchmen. There are some who live for so long near Jehovah that they hear His voice and receive orders direct from Him about everything. . . . who watch all night long for nights that they might have the privilege and honor of watching with Him over the affairs of His Kingdom. Such a one was John Hyde. ☞

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## BEING GOD'S PEOPLE

(continued from page 11)

fact that Christianity was never meant as an experience with God to be enjoyed alone. I have heard Judson Cornwall say, "When you start to come into God's presence, one of the first things you cry out for is 'Oh magnify the Lord *with me*, and let us exalt His name *together*.'" You want somebody to join you. You want to be related to somebody. One of the most important things God is revealing to all of us today is that unless we are related to one another in Christ, it is going to be impossible to stand in the immense pressures of the time in which we live. That is true of every member of the Body of Christ, whether they are in leadership or not, but especially if they are in leadership.

Can you imagine the apostle Paul riding on a white stallion into Ephesus, holding a few meetings, leaving his forwarding address, and riding on to Philippi. Somebody asks, "Who was that man anyhow?"

And some fellow answers, "He's the lone apostle, and that was his faithful companion, Timothy with him."

Somebody else says, "Where is headquarters?"

"Nobody knows."

"Who's he related to?"

"He never tells."

"Where did he get his authority?"

"Nobody knows. . . . I think he had a secret revelation while he was unconscious in the bottom of a canyon."

Paul wasn't a "lone apostle." He said, "I came from Antioch. The Church there sent me forth. The Holy Ghost spoke in a meeting of the brethren, we prayed and fasted, and then presented it to the whole Church. The whole Church said, 'It witnesses to us, brother.' They laid hands on us, sent us in the name of the Lord, and when we go back there, we're going to report to them all about the people we have contacted, and the Gentiles that have come to the Lord. And when we come to you again, we will be sent

from Antioch the same way." Do you see the development of order that is there? That's not a bondage, but protection and safety. We will never be the people God wants us to be alone.

Christianity is a religion of plurality. It is a life lived together. Mark the times in the second chapter of Acts that you find that word "together." They were together! They loved to be together. Not because people were making them, but because they just wanted to be. It was a fellowship together. The will of God is going to be done, and no matter how things may appear to be on the surface right now, Jesus Christ is going to receive to himself a glorious Church without spot or blemish or any such thing. He is not coming back for a beat-up Bride. Hallelujah! He is coming back for a Bride that is gloriously at one within.

God's purpose is to have a unified Church, composed of a company of people who have been delivered out of the world to fit the mold of the Kingdom of God. ☞

# BIBLE STUDY

## PRAYER

Prayer is one of the profoundest tools God has granted to us as believers. He has ordained it to be employed in any and every situation, from penning a letter to drafting a constitution; from healing a cut to raising the dead; from the fall of a sparrow to the fall of an empire. There is no occasion too unimportant for prayer, and no circumstance too challenging for its application.

Although God has freely given us this tool, it is not without conditions, qualifications, and instructions for its use; and often, our prayers are frustrated by our failure to comply with these standards. In light of the many facets of prayer, our Bible study this month centers on conditions, hindrances, and aids to be considered for effective prayer.

(Answers on page 31).

### CONDITIONS TO BE MET

- 1 John 5:14 and 15 states the confidence that we have in Jesus, that "... if we ask anything according to his will, \_\_\_\_\_"  
Since this is true, what can we know for certain? (v.15) \_\_\_\_\_
- God wants us to be in earnest when we come to Him in prayer, and this requires certain attitudes and actions on our part. Hebrews 11:6 says first of all that "... it is impossible to please Him" without \_\_\_\_\_
- Another primary attitude in prayer is expressed in the rest of this verse and also in Matthew 21:22 and Mark 11:24:
  - Hebrews 11:6: "for he that cometh to God must \_\_\_\_\_"
- In Jeremiah 29:13, when does God promise results for those who seek Him? "When ye shall search for me \_\_\_\_\_"
- What *four* actions does God require from His people in 2 Chronicles 7:14?
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

- What three promises does He extend to those who earnestly obey Him in these requirements? *He will:*
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

### AIDS IN PRAYER

- The following are scriptures that describe a variety of prayer aids. They are either attitudes or actions which, combined with prayer, help to touch God's heart, bringing results. Write each aid after the appropriate scriptures:
  - Ps. 35:13; Acts 13:2,3; Matt. 17:19-21; Luke 2:36-37: Prayer and \_\_\_\_\_
  - Heb. 5:7; Acts 1:14; Dan. 6:11: Prayer and \_\_\_\_\_
  - Jude 20; Rom. 8:26,27; 1 Cor. 14:14,15: Praying in \_\_\_\_\_
  - Col. 4:2; Phil 4:6: Prayer with \_\_\_\_\_
  - Ezra 10:1; Neh. 1:6; Ps. 32:5: Prayer with \_\_\_\_\_
  - Eph. 6:18: Prayer, "... and watching thereunto with all \_\_\_\_\_"
- The Bible records that on occasion, some men employed a variety of prayer forms to intercede before God on behalf of their people.
  - What six methods did Daniel employ to set his face toward God to seek Him? (Dan. 9:3,4) \_\_\_\_\_
  - What five things did Nehemiah do? (Neh. 1:4,6) \_\_\_\_\_

### THE RESULTS OF EARNEST PRAYER

- What were the three results of the powerful prayer offered by the early believers in Acts 4:31? \_\_\_\_\_
- After reading the story of Peter's imprisonment in Acts 12:1-12, what do you think prompted his miraculous release? (v.5) \_\_\_\_\_
- The last sentence in verse 16 of James 5 is more or less a summary statement of the effects of prayer. What is this sentence? \_\_\_\_\_

# PRAY, AND DO NOT LOSE HEART

Practical solutions to common problems in prayer.

by  
Ralph  
Martin

**T**hese are truly amazing times. The tempo of God's action is increasing, and the stakes — the salvation of the race — are emerging undisguised. For the individual Christian, this is especially a time of preparation. God is preparing His people so that they can follow Him, very closely indeed. I believe that this preparation consists very centrally in becoming profoundly one with God, accustomed

to hearing His voice, sensitive to the promptings of His Spirit, in full accord with His mind and heart. We must learn to obey: to go when He says go, to stop when He says stop. Only Christians who have such an abiding union with God will be able to take full part with Him in what lies ahead.

And it is through prayer that this

*RALPH MARTIN also appears as guest panelist in this month's Fourm.*

deepening union will come to pass. Not just prayer of intercession or prayer for getting things to happen — important as that is — but prayer of friendship, prayer of joy and celebration in being with God, prayer of dedication and commitment in following Him and putting Him first in our lives, prayer of peace and silence, adoration and love.

What I'll be writing lays no partic-

ular claim to originality. It is, I suppose, a simple wisdom known to every age of Christians in some form or another. It is a wisdom that no man lays claim to, but a wisdom that lays claim to man. It has been immensely important to me, and will, I know, be helpful to many of us as we try to respond to what we sense God doing today.

I am not concerned with writing a scholarly treatise on the traditions of Christian prayer, nor am I competent to do so. I am mainly concerned to communicate a portion of what I have learned of the ways of God in prayer. My hope is not that you know more about prayer, but that you know God more, and desire Him more, and cleave to Him more.

Anyone who has tried to pray has at one time or another found it difficult.

"I'm not experiencing the presence of God. I feel like I'm talking to a blank wall. God seems absent."

"I'm distracted constantly. I seem restless, preoccupied."

Unfortunately, the difficulties, while normal and to be expected, can seriously block our relationship with the Lord. Many who set out on the way to a deepening personal relationship with God have turned back because of them. With modest courage and understanding, however, we can get through these difficulties if the right help and encouragement is available. I want to consider some of the common problems that people experience, and ways we can work them through.

## DRYNESS

Dryness is perhaps the most common difficulty. Whether one week, one month, or one year after initial conversion or renewal, it is almost certain to come. Dryness consists in not experiencing the presence of God or the desire to pray. God may seem absent or distant; we may feel we are talking to ourselves. It becomes more difficult to persist in prayer under such circumstances; yet if understood correctly, these can be special times of grace.

NEW WINE

Experience of God is intended to be a normal part of the Christian life. It is not, however, without its variations. Sometimes our failure to experience God in a sensible manner comes through no fault of our own, but is a normal stage in God's purification of our desire and intention to serve and follow Him. When we experience His presence in a satisfying way, our feelings may well become the motive for our love of Him. Love will not mature or deepen unless it reaffirms its choice of the Beloved when the consolation of experience is not there.

Some dry times are caused by normal fluctuations in our human nature. Our psychological and physical well-being will inevitably affect our experience of God. Lack of sleep or food (or too much) can affect our prayer times, as can the psychological drain of long sustained efforts. We should not be alarmed at these effects but should seek God for the wisdom we need to deal with the root problems.

God's plan for us is ultimate union with Him. Our experience of God will deepen as our fidelity through dry times remains steady. Temptations to shorten our prayer times during these periods, or to drop them altogether, should be resisted. Getting out of the habit of regular prayer prolongs the dry time, and makes it more difficult to respond to the next prompting of the Holy Spirit.

## TRIALS – SUFFERING

Our progress in prayer may also be interrupted when we become involved in difficult or painful situations. Much of what was said about dryness applies here. We are warned in Scripture that we will not be magically spared trials and sufferings as Christians; indeed, we are told that God often permits trials to bring about the steadfastness and seriousness of character that he wants us to have (James 1:2–4). Someone who has committed himself to God, and loves Him, can be assured that God will bring great good out of everything that happens (Rom. 8:28). The very force of the trial or suffering, if

we look on it with hope and faith, can be turned to produce a comparably strong good.

Let me make a few distinctions, however. There are some trials that God does not intend us to accept in faith but to resist and overcome: sufferings coming from our own sin or a wrong situation or an attack of Satan. Things that we bring on ourselves or have control over we should repent of, resist or change. It is not God's will that we experience them.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you men of double mind (James 4:7–8, RSV).

There are trials – the loss of a job, for example – that may indeed be attributed in some way to Satan but are to be borne in faith. God will bring good out of them.

The main kind of suffering spoken of in the Scriptures comes from the attempt to follow Christ faithfully. It is the suffering of death to self and the daily carrying of the cross: the persecution and inconvenience that are encountered; the sacrifices that must be made; the misunderstanding that must be endured. It is a suffering that is to be borne joyfully and counted as a normal part of our life.

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal, which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrongdoer, or a mischief-maker; yet if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God (1 Pet. 4:12–16, RSV).

## REGULARITY OF PRAYER TIME

We may have difficulty experiencing

God because we are skipping our prayer time or letting it get pushed out of our schedule. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of faithfulness and regularity; they significantly reduce many of the problems people experience in trying to pray. We usually need the support of other people encouraging us to take our prayer time and not asking us to do other things at that time. It may appear Christian to yield to every demand even when it consistently prevents us from praying, but it is not. We cannot ignore the consequences to our long-range commitments: Saying yes to every immediate demand can amount to saying no to God. It injures others in the long run for the need of the moment. We can become bound up by what has been called the "tyranny of the urgent." We need not be "rigid" in any part of our Christian lives, and must always be ready to help a brother or sister in need even if it interferes with our prayer time, but we need also to have God's own wisdom and to know that to choose a life of personal prayer, to choose to be faithful to our daily prayer time (making allowances for legitimate exceptions), is to be choosing the pearl of great price, the treasure in the field; is to be choosing God Himself.

At the same time, our prayer time should not be completely inflexible. We should not feel that God will not love us if we miss an occasional prayer time (or all our prayer times for that matter!), but His love desires the best for us and our brothers. That is why we pray. Also, it is possible, of course, to use our prayer time as a means to hurt other people or shirk our responsibilities. A parent who schedules his prayer time for the hour after supper, when several children need to be put to bed and the service of both parents is required, will only cause hurt and resentment. The solution is not to give up our prayer time, but to find a better time. In families, parents should work out their personal prayer times in light of each other's needs, to their mutual satisfaction. It may take a while to hit on the right time, but keep trying!

## LENGTH OF PRAYER TIME

We may experience difficulty in prayer because we have committed ourselves to a prayer time that is too long or too short. If too long, it becomes a strain and a burden; if too short, it will not allow for all that the Holy Spirit wants to do in us. Something between the time we pray on our best days and the time we pray on our worst days is probably right. If we are just beginning to pray, it would be good to be conservative, taking perhaps ten to fifteen minutes a day for the whole prayer period, including some spiritual reading. We can increase it gradually to a half hour, and perhaps eventually to an hour.

## LACK OF PEACE—RESTLESSNESS—PREOCCUPATION

Indications of lack of peace, restlessness, and preoccupation are sometimes closely related, and we will deal with them together here. There are a number of things that can cause these obstacles.

*Sin and Guilt.* Unconfessed sin can choke off our prayer. When we do something wrong, we ought immediately to confess to our Lord, repent of it, and firmly resolve not to repeat it. We can be assured of Christ's forgiveness when we confess our sin, and we should not allow guilt to plague us or quench our prayer. There is no place for guilt in the Christian life except as a sign that we need to confess to the Lord.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

I acknowledged my sin to thee, and I did not hide my iniquity; I

said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"; then thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin (Ps. 32:1-5)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

*Wrong/Relationship.* Jesus' directives for our relationships are clear. We are to continuously forgive others and not hold any resentment against them, forgiving as He Himself forgives. In fact, He taught us to ask Him to forgive us as we forgive others. He told us to turn back from worship if there is anything wrong between us and our brothers and set that right first (Mt. 5:23-24). To a startling degree, problems in this area are a hindrance to joy and peace in prayer. The lack of peace is a signal that we need to take care of the problems.

Sometimes, on the conscious level things may seem "in order," but often there can be deeply buried hurts and resentments that effectively prevent that peace with God from developing out of which prayer flows more easily. It is not uncommon for the Holy Spirit over a period of time to open up these deeply buried areas and allow us to finally and freely give forgiveness to someone who has hurt us, or heal some wound inflicted long ago; from as long ago even, as earliest childhood. If we feel that there may be some deeply buried hurts blocking our relationship with God, we can invite the Holy Spirit to bring these to the surface, or perhaps pray with an experienced Christian for "inner healing."

Some relationships we should not be in at all. For example, a married man should not develop a close, dependent relationship with a woman other than his wife. A person committed to celibacy should not get involved in such a relationship either. Unless our relationships are right, our prayer can be hindered.

*Lack of Order In Our Life, "Busyness."* If we have not established a basic order among our various responsibilities and are "running around like a chicken with its head cut

off," we can be sure that our prayers will be hindered. Our home life, work life, free time and friendships must be working right, or on their way to working right, if our prayer time is to work right. We may be doing too many things, or we may be doing things in a helter-skelter way. Both produce a sensation of chaos which is an obstacle to prayer.

Some people who say they have no time to pray actually have plenty of time, but have managed and invested it badly. Sometimes they do not really know how they are spending their time. Here we again see the value of a schedule. We need to sit down and see what we are doing and when we are doing it, and then evaluate what we should do and when we should do it. It helps to write everything down, not forgetting time for traveling from place to place, eating, reading mail, putting the children to bed, washing dishes. Then we can figure out which things are most important, giving a high priority to personal prayer. We can schedule these things and work with that schedule for a while, expecting to make adjustments before it works well. We may have to revise it periodically as circumstances change. Making a workable schedule is an art that requires much practice and involves many mistakes, but is one well worth learning.

Some people are doing too much and need to slow down. We must have enough breathing space and leisure to allow a spirit of prayer to develop and permeate our whole life. Making decisions about our job and where we live, our friends and our activities, with an eye to their effect on our ability to spend time with the Lord and maintain a basic sense of peace, is very important.

"Psychic overload" — having too much going on, too much to think about — is one of the commonest causes of difficulty in prayer. The only cure is to put some order into our life, possibly do less and clear out some peaceful time to be with the Lord. Even with a good time for personal prayer, if the rest of our life is too intensely packed with activities, we are

likely to remain preoccupied while praying.

*Anxiety.* The Scripture contains some clear instructions about anxiety. Jesus told his disciples, "... do not seek what you are to drink, nor be of anxious mind. For all the nations of the earth seek these things, and your Father knows that you need them" (Lk. 12:29-30). Paul exhorted the Philippians to "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God" (Phil. 4:6). If we do not obey these instructions, anxiety will undercut our prayer. It will take some time to learn how to give our anxiety over to the Him, but the lesson must be learned if we are to move forward with the Lord. "Cast all your anxiety on him, for he cares about you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

*Sleepiness.* If we are sleepy, we should consider whether we are getting enough sleep, rest and exercise.

Occasionally a spirit of sleep can plague us, and it ought to be resisted and rebuked in the name of Jesus.

Sometimes it helps to change our prayer posture and begin to pray more actively, perhaps standing or walking around and praying out loud or singing.

Praying or singing out loud, and walking around while we're praying, can in fact make fruitful a prayer time that could have easily been short-circuited by sleep or distractions.

## DISTRACTIONS

Superficial distractions, as opposed to more deep-rooted problems arising from lack of organization, can be handled in a number of ways.

Some can be incorporated into our prayer. For example, if we are thinking of somebody in our prayer, we can pray for them. If we are concerned about some situation, we can turn it over to the Lord and move on to other things. Things we "remember to do" while praying can be jotted down quickly on a nearby pad for later reference, and we can go on in prayer freed of the anxiety of forgetting.

Some distractions must simply be endured and made the best of: the noise of pneumatic drills when the street is under construction, for example.

Some distractions can be eliminated by taking specific action. For example, I always found it very distracting to see a pile of messages, memos, and correspondence waiting on my desk when I arrived at the office and took my prayer time. I solved that by asking my secretary to hold them until I finish praying. Another serious distraction was the telephone, so I asked that telephone calls be held until I finish praying, unless there is an obvious emergency. We have not really had one of those in many months. It is important that we not be slaves to the phone or mailman or whatever. A peaceful and uninterrupted prayer time makes quite a difference in our ability to pray.

Some distractions need to be dealt with vigorously and resisted. Letting our mind wander or daydream can sometimes only be successfully dealt with by vigorous resistance. There is an undeniable element of crucifying the flesh involved in the Christian life, and unless we have the courage to endure the pain of self-denial when appropriate we will not make much progress. But God is faithful and He will give us the courage we need. In fact He probably already has. Use it.

We have talked about many major components for union with God in prayer. Many of these are objective and definite actions that produce definite results, and the importance of these acts cannot be underestimated. On the other hand, as important as the objective actions are, they are intended only to make us more accessible to the true goal of our life-union with God, the full maturity of the seed of new life.

God calls us on. He will transform us. To give Him full freedom, we must do our part in removing the obstacles to His action in our lives. ♥

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# Forum

## PRAYER

BOB MUMFORD •

GUEST PANELIST  
RALPH MARTIN •

CHARLES SIMPSON

Prayer is probably one of the most "talked about" Christian subjects, but one of the least "experienced" areas of the Christian life. One cannot simply view prayer as a discipline to be grasped and put into practice aside from one's total spiritual growth. Many factors affect our ability and effectiveness in prayer — our concept of God, our basic motives in life, our relationship to others, etc. These areas must be worked out in collaboration with our attempts to establish a prayer life.

This month our panel covers many different aspects of prayer, and answers some of the most frequently asked questions about the subject.



### What part does prayer play in spiritual growth?

**MARTIN:** I feel that prayer, in its essence, is simply "paying attention to God." Often I believe we think of prayer primarily as asking for things and interceding. While these are important aspects of prayer, I feel that the heart of prayer is simply being



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with Him, present to Him, paying attention to Him, delighting in His presence and His being. Prayer is a matter of love and adoration, worship and communion, before it is a matter of petitioning or interceding. When prayer is understood in this way, it is easy to see why I consider it to be essential to spiritual growth. Being with God, open to Him, present to Him, is essential for Him to act in us and transform us from "one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:18). Prayer forms, in many ways, the core of our relationship with God. Prayer is to our relationship with God what

communication is to husbands and wives, what conversation is to friends, what time together is to parents and children. It is the medium in which the relationship flows.

**MUMFORD:** What Ralph has just said brings to my mind a song which was popular some years ago. The lyrics went something like this: "Getting to know you . . . getting to know all about you." We get to know people through being with them, sharing and communicating through every available avenue.

It is through prayer that we get to know God in a personal relationship and this is vital for any degree of spiritual growth. True, we get to know Him through His Word; but that Word must become a part of us. It is when we seek Him through prayer that the words become a part of our lives, rather than just having read words on the page of a book.

Also, we can see how important prayer was to the spiritual growth of the early Church as we read the Book of Acts. Before all major decisions or undertakings, we note that, both individually and corporately, prayer is mentioned. Prayer contains the release necessary for spiritual advances in every area of life.

**SIMPSON:** Prayer is the taproot of

spiritual growth. Every man or woman used of God in an outstanding way has testified to a life of prayer. Since God Himself is the source of life, communion with Him is vital to our receiving life and maturation. Jesus, who is the pattern of perfect spiritual development, was a man of intense and lengthy prayer periods. He was in prayer at His baptism (Luke 3:21) and he received the Spirit. On the Mount of Transfiguration, the disciples witnessed Jesus' literal saturation with the glory of God as He prayed. Before the crucifixion, Jesus agonized in prayer. It is accurate to say that He was in continual communion with the Father.

Real prayer is a spiritual experience, not simply a mental one. God is spirit. Those who worship Him, do so in spirit. He that is joined to God is one with Him in spirit. Unless one abides in a spiritual communion and awareness with God, He lapses into a "soulish" or natural way of thinking and acting, even though he may still use religious terminology. Of ourselves, we can do nothing spiritual. Spiritual communion — listening and speaking to God through Christ — is the essential source of God's life that brings us to His likeness.

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### What hinders effective praying?

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**MUMFORD:** In Matthew, chapter 6, Jesus gives some words of advice about praying. Certainly, He had in mind "effective" praying.

Verses 5 and 6 tell us that when we pray to be heard of men, the only reward we can expect is the possible commendation of men. He also tells us how to get results from our prayers. Pray to be heard of God. He is the only one who can come up with the right answers and He will reward us openly. We can see answers!

Verses 7 and 8 warn against "vain repetitions." Jesus gave an example of those who prayed in this way and why they did it. They thought that merely a lot of words and a set number of times to appear before their gods

would gain results. However, having faith and knowing that the One to whom we pray is already aware of our needs, eliminates *vain* repetitions. This does not necessarily rule out persevering prayer, of course.

Verses 14 and 15 bring yet another aspect to effective praying. A clean heart, free of grudges and judgmental attitudes is necessary to appear in God's presence and claim forgiveness for ourselves. And who of us does not need to first ask forgiveness for ourselves before asking other favors and requests?

**SIMPSON:** Sin obviously hinders our communion with God. He cannot share with us in our sin. God is holy. Repentance and forgiveness must precede real fellowship with God. Of course, many people talk to God but in reality have no fellowship with God. He doesn't participate in their fellowship because of sin.

Sin takes many shapes. One of the basic sins that hinders prayer is selfish motivation. As spiritual babes, God tolerates much of this as a mother or father does, but as we grow older it becomes a real hindrance. James puts it this way: "You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:2-3 NAS).

To paraphrase: They lusted, killed (or hated), envied, quarreled and didn't get what they wanted, so they prayed and still did not get it. Why? Wrong motives! Your motive for praying is more important than your method of praying. (See Is. 58 on this subject.)

Wrong relationships are another hindrance. Jesus reminds us to make matters right with our brother before giving our offering. Unforgiveness on our part will keep God from forgiving us and opening His presence to us.

Disobedience is another major factor in unanswered prayer. 1 John

5:14 reminds us that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. A disregard for His will destroys the effectiveness of our prayer, because it is His will to accomplish His purpose, with His power. For example, it is God's will that we prosper and be in health. But it is only *in* God's will that we can prosper and be in health.

**MARTIN:** Obstacles to effective prayer that produce fruitfulness in our lives and in the lives of others can occur on a number of different levels. Bob and Charles have covered the areas of unconfessed sin, disobedience, broken relationships and wrong motives.

On another level, obstacles to prayer occur when prayer never becomes a regular part of Christian life because of a lack of practical wisdom and discipline. Many people never enter into a deep, abiding relationship with the Lord because they never set aside time in their busy lives for prayer. In order to develop an effective prayer life, it is necessary to discern the right time and the right place.

On yet another level, perhaps the deepest, prayer is hindered when we do not have the attitude that Jesus indicates is the heart of our relationship with him: "Abide in me, and I in you" (John 15:4a). We need to seek God not only for gifts or for His intervention in the affairs of daily life, but simply for Himself, for union with Him, for conformity to His will out of obedience and love. This is the kind of relationship and prayer that the psalms movingly speak of as "seeking."

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple (Ps. 27:4).

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

Thus will I bless thee while I live:  
I will lift up my hands in thy name  
(Ps. 63:1-4).

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### What is meant by "agreeing in prayer"?

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**SIMPSON:** Agreeing in prayer is much more than agreeing to pray or even agreeing as to what should be prayed. More basic is simply being in harmony with one another. Matthew 18:19 is speaking of the power of harmony in the Church. The verse appears in the context of how to deal with an erring brother. The Lord declares that heaven will confirm the actions of a united body. That kind of unity can only be achieved by the leading of the Spirit. Jesus honors such unity in His name with His presence (Matt. 18:20) and manifested answers to prayer. "Agreeing in prayer" is the corporate petitions of a united fellowship.

**MUMFORD:** Two references in the very beginnings of the early Church come to my mind in regard to "agreeing in prayer." The phrase used in King James Version of Acts 1:14 and 2:1 is "one accord." Surely this is agreeing, and surely prayer was involved. The result? Pentecost!

Again, in Acts 2:46 and 47, we find the believers again "in one accord." Not only was prayer a part of this accord, but they were daily in the temple, breaking bread from house to house, sharing meat with gladness and singleness (accord) of heart and praising God. This resulted in gaining favor "with all the people" and daily additions to the Church.

**MARTIN:** When Jesus says in Matthew 18:19 "...if two of you agree on earth, about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven," I, too, believe He is referring to the fruit of unity among His disciples for which He so strikingly and fervently prayed the night before He died (John 17:20). The unity of

each Christian with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the unity of Christians with each other will bear fruit both in its visible witness and in the results of its invisible prayers.

Our commitment as brothers and sisters to be one with each other and with the Lord, as well as our desire to live out the various tests and trials that threaten that commitment, is an important key to the power of prayer.

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### In some scriptures we are commanded to continue in prayer until we get an answer and in others we are instructed to ask once in faith and believe we have the answer. What type of praying fits what type of situation?

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**MARTIN:** I believe we need to look at everything that Jesus says about prayer in order to have a balanced picture. Every day Christians are disappointed or discouraged, or immaturely and pathetically "blaming God" for not answering prayer because they've fastened on to one thing that Jesus said about prayer without bothering to get the whole picture. For example, new believers often fasten on to Jesus' promise to grant anything we ask for, but fail to notice that Jesus addressed this to His disciples and further elaborated that it applies to those who were abiding with Him and who were asking according to the will of God. The same is true of the apparently contradictory directions given about asking once and on the other hand persisting in prayer.

I believe a few things can be said about what type of praying fits what types of situations. For example, persisting in prayer is frequently what is called for when spiritual warfare is being waged and the work of Satan has to be overcome. But I believe the only satisfactory way of knowing what type of prayer to pray — whether to pray once and "claim it" or to persist in prayer — is to be led by the Spirit of God in our prayer, and to seek His direction for what prayer to undertake in each situation.

**SIMPSON:** To me, the key word in this question is "faith." The New American Standard Version translates Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction [an evidence] of things not seen." Faith is assurance. I believe it is proper to pray until one has assurance. In some cases that will happen the first time one prays. In other cases, one may pray numerous times before getting a deep conviction that God has answered. In the interval between the first request and the last, many adjustments may take place in the intercessor or the situation being lifted before the Lord.

I do not think one should cease praying after one request and try to convince himself with verses of Scripture, if there is no real assurance in his heart. Daniel prayed for twenty-one days on one occasion before he got an answer. There was a spiritual warfare in the heavens that had to be won. Perseverance is a virtue. When assurance comes, then let the matter rest with the Lord.

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### What is "praying in the Spirit" and what part does the Holy Spirit play in our prayer life?

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**SIMPSON:** Praying in the Spirit is what happens when the Holy Spirit takes control of our prayer. Romans 8:26 reminds us that we do not know how to pray as we ought, so the Spirit helps us by interceding according to the will of God.

Most of us have had the experience of praying a prayer that seemed to be inspired. We knew in that moment that the Spirit of God was helping us to pray, and the prayer would be effective. This is praying in the Spirit.

However, Romans 8:26 speaks of something deeper. It speaks of groanings too deep for words. I believe this is what John means in John 11:33,38 when He says Jesus groaned in His spirit at Lazarus' grave. Then He said, "I thank you, Father, that you



**MUMFORD:**

"Prayer contains the release necessary for spiritual advances in every area of life."

**SIMPSON:**

"Real prayer is a spiritual experience, not simply a mental one."



have heard me." In His spirit He knew it was the Father's will to raise Lazarus.

I believe we can pray in the Holy Spirit with our understanding — but I also believe we can pray in the Holy Spirit from our own spirit as Jesus did at Lazarus' grave. Paul speaks of this kind of praying in the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 14:2 when he says, "For one who speaks in a tongue [unknown] does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands him, but in his *spirit* he speaks mysteries." Again in verse 14 Paul says, "For if I pray in a tongue [unknown] my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful." He concludes that He will pray from his spirit and his understanding. Praying in the Spirit, as I understand it, is praying an Holy Spirit-inspired prayer from our spirit (in tongues) or from our understanding.

**MARTIN:** I believe that praying in the Spirit is not simply praying in tongues, but any type of prayer, whether in our native language or in tongues, whether long or short, silent or out loud, that is moved and empowered by the Spirit dwelling within. I believe praying in the Spirit is that bubbling up of the Spirit within us, that Jesus talked about in John 7:38 that leads us to

pray in a great variety of ways, in great rejoicing, in song and dance, in powerful groaning and travailing, in silent adoration, in overwhelming love, in quiet assurance. The Holy Spirit has everything to do with our prayer life. Only the Spirit of God knows the depths of God (1 Cor. 2:11,12,13) and when in our weakness we don't know how to pray it is the Spirit of God that undertakes that prayer within us (Rom. 8:26). God Himself within us, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, makes all the difference in a life of prayer.

**MUMFORD:** Both Jude and Paul speak of praying in the Holy Ghost as edifying the believer. Jude 20 says, "... building up yourselves... praying in the Holy Ghost." 1 Corinthians 14:4 tells us, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself." Edifying is building up ourselves. Paul concludes by saying (v 15) that he will both pray with the spirit and with the understanding; and (v 18) that he thanks God that he speaks with tongues more than "ye all."

When the human spirit meets with the Spirit of God, there is refreshing, edification, great joy and a life-giving force released which can minister life to others.

**BIBLE STUDY ANSWERS**

- (1) He heareth us; We have the petitions that we desired of him. (2) Faith. (3) Believe. (4) With all your heart. (5) a. Humble themselves; b. Pray; c. Seek my face; d. Turn from their wicked ways. (6) a. Hear from heaven; b. Forgive their sin; c. Heal their land. (7) a. Fasting; b. Supplication; c. The Spirit; d. Thanksgiving; e. Confession; f. Perseverance. (8) a. Prayer, supplications, fasting, sackcloth, ashes, confession, b. wept, mourned, fasted, prayed, confessed. (9) The place was shaken, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, they spoke the Word of God with boldness. (10) "Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." (11) "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

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