

# Magazine **New Wine**®

October 1985 \$1.95

## GUIDANCE

How you can discover  
God's will for your life

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Seven ways God guides us

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Successful decision making

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Counterfeit guidance  
or the real thing?

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Larry Christenson:  
Guidance for  
daily living



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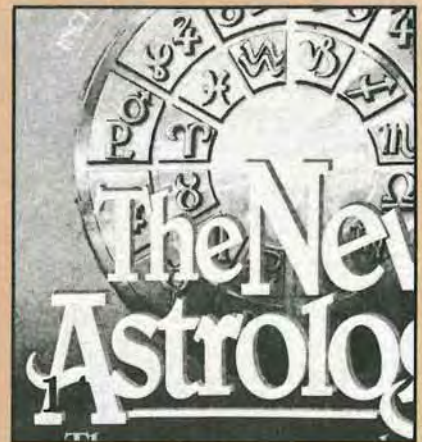
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*Bob Mumford warns of the danger in seeking guidance in the occult realm.*



*Decisions don't have to be hard. Here's hope for a double-minded man.*



*Is your quiet time a nap time? You can learn how to pray an hour every day.*



We can better know how God guides if we know

# Why God Guides

BY BRUCE LONGSTRETH

**A**s editor of a Christian publication and as a pastor, I've heard many people ask, "How can I know God's will for my life?" That is a legitimate and important question, for the Scriptures clearly indicate that God has a plan for us, that we've been redeemed to fulfil His plan, and that we won't know the righteousness, peace, and joy of His kingdom until we line up with His will.

But I was wondering recently about guidance from a slightly different angle. What I wanted to know was, why? Why would God bother to guide us? After creating the universe, why would He get involved in making it work? Why wouldn't He go off and do something else?

Some people believe God designed the world so well that He confidently gave it a spin, walked off, and left it. After all, they reason, something so well built should easily run itself. But if they would take a good look at the world beyond the range of their rose-tinted spectacles, they would probably notice tremendous societal problems on every level—economic, domestic, and religious, to name a few. In view of these issues, it's a good thing that God did decide to stick around and help us out for whatever reason.

Although I am easily convinced that God does guide us, I still wanted to know why. As I was reading in the Psalms one day, I found what I believe is the answer. In Psalm 23, David writes: "He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's

sake" (v. 3 NAS). For the sake of His name—His reputation in the earth—God leads His people, keeps them on course, and brings them safely to the destination that He has in mind for them. Put another way, the reputation of the creator is not enhanced by creatures who claim to know Him and yet wander aimlessly around, crashing into and denting other parts of creation. When God's people fail to honor His holy name and demonstrate their dishonor by choosing their own way, God is jealous for His reputation.

The Israelites were led out of Egypt for His name's sake. But eight hundred years later, they were led into the Babylonian captivity for the same reason: When they failed to obey God's law and walk in His ways, He had to punish them. He was thinking about the other nations' perception of Him if He didn't. "But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went" (Ezek. 36:21 NAS). Seventy years later, again out of concern for His reputation, He brought Israel back to its land and promised that one day He would reveal Himself in a special way "because of His name" (see verses 23-24).

God's guidance and our willingness to follow Him with a whole heart will always bear testimony to the greatness of His name. He leads us out of the bondage of sin and death and into the freedom and abundant life of His kingdom. He leads us into times of testing to prove our faith and leads us out again when

"patience [has] her perfect work" (Jas. 1:4). He leads us out of trouble so that His enemies will not boast and say, "Where is their God now?" and into glorious opportunities to declare the greatness of His kingdom. He leads us out of the desert of despondency and into green pastures and still waters to restore our weary souls. Each place He leads us is the "path of righteousness for His name's sake."

When we know why God guides us, we can better hear God's will and do it, which is what this issue of *New Wine* is all about. Houston Miles leads off, sharing from a biblical perspective seven ways God guides us, and then contributing editor Larry Christenson gives us some practical advice for finding God's guidance in our daily lives.

Describing his personal experience, Don Basham tells us about the importance of listening to God and heeding not only the call to go, but also the call to stay put. And Bob Mumford gives a frank warning to those who might consider seeking guidance from the occult.

The Apostle Paul had a hunger for the ways of Christ that enabled him to find the path himself and to mark it well for others who would seek the Lord in future generations. As we too embrace the ways of God in our lives, we will point the way for others and bring glory to the One who leads us in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. □



Bruce Longstreth is editor of *New Wine* and *Fathergram*.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



### *A Confusing Matter*

I'm a longtime subscriber to *New Wine*. I appreciate this magazine as a source of teaching and a gift from the Lord. As a Catholic Christian, I have appreciated your integrity, love of the brethren of all denominations, and sensitivity. I would, however, like to mention something that escaped your attention in the July issue.

A paragraph in Terry Law's article, "Call to Worship," implies that the Church started in the sixteenth century. I know that Mr. Law loves the whole body of Christ and in fact has ministered to and encouraged many Catholics. Some of the brothers in the ecumenical Christian community of which I am a member were also offended by this paragraph. So in the interest of Christian unity and for the love of our Savior, I recommend a clarification.

J.R. Carreiro  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

*Editor's note: The paragraph in question begins:*

*The Church that Jesus established on earth has made much the same journey. It began in the sixteenth century when God raised up Martin Luther, giving him the revelation that the just shall live by faith.*

*The second sentence begins with the word it, which is supposed to refer to the "journey." The reference, however, is ambiguous, and could be construed to represent the Church. We apologize for the lack of clarity on our part.*

*Terry Law is an ecumenist in the true, biblical sense of the word. He sees the Church as a whole Church, and has labored faithfully for years to bring the various streams together under the headship of Jesus. The analogy he uses in this article is a difficult one to communicate, and we apologize for any confusion*

*our editing may have caused.*

### *Heartfelt Thanks*

We would like to personally thank you for the July *New Wine* Magazine, which contained Don Basham's "From Tragedy Into Triumph," a story about my husband and I, and our peace within the Lord. My husband, Jim, is still with us on earth and I cannot put into words just how blessed we were to know that we were able to glorify God in such a wonderful way.

Although Jim cannot speak with words or move any of his limbs, God has made it possible for him to speak and move in other ways. We were blessed by our visit with Mr. Basham and are very happy to know that our testimony will reach out to others.

Barbara Hoffer  
Dimondale, MI

### *An Offer You Can Refuse*

I wanted to let you know of the encouragement I received from Don Basham's article "Living Without Guilt" (August). I have the tendency to readily accept guilt, but Brother Don stirred my faith to stand on the truth that Jesus' job was to atone for my sin. The more effectively we refuse guilt, the more decisively we will be manifested to all creation as "the sons of God."

Wayne LaGrone  
Littleton, CO

### *What a Difference*

I was greatly encouraged by Bob Mumford's article "The Internal Pharaoh" (August). Realizing the difference between conviction and condemnation was a timely word for me. I praise God for practical messages like these.

Tina Nunnelley  
Denver, CO



### On Getting Ready

Joseph Garlington ("Qualified!" August) so accurately pinpointed the sense of unworthiness that keeps us in a state of "getting ready" rather than ever going out and doing it! Over the past several years, I have had to face the fact that I felt lacking. Each time God was faithful to show me that it was His strength and His power that would accomplish the task, and that what was required from me was my confidence in His ability to use me.

All the talents and skills in the world are no substitute for a heart that desires to do the will of God above all else. How often have I been ministered to by someone who was not abounding in natural talent in an area, but was open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit! It was a blessing to read an article that pulled it all together for me (and I'm sure many others as well) and offered spiritual clarity and practical suggestions on how to be ready to be used by God.

Mrs. Michael Sullivan  
East Lansing, MI

### Adding to Our Lives

I just received your new issue of *New Wine* (August) and loved it to the fullest. Its articles touched my heart, especially "The Internal Pharaoh" by Bob Mumford and "Living Without Guilt" by Don Basham.

The good guidance and the scriptures added to my walk while here in this maximum-security prison. They are also adding to the lives of other Christian prisoners in here as the magazine is being passed and shared.

Steven Marquiz  
Canon City, CO

### Shaking the Unshakable

Larry Tomczak's article "It's

How You Finish That Counts!" (July) really hit the mark. I believe that there is an anointing of the Holy Spirit to bring the body of Christ into reality. I've witnessed God's fire at work in my life and have seen some wood, hay, and straw go up in smoke, but praise God, I've also seen that which God has built stand the test. I believe this word of Larry's needs to be taken to heart by all of us who call on the name of the Lord.

David Howell  
Lexington, KY

### Hosanna! Music Is Powerful!

Our first Hosanna! tape arrived the day before we started vacation, which was what I was praying for. Can you picture a family gathering together in the great north woods of Minnesota (Itasca State Park) and playing this music to worship God? Wow and double wow! This music has power. It draws you into praise and worship. Thank you. And God bless you.

Kathy Knuth  
Glencoe, MN

"Dear New Wine" is your platform to express your point of view about a *New Wine* article, to pose a question, or to disagree with a point we've made.

If you'd like to respond to a specific article, to question a writer, or to share how God spoke to you or challenged you, this is your opportunity to do it. Send your letters to "Dear New Wine," P.O. Box Z, Mobile, Alabama 36616.

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*New Wine* Magazine seeks to promote the unity  
and maturity of the Church and individual Chris-  
tians by presenting sound biblical teachings and  
testimonies from a variety of Christian authors.

*New Wine* will carefully consider all unsolicited  
manuscripts, although we cannot return them  
unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped  
envelope. (Please note we do not publish poetry.)



An impatient father and a frustrated son learn

## A Graphic Lesson

BY RONALD DAGGETT

**M**y eleven-year-old son, Paul, has a remarkable memory. He has long known all the state capitals and can recite the phone numbers and addresses of nearly everyone in our church, but he still can't tie his shoes. He has been slow to develop both large and small motor skills, making him awkward in movement and speech. Sometimes he doesn't seem to know what to do with his hands, feet, or tongue.

He has always been eager for my affection and has consistently desired to please me. On the other hand, he can be stubborn when confronted with doing something physically difficult for him. I'm sure that teasing by his playmates and my own impatience with him have provoked much of it.

As we worked together on his geography lesson one day, he sat clutching his pencil, making his fingers white at the knuckles from the pressure of his grip. His gray eyes had a stricken look and he was responding to any suggestion I made with anxiety.

I was getting angry with him. I knew the anger was working against both of us but it was getting the best of me.

The lesson we were struggling with was about wheat production in various countries. Using the symbol of a loaf of bread for each five thousand tons of wheat, Paul was supposed to draw a graph that would show the appropriate

number of loaves by each country's name. I had set aside an hour for the lesson and time was running out.

First, I showed him how to draw the loaf of bread, which he did fairly well. Then, we worked on translating the amounts into loaves, but he became confused and couldn't grasp the symbolism. My impatience and his fear of displeasing me seemed to paralyze him. The simple concept of three loaves representing fifteen thousand tons of wheat eluded him.

My anger mounted with each failure, but finally he seemed to catch on and began to draw the loaves. The atmosphere was thick with tension, however, and I pushed him to get done rather than encouraging him after he made his first success. As a result, the loaf that he had been able to draw earlier became an enigma to him. He didn't know where to begin. "But, Paul," I said angrily, "you have already drawn one. Why can't you do it now?"

He sat gazing at me, looking hopeless and frightened. "I don't know. I just can't," he said.

"What? Speak up, Son. I can't hear you!" I said, grasping his arm.

"I just can't. It's hard for me." He pulled away with tears welling in his eyes.

I looked at my hand and saw that my knuckles were white as if I were trying to will him into

pleasing me. I quickly let go of him. He did not cry out but rubbed his arm and sniffed back his tears. I felt like a jerk.

Knowing my anger had broken, he came to stand close to me. I put my arm around him and apologized. Then, we did something we should have done first. We prayed. I confessed my sins of anxiety and anger and asked God to forgive me. Then, I prayed for Paul that God would help him to draw the loaves and complete his lesson.

As we prayed, holding each other, I believe my heart was changed regarding Paul. I had always said that he was a gift from God but now I believed it. I realized that raising him was a responsibility God had given me and if it required twice as long as I expected, that was all right. I saw that I had to stop being embarrassed by my son. He was God's handiwork. He wasn't mine to remake in my image. He was God's to raise with reverence and care. I saw that if we sought God together, Paul would become all His heavenly Father meant him to be. I found myself rejoicing in my son.

After we prayed, Paul picked up his pencil. Carefully, but no longer tense, he drew the lines. Soon there appeared a slightly lopsided but recognizable loaf of bread. He smiled at me in triumph. "I think we've got it right now, Daddy!"

"Yes, Son," I answered, "I think we do." □



*Ronald Daggett is a design analyst with General Motors and pastors a home church group with Rochester Covenant Fellowship, Rochester, Michigan. He and his wife, Judith, live with their three children in Rochester.*



# THE WORD

October 1985

## *I Believe in the Holiness of the Church Because...*

<b>I. Jesus Prayed for a Holy Church</b>	Jn. 17:13-19	Oct. 1
<b>II. The Saints Are Called to a Holy Life</b>		
A. Abraham—a blameless walk	Gen. 17:1-14	Oct. 2
B. Moses—a holy ground	Ex. 3:1-12	Oct. 3
C. Israel—a holy nation	Ex. 19:1-6	Oct. 4
D. Israel—a people set apart	Lev. 20:22-27	Oct. 5
E. Israel—a treasured possession	Dt. 26:16-19	Oct. 6
F. David—a pure heart	Ps. 24:1-6	Oct. 7
G. Isaiah—a cleansed prophet	Is. 6:1-13	Oct. 8
H. Saints—a destined people	Eph. 1:1-14	Oct. 9
<b>III. God Blesses a Holy People</b>		
A. The prosperity of the righteous	Ps. 1:1-6	Oct. 10
B. The rule of the righteous	Dt. 28:1-14	Oct. 11
C. The effective prayer of the righteous	Ps. 34:1-22	Oct. 12
D. The inheritance of the righteous	Ps. 37:1-40	Oct. 13
E. The rewards of the righteous	Pr. 10:1-32	Oct. 14
F. The success of the righteous	Pr. 11:1-31	Oct. 15
G. The blessings of the righteous	Pr. 12:1-28	Oct. 16
<b>IV. Jesus Taught Holy Living to His Disciples</b>		
A. Holiness and witness	Mt. 5:1-16	Oct. 17
B. Holiness and religion	Mt. 5:17-26	Oct. 18
C. Holiness and tradition	Mt. 5:27-37	Oct. 19
D. Holiness and love	Mt. 5:38-48	Oct. 20
E. Holiness and prayer	Mt. 6:1-15	Oct. 21
F. Holiness and service	Mt. 6:16-34	Oct. 22
G. Holiness and endurance	Mt. 7:1-14	Oct. 23
H. Holiness and obedience	Mt. 7:15-29	Oct. 24
<b>V. The Apostles' Doctrine Taught Holiness</b>		
A. Freedom for holy service	Rom. 6:1-23	Oct. 25
B. Chosen for a holy purpose	Col. 3:1-17	Oct. 26
C. Disciplined for a holy race	Heb. 12:1-29	Oct. 27
D. First fruits of a holy creation	Jas. 1:1-27	Oct. 28
E. Conformed to a holy likeness	1 Pet. 1:1-25	Oct. 29
F. Partakers of a holy nature	2 Pet. 1:1-11	Oct. 30
G. Contenders for a holy faith	Jude 1-25	Oct. 31

A monthly Bible study by Bruce Longstreth



# DIRECTING OUR STEPS

A biblical perspective on how God guides His people

BY HOUSTON MILES



**H**e leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (Ps. 23:3 NKJ). In these familiar words of King David we see that God's purpose for guiding His people is to establish His own reputation, to glorify His name in the earth. As He guides our lives according to His purpose, His will, which is the lifting up of His

name and the advancing of His kingdom, is accomplished.

The Bible plainly reveals that God had a plan for the patriarchs, prophets, kings, and apostles. It also reveals that He has a plan for us. He has formed each of us for His eternal purpose, and has promised to guide us. "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide

you with My eye" (Ps. 32:8 NKJ). The Apostle Paul likewise writes:

We...do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (Col. 1:9 NKJ).



But there's more to guidance than just knowing that God will direct us. He has set certain conditions that we must meet to receive guidance, and He has provided certain methods whereby we can receive guidance. It is only when we meet these conditions and become familiar with these methods that we can effectively follow His plan for our lives.

### Conditions for Guidance

To receive direction from the Lord, we must first desire it. John 7:17 promises, "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know..." (NKJ). This goes beyond the desire to *know* God's will. We must also have a strong desire to *do* His will. Jesus says in John 5:30: "I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me" (NKJ). Just as His desires were secondary to His Father's, our desires must be secondary to God's desires, and must be sacrificed or rejected when they conflict with His.

Oftentimes our desires and the Lord's desires for us will be the same, which is quite contrary to what many Christians believe. Some think that the will of God is always painful, that it always robs us of joy. They reason if it's something they want to do, then it cannot be the will of God. "It cannot be God's will, because I'm enjoying it too much" is the way one person put it.

But Psalm 37:4 says, "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (NKJ). If we are delighting in the Lord, our desires will be in line with His.

Second, to receive God's guidance, we must be moving. Don Basham once said, "Guidance comes when we move in faith, not when we sit in doubt." If we are doing nothing—just sitting with our hands folded—it is unlikely that we will be guided by the Lord.

As we move in what we know, we can see God's will. Howard Hendricks, a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, said, "God's will is not a blueprint but a scroll—it is constantly unfolding." God will never reveal His whole plan for us at one time, yet some Christians seek God's will as if it can be found behind a tree or under a tin can.

The will of God is like driving a car at night. The headlights only shine so far. We cannot see ahead to the next curve, but when we get there, the headlights will show the way. In Isaiah 48:17 the Lord promises, "I am the Lord your God...who leads you by the way you should go" (NKJ). We do not have to wait for a special leading. If we walk in the light we have, God will always supply more light.

If we desire God's guidance in our lives and are moving in what we know to be His will, we can be certain that we are headed in the direction of His purposes for our lives. But sometimes we may take a wrong turn because we don't know all the ways in which God guides. I have found seven:

### The Word as a Guide

The primary way God leads us is through His Word, which Psalm 119:105 says "is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (NKJ). The vast majority of the will of God is in the Bible, which tells us what we are to do as well as what we are not to do.

We should never seek guidance on what God has commanded or forbidden, because He never speaks in contradiction to the Scriptures. We don't ever have to pray about lying, for example, because the Bible tells us, "Do not lie to one another" (Col. 3:9 NKJ). We don't ever have to seek God's will about marrying an unbeliever, because the scripture says, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbeliev-

ers" (2 Cor. 6:14 NKJ). God never makes exceptions.

We should also be careful not to take a promise from the Bible out of context. Cults gain followers because they can say almost anything by twisting the Word. All of God's promises are real, but taken out of context, they can be misleading.

When we do have a proper understanding of what the Scriptures tell us to do, we need to act on it. Many Christians are trying to find God's will in areas not specified while they are not doing His will in areas that are clear.

### The Holy Spirit as a Guide

Second, God in His love has planned that we should receive something far better than mere guidance. He has provided a personal guide in the Holy Spirit. Jesus says in John 16:13, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth" (NKJ).

When Paul wrote, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14 NKJ), he was telling us of this function of the Holy Spirit. If we belong to Christ, the leading of the Spirit is available to us.

But to be guided by the Holy Spirit we must have an intimate, unbroken relationship with Him. If the Holy Spirit is grieved or quenched, guidance will be clouded or hindered altogether (see Ephesians 4:30 and 1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The Holy Spirit's guidance was evident in the lives of the followers of Jesus. In at least four passages, the Holy Spirit spoke and gave guidance to Jesus' disciples: Acts 8:29; 10:19-20; 13:2; and 16:9. In these scriptures we find three characteristics of the Spirit's guidance:

One is that the Holy Spirit spoke to men of willing obedience, prayerful character, and devotion



to the gospel. They had an unreserved commitment to God.

Also, in speaking, the Holy Spirit used more than one method. At Antioch it was probably a word spoken through one of the prophets. Paul, however, had a vision of the man in Macedonia. And Philip and Peter heard the Spirit's voice while alone at the time. Although there is no reason for ruling out the possibility that Philip and Peter heard an audible voice, it is more probable that a strong, compelling inward urge and witness took on the definite qualities of a voice. Because the Holy Spirit dwells within the believer, it is logical to expect that His voice will be heard from within rather than from without.

Finally, in each case the voice of the Holy Spirit had something to do with furthering the gospel: Philip witnessed to the Ethiopian eunuch; Peter witnessed to Cornelius; at Antioch the first missionaries were sent out; and Paul was told to take the gospel to Macedonia. The point is, the Spirit's voice will always speak in unison with the purposes of God. He guides us as a means to His own ends.

We must realize that the Spirit leads within the limits that God's Word sets, not beyond. He leads us in the paths of righteousness—but not anywhere else. Therefore, never expect to be guided to marry an unbeliever or elope with a married person as long as 1 Corinthians 7:39, 2 Corinthians 6:14-15, and the seventh commandment are in the Bible.

#### **Circumstances as a Guide**

Circumstances, the third form of guidance, are the events in our daily life that God uses to point us in the direction we should go. Sometimes our circumstances control us, forcing us into a particular course of action. In Genesis, for example, young Joseph was caught up in events beyond



**The vast majority of the will of God is in the Bible, which tells us what we are to do as well as what we are not to do.**

his control and found himself a slave in Egypt. But he recognized that what had happened was part of God's plan. He told his brothers, "It was not you who sent me here, but God" (Gen. 45:8 NKJ). Because of his faith, he was able to save thousands, including his own family, from starvation.

God will also use circumstances to help us understand His will. Sometimes He will open

a door to confirm a decision. Other times He will close a door to indicate His will.

But at times God's will must be done in spite of our circumstances, which is why an over-emphasis on circumstances can be dangerous. We should always seek the support of the Word and confirmation of other Christians before accepting circumstances as the sole criterion for judging God's will.

#### **Authorities as Guides**

All through life we are subject to existing authorities, the fourth form of guidance that God uses. As young people we are subject to our parents (see Ephesians 6:1). Later on, we are under the authority of teachers or employers (see Ephesians 6:5). Also, we must obey representatives of local, state, and federal governments (see 1 Peter 2:13-14), and we must cooperate with and even obey leaders whom God has placed in the church (see Hebrews 13:17). Romans 13:1 makes it clear that it is our duty as Christians to obey all legitimate authorities in our lives.

This does not mean we are to give blind obedience; we must obey God, who is our higher authority, not an authority who requires us to do something that is contrary to His direct command.

#### **Common Sense as a Guide**

Common sense, the fifth form of guidance, is one that many people often forget about when seeking God's will. We do not have to pray about whether we should support our family; neither do we have to pray about whether to pay back money we have borrowed. In most situations, God's will is for us to do the logical thing, and to use reason. One man said, "Ninety percent of God's will is from the neck up."

In many decisions we have to



make, there won't be specific instructions in the Bible; we make them based on the principles set down in Scripture. Of course, many decisions are a matter of choice, such as whether to eat hot dogs or steaks, what color shirt to wear, whether to play golf or tennis, and so forth. God usually has no preference in these decisions, and He leaves the choice to us.

It is when we try to be super-spiritual that we get into trouble. Hannah Whitall Smith, in the book *Group Movements of the Past and Experiments in Guidance*, tells of people who let the "inward voice of the Spirit" decide and direct everything. It sounds spiritual but in practice it leads to fanaticism and lunacy. She tells of a woman who each morning, having consecrated the day to the Lord as soon as she awoke, "would then ask Him whether she was to get up or not," and would not stir till "the voice" told her to dress.

"As she put on each article she asked the Lord whether she was to put it on, and very often the Lord would tell her to put on the stockings and no shoes; and sometimes both shoes and no stockings; it was the same with all the articles of dress."<sup>1</sup>

That woman's actions are sadly typical of what happens when sincere Christians think of guidance as essentially an inward prompting by the Holy Spirit apart from the written Word.

#### Christians as Guides

Sixth, we can receive advice from other Christians. This does not absolve us from making our own decisions, but it can help point the way.

The choice of a counselor is of utmost importance. Many people are ready to give advice—even before we ask. But listening to anyone and everyone can get us into trouble. Don't become a coun-



**We do not  
have to wait  
for a special  
leading to do  
God's will. If  
we walk in the  
light we have,  
He will always  
supply more  
light.**

seling addict—one who seeks the counsel of anyone who is available. Some people seem to enjoy sharing their problems with others, but they do very little about solving them.

The counselor should be someone who is truly spiritual, who is wise, who will be objective, who can be trusted, who knows something about the kind of problem we are facing, who has a mature perspective, and who has the

skill to be helpful.

#### The Final Judge

Isaiah 26:3 says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You" (NKJ). The Apostle Paul says that if we bring our problems to God with prayer and thanksgiving, we can expect the peace of God, which is beyond understanding, to keep our heart and mind (see Philip-  
pians 4:6-7).

The peace of God is the umpire within us—the final judge of what is right and what is wrong. If we are thinking about doing something and do not have peace about it, it is best not to do it. In some cases we will experience the peace of God only after a decision is made. But whether before or after, this divine peace of God in connection with our decision is one of His greatest gifts to us.

These are just some of the ways that God leads us, but more than likely He will use one of these means to communicate His will to us. The important thing to remember is that if we not only desire to know God's will, but also are willing to do it, and are moving in what we already know of His plan, we can rest assured that He will guide us according to His eternal purposes. □

#### Footnote

<sup>1</sup> J.I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), p. 213.

Scripture marked NKJ: From *The New King James Version*. Copyright ©1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers.



*Houston Miles is senior pastor of Evangel Cathedral in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and serves on the steering committee of the National Leadership Conference. He and his wife, Evelyn, live in Spartanburg.*



# Guidance for

Larry Christenson shares fresh



**L**arry Christenson, a *New Wine* contributing editor, has taught extensively on guidance, and is in the process of writing a book on the subject, which will be published in 1986. We asked him to share some of his insights.

***New Wine:*** Why is guidance a topic you feel we need to focus on?

**Larry Christenson:** Because it touches on so many areas of practical Christian living. God's guidance gets to the heart of the difference between living under the Law and living under the gospel. To live under the Law doesn't simply mean that we're bound by some Jewish tradition; it means we're living by an abstract principle. Living under the gospel, on the other hand, means that we have a relationship with the living Lord. Instead of being bound by abstracts, we can respond flexibly, according to His guidance, in specific situations.

**NW:** Are you saying that God speaks to us beyond the written Word?

**LC:** Absolutely. He never speaks *contrary* to the written Word, but we face many practical and important issues in life that the Scriptures do not specifically address. For instance, which job am I going to take? Who am I going to marry? How are we going to solve this problem with our children, or that problem in personal relationships? We do have general scriptural principles, but it's the guidance of the Spirit that shows us the way to handle a



# Daily Living

insights on following God's will.

specific situation. When people live under the Law, often they operate by a principle that they might have picked up through a previous encounter with the Lord. They're using the old answer for a new problem.

**NW:** I've heard Charismatics say, "The Lord told me!" Is there a danger for these folks of being a little too subjective in how and what they hear?

**LC:** If they don't understand guidance the way Scripture presents it, there could be. They could make a subjective judgment and not recognize the counsel of brethren or circumstantial development. The Spirit speaks in a variety of ways. Often it's necessary for God to use one method of guidance to confirm others. To make sure that we have not heard inaccurately, we need to check, for example, with the brethren to see if there's a common witness to His guidance by people who are less emotionally involved than we are. A Christian is on dangerous ground if he thinks that God speaks to him in an exclusive way that doesn't need to be confirmed by others.

**NW:** One of the things you stress as you teach on the subject of guidance, Larry, is the importance of recognizing paradoxes both in the Scriptures and in the Christian life. Would you explain what you mean by that?

**LC:** Scripture gives us a number of absolutes—the sovereignty of God, man's need of salvation, the atonement of Christ, and the validity of the moral law, for exam-

ple. When these absolutes come to a point of application in specific situations, we often run into paradoxes; in terms of human logic, one scripture will contradict another. What these paradoxes actually do, however, is speak of the great breadth of circumstances that we encounter in real life.

One of the most graphic scriptural paradoxes, for example, is found in Proverbs 26:4-5. It begins, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself." But the very next verse says, "Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes" (NIV). Here we have in consecutive verses two absolutely contradictory ways of dealing with a fool. The only thing that makes sense out of them is to recognize that there are times when it's appropriate to speak to a person who is saying something foolish, and there are times when it is appropriate not to speak. The Spirit has to sort it out for us and give us discernment.

A pendulum is a good symbol for understanding how to live with these paradoxes. We move in an alternating rhythm from one pole to the other. At one time the Spirit may call for a strong accent on works; and at another time He will accent grace. In one situation He may stress the need for discipline and punishment; in another, the need for gentleness and mercy.

Agnes Sanford, author of many books on prayer and practical Christian living, taught the practical outworking of paradoxes with this bit of whimsy: "From Monday through Thursday I

work out my own salvation in fear and trembling; and from Friday to Sunday I rest in the grace of God." In other words, she moved in a certain rhythm from one pole of truth to the other.

One danger we face is that when the Holy Spirit taps the pendulum in a particular direction, we have a tendency to belittle the truth that we are moving away from. We criticize or find fault with that truth rather than simply recognizing that the Holy Spirit has called for a contrary emphasis at the time. The truth of the matter is that the opposite pole of truth lends inner strength to the truth that is currently being accented: Faith gains strength because of its interconnection with Law; exhortation and godly confrontation derive power because inwardly they are related to a readiness to be silent or to suffer injustice.

**NW:** How do you answer someone who asks, "How do I know if what I'm hearing is from God?"

**LC:** That involves the whole question of verification or confirmation of guidance, which is tremendously important. Confirmation is the foundation stone of the whole guidance picture. I stress these points: First, the Scripture is the plumb line. It is the standard by which all else is measured.

In situations where Scripture does not provide a clear answer or where there may be two or more alternatives, any one of which would not be contrary to Scripture, then we have to rely on things such as Christian counsel, circumstances, and evident reason.





One of the key ways God confirms guidance is by bringing people to unity on a matter. In the family, when a husband and wife agree on an issue, that can be a very strong indication that they have heard the mind of the Lord. If they haven't come to unity, they need to listen more carefully. In a body of believers, unity among leadership is a significant confirmation that they have heard God accurately.

Then, of course, our prayer life is very important. Through prayer we learn to become sensitive to the voice of the Lord and to distinguish between His voice and our own thoughts or the impulse of the moment.

The important thing to recognize about hearing the Lord's voice is that confirmation is possible. I can think of times when I have had to plead with Charismatics, telling them, "At least entertain the theoretical possibility that you might have heard God inaccurately."

It's like walking down the street on a dark night, and you think you see a robber crouching ahead of you. But then you discover it's a fire hydrant. You perceived inaccurately. Paul

says, "Now we see through a glass, darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12). We need to recognize that even though God speaks to us, we don't always hear with one-hundred-percent accuracy.

Agnes Sanford tells about the time she was about to catch a plane and heard the Lord tell her the plane was going to have trouble. So she canceled her flight. The plane crashed. When she reported this, someone took great offense, saying, "Why should God single you out and then let the others be killed?" Agnes's answer was significant: "I think He probably was speaking to all of us, but so few listen." We must learn to hear when God speaks.

When it says in Scripture, "The Lord spoke," it doesn't necessarily mean that He spoke with an audible voice, or that there wasn't an agony of searching and a certain tremulousness on the part of the one taking a step of faith. The way Scripture uses the term "God spoke" can have much the same meaning that it has today when we say, "The Lord said to me...." We sometimes have an unrealistic idea of how God spoke to the

writers of the Scripture. The Bible says that God spoke to Joseph in a dream. God still speaks to people in dreams today. Joseph probably had to sort the dream out and come to the conviction that it really was God speaking, which is just what we have to do.

**NW:** You've said that God's guidance is a lamp and a light—not a beam that goes four hundred yards down the road. From what you're saying, it sounds as if it's an orderly process.

**LC:** Yes, I believe guidance is usually step-by-step. Oftentimes the Lord doesn't throw light very far ahead. If He gave us the whole picture all at once, it would be too easy for us to take off on our own and get ahead of Him. He keeps us on a short reign so that we will continue to check with Him to see that we are moving in step with His will. □

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# IT PAYS TO LISTEN

God orders not only our steps but also our stops.

BY DON BASHAM



**H**ave you ever wanted to go somewhere God didn't want to go? That's what happened to Paul and Silas while on a missionary journey. First, they were kept by the Holy Spirit "from preaching the word in the province of Asia" (Acts 16:6 NIV). Then, they tried to go to Bithynia, but the scripture says that "the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them" (v. 7 NIV).

We're not told how the Lord stopped them, but I think it is likely that Paul and Silas recognized that the Spirit was closing the doors to Asia and Bithynia by a negative "inner witness" that came when they made plans to go. Although in most cases divine guidance is directive—God tells us to go to a certain place or do a certain thing—it can also be restrictive. That's when God lets us know where He doesn't want us to go, and often He does it through an inner witness. All of us need to learn to hear the inner witness, and even more to heed it.

## Wave of Weariness

I learned my lesson about the inner witness when I was in seminary. Back then graduate students commonly took a portion of their training at a school of a different denomination to gain a broader theological perspective.

I still had a year of seminary left when I decided to leave the Christian Church graduate seminary of Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma, to enroll at Westminster Theological Seminary, a fine Methodist school in Westminster, Maryland. My wife,

Alice, and I had lived in Maryland, and desired to seek a pastorate there when I finished seminary.

But once we began to pack, a strange thing happened. What can best be described as a "wave of weariness" settled over me, and it took an unusually great effort just to make the most routine preparations for the move.

At first, I tried to ignore the feeling, telling myself it was just a natural "let down" following completion of the year's work and the prospect of leaving a familiar school and close friends. I diligently recounted all the good, sound reasons we had for making the move, but the heaviness remained.

Up until then, our relocation plans seemed so natural and routine that we had prayed about them only casually, reminding God that we wanted Him to bless our move. But now, we decided to pray more earnestly, specifically seeking His will about our future. "Lord," we said, "we need to know if our plans to go to Maryland are pleasing to You."

No answer came, but the heaviness continued. Finally, I said to Alice, "Something's wrong! I know it sounds fine to change seminaries, and we've really been looking forward to moving back to Maryland, but something isn't right about what we're trying to do."

Alice looked at me, waiting. Suddenly, I said, "Maybe we should give up the idea of moving and stay right here at Phillips." The moment I spoke

the words, it was as if a great weight lifted from my shoulders.

"Sounds fine to me, Honey," Alice said in relief.

So we canceled our plans to move and I began to choose my courses for the next semester at Phillips. Only then did I discover that by taking two short courses during the summer term I could complete the final requirements for my graduate degree a full six months earlier than I would have at Westminster. At last, it was obvious why God had resisted our move—He had a different timetable for my life and ministry.

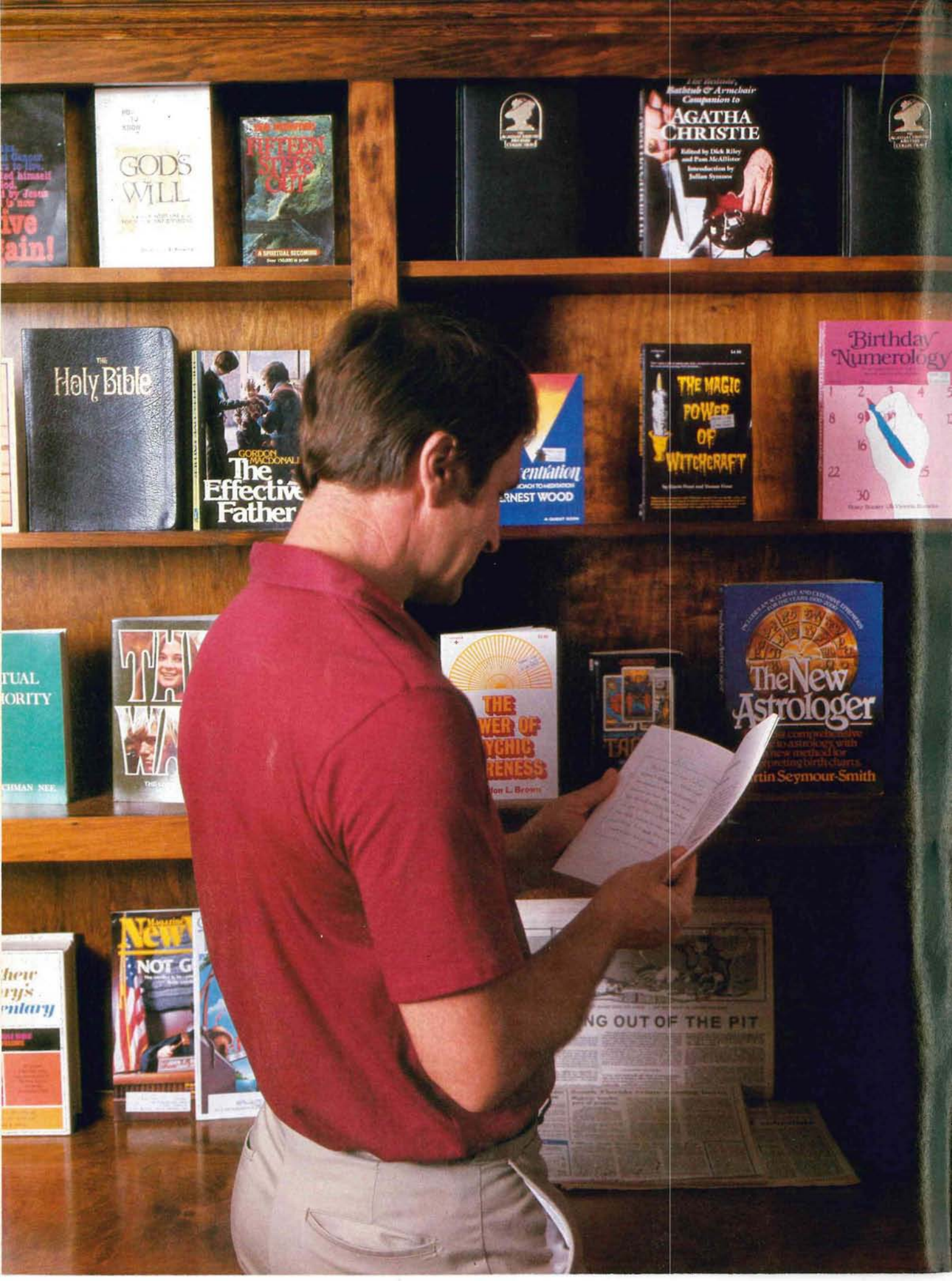
I have not always listened to that inner witness, but when I have obeyed it, the results have been gratifying. When I completed my seven-year odyssey through Bible college and seminary, I accepted a pastorate in Prince George's County, Maryland, and began full-time ministry six months ahead of our schedule, but right on schedule with the Spirit of Jesus.

It pays to listen. □



*Don Basham holds bachelor of arts and bachelor of divinity degrees from Phillips University and its graduate seminary in Enid, Oklahoma. A member of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors, he is chief editorial consultant for New Wine and the author of several books, including Face Up With a Miracle and Deliver Us From Evil. Don resides in Mobile, Alabama, with his wife, Alice.*





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**ING OUT OF THE PIT**



# Shopping Around for Guidance?

Knowing where to get it can make all the difference in the world.

BY BOB MUMFORD

**W**ho am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?

Everyone has asked these questions at one time or another, although we don't all look in the same place for answers.

I once read in *Reader's Digest* that businessmen, politicians, and other prognosticators of our generation read charts, graphs, and stock market reports for guidance just as our forefathers used to read the entrails of the chickens.

Book racks in local drugstores and supermarkets are stocked with books that deal with one form of guidance or another: how to know our future; how to improve our power of thinking; how to seek the stars for guidance; and how to open our mind to the supernatural wisdom of the universe. There are books on dream interpretation, horoscopes, ESP, mind reading, how to conduct a seance, and even how to make witches' brews to make ourselves irresistible or to put hexes on our enemies.

Millions of people study their daily horoscope in the newspaper either "just for fun" or more seriously before deciding on a new job, a new car, or a wedding date.

Schools give children tests to determine what they will be like in the future. Data experts feed personality inventories into com-

puters to determine what job a person is suited for or what kind of partner someone should choose in marriage.

There are about as many different forms of guidance available as there are areas we need guidance in.

Is there one correct way to find out the purpose for one's life, a right vocation, or a right partner in marriage? Is there a sure-fire way to know who we are and where we are going?

## Two Sources of Wisdom

The Bible teaches that there are two sources of wisdom: One is from God, and the other from Satan. Both are supernatural. Both can be sought. Both can be found. But the Bible also teaches that the wisdom "from above" is true. The other is false.

There are at least four provisions that God has given us to help us receive His guidance. To know what life is all about, we must seek the guidance from above by taking that first step toward the purpose of God in our lives, that is, accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. He is the first provision, and He knows the answer to the age-old riddle. He declared where He was going (see John 8:14), and He desires to bring the same certainty to all who follow Him.

The Apostle Paul tells us that the secret of Christianity is that

Christ actually dwells in the believer by faith (see Colossians 1:27). With Jesus Christ in us, we can begin to focus on what life is all about for us personally.

God has made a second provision for our guidance: the Holy Spirit. Jesus says in John 16:13:

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

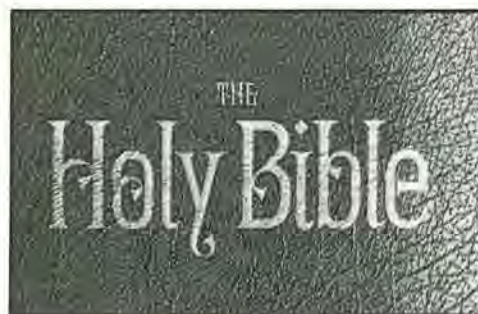
The third provision God has made available for our guidance is His Word, the Bible. Without the Word of God, it is impossible for us to know the will and the purposes of God. These must be revealed to us.

Jesus told the Jews who believed in Him:

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:31-32).

A fourth provision God has made is the counsel of mature Christians. Scripture says, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Pr. 11:14). We need the wisdom of our brothers and sisters when





## The Bible promises that any child of God can know the perfect will of God for his life and can know the joy, reality, and fullness of divine guidance.

seeking guidance.

Everyone lives by some authority, whether Pluto or Plato. Blessed is the man who makes God's Word to be his authority.

### Counterfeit Wisdom

Even though we may know and accept God's provisions for guidance, it does not necessarily follow that we are automatically tuned into wisdom from above. Much of the confusion about guidance among Christians comes from the sad fact that we do not recognize that we are exposed to counterfeit wisdom, that is, wisdom that is not from God. John Wesley said:

"Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, impressions, visions or revelations to be from God. They *may* be from Him, they *may* be from nature, they *may* be from the devil. Therefore, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be from God."

The Bible promises that any child of God can know the perfect will of God for his life and can know the joy, reality, and fullness of divine guidance (see James 1:5). To do so, it is vitally important that we understand what guidance is not.

I remember a young man at the Bible college where I taught. One day he came to me and said, "Bob, I have a wonderful form of guidance. There is a presence surrounding me. Anytime I ask a question, I receive an immediate answer from this presence."

I was suspicious about his "presence" and questioned the young man. It was apparent that he was involved with what the Bible calls a "familiar spirit" (see Deuteronomy 18:11). Having a familiar spirit simply means he had cultivated a relationship and become familiar with a spirit from the supernatural world. This spirit, as is often the case, was posing as the Holy Spirit.

I weighed this matter in my heart and asked God for discernment. Two days later the young man was in my office again and I asked him point-blank: "Have you ever been involved with witchcraft or mind reading?"

His eyes took on a strange look, as though they could see through me, and he said, "How did you know? Ever since I was a child my mother has exposed me to fortune-tellers."

I asked him to sit down, and I opened my Bible and read:

"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God" (Dt. 18:10-13).

Then I explained: "Divination means fortune-telling. An ob-

server of the times is an astrologer. An enchanter is a genuine magician, performing not childish parlor tricks but actual works of magic. A witch is a sorcerer. A charmer is a hypnotist. A consulter with familiar spirits is a medium with a 'guide.' A wizard is a clairvoyant or psychic. A necromancer is one who consults with the dead."

As I talked, the presence of the Holy Spirit became apparent in the room and a look of understanding dawned in the man's eyes. "People use these counterfeit means of guidance to unveil hidden knowledge, ascertain future events, uncover secret wisdom, and exercise supernatural power," I told him. "But you see, all this and more can be found through the Holy Spirit. Are you willing to surrender this counterfeit form of guidance for one that is genuine and biblical?"

He nodded and said he wanted deliverance. We prayed according to the new covenant that was provided in the blood of Jesus Christ for release, and he stepped out of my office a new man. Today he is in the ministry.

### Master of False Guidance

The reason that sincere Christians, such as the young man at Bible college, can get off track in their search for guidance is that Satan has a very special arsenal of weapons that he uses against us. He gets to us through superheated impulses and uncontrolled imaginations. He seduces, deceives, accuses, and condemns. He is the master of false guidance and deception.

It is tragic that many misled,



uninformed people have committed indescribable acts of horror and immorality, and later, when questioned in court, have said, "God spoke to me and told me to do it." They may have heard a voice, but had they known God as He reveals Himself through His Word, His Spirit, His Son, and other believers, they never would have believed the false guidance and acted on it.

To avoid such deception we must realize that Satan is a liar and we must acquaint ourselves thoroughly with the truth of God's Word, which is the antidote to lies and deceptions. Then, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit we will be able to recognize a lie when we are required to judge. This is the armor that God has provided so that we can withstand every fiery dart from Satan.

Divine guidance is further complicated by the trickery of our own mixed-up emotions, impure motives, prejudices, and old patterns of thought and action. It is through these problems that many turn their backs in fear of a deeper commitment to God's way.

Whole churches have clamped the lid on any possibility that God can speak to His children today. They say that He has spoken through His Son in the Scriptures and "that's that." They argue that all this foolishness about the Holy Spirit telling people what to do and where to go was strictly for the Church of the first century. "We're living in a different dispensation and don't need the supernatural divine guidance that comes through the gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit." These are the people who call themselves "practical Christians" and boast that they have both feet firmly planted on the ground. They accuse their more mystically inclined brethren of being "so heavenly minded

that they're no earthly good."

The man who chooses to live entirely in the natural thinks he is safe. He says, "By rejecting the mystical and keeping myself solidly based on the Word of God, I'll never go astray." Perhaps this holds some truth. But he will never enjoy that intimate walk with God guided by the presence of His Holy Spirit that the early apostles enjoyed. He may be safe, but he will be robbed of the delights that are the rewards of a more adventurous soul. He is the careful failure.

The twelve disciples were together in a boat at sea when Jesus came walking toward them on the water. Peter cried out, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water" (Mt. 14:28).

Jesus said, "Come!" (v. 29), and Peter got out of the boat and walked on water. Yes, he did start to sink, and it was a fearful experience. But consider the eleven careful failures who remained in the boat. They didn't even attempt to walk on the water.

Peter, whose heart cried out for all that God had for him, took the risk. He made that leap of faith into a state of trusting God. Peter, the adventuresome, impulsive one who sometimes made eager promises he couldn't keep, later became the rock, the obedient, the solid one.

While some become careful failures living in the natural, there are also those who boast of deep mystical experiences in the realm of the Spirit and who look down their noses at the "uninitiated ones." But both groups have missed the mark. While these people seem to look at the world as either natural or supernatural, the reality is that our lives should be a balance of both.

#### **A Clean Break**

One way we can avoid all forms of false guidance is to



*Ern Baxter on Kingdom joy*

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**The Bible calls it sin to attempt to know the future by any means other than the direct revelation of God; it is therefore something we must confess and repent of.**

make a clean break with all forms of guidance except those from the Lord. The Bible calls it sin to attempt to know the future by any means other than the direct revelation of God; because it is sin, it is therefore something we must confess, repent of, and turn from. This specifically includes all forms of spiritism, seances, fortune-telling, card reading, crystal gazing, astrology, horoscopes, Ouija boards, palm reading, handwriting analysis, ESP, clairvoyance, mind reading, parapsychology, and science-of-mind religions.

There can be absolutely no compromise in this realm for the Christian, for this is precisely how the supernatural wisdom from below, Satan's counterfeit, gains access to our lives. The consequences have been tragic for those who have opened themselves to these influences: agony, despair, mental torment, confusion, depression, and for some, suicide.

If we are ever unsure of the source of our guidance, we can turn to God's Word, where we find a clear description of the two forms of supernatural wisdom. James writes: "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jas. 3:15). A literal translation describing the fruit of this wisdom goes like this: "But where there is a supernatural wisdom that is working not from above, but is really earthly, natural, that is, soulish and inspired by demons, there is jealousy, rivalry, tumult, and every worthless practice" (see James 3:16).

In direct contrast is James's

description of the wisdom that comes from above:

The wisdom from above is first of all pure (undefiled)...peace-loving, courteous (considerate, gentle). [It is willing to] yield to reason, full of compassion and good fruits; it is wholehearted and straightforward, impartial and unfeigned—free from wavering and insincerity. And the harvest of righteousness (of conformity to God's will in thought and deed) is [the fruit of the seed] sown in peace by those who work for and make peace—in themselves and in others...that peace which means concord (agreement, harmony) between individuals, with undisturbedness, in a peaceful mind free from fears and agitating passions and moral conflicts (vv. 17-18 AMP).

As we begin to seek God's guidance for our lives, we must be willing to submit the impressions we receive to the test. God's Word is the final judge, and that means it must take precedence over our emotions, feelings, impressions, or any signs or leadings we have received. God's Word must take precedence over our subjective confidence that God has indeed spoken to us in some personal revelation.

If a revelation doesn't agree with God's Word or pass the test of James chapter 3, our source of wisdom is not from above and must be rejected, however con-

vinced we are that it is "of God"!

A note of reassurance: As we grow in maturity, both in the Word and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we can be as sure about our guidance as we are about our salvation.

We can know the fruits of guidance and recognize that we are not being deceived. We can distinguish between the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the subtle counterfeit of Satan. We can, as well, avoid being led into a dead-end street, fruitless activities, or subjective confusion.

Romans 8:14 says: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." When we allow ourselves to be disciplined and led by God's Holy Spirit, we are then showing the quality of a mature son. □

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Bob Mumford has served as dean of Elim Bible Institute in Lima, New York, and as a pastor, evangelist, and seminar teacher. Bob, who travels widely in ministry to Christians of all backgrounds, has also written a number of books about the Christian life. He is a member of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors and resides in San Rafael, California, with his wife, Judy, and their family.





# RESPONSE PAGE

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# Behind Closed Doors

Can God guide His people where there are no pastors, Bibles, or places of worship?

BY DIANA SCIMONE

**F**or eighteen long years, a man named Zhang suffered in the almost unbearable conditions of labor camps in the People's Republic of China (PRC). His crime? He had been arrested for starting Christian churches and meeting houses. During his prison stay when he was literally cut off from the outside world, he often wondered what would happen to the Christians back home. He knew that all over China the Communist government had closed church buildings, sent ministers to labor camps, and burned every Bible it found.

Finally in 1978 Zhang was released from prison, and to his

astonishment found that the three meeting houses and three hundred believers in his county had grown to twenty meeting houses and more than five thousand believers.<sup>1</sup>

Although these believers had no church buildings, pastors, Bibles, or other Christian literature, the Holy Spirit directed them in such a way that they were able to grow in number and in their knowledge of the Lord and His kingdom.

When western Christians think of guidance, they tend to think of the usual channels of God's providential leading through pastors, Bibles, books and tapes, fellow Christians, and prayer meetings.

But what happens when the "normal" channels of guidance are blocked? What if Christians are not allowed to worship openly? What if their Bibles are confiscated? What if they can't meet on Sunday morning and receive scriptural teaching or the confirmation and support of their brethren? Does God still intervene on their behalf? Accounts from people who have faced these circumstances indicate that the Holy Spirit continues to direct, protect, and provide in spite of man-made barriers.

## Christianity Outlawed

During the Cultural Revolution in the PRC, churches were outlawed, and there had been no missionaries in the country since the early 1950's, but the word of the Holy Spirit could not be stopped. Ross Paterson, senior pastor of Acomb Chris-



tian Fellowship in York, England, spent many years ministering to Chinese people, including during visits to the PRC, and tells about a Communist official who was miraculously touched by the Holy Spirit.

"The man's wife was mentally ill," he says, "and he was at his wit's end when the Holy Spirit spoke to him in a dream. He told him to look for a Christian who would pray for his wife to be healed."

Although it was extremely risky for him to do so, because of the anti-Christian laws, he felt he had no other choice and began his search. "Finally," Paterson says, "he found an old Christian woman who took his wife into her home to care for her. She prayed and fasted for her until she accepted Jesus and was restored to her right mind. Seeing the change in his wife, the husband also accepted the Lord, putting his own position and freedom at risk."

The Lord's guidance also results in protection for Christians from the West who are ministering behind the iron curtain. Ragnhild Kjeldaas, U.S. field representative for Die Brücke (The Bridge), a nondenominational Christian mission based in Munich, West Germany, tells of an incident in Romania. The police there had recently searched the home of her contacts and confiscated the Christian materials they found there. After interrogating the couple for thirteen hours, the police returned them to their home as "bait" for the westerners, whom they assumed would be bringing more Christian materials. To further set the trap, they planted an informer in a nearby apartment and installed bright street lights so that he could see anyone who approached the contacts' home.

"We didn't know any of this when we decided to make a late-

night delivery of Christian materials," Miss Kjeldaas says, "and so we blindly headed for their house. But we mistakenly took a right turn instead of a left, even though we had been there many times before, causing us to park a mile away from where we should have."

As soon as they got out of their car, the entire neighborhood suddenly lost all electricity, and they had to find the house in the dark.

"In the pitch dark we walked through the gate and closed it behind us. Just at that instant the lights went back on. Once inside, our contacts told us about the police arrests and the informer. If we had been out in the street a few seconds before, we would have been spotted, and all of us arrested, but the Holy Spirit caused a blackout that protected us."

#### **Evangelism Opportunities**

Often the Lord provides evangelism opportunities in the most unusual circumstances. Al Akimoff, Slavic ministries director for Youth With a Mission (YWAM), recalls, for example, a 1980 YWAM mission in the Soviet Union called Operation Friendship that included the participation of a thousand young people from all over the world. They witnessed many powerful examples of the Holy Spirit at work in a situation where the government tried to repress any spiritual activity. In one instance, a plane carrying young people from Australia had to make a detour because of fog.

"The remote village where they landed was so small that it didn't even have a terminal," explains Akimoff. "So they waited in the hanger for the fog to lift, singing and worshipping the Lord. When another plane landed, the passengers gathered around the Christians and listened to their



*At this 1975 gathering in Latvia, two believers were arrested by the KGB.*



*Soviet Christians and policemen watch as seven gypsies are baptized.*



*During a food crisis in Poland, a woman gets a gift from a Christian worker.*





U.S. Representative Mark Siljander (R-MI), a born again Christian who serves on the Europe and Middle East Subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, recently spoke in Baptist and Pentecostal churches in Romania. "There is no such thing as a study guide for ministers," he says about Christians behind the iron curtain. "They don't have concordances or commentaries or any of the literature we rely on here. They're relying solely on the Holy Spirit." □



Evangelist Terry Law, who has ministered widely behind the iron curtain, says, "My estimate is that

probably less than ten percent of the people in the underground church in the USSR have access to Scripture. Yet when the Word gets in, there seems to be a tide of the Spirit following it. There was a preacher in Siberia who preached for twelve years from the only two pages of a Bible that he had—and he saw people healed and saved." □

singing. Soon there were passengers from five planes—all diverted to this obscure town because of the fog. For six hours, the Christians sang and shared the Lord with them while several Soviets translated their testimonies. Finally the fog lifted, and one by one the planes left. The Holy Spirit even arranged the 'crusade' so that the Christians' plane was the last to leave, enabling them to do follow-up counseling."

### Supernatural Provision

The Lord's guidance often takes the form of provision. The family of another believer in the PRC, according to Paterson, was provided for supernaturally when he was sent to prison. Unable to purchase food, the man's wife and children in desperation tried to fish in a small stream behind their house, even though no one had ever caught fish there before.

On the first try they caught enough fish to feed the family, and as the weeks went by, they caught enough to sell. During the thirteen years of his imprisonment, they were able to support themselves entirely from the fish they caught. But as soon as the man was released from prison and able to support his family once more, there were no more fish in the stream. God had miraculously provided for His people during their time of need.

In many areas where gospel literature is not welcome, the Holy Spirit prepares the way for people to bring it—sometimes via surprising means. Akimoff gives another example. This time he planned to lead a ministry group to Hungary in a tiny car packed with literature, much more than they usually took on such trips. Just before they began their trip, an elderly lady asked if they would bring an old bicycle to a poor family in Hungary. "It seemed like an odd request," he says, "but we prayed

about it and felt that the Lord was specifically telling us to take the bicycle—even though it took up half the space in our car.

"Once inside Hungary, we learned that a Christian had recently been arrested, so our usual contacts would not accept more than a few pieces of literature each. By the time we neared our last stop to deliver the bike, we still had most of the literature we started out with."

To their surprise, the man they took the bike to asked if they had any extra Bibles or Christian literature. "When we showed him how much, he was beside himself with joy. He said he belonged to a church that had no contact with the West, and didn't have any access to Christian literature. The Lord had spoken to him a few months earlier that someone would be giving him a large amount of Bibles and books, and that he should begin preparing a place for them. For months he had been digging a hiding place in his cellar for what he knew would be forthcoming."

These testimonies and countless others show that guidance is not dependent upon any of the usual elements we are accustomed to relying upon. Although God has richly blessed most of us with Bibles, pastors, and worship services, He is able to guide us all, no matter what our circumstances. □

### Footnote

Joel A. MacCollam, ed., *Outreach to China: Opening the Bamboo Curtain* (Glendale, CA: Door of Hope Press, 1984), pp. 17-25.



Diana Scimone is an editorial assistant for *New Wine Magazine*. For eight years she was a free-lance writer in Washington, D.C. Her work has appeared in *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, *Travel/Holiday*, and other publications. She now resides in Mobile, Alabama.



# Graceful Exits and Glorious Entrances

Putting the past in its proper perspective

BY GLEN ROACHELLE

**T**here's a trick to the Graceful Exit, I suspect. It begins with the vision to recognize that a job, a life stage, a relationship is over, and to let go. It means leaving what's over without denying its validity or its past importance in our lives. It involves a sense of future, a belief that every exit line is an entry, that we are moving on, rather than out.<sup>1</sup>

This profound statement addresses the many transitions that God's people face as they progress through life. Unfortunately, many people would take this quote as an indictment of the past rather than a vindication of it.

Often, God prepares us for transitional phases in our walk with Him by creating restlessness all around us. But the excitement and newness of the next dimension are more than many Christians can handle gracefully. Some don't recognize that the hand of God is responsible for the open door ahead of them. Instead, they refuse to move on and try to recreate the glory of what used to be. Solomon said, "Do not say, 'Why is it that the former days were better than these?' For it is not from wisdom that you ask this" (Eccl. 7:10 NAS).

Charles Simpson once said, "It is a basic heresy to try to preserve a thing beyond its time." It is a gift from God to be

able to discern His hand in a transition and then be able to let go. It might even be called the gift of releasing.

The balance of releasing is reverence—having a proper reverence for the past. To repudiate the past with its validity is also a mark of immaturity. If we are to see our life as God does, we must look at our past, present, and future as one great continuum—a continuous succession of life experiences ordained by God to mature us. The past is a foundation to help make up the contour and outlines of our identity.

## Pioneers, Not Wanderers

When we look at the future based on our foundations, we suddenly become pioneers instead of wanderers. A pioneer has a sense of future, yet he honors his experiences of the past. He carries with him as much of the past as is healthy, and transmits and imparts it to those who will carry on his name. He knows what from the past to keep and what to discard.

The wanderer, on the other hand, is in a constant process of fleeing past failures and searching for a utopia.

"Exit lines," as Ellen Goodman calls them, are not a disengagement from the past, but progress into the next dimension to build upon foundations already laid.

The Church today is facing the future with a tremendous sense

of excitement and expectancy. I believe we will see that some things precious to us in the past must be laid aside. It will take the discerning of the Spirit to know what to lay aside and what to build upon. In my own church, there is a mounting anticipation concerning the miraculous, and we are expecting an outbreak of evangelism unparalleled in our experience.

Remember the words of our Lord about the woman in travail: "When she gives birth to the child, she remembers the anguish no more, for joy that a child has been born into the world" (Jn. 16:21 NAS). Oh, the joy of the newborn! The rejoicing of such ingathering!

All of the past is preparation for the future. Let us both revere it and know when to release it. Living our life that way will insure not only graceful exits, but also glorious entrances into the next season that God has in store for us. □

## Footnote

<sup>1</sup>Ellen Goodman, "At Large," *The Boston Globe*, October 12, 1976.



Glen Roachelle is senior pastor of Metroplex Covenant Church in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and has an extensive regional and national pastoral ministry. Glen lives with his wife, Roberta, and their four children in Colleyville, Texas.



# **MAKING UP YOUR MIND**

**A surefire tonic for successful decision making  
BY ROBERT GRANT**





There's a restaurant near my home where my family and I eat on occasion. The food is great, the decor is pleasant, and the people who work there are friendly.

There's only one thing I don't like about this restaurant: the size of the menu. It's huge, with many enticing selections, each one equally tempting as it begs to be ordered. When the waitress approaches our table, paralysis strikes me as I'm forced to make a decision.

The problem of "multiplied options" on a menu seems simple compared to a similar yet more serious condition affecting much of society. A hundred years ago in America, life-styles were simple, but the mushrooming complexity of current technology seems to have multiplied the choices that lie before us in every area of life. Many people find themselves in never-never land, floating between options, avoiding solid commitments.

But the Christian life requires wholehearted commitment demonstrated in clear choices and righteous behavior. Obedient response to God's direction is the central theme of biblical history. We see God continually calling His people to abandon neutral ground, to identify the right course of action, and to make a firm commitment to do His will. In 1 Kings 18:21, for example, Elijah warns God's people to quit wavering between two opinions. In the New Testament, James clearly states that a double-minded man is unstable in all of his ways (see James 1:8).

The critical area of the decision-making process is getting out of the no-man's-land of noncommittal, neutral responses and into the place of saying, "This is it; this is what I'm going to do."

In the last two years I've faced a number of major decisions that significantly affected me and my family. My first reaction was usu-

ally to put off making a decision as long as possible. I weighed each matter, considered the options, stewed, worried, and wavered. But in the end—every time—I had to let go of my wavering and make a commitment.

#### A "Tonic" for Decisions

Over the years, I've learned to rely on a certain formula—what I call a "tonic" for successful decision making. Properly mixed and taken as prescribed, it has significantly reduced my jittery wavering, and helped me to calmly hear God and make wise decisions. Here's the recipe for my tonic:

1. *Take a good portion of Proverbs 3:5-6.* Here the Lord clearly declares that if we trust Him more than we trust our own understanding, He personally will take charge of directing our paths. This first ingredient is most essential!

2. *Add a little of Isaiah 42:16.* This is a concentrated dose of the Lord's commitment to lead us. He promises that He will "lead the blind by a way they do not know" (NIV), even along unfamiliar paths. What a fantastic ingredient! Even if we can't see a foot in front of us, He will insure that we stay on the right paths—both familiar and unfamiliar ones. If we are faced with a decision that is lacking clarity as far as we can see, He is there to insure that we stay on the right trail.

3. *Mix in a measure of dependence upon godly counsel.* This ingredient is found in Proverbs 11:14: "In the multitude of counselors there is safety." We must be willing to say, "I don't know all that I need to know to make a responsible choice." It is an acknowledgment that we do not possess all that we need to make a wise decision.

4. *Blend in a portion of "ownership."* Without this vital element, the tonic will not work. Unless I see the decision as "my decision," I won't embrace the

responsibility of deciding, nor will I be committed to paying the consequences. Adding the proper amount of this ingredient brings an immediate sense of relief.

5. *Carefully blend in a good amount of "Psalm 30:5 extract."* This final ingredient has a distinct yet subtle taste that many people don't like at first, but I can guarantee that any bad taste will eventually disappear. This extract is commonly known as, "Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning" (NIV). We seldom have the ability to see how much God influences our direction until we can look back at the clear indicators of His presence and actions on our behalf. Many times it is only after we have proceeded in confident trust in His faithfulness that we are able to actually survey how much He was truly there all along the way. The flavor of this part of the tonic lingers long after decisions have been made.

I've thought about mixing other beneficial ingredients into my tonic, but this surefire formula never fails. It strengthens my heart in times of change and choice. Whenever I must move from options and alternatives to decisions and commitments, a good dose of the above tonic energizes me to action. I highly recommend this tried and proven recipe. □

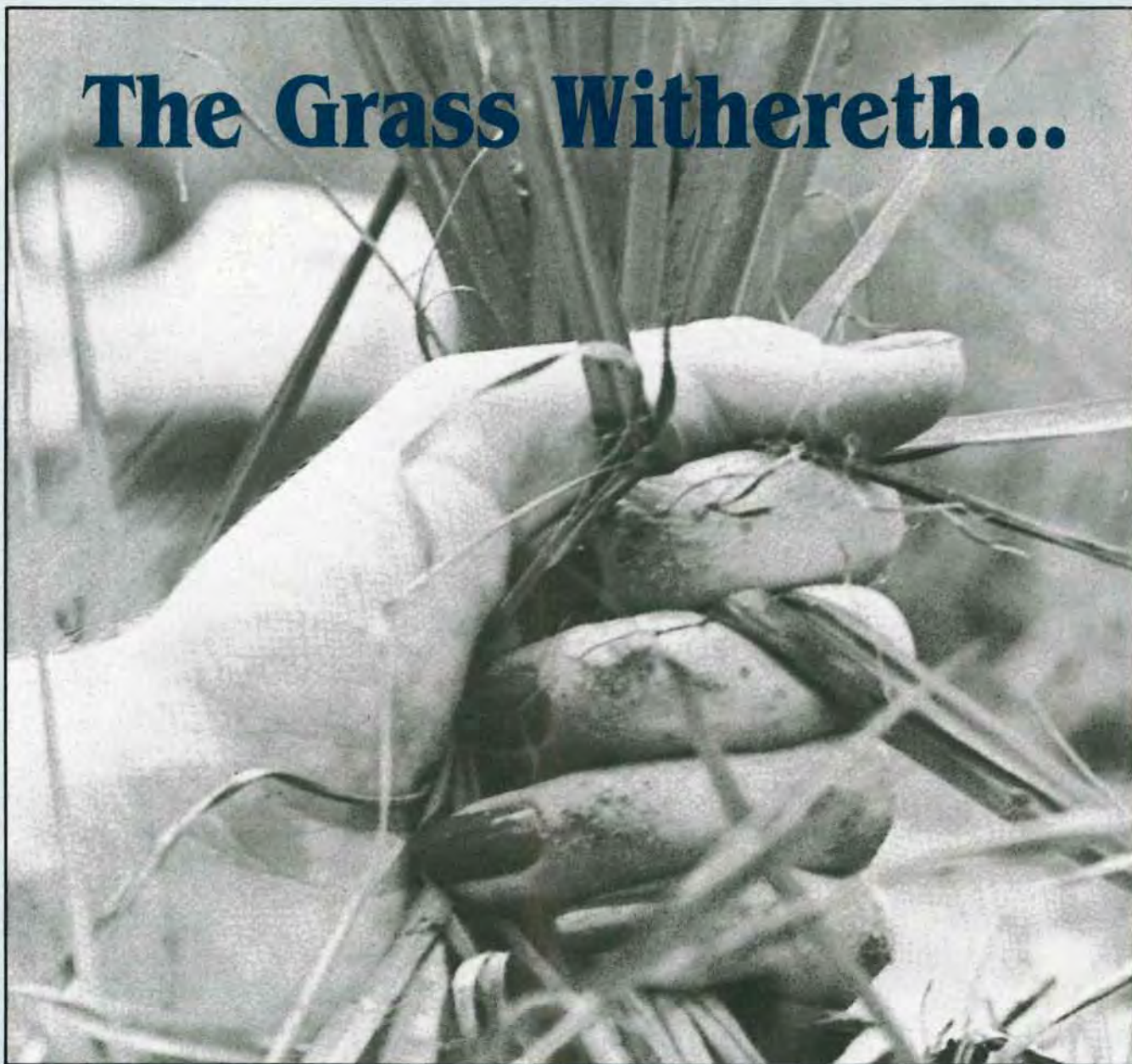


Robert Grant is senior pastor of Saddleback Covenant Church, Laguna Hills, California, and has pastoral responsibilities for churches throughout the United States and Canada. He graduated from

Southern California College in Costa Mesa, and studied at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Robert and his wife, Sue, live with their family in Mission Viejo, California.



# The Grass Withereth...



"On death's threshold, I found life in a new dimension through a personal encounter with God."

BY GARY HENLEY

**I**ntense pain shot through my body and jarred me into consciousness.

*Help me, Lord!*

I had been drifting in and out of consciousness, and I faintly remembered my pastor explaining that I was in a hospital in Waco, Texas, after a terrible car

accident. My daughter, Cheri, was driving when the car momentarily drifted onto the shoulder. As she tried to steer back onto the interstate, a tire caught on the road's edge, and the car flipped and rolled over two or three times.

Cheri was wearing her seat

belt and was not injured, but my wife, Sharrol, and I were not wearing ours and were thrown out of the car. Sharrol's leg was literally pulled out of joint, and judging from my condition, it appeared that the car had run over me. Almost everything on the left side of my body was brok-



en—my pelvis, front and back shoulder bones, and eighteen ribs—almost twenty-five fractures altogether.

For two weeks, strong pain-killers and severe head injuries had kept me unconscious and on death's threshold, but I was about to find life in a new dimension through a personal encounter with God.

### The Presence of God

As I regained full consciousness, all I could think about was the intense pain racking my body. A good friend, Steve Graham, was in the hospital room with me, and I asked him to pray for relief from the unbearable pain. Even after he left, I continued to call on God to set me free from the agony.

Suddenly, I became aware of the Lord's presence, and He began to speak to my spirit. His words came quite clearly: "I want you to cease this desperate concern for your body. Come up and meet Me in the spirit. There I will refresh you and help you to understand."

I had no idea what He meant by "come up," but His presence was suddenly so strong that spiritual reality began to overcome physical awareness. I turned from focusing my attention on myself to worshiping Him. Then, He began to speak again.

First, He reminded me of a verse of Scripture I had heard only a few weeks earlier: "Why should any living mortal, or any man, offer complaint in view of his sins?" (Lam. 3:39 NAS). I almost laughed as I began to see the Lord's perspective of my situation. I saw that I was nothing more than a sinner saved by grace. I didn't deserve a trouble-free existence; I deserved nothing but trouble. Anything else was grace. Thanksgiving began to well up inside me. *I'm alive!* my spirit shouted.

Before I could even wonder, *Why did this happen to me?* God began to answer the question. He took me back to some of my darkest moments. In my mind, I found myself lying on the floor of another hospital, the one in which my son had died just a few months after I had come to know the Lord. Twenty years later, I could still feel the chill of that tile floor where I had lain weeping that night.

Looking back, I could see what followed that agonizing night: I had been a floundering new convert, but through the tragedy of my son's death I gained a deep resolve to follow God no matter what might come. I could have easily felt sorry for myself or been bitter toward God. But He granted me grace.

Other verses of Scripture came to my mind:

We who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh....Momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:11, 17 NAS).

God took me back to other points in my life, such as the time I was betrayed by Christian associates, and the day a crushing awareness of my own failures caused me to look for a way to give up my walk with the Lord.

There had been many other disappointments, but He showed me how He had worked through each of them to transform me. It seemed that I had come to know more of Him when the temporal was being stripped away. Again I heard Paul's words, "I count all things to be loss...that I may gain Christ" (Phil. 3:8 NAS).

Everything God said to me that day can't be told here. But He showed me clearly that those dark moments in my life were im-

portant turning points. As He directed me toward the eternal quest of coming to know Christ more and more, I was able to see this life as withered grass—a truth that began to burn deep in my heart.

### Confirming Words

The day after my encounter with the Lord, one of the nurses brought my wife to my room in a wheelchair. It was the first time we had seen each other since the accident. As we talked we realized that from the moment the car left the road the Lord was preparing to bring us through the accident and to leave a spiritual deposit in us. I shared what the Lord had said to me, and she began to cry as she recalled that she had awakened on the ground after the accident tightly clasping a clump of withered grass.

Often it is in the midst of affliction that we see spiritual things most clearly. Today, one year later, my wife and I are both well and suffer no lingering effects from the accident. That is a testimony in itself—but it is not all. Our spirits have been eternally touched by God's words to me in that dark hour, and by that clump of withered grass.

All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord abides forever (1 Pet. 1:24-25 NAS). □



Gary Henley is a pastor with Metroplex Covenant Church in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and the author of *The Quiet Revolution*. He resides with his wife, Sharrol, and their daughter in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.



# H THE R HOUR OF POWER

How we can revitalize our daily time with the Lord

Part 1 of a 2-part series

BY LARRY LEA

**R**ockwall, Texas, is a small community of ten thousand people that sits in the middle of the Texas plains east of Dallas. It is here that Dr. Larry Lea pastors Church on the Rock, one of the fastest-growing churches in America. Worshipers drive from as far as three hours away every Sunday, and since the beginning of this year, the church has averaged a hundred new members every week. Construction of a twelve-thousand-seat auditorium is currently under way. In the meantime, the church holds three services each Sunday morning to accommodate its members. From the beginning, the church has been on a pay-as-you-go basis, and they expect the new facility to be completed free of debt by the fall of 1986.

We traveled to Rockwall to see this remarkable church and to discover the secret of its success. "It's nothing but prayer," says Lea. "Our church is not growing because I've got some gimmicky program or even the billboards you saw as you drove out to visit us. Jesus said, 'Lift up My name,' but put billboards up and have a fancy program without prayer and just see what kind of church you have. We will only go as far with God as we're willing to go in prayer."

In this first of a two-part series, Lea explains how he and his church pray. We think you'll be blessed, as we were, by what he has to say.

When the Lord called me to preach in 1969, within that call was the call to pray. Although I answered the call to preach, I did not obey the call to pray. I soon had a successful ministry, but many times after preaching to a congregation, I would retreat to a back room of the church and cry out to God, repenting of the lack of prayer in my life. When I finally chose to obey the call to pray that had haunted me for six years, it was the turning point of my life.

Jesus had the same problem with the eleven disciples in the garden of Gethsemane. In His greatest trial, they could not even stay awake an hour to pray with Him. He asked them, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Mt. 26:40). The plight of the Church today is pictured in that scene. Jesus is praying, but His disciples are sleeping.

Although we may agree that a consistent prayer life is important, the desire to pray is not something we can work up in our flesh. That desire must be birthed within us by the Spirit of God. Then, as we respond, desire moves us into a place of holy discipline before the Lord and we are enabled to develop a daily, consistent time of prayer. After we discipline ourselves to pray, our prayer life rises to a third level: to delight. Most everyone wants to change, but change demands desire and discipline before it becomes delightful.

In my journey with the Lord

in prayer, He has shown me several keys to a delightful prayer life. They are found in the Lord's Prayer, a model prayer in which Jesus outlines six topics as a pattern to be followed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

As I pray through these topics, I am not racing the clock or praying some formula. I take time to commune with my Father and let my soul reach up to Him in praise and adoration. I concentrate on a topic until the Holy Spirit releases me to go on. If I have not finished praying and my prayer time is gone, I simply take up where I left off at the next opportunity that arises that day. I am not in bondage to any particular ritual; rather, I am in a loving relationship with my Lord.

By following Jesus' prayer outline, we can find ourselves spending an hour or more a day with Him, and our prayer time will become a joy. When I disciplined myself to pray an hour at a time, something supernatural happened. I moved into a new dimension of the Holy Spirit where I experienced the anointing and power of God as never before. This month, we will look at the first three topics in the Lord's Prayer.

## Hallowed Be Thy Name

Topic 1: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (Mt. 6:9). This first topic shows us how to praise the Lord and appropriate His promises.

*continued on page 36*







**NEW  
SERIES ON  
SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

# WHAT EVERY KNOW ABOUT

## DO YOU KNOW:

1. How demons originated?
2. Why people think that God created a devil?
3. What territory Satan holds?
4. What the dangers are of dabbling in the occult?
5. What sophisticated weapons Satan uses today?
6. How to disarm Satan?
7. Who the recruits are in Satan's army?
8. What Satan uses as ammunition?
9. What the deadliest kind of war is?
10. What Satan's ultimate goal is?

**If you have trouble answering these questions, this new tape-series by Don Basham can help you become more effective in your own spiritual warfare.**

To effectively engage in warfare, you need to be able to identify your enemy, and understand his plan of attack against you. If you are out on the battlefield surrounded by fog, you may shoot every gun you have and still not hit anything because you can't see your enemy.

Satan would like to keep us in that ineffective position. He tries to disguise his workings as much as possible. In this tape series, Don Basham exposes the camouflaged enemy surrounding us, and gives practical suggestions to help us dislodge him from the territory he holds.

## Origin of Demons

In this tape, Don describes the warfare between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. He examines the nature of that spiritual warfare in terms of each leader's goal. Using the Book of Genesis, Don gives you a theological background for a new perspective on present-day warfare. You will see how demons originated, what they want to accomplish, and how you can thwart their schemes for your life.



# CHRISTIAN SHOULD SPIRITUAL WARFARE

## Encounter With the Occult

In the midst of warfare, people are motivated to seek help from any source that might meet their needs. Satan is a master at offering inducements to get you on his side. A common temptation is to believe that because an experience you had was supernatural, it must have been from God. Don warns you of Satan's counterfeit Pentecost and the problems that can begin in your life if you seek help in his realm.

## Resisting the Enemy

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## Prayer

continued from page 32

We begin by calling Him our Father, and by thanking Him for sending His Son to redeem us. If it weren't for His Son, we couldn't call Him Father (see Galatians 4:4-6).

As we hallow the name of God, we come into agreement with who our Father is and what He has already done in Jesus Christ. I would define the word *hallowed* as meaning "separated for praise, for glory, and for adoration." Because His name is worthy of praise, glory, and adoration, we magnify His name.

As I say, "Hallowed be Thy name," I include eight Hebrew names for Jehovah in my praises. These names correspond with the fivefold promise God makes to His people under the new covenant, which is fulfilled in the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I praise God that He is *Jehovah-tsidkenu*, "God our righteousness," and as *Jehovah-m'kaddesh*, "God who sanctifies." I praise Him that my sins—past, present, and future—have already been forgiven by the blood of Jesus. Therefore, all I have to do is confess my sin and appropriate that forgiveness (see 1 John 1:9).

Second, I praise God that He is *Jehovah-shalom*, "God is peace," and as *Jehovah-shammah*, "God is present." Because Christ's atonement removed the barrier of sin separating me from God, I can enjoy His peace and experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit dwelling within me.

Third, I praise God that He is *Jehovah-rophedh*, the "God who heals." I am made whole because of the stripes of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter said, "By whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pet. 2:24). I don't praise God because of what I feel; I praise Him for what the stripes of Jesus have already done for me. I say, "You

are the God who heals!" I'm not begging, "Please, God, heal me!" I'm thanking Him for who He is. The greatest faith words in the world are *thank you*. Many times during this part of the prayer I get healed.

Fourth, I praise God that on the cross, Jesus took the curse of my failure and insufficiency and became my *Jehovah-jireh*, "God's provision shall be seen." I praise God for being my provider. He sees my need before I ever have it and provides for it. He redeemed me from the curse of failure, inferiority, and falling short. Some of us have been beaten so much by the devil that we think losing is normal. But the Bible promises, "In all these things we are more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37).

Fifth, I praise Him for giving me freedom from the fear of death and hell. He is *Jehovah-nissi*, "God my banner," and He has swung His banner of victory over my head. He is *Jehovah-rohi*, "God my shepherd," who will lead me through the valley of the shadow of death and into the house of the Lord where I will dwell forever (see John 10:27-28).

In this first portion of the Lord's Prayer, we have praised the names of God, which are revelations of His divine nature and His will for His children, and have given thanks for Jesus in whom each of those names finds fulfillment. Through praise, we have entered into the very presence of God where we can bring our petitions before Him.

### Thy Kingdom Come

Topic 2: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done" (Mt. 6:10). This second topic shows us how to establish and live out the priorities planted in our lives by the Holy Spirit. Here we acknowledge that God has a kingdom over which He reigns. We ask Him to come and be the king of our lives.

I make the declaration of this

topic in four areas, starting with myself. That may seem somewhat selfish, but I've learned that if the Kingdom is not functioning in my life, my prayers will not be effective. I pray, "Lord, let Your righteousness, Your joy, and Your peace be in me today. Let Your will be done in my life this day—nothing less, nothing else than the high calling of God."

Second, I pray for my wife and my family—they're my second priority. I declare, "Lord, Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in my wife and in our marriage." We don't need to moan, "I wish she'd do better," because she won't do any better as long as we're just *wishing* it. We need to start praying!

I pray over my children individually, calling each one's name out to the Lord and declaring that God's will be done in their lives. I ask the Lord to reveal His plan for my children so that I can train them up in the way they should go.

Third, I pray over the church. I hope it doesn't shock anyone to learn that my relationship with Jesus is first, my family is second, and my church is third. I love the church I pastor, but the best way to succeed in pastoring is to have my relationship right with Jesus and with my family. Otherwise, pastoring can be drudgery.

I pray for the church as a whole and for all the people my ministry touches. Often at this point in my prayers, God will nudge me to pray for something or someone in particular. Many times I won't understand what I'm praying, so I just pray in the Spirit until I know I've prayed it through.

The Lord showed me a specific way to pray for my church through Isaiah 43:4:

"Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been hon-



orable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life....I will say to the north, 'Give up'; and to the south, 'Keep not back'; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even everyone that is called by my name" (Is. 43:4, 6-7).

This was written as a promise for gathering the Jews back to Israel, but it is also a promise to the Church for gathering the remnant of God's people coming together as the spiritual Israel. I claim this scripture as I pray in the harvest of souls for our church.

I speak directly to the north as if it were a person, for the Bible tells us principalities and powers rule over certain areas (see Ephesians 6:12). I say, "North, in Jesus' name, I command you to release every person that God wills to become a part of our church." Then, I petition the Holy Spirit, the Lord of the harvest, to draw people and plant them in our church (see Psalm 92:13). I visualize thousands of people marching toward our church from the north. I ask the Lord to dispatch angels to minister to these heirs of salvation.

Next, I go to the east, west, and south and do the same. I continue in prayer until I know they are listening and relinquishing what belongs to God.

The nation has fourth priority in my prayers. I pray daily for the United States, our President, and for Israel (see Psalm 122:6). I also pray for other countries. I ask God to put a country on my heart, and then I pray, commanding that God's kingdom come and His will be done in that country.

#### Give Us This Day

Topic 3: "Give us this day our daily bread" (Mt. 6:11). The third topic in the Lord's Prayer shows

us how to appropriate God's provision for our physical and material needs. There are four basic requirements for this. When we don't receive what we pray for, one reason may be our failure to meet these prerequisites.

To successfully pray in what we need, we must first be in the will of God. We must be walking, talking, and fellowshiping with Jesus regularly through our personal prayer life and the Word of God. Much of Matthew chapter 6 deals with finances and money, but it ends by saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (v. 33).

If we are to be in the will of God, we must also be obedient stewards. If we have robbed God in tithes and offerings, we cannot expect Him to bless us in return. But God promises that if we bring our tithes into the storehouse, He will pour out blessings upon us (see Malachi 3:8-10). As we put the needs of His house first, God will see that the needs of our households are met.

The second requirement for praying in what we need is that we must believe it is God's will to prosper us. Many Christians wonder if it is God's will for them to prosper, but Deuteronomy chapter 28 lists the multitude of blessings that are promised to those who obey the covenant: Those who obey will be the head and not the tail, above and not beneath, the lender and not the borrower, and their enemies will come in one way and will be chased out seven ways!

At the heart of the name of God *Jehovah-jireh*, which means "God my provider," is our redemption from the curse of failing and falling short. God has ordained our success, but we must believe that He wants us to be blessed. Then, we will have confidence as we go before the

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Lord with our specific requests.

The third requirement for successfully praying is to be specific. Jesus instructed us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." By this we know we are to pray daily about our specific needs. In addition, Paul exhorts, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).

When we began believing God for the specific needs of our church, God began raising our faith level. We went from praying for five thousand dollars a week to ten thousand. By 1981, we were believing God for twenty thousand dollars and twenty new members a week. In 1984, He challenged us to ask Him for sixty thousand dollars and sixty new members each week. As we set our hearts in agreement with His will, 3,659 new members were added to our church in 1984—an average of seventy people a week.

In 1985, our faith level is at one hundred thousand dollars and a hundred new members. These things have happened not because I'm a smart businessman or because I know all the tricks, but because I have learned to wait upon the Lord until He implants His will in my heart. Then, I set

myself in agreement with His will and continue to pray over those specific needs daily until the answer comes.

The fourth requirement to successfully pray in our daily needs is that we must be tenacious. That means we must not turn loose until our prayers are answered. Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Lk. 18:1). God honors shameless persistence.

We must refuse to let discouragement or unbelief rob us of answers to prayer. We should take the weapons of our warfare and go after the devil in the name of Jesus. If he steals what is ours, that's the time to take our stand in the Spirit of God and declare, "I am claiming in the name of Jesus a sevenfold return on everything the devil stole from me" (see Proverbs 6:30-31). We can repossess lost ground and demand that our stolen treasures be restored! We must refuse to cast away our confidence in the Word and power of God.

### A Spiritual Breakthrough

We have covered half of the topics outlined in the Lord's Prayer. Now, when we pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name," we should thank God that we can

call Him Father by virtue of the blood of Jesus. We can praise the Lord and appropriate His promises by hallowing the names of God that correspond with the five benefits in the new covenant. We can establish and maintain our priorities as we declare, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." We can pray over ourself, our family, our church, and our nation. And we can pray in what we need each day. We must remember the importance of being in the will of God, believing it is God's will to prosper us, being specific, and being tenacious, for this is how we appropriate and experience God's provision for our daily needs.

Next month, we'll look at the remaining three topics in the Lord's Prayer. In the meantime, if you will begin to practice these things in your daily prayer time, I promise that you will rapidly become an effective prayer warrior. And you'll also find, as I did, that you can easily commune with the Lord for one hour or more. □

### For Further Study

Larry Lea has a seven-tape series, from which this article was taken, called "Could You Not Tarry One Hour?" It's available from Church on the Rock, and comes with a 122-page study guide. To order, send \$35 to Church on the Rock, P.O. Box 880, Rockwall, Texas 75087.



## PROFILE

Larry Lea was seventeen years old when a severe bout with depression caused him to turn his life over to the Lord and commit himself to the gospel ministry. To prepare for this calling, he attended Dallas Baptist College, and received graduate degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and California Graduate School of Theology in Glendale.

For five years, Larry served as minister of youth and evangelism at Beverly

Hills Baptist Church in Dallas, where he launched a concert ministry and a weekly one-hour nationally televised program featuring top contemporary musicians. In 1980, he began the task of building Church on the Rock in Rockwall, Texas; from just thirteen people in those early days, he has seen the church grow to more than seven thousand members.

Larry and his wife, Melva, live in Rockwall with their three children. □



The day God moved a mountain to say

# "Attention, Please"

BY KATHLEEN MILLS

On Sunday, May 19, 1980, Mount St. Helens was majestic and quiet. I was on my way home from the store that morning, where I had picked up some aspirin for my four-year-old son, Chris.

As I crested a small rise not far from our house, just twenty-five miles southwest of St. Helens, I slowed, taking in the beauty of the countryside surrounding the mountain.

Suddenly, the peaceful scene was interrupted by what seemed like a hydrogen bomb exploding. Searing gasses burst from the volcano, and a mushroom cloud of ash exploded upward into the sky. I hit the brakes and stared for a moment at the carnage in front of me. Vegetation, animals, and even people were dying before my eyes. Fortunately, I was not hurt.

Over the past couple of months, local residents had grown accustomed to seeing minor steam and ash eruptions from the volcano. However, we never really took seriously the warnings that were being issued. The government had closed the peak, admitting only scientists to the inner "red" zone, but that didn't keep everyone out. Many made their way up logging trails to circumvent the padlocked roadblocks.

David Johnston, a volcanologist with the Geological Survey, had compared Mount St. Helens to a dynamite keg with a lighted fuse. He was ignored by many and ridiculed by some. And he lived only long enough to see his prophecy fulfilled. As he was exploring the north summit, the mountain came crashing down

on him, and he was listed among the missing.

Hours after the eruption, reports of other fatalities began coming in. Among them was a local legend, Harry Truman, a stubborn old man who publicly refused to leave his home on the mountain.

Safe at home, we alternately listened to newscasts and watched the incredible sight outside. As the ash cloud moved eastward, day was turned into night for much of eastern Washington. The sight of that black caldron of smoke and ash boiling some eleven miles into the sky, lightning flashing through it, was the most awesome sight I had ever witnessed.

Four years have passed since that earthshaking Sunday, and we now live in southern California. I often think of that day, and the warnings that preceded it, because here in our new home the media have warned us again of natural disaster. Scientists have stressed that an earthquake is not a matter of if, but when.

In response to their warnings, one day I cut out several articles telling how best to prepare for this catastrophic earthquake. I methodically went through them, underlining things we needed to do to make our home as safe as possible and placing check marks next to emergency supplies to purchase. I clipped the articles together and set them on the desk in the den, planning to go over them with my family the following weekend. Months later the clippings still sat on the desk.

Then, one day I discovered a poster I had purchased shortly after the eruption of Mount St.



Helens. It showed the exploding volcano and beneath was printed the phrase, "Now that I have your attention...." Suddenly, I realized that I was treating certain things in my spiritual life the same way I had treated the volcano and earthquake warnings. Oh, I had heard the gospel and, of course, believed it. I often gathered my Bible, concordance, study guides—everything I needed—all in a nice, neat pile. I even underlined verses in my Bible as I read!

But how many times had I read a passage, knowing that the Lord was speaking to me about an issue, and then, because correcting the problem seemed inconvenient, "put it on the back burner"? How many times had I despaired over my haphazard prayer life, resolving to change, but always putting it off?

But now, as I stared at the print of that awesome scene, I knew that this time the Lord had gotten my attention. □

*Kathleen Mills is a New Wine reader who lives in Moorpark, California.*



Keeping short accounts is an important lesson

## The Needless Pain of Bearing Grudges

BY DON BASHAM

**E**xperience shows us that there is more than one category of sin. There are what we call gross sins, such as murder, adultery, and thievery, that everyone agrees are bad. But then there are all those not-so-gross, upper-class, respectable sins, which many Christians not only tolerate but even relish. Just as certain physical indulgences are harmful to our health, these respectable sins undermine and eventually destroy our spiritual health—sins such as covetousness, resentment, jealousy, and unforgiveness. Let's talk specifically about unforgiveness.

Years ago, I had a brief but sharp disagreement with a Christian brother over some matters involving a Christian publication. Because apologies were expressed at the time, I forgot the matter until nine years later, when I received a letter from the man. In the letter, he painstakingly recounted every detail of our argument, at first, justifying again his own position, then, almost reluctantly, asking my forgiveness. It was obvious the pain of our encounter was still as sharp for him as the day the argument occurred.

I responded quickly, assuring him of my forgiveness and asking his pardon for my own part in the unpleasant dispute. But I was shocked and grieved to realize he had nursed a needless bitterness for so many years. His

letter implied he had been so bound by his unforgiveness that he had been unable to experience real peace or joy in his life since our quarrel. I found myself praying for him that God would "restore the years the locust had eaten."

From years of counseling, I've come to see that most troubled people gravely underestimate the destructive power of unforgiveness, and fail to see the healing, redemptive power of forgiveness as well. Both facts may explain why forgiveness is not an elective course in the curriculum of Christian living; it is required. We are commanded to forgive. It is such an essential virtue that God deliberately links it to the grace we seek and expect for ourselves. Thus, every time we withhold forgiveness from others, we endanger our own relationship with the Lord.

After teaching that we must forgive others just as the Lord has forgiven us, Jesus adds this sober warning:

"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Mt. 6:14-15 NIV).

Too often we plod through life, day by day nursing hurts and grievances that not only strain

our relationship with God and alienate us from those we love, but also may radically, sometimes fatally, affect our health. I remember a prominent minister in a large city who became bitterly offended at another minister friend, simply because they disagreed in certain matters of Christian doctrine and practice. When he contracted cancer, some of his closest friends felt his bitterness not only contributed to the onset of the disease, but was also a hindrance to his recovery. During his illness, they repeatedly pled with him to forgive his friend and seek reconciliation. He stubbornly refused and died in his bitterness.

This may be a good time for a quick examination of our own relationships to determine if all of them are healthy. If we find names that seem to make us angry or uncomfortable, forgiveness may be called for. Forgiveness is a precious commodity, but we don't have to hoard it. Rather, we should squander it, spreading it as far and wide as we are able.

Life is much too short, and love much too precious for us to spend our days feeding grudges and nursing grievances. Imagine what glorious healing the whole body of Christ would experience if all the Christians who currently harbor bitterness and unforgiveness against friends and family would obey God's Word and forgive as He has forgiven them. As Christians, we desperately need to learn how to "keep short accounts." At least, that's the way I see it. □



Don Basham is chief editorial consultant for New Wine.



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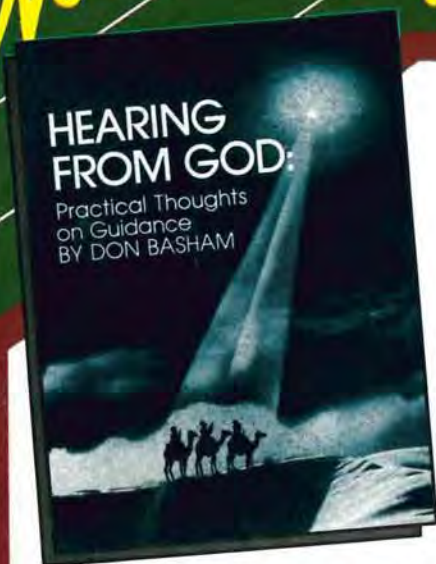
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