

Magazine **New Wine**

August 1986 \$1.95



SEEKING GOD... AND FINDING HIM

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How to pray effectively

BOB MUMFORD:

When God hides from us

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Getting congressmen to pray

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CONTENTS

Seeking God

8 GOD IS NOT A FIRE ESCAPE!

An interview with Ern Baxter

11 EARTHSHAKING PRAYER

by Derek Prince
How to petition God effectively

17 "THE SPIRIT IS WILLING, BUT..."

by C. J. Mahaney
Seven steps to self-control

20 WHEN THE HEAVENS TURN TO BRASS

by Bob Mumford
If you think God is hiding from you, it may be true!

24 INTERCESSORS FOR AMERICA

by Gary Bergel
Calling Christians to unite in prayer and fasting

28 CONGRESSMEN SEEK GOD

Challenging spiritual strongholds through prayer

32 FROM THE INSIDE OUT

by Bruce Longstreth
Preparing our hearts to do the will of God

Feature

38 THE STORY BEHIND THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION

by Howard Carter
A special report

Vol. 18, No. 8, August 1986

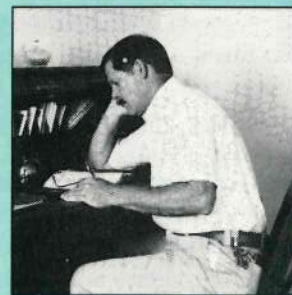


17. C. J. Mahaney offers seven tips for overcoming a lack of self-control.



38. Howard Carter tells us what the media didn't about the Philippines.

8. Ern Baxter says that the Lord must be more than a fire escape for us.



20. In his article, Bob Mumford looks at why God sometimes hides from us.



Departments

- 2 EDITORIAL—Seeking God
- 4 LETTERS
- 6 DID YOU KNOW?—Answers to prayer
- 27 PRAYER AND FASTING
- 36 THE WORD—The judges of Israel
- 37 BOOK REVIEWS
- 41 WASHINGTON WATCH—A presidential poll
- 42 FATHERGRAM—"Optimism potential"
- 44 THE WAY I SEE IT—Keep it simple

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EDITORIAL

The importance of waiting for the Lord

Seeking God

by Bruce Longstreth

I heard a story once about a woman who read in the Scriptures that faith could move mountains. The verse fit her need to a T, and she decided to claim it as God's promise to her that He would remove a huge mound of dirt from her yard that blocked her picture window view of the ocean.

Nothing immediately happened to the mound of dirt when she prayed. And when she got up early the next day and looked out her window, the mound was still there. Seeing the situation unchanged, she turned sadly away from the window, mumbling, "I just knew He wouldn't do it."

But that's not the end of the story. A week later, some earth-moving equipment transferred the mound of dirt to a construction site nearby. God had moved her mountain!

I'm not sure whether the story is true or not, but it illustrates a common failure among those who are determined to seek the Lord: the failure of waiting for the mountain to move instead of waiting for the Lord, who is able to move mountains.

A second failure of God seekers is illustrated by a man I met several years ago. He was quite proud of his new ski boat, and he told me all about it: how fast it could go, the number of skiers it could pull, and all the safety features and extras that came with it. As he finished his sales pitch, he said, "The Lord gave me this ski boat to minister to young people."

He was a sincere man who fully intended to use the boat for the Lord's work. But I couldn't resist asking him, "What did He look like?"

He looked at me. "What did who look like?"

"The Lord," I said. "I just wondered if you got a good look at Him when He delivered the ski boat."

The man probably figured he had run into a real weirdo. But he did what many Christians do when they "seek the Lord": He settled for answers and gifts but never got a good look at the One who brought them.

The Psalm writer says, "I waited patiently for the Lord" (Ps. 40:1). The Hebrew translation says, "Waiting, I waited." In other places, that phrase is translated "hopefully wait," "expectantly wait," and "look eagerly." The Psalm continues:

He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand (Ps. 40:1-2 NIV).

He had been in scrapes before. He had faced the enemy before, but it was always his God who saved him. In the slime pit he didn't wait for a ladder, rope, or other help. He waited for the Lord—the One who was able to do exceeding abundantly above all he could ask or think.

Waiting for the Lord to move in our situation gives us the opportunity to get to know Him. If we wait merely on answers, our emotions rise or fall depending on how quickly He responds to our request. As we wait on Him, the Spirit reveals the Father's heart and the things He has in store for us. When the Father's intervention becomes evident for all to see, we don't say,

"Well, what do you know about that?" but, "Isn't that just like my heavenly Father?" We got to know Him while we waited.

Seeking the Lord is the focus for this month's issue. Ern Baxter discusses how the crises of our lives strengthen our resolve to pursue God until He hears and answers. Derek Prince next gives practical hints for effective prayer, and C. J. Mahaney helps us overcome what often keeps us from praying—lack of self-control.

Does God sometimes hide from us? Bob Mumford thinks so and confronts us with the reasons why. He says that the Lord is sometimes unable to give us what He wants to because we are too immature to steward it properly.

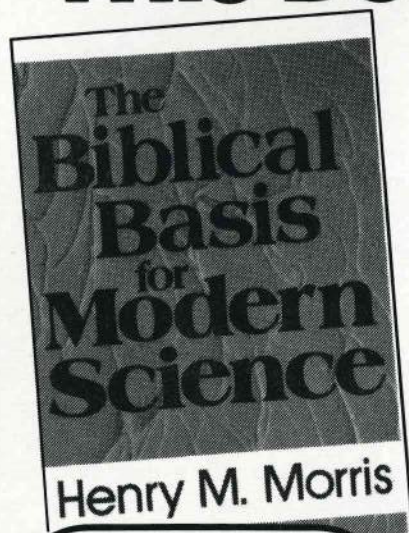
Next, Gary Bergel of Intercessors for America talks about the importance of praying for our country and shares some of the exciting answers to prayer for the United States that his group has seen. In an interview, Representative Mark Siljander (R-Mich.) then tells how congressmen are beginning to meet together for prayer in our nation's capital.

Finally, I bring the theme of the issue to a close by explaining how we can prepare our hearts to seek the Lord.

What the Church needs today are eager seekers—men and women who wait for God, watching with the eye of faith until they receive both the giver and the gifts He brings to accomplish His eternal purpose on the earth. □

Bruce Longstreth is editor of *New Wine*.

FOR SERIOUS CHRISTIANS, THIS BOOK CRIED OUT TO BE WRITTEN



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Dr. Morris has served for 28 years on the faculties of major universities — including 13 years as chairman of the Civil Engineering Department of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He is the president of the Institute for Creation Research.

So isn't this book heavy going for the nonscientist? Again, our editor:

"The book is a mass of scientific exposition and evidences, but so clearly written and well arranged visually that it held the attention of even a layman with minimal scientific background like myself."

As for the theological position of Dr. Morris, our editor writes:

"Basically evangelical Protestant, but I think there's very little that's not fully consonant with conservative Catholic teaching. As a matter of fact, I found much of his thinking and even his style reminiscent of Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*. You could say Morris' overall argument almost parallels Chesterton's, with the addition of technical references!"

We quote from the editorial report that prompted us to select this book for the Conservative Book Club:

"Any honest believer will admit that he has often found himself facing uncomfortable difficulties and dilemmas when confronted by the pronouncements of scientists (genuine or pseudo) on matters that concern controversial Biblical passages involving scientific areas. We search for explanations, but too often come up with weak ones that don't even convince us."

This book should help straighten us out. Henry Morris brings together those key Biblical insights and instructions related to all the natural sciences. In his own words:

'Whenever a Biblical passage deals either with a broad scientific principle or with some particular items of scientific data, it will inevitably be found on careful study to be fully accurate in its scientific insights. Often it will be found even to have anticipated scientific discoveries.'

A large order, but I think Morris fills it admirably in what can only be called a monumental volume. The main thrust of the book is to reassure theists of the validity of the Scriptures not only as a guide to living but as an explanation of the facts of the natural sciences, of mankind, and of the world around us. *It may well be the means of liberating a reader from long-time doubts and give him ammunition for confrontations with the scoffers."*

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- ✓ "Miracles and the Laws of Nature."

- ✓ Problems with the "big bang" theory. Other modern theories of creation and solar system that don't hold up — even on scientific grounds.
- ✓ "Fossils and the Flood": new findings that strengthen the old arguments for Genesis.

One publication that would be unsparing if Dr. Morris failed to do justice to the case for inerrancy is *The Biblical Evangelist*. So its review carries great weight:

"Morris . . . is the man to whom Biblical Christianity probably owes more in answering the pseudo-science of evolution than to any other. . . . The average reader will be amazed that the Bible and science are so inter-related."

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New Wine Magazine seeks to promote the unity and maturity of the Church and individual Christians 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.)

Advertising in *New Wine* does not necessarily imply endorsement by the board of directors or the magazine staff.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hitting Where It Hurts

I was very impressed by the articles on our words and the power they possess (June). I have read Charles Capps's book *The Tongue: A Creative Force*, and very much agree with the way you put the whole series of articles together. I believe you are hitting where it hurts and that more Christians must realize the powers we possess through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Steve Melroy
Chadron, NE

An Unbalanced Walk

Thanks for the articles in the June issue on "positive confession." Those of us in the "faith message" that are striving for a *balanced* walk with the Lord appreciate your concern, but six out of seven articles plus an editorial are *too much*.

Carolyn Cowart
Jacksonville, NC

Learning to Forgive

The interview with Lewis Smedes ("Forgive and Forget," May) was great. My wife was going through a very trying time and just like *New Wine Magazine*, you had an article to minister to her. She received the help, strength, and godly counsel she needed to make the right decision.

Continue to hear from the Lord for His children's sake. We need you.

Name withheld

The First Step

I want to express my appreciation to Don Basham for his openness of heart and honesty ("When God Calls You!" April).

I have been in the pastorate for more than twenty-six years now and have many times been faced with the same fears, doubts, and frustrations. I pastored small congregations, and worked for the Missouri State Highway and Transportation Department until last

year. I resigned my job ten years short of retirement because God was calling me to step out in faith into full-time pastorate.

In my own struggle, I too finally came to see that if I insisted on waiting until all my doubts were resolved, I could wait forever and never do anything significant for the Lord. Neither did my conclusion come easily. Before resigning from my job, I too prayed long and earnestly and spent many sleepless nights. And over and over, I too heard a quiet voice answering somewhere deep in my Spirit, "You step out and I'll show you." It was then that I began to realize that God seldom calls us to take a task that we can perform acceptably without Him.

Can we ever be absolutely sure—ahead of time—that we are doing the right thing? I especially appreciated Brother Basham's answer: "I don't think so." And what if we do miss God? Of course, there's always that possibility. But if we do make the wrong first step, He's always there to help us to take the right second step.

In retrospect, it has become my conviction too that when—with fear and trembling and an honest heart—I faced my hindrances, doubts, and fears, and found sufficient courage in God to step out in faith despite them, I made God more directly responsible for me than I had ever let Him be before. And to my great joy, He is always there to accept that added responsibility and pour His blessings upon us.

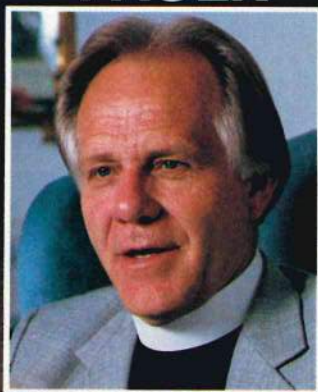
These past six months have been the greatest and fullest of my entire life and ministry, and I believe that if Jesus tarries the best is yet to come.

Pastor Billy Anderson
Salem, MO

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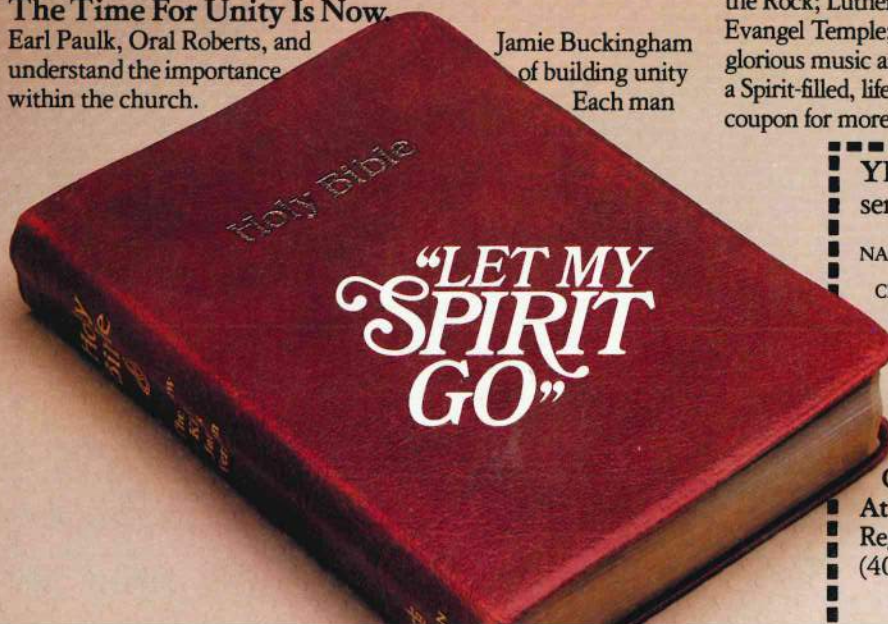
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DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that *New Wine* is praying for you?

Each month we receive prayer requests from hundreds of our readers around the world—and each month we pray for those readers by name. Our staff is divided into five prayer groups, one of which meets each morning. Here is just one of the many responses we've received as we've joined our readers in prayer:

This is a praise report to God's glory in answer to your staff's prayers about healing my relationship with my dad. Bless God, He has healed big time!...I had always held it against Dad that we never had a real relationship, and in the past few weeks I came to see my sin of judgment against Dad, thus dishonoring him. I repented and asked God to teach me how not to judge Dad or anyone, yet not be unrealistic about who they are....I knew I'd changed some toward Dad, but I didn't realize how much until the last morning of my recent visit. When I got in my car to leave, I started crying. I *never* cried over leaving Dad in my life! The Lord then opened my eyes and my heart, and showed me that I really loved my dad. No matter what he did, no matter if he never changed, *I love my dad*. All thirty-six years of anger and bitterness are gone!

New Wine is more than just a magazine. We're a ministry, here to serve your needs. If you'd like us to pray for you, just let us know. It would be an honor to stand with you in prayer, and we thought you'd like to know. □

WAR PLANS

Three months ago the issue you hold in your hands had an entirely different theme: how to be strong in spiritual warfare. With just a few weeks to go before deadline, however, the board of directors and the *New Wine* staff met for our regular monthly meeting. Our time together was fraught with spiritual warfare, and we sensed there was a battle raging in the heavens as we reviewed the themes of future issues.

One thing became clear: God did not want us to write about how to wage spiritual warfare until we wrote about how to prepare for it. Of course, we all face daily battles against the enemy, but God is calling His Church to attack fortresses of darkness. Satan would have us march headlong into these battles without being ready so that he could easily defeat us. But the Lord wants

us to be prepared.

A prepared Church that actively tears down satanic strongholds is the focus of this and the next four issues of *New Wine*. This month we learn how to seek God and find Him. In September, we'll see how to pursue the goals, purposes, and battle plans He gives us. Then, in October, we see the Church as the army of God. In November, we present "Where in the World Is the Church Going?"—a victorious eschatology for believers. And finally, in December, we focus on the implications of the incarnation, as the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God.

We hope you'll stay with us these next months as we learn how to become mighty warriors of God, and we look forward to hearing from you about the victories you experience on the battlefield. □





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GOD IS NOT A

Ern Baxter on the importance of c

Ern Baxter, a member of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors, has been in ministry for more than fifty years, and through that time the Lord has taught him many important lessons about seeking Him. In this interview, Ern discusses some of those lessons.

New Wine: How can people be motivated to seek the Lord?

Ern Baxter: Two things motivate us to seek the Lord: crises that come into our lives, and also what I call process, which is our growing, maturing relationship with the Lord. When we talk about seeking the

Lord, it's difficult to completely separate the two. A person must have some kind of rapport with God to begin with. Most of the men in the Bible who came into times of crisis did so out of the process of their relationship with God. The crisis was an interruption, a confrontation or course change, in the flow of



FIRE ESCAPE!

of a day-by-day walk with the Lord

their lives.

Seeking God is more than a matter of prayer or intercession. It's a combination of *watching* and praying to heighten our sensitivity to what's going on. Hidden in whatever is going on is a clue to what the crisis is about. Prayer without watching is only half the solution, and watching without prayer gives you a nervous breakdown.

When we seek the Lord, we also need a good dose of patience. On one occasion I experienced a crisis that indicated a significant change was about to take place in my life; one of the many course corrections that have taken place because of the nature of my calling. I was convinced that God was in the change, yet the circumstances surrounding it seemed to drag on and I got impatient.

One morning as I was driving to church by myself I blurted out, "God, why don't You listen to me? How long am I going to drag on here? Let me get this change over with."

He just shot back like lightning, "Why don't you listen to *Me*?"

I knew instantly what He meant. We constantly ask God for things. We pray to Him. But there's a sense in which He prays, or speaks to, us.

NW: Does the Lord allow situations to come into our lives to intensify our fellowship with Him?

EB: Yes, and the Lord Himself is the best example of that. The Bible tells us He did always those things that pleased the Father. But He was constantly facing crises; the greatest were the betrayal, the trial, and the cross. In all of those, He was very much in the Father's pres-

ence in prayer. Hebrews 5:7 says, "In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying." In several crises, He cried unto the Father out of His humanity. Crises were simply part of the process of His relationship to His Father.

Life consists of process and crisis. A marriage relationship is a good example. A couple will go along for a time and then they encounter a crisis, large or small. Eventually that crisis passes and they settle down, go along for a time, and then hit another crisis. They probably won't handle the crisis well if they're not handling the relational process well.

NW: Do some people go from crisis to crisis without a sense of the process, always in or out of a panic?

EB: Yes, that's true. Once I was close to a young man in my church, but he was weak. He'd walk with God enthusiastically, but then he'd start to wane and he'd lose his job or experience some other disturbing reversal. It was a pattern. Each time he would come to me sheepishly and say, "Well, Pastor, I guess I blew it again. I lost my job."

I'd say, "Okay, let's pray and get this straightened out."

He would get fixed up, find another job, and be fine, ready to go to the ends of the earth. But it was as if he used God in crises and forgot Him in the process.

One evening he came to me to say good-bye. He was leaving his wife for another woman, and there was nothing I could say to dissuade him. We wept together, and he was gone; it was obvious he had made up his mind.

I never did hear from him again, but about three years later I was listening to my car radio and I heard that this man had been found dead in the water alongside his boat. I immediately pulled off the road, found the nearest pay phone, and called his ex-wife. "Is he the man they found?" I asked.

And sadly, he was. Here was a man who used God in crisis. I'm not pronouncing judgment on his spiritual condition, but rather pointing out a principle. God is not a fire escape; He's someone you live with. Romans 7:4 says, "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another...that we should bring forth fruit." Again, our relationship to God is like a marriage, which is both crisis and process. But it's a relationship that you either handle or mishandle.

NW: Does God allow the crises to come into the process to strengthen our relationship with Him?

EB: Yes, and Job is a great illustration of this principle. God tested his faith, and God tests our faith as well. But how He tests it is up to Him. That's one of His prerogatives. If He didn't test us, we'd never grow. Remember the first step you saw your child take? If there wasn't a first one, he'd never walk.

NW: Do you think that many times God allows crises in our lives to sharpen our hearing?

EB: That's right. Often when we're praying we rush in and tell God a list of things, walk out, and slam the door. We don't even have the courtesy to find out if He would

like to say something. Our amen may not be God's amen.

NW: How do you handle the crises that come?

EB: The circumstances in which you are directly or indirectly involved are always changing. In my life, for example, the death of my first wife was a severe jolt. That's not a daily crisis; something like that happens maybe once in a lifetime. But whether it's a death, a financial reverse, or an accident, we can handle it if our relationship with God is based on a process rather than crisis.

NW: It might be helpful to hear how you faced the change in your relationship with William Branham, whom you ministered with for some time.

EB: In the ministry with William Branham, I saw a dimension of the supernatural that had in it such seeds of Christian unity and other good fruits that my excitement was hard to contain. But when I saw carnality start to invade the movement—exaggeration, misrepresentation, metaphysics, and eventually the breakdown of many of the healers in critical areas of their lives because they couldn't handle the crowds, the popularity, or the money—I had to withdraw from it. That probably was one of the most traumatic times in my life. I did a lot of praying at that time, a lot of groaning. In fact, I did a lot of screaming because I was close to an emotional breakdown. A tremendous move of God had been sold out so cheaply; it was difficult to handle. If I hadn't had an experience with God, if I hadn't had a consciousness of His sovereignty, if I hadn't had some kind of a relationship with God based on process, I don't know what I would have done.

I had maintained the pastoral oversight of my church while working with Branham, and I went back

and gave myself totally to that. I was now pastoring a church, whereas before I had been with thousands of people in city-shaking meetings. It was quite a shock. I would go to my study, get down on the floor, and just groan. I'd talk to God, and just wait. I couldn't do anything else. If it were not for my relationship with God, I could have taken the extreme position that Christianity was a "bunch of bunk." But I couldn't do that,



Seeking God is more than a matter of prayer or intercession.

because it wasn't a matter of Christianity; it wasn't a matter of the healers; it was a matter of who was the most important person in this, and that was God. God wasn't bunk to me. I knew that. I knew God, and I knew where God was.

NW: What did that experience work in your life?

EB: Romans 5:3-4 says, "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope."

Tribulation means "pressure." God lets pressures come into our lives so that we get experience. There's nothing like experience.

I once heard a story about a man who lived on a hog farm all his life, raising hogs and doing a good job of it. He learned it from his dad. But one day he decided his boy wasn't going to learn hog farming by trial and error as he did; he was going to go to an agricultural college and learn how to be a smart farmer.

So off his son went, and after graduation he came back to the farm and his dad told him to go ahead and make some improvements. The boy did and the pigs began to die.

Suddenly the father realized that his son had built a fancy new operation, but forgot to put proper ventilation in it. So the old man tore it all down and built what he had before.

It takes a lot more than a degree in college to learn the facts of life. Because of his experience, the old man really ought to have been a lecturer at the college.

NW: Without your experience, you wouldn't have the relationship that you now have with the Lord, would you?

EB: Right. A word that is missing from our vocabulary today is *endurance*. Hebrews 12:6 says, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." If you endure chastening, then He deals with you as a son—if you endure chastening. It's not necessarily punishment; it can be instruction. To endure means to wade through until it's done. That's where patience comes in.

A lot of Christians live from crisis to crisis, and wonder why their crises are so hard. It's because they don't develop a process. All God is saying in a crisis is that if you move in close to Him and develop a process, you might not need all those crises. □



Earthshaking Prayer

How to petition God effectively

by Derek Prince

One of the questions I am asked most frequently is how Christians can deepen and strengthen their prayer life. Over the years I have learned some helpful lessons in the school of prayer, and I would like to share some basic principles and practices of

prayer that I have found to work in my own life. Let me say emphatically from the beginning that I am not offering a pattern for everyone to follow: These are simply some examples of principles that others might wish to apply in prayer.

The first thing we need to empha-

size is the importance of our agreeing together when we pray. In Matthew 18:19 Jesus said:

"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for

them of my Father which is in heaven."

In the same context He also says, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (v. 18). Here Jesus is speaking about the exercise of spiritual authority in the realm of prayer. It seems to me that one of the conditions He is laying down is that we pray on the basis of agreement. The Greek word translated "agree" here is the source of our English word *symphony*. It does not mean merely intellectual agreement; it means a spiritual harmony of two or more people. These people may be a family, a small prayer group, or even a whole church.

One important opportunity for such harmonizing is the prayer of a husband and wife who are both

that their prayers will not be hindered. I think that many married couples are not sufficiently careful to avoid letting irritations and frustrations spoil their spiritual harmony. As a result, their prayer life is crippled. For that reason, married couples must guard their harmony carefully, because the devil knows our strength is in our harmony. Once a husband and wife start praying together and become effective in prayer, he will use all sorts of silly, insignificant issues to cause disagreements. He knows that two people praying together do not merely double the effectiveness of prayer—they probably increase its effectiveness at least one hundred times.

A Prayer List

Another question often asked me is, "How can we be disciplined or systematic in our prayers?" Although

the prayers that have been answered.

My wife, Ruth, and I nearly always make a prayer list on a day when we are fasting. Because we take this responsibility very seriously, we may even spend a whole day making our prayer list. What we choose to pray about and how we decide to pray about it are some of the most vital issues in prayer. Prayer is not a way of twisting God's arm or getting God to do things that He doesn't want to do. Prayer is a way for us to become an instrument for God to do what He wants, and if we fail to approach it that way, we will run into many frustrations.

Usually we set aside a specific time to make a prayer list for a specific season. Then we divide our concerns into several categories. First of all we pray for our personal lives and ministry. Second, we pray for our family, and in our case that is a very large category to cover because the members of our family today number more than eighty. Third, we pray for those leaders and fellowships that God has in some special way joined with our lives and that have a special place in our ministry. Next we pray for Israel and the Middle East, because we feel we have a special God-given responsibility for that area of the earth. (Of course, we do not all have the same sphere of responsibility. Not everyone will be praying for the same areas.) Then as American citizens we believe that it is our duty to pray for our government and our nation. Finally, we have one last category that covers all the remaining areas of concern.

Normally we don't try to pray about all the items in every category on the prayer list in one day; rather, we tend to take a certain day to pray about a certain category. One day it might be our family; another day it might be Israel and the Middle East. On the first Friday of each month, which is the day set apart by Intercessors for America and other groups for fasting and prayer, we always try to fast at least part of the day and to focus our prayers



Agreeing together with my wife in prayer has been the greatest underlying strength of my ministry.

believers. I think it is a very poor use of resources not to harness the power of agreement between husband and wife in prayer. Agreeing together with my wife in prayer has been, I believe, the greatest underlying strength of my ministry.

In 1 Peter chapter 3, the apostle writes to husbands and tells them how to relate to their wives so

that is obviously a very important question, there is no easy or quick answer. I would just suggest that one effective way to develop discipline in prayer is to make a prayer list and maintain it. Then from time to time it is good either to update the list or to make a new list. When updating the prayer list it is very important to take time to indicate

on the United States.

Spontaneity in Prayer

We feel it is important that we combine the system and regularity of a prayer agenda with some degree of spontaneity so that we are not going to God with a "shopping list." There are various ways we can maintain spontaneity in prayer. First of all, we always try to take the time at the beginning of our prayer for worship. This time may not be lengthy, but without worship, prayer is really incomplete. Sometimes when we decide that we are going to pray, we even end up spending all our time in worship.

Another way we cultivate spontaneity is to try to take a day of Sabbath rest in our prayer lives every week. That does not always work, but it is a basic principle we try to follow. On that day we usually refrain from focusing on petitions and prayer warfare. Instead we spend more time just enjoying God, thanking, praising, and worshipping Him.

Still another way we are spontaneous in our prayer is in allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us into focusing on one particular concern on our prayer list when He chooses to do so. For instance, we may come to one item on the list and feel a strong impulse from the Spirit to spend some time on that item. At other times we may come to the name of a family member and the Spirit will give us prayer in an unknown tongue. We try to be sensitive so that we do not let our prayer list dictate to the Holy Spirit, but rather let the Holy Spirit use the list in whatever way He wants.

The next matter we should examine closely is spiritual warfare in prayer. I think we need to be very careful about the situations in which we launch out in what I would call offensive praying—that is, attacking satanic strongholds with spiritual weapons and seeking to bring them down. We certainly need to understand and practice that kind of prayer, but I do not think it is

appropriate for every person in every situation.

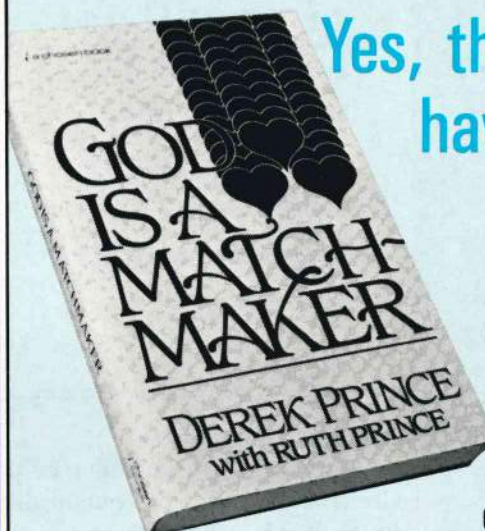
I believe it is very important that when we launch out into spiritual warfare, we are fully covered by spiritual authority, and rightly related to other Christians. We cannot be like Don Quixote, going out alone to fight windmills; we must be part of a disciplined group of "prayer warriors." I believe it is of tremendous importance to build up such

groups so that we may launch out into more effective offensives against Satan and his strongholds.

Handling Distractions

Another very important question that is often raised in regard to praying systematically and with discipline is how to handle distractions. I have a few suggestions to make in this matter. First of all, one of the major distractions of modern

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life is the telephone. If we do not learn how to handle the telephone and keep it from interrupting us, I think our prayer life will always be somewhat ineffective.

A second kind of distraction is wandering thoughts. I think there are few of us who do not at some time or another face that problem. We want to pray about Aunt Sue,


nearer to getting somewhere than we ever were. The devil knows it, and he knows that if he does not stop us immediately at this point, then we are going to be successful in our attack. So he dispatches his demons of discouragement to tell us all sorts of lies. For that reason we must learn to press through.

persevere; we will give up just when it is most important that we do not.

This principle is especially true in prayer. I believe that if we could look into the unseen realms when we join in agreement with our fellow believers to pray in the will of God about a matter of great spiritual importance, we would see that we are throwing the forces of Satan into consternation. We would find that they are actually terrified, and that their reaction is, "Stop those people from praying, or our kingdom is going to suffer a major defeat." So we have to learn how to press through these moments when the enemy causes physical and mental reactions to disturb us, because those are some of the most critical moments in prayer. When these pressures come against us, they are almost always an indication that we are praying a prayer that really matters. We are threatening Satan's kingdom, and this harassment is one of his favorite ways to stop us.

Sometimes when we feel that we have tremendous faith, that we are flexing our "faith muscles" and so are satisfied with our spiritual power, then we are probably accomplishing very little. I doubt whether real faith is being exercised at that point, because the Bible says that real faith is always accompanied by real humility. At other times, however, we may think, *I don't know how I'm holding on; all I have left is my commitment to pray this prayer.* But when we come to that point and yet we go on praying anyway, that is the time we demonstrate real faith.

The devil may try to bring physical infirmity on us so that we will say, "Well, I can't pray about Israel any longer because I've got to pray about my stomachache." But don't give way! We can pray about our stomachache, but we shouldn't stop praying about Israel if that is what God has laid on our heart to pray about. I do not know of any greater test of character than praying, because the person who perseveres



**I wonder
whether when
eternity
comes some
of us will not
regret that
we did not
spend more
time in
prayer while
on earth.**

and we end up wondering about what the wife is going to make for supper. Then poor Aunt Sue does not get the prayer she needs so desperately.

I believe that the prayer list is a wonderful source of help in this matter, because it is objective. If our minds start wandering, we can go back to the prayer list.

A third kind of distraction we need to take into account is what I call spiritual harassment. Sometimes moods of depression settle on us or words from the enemy bombard our mind. Doubts may enter our thoughts, such as, *What's the use of praying anyhow? I'm not getting anywhere.* So one of the things we must do is recognize the voice of the devil in our doubts. When the devil is injecting into our minds the thought, *I'm not getting anywhere*, that is probably when we are much

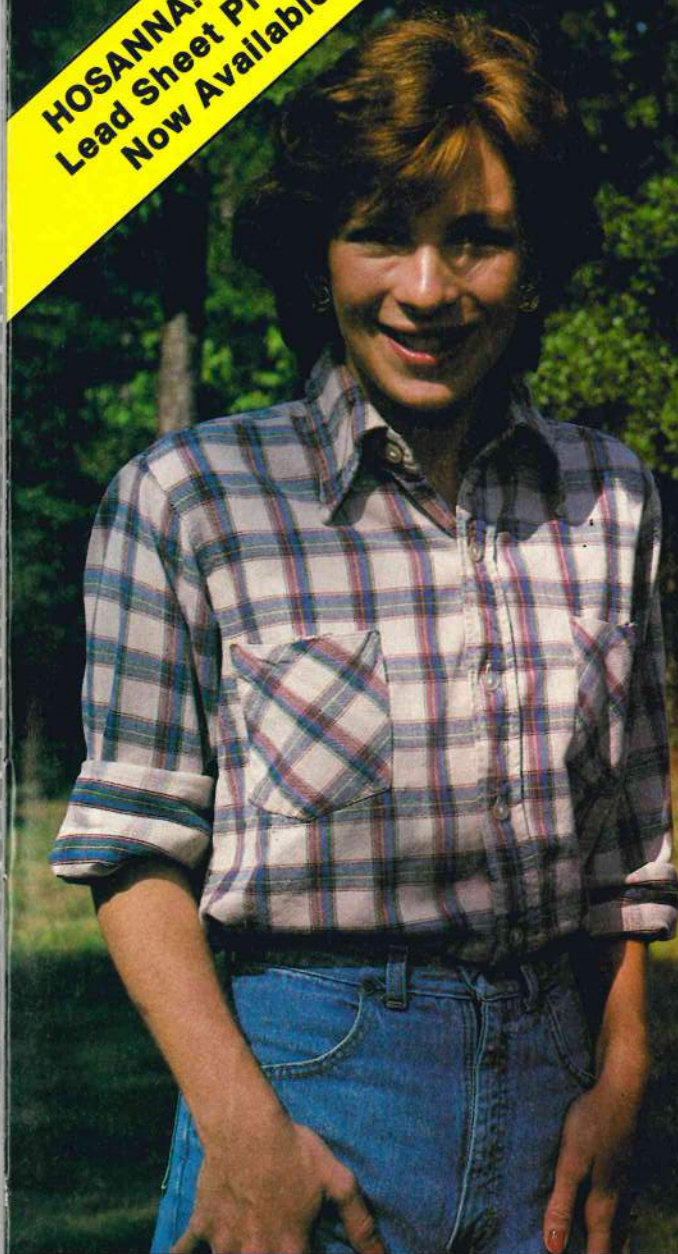
Learning Self-control

Two character qualities in the Christian life that are emphasized in Scripture are self-control and perseverance. Whenever we read a list in the New Testament of steps toward spiritual progress, we nearly always find somewhere in the middle of them these two qualities. I believe they are there because without them we cannot make progress. If we do not learn to control ourselves (and I am not talking so much about our bodily desires as our soulish reactions), if we do not learn to resist depression or irritation, then the devil can always stop us. One of the most conspicuous characteristics of teenagers is that they are often totally ruled by their moods. Until a person can rule his moods, he is not mature; he is still spiritually a teenager. And if we cannot rule our moods and our appetites, we will not be able to

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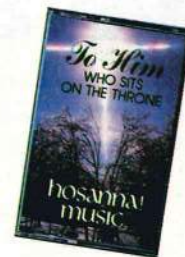
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in prayer is a person of real fiber. If we have not learned discipline, persistence, and faithfulness in prayer, we need to face the fact that somewhere there is a weakness in our character. Perhaps much of the difficulty God is putting us through is His way of pointing out that weakness and getting us to deal with it.

Shaking the Earth

I am convinced that we cannot fully measure the significance of what prayer does. It is something that we will only understand completely in eternity, and I wonder whether when eternity comes some of us will not regret that we did not spend more time in prayer while we were here on earth. As I consider the significance of prayer, one particular passage of Scripture is especially vivid to me. In Revelation 8:1-5, John describes a scene in

and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake (NIV).

There are many ways of interpreting that passage, but this is how I understand it:

First, why was there silence in heaven? My personal thinking is that there was silence in heaven because those in heaven were waiting to hear the prayers of God's saints on earth. It blesses me to think that when God's saints on

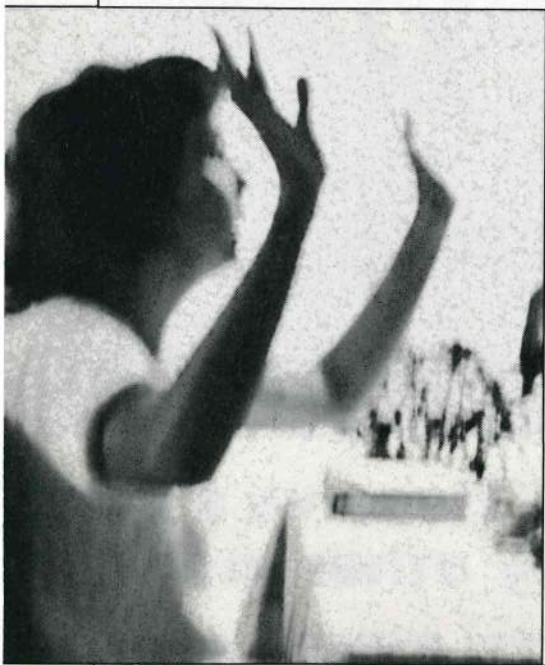
"much incense"—that is, worship.

After the prayers came up to God, the angel took the censer that was in his hand, filled it with live coals from the altar, and hurled them on the earth. The response on earth was peals of thunder, rumbling, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. That to me is what happens when God's people pray: Their prayer goes up before God, and God answers, as it were, by taking the coals of their prayers and casting them on earth. And that certainly changes things on earth!

Sometimes the answer to our prayers is not smooth and peaceful, but rather catastrophic. For that reason we need to see that such shaking is one of the ways in which God answers the prayers of His people. Much of the disturbance on earth today I believe is caused by the prayers of God's people. God is shaking many things that He opposes—He is shaking political and economic systems, dynasties, and nations.

As God's people are praying, the coals of their prayers with the incense of worship are being thrown down upon the earth to bring about the changes for which we pray. If we can fix in our minds that picture of God's response to our prayers, I believe that we will be encouraged to seek Him daily and to pray more earnestly that His will be done on the earth. □

This article appeared in the February 1983 issue of New Wine.



Much disturbance on earth today is caused by the prayers of God's people. God is shaking many things that He opposes.

heaven in which the Lamb is opening the seven seals of the scroll:

When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Another angel, who had a gold censer, came

earth are praying in earnest, heaven becomes silent to listen to their prayers.

Next we read that the prayers had to be offered up before God mixed with incense. To me incense is always a symbol of worship. I believe that if our prayers are to ascend to God and be acceptable to Him, we must mix them with



Derek Prince has a radio program, Today With Derek Prince, that is aired worldwide. He and his wife, Ruth, minister in Israel and Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

"The Spirit Is Willing, But..."

Seven steps to self-control
by C. J. Mahaney



What's my problem with prayer, Lord?" I called out to God because I was discouraged about my inability to pray consistently. I expected a profound, theological answer. Instead He told me, "You don't do it."

Startled by this unexpected, simple insight, I blundered on, "Why don't I do it, Lord?"

"You're lazy."

That too was not what I expected to hear! Yet I knew it was true. My inconsistent prayer life did not

stem from a lack of desire, inspiration, or instruction, but from a lack of self-discipline. God had revealed the root problem, and I had to take responsibility for it—no more excuses or blame shifting. Once I could clearly see what hindered me then I could begin to take the necessary steps to change.

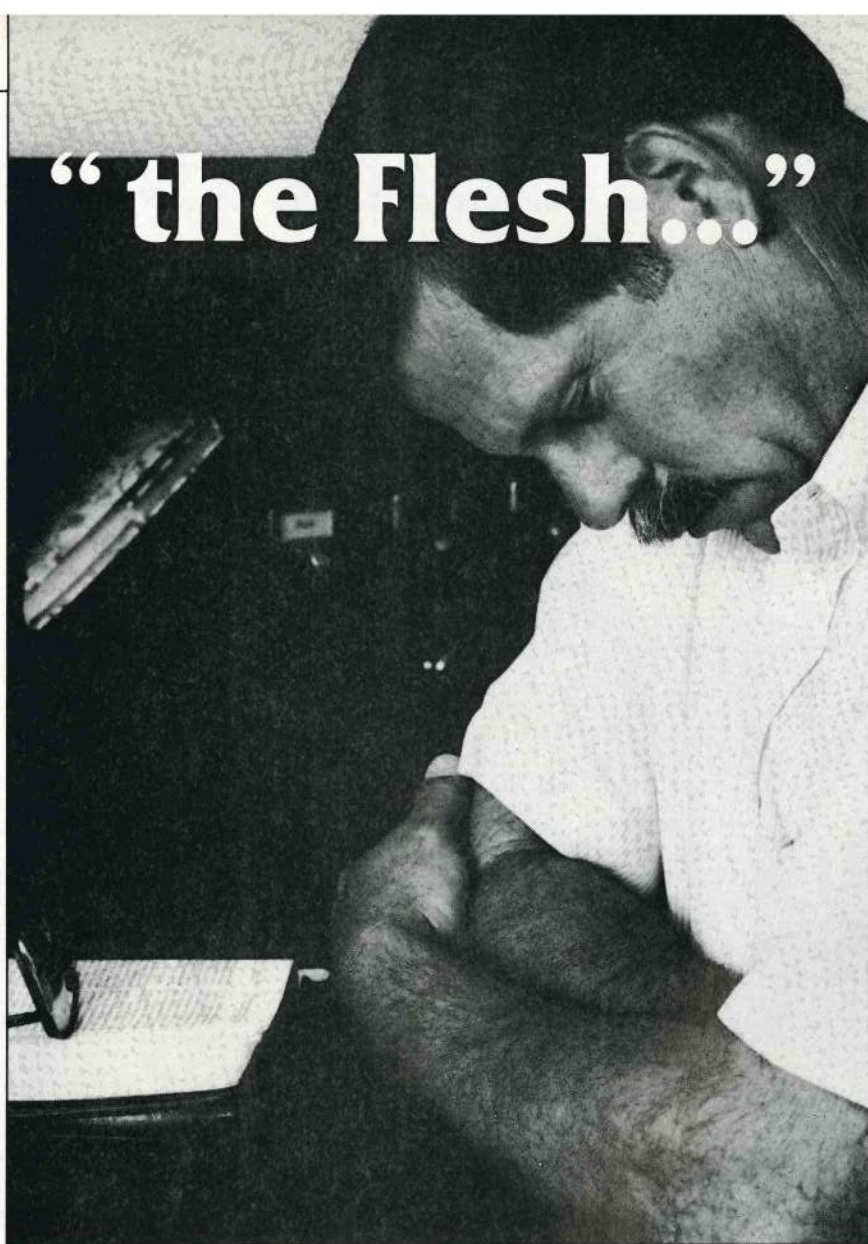
The Scripture says, "Be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray" (1 Pet. 4:7 NIV), and I saw that without self-control I could never grow in consistent, effective prayer—or in any other

aspect of my Christian life. But self-control was an unfamiliar spiritual concept to me. It was not something I underlined in my Bible. In fact, for me and probably many others, self-control is the least referred to fruit of the Spirit. Yet without developing that character quality we never completely mature or fulfil God's call on our lives.

Hearers and Doers

The Bible says we are to be hearers and doers of the Word; hearing without obeying God's Word

"the Flesh..."



leaves us discouraged and deceived. But too many of us don't know how to translate our desire to obey into faith, power, and character. We hear great teaching and feel tremendously motivated but see so little change. After a while we fulfil the proverb, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Pr. 13:12 NAS). We no longer rise in faith as we hear God's Word. *Why try again?* we reason. *It doesn't deliver as advertised.*

Jesus said to the disciples who had fallen asleep at a prayer meeting, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mk. 14:38 NAS). Every believer wants to do the will of God. Although the devil often whispers to us, "You don't desire God's will," that's a lie. The spirit is willing. Sometimes, however, we

are more aware of the weakness of our flesh than the willingness of our spirit. We also confuse desire to do the will of God with actually doing it. There is a continual frustration in the conflict between our spirit and flesh. Arthur Wallis, a British Bible teacher and author, once stated, "Most of us have godly desires and ambitions that are not beyond our spiritual capacity but beyond our spiritual discipline." The enemy we face is not wilful rebellion, but laziness. That is where we must cultivate self-control, and where progress can take place.

Self-control means "the ability to regulate conduct by principle and judgment rather than impulse, desire, or outside pressure."¹ Self-control is not self-effort. It is not control by self but control of self

by the Holy Spirit through our redeemed wills. "Willpower" is involved, but we cannot trust in the power of our wills alone to pull it off. Our source of power does not come through tightened muscles or clenched teeth, but from God Himself.

Seven Steps

Here are seven steps I have found helpful in developing self-control:

1. *Right motive.* We will not develop self-control by trying to impress others. In the midst of our busyness, God often asks us, "Why are you doing that?" It's not that He's not sure. It's that He can't respond to us if our motive is wrong. I've fallen asleep while praying at my desk and tried to act awake when someone knocked at the door. It's easy to open my eyes, but nearly impossible to remove the red welt from my forehead where my head rested on my hand. If our motive is to impress or to project an image, then God cannot bless us.

We also cannot develop self-control in an effort to earn God's grace or acceptance. A disciplined life grows out of God's acceptance. We become legalistic when we place more emphasis on what we do instead of why we do it. Right motivation is important.

2. *Goals.* Our goals must originate with God. We cannot copy them from others. Without specific, measurable goals that come from the Holy Spirit, we can be overwhelmed by all we think we're supposed to do.

Goals must be specific. Statements such as, "I want to be more disciplined," aren't worth much; we must stop thinking or speaking in generalities. The lazy person doesn't like to be asked when or how long because he is then forced to be specific.

Our goals must also be realistic. Make them small and achievable at first. Unrealistic goals set us up for discouragement and disillusionment. The Christian life is a walk (not a sprint) made up of individual steps (not leaps). So often I find

myself setting goals that are unattainable and promising God incredible change when all He's saying is, "Just take one step, C. J." That's how growth comes.

Don't Broadcast It!

3. *Announcements.* Too often I've broadcast my desired achievements prematurely. "I'm praying an hour a day," I proclaim.

"How long have you been doing that?" someone asks.

"Oh, I started today."

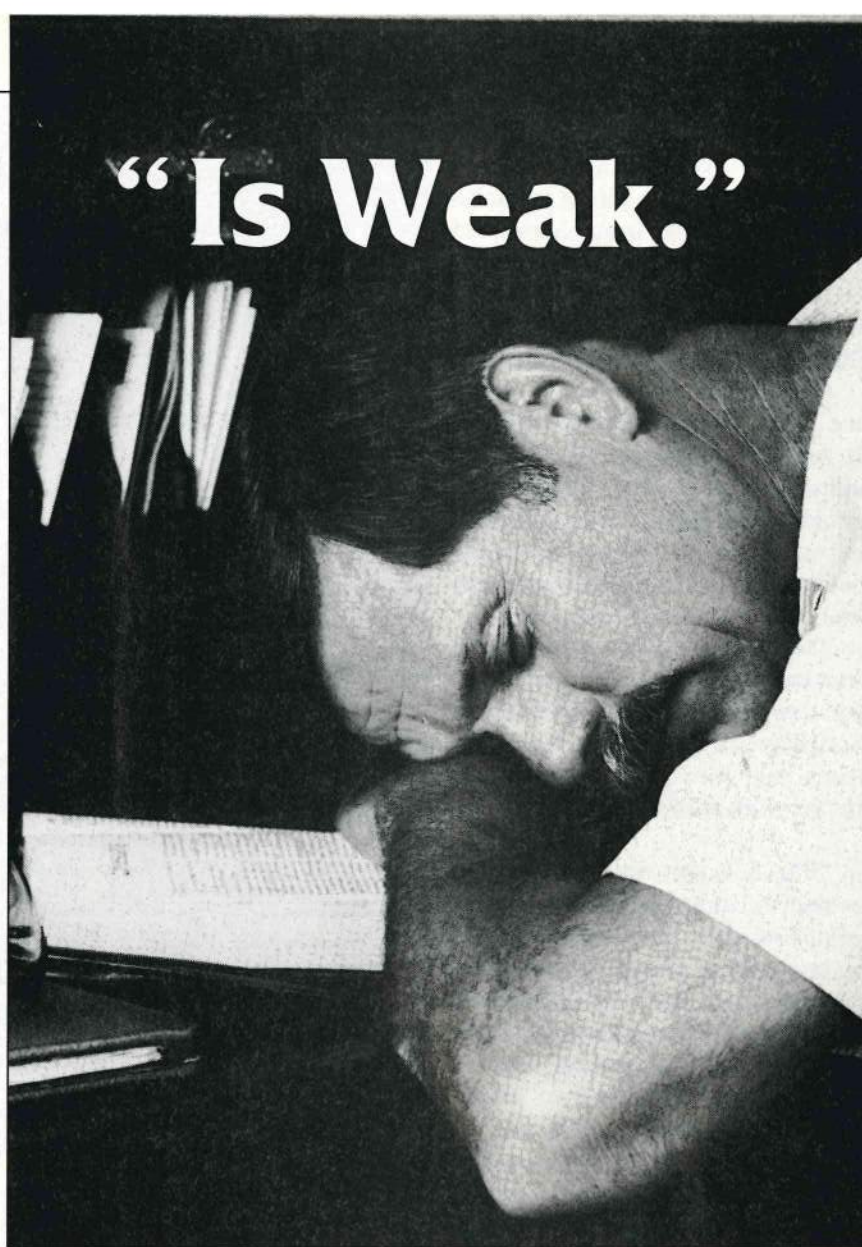
Announcing achievement before it's a part of our life-style can cause us to be nervous when we're around the people we've told. *What if they ask how I'm progressing?* we wonder. And if we falter, the result is unbelief. Let's have speech with integrity in it.

4. *Decision.* Obeying God does not depend upon feelings. Our emotions are the most unstable part of us. Self-control is not a feeling; it's the fruit of a decision we make in faith to obey God. If we've lived undisciplined lives for a long time, chances are we've become indecisive and passive. Passivity is not of God. Believers should make decisions based on what God has done and is doing in their lives. They must also refuse to ask God to do what He has told *them* to do.

5. *Action.* There are no shortcuts to developing self-control. The "perfect day" to begin will never come. If God is telling me to rise earlier in the day for prayer and study, there is no secret formula. It's not quick and easy. God's presence will not lift me physically out of my bed and set my feet on the floor. An early-morning prayer time will happen when I pull back the covers and move my body out of bed by God's grace. We learn self-control by taking action and doing the will of God.

6. *Become accountable.* The encouragement, faith, and correction of a friend is of inestimable value in accomplishing God-given goals.

Two are better than one...if one



falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! (Eccl. 4:9-10 NIV).

Becoming accountable by sharing your progress with a close friend can mean the difference between success and failure.

7. *Persevere.* We must determine before we start that no matter how long it takes, we will develop self-control in our lives. We need to start with a long-term mentality because the initial excitement will soon wear off. It's not *whether* our emotions subside; it's *when*. Through persevering we learn not to give way to various moods and we grow in self-control. It is imperative we understand that fruit grows over a period of time; we don't receive it

as an instantaneous gift.

God wants to see growth and progress in our lives. Developing self-control ensures that one day we will be able to look back and see not what we could have been, but rather how much of His purpose we fulfilled in our generation. □

Footnote

¹Richard Taylor, *The Disciplined Life* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1962), pp. 26-27.



C.J. Mahaney is senior pastor of Covenant Life Church in suburban Washington, D.C., and an associate editor of *People of Destiny* magazine.

I once fasted for a long period of time for the gift of miracles. During my fast, I prayed, "Where is the God of Elijah?"

If I ever heard God speak to me, I know it was then. He said, "Where are the Elijahs?"

God had been reluctant to use me and I finally understood why. It was because of my spiritual immaturity. I was no Elijah. God couldn't use me the way I wanted, or even the way He wanted, because it would probably destroy me!

The Apostle Paul understood that problem. He stayed in Ephesus for three years, gently opening the Scriptures and teaching the Ephesians the good things of God. In his farewell address, he said:

"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:27-28).

Then he began to warn them of trouble ahead:

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (vv. 29-32).

Paul was saying, "Now that I have taught you all these good things, they're going to get you in trouble!"

WHEN THE HEAVENS TURN TO BRASS

If you think God is hiding
from you, it may be true!

by Bob Mumford

Waiting for Us to Mature

It is so difficult for Christians to understand that it is the good things God shares with us that get us into trouble. If we don't hear anything or know anything, then we're not as responsible. But the minute we begin understanding the fullness of God's purpose, we face one complication after another.

I used to read stories about men like D. L. Moody and I'd think, *Oh, Lord, would I like to have what they had! What an inheritance!*

I have since found that God wants to give us such an inheritance—it belongs to us—but if we receive it before we are able to handle it, we get into trouble. He holds our inheritance, waiting for us to grow up so that we will not abuse it or lose it.

In Luke chapter 15, the prodigal son went to his father and said, "Father, give me my inheritance. I

want that which belongs to me, and I want it now!"

The father could have said, "Son, the minute I give you your inheritance, it's going to get you in trouble." He probably knew that once he gave his son that which belonged to him, he would get in trouble, because he was neither old enough nor mature enough to handle it. Sure enough, as soon as the prodigal got his hands on the money, he began to misuse it.

The same thing happens in the realm of the Spirit. I say, "God, I want that which belongs to me. I want the anointing. I want the power. I want the authority. Lay it on me."

He says, "Son, if I do, it's going to get you in trouble."

And I say, "Just try me. Go ahead."

He does and I get in trouble. Proverbs 20:21 says, "An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not



be blessed." That is what happened to the prodigal son.

Jesus Had to Wait

At age twelve, Jesus understood the purposes of God for His life, but He too had to wait on God's time. When Jesus was thirty, God revealed Himself to Jesus, and as He did, Jesus began coming into His inheritance. But before He received it, He spent forty days in the wilderness and was tempted by the devil. Only after that did He get up in the synagogue and say:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year

of the Lord" (Lk. 4:18-19).

The scriptural method of receiving our spiritual inheritance is that God comes to us and reveals Himself so that what He wants to give us doesn't injure or hurt us.

Jesus once said to the disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (Jn. 16:12). A good way to shake people up is to say, "I have some things I want to share with you, but you're not mature enough to receive them." We all have the kind of spiritual pride that says, "Maybe others aren't mature enough, but I am!"

Many Christians insist, "God, I want my inheritance now!" And so they force Him. They fast and pray and claim their inheritance. Sometimes, God gives it to them, but then instead of a stable life in Christ, they become what I call a "shooting

star." Three months, six months, or a year later, they're gone. But that's not what God wants for us. He wants us to find our place in the body of Christ, grow in our understanding of His will, reflect His glory, and keep right on shining.

Grievous Wolves

The kind of maturity God is looking for in us is that which will enable us to protect what He has given us. I have heard it said that the wolf only howls at the door where there is food. It's the same with the powers of hell. They know where the food is. They know where God is moving. They know where things are happening, and they come to stir up trouble.

Paul told the Ephesians:

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

But Paul did not say, "Because I know that, I'm going to stay here and protect you." No, he said:

"I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

He was saying, "I have delivered to you your inheritance. Now, it's up to you to learn how to protect and defend it."

One aspect of our inheritance is healing, and I've seen many people healed by the power of God. But then after they get home, they call me and say, "I'm sick again." They got healed on my faith, but didn't have enough maturity to defend their inheritance on their own. Healing isn't automatic. It must be received from God and then defended, and that takes maturity.

We have to learn to defend our place in God. We have to learn to

defend our calling in God. We have to learn to defend our finances in God. When I say, "Lord, I believe You're going to supply," He does, but then I struggle to keep His provisions.

That happens to us all the time. I give my son his lunch money, and he starts out for school. But before he gets there, two kids meet him and shake him down.

They say, "Boy, give us your lunch money!"

So he comes back to me and says, "Dad, every time I go to school, two boys are waiting for me and they take my lunch money."

I say, "Son, one of two things must happen. Either you'll learn to protect your fifty cents, or you'll go hungry." My son has to grow up; he has to get mad enough, bold enough, and brave enough to say, "You're not going to get my lunch money!"

When Christians finally get provoked enough, they'll rise up in holy boldness and say, "Devil, get off my back! In the name of Jesus, leave my child alone!" It happens and then we ask why it didn't happen a year ago. It was because we weren't mature enough or bold enough.

Great and Precious Promises

God is a Father. He knows better than to give us things we can't protect, which is why His provisions are given to us as promises: Salvation is a promise; healing is a promise; baptism in the Holy Spirit is a promise; deliverance is a promise; financial provision is a promise. Second Peter 1:4 says that we are given "exceeding great and precious promises." By the time we have the faith to claim the promise, we should have the maturity to protect its provision. It isn't only receiving the provision that counts; we have to protect and defend it.

God called me to preach while I was still in the Navy. Being naive, I said to some buddies in the Navy, "God called me to preach!" They almost took my inheritance from

me before I even got started!

"You, preach? Who are you kidding?" they scoffed.

And I thought, *Maybe God didn't call me after all.* But when I got alone with God and asked Him about it, He zapped me with His Holy Spirit!

I then said, "Okay, God called me to preach." I learned that I needed to protect the word God had spoken to me.

God speaks healing, financial provision, and spiritual usefulness to us. He says, "If you will obey Me, I'll bring you into a life of usefulness so that your life will affect others."

But it's a promise that has to be worked, cultivated, brought to maturity, and then defended. As we learn to defend our inheritance, God gives us more.

As Jesus had to defend His inheritance in the wilderness, so we have to defend ours through a time of struggle. I heard a story about a man who was sitting on a dock, fishing. As he was fishing, he saw a cocoon attached to a nearby post, and in the cocoon a butterfly was struggling to get out. After a long time, the butterfly got out two feet and the first section of his wings. But his struggle was so great the fisherman couldn't stand it. He took his fishing knife, reached over, and cut the cocoon all the way open. When he did, out on the wharf fell this little butterfly, half born. The first section of his wings and his two feet were all fully formed with the color and all the beauty of a mature butterfly. But the bottom half was all emaciated, the wings still folded back and the legs still folded in. The butterfly staggered around on the wharf a little while and then died.

I must confess that I have cut a few cocoons in my life. I've cut some for my own children, and when I was pastoring, I cut them for my people.

Some of the gospel we have preached has been the instantaneous kind that says, "Push. Pull. Click. God will do it for you." He

will do it for us. But as He does it, don't complain about the element of struggle.

I have seen too many Christians who have had their cocoon cut for them. Few of them ever come around to a new birth the proper way.

When God seems to leave us alone in the middle of a struggle and we have to battle our way through on our own, it's because He wants us born whole. He hides from us simply because the struggle we're going through is essential for a proper birth into the realm God wants us in.

One night a man had a dream that he went to heaven. When he got there he met Paul and Peter, some of the martyrs of the Middle Ages, and John Wesley and D. L. Moody. Then he woke up. Later he said, "The thing that bothered me most was that I didn't feel like I belonged in the company of men who through great struggle had achieved what they had."

An inheritance quickly gained is not profitable in the end. There is an inheritance that belongs to the Church. But it isn't something that God gives capriciously or without thought, for giving it too soon would get us into trouble. We need to grow up. For us to do that, sometimes God must hide Himself!

"I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." □



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.

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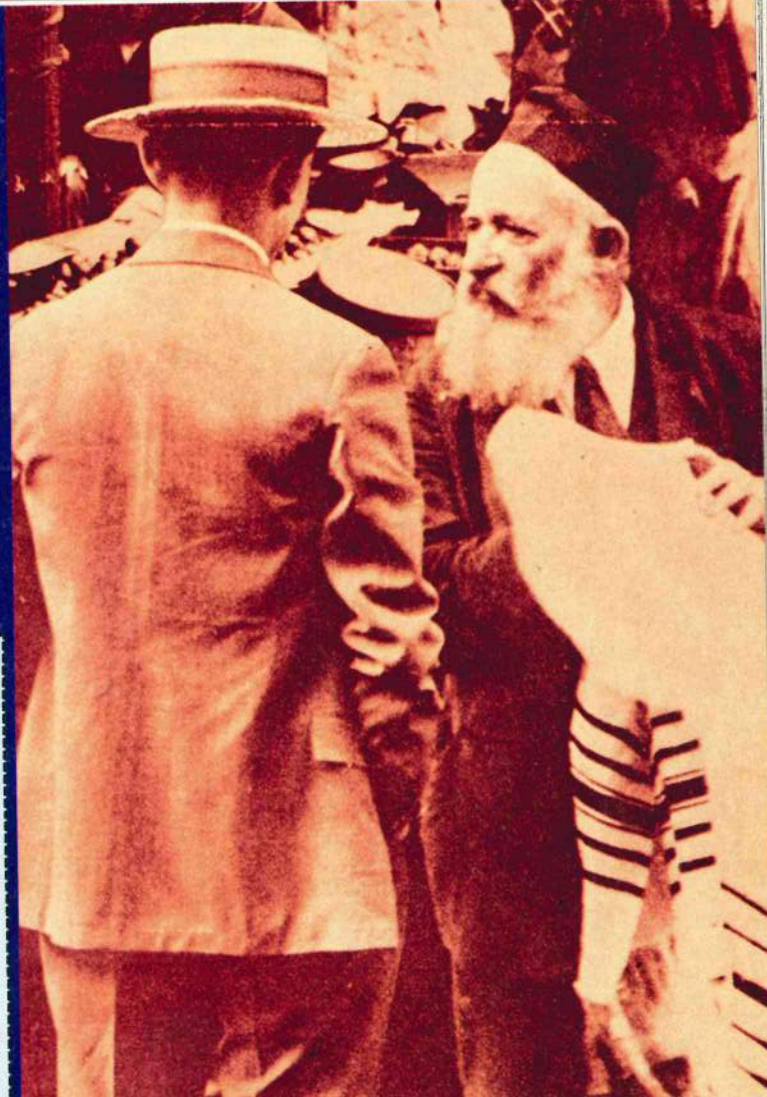
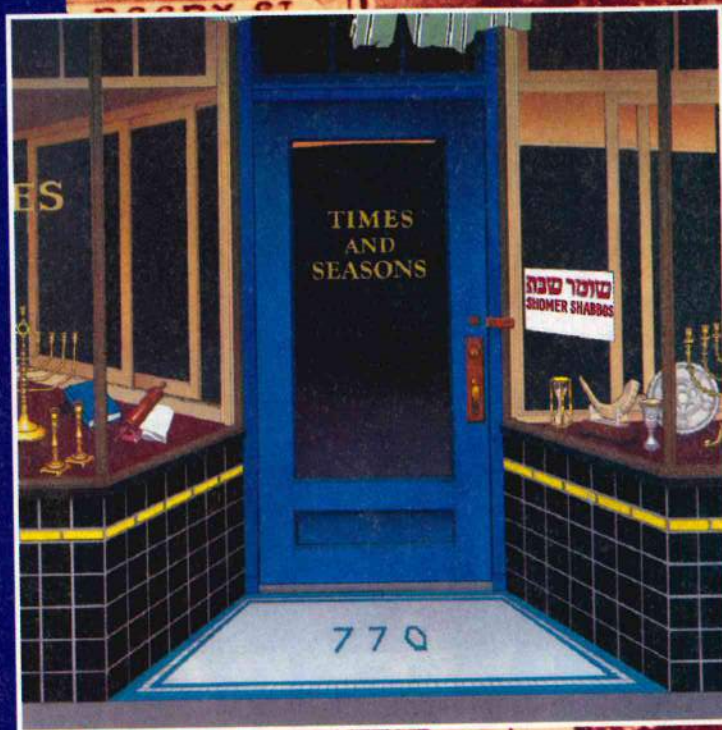
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INTERCESSORS FOR AMERICA

by Gary Bergel

Calling Christians to unite in prayer and fasting

There are never any coincidences in God's way of doing things. Knowing that, I have often mused over the irony that in America in the same year—1973—abortion was legalized and Intercessors for America (IFA) was founded.

IFA was birthed during a Christian conference led by men who had a burden to see prayer and fasting restored to the Church in America. Although I was privileged to witness IFA's establishment and growth, I must say that as with the legalization of abortion, IFA's formation was not a cause for rejoicing; both events pointed to the state of slumber and deficiency that existed in the body of Christ in the early seventies. Many people did not know the full counsel of God's Word and were preoccupied with personal affluence and success. They were weak witnesses who did not engage in effective spiritual warfare.

Many years earlier, Peter Marshall, chaplain of the U.S. Senate from 1947 to 1949, issued this warning:

The choice before us is plain, Christ or chaos, conviction or compromise, discipline or disintegration. I am rather tired of hearing about our rights and privileges as American citizens. The time is come, it now is, when we ought to hear about the duties and responsibilities of our citizenship. America's future depends upon her accepting and demonstrating God's government.¹

Most Americans ignored the warnings of men such as Peter Marshall,

and spiritual turf was lost. By the 1970's, it seemed that only a handful of Christians prayed together regularly for the government or were involved in the political process. Much of the prayer that did take place lacked the intensity needed to move mountains and tear down strongholds.

Such is not the case today. The desire to "occupy" and "do His business" until Christ returns is again beating in the hearts of many of God's redeemed people. Nearly every quarter of the believing Church is awakening and is experiencing an increasing momentum in prayer, fasting, and spiritual warfare.

This year, for example, the widest diversity of Christians ever joined in the thirty-fourth observance of a national day of prayer, standardized by law in 1952 to be the first Thursday in May. In fact, so many groups were represented at the assembly in Washington, D.C., that it was impossible to gather all the reports of what happened. And, for the first time, the national coordinators called for a fast until the evening meal.

Also, pastors and churches in many cities and regions of the country are beginning to draw together for First Friday assemblies, concerts of prayer, early-morning prayer, Saturday prayer, weekend prayer, and prayer summits. Leaders are seeking God and each other for the best way to form prayer networks, and how to use the latest technology to form computerized emergency prayer systems and interchurch satellite prayer meetings.

Adding Thousands

Over the years, God has blessed

our efforts at IFA to challenge Christians to unite in prayer and fasting for America's recovery. Even with limited financial resources and minimal promotional efforts, we have added an average of a thousand "partners in prayer" each month during the past year. We're working on special programs to build an overall network of 250,000, to encourage stronger corporate intercession, to reach prisoners, to provide blind believers with IFA's newsletter on cassette tape, and to encourage and mobilize more elderly citizens and widows to pray.

More than fifty thousand Christians receive IFA's monthly newsletter, observe the first Friday of each month as a day of united prayer and fasting, and pray in agreement around selected monthly issues of national concern. In addition, IFA members "aim their artillery" in prayer toward our nation's capital each month, and focus prayer upon cities and significant events across America. We also stand with other intercessory groups in the United States and some forty other nations. Here are some of the gains our faithful battalion of prayer warriors has made through its united prayer and fasting efforts:

1. Spiritual awakening, revival, and unity among leaders and believers continue to increase. The Coalition on Revival's recent mobilization of more than 112 Christian leaders, and the hundreds of major pastors and leaders who formed the Network of Christian Ministries during the past few years are prime examples of this dynamic. We are witnesses to some of the greatest displays of Christian unity in this

NEXT MONTH IN NEW WINE: PURSUIT OF PURPOSE



Charles Simpson on Elijah

Charles Simpson, using the life of Elijah as an example, says that despite persecution, trials, and tribulation, we can be renewed in purpose and vision.

Larry Tomczak, in an excerpt from his new book, *Divine Appointments*, tells how to fulfil the tasks that God sets before us.

C. Peter Wagner, a well-known authority on church growth, explains how a church can move out and touch the surrounding community.

R.J. Rushdoony warns that if we read the Bible solely as a devotional, we're missing a vital message. The Word also contains marching orders for those heading into battle.

Plus what happens to people without a vision, and a special report on false arrests for child abuse.

All in the September *New Wine*

century.

2. Christians prayed, fasted, and broke the so-called Van Buren death curse upon the U.S. presidency. A combination of death curses, which had been decreed through American Indian sorcerers during President Harrison's administration and by voodoo spiritualists invited into the White House by Mary Todd Lincoln, had worked to take the lives of American presidents elected every 20 years: Harrison was elected in 1840 and died in 1841; Lincoln was elected in 1860 and died in 1865; Garfield was elected in 1880 and died in 1881; McKinley was elected in 1900 and died in 1901; Harding was elected in 1920 and died in 1923; Franklin Roosevelt was elected in 1940 and died in 1945; Kennedy was elected in 1960 and died in 1963. Evidence that the curse was broken is the failed assassination attempt against President Reagan in 1980.

3. President Ronald Reagan has taken a forthright and articulate stand against abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. The publication of his book *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation*, his appointment of Dr. C. Everett Koop as U.S. Surgeon General, and the series of White House briefings on alternatives to abortion show President Reagan's commitment on this issue.

4. National surveys completed by IFA indicate that approximately three thousand alternative crisis pregnancy counseling centers, many of them overtly Christian, have sprung up during the past twelve years and now openly compete with the Planned Parenthood death chambers that blight our land. Hundreds of churches and thousands of individuals are heeding the mandate of Proverbs 24:11 to "rescue those being led away to death" (NIV) and are regularly involved in ministries of mercy and compassion. The Christian Action Council's May newsletter declared and verified that those efforts have resulted in a seven-percent drop in the abortion rate from 1982 to 1984.

5. The Church has once again taken a prophetic posture on social and moral issues, and is involving itself in public affairs. These are some examples of how American believers are again "putting feet to their prayers" and becoming "salt and light" in society: the swelling ranks of the prolife movement, the bold emergence of groups such as Moral Majority, the Freedom Council, and Concerned Women for America, the entrance of thousands of Christian citizens into the political process since the 1980 elections, the possible candidacy of Pat Robertson in presidential primaries, and the July 4 presentation of seventeen Christian worldview documents in Washington, D.C.

6. A profamily movement has emerged and helped to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment, countered militant pagan feminism, challenged homosexuality and child abuse, has seen the removal of pornography from thousands of retail outlets, such as 7-Eleven, HIGHs Dairy, and Peoples Drugs, and is even beginning to address the need for restoring the biblical role of men and fathers.

7. New tax reform legislation, the Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction act, measures toward reducing the national debt, and the proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would require a balanced national budget are daily news items, indicating that debt, self-indulgence, and excessive taxation are again being questioned and challenged as inappropriate national life-styles.

8. Communist and Islamic terrorism, which has been a prayer focus for IFA during the past ten years, is shattering pride and naivete, bringing about a healthy resurgence of national identity and patriotism, and causing western nations to re-ally and to reexamine pacifist and socialist philosophies. The joint stand and statement against terrorism issued by leaders gathered for the recent Tokyo summit is further proof of this trend.

9. By the time President Reagan

leaves office, he will have appointed conservatives to fill more than fifty percent of the federal judiciary positions. Periodicals such as *U.S. News and World Report*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* have stated that this will establish a more conservative tone in the U.S. judiciary, perhaps even in the Supreme Court should more vacancies occur.

10. The National Association of Christian Schools estimates that more than twenty thousand Christian schools have been established in the past ten years and are still opening at the rate of three a day, providing a disciplined, moral, and ethical educational atmosphere for almost thirty percent of the nation's children. These are tomorrow's citizens and leaders who will continue the fight against entrenched liberal theology, and humanist-socialist political philosophy, education, economics, and social engineering in the United States.

God's Answer to Prayers

Some have charged that such reports excuse or minimize sin and evil works in our nation. Others view them as nothing more than slight shifts, standoffs, or passing trends. But I do not see those reports as anything less than God's answers to our prayers. He has mercifully heard and tenderly regarded the prayers and obedience from a remnant of His people, both here and abroad. Although the United States is in many ways deserving of judgment, we continue to experience God's mercy, forbearance, and grace. Believers who have been exercising their calling in Christ as priests and intercessors have been getting to the heart of God. Brothers and sisters stand daily like Aaron, "between the living and the dead," offering prayer for mercy, pardon, and life (see Numbers 16:47-48; 1 John 5:16; and Revelation 5:10).

The fulfillment of God's purpose, America's destiny, and the completion of the great commission wait upon more Christians who will do the same on a daily basis.

We are witnessing a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit and are still experiencing a season of mercy and grace. We must, however, cease living presumptuously, carelessly, and in vain pursuits. God is calling us to put off slumber and fear, seize the grace offered, and like Nehemiah, energetically continue building, battling, and restoring the waste places.

May it be said of us that they "did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other" (Neh. 4:17 NIV), and that they have taken refreshment from the tables prepared for them under the eyes of their enemies (see Psalm 23:5).

Jesus never told us that intercession is optional. He simply declared, "When you pray," "when you fast," "watch therefore," "overcome," and "occupy until." Intercessors for America is more committed than ever to challenge, recruit, encourage, and equip multitudes of Christians to increased prayer, fasting, and effective spiritual warfare. We stand ready to serve through our monthly newsletter, regional conferences, instructional materials, and biblical perspective on critical issues. As we unite, we can draw strength and boldness from the Holy Spirit speaking through Nehemiah:

"Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses....At whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us" (Neh. 4:14, 20 NAS). □

Footnote

¹ Nancy Leigh DeMoss, ed., *The Rebirth of America* (Bala Cynwyd, PA: Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, 1986), p. 205.



Gary Bergel is executive director of Intercessors for America and a pastor of New Covenant Christian Church, Reston, Virginia.

REMEMBER REMEMBER REMEMBER

Friday, August 1, is a national day of prayer and fasting.

This month, please focus on these topics for prayer:

- Stopping terrorism, especially coming from Libya, Syria, and Iran.
- Tax reform, that God would institute a just and righteous system.
- Pornography Commission, that its effect would be sound and effective legislation to stop pornography.

"If two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 18:19 NAS).



CONGRESS

Challenging spiritual

U.S. Rep.
Mark Siljander

After Representative Mark Siljander (R-Mich.) arrived in Washington, the Lord showed him that the battle he faced there was not against flesh and blood, but spiritual forces. Since then, he and several other congressmen have been seeking the Lord together in weekly prayer meetings. We recently talked with Congressman Siljander.

New Wine: What have been your impressions of Congress since you've been in Washington?

Mark Siljander: I came to Congress in 1981, full of faith that God had sent me for a specific purpose. The first thing I sensed was that Congress was far more intense than the state legislature where I had served four terms. I saw much confusion, manipulation, disorder, and turf consciousness, and many incredibly puffed-up egos. It is difficult to truly understand how much disorder there is on Capitol Hill. Rarely does one know when we're voting, what the issues are, or when we're likely to adjourn. Whatever you have scheduled is essentially meaningless because schedules change by the hour. A decent family life and proper management of one's personal affairs are nearly impossible in this atmosphere of chaos.

Second, I saw America in terms of the social crises we face: abortion, education, child abuse, pornography, poverty, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, AIDS, and the list seems endless.

Third, I saw the Church coming out of its we-shouldn't-get-involved-in-politics syndrome. The Church was beginning to realize that sitting back, watching, and doing nothing was detestable in the eyes of God (see 2 Corinthians 5:10; James 4:17). It was beginning to move out with boldness and to get involved through the democratic political structure God has blessed us with in this country. Nevertheless, I observed little to no change in social conditions by Congress.

NW: Is that what brought about the weekly prayer meetings with other congressmen that you're involved with?

MS: Yes, I went before God and sought Him as to how to bring about the changes needed. He showed me through Ephesians chapter 6 that we were not in a battle against amendments, bills, coalitions, or liberal humanists. But we were in a battle against rulers, authorities, powers, and spiritual forces. We were in a battle against a supernatural world that we couldn't see, taste, or feel.

I shared my feelings with another congressman, and we began challenging the spiritual strongholds through prayer. Second Corinthians 10:4 indicates that our weapons aren't carnal but are spiritual, bringing down strongholds. There will be no significant changes until we bring down these strongholds.

As we prayed together we were impressed that 2 Chronicles 7:14

is a blueprint for victory: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall *humble* themselves, and *pray*, and *seek* my face, and *turn* from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Two of us began this four-point strategy—humble, pray, seek, and turn—in my first term through intercessory prayer and fasting one day a week. My second term, four of us were praying and fasting, and now, in the third term, eight congressmen are praying and fasting every Thursday.

NW: What kinds of things are you specifically praying for?

MS: We pray against the spiritual strongholds I mentioned earlier, and for the Supreme Court—that the righteous would be raised up and the wicked torn down. But the greatest personal concern we face is our family life: husband-wife relationships, safety of our children, and the salvation of loved ones. Our jobs are hard on our families when considering the anxieties and pressures we face, and running for office every other year. The divorce rate is significantly higher in Congress than in many professions. So family life is an important focus. It is critical that we find quality time with God and our families, and not become overwhelmingly dominated by politics.

Our families also need protection against spiritual attack. When Satan is challenged effectively, he doesn't

MEN SEEK GOD

strongholds through prayer

sit back. He responds with vengeance. If I'm filled with the Holy Spirit and protected by the blood of Christ, the enemy will try to go to those closest to me: my wife, children, and relatives. That's why prayer for our families is so important.

NW: How else has being in Congress affected your spiritual life?

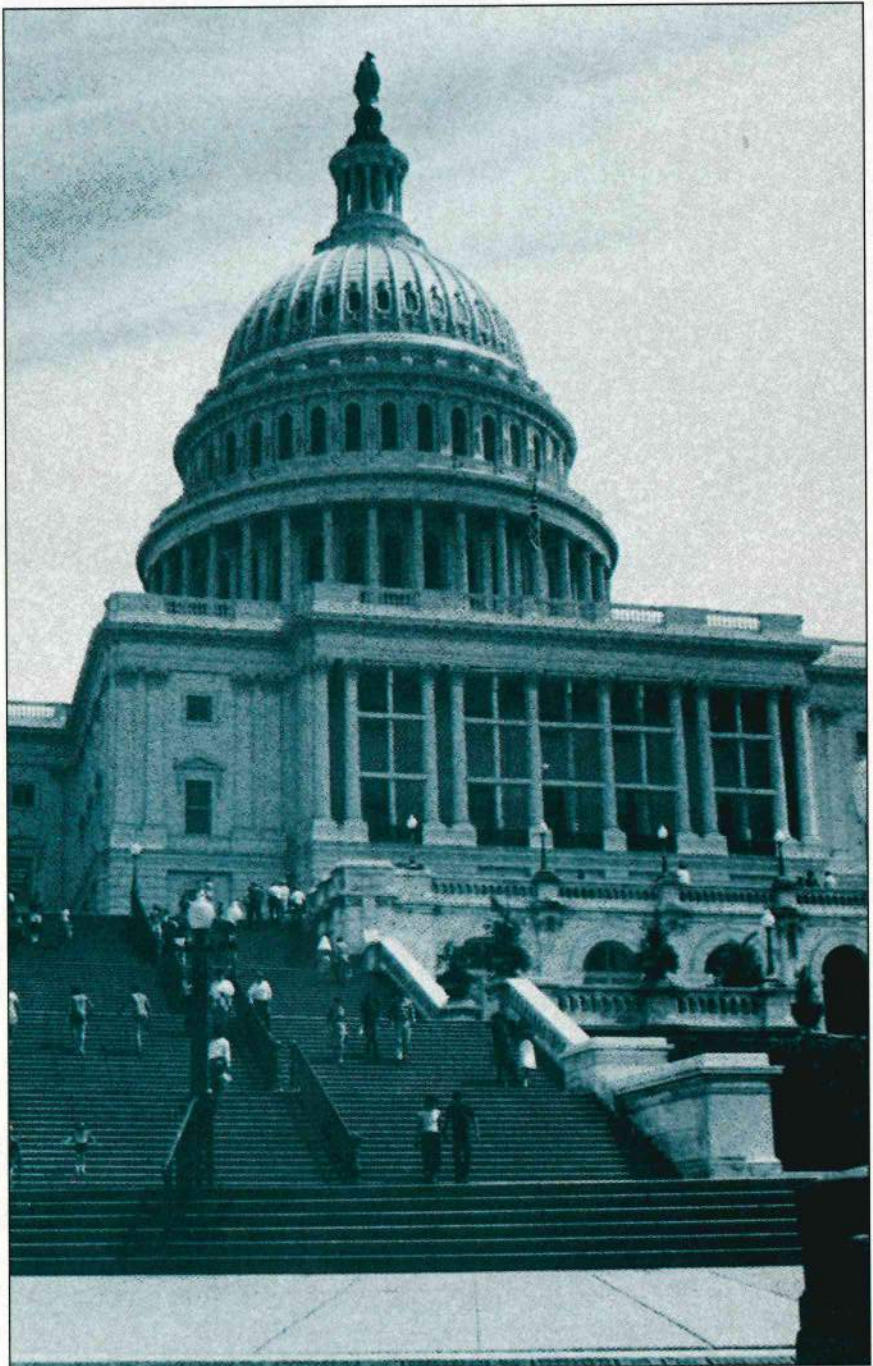
MS: As a congressman, my spiritual life is challenged so deeply on a daily basis that I have to grow stronger or collapse. There is no middle ground. Those who float in the middle too long will eventually be picked off by the enemy.

It's much like a weight lifting program. Through consistent and persistent exercise, the body grows stronger. Essentially what's true in our physical bodies is true in our spiritual lives. My situation forced me deeper into the Scriptures. Other congressmen have challenged me with a variety of doctrinal questions, which have forced a greater discipline of prayer and Bible study.

I also have had the honor of speaking to many Christian groups all over the country. I want to relay a vision that reflects a spiritual perspective; therefore, I must listen carefully to discern what the Lord is saying to His Church at the close of the twentieth century.

NW: Have you seen situations changed because of your prayer and fasting?

MS: Yes, over the long haul. Besides



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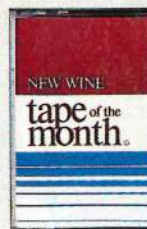
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Besides changing the personal lives of those who pray together, God is using that time to work changes in our country.



changing the personal lives of those who pray together, God is using that time to work changes in our country.

For example, three years ago while the House was in full session, I walked in and sat next to the congressman who was the first one to meet with me for prayer and fasting. He seemed awfully depressed. When I asked what was wrong, he told me that an amendment to stop federally funded abortions was tied up in the rules committee, and nothing could be done to get it out because the vote was something like seven to three against it.

I said, "God can do anything, and we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Let's pray." So in the midst of the session and debate, we sat and quietly prayed together. Then I said, "Go back to the committee, and in your heart command the members to change their votes."

About three hours later, I saw him in a hall, so very excited that he could hardly believe what had taken place; the amendment had passed!

A year after that, I walked onto the floor to the same section of the chambers and sat next to the same person, sitting with the same dejected face. The same issue had come up again. I said, "Remember we prayed a year ago and it worked?"

"It's even worse this time," he told me.

We prayed again, he went back again, and the results were the same.

Eventually the bill passed the House and the Senate.

A year later, the same congressman and I were in a similar situation. "This time I'm in a real bind," he told me. "We have to pass the budget bill by midnight; otherwise the government will go bankrupt. The liberals have succeeded in putting in the budget \$150 million for family planning clinics (counseling, contraception, abortion referral, et cetera) in public schools! Furthermore, the rule is closed, so no amendments to eliminate it are allowed. And the President will sign the bill to keep the government in operation. We're procedurally without option."

So once again we prayed. I told him, "Speak boldly against it from the floor, and tell them that you think this is wrong."

He did, and other members spoke against it even though there was technically nothing they could do.

Then, something quite bizarre happened. The leadership of the House and the Senate—Republican and Democrat—met I am told in a closed room and decided to eliminate this language as a gentlemen's agreement. I don't even know if they could procedurally do that, but because none of the leadership disagreed, the \$150 million for family planning clinics was taken out, and the budget was passed!

NW: Has it been easy to get other members of Congress to fast?

MS: Actually, it's been very difficult.

One congressman told me he wanted to know about fasting. So as we rode to work one morning I spent forty-five minutes telling him in great detail about Jehoshaphat, Nehemiah, Mordecai, Esther, and Daniel. I carefully pointed out various times in history when faced with social or moral problems the leadership turned to God through repentance, prayer, and fasting.

He responded with an excited, "Amen! Hallelujah! We're going to fast. Today's the day."

But on that same day we had set aside to fast, I met him, and he had a doughnut in each hand. "Now, wait a minute," I said. "We just agreed to fast."

He looked at me and said, "Oh, that's right."

So he set one doughnut down, and finished the one he was eating. There is a serious lack of discipline with all of us in Congress. As we talked in the car, he was highly motivated to fast but as soon as we arrived at work, we were in another dynamic, another dimension. Everything else was pushed aside. Because of the nature of this job, he legitimately forgot all about it. We must continually remind ourselves to become more faithful.

Although the opposition is strong, God's victory is assured. With us or without us, God will have His way. The issue is whether we are willing to pay the price, the sacrifice of prayer, to be partakers of His victory. □

FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Preparing our hearts to do the will of God
by Bruce Longstreth

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God (2 Cor. 4:16—5:1 NAS).

Fulfilling God's destiny for our lives depends on our ability to stand when we are shaken and tested, and our ability to stand comes from a heart that is fixed on God. Psalm 78 reviews the history of Israel and pinpoints the reason it failed in the calling God had for it. The source

of the problem is found in verse 8:

And not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, *a generation that did not prepare its heart*, and whose spirit was not faithful to God (NAS, italics mine).

Israel failed to prepare its heart. The people were so concerned with what was going on around them that they neglected to prepare the internal mechanism needed to accomplish the will of God.

The word *prepare* in verse 8 means "to bring something into being with the consequence that its existence is a certainty."¹ God prepared the heavens, and when He prepares something, it doesn't shake, quiver, move, or crumple. The man who allows the maker of heaven and earth to prepare his heart faces the critical issues of life with supernat-

ural stamina. King David and the Apostle Paul were both men who sought the Lord's preparation of their hearts.

David said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a *steadfast* spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10 NAS, italics mine). The word *steadfast* is the same as *prepared* in Psalm 78:8. David knew that a clean heart and a steadfast spirit would enable him to "teach transgressors Thy ways," and that "sinners will be converted to Thee" (Ps. 51:13 NAS). It is not the cleverness of our message or the skill of our communication, but the purity and the stability of our heart that will turn unrighteous people toward God.

Paul said, "One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead" (Phil. 3:13 NAS), and, "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58 NAS).

Paul was a man with a fixed heart, which made him immovable in the test and abounding in his labor for the Lord.

How does this come about in our lives? Before we look at how, let's look at the people of Israel to find the evidences of an *unprepared* heart.

An Unprepared Heart

Psalms 78 lists five evidences of Israel's unprepared heart. Verse 9 says, "The sons of Ephraim were archers equipped with bows, yet they *turned back* in the day of the battle" (NAS, *italics mine*). The first sign of a shaky heart is turning back. The people did not prepare their hearts, so in the day of battle they turned and ran. But look at David as he faced the giant Goliath:

"You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands" (1 Sam. 17:45-46 NAS).

David could speak to his enemy so fearlessly because he had prepared his heart to do so. The strength he needed to conquer his enemy began on the inside; then it steadied his hand, sharpened his aim, and gave him the victory—while men with weaker hearts peeked out from their hiding places.

The second evidence of an unprepared heart is covenant breaking. Psalm 78:10 tells us, "They did not keep the covenant of God" (NAS). We are not justified by keeping the Law written on tables of stone, but obedience to the will of God is the inevitable result when God inscribes His law with His holy finger on our hearts. God says, "I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 11:19 NAS), and David says, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8 NAS). Failure

to keep the covenant is a heart problem.

The third evidence of an unprepared heart is that Israel refused to go any farther: "They...refused to walk" (Ps. 78:10 NAS). That reminds me of a story about a woman who had four children. She named them Eenie, Meenie, Minie, and Jacob. When someone asked why she didn't call the last one Mo, her response was, "Because I don't want no mo."

An unprepared heart has "no mo" written on it. I have met people who are so defeated in their Christian life and so hardened in their spirit that no revival, no supernatural manifestation, no angel straight from the throne, could turn them around. "No mo" has been stamped on their hearts.

Forgetting the Lord

The fourth evidence is forgetfulness—one of the clearest indications of an unprepared heart. Israel had forgotten all the ways the Lord led it: "They forgot His deeds, and His miracles that He had shown them" (v. 11 NAS). We must never lose our personal testimony of God's miraculous grace. It is the most important weapon in our arsenal of spiritual artillery. Revelation 12:11 says, "They overcame him because of the...word of their testimony" (NAS). If we can't recall the faithfulness of God to us, we have a serious heart problem.

I remember the day my wife and I went to Kansas City, Missouri, to adopt our first daughter, Cara. We had been married for twelve years, but didn't know anything about taking care of babies. What does one do with a three-day-old infant? After we completed all the legal procedures, we suddenly found ourselves alone in a hotel room with this precious gift.

As reality began to dawn on us, I began to get nervous. *What do we do? Do we have enough food? I think we've only got one case of formula left. What if she chokes? What if she cries?* We probably had

enough formula to last several days, but I called a cab in the middle of the night and hurried out into the dark to find more food. The cab driver didn't know who I was, but had six children of his own and understood some of my feelings.

When he brought me back to the hotel, he stopped me as I got out of the cab, "Just a minute, young man. Before you leave, I've got something to tell you. Besides being a cab driver, I'm also a preacher. Here's a verse I want to share with you: 'Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.'"

I was a puddle. God had searched all over Kansas City looking for a particular cab driver to pick me up at that hotel, to take me out into the night, to calm my fears, and to tell me that this precious child was His favor upon me. My God had gone before me, and this child was His gift. "Bless the Lord, Soul, and forget none of His benefits."

Rebellion Against God

In Psalm 78:17, we find the fifth evidence of an unprepared heart—open rebellion against God. "Yet they still continued to sin against Him, to rebel against the Most High" (NAS). The Israelites began to test God, and to speak out against Him.

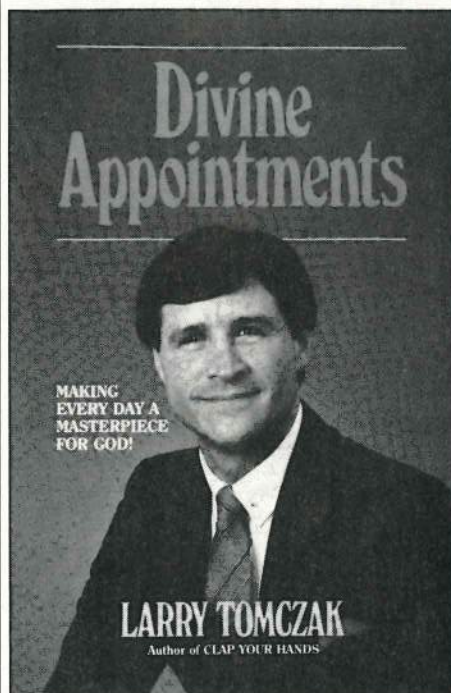
Therefore the Lord heard and was full of wrath, and a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also mounted against Israel; because they did not believe in God, and did not trust in His salvation (vv. 21-22 NAS).

Then, verses 34-37 say:

When He killed them, then they sought Him, and returned and searched diligently for God; and they remembered that God was their rock, and the Most High God their redeemer. But they deceived Him with their mouth, and lied to Him with their tongue. For their heart was not steadfast [prepared] toward Him, nor were

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they faithful in His covenant (NAS).

The uppermost questions in minds of the Israelites were, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?...Can He give bread also?" (vv. 19-20 NAS). That's the clearest evidence of a heart unprepared and unwilling to do God's will.

Their inability to repent when God nearly killed them was the final evidence of an unprepared heart. He nearly beat them to death, and they cried out to Him for mercy, but nothing changed. Their repentance was carnal.

This Psalm would end on a depressing note if it weren't for the last three verses.

He also chose David His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from the care of the ewes with suckling lambs He brought him, to shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them with his skillful hands (vv. 70-72 NAS).

Finding David

God looked for a man with a prepared heart until one day He found David. When Samuel went to anoint the king he saw some strapping, powerful men—six feet four, muscles bulging out all over. And Samuel said, "Surely, this is the one."

But God said, "Don't you dare do that. I've had my eye on a young man ever since this whole king mess got started. I want him."

So Samuel, hesitant and probably embarrassed, said to Jesse, "These aren't all your sons, are they?"

"No, the youngest is out watching the sheep. He's short and kind of scruffy, writes poetry and sings songs. He's really not much to look at." And Samuel sent for David.

"What's going on, Dad?" he asked Jesse.

"We're about to anoint a king,

Son."

"Oh, man, where is he?"

"It's you," said Samuel, and the Spirit of God came on David, a man with a prepared heart. God took him from sheep tending to people tending. He was an Old Testament type of Jesus, the Son of David, who became our high priest and shepherd because His heart was knit to the heart of His Father.

God is still looking for people who have prepared their hearts and in Hebrews 3:8 He sternly warns us not to be like Israel: "Do not harden your hearts" (NAS). We can keep our hearts pliable and prepared to better respond to the will of God. Here are five ways that have been helpful to me.

The first way is meditation on the Word of God. We need to pour through, listen to, memorize, quote, and live in the Word. I choose at least one Psalm each day, and verse by verse, put myself, my family, and my concerns in it. As I do I order my thinking according to the will of God because the Spirit inspired those words originally from the hearts of men who sought the Lord. As I meditate on the Word it washes, cleanses, and renews my heart. The answer to a hard heart is in Hebrews: "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. 4:12 NAS). The Word discerns between soul and spirit, and judges the thoughts and intentions of my heart. So I start with the Word. If I want to be exposed, I live in the Word and identify my life with the Word.

Pray and Don't Lose Heart

The second way we prepare our hearts is prayer. I cited meditation in the Word first because I believe the truth of God's Word needs to be the foundation of our prayers. The Word in my heart and in my mouth enables me to petition the Father "according to His will." Luke 18:1 says, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." The New American Standard version says,

"They ought to pray and not to lose heart."

A third way is worship. Ephesians 5:18-19 says, "Be filled with the Spirit...singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (NAS). David, the man after God's heart, was also known as "the sweet singer of Israel." He composed many psalms of praise to the Lord and I believe it was his ministry of music to the Lord that had much to do with his prepared heart. In this high-tech age, it's easy to get a tape recorder and headphones and sing along with worship music as we drive, jog, or do housework. It is a great preparation for hearing what the Lord would speak to prepared hearts.

In addition to the Word, prayer, and worship, we must sow good seed into our hearts. In Matthew chapter 13 we read the parable of the sower and the different soils. Verse 24 says, "He presented another parable to them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field'" (NAS).

Earlier, in verse 19, Jesus says that the field is the human heart. We can sow good things in our hearts through the Word. But we must constantly be on guard against bad seed. We're in the world but not of it, so we should pay careful attention to the things we see and hear. Much of the seed available is not "good seed." We want to avoid close fellowship with those who continually say, "Oh, man, I've been looking all over and it's bad." It's like opening up our hearts and saying, "Hit me with some tares. Go ahead, sow them in there." But encouraging people will sow something good in our hearts.

We also don't want to be discouraging to others. Husbands, in particular, must take care of their words, because they sow into their wives. They will reap what they sow whether good or bad.

The last way we can prepare our hearts is by walking in close fellowship with the household of

faith. We will never discover our real selves in church meetings or in our prayer closets. But as we meet our wife or brother or sister one-on-one, we discover who we are.

If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin (1 Jn. 1:7 NAS).

Having an unprepared heart is a sin that is most easily cleansed by walking in the light with those who know the Lord. Confess and be eager to confess. When someone says, "I've seen this in your life," we should be quick to open up and confess it. Even if we don't feel as if our brother is correct in his judgment, we should acknowledge the sin and let the Lord judge it. If we are quick to confess the sin that others see in us, we will be strengthened in the inner man by God's grace. If we desire to be a person who will respond to the voice of God, we will use every opportunity to humble ourselves before the Lord and our brothers and sisters.

If God has called us and our hearts are fixed on Him, we will be unshakable. The unshakable people of God won't experience the failure of Israel, but like David, they will experience the favor of God. □

Footnote

¹R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 433.



Bruce Longstreth is editor of *New Wine*. He is a graduate of Simpson College in San Francisco and did graduate study at Golden Gate Seminary, Mill Valley, California.

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When God's people missed a great opportunity

The Judges of Israel

We are studying the Old Testament from three viewpoints: the Kingdom principle, God encouraging man to live under His rule; the incarnation principle, God demonstrating His nature through faithful men and women; and the Spirit principle, God acting in human affairs by the power of the Holy Spirit.

During the time of the judges, Israel was a loose tribal confederacy that was ruled in theory by God directly through the judges. The idea of a monarchy was rejected by Gideon, one of the judges. "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you" (Judg. 8:23 NAS).

But theocracy didn't work for Israel. Direct government by God put a lot of responsibility on the people, which they could have handled had it not been for their hard hearts. Eventually they clamored for a king "like other nations."

In so doing, Israel missed the greatest opportunity it would ever have to become a nation truly under God. The heathen society around it was more real and threatening than the commands and promises of God, and so the people compromised their faith. The God of their fathers became a convenience in times of extreme trouble.

The most significant turning point in the Old Testament concerning God's rule over His people was when God told Samuel, "They have not rejected you, but they have

rejected Me from being king over them" (1 Sam. 8:7 NAS). God then ruled through kings (even heathen ones) until the coming of His Son.

The judges were not consecutive rulers with legal authority over Israel. They were charismatic personalities much like the popular heroes of our modern history. When the people found themselves in a terrible situation, oppressed by foreign nations, God raised up someone on their behalf, infused him with His Spirit, incarnated His leadership qualities, and used him to rally the people and drive out their oppressors. We can see the Holy Spirit throughout the Book of Judges because He empowered the judges.

The incarnation principle is evident in Gideon. God had to incarnate His confidence, power, and strength in Gideon, because he had none of those qualities. That incarnation is what made the people follow the judges—they saw that God had indwelt these people and caused them to act beyond their ordinary abilities.

GENERAL READING ASSIGNMENT: Judges chapters 1-21

FIRST ASSIGNMENT:

In Judges locate six places where this phrase occurs: "The sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord." Each instance marks the beginning of a downward cycle.

1. Make a chart showing each apostasy, which nation subjected

them, and which judge delivered them and how.

2. In studying these occurrences, who was it that actually brought about their servitudes? What does this tell us about how God deals with His people even today?

SECOND ASSIGNMENT:

1. God told Israel to root out all strongholds of the enemy in the land He had given them. What does this say to us about rooting all the nesting places of sin and defeat out of our lives?
2. Can we make a truce with certain sinful tendencies in our lives?
3. If we compromise by allowing any sin to remain in our lives, what is the personal parallel to Israel's downward progression?
4. What compromises with sin do you still allow in your life?

THIRD ASSIGNMENT:

Read the accounts of the coming of the Spirit upon several of the Judges, such as Jephthah (see Judges 11:29), Gideon (see Judges 6:34), and Samson (see Judges 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14).

1. Did the presence of the Spirit confer holiness and perfection of character on these individuals (compare Acts 5:32)?
2. In what ways does the infusion of the Spirit on these judges differ from the coming of the Spirit on people in the Book of Acts?

BOOK REVIEWS

Becoming a Woman of Excellence by Cynthia Heald (NavPress, 1986, 114 pages, \$4.95). A motivating Bible study on topics such as obedience, discretion, wisdom, and purity.

Divine Appointments by Larry Tomczak (Servant Books, 1986, 166 pages, \$5.95). From his personal experiences, Larry shares how to make miracles a part of everyday life.

The Five Silent Years of Corrie ten Boom (Zondervan Publishing House, 1986, 189 pages, \$6.95). The story of the Dutch evangelist's bedridden years following a stroke.

The Goal and the Glory (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1986, 160 pages, \$5.95). Inspiring stories from heroes of football, basketball, and baseball.

Heart Cries by Mary Lou Carney (Abingdon Press, 1986, 124 pages, \$5.95). Possible prayers of biblical heroines, such as Sarah, Leah, and Lydia.

How to Cope When You Can't by Don Gossett (Huntington House, 1986, 167 pages, \$6.95). A Bible-based primer on dealing with depression, sickness, finances, rebellious children, gambling, and other problems.

Lead On! by John Haggai (Word Books, 1986, 208 pages, \$11.95). Twelve principles to foster enduring leadership, including vision, goal setting, and staying power.

Marx & Satan by Richard Wurmbrand (Crossway Books, 1986, 143 pages, \$5.95). A sobering biography of Karl Marx, revealing the satanic roots of his theories. □



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The Story Behin

by Howa

Early this year, the world's media converged on the Philippines as the confrontation between Ferdinand Marcos and Corazon Aquino was fast becoming yet another "media event." But what really happened?

The rise of the Aquino government by the popular protest of the people must be traced back to the slaying of Benigno Aquino, Corazon's husband, at Manila Airport August 21, 1983.

Charles Colson in his book *Who Speaks for God?* gives some startling background on the events in the Philippines. While in the United States, Benigno Aquino shared with Colson about his conversion in prison in the Philippines after reading Colson's book *Born Again*.

Aquino explained how his conversion radically reversed his bitterness toward Marcos and his Marxist ideology, and that he wanted to return to the Philippines either in government or in prison. He also said he wanted to start a Prison Fellowship there.

When Aquino returned to Manila, he was murdered, but his death was the seed of the revolution. An apparent defeat turned out to be victory, life through death.

The Power of Prayer

Mrs. Garlinda Hyde, wife of a teacher at Faith Academy in the Philippines, says the real story has been left untold by the foreign press. She asks, "How did a nation of fifty-five million people begin and

end a revolution in three days without the slaughter of human life?"

When the announcement was made by President Marcos of an attempted coup and the intended arrests of General Ramos and Minister of Defense Ivan Enrile, there was a call by a radio announcer to take a stand with God against that injustice. Another broadcaster read 2 Chronicles 7:14, calling the people to pray, and they responded.

Miracles took place all over Manila: Broadcasters read the Word over the radio and prayed; the people met the army and prayed and sang praises to God. One broadcaster said it was not "people power" but "prayer power."

The world knows much about the general developments but what



President Corazon Aquino waves to thousands celebrating a thanksgiving mass March 2.



Aquino's greatest threat is the Communist military army, which vowed never to surrender.

e Philippines

d the Revolution

rd Carter

wasn't reported was that immediately upon confirmation that Marcos had left the country, the three television broadcasters joined hands, and prayed and wept, giving thanks to God for victory. People everywhere leaped and cried for joy, thanking God.

The following day people again were reminded that it was God who defeated Marcos. The front page of the newspaper read "Three P's Contributed to P.M.'s Fall"—prayer, people power, and pastors.

With the removal of the Marcos government from office and the succession of the Aquino government the question arises, Will the downfall of this military dictatorship mean liberation from oppressive government?

The Communist Threat

Mrs. Aquino's obvious decency will hopefully get rid of some government corruption. But her greatest threat comes from the New People's Army, the Communist military army, which has vowed never to surrender. The Communists were conspicuously absent from the people's uprising because as Australian journalist Barry Lowe wrote on February 25:

The Left believes the revolution...is bourgeois in origin and will not meet the aspirations of the Filipino people. They believe that Mrs. Aquino's election will not resolve the fundamental social problems of the country: the excessive concentration of wealth in

few hands (including those of the Aquino family), and the alienation of the mass of landless peasants, endemic corruption, and economic depression in the sugar-producing areas.¹

The Communist Party has been pursuing a two-pronged strategy—armed rebellion through its thirty-thousand-strong New People's Army and political agitation from the National Democratic Front, the front organization of the Communist party of the Philippines. This political wing will probably use terror campaigns in any future elections to gain power in Manila. With their statement that they will "never, never, never give up the armed struggle," it's clear the Communists will not succumb



Ferdinand Marcos gives a campaign speech, accusing Aquino of supporting the Communists.



Marcos is carried through a crowd during his re-election campaign. Behind him is his wife.

to Mrs. Aquino's call to lay down their arms.² That has been made evident by the 120 or so deaths since she proclaimed a truce. The Communists hope they will force President Aquino to form a coalition with them and thus move to dismantle the 250,000-strong army before ultimately taking power.

President Aquino has a clear advantage in her relatively well-equipped

army. If it remains loyal to the new government and if those who exercised a free arm of torture under Marcos are replaced, she has a good chance of remaining in power.

But the situation is clouded further by the influence of overseas church aid groups that are providing funds for the Communists. Many of these groups are thoroughly infiltrated with pro-Communist

clergy. Liberation theology is endemic.

Severe Economic Problems

Another factor in Mrs. Aquino's future as president is the country's economic problems. The Aquino government is faced with a large external debt. The governor of the Central Bank of the Philippines, Jose Farandez, resigned after the end of the Marcos reign, but was reappointed for a term of six years. His reappointment alleviates some concerns about Mrs. Aquino's ability to come to grips with the immense economic problems facing the nation.

Some argue that the growing Communist problem in the Philippines has to a great extent been the result of the harsh economic policies imposed. Those policies are related to the huge international debts of the Philippines.

There is a tragic record of Third World countries that have thrown off totalitarian regimes to gain supposed democratic governments only to have been quickly taken over by Communist rulers.

A factor in all those cases has been the large international debt and some contend that there is a direct correlation between debt and revolution.

This debt, the landless peasants, low prices for sugar, and other problems do not augur well for the Philippines economically.

Whatever challenges Mrs. Aquino faces, however, none are as great as the one the people faced in attempting to overthrow the Marcos government, and yet they succeeded. If the people will continue seeking God, liberation for the Philippines may indeed bring liberation. □

Footnotes

¹News Weekly, April 16, 1986.

²Ibid.

Howard Carter is director of Logos Foundation and editor of Restore Magazine, published in Australia.

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WASHINGTON WATCH

Who will the Evangelicals support?

A Presidential Poll

by Arne Christenson

A recent straw poll uncovers some interesting trends in evangelical support for presidential candidates, and confirms that the abortion issue remains central in motivating that support. The poll of 110 evangelical leaders from across the country was taken at the end of a Washington, D.C., briefing sponsored by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), an organization representing a broad range of evangelical churches and an affiliate of the National Religious Broadcasters.

When asked to choose the best candidate the Republican party could field for its 1988 presidential nominee, forty-one percent of those polled picked Representative Jack Kemp of New York, indicating a broad evangelical base for the candidate who now poses the most formidable challenge to Vice President George Bush.

Kemp has strong support among Evangelicals because they recognize his commitment to God and to the values they hold, says Kemp's press secretary John Buckley. "Evangelicals recognize that Kemp has done more than just paid lip service to their cause. They respect the depth of his commitment on a variety of profamily issues, including abortion."

Senator William Armstrong of Colorado drew twenty-one percent of the vote, and in a bit of a surprise, Pat Robertson of the Christian Broadcasting Network took only fifteen percent. Robertson's showing indicates that Evangelicals will not automatically support an unquestionably evangelical candidate, and suggests they are not just looking for a candidate with impeccable credentials on key moral issues.

Other Republicans who drew support from Evangelicals were Vice President Bush, twelve percent; former U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, six percent; and Senator Robert Dole of Kansas, three percent.

Bush's fourth-place showing betrays some soft support among Evangelicals. Part of his difficulties undoubtedly stem from his weakness in the prolife community. When he recently canceled a speaking engagement at the annual convention of the National Right to Life Committee, he set off an avalanche of complaints. Prolife leaders contended that he had misplaced and misjudged his priorities, and that his commitment to the prolife cause remains questionable. Whether or not Bush's commitment is questionable, it is unquestionable that he has not galvanized support yet among key evangelical and prolife groups.

When asked to choose the best candidate the Democratic party could field for its 1988 nominee, those polled gave extraordinary support to Representative Richard Gephardt of Missouri, who with twenty-two percent of the vote came in a very close second behind Democratic front-runner Senator Gary Hart of Colorado. Gephardt, known as a leading advocate of tax reform, was distinctive among Democratic candidates in taking a prolife stance, which was the main reason he captured such strong evangelical backing.

Since the poll, however, Gephardt has reversed his position on abortion. His startling change underscores how difficult it is to capture the Democratic nomination from a prolife platform. It also demonstrates why the Democratic party has trou-

ble attracting Evangelicals.

Formerly, Gephardt's unequivocally prolife stance distinguished him among top Democratic presidential hopefuls. But when he withdrew his support for a constitutional amendment banning abortion, he turned his back on the evangelical bloc to gain support in the feminist wing of the Democratic party.

Gephardt's move reflected a realistic assessment of the Democratic presidential nomination process. A serious Democratic presidential candidate must pander to several powerful prochoice lobbies—such as the National Organization for Women—because those lobbies can deny the nomination to any prolife candidate.

When the Democratic party locks prolife candidates out of the race for the presidential nomination, it inevitably loses evangelical support. The prolife movement is a respected and influential force within the Republican party, so it is not surprising that the overwhelming majority of voters in this straw poll said they would have voted Republican if the election were held today.

The poll by the NAE admittedly involves a narrow sample, but it reflects activist support, which is absolutely essential to a presidential campaign. Two of the earliest and most important primaries, Iowa and Michigan, involve a delegate selection process that requires a cadre of dedicated volunteers, and many of those volunteers will be Evangelicals. The outcome of those primaries could set the tone for the next presidential race before the polls in New Hampshire even open. □

Arne Christenson is a legislative aide to Representative Vin Weber (R-Minn.).

FATHERGRAM®

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Faces

by Vernon Simpson

Did you ever see a face that you could not forget? I remember one that to myself I called "angel face." She was my Bible teacher when I was a youngster. Of the fifteen teenage girls in her class, eleven had never received Jesus as their Savior, but during a week of revival, she led them to receive Christ. They each walked down the aisle, confessing Him as Lord and Savior. When the last one came at the end of the meetings, she walked the aisle with her. The glory of God was reflected on her face! Even now when I recall it, I am lifted up.

I remember one face of a father of seven who had such lines of love and kindness that his heart was revealed. He'd suffered through the loss of his first wife, but God gave him another fine Christian wife and a happy home. How he loved his family and how he struggled to make a living for it. He was happy and I could see it in his face.

I have also seen faces etched in sorrow, suffering, and defeat by the killer alcohol. Just to look at their swollen, sad faces brought sorrow to my heart.

Dads, let's help our kids to have happy and lovely faces. Now is the time to help them have the peace of God and the victory of God. While they are in your hands, guide them to the real victory of life, which is to know Christ and to be filled with His Spirit.

How to test your

"Optimism Potential"

by Bruce Longstreth

I find some of the greatest insights from some pretty out-of-the-way places. An airline magazine, for example, was the source for this quiz that tests your "**optimism potential**":

1. Do you believe that, inevitably, most things will work out?
2. Do most of your daydreams have happy endings?
3. Do you believe that success is just around the next corner or only a phone call away?
4. If your favorite sports team is twenty points behind, do you still wait until the final buzzer before admitting defeat?¹

That kind of tongue-in-cheek, lighthearted thought provoker may help you see the way you see things. If you took it seriously, you could be in trouble, for you may have just flunked the optimist test. But if, on the other hand, you did answer any one of the questions yes, you have the potential of facing and solving life's most sticky problems. Researchers have found that **optimistic people are far more successful** in life than pessimistic ones.

In a study made of former prisoners of war captured during either World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War, four qualities stood out as keys to their survival: a mind-set that focused on the present, the abil-

ity to control anger and hostility, a determination to live, and the ability to be optimistic even in the face of great hardship.

As you read those four qualities, you may have noticed that they have a biblical base for truth: "Take no thought for tomorrow." "Don't let the sun go down upon your wrath." "In everything give thanks." For the Christian, the word for all of these important truths is **hope**. *Optimism* and *hope* are quite similar in meaning but have one slight difference.

Optimism can at times be an unrealistic whistling in the dark, a Pollyanna view of life that refuses to see problems. *Hope*, on the other hand, is firmly fixed in present reality but connected as well to the "God of all hope," who lives above and beyond the present circumstances.

Fathers at all times must be hopeful. As "hopers," they hold to this cardinal rule: "Never confuse temporary states with permanent ones." If you ever believe that your bad situation will last forever, you have lost hope. If you have lost hope, you have lost the ability to plan creative ways to solve the present crisis. □

Footnote

¹ Perry W. Buffington, Ph.D., "A Cheery Topic," *Sky* (November 1985), p. 109.

Tips for the Pessimist

If you are caught in the trap of pessimism, here are some tips that may set you free:

1. **Review the faithfulness of God in your life.** When you can say, "The God who *has* helped me *will* help me," you have taken the first step needed to find a way out of your predicament.
2. **Take a worry break.** Sometimes we get so enmeshed in the problem that we can't see the forest for the trees. Go for a walk, take the day off, or rent a slapstick comedy video. Fresh air, time off, and a good laugh can help get the hopeful perspective back again.
3. **Force yourself to be with optimistic people.** When you

feel down, you tend to isolate yourself, but sharing your situation with a close friend who has an upbeat attitude can help you see things from a fresh point of view. It would be a disaster to have only those friends who share your limited perspective.

4. **List the best and worst scenarios.** If you would list the worst thing that could happen and what you would do in that case, and then list the best that could happen and the strategy for that, you would have taken steps to get out of hopelessness and move into a positive view of the future. The bottom line for this is that as a Christian, you will have to face the fact

that "all things (worst case, best case) work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose."

5. **Determine to speak positively about your situation.** Many times we would be able to overcome a hopeless attitude if we simply spoke hopefully about it. It doesn't take any more effort to say, "I believe it will all work out," than to say, "I'm doomed!" But the results are dramatically different. If I confess the promises of God, hope is restored. If I continually murmur and complain, I feed the spirit of pessimism that has paralyzed me.

Family Affairs

Writing in *The Washington Post*, Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, says that it is important to correct the impression that the number of black teen births is increasing. Between 1978 and 1983 black teen births actually declined by five percent, and white teen births rose two percent....In his new book, *Family and Nation*, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan says that a large majority of blacks and more than one third of the whites will spend a substantial portion of their first eighteen years in a family with no man as its head....Nick Stinnett and John DeFrain, two noted professors of family studies, write that strong families share six major qualities: commitment, appreciation, communication, time, spiritual wellness, and coping ability.

A Family Hope Test

It is important for fathers to see if their family members have an attitude of hope. Here's a test:

1. Listen to their conversations about projects they've recently been involved in. Do they expect to win, pass the test, or be the "life of the party"?
2. How do they respond to a tough assignment? Do they believe they can do it, or do they begin with a defeated attitude?
3. Do some role-playing. Create what you think would be an impossible situation and ask each family member what he would do in it. After each has finished the assignment, see what the others think would be a good idea.
4. Ask them to list hopeful words and doubtful words. Then have them choose their worst and best words, and use them in a short story or sentence.
5. Have them describe the most hopeful and the most pessimistic

person they know. Then have them tell how they could give hope to the pessimist and bring doubt to the hopeful. This little exercise may help them to see that they can either lift up or drag down those they meet.

6. Make a list of ten Scripture verses that could be used in bringing hope to someone who is down-and-out. Challenge your tribe to memorize five of these so that they'll be ready for immediate use. Although this is intended to help others, what they may find is that they need the scriptures as much as the person they had in mind.

7. Draw, clip, or photograph an optimist, and list why he's your choice.

8. It might be good to finish this exercise with a "cockeyed optimist of the week" award. Who is the most optimistic person in the house? Dads, if you don't win, tie, or get runner-up, you're in trouble.

THE WAY I SEE IT

The antidote for complicated theology is

Keep It Simple

by Don Basham

And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables [tablets], that he may run that readeth it' (Hab. 2:2).

As one who both writes and edits for a living, I am continually aware of how difficult it is to communicate clearly. When I read or try to edit an article that falls short of the literary quality necessary for publication, I recall a line from a popular movie, "What we have here is a failure to communicate."

In his excellent book *The Power of Little Words*, author John Beckley, former business editor of *Newsweek* magazine, observes:

The emphasis in education is rarely placed on communicating ideas simply and clearly. Instead we're encouraged to use more complicated words and sentence structures to show off our learning and literacy....Instead of teaching us how to communicate as clearly as possible, our schooling in English teaches us how to fog things up. It even implants a fear that if we don't make our writing complicated enough, we'll be considered uneducated.¹

The problem we are talking about spills over into practically every kind of writing, all the way from books and magazines, down to those little sheets of instructions that accompany kits of things that have to be put together. Have you ever tried to read and follow those instructions? Just the other day my wife brought home a package containing

an unassembled frame for drying sweaters. Upon opening it I found a little slip of paper that read:

Instructions: Pivot four hinged arms into cross. Slip single tabbed arm extension into each slotted sleeve, with double tabbed bend pointing upward. Position nylon corner eyelets over ends of upward arm extensions. Place plastic tips on wire ends to lock nylon surface. Place towel under dryer to absorb excess moisture, when not used in tub.

I looked at the pile of strangely bent pieces of wire and single piece of nylon fabric and then again at the sheet of instructions and mumbled to myself, "What we have here is a failure to communicate." Then recalling the scripture that says, "With God all things are possible," I made a positive confession before I began. Honest, I did. But it still took thirty minutes of intense mental and physical concentration to put the darn contraption together—even the wrong way. And another twenty minutes to finally get it together right.

I know some ministers and Bible teachers who twist the Scriptures into doctrines almost as complicated as the directions for assembling that sweater dryer. In seminary I became frustrated to the point of tears trying to read complicated theological texts whose authors were far more concerned with impressing other theologians with their profundity than with helping young preachers understand the Scriptures and the basic principles of the Christian faith. In

my classes we spent far more time reading and discussing books *about* the Bible than we spent studying the Word of God itself.

Those frustrating experiences have sometimes prompted me—when asked if I attended seminary—to answer, "Yes, but I finally managed to get over it."

For all the inspirational and self-help books I have read, when I'm having a really difficult time I still find the greatest help and encouragement in the Word of God itself. Maybe that's because what the Scriptures claim for themselves is true.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The clear, simple truths of the Scriptures have it all over man's advice, which all too often proves about as helpful as "slip single tabbed arm extension into each slotted sleeve, with double tabbed bend pointing upward."

At least, that's the way I see it. □

Footnote

¹John Beckley, *The Power of Little Words* (Fairfield, NJ: The Economics Press, 1984), p. 8.

Don Basham is chief editorial consultant for New Wine.

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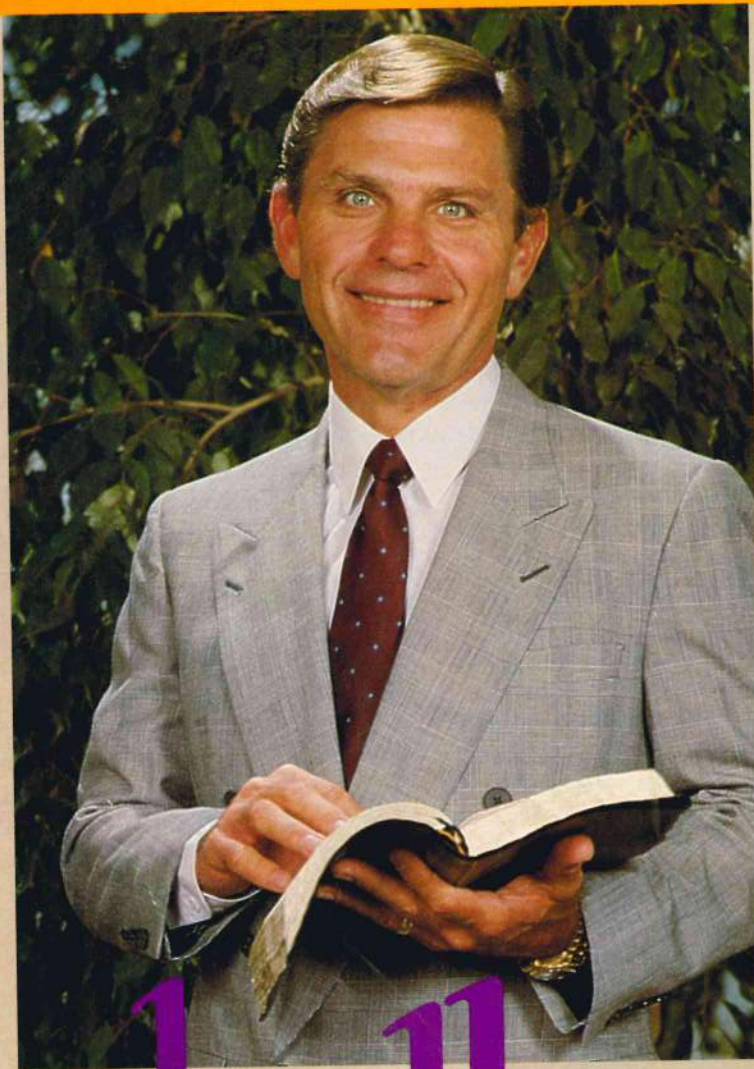
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