



COMMUNION
WITH GOD

.....
A Devotional Guide for
the School of Prayer

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A Devotional Guide for the School of Prayer, comprised of materials drawn from the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White, and issued under the auspices of the Ministerial Association. The compilation has been submitted for review to the Ellen G. White Estate.

Ministerial Association
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

COMMUNION WITH GOD

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✿ FOREWORD ✿

In 1962 the church at Saint Helena Sanitarium, California, enjoyed a revival and gained renewed strength through a "School of Prayer" conducted by the pastor and several retired workers of long experience who made up the faculty.

The school commenced with a Sabbath morning church service, after which classes met for six weeks on prayer-meeting night. To provide adequate time for instruction and participation, the usual time for prayer meeting was extended to an hour and a half. The class session consisted in a presentation by one of the members of the faculty, followed by a panel discussion or by small group meetings. There was also a daily period of personal study and prayer at home.

It soon became apparent that more effective work would be done if key quotations could be drawn together from the rich sources of the Ellen G. White writings and placed in the hands of the class members for personal study and contemplation. Fifty such studies, entitled *Communion With God*, were prepared by the faculty and duplicated. Those leading in this initial project were Elder C. M. Mellor, pastor of the Sanitarium church; Elder A. L. Ham, a former vice-president of the General Conference; Elder and Mrs. Taylor G. Bunch, who for long years carried responsibilities in conference leadership and pastoral work; and Miss Minnie Dauphinee, veteran college dean of women.

This "School of Prayer" proved to be such a blessing that the instructors were invited to present the program in other churches. For this, additional copies of the *Communion With God* guide were needed. Three thousand were distributed, yet the supply was soon exhausted and requests for more kept coming. It soon became evident that thousands of our members are eager for the blessing accruing from such periods of devotion. It was therefore felt wise that this study guide be published in an attractive but

inexpensive form. Thus *Communion With God* has come into being under the sponsorship of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference. The content of these studies has been drawn almost entirely from the writings of Ellen G. White, whose inspired pen has produced so much on the importance and rewards of prayer. It has been difficult to condense into a few minutes' reading the wealth of material available from the messenger of the Lord; but all will agree that the initial "School of Prayer" faculty has made a fine selection.

It is suggested that first the pages for the day be read thoughtfully. Next, ponder the gems presented, asking the question, "Lord, how can I apply this to my own life?" Then one is ready to enter into that most important, sacred, and thrilling experience known to the Christian—prayer! "Ye shall find Me when ye shall search for Me with all your heart."

Where "Schools of Prayer" are conducted, we urge that the student pursue still further study in the sources referred to in *Communion With God*. If such a program could be conducted in our churches throughout the world, what an inspiration that would be!

Nothing else will do so much for our members as an experience of deep devotion and prayer. *Communion With God* has been prepared with this in mind. It is with confidence, therefore, that we send forth this booklet. Let us all unite in praying for the promised revival and the showers of the "latter rain."

James A. Cress
Secretary, Ministerial Association

Special thanks to Mr. and Mrs.

Shelley whose generosity underwrote
the development of this spiritual project.

PREFACE

Our prayer for each person that reads this book is that as you read you may know that you have been and you are right now prayed for by multitudes of your Christian brothers and sisters around the world. We are praying that you may sense the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit as you read these pages. He will inspire you with new insights and help you to develop a deep and meaningful relationship with the Trinity that will last until Jesus comes. By earnest sincere heartfelt prayer we can have the privilege to open the treasure house of Heaven and there awaits us multitudes of gifts and blessings which we will never receive unless we ask and earnestly seek the good Lord in prayer.

Has your Christian life become dry, meaningless and joyless? God has a wonderful way to change all that and completely revitalize, renew, invigorate and make your Christian life the most satisfying experience you ever had in your whole life.

God personally invites you and me through the Prophet Isaiah to develop on our knees an everlasting relationship that will bring complete fulfillment, great joy and total satisfaction to our lives.

This is an unconditional invitation irrespective of where we are spiritually. God says to you and me in Isaiah 1:18, "Come now and let us reason together." Here the Creator of the Universe says to us individually: Come now, I want to have a two-way communication with you, talk to me in sincere prayer, and I will talk to you by that still small voice.

My precious brothers and sisters, God promises that you will hear a voice behind you saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Isaiah 30:21. However this precious experience will not come to casual seekers, or if we love our position or possessions or worldly pleasures and sin more than we love the living God.

Multitudes of you brothers and sisters and this writer have turned the

TV off and turned on prayer for lengthy periods of time every day, and as a result, our lives have become most joy filled and happy, contented, very satisfying and truly meaningful, and our prayer is that you may experience the same untold, unexplainable pleasures.

You can make this old fashioned yet revolutionary experience, this two-way communication with God, a most rewarding experience. And when you do, you will do anything to maintain it forever.

You'll never be the same person again if thoughtfully and prayerfully you read this book.

With much Christian love and best wishes, your brother and sister in Christ,

Tibor and Maria Shelley

THANKS AND APPRECIATION

Without the kind suggestion and initiative of Elder Leo Ranzolin, General Conference Vice President, and the help and encouragement of Elder James A. Cress of the General Conference Ministerial Association, this book would not have been reprinted. I am also eternally grateful to my loving wife Maria, who wholeheartedly supports me in all our missionary undertakings. I'm also grateful to my loving daughter, Esther Plewa, who helped me to reconstruct sentences for hours, even at 1:00 a.m., and also to Joan Jones for typing all the prayer thoughts and suggestions.

Of course, above all, we are thankful to God for all of His wonderful blessings. May He lead and guide continuously in all of our lives.

Tibor Shelley

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WHAT IS REAL PRAYER?

BIBLE GEM

"And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."—Luke 11:1

QUESTION

What is real prayer? Would it not be well to define what effective prayer really is before beginning this spiritual adventure?

ANSWER

Speaking to God as to a friend: "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him."—*Steps to Christ*, page 93

Conversation with God: "If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that shows to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 129, 130

The key in the hand of faith: "The darkness of the evil one encloses

those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path."—*Steps to Christ*, pages 94, 95

It is the soul of religion: "Do not neglect secret prayer, for it is the soul of religion. With earnest, fervent prayer, plead for purity of soul. Plead as earnestly, as eagerly, as you would for your mortal life, were it at stake. Remain before God until unutterable longings are begotten within you for salvation, and the sweet evidence is obtained of pardoned sin."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 163

The breath of the soul: "Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted, and the health of the soul be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Wellspring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience. Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God."—*Gospel Workers*, pages 254, 255

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Heavenly Father, we cannot live for You and work for You unless You teach us by Your Spirit to pray like Jesus taught his disciples. Help us to open our hearts to You as to our very best Friend in sincerity and humility and earnestly seek to develop a two-way communication with You.

May we learn to pray so that Isaiah 1:18 becomes an every day experience. Help us to pray to You in purity of soul and we will hear that still small voice speaking to us, helping, teaching, leading and instructing us until completely united with You we may work as a team, constantly listening and following Your divine guidance and the leading of Your Holy Spirit.



PRAYER IN THE MORNING

BIBLE GEM

"Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto Thee will I pray. My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up."—Psalm 5:1-3

QUESTION

What is the first work of the day? For what should one pray in the morning?

ANSWER

The first words in the morning: "The very first outbreathing of the soul in the morning should be for the presence of Jesus. 'Without Me,' He says, 'ye can do nothing.' It is Jesus that we need; His light, His life, His Spirit, must be ours continually. We need Him every hour. And we should pray in the morning that as the sun illuminates the landscape, and fills the world with light, so the Sun of Righteousness may shine into the chambers of mind and heart, and make us all light in the Lord. We cannot do without His presence one moment. The enemy knows when we undertake to do without our Lord, and he is there, ready to fill our minds with his evil suggestions that we may fall from our steadfastness; but it is the desire of the Lord that from moment to moment we should abide in Him, and thus be complete in Him."—*My Life Today*, page 15

Your first work: "Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, 'Take me, O

Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.' This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ. A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there should be an abiding, peaceful trust."—*Steps to Christ*, page 70

Lord, help me to do my best: "In the future life the mysteries that here have annoyed and disappointed us will be made plain. We shall see that our seemingly unanswered prayers and disappointed hopes have been among our greatest blessings. We are to look upon every duty, however humble, as sacred because it is a part of God's service. Our daily prayer should be, 'Lord, help me to do my best. Teach me how to do better work. Give me energy and cheerfulness. Help me to bring into my service the loving ministry of the Saviour.'"—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 474

Daily prayer as essential as temporal food: "If we would develop a character which God can accept, we must form correct habits in our religious life. Daily prayer is as essential to growth in grace, and even to spiritual life itself, as is temporal food to physical well-being. We should accustom ourselves to often lift the thoughts to God in prayer."—*Messages to Young People*, pages 114, 115

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Loving Father, help us to realize that without heavenly help and the indwelling presence and power of Your Holy Spirit, we are unable to do anything that is any good. Therefore, help us that our words, deeds and actions may be the very best because we are empowered by Your Holy Spirit to do Your loving ministry.

Please help us not to eat food until we have feasted on the Bread of Life first each morning. Then light up our lives by Your divine presence that through us Your love may beam to everyone we speak to or live and work with every day.

3

IT IS HARD TO FIND TIME FOR PRAYER

BIBLE GEM

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."—Psalm 27:14

QUESTION

How does one find time for meditation and prayer?

ANSWER

A need to watch: "You need to watch, let the busy activities of life lead you to neglect prayer when you most need the strength prayer would give. Godliness is in danger of being crowded out of the soul through overdevotion to business. It is a great evil to defraud the soul of the strength and heavenly wisdom which are waiting your demand. You need that illumination which God alone can give. No one is fitted to transact his business unless he has this wisdom."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 560

Prayer a source of strength: "Remember that prayer is the source of your strength. A worker cannot gain success while he hurries through his prayers and rushes away to look after something that he fears may be neglected or forgotten. He gives only a few hurried thoughts to God; he does not take time to think, to pray, to wait upon the Lord for a renewal of physical and spiritual strength. He soon becomes weary. He does not feel the uplifting, inspiring influence of God's Spirit. He is not quickened by fresh life. His jaded frame and tired brain are not soothed by personal contact with Christ."—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 243

Prayer neglected for bustle and show: "As our numbers are

increasing, broader plans must be laid to meet the increasing demands of the times; but we see no special increase of fervent piety, of Christian simplicity, and earnest devotion. The church seems content to take only the first steps in conversion. They are more ready for active labor than for humble devotion, more ready to engage in outward religious service than in the inner work of the heart. Meditation and prayer are neglected for bustle and show. Religion must begin with emptying and purifying the heart, and must be nurtured by daily prayer."—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 535

Failure in prayer causes our greatest mistakes: "If the rush of work is allowed to drive us from our purpose of seeking the Lord daily, we shall make the greatest mistakes; we shall incur losses, for the Lord is not with us; we have closed the door so that He cannot find access to our souls. But if we pray even when our hands are employed, the Saviour's ear is open to hear our petitions. If we are determined not to be separated from the Source of our strength, Jesus will be just as determined to be at our right hand to help us, that we may not be put to shame before our enemies. The grace of Christ can accomplish for us that which all our efforts will fail to do. Those who love and fear God may be surrounded with a multitude of cares, and yet not falter or make crooked paths for their feet. God takes care of you in the place where it is your duty to be. But be sure, as often as possible, to go where prayer is wont to be made."—*Counsels on Health*, page 424

Let nothing divert from Bible study and prayer: "Let nothing, however dear, however loved, absorb your mind and affections, diverting you from the study of God's Word, or from earnest prayer."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 53

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Merciful Father, please help us to pray, because without an intimate relationship with the Trinity, Your Holy Spirit leaves us and our spiritual nature dies, then no matter how hard we work, our multitude of labors will be fruitless and we become Holy Spirit powerless Christians. Help us to see clearly that over-devotion even to the Lord's business can devastate and destroy our spiritual life. When we make mistakes and wrong decisions, it is evident that our heart and mind are closed to Heavens influence.

Even Martin Luther recognized this. This is what he said: "Unless I spend two hours each morning in prayer, the devil gets the victory during the day."

Please help us, Lord, to let nothing no matter how good, take us from reading Your Word and heartfelt lengthy periods of time in prayer and

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meditating on the spotless life of Christ and then listening to that still small voice of the Holy Spirit saying This is the way, walk this way.

✻ 4 ✻

FERVENT IN PRAYER

BIBLE GEM

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—James 5:16

QUESTION

How may we enter into the experience of fervent prayer?

ANSWER

Fervent, constant prayer: "If the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer.

"Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children. . . .

"Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence?"—*Steps to Christ*, pages 94, 95

Pray in faith: "Faith is not feeling. . . . True faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption, for presumption is Satan's counterfeit of faith. . . .

"To talk of religion in a casual way, pray without soul-hunger and living faith, avails nothing. . . .

"Man hold faith as an opinion. But saving faith is a transaction, by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant

relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power."—*Gospel Workers*, pages 260, 261

The value of persistent asking: "God does not say, Ask once, and you shall receive. He bids us ask. Unwearyingly persist in prayer. The persistent asking brings the petitioner into a more earnest attitude, and gives him an increased desire to receive the things for which he asks. . . .

"But many have not a living faith. This is why they do not see more of the power of God. . . . They plan and devise, but pray little, and have little real trust in God. They think they have faith, but it is only the impulse of the moment. Failing to realize their own need, or God's willingness to give, they do not persevere in keeping their requests before the Lord.

"Our prayers are to be as earnest and persistent as was the petition of the needy friend who asked for the loaves at midnight. The more earnestly and steadfastly we ask, the closer will be our spiritual union with Christ."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 145, 146

Satan loses the battle: "If Satan sees that he is in danger of losing one soul, he will exert himself to the utmost to keep that one. . . . But if the one in danger perseveres, and in his helplessness casts himself upon the merits of the blood of Christ, our Saviour listens to the earnest prayer of faith, and sends a reinforcement of those angels that excel in strength to deliver him. Satan cannot endure to have his powerful rival appealed to, for he fears and trembles before His strength and majesty. At the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 345, 346

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Loving Jesus, so many of us are almost faithless and unbelieving. We have very limited living faith in a prayer-hearing, prayer-answering and miracle-working God. And as a result, we see so little of the mighty hand of God demonstrated in power in the midst of us.

How comforting, encouraging and faith building to read about Your example. You have regularly, earnestly and fervently prayed to the Father and proved Your sincerity by valuing prayer more than sleep.

Please help us by Your Spirit to know what it means to experience constant, unwavering, persistent, servant, earnest and sincere prayer expressed in words of faith.

Persevering prayer of faith will unquestionably move the mighty hand of God. Let us so pray that we may have the privilege to rejoice in seeing the prayer-hearing prayer-answering and mighty miracle-working God work his wonders in and through us.

5

WHAT TO PRAY FOR

BIBLE GEM

"We can approach God with confidence for this reason: if we make requests which accord with His will He listens to us; and if we know that our requests are heard, we know also that the things we asked for are ours."—1 John 5:14, NEB

QUESTION

What are some of the things I should ask for with the assurance that I shall receive them?

ANSWER

Ask for anything He has promised: "Every promise in the Word of God furnishes us with subject matter for prayer, presenting the pledged word of Jehovah as our assurance. Whatever spiritual blessing we need, it is our privilege to claim through Jesus. . . . We may state to Him our temporal matters, asking Him for bread and raiment as well as for the bread of life and the robe of Christ's righteousness. Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things, and you are invited to ask Him concerning them."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 133

For our own necessities: "Every soul has the privilege of stating to the Lord his own special necessities and to offer his individual thanksgiving for the blessings that he daily receives."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 278, 279

For the cause of God: "The varied interests of the cause furnish us with food for reflection and inspiration for our prayers."—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 459

For the Holy Spirit: "There is now need of much prayer. . . . The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for His blessing. It is time we were

more intense in our devotion. . . .The Lord expects us to ask Him."
—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 511, 512

For power and wisdom: "As you ask the Lord to help you, honor your Saviour by believing that you do receive His blessing. All power, all wisdom, are at our command. We have only to ask."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 514

"We must seek wisdom from on high that we may stand in this day of error and delusion."—*Early Writings*, pages 87, 88

For an understanding of God's Word: "No man is safe for a day or an hour without prayer. Especially should we entreat the Lord for wisdom to understand His Word. Here are revealed the wiles of the tempter and the means by which he may be successfully resisted. Satan is an expert in quoting Scripture, placing his own interpretation upon passages, by which he hopes to cause us to stumble."—*The Great Controversy*, page 530

For an understanding of these times: "Pray most earnestly for an understanding of the times in which we live, for a fuller conception of His purpose, and for increased efficiency in soul-saving." *Selected Messages*, b. 2, p. 400

For perfection: "The Lord loves to see His work done as perfectly as possible."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1108

"Let the workmen in the service of God today pray to Him for wisdom and keen foresight that they may do their work perfectly."—*Ibid*

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Let not anybody who only half believes God's promises expect to receive anything of the Lord. Every precious promise is a pledge by God. Let us honor Him by believing His Word. Ifs, buts, perhaps's, or maybe's cannot be answered. Only positive faith will unlock the treasure house of heaven. Let us ask anything God has promised with confidence during our intense devotional prayer time, and God will give us His Holy Spirit; and when He comes, we will have His wisdom, discernment, efficiency and overcoming power. He is our present and instant help in every time of need.

✻ 6 ✻

NEED OF A SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

BIBLE GEM

"Repent, therefore, and reform your lives, so that the record of your sins may be canceled, and that there may come seasons of refreshment from the Lord."—Acts 3:19, Weymouth

QUESTION

What is the great need of the church and how may it be met? (See Psalm 85:6; Habbakkuk 3:2; Psalm 138:7; Hosea 6:1-3; Luke 24:49; Matthew 23:19, 20; Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4, 14-18; *Selected Messages*, b. 1, pp. 121-128.)

ANSWER

A spiritual revival: "A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer."—*Selected Messages*, b. 1, p. 121

Every hindrance must be removed: "There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church and an impenitent congregation. If Satan had his way, there would never be another awakening, great or small, to the end of time. But we are

not ignorant of his devices. It is possible to resist his power. When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessings will come. Satan can no more hinder a shower of blessing from descending upon God's people than he can close the windows of heaven that rain cannot come upon the earth. Wicked men and devils cannot hinder the work of God, or shut out His presence from the assemblies of His people, if they will, with subdued, contrite hearts, confess and put away their sins, and in faith claim His promises."—*Ibid.*, p. 124

In answer to prayer: "Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 672

The result: "The Spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The Infinite One revealed Himself in power to His church. It was as if for ages this influence had been held in restraint, and now Heaven rejoiced in being able to pour out upon the church the riches of the Spirit's grace. And under the influence of the Spirit, words of penitence and confession mingled with songs of praise for sins forgiven. Words of thanksgiving and of prophecy were heard. All heaven bent low to behold and to adore the wisdom of matchless, incomprehensible love. . . . And what followed? The sword of the Spirit, newly edged with power and bathed in the lightnings of heaven, cut its way through unbelief. Thousands were converted in a day."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 38

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Lord, please help us to be genuine when we repent. True repentance is being willing to quit all known sins, said Elder George Vandeman.

When we confess in humility and repent and we are willing to give up all known sin, then fervent earnest prayer will lead the way to revival and reformation and regeneration and renewal and Satan will be powerless to stop it.

Please send Your Holy Spirit, loving Father, to revive us and may Your love be visible in our words and deeds and actions and how we respond and react to other people.

7

THE EARLY AND THE LATTER RAIN

BIBLE GEM

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month."—Joel 2:23

QUESTION

What is the necessary preparation for the latter rain?

ANSWER

Early rain necessary: "We may be sure that when the Holy Spirit is poured out those who did not receive and appreciate the early rain will not see or understand the value of the latter rain."— *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 399

"As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one state to another, the process of spiritual growth. . . .

"Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection."—*Ibid.*, p. 506

"Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided from them. They expect that the lack will be supplied by the latter **rain**. When the richest abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake. . . . Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of **the** active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling

on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it."—*Ibid.*, p. 507

"If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door."—*Ibid.*, p. 508

God's power gives life: "The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the Word of God. This Word imparts power; it begets life. . . . It transforms the nature and recreates the soul in the image of God."—*Education*, page 126

Baptism of Holy Spirit needed: "What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without this, we are no more fitted to go forth to the world than were the disciples after the crucifixion of their Lord. Jesus knew their destitution, and told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endowed with power from on high."—*Review and Herald*, Feb. 18, 1890

"We should pray as earnestly for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the disciples prayed on the Day of Pentecost. If they needed it at that time, we need it more today."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 158

Be constantly ready: "I have no specific time of which to speak when the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will take place—when the mighty angel will come down from heaven, and unite with the third angel in closing up the work for this world; my message is that our only safety is in being ready for the heavenly refreshing, having our lamps trimmed and burning."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Loving Lord Jesus, help us to understand that every one of us must now receive the infilling and enabling and empowering of the Holy Spirit.

Only those who know with certainty that they have the Holy Spirit now will receive the second great pentecostal outpouring and infilling to finish God's work.

As I preach short revival crusades around the world, many ask, How do we know with certainty that we have the Holy Spirit? Those that live Christlike virtuous lives and manifest love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, gentleness and compassion and self-control, are the only Holy Spirit-filled children of the living God.

The former infilling recreates us in the image of God and brings complete renewal and transformation of character, the new birth experience, the fruit and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

8

PRAYER AND REJOICING

BIBLE GEM

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."—Philippians 4:4

"The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Isaiah 35:10

QUESTION

In a world filled with sorrow and tragedy, what cause have we for rejoicing?

ANSWER

Praise, the atmosphere of heaven: "The melody of praise is the atmosphere of heaven; and when heaven comes in touch with the earth, there is music and song—'thanksgiving and the voice melody.'"—*Education*, page 161

Jesus met temptation with a song: "With a song, Jesus in His earthly life met temptation. Often when sharp, stinging words were spoken, often when the atmosphere about Him was heavy with gloom, with dissatisfaction, distrust, or oppressive fear, was heard His song of faith and holy cheer."—*Ibid*, p. 166

Study, meditation, and song: "He studied the Word of God, and His hours of greatest happiness were found when He could turn aside from the scenes of His labors . . . to hold communion with God. . . . The early morning often found Him in some secluded place, meditating, searching the Scriptures, or in prayer. With the voice of singing He welcomed the morning light. With songs of thanksgiving He cheered His hours of labor, and brought heaven's

gladness to the toilworn and disheartened."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 52

Use song against discouragement: "Song is a weapon that we can always use against discouragement. As we thus open the heart to the sunlight of the Saviour's presence, we shall have health and His blessing."—*Ibid.*, p. 254

Gratitude promotes health: "Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings—as much a duty as it is to pray."—*Ibid.*, p. 251

The way of triumph: "As the children of Israel, journeying through the wilderness, cheered their way by the music of sacred song, so God bids His children today gladden their pilgrim life. There are few means more effective for fixing His words in the memory than repeating them in song. And such a song has wonderful power."—*Education*, pages 167, 168

"As our Redeemer leads us to the threshold of the Infinite, flushed with the glory of God, we may catch the themes of praise and thanksgiving from the heavenly choir round about the throne; and as the echo of the angels' song is awakened in our earthly homes, hearts will be drawn closer to the heavenly singers. Heaven's communion begins on earth. We learn here the keynote of its praise."—*Ibid.*, p. 168

The song of hope and trust: "Amidst the deepening shadows of earth's last great crisis, God's light will shine brightest, and the song of hope and trust will be heard in clearest and loftiest strains."—*Ibid.*, p. 166

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

If we are cleansed, forgiven, born-again, Holy Spirit-filled, genuine Christians, then our hearts should be filled with joy and gladness and happy expressions on our faces should show that now we have become a new creation. Our happiness should be expressed in our joy-filled lifestyle and by prayer and songs of praise to our Creator.



PRAYER AND TRUST

BIBLE GEM

"The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."—Lamentations 3:24-26

QUESTION

How may I hold fast my hope, and maintain quiet confidence?

ANSWER

"Rest in the Lord": "Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 481

A life of restful, peaceful trust: "A life in Christ is a life of restfulness: There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there should be an abiding, peaceful trust. Your hope is not in yourself; it is in Christ. Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, . . . Christ in His matchless love—this is the subject for the soul's contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness."—*Steps to Christ*, pages 70, 71

The surrendered life: "If we surrender our lives to His service,

we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever may our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. If in our ignorance we make missteps, Christ does not leave us. His voice, clear and distinct, is heard saying, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.'"—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 173

Christ our example: "Worry is blind, and cannot discern the future; but Jesus *sees* the end from the beginning. . . .

"In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage. But many who profess to be His followers have an anxious, troubled heart, because they are afraid to trust themselves with God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 330

God will help those who trust Him: "God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 493

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Hope, trust, confidence and steadfast faith and a completely surrendered life to the Lord will give us the assurance that we are never alone. Under all circumstances of life we can trust the Lord, and if we trust Him, He will lift our burdens, heal our wounds, comfort our sorrows and surround us with His love. Under His wings we will be protected, cared for and cherished.



PRAYER AND REVERENCE

10

BIBLE GEM

"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him."—Psalm 89:7

QUESTION

How may one learn true reverence? Why is reverence important to spiritual growth?

ANSWER

A sense of God's greatness and presence: "True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence. With this sense of the Unseen the heart of every child should be deeply impressed."—*Education*, page 242

"There is no other way of manifesting reverence so pleasing to Him as obedience to that which He has spoken."—*Ibid.*, p. 244

Obedience comes from the heart: "All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. . . . When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 668

With humility and reverence: "Humility and reverence should characterize the deportment of all who come into the presence of God. In the name of Jesus we may come before Him with confidence, but we must not approach Him with the boldness of presumption, as though He were on a level with ourselves. There are those who address the great and all-powerful and holy

God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, as they would address an equal, or even an inferior. . . . These should remember that they are in His sight whom seraphim adore, before whom angels veil their faces."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 252

God is at the place of prayer: "The hour and place of prayer are sacred, because God is there; and as reverence is manifested in attitude and demeanor, the feeling that inspires it will be deepened. 'Holy and reverend is His name,' the psalmist declares. Angels, when they speak that name, veil their faces. With what reverence, then, should we, who are fallen and sinful, take it upon our lips!"—*Gospel Workers*, page 178.

"Reverence My sanctuary": "To the humble, believing soul, the house of God on earth is the gate of heaven. The song of praise, the prayer, the words spoken by Christ's representatives, are God's appointed agencies to prepare a people for the church above, for that loftier worship into which there can enter nothing that defileth."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, 491

Reverence for His name and Word: "Reverence should be shown also for the name of God. Never should that name be spoken lightly or thoughtlessly."—*Education*, page 243

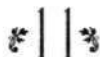
"We should reverence God's Word. For the printed volume we should show respect, never putting it to common uses, or handling it carelessly."—*Ibid*, p. 244

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

God will cleanse the world by unquenchable fire soon. Are we fire resistant? Only if we are cleansed and filled and empowered and protected by the Holy Spirit will we escape the holocaust.

Loving Lord Jesus, help us to realize that at all times we are in the presence of the awesome God, the mighty and powerful Creator of the Universe. God sees and reads every thought and the very intents of our hearts. Nothing is hidden from His all-seeing eyes.

What reverence we should have when we come into the presence of the Almighty God in prayer. Openness, sincerity, honesty and humility must be the platform from where we approach the throne of mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.



PRAYER AND DILIGENCE

BIBLE GEM

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."—Hebrews 12:14, 15

QUESTION

How may I reveal Christ to those whose lives I shall be privileged to touch today?

ANSWER

Witness of godly life: "Character is power. The silent witness of a true, unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence. By revealing in our own life the character of Christ, we cooperate with Him in the work of saving souls. It is only by revealing in our life His character that we can cooperate with Him. And the wider the sphere of our influence, the more good we may do. When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves, then will the church have power to move the world."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 340

It radiates from within: "True character is not shaped from without, and put on; it radiates from within. If we wish to direct others in the path of righteousness, the principles of righteousness must be enshrined in our own hearts."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 307

An argument none can gainsay: "Our influence upon others depends not so much upon what we say as upon what we are. Men may combat and defy our logic, they may resist our appeals; but a life of disinterested love

is an argument they cannot gainsay. A consistent life, characterized by the meekness of Christ, is a power in the world. . . . The word of God, spoken by one who is himself sanctified through it, has a life-giving power that makes it attractive to the hearers, and convicts them that it is a living reality. When one has received the truth in the love of it, he will make this manifest in the persuasion of his manner and the tones of his voice."—*Ibid.*, p. 142

To tell what we really know: "As witnesses for Christ, we are to tell what we know, what we ourselves have seen and heard and felt. If we have been following Jesus step by step, we shall have something right to the point to tell concerning the way in which He has led us. We can tell how we have tested His promise, and found the promise true. We can bear witness to what we have known of the grace of Christ. This is the witness for which our Lord calls, and for want of which the world is perishing."—*Ibid.*, p. 340

Influence of the atmosphere that surrounds us: "Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own—an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith. . . . Or it may be heavy and chill with the gloom of discontent and selfishness. . . . By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 339

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

When we live in a selfish, self-centered, egotistic, self-opinionated atmosphere of our own making, we repel people. When this is transformed by the presence of God in our lives, then meekness, gentleness, kindness, and selfless service and love will draw people like a magnet to our Lord and Saviour.

It is not what we say but what we do and how we live our daily lives that makes the difference. We need to practice what we preach. And with all of us, this is the hardest.

Lord, please help us. This world is dying because they do not see enough completely transformed lives demonstrating the principles of righteousness and the meekness and love of Christ.

Come in Lord, and radiate from within Your endless kindness, compassion and love.

Our own testimony of a truly transformed life—not slightly altered, but completely changed—will powerfully move the world and make our religion super attractive.

12

TO SEE HIS FACE

BIBLE GEM

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."—Matthew 5:8

QUESTION

How may one acquire the purity of heart without which it is impossible to see God?

ANSWER

By imitating Christ's life: "As God is pure in His sphere, so man is to be pure in his. And he will be pure if Christ is formed within, the hope of glory; for he will imitate Christ's life and reflect His character."—*Gospel Workers*, page 366

The Holy Spirit in hearts and homes: "In order to be purified and to remain pure, Seventh-day Adventists must have the Holy Spirit in their hearts and in their homes."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 164

"If ever there was a time when we needed the working of the Spirit of God upon our hearts and lives, it is now. Let us lay hold of this divine power for strength to live a life of holiness and self-surrender."—*Ibid.*, p. 166

Christ takes control: "As we work in connection with the Great Teacher, the mental faculties are developed. The conscience is under divine guidance. Christ takes the entire being under His control. . . . New, rich thoughts come to him [the individual]. Light is given to the intellect, determination to the will, sensitiveness to the conscience, purity to the imagination."—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 476, *All*

Pure in heart here: "Into the City of God there will enter nothing that defiles. All who are to be dwellers there will here

have become pure in heart. In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing distaste for careless manners, unseemly language, and coarse thought. When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pages 24, 25

Behold Christ: "If we would enter the City of God, and look upon Jesus in His glory, we must become accustomed to beholding Him with the eye of faith here. The words and character of Christ should be often the subject of our thoughts and our conversation; and each day some time should be especially devoted to prayerful meditation upon these sacred themes."—*Messages to Young People*, page 114

Grow in His likeness: "Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, and by beholding we become changed. Goodness, love for our fellowmen, becomes our natural instinct. . . . Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 355

Live as in the presence of God: "The pure in heart live as in the visible presence of God during the time He apportions them in this world. And they will also see Him face to face in the future immortal state."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 27

"Then we shall see Him face to face": "We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face."—*The Story of Redemption*, page 432

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

When self is crucified, dead and buried out of the way, when our vessel is emptied of self, pride, the lust of the flesh and sin, and we repent, then Christ moves in. Christ in you the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27, last paragraph) becomes a reality, yes, Christ within, inside of us, below our skin, Christ formed within, in complete control of our life.

The result: Conscience reactivated, rich pure thoughts and feelings flood the mind, we'll be determined to do only what is right and honorable, orderliness, cleanliness in life and home will be automatic. God-likeness, compassion and heartfelt love become a natural outflow.

When the life of Christ reflects from within like a mirror, then we will be like Elder Charles D. Brooks, whose son at his retirement farewell party at General Conference said, "Ml my life I have never heard my father ever

raise his voice or yell or lose his temper or slam a door in anger in our house." This is an example of what happens when we are cleansed, born again, and Christ comes to live inside of us as a permanent resident.

13

THAT I MAY KNOW THEE

BIBLE GEM

"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."—John 17:3

QUESTION

How may the saving knowledge of Jesus become my personal experience?

ANSWER

Through study of the Scriptures: "The Holy Scriptures are the perfect standard of truth, and as such should be given the highest in education. To obtain an education worthy of the name, we must receive a knowledge of God, the Creator, and of Christ, the Redeemer, as They are revealed in the Sacred Word.

"Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do."—*Education*, page 17

"As the perfection of His character is dwelt upon, the mind is renewed, and the soul is re-created in the image of God. . . .

"Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached."—*Ibid*, p. 18

Experimental knowledge: "Oh, do we know God as we should? What comfort, what joy, we should have if we were to learn daily the lessons He desires us to learn! We must know Him by an experimental knowledge. It will be profitable for us to spend more time in secret prayer, in becoming personally acquainted with our heavenly Father."—*Medical Ministry*, page 102

Soul re-created in the image of God: "The knowledge of God as revealed in Christ is the knowledge that all who are saved must have. It is the knowledge that works transformation of character. This knowledge, received, will re-create the soul in the image of God. It will impart to the whole being a spiritual power that is divine."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 425

"As Jesus was in human nature, so God means His followers to be. In His strength we are to live the life of purity and nobility which the Saviour lived."—*Ibid*, p. 426

Study the prophecies: "The prophecies are to be studied, and the life of Christ compared with the writings of the prophets. He identifies Himself with the prophecies, stating over and over again, They wrote of Me; they testify of Me. The Bible is the only Book giving a positive description of Christ Jesus; and if every human being would study it as his lesson book, and obey it, not a soul would be lost."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 382

The Word begets life: "The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the Word of God. This Word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God."—*Education*, page 126

Conversing with God: "If we keep the Lord ever before us, . . . we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 129

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

There is no other way to get to know God and His plan for our life than to develop daily and intimate relationships by earnest prayer, Bible reading, meditating on the life of Christ and listening to the Holy Spirit. Christ is our example! Because of His prayer life, He responded with love even when He was ridiculed, humiliated, spat upon, beaten until His back was in shreds, and finally crucified.

Do we respond the same way when we have our light afflictions?

Meditating on the life of Christ will definitely increase our tolerance level and we will learn what it means to be patient, kind, forgiving and loving. This is the way we become recreated in the image of Christ.

My prayer is that you may find joy as I have, in spending two hours with the Trinity most mornings (my aim is every morning), while everyone in the

house is still fast asleep, in prayer, Bible reading, meditating on the life of Christ and listening to God's voice. This is the sweetest, the nicest, the very best thing that happens to me each day, and it prepares me for a Holy Spirit filled day of victory and joy.



SELF-CENTERED PRAYERS

BIBLE GEM

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."—James 4:3

QUESTION

How may we know when our prayers are self-centered?

ANSWER

Prayers from proud and selfish hearts: "Your pride threatens to be **your ruin**. . . . Your prayers . . . come from hearts filled with pride and selfishness."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 176

"God cannot approve of the least degree of covetousness or selfishness, and He abhors the prayers and exhortations of those who indulge these evil traits. As Satan sees that his time is short, he leads men on to be more and more selfish and covetous, and then exults as he sees them wrapped up in themselves, close, penurious, and selfish."—*Early Writings*, page 268

A selfish prayer: "In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, the self-sufficient prayer, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not as the rest of men,' stood out in sharp contrast to the penitent's plea, 'Be merciful to me the sinner.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, page 495

"They are boastful, and pray and talk in a self-righteousness manner, exalting themselves, recounting their good deeds, and, like the Pharisee, virtually thanking God that they are not as other men."—*Testimonies*, vol., 1, p. 416

"The Pharisee's boastful, self-righteous prayer showed that his heart was closed against the influence of the Holy Spirit. . . . He felt no need, and he received nothing."—*Steps to Christ*, page 31

The hope of winning commendation: "The Pharisee goes up to the temple to worship, not because he feels that he is a sinner in need of pardon, but because he thinks himself righteous and hopes to win commendation. His worship he regards as an act of merit that will recommend him to God. . . . And he is full of self-praise. He looks it, he walks it, he prays it."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 150

"We must have a knowledge of ourselves, a knowledge that will result in contrition, before we can find pardon and peace. The Pharisee felt no conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit could not work with him. His soul was encased in a self-righteous armor which the arrows of God, barbed and true-aimed by angel hands, failed to penetrate."—*Ibid.*, p. 158

Behold Christ: "While speaking to God to poverty of spirit, the heart may be swelling with the conceit of its own superior humility and exalted righteousness. . . . We must behold Christ. It is ignorance of Him that makes men so uplifted in their own righteousness. . . .

"The prayer of the publican was heard because it showed dependence reaching forth to lay hold upon Omnipotence. Self to the publican appeared nothing but shame. Thus it must be seen by all who seek God. By faith—faith that renounces all self-trust—the needy suppliant is to lay hold upon infinite power."—*Ibid.*, p. 159

The peril of self-sufficiency: "The evil that led to Peter's fall and that shut out the Pharisee from communion with God is proving the ruin of thousands today. There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency."—*Ibid.*, pp. 154, 155

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

When we are self-centered, self-opinionated, filled with self-love, we will pray like the Pharisee and we will look, walk and act it. Covetousness, boastfulness, and a selfish attitude, exalting ourselves and our good deeds, telling others what wonderful Christians we are, if we are like this, then hell's door is wide open for us to walk straight in, and because of our pride, we won't even know where we went.

Ignorance of Christ's will leads us to self-conceit, self-deceit and false security and self-sufficiency. And the biggest problem is that when we are like this, we have no idea about our misled, deluded condition.

If we open our hearts to God in earnest prayer and acknowledge our

desperate need and ask Him to search our hearts and reveal to us our degraded spiritual condition, then only can our terrible spiritual problems be cured. Let's be honest. We have all suffered or are suffering under this self-destroying disease called pride.

Lord, please have mercy upon us and help us to see ourselves as we really are and give us time to repent and help us to develop humility and Christlikeness under the guidance of Your Holy Spirit.

15

GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES

BIBLE GEM

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."—2 Peter 1:4

QUESTION

Is my daily life in harmony with God's will so that I can confidently claim His precious promises?

ANSWER

Purpose of God's promises: "God has placed the promises in His Word to lead us to have faith in Him. In these promises He draws back the veil from eternity, giving us a glimpse of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which awaits **the** overcomer."—*My Life Today*, page 338

Prayers will be answered: "The simple prayers indited by the Holy Spirit will ascend through the gates ajar, the open door which Christ has declared: I have opened, and no man can shut. These prayers, mingled with the incense of the perfection of Christ, will ascend as fragrance to the Father, and answers will come."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 467

The Trinity will help: "The fact that you have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is an assurance **that**, if you will claim Their help, these Powers will help you in every emergency."—*Ibid.*, p. 99

Angels, likewise, will help: "The guardianship of the heavenly host is granted to all who will work in God's ways and follow

His plans. We may in earnest, contrite prayer call the heavenly helpers to our side. Invisible armies of light and power will work with the humble, meek, and lowly one."—*Selected Messages*, b. 1., p. 97

Help pledged for every emergency: "Toilers in the busy walks of life, crowded and almost overwhelmed with perplexity, can send up a petition to God for divine guidance. Travelers by sea and land, when threatened with some great danger, can thus commit themselves to Heaven's protection. In times of sudden difficulty or peril the heart may send up its cry for help to One who has pledged Himself to come to the aid of His faithful, believing ones whenever they call upon Him."—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 631, 632

Love unchanged: "If one who daily communes with God errs from the path, if he turns a moment from looking steadfastly unto Jesus, it is not because he sins willfully; for when he *sees* his mistake, he turns again, and fastens his eyes upon Jesus, and the fact that he has erred, does not make him less dear to the heart of God."—E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, May 12, 1896

By faith claim every promise: "Is Jesus true? Does He mean what He says? Answer decidedly, Yes, every word. Then if you have settled this, by faith claim every promise that He has made, and receive the blessing; for this acceptance by faith gives life to the soul. You may believe that Jesus is true to you, even though you feel yourself to be the weakest and most unworthy of His children."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 517

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

When we become baptized in water in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, then we become a clean dwelling place for the Trinity. By God's help we will experience on-going victory, and we become overcomers. Then we can come with confidence in prayer, knowing that God will answer more abundantly than we can ask or think.

Whatever dangers, difficulties, threatenings, trials, temptations or problems we may face, an army of heavenly guardians will protect and help us. Jesus said, and we can trust Him, with full confidence: Be of good courage, I am with you, even unto the end of the world. I will never leave you, nor forsake you.

❖16❖

THE SECRET OF HIS PAVILION

BIBLE GEM

"For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock."—Psalm 27:5

QUESTION

What preparation must I make in order to claim God's protection in the time of trouble?

ANSWER

"Thus saith the Lord": "When Satan presses his suggestions upon our minds, we may, if we cherish a 'Thus saith the Lord,' be drawn into the secret pavilion of the Most High."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 393

Knowledge of the truth a sure defense: "Those who are earnestly seeking a knowledge of the truth and are striving to purify their souls through obedience, thus doing what they can to prepare for the conflict, will find, in the God of truth, a sure defense. 'Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee' (Revelation 3:10), is the Saviour's promise. He would sooner send every angel out of heaven to protect His people than leave one soul that trusts in Him to be overcome by Satan."—*The Great Controversy*, page 560

The Scriptures a safeguard: "The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. . . . The last great delusion is soon to open before us. . . . So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their

testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested. . . .

"None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict."—*Ibid.*, pp. 593, 594

Called to remembrance: "Jesus promised His disciples: 'The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' But the teachings of Christ must previously have been stored in the mind in order for the Spirit of God to bring them to our remembrance in the time of peril."—*Ibid.*, p. 600

Flashed into memory: "A daily, earnest striving to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, would bring power and efficiency to the soul. The knowledge obtained by diligent searching of the Scriptures would be flashed into the memory at the right time. But if any had neglected to acquaint themselves with the words of Christ... they could not expect that the Holy Spirit would bring His words to their remembrance. They were to serve God daily with undivided affection, and then trust Him."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 355

"It is written": "God's tried and tested people . . . are to take their stand on the living Word: 'It is written.'"—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 16

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

While we are servants to sin and Satan, he loves our faithful service, and imperceptively, little by little, we are degraded to his filthy low standards. However, when we become genuine Christians and we resist sin by God's power, then Satan becomes our fiercest enemy and we will be relentlessly attacked, especially through our mind. He loves to torture us with our sins of the past. When we are tempted, we must remember that God has cast our sins as far as the east is from the west and he remembers them no more. They are buried in the sea of forgetfulness. When Satan comes like a flood and our mind is bombarded by memories of sin from the past, or temptations through our eyes or ears, then we must remember that we have been promised that we will not be tempted or tried or tested above that which we are able to bear, and with every temptation, there is a way to escape through prayer. God has promised that sin will have no dominion over us. He will hide us in His pavilion. Praise God! Our slavery to sin is over and the slave driver has no power over us. He cannot force us to sin.

17

PERSEVERING PRAYER

BIBLE GEM

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."
—Ephesians 6:18

QUESTION

What instruction is given on perseverance and fervency?

ANSWER

Pray always: "Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat."
—*Steps to Christ*, page 95

Let nothing hinder: "Let nothing, however dear, however loved, absorb your mind and affections, diverting you from the study of God's Word or from earnest prayer."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 53

"Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 51

The fervent prayer effectual: "Stronger and stronger should be our confidence that God's Spirit will be with us, making us pure and holy, as upright and fragrant as the cedar of Lebanon."—*Gospel Workers*, page 272

"That prayer which comes forth from an earnest, believing heart is the effectual, fervent prayer that availeth much. God does not always answer our prayers as we expect, for we may not ask what would be for our highest good; but in His infinite love and wisdom He will give us

those things which we most need."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 531

Leave the results with God: "What God promises, He is able at any time to perform, and the work which He gives His people to do, He is able to accomplish by them."—*Counsel on Health*, page 378

"It is better for us that God does not always answer our prayers just when we desire, and in just the manner we wish."—*Ibid.*

"Our petitions must not take the form of a command, but of intercession for Him to do the things we desire of Him."—*Ibid.*, p. 379

An example of persevering prayer: "On the Day of Pentecost the Infinite One revealed Himself in power to the church. . . .

"The hearts of the disciples were surcharged with a benevolence so full, so deep, so far-reaching, that it impelled them to go to the ends of the earth testifying: God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 31

"By earnest, persevering prayer they obtained the endowment of the Holy Spirit, and then they went forth, weighted with the burden of saving souls, filled with zeal to extend the triumphs of the cross."—*Ibid.*, p. 32

"Is not the Spirit of God to come today in answer to earnest, persevering prayer, and fill men with power?"—*Ibid.*

"What the Lord did for His people in that time, it is just as essential, and more so, that He do for His people today."—*Ibid.*, p. 33

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

If in any way we find it difficult to follow God's plan for our lives, then we need to be diligent in unceasing persevering prayer.

There is no physical, mental, emotional or spiritual sin problem that prayer cannot cure. Earnest fervent prayer of faith believing that nothing is impossible with God must come from the depth of our heart. Then He will grant all of our requests.

When our heart and mind is completely united with the Trinity, then the mighty power of God will be manifested just like at Pentecost. God will move heaven and earth to answer the earnest fervent prayer of faith, but never if it is presumptuous or selfish or self centered

Loving, Lord Jesus, please help us to unite and dedicate our hands, hearts, minds and all that we are and have with You, that unrestricted, Your Holy Spirit may flow through us with love and compassion to the hungry, needy, sick and suffering.



PRAYER AND MEDITATION

BIBLE GEM

"I will delight myself in Thy statutes: I will not forget Thy Word."—
Psalm 119:16

QUESTION

How can I make David's experience mine?

ANSWER

We are to obey: "A true knowledge of the Bible can be gained only through the aid of that Spirit by whom the Word was given. And in order to gain this knowledge we must live by it. All that God's Word commands, we are to obey. All that it promises, we may claim."—*Education*, page 189

Understanding through prayer: "The Bible should never be studied without prayer. The Holy Spirit alone can cause us to feel the importance of those things easy to be understood, or prevent us from wresting truths difficult of comprehension. It is the office of heavenly angels to prepare the heart so to comprehend God's Word that we shall be charmed with its beauty, admonished by its warnings, or animated and strengthened by its promises."—*The Great Controversy*, pages 599, 600

Singleness of purpose: "An understanding of Bible truth depends not so much on the power of intellect brought to the search as on the singleness of purpose, the earnest longing after righteousness."—*Ibid.*, p. 599

Meditate upon His love: "God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the

study of the Scriptures."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 60

Walk in the light: "Walk continually in the light of God. Meditate day and night upon His character. Then you will see His beauty and rejoice in His goodness. Your heart will glow with a sense of His love. You will be uplifted as if borne by everlasting arms. With the power and light that God imparts, you can comprehend more and accomplish more than you ever before deemed possible."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 514

Meditate on the perfection of the Saviour: "As we meditate upon the perfection of the Saviour, we shall desire to be wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. There will be a hungering and thirsting of soul to become like Him whom we adore. The more our thoughts are upon Christ, the more we shall speak of Him to others and represent Him to the world."—*Steps to Christ*, page 89

The most solemn period of the world's history: "We are living in the most solemn period of this world's history. . . . We need to humble ourselves before the Lord, with fasting and prayer, and to meditate much upon His Word, especially upon the scenes of the judgment. We should now seek a deep and living experience in the thing of God. We have not a moment to lose. Events of vital importance are taking place around us; we are on Satan's enchanted ground."—*The Great Controversy*, page 601

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

If we really want purity of heart, higher, cleaner and holier thoughts, then we need to meditate daily (and when we cannot sleep at night) on the life of Christ. By beholding we will become changed, renewed and our mind will be reprogrammed to the image of His purity.

If we don't seem to be able to think clean thoughts and develop a Christlike character, then we need to meditate on God's Word, and fast and pray for more divine help.

Philippians 4:8 gives us concrete suggestions what we should think about, concentrate and meditate on. The result will be a life that reflects Christ's character.

19

ANGEL MINISTRY IN PRAYER

BIBLE GEM

"Therefore hear the word of the Lord; I saw the Lord sitting upon His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and on His left."—2 Chronicles 18:18

QUESTION

What service do angels perform with reference to prayer?

ANSWER

Angels present prayers to God; also record them: "Those who look unto Jesus day by day and hour by hour, who watch unto prayer, are drawing nigh to Jesus. Angels with wings outspread wait to bear their contrite prayers to God, and to register them in the books of heaven."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1184

Appointed to answer: "Heavenly beings are appointed to answer the prayers of those who are working unselfishly for the interests of the cause of God. The very highest angels in the heavenly courts are appointed to work out the prayers which ascend to God for the advancement of the cause of God. Each angel has his particular post of duty, which he is not permitted to leave for any other place."—*Ibid.*, p. 1173

Obey instantly: "Ministering angels are waiting about the throne to instantly obey the mandate of Jesus Christ to answer every prayer offered in earnest, living faith."—*Selected Messages*, b. 2, p. 377

Will come to our help: "We may through the exercise of faith and prayer, call to our side a retinue of heavenly angels, who will guard us from every corrupting influence."—*Our High Calling*, page 23

Bring may blessings: "Angels are constantly . . . bringing blessing and hope, courage and help, to the children of men."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 153

"Strength and grace have been provided through Christ to be brought by ministering angels to every believing soul."—*Steps to Christ*, page 53

Choose our words; influence our actions: "When you rise in the morning, do you feel your helplessness and your need of strength from God? . . . If so, angels mark your prayers, and if these prayers have not gone forth out of feigned lips, when you are in danger of unconsciously doing wrong and exerting an influence which will lead others to do wrong, your guardian angel will be by your side, prompting you to a better course, choosing your words for you and influencing your actions."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 363, 364

Why do we pray so little? "What can the angels think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God's heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith? The angels love to bow before God; they love to be near Him. They regard communion with God as their highest joy; and yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence."—*Steps to Christ*, page 94

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Those that look to Jesus day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment, will never be overcome by the enemy. All God's children are protected and assisted by mighty powerful angels. When our prayers come from trusting hearts, and we express them in earnest living faith, then no corrupting influence will be able to destroy us.

Praise God for His mighty angels who are always by our side. But they will leave in sadness if we watch the wrong degrading TV programs or listen to the devil's music with heavy beat, or when we acknowledge and willingly do the wrong thing and by our action we prove that we still love sin more than purity.

Help us, loving Father, to always remember that You are more willing to give us overcoming power than we are to give good gifts to our children.

* 20 *

WHY PRAY IF GOD ALREADY KNOWS?

BIBLE GEMS

"When you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him."—Matthew 6:7, 8

QUESTION

Since God already knows our needs and He is more willing to supply them than parents are to give good things to their children, why do we need to ask for them in prayer?

ANSWER

We ask because God says, "Ask and ye shall receive": "Our prayers are not to inform God of something He does not know. The Lord is acquainted with the secrets of every soul."—*Messages to Young People*, page 247

"Even before the prayer is uttered, . . . grace from Christ goes forth to meet the grace that is working upon the human soul."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 206

"It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask."—*The Great Controversy*, page 525

Blessings in store for those who ask: "God has a heaven full of blessings that He wants to bestow on those who are earnestly seeking for that help which the Lord alone can give."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 123

"When you have asked for things that are necessary for your soul's good, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them."—*My Life Today* page 16

Continue to ask: "God does not say, Ask once and you shall receive. He

bids us ask. Unwearingly persist in prayer. The persistent asking brings the petitioner into a more earnest attitude, and gives him an increased desire to receive the things for which he asks."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 145

Watch, lest you defraud the soul: "You need to watch, lest the busy activities of life lead you to neglect prayer when you most need the strength prayer would give. . . . It is a great evil to defraud the soul of the strength and heavenly wisdom which are waiting your demand."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 560

"Do just what He [God] has told you to do, and be assured that God will do all that He has said He would do."—*Our High Calling*, page 97

Prayer does not change God's mind; it does influence His actions: "The sense of our need leads us to pray earnestly, and our heavenly Father is moved by our supplications."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 172

"It is only as we ask in earnest prayer, that God will grant us our heart's desire."—*Gospel Workers*, page 255

Quest for power through prayer: "The Greatest victories gained for the cause of God are not the result of labored argument; . . . they are gained in the audience chamber with God."—*Ibid.*, p. 259

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Without prayer we would never know where we are spiritually. It is answered prayer that shows like a gauge our position. No prayer gives no spiritual power, no overcoming power and no heavenly guidance.

Irregular, little, pathetic short prayers will give little, inadequate spiritual muscle, but still no victory over self, pride, the lust of the flesh, and the cravings of our evil nature, and the temptations we face.

Much earnest heartfelt prayer of faith will give us that blessed assurance that we have been reappointed daily by the mighty, overcoming power of the Holy Spirit, and that Jesus lives inside of us. Then the world, the flesh, the devil will have no power over us. Self and pride will be bound crucified and buried, and as a result we will have intimate sweet unity with the Trinity, constant overcoming power and ongoing heavenly guidance.

When we ask and seek and knock, God has promised to answer.

• 21 •

FEELING NOT A CRITERION

BIBLE GEM

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."—Ephesians 4:14,15

QUESTION

How can a person pray when he doesn't feel like praying? Must one force himself to pray?

ANSWER

Feeling of a religious life not a criterion: "Many make a serious mistake in their religious life by keeping the attention fixed upon their feelings and thus judging of their advancement or decline. Feelings are not a safe criterion. We are not to look within for evidence of our acceptance with God. We shall find there nothing but that which will discourage us. Our only hope is in 'looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.'"—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 199, 200

We can be deceived by feelings: "Feelings are often deceiving, emotions are no sure safeguard; for they are variable and subject to external circumstances. Many are deluded by relying on sensational impressions. The test is: What are you doing for Christ? What sacrifices are you making? What victories are you gaining? A selfish spirit overcome, a temptation to neglect duty resisted, passion subdued, and willing, cheerful obedience rendered to the will of Christ are far greater evidences that you are a child of God than spasmodic piety and emotional religion."—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 188

Principle more important than feeling: "I saw that the Christian should

not set too high a value, or depend too much, upon a happy flight of feeling. These feelings are not always true guides. It should be the study of every Christian to serve God from principle, and not be ruled by feeling. By so doing, faith will be brought into exercise, and will increase. I was shown that if the Christian lives a humble, self-sacrificing life, peace and joy in the Lord will be the result. But the greatest happiness experienced will be in doing others good, in making others happy. Such happiness will be lasting."—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 161

Feeling can be deceiving: "Satan leads people to think that because they have felt a rapture of feeling they are converted. But their experience does not change. Their actions are the same as before. Their lives show no good fruit. They pray often and long, and are constantly referring to the feelings they had at such and such a time. But they do not live the new life. They are deceived. Their experience goes no deeper than feeling. They build upon the sand, and when adverse winds come their house is swept away. . . .

"They overlook the fact that the believer in Christ must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. The convicted sinner has something to do. He must repent and show true faith. . . .

"What is the sign of a new heart?—A changed life. There is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride."—*Messages to Young People*, pages 71, 72

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Satan plays more with our feelings than we understand or give him credit for. His goal is to pervert us through our five senses. For example, the percentage of broken marriages in the church is almost as high as of the people out in the world, and most of the time it is based on "it feels so good."

When feelings are relied on instead of Christian principles, we are heading for disaster because Satan's agents are master feeling manipulators. When we have sex before or outside of marriage, or we've practiced sex perversion of any kind, then we invite the evil spirits and they will tickle our bodies where it feels the best and they will make sure that it will feel better than anything else we experienced or felt in the past. This is how we become hooked to sinful feelings and then he chains us to ongoing, repetitious, exciting experiences.

God alone is able to break the bondage to unholy feelings enhanced by unholy spirits. Praise God through Jesus Christ we can be set completely free from bondage to sin and when the Son sets us free, we will be free indeed!

❁ 22 ❁

HOW PRAYER IS ANSWERED

BIBLE GEM

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."—Isaiah 65:24 (See also Daniel 9:23.)

QUESTION

In what way does God answer sincere prayer?

ANSWER

Always for your good: "Ask, then; ask, and ye shall receive. Ask for humility, wisdom, courage, increase of faith. To every sincere prayer an answer will come. It may not come just as you desire, or at the time you look for it; but it will come in the way and at the time that will best meet your need. The prayers you offer in loneliness, in weariness, in trial, God answers, not always according to your expectations, but always for your good."—*Gospel Workers*, page 258

Strengthening of the inner life: "When we seek to gain heaven through the merits of Christ, the soul makes progress. Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, we may go on from strength to strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation."—*Selected Messages*, b. 1, p. 364

In direction for action: "Jesus does not call on us to follow Him, and then forsake us. If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a guide to direct our way. . . .

"All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."—*Gospel Workers*, page 263

In quieting anxiety: "Summon all your powers to look up, not down at your difficulties; then you will never faint by the way. You will soon see

Jesus behind the cloud, reaching out His hand to help you; and all you have to do is to give Him your hand in simple faith and let Him lead you."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 578

In assurance of sin forgiven: "It is God's glory to encircle sinful, repentant human beings in the arms of His love, to bind up their wounds, to cleanse them from sin, and to clothe them with the garments of salvation."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 668

In a sense of divine companionship: "Jesus, the Majesty of heaven, proposes to elevate to companionship with Himself those who come to Him with their burdens, their weaknesses, and their cares. . . .

"It is our privilege to have daily a calm, close, happy walk with Jesus."—*Our High Calling*, page 97

Through divine providences: "Pray in faith, and the mystery of His providence will bring its answer."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 245

Christ presents our prayers as His own request: "No sooner does the child of God approach the mercy seat than he becomes the client of the great Advocate. At his first utterance of penitence and appeal for pardon Christ espouses his case and makes it His own, presenting the supplication before the Father as His own request."—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 364

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

When our hands and hearts are clean then simple prayer of faith God has promised to answer. If not, then ask for humility, wisdom, courage, increase of faith, patience, and to know how and what to pray for.

When we are tired, lonely, distressed, disappointed, overworked and burdened with a load of care, and we see no way out, and when people don't seem to care or understand, and our problems overwhelm us and we feel depressed and forsaken, then please look up, reach up to Heaven by simple childlike faith and get hold of the hand of our loving and caring God and don't let it go until he blesses you.

When our hands and hearts are united with God then he says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." He can be trusted! Simply believe Him even when every appearance indicates the opposite.

✻ 23 ✻

OBEEDIENCE AND FAITH
A CONDITION OF PRAYER

BIBLE GEM

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."—Isaiah 55:6, 7

QUESTION

What are the conditions I must meet if my prayers are to be answered? What is one of the first of these? Am I meeting these conditions?

ANSWER

Must feel our need: "There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers. One of the first of these is that we feel our need of help from Him."—*Steps to Christ*, page 95

Wholehearted consecration required: "All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. . . . Through cooperation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 827

Obedience necessary: "Prayer can never take the place of duty. . . . Those who bring their petitions to God, claiming His promise while they do not comply with the conditions, insult Jehovah. They bring the name of Christ as their authority for the fulfillment of the promise, but they do not those things that would show faith in Christ and love for Him."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 143

"As the giver of every blessing, God claims a certain portion of all we possess. . . . But if we withhold from Him that which is His own, how

can we claim His blessing? If we are unfaithful stewards of earthly things, how can we expect Him to trust us with the things of heaven? It may be that here is the secret of unanswered prayer."—*Ibid.*, p. 144

"If we render to Him only a partial, halfhearted obedience, His promises will not be fulfilled to us."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 227

Faith another condition: "Another element of prevailing prayer is faith. . . . Do we take Him at His word?"—*Steps to Christ*, page 96

"We are too faithless. Oh how I wish that I could lead our people to have faith in God! They need not feel that in order to exercise faith they must be wrought up into a high state of excitement. All they have to do is to believe God's Word, just as they believe one another's word. He hath said it, and He will perform His Word. Calmly rely on His promise, because He means all that He says. Say, He has spoken to me in His Word, and He will fulfill every promise that He has made. . . . Act as if your heavenly Father could be trusted."—*Selected Messages*, b. 1, pp. 83, 84

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Wickedness and faithlessness go hand in hand. Unless we are going to believe that God is able to cleanse us and give us faith and Christlike love and His Holy Spirit, we have no foundation to build on.

Don't let anyone think that God will answer a faithless unbeliever's prayers. Doubting Thomases will be left with empty hands.

When we finally recognize our great and desperate need of God, and the fact that nothing in our hand we bring but simply to the cross we cling and we have no righteousness of our own because the very best words, deeds and actions are like filthy rags, when we recognize this and we come humbly to the foot of the cross to be cleansed and purified from all sin and unbelief and we finally acknowledge that without heavenly help, Holy Spirit power, we are unable to do anything then Heaven takes over. Mega-changes take place. Then we can say with Paul, I live, yet not I, but Christ lives inside of me. Because Christ lives inside of us, we are able to do all good things. Jesus challenges us to do even greater things than He has done while He was here on earth. John 14:12. This is what we, God's sleeping church, need to recognize.

Let us pray with faith like we have never prayed before that God's mighty Holy Spirit power may flow through us in a latter rain experience right now.

* 24 *

CONFESSION AND A FORGIVING
SPIRIT ESSENTIAL

BIBLE GEM

"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."—Matthew 6:14, 15

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."—Luke 23:34

"Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."—Ephesians 4:32

QUESTION

Since the measure of our forgiveness toward those who wrong or offend us is the measure by which we may expect God to forgive us, how important becomes the question, "To what extent do I maintain a spirit of forgiveness in my heart?"

ANSWER

Receiving God's mercy depends upon us: "When we come to ask mercy and blessing from God we should have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our own hearts. How can we pray, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,' and yet indulge an unforgiving spirit? (Matthew 6:12) If we expect our own prayers to be heard, we must forgive others in the same manner and to the same extent as we hope to be forgiven."—*Steps to Christ*, page 97

What to do if you have wronged someone: "If you have given offense to your friend or neighbor, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother you have wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer."—*Ibid.*, p. 37

"If we have unwittingly borne false witness, if we have misstated his words, if we have injured his influence in any way, we should go to the ones with whom we have conversed about him, and take back all our injurious **misstatements.**"—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 59

"Honesty of intention cannot stand as an excuse for not confessing errors."—*Early Writings*, page 103

True confession is specific: "True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as to be brought before God only; they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly confessed. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty."—*Steps to Christ*, page 38

Confess before sins are found out: "There is a vast difference between admitting facts after they have been proved and confessing sins known only to our selves and to God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 498

"There are those among you who will make confessions, as did Achan, too late to save themselves."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 272

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

The Lord helped me to take injury, criticism, gossip, bodily injury, lies, racial hatred, and I have been robbed Early in my Christian walk, the good Lord taught me to instantly unconditionally forgive others just the way I would want to be forgiven and as a result I always have perfect peace. Even with a positive attitude like this, we can still have battles with forgiveness. For example, there is one area I have a real problem with when Christians are heartless and prevent others from receiving the gospel. Because of pride or arrogance, individuals exercise their authority to stop God's saving grace from flowing to certain people because of their race or color. Because of this one area of unforgiveness and hard feelings toward the offender, when I read the above Bible verses and quotes I was unable to write. My mind was in turmoil. I wrestled and wrestled with those thoughts. Finally, finding no peace, I went to my knees with my problem of not being able to forgive. I prayed and asked for peace and forgiveness over this issue and forgiveness for the guilty offenders. After a long wrestle in prayer, God gave me peace on the condition that I would forgive and pray for the salvation of the persons concerned.

Please help us, Lord, to follow Christ's example of forgiveness, because many times they don't know what they are doing.

* 25 *

PRAYER FOR HEALING

BIBLE GEM

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray."—James 5:13

QUESTION

Is our Lord and Master as much a healer of disease today as when He was here on earth in person?

ANSWER

Christ still the Great Physician: "Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied servant of man's necessity. He 'took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,' that He might minister to every need of humanity."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 17

"He is our refuge in sickness as in health. 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. . . . He sendeth His word, and healeth them, and delivereth them from their destructions.'

"God is just as willing to restore the sick to health now as when the Holy Spirit spoke these words through the psalmist. And Christ is the same compassionate physician now that He was during His earthly ministry. In Him there is healing balm for every disease, restoring power for every infirmity."—*Ibid.*, pp. 225, 226

The source of healing: "The desire of God for every human being is expressed in the words, 'Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.'" —3 John 2

"He it is who 'forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.'" (Psalm 103:3, 4).—*Ibid.*, p. 113

Cooperation with God necessary: "The physician should teach his patients that they are to cooperate with God in the work of restoration. . . . He

knows that the laws of nature, as truly as the precepts of the Decalogue, are divine, and that only in obedience to them can health be recovered or preserved. He sees many suffering as the result of hurtful practices who might be restored to health if they would do what they might for their own restoration. They need to be taught that every practice which destroys the physical, mental, or spiritual energies is sin, and that health is to be secured through obedience to the laws that God has established for the good of all mankind."—*Ibid*

Use of remedial agencies: "Those who seek healing by prayer should not neglect to make use of the remedial agencies within their reach. It is not a denial of faith to use such remedies as God has provided to alleviate pain and to aid nature in her work of restoration. It is not a denial of faith to use such remedies as God has provided to alleviate pain and to aid nature in her work of restoration. It is no denial of faith to cooperate with God, and to place themselves in the condition most favorable to recovery. God has put it in our power to obtain a knowledge of the laws of life. This knowledge has been placed within our reach for use. We should employ every facility for the restoration of health, taking every advantage possible, working in harmony with natural laws."—*Ibid.*, pp. 231, 232

God's purpose in afflictions: "Many of your afflictions have been visited upon you, in the wisdom of God, to bring you closer to the throne of grace."—*Testimonies*, vol 4, p. 143

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

We are created within certain fixed unchangeable physical and spiritual laws. To the degree we obey them, to that exact same degree we will receive a blessing.

If we put diesel into a car that runs on gas and water in place of motor oil, how far will our car go? Surprisingly, however, our bodies will run on junk food for a while, but then we will have all the diseases of the people around us. The main health destroying substances are sugar, white bread, fatty meats, candies, chocolate, cookies, cakes, sugar loaded drinks, coffee, tea, etc. Less harmful but not the best are devitalized cooked food, preserved and canned products, etc.

We have been wonderfully made. To maintain perfect health, we need to go back to the Edenic diet. Eve didn't have a stove or an oven or microwave to spoil her food

To maintain good health without disease, we need to one, expose our bodies to sunshine. Two, live where the air is fresh and open the windows

twenty-four hours a day. Three, exercise regularly at least three or four times a week. Four, use six to eight glasses of water each day. Five, vegetarian diet of 75% to 85% uncooked foods, like raw vegetables, fruits and nuts, etc. Six, go to bed early to make sure we get enough sleep. Seven, we must have a clean conscience. Eight, pray for wisdom and heavenly guidance.

If you have health problems, please get Dr. George Malkmus's book "God's Way to Ultimate Health," and his video. He healed his cancer in the bowel with God-given simple food substances and for the last twenty years he has not had one headache or a cold.

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PRAYER FOR HEALING A SOLEMN ACT

BIBLE GEM

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."—James 5:14, 15

QUESTION

Why do we not see more demonstrations of the gift of healing?

ANSWER

Prayer for healing is a solemn act: "In the Word of God we have instruction relative to special prayer for the recovery of the sick. But the offering of such prayer is a most solemn act, and should not be entered upon without careful consideration. In many cases of prayer for the healing of the sick, that which is called faith, is nothing less than presumption."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 227

Beware of fanaticism and false miracle workers: " 'Why,' asks one and another, 'is not prayer offered for the miraculous healing of the sick, instead of so many sanitariums being established?' Should this be done, great fanaticism would arise in our ranks."—*Evangelism*, page 594

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity' (Matt. 7:21-23). These may profess to be followers of Christ, but they have lost sight of their Leader. They may say, 'Lord, Lord;' they may point to the sick who are healed

through them, and to other marvelous works, and claim that they have more of the Spirit and power of God than is manifested by those who keep His law. But their works are done under the supervision of the enemy of righteousness, whose aim it is to deceive souls, and are designed to lead away from obedience, truth, and duty. In the near future there will be still more marked manifestations of this miracle-working power."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 975, 976

Must not demand healing, but be submissive to God's will: "We have united in earnest prayer around the sickbed of men, women, and children, and have felt that they were given back to us from the dead in answer to our earnest prayers. In these prayers we thought we must be positive, and if we exercised faith, that we must ask for nothing less than life. We dared not say, 'If it will glorify God,' fearing it would admit a semblance of doubt. We have anxiously watched those who have been given back, as it were, from the dead. We have seen some of these, especially youth, raised to health, and they have forgotten God, become dissolute in life, causing sorrow and anguish to parents and friends, and have become a shame to those who feared to pray. They lived not to honor and glorify God, but to curse Him with their lives of vice.

"We no longer mark out a way, nor seek to bring the Lord to our wishes. If the life of the sick can glorify Him, we pray that they may live, nevertheless, not as we will but as He will."—*Counsels on Health*, page 379

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

I was invited by the General Conference Ministerial Department to go to Utrecht, Holland, to counsel and pray with people that came to the special prayer room. We have seen many miracles in answer to earnest prayer. One minister came from New Guinea. The day after he left for meetings in Australia, and then went to Utrecht, Holland, his little baby became desperately ill. Wouldn't eat, barely drank, given the best medication and care, yet the baby did not respond. The father was expecting the baby to die. He wanted to go home, but he couldn't change the date of his ticket. He felt impressed to come to the special prayer room. He believed that all of the gospel commission was still in force today. A few of us knelt to pray and asked in Jesus' name that the baby would be healed. We phoned the next day and we were informed that in the same hour we prayed in Holland the baby rallied for the first time in New Guinea and asked for food to eat. Praise God that he is a prayer-hearing, prayer-answering and miracle-working God.

* 27 *

ANSWERS SOMETIMES DELAYED

BIBLE GEM

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry."—Psalm 40:1

QUESTION

Why does God sometimes delay the answer to our prayers?

ANSWER

Delays test faith and sincerity: "There are precious promises in the Scriptures to those who wait upon the Lord. We all desire an immediate answer to our prayers and are tempted to become discouraged if our prayer is not immediately answered. . . . They delay is for our special benefit. We have a chance to see whether our faith is true and sincere or changeable like the waves of the sea. We must bind ourselves upon the altar with the strong cords of faith and love, and let patience have her perfect work."—*Counsels on Health*, pages 380, 381

Delays give opportunity for heart-searching: "God does not always answer our prayers the first time we call upon Him; for should He do this, we might take it for granted that we had a right to all the blessings and favors He bestowed upon us. Instead of searching our hearts to see if any evil was entertained by us, any sin indulged, we should become careless, and fail to realize our dependence upon Him, and our need of His help."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1035

God does not forget: "Throughout his married life, Zacharias had prayed for a son. He and his wife were now old, and as yet their prayer had remained unanswered; but he murmured not. God had not forgotten. He had His appointed time for answering this prayer, and when the case seemed hopeless, Zacharias received his answer. . . . God had not forgotten the prayer of His

servants. He had written it in His record book, to be answered in His own good time."—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 1114

God's delays always for our good: "Christ's two days' delay after hearing that Lazarus was sick was not a neglect or a denial on His part. . . . This should be an encouragement to us. . . . The answer to our prayers may not come as quickly as we desire, and it may not be just what we have asked; but He who knows what is for the highest good of His children will bestow a much greater good than we have asked, if we do not become faithless and discouraged."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 92

One answer never delayed: "When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, . . . but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 70

What to do if we do not see immediate answers to our prayers: "When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. . . . God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon His sure promise, 'Ask, and it shall be given you.'"—*Steps to Christ*, page 96

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

The sinner's prayer for cleansing is immediately answered. God never fails to hear our heart's cry, but sometimes we need to develop unwaivering trust and patience. God always answers, but only in His time and when he sees it is the best for us, sometimes after we have learned a few lessons.

Even the apostles had to wait for many days before they received the Holy Spirit. During that time they searched their hearts, put things right with everyone, pled for cleansing and forgiveness and finally when they realized that without heavenly help they were helpless, hopeless, powerless, and by their own strength and wisdom they couldn't do anything, then they were ready to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. As a result uneducated rough fishermen became mighty evangelists. The sick were healed, demons were cast out, etc.

Hang in there. There is hope for us, even if we have to wait for the second Pentecost. Prepare for it! Expect it! God is faithful to fulfill His promise.

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PRAYER AND TRIALS

BIBLE GEM

"He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."—Job 23:10

QUESTION

How may we meet the daily trials of life and the uncertainties of the future?

ANSWER

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be": "We are to follow Christ day by day. God does not bestow help for tomorrow. He does not give His children all the directions for their life journey at once, lest they should become confused. He ells them just as much as they can remember and perform. The strength and wisdom imparted are for the present emergency."— *The Desire of Ages*, page 313

Divine comfort: "Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 417

"He measures every trial": "God in His great love is seeking to develop in us the precious graces of His Spirit. He permits us to encounter obstacles, persecution, and hardships, not as a curse, but as the greatest blessing of our lives."— *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 117

"He measures every trial, He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul."—*Ibid.*, p. 121

"All things work together": "The Father's presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is

imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. Whatever comes to him comes from the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. . . . All experiences and circumstances are God's workmen whereby good is brought to us."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pages 488, 489

Ministry of sorrow: "In the full light of day, and in the hearing of the music of other voices, the caged bird will not sing the song that his master seeks to teach him. He learns a snatch of this, a trill of that, but never a separate and entire melody. But the master covers the cage, and places it where the bird will listen to the one song he is to sing. In the dark, he tries and tries again to sing that song until it is learned, and he breaks forth in perfect melody. Then the bird is brought forth, and ever after he can sing that song in the light. Thus God deals with His children. He has a song to teach us, and when we have learned it amid the shadows of affliction we can sing it ever afterward."—*Ibid.*, p. 472

Rest in Christ's love: "Often your mind may be clouded because of pain. Then do not try to think. You know that Jesus loves you. He understands your weakness. You may do His will by simply resting in His arms."—*Ibid.*, p. 251

"When temptations assail you, when care, perplexity, and darkness seem to surround your soul, look to the place where you last saw the light. Rest in Christ's love and under His protecting care."—*Ibid.*, p. 250

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

When we put our hands and hearts into the hand of God fully believing and trusting in Him, then we can have peace and confidence even while we are tried, tested, tempted and tossed by the circumstances of life or troubled by the enemy of our soul.

When we are refined like gold in the fire then we are ready for use for service of value and we become a useful tool in the hand of God to bring gladness, comfort and joy to the hearts of many who are tempted and tried by the circumstances of life.

Dear Lord, please help us to trust you with all of our hearts no matter what happens to us and teach us to hang on to your precious promises.

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WHAT TO DO WHEN THE MIND WANDERS

BIBLE GEM

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."—Isaiah 26:3

QUESTION

How can one keep his mind from wandering while he is praying?

ANSWER

Bring it back: "Daily prayer is as essential to growth in grace, and even to spiritual life itself, as is temporal food to physical well-being. We should accustom ourselves to often lift the thoughts to God in prayer. If the mind wanders, we must bring it back; by persevering effort, habit will finally make it easy."—*Messages to Young People*, page 115

Effort required: "Gird up the loins of your mind, says the apostle; then control your thoughts, not allowing them to have full scope. The thoughts may be guarded and controlled by your own determined efforts."—*The Adventist Home*, page 54

Prayer for help: "However great one's spiritual light, however much he may enjoy the divine favor and blessing, he should ever walk humbly before the Lord, pleading in faith that God will direct every thought and control every impulse."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 421

"Christ alone can direct the thoughts aright."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, page 323

Be constantly on guard: "God would have you trust in His love, and be constantly guarding your soul by locking the gate of your thoughts, that they shall not become unmanageable."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 298

Listen for God's voice: "We must individually hear Him speaking to the

heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, "Be still, and know that I am God " (Psalm 46:10).—*The Desire of Ages*, page 363

Kneel before God: "Both in public and in private worship it is our privilege to bow on our knees before God when we offer our petitions to Him."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 48

"Let this act testify that the whole soul, body, and spirit are in subjection to the Spirit of truth."—*Selected Messages*, b. 2, p. 314

"Man must come on bended knee, as a subject of grace, a suppliant at the footstool of mercy."—*Ibid.*, p. 315

Praying aloud: "He [Jesus] spent whole nights in prayer upon the lonely mountains. . . . It was on our account that He poured out His prayers to His Father with strong cries and tears."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 379

"At the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles."—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 346

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Salvation is rich and free, we cannot earn it and we certainly do not deserve it. Salvation is a gift! Freely given when we come with humble hearts, recognizing our great need.

After salvation we have a difficult task ahead of us. Nothing short of blood, sweat and tears on our knees, a lot of hard work in prayer and total focus of our attention, will ultimately help us to develop an intimate relationship with God. It takes a lot of effort to establish a meaningful, intimate relationship with the Trinity.

We need to completely refocus and sort out our priorities, change our aims and purposes and learn to concentrate on our glorious new goals, and everything else must fall by the wayside.

Loving Lord Jesus, we cannot even focus our minds by ourselves when we pray. Please help us and set our minds on eternal goals. Help us to focus with full attention on heaven and please reprogram our wandering brains to become heavenly minded and may nothing derail us from Your eternal purpose for our lives.

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PRESUMPTUOUS PRAYER

BIBLE GEM

"Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me: for I will not hear thee."—Jeremiah 7:16

QUESTION

What is presumption? How may I guard against presumption when I pray?

ANSWER

Presumption defined: "Presumption is Satan's counterfeit of faith. Faith claims God's promises, and brings forth fruit in obedience. Presumption also claims the promises, but uses them as Satan did, to excuse transgression. Faith would have led our first parents to trust the love of God, and to obey His commands. Presumption led them to transgress His law, believing that His great love would save them from the consequence of their sin."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 126

"That so-called faith in Christ which professes to release men from the obligation of obedience to God, is not faith, but presumption."—*Steps to Christ*, page 61

"It is presumption to indulge in suppositions and theories regarding matters that God has not made known to us in His Word. We need not enter into speculation regarding our future state."—*Selected Messages*, b. 1, p. 173

A common temptation: "Presumption is a common temptation, and as Satan assails men with this, he obtains the victory nine times out of ten. Those who profess to be followers of Christ, and claim by their faith to be enlisted in the warfare against all evil in their nature, frequently plunge

without thought into temptations from which it would require a miracle to bring them forth unsullied.... The promises of God are not for us rashly to claim while we rush on recklessly into danger. . . . This is the most flagrant presumption."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 44, 45

Satan tempted Christ on presumption: "He then urged Christ to give him one more proof of His entire dependence upon God one more evidence of His faith that He was the Son of God, by casting Himself from the temple. . . .

The Redeemer of the world. . . . would not, at Satan's suggestion, tempt God by presumptuously experimenting on His providence."—*Selected Messages*, b. 1, p. 282

"He refused to presume upon the mercy of His Father by placing Himself in peril that would make it necessary for His heavenly Father to display His power to save Him from danger."—*Ibid.*, p. 283

Presumption in prayer: "To claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption."—*Steps to Christ*, page 96

Balaam's presumption: "He did not seek to do the will of God, but chose his own course, and then endeavored to secure the sanction of the Lord.

"There are thousands at the present day who are pursuing a similar course. They would have no difficulty in understanding their duty if it were in harmony with their inclinations.... But because these evidences are contrary to their desires and inclinations, they frequently set them aside and presume to go to God to learn their duty."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 440, 441

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

When we are unwilling to confess and forsake known sin in our lives, then prayer becomes a presumption.

The Lord told Jeremiah to stop praying for the Israelites. Almost the whole nation had forgotten God's ten commandments, and they did all the degrading and abominable sins of the heathen nations around them. They boasted that they were the children of Abraham, the chosen nation, yet for those sins God wiped out the previous inhabitants of Palestine.

Sin blinded their eyes. Their prayers became presumption. They thought that God was too good to execute justice and judgment for their unrepented sins. What a sad history. God allowed national tragedy that at least some may come to their senses and repent.

There is a parallel here in our days. TV and sin have misled and blinded us. We have no idea how far we have drifted from God, yet we say we are

commandment keeping SDA's.

Wonderful Jesus, most of us don't realize that we are unprepared because sin has blinded our eyes and soon the "New World Order" also called "One World Government" will force every nation and then every person to receive the mark of the beast.

Prayer of presumption while we revel in sin will not be good enough to prepare us to say no.



PRAYER AND PUBLIC WORSHIP

BIBLE GEM

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."—Psalm 122:1

"O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come."
—Psalm 65:2

QUESTION

Since prayer is a very important part of public worship, what are some of the principles I must follow to make my prayers acceptable to God?

ANSWER

Sense that God is present: "There should be an intelligent knowledge of how to come to God in reverence and godly fear with devotional love."—*Selected Messages*, b. 2, p. 315

"True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence. With this sense of the Unseen, every heart should be deeply impressed. The hour and place of prayer are sacred, because God is there."—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 48, 49

Kneel whenever possible: "Both in public and private worship it is our duty to bow down upon our knees before God when we offer our petitions to Him. This act shows our dependence upon God."—*Selected Messages*, b. 2, p. 312

Speak God's name with reverence: "Some think it a mark of humility to pray to God in a common manner, as if talking with a human being. They profane His name by needlessly and irreverently mingling with their prayers the words 'God Almighty,'—awful, sacred words, which should never pass the lips except in subdued tones and with a feeling of awe."—*Gospel Workers*, page 176

Use simple language: "High-flown language is inappropriate in prayer, whether the petition be offered in the pulpit, in the family circle, or in secret. Especially should the one offering public prayer use simple language, that others may understand what is said and unite with the petition.

"It is the heartfelt prayer of faith that is heard in heaven and answered on earth. . . .

"With simplicity we should state our needs to the Lord, and claim His promise with such faith that those in the congregation will know that we have learned to prevail with God in prayer."—*Ibid.*, p. 177

Substance of our prayers: "In our devotional meetings, our voices should express by prayer and praise our adoration of the heavenly Father, that all may know that we worship God in simplicity and truth, and in the beauty of holiness."—*Counsels of Parents, Teachers, and Students*, page 245

"We should not come to the house of God to pray for our families unless deep feeling shall lead us while the Spirit of God is convicting them. Generally, the proper place to pray for our families is at the family altar. . . . When in the house of God, we should pray for a present blessing, and should expect God to hear and answer our prayers."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 145, 146

Length: "The prayers offered in public should be short and to the point. . . .

"A few minutes is long enough for any ordinary public petition."—*Gospel Workers*, page 175

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Reverence in God's sanctuary is almost a forgotten art in some of our churches. Talking about anything and loud greetings, whispering during the sermon, disturbs those who would like to pray, meditate or listen.

The sanctuary is a sacred place. We have invited the Trinity to be there, and They do come. God has promised that wherever two or three gather together in His name He is there.

In the reverent, quiet, spiritual atmosphere of the sanctuary, sensing God's presence, with earnest, heartfelt, short and to the point public prayers, let us petition our prayer-hearing prayer-answering and miracle-working God.

Father, help us to live so close to you that our reverent prayers in secret or in public may be acceptable to you.

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FAMILY WORSHIP

BIBLE GEM

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Joshua 24:15

"I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."—Psalm 101:2

QUESTION

Is there any relation between the morning and evening sacrifices in Biblical times and family worship today? How important is family worship? How should it be conducted?

ANSWER

Relation between sacrifices and family worship: "The hours appointed for the morning and the evening sacrifice were regarded as sacred, and they came to be observed as the set time for worship throughout the Jewish nation. . . . In this custom Christians have an example for morning and evening prayer."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 353, 354

"Morning and evening the heavenly universe behold every household that prays, and the angel with the incense, representing the blood of the atonement, finds access to God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 971

Protection promised: "In every Christian home God should be honored by the morning and evening sacrifices of prayer and praise.... It is the duty of Christian parents, morning and evening, by earnest prayer and persevering faith, to make a hedge about their children."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, page 110

"Will the Lord of heaven pass by such homes, and leave no blessing there? Nay, verily. Ministering angels will guard the children who are thus dedicated to God."—*Ibid.*

Tragedy of a prayerless home: "I know of nothing that causes me so great

sadness as a prayerless home. I do not feel safe in such a house for a single night; and were it not for the hope of helping the parents to realize their necessity and their sad neglect, I would not remain. The children show the result of neglect, for the fear of God is not before them."—*Child Guidance*, page 518

Family worship should be a daily matter: "Family worship should not be governed by circumstances. You are not to pray occasionally, and when you have a large day's work, neglect it. In thus doing you lead your children to look upon prayer as of no special consequence. . . .

"It should be a pleasure to worship the Lord."—*My Life Today*, page 29

How to conduct family worship where there are children: "Let the father select a portion of Scripture that is interesting and easily understood. . . . Questions may be asked, a few earnest, interesting remarks made, or incidents, short and to the point, may be brought in by way of illustration. At least a few verses of spirited song may be sung, and the prayer offered should be short and pointed. . . . Let all join in the Bible reading and learn and often repeat God's law. It will add to the interest of the children if they are sometimes permitted to select the reading. Question them upon it, and let them ask questions."—*Child Guidance*, pages 521, 522

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

My wife and I remember with fondness the precious memories when our children were little and every morning and evening we would spend time in family worship. They all sat reverently, in order, holding their favorite dolls or teddy bears and loved to listen to Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories and other Bible stories. Sometimes we would discuss the context and then pray. Now they are all in their 30's and they still remember. There was something special and very sweet about the time we spent together as a family in prayer. We praised God for the nearness of His heavenly angels.

Families that pray together even if it is interrupted by Satan, will at a later time come together. Let us earnestly continue to pray for our children and grandchildren. God has promised, "I will save your children." Isaiah 49:25.

Some of our children left the church. God in His mercy gave me a dream: I was in a cemetery and a voice told me that some of my children are buried there. Then I was told to pray for them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I prayed a powerful intercessory prayer and out of their dusty graves came our children, restored from sin and death to their childhood innocence and they came running and hugging our legs just exactly as they did when they

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were little children.

God is good! Keep praying, parents! He has promised to save everyone we commit to Him and I believe that.

* 33 *

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER MEETING

BIBLE GEM

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."—1 Peter 4:7

QUESTION

What is the purpose of prayer meeting? Is it necessary that the busy twentieth-century Christian attend?

ANSWER

Faithful to their duty: "Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven."—*Steps to Christ*, page 98

Spirit-filled Christians seen in prayer meeting: "When the Spirit of God shall work upon the heart, cleansing the soul-temple of its defilement of worldliness and pleasure-loving, all will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefit they can gain."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 461

Educate the mind to love prayer meeting: "Prepare for eternity with such zeal as you have not yet manifested. Educate your mind to love the Bible, to love the prayer meeting, to love the hour of meditation, and, above all, the hour when the soul communes with God. Become heavenly-minded if you would unite with the heavenly choir in the mansions above."—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 268

The object of the prayer meeting: "What is the object of assembling together? Is it to inform God, to instruct Him by telling Him all we know in prayer?"

We meet together to edify one another by an interchange of thoughts and feelings, to gather strength, and light, and courage by becoming acquainted with one another's hopes and aspirations; and by our earnest, heartfelt prayers, offered up in faith, we receive refreshment and vigor from the Source of our strength. These meetings should be most precious seasons and should be made interesting to all who have any relish for religious things."—*Ibid.*, p. 578

Making prayer meeting interesting: "Our prayer and social meetings should be seasons of special help and encouragement. Each one has a work to do to make these gatherings as interesting and profitable as possible. This can best be done by having a fresh experience daily in the things of God, and by not hesitating to speak of His love in the assemblies of His people."—*Christian Service*, page 211

"Long, prosy talks and prayers are out of place anywhere, and especially in the social meeting. . . . They weary the angels and the people who listen to them. Our prayers should be short and right to the point."—*Testimonies*, vol 4, pp. 70, 71

Pray short prayers: "All should feel it a Christian duty to pray short. Tell the Lord just what you want."—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 578

"One or two minutes is long enough for any ordinary prayer."—*Ibid.*, p. 581

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

I love to spend two hours with the good Lord early each morning in heartfelt prayer, Bible reading and meditating on the spotless life of Christ and listening to the Holy Spirit, "to that still small voice," teaching, leading, guiding, instructing, rebuking, correcting, and commissioning me to do God's will. This is the way God helps me to grow spiritually.

We are also instructed not to neglect the regular prayer meetings. I especially enjoy when we break up into small groups of twos and threes. In an intimate small group we can be more open, get to know one another better, and we can pray more meaningfully for one another's burdens and problems.

God has promised wherever two or three are gathered together in His name that He will come to comfort, edify, to give us strength, courage and spiritual vigor to fight the good fight of faith.

* 34 *

THE AGONIZING OF CHRIST IN PRAYER

BIBLE GEM

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

"And being in an agony [of mind] He prayed [the] more earnestly and intently."—Amplified New Testament

"While He—an agony of distress having come upon Him—prayed all the more with intense earnestness."—*Weymouth*

QUESTION

What did Christ agonize in prayer?

ANSWER

Christ reveals to angels His coming agony: "He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. . . . [He told them] that He would suffer dreadful hours of agony, which even angels could not look upon, but would veil their faces from the sight. Not merely agony of body would He suffer, but mental agony, that with which bodily suffering could in no wise be compared. The weight of the sins of the whole world would be upon Him."—*Early Writings*, pages 149, 150

Christ's earthly suffering in the wilderness: "When Jesus entered the wilderness, He was shut in by the Father's glory. . . . But the glory departed, and He was left to battle with temptation. It was pressing upon Him every moment. His human nature shrank from the conflict that awaited Him. For forty days He fasted and prayed. Weak and emaciated from hunger, worn and haggard with mental agony, 'His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, page 118

His suffering in Gethsemane: "Behold Him contemplating the price to be

paid for the human soul. In His agony He clings to the cold ground, as if to prevent Himself from being drawn farther from God."—*Ibid.*, p. 687

"Now had come the hour of the power of darkness. Now His voice was heard on the still evening air, not in tones of triumph, but full of human anguish.

"The humanity of the Son of God trembled in that trying hour. . . . The awful moment had come—that moment which was to decide the destiny of the world."—*Ibid.*, p. 690

The ultimate of agony at the cross: "But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt."—*Ibid.*, p. 753

The Christian is to pray with great earnestness and sincerity: "Be in earnest, be sincere. Fervent prayer availeth much. Jacob-like, wrestle in prayer. Agonize. Jesus, in the garden, sweat great drops of blood; you must make an effort."—*Testimonies*, vol 1, p. 158

Agonizing without the surrender of self is useless: "There are many souls who wrestle for special victories and special blessings that they may do some great thing. To this end they are always feeling that they must make an agonizing struggle in prayer and tears. . . . All the agonizing, all the tears and struggles, will not bring them the blessing they long for. Self must be entirely surrendered."—*Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 165

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Loving Father, help us to seek to experience heartfelt, intense, to the point, sincere, earnest prayer. Help us to enter into a deep and meaningful ongoing prayer relationship with you for lengthy periods of time in our private prayers at our secret and quiet place of worship. Please give us an inner longing and yearning, a heartfelt sincere desire to want to spend more and more time in the presence of God.

Thank you for your loving loyal angels who keep away the influences and the presence of evil angels when we pray, we deeply appreciate the battles they fight on our behalf.

Only as we are willing to surrender all that we are and all that we have and by God's help search our souls to see if there is any wicked way in us, when every obstacle and sin is confessed and forsaken and removed by God, then our prayers will be heard.

Help us Lord to meditate on the prayer life of Jesus and may He be our example.

* 35 *

PRAY WHOLEHEARTEDLY

BIBLE GEM

"Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will harken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart."—Jeremiah 29:12, 13

QUESTION

What is meant by agonizing in prayer, or praying wholeheartedly?

ANSWER

The spirit of wrestling prayer: "There is need of prayer,—most earnest, fervent, agonizing prayer,—such prayer as David offered when he exclaimed: 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.' 'I have longed after Thy precepts.' 'I have longed for Thy salvation.' 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto Thy judgments.' [Psalms 42:1; 119:40, 174; 84:2; 119:20.] This is the spirit of wrestling prayer, such as was possessed by the royal psalmist."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 534

We must learn to pray with great earnestness: "When with earnestness and intensity we breathe a prayer in the name of Christ, there is in the very intensity a pledge from God that He is about to answer our prayer 'exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.'"—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 147

Learn the trade: "God will be to us everything we will let Him be. Our languid, halfhearted prayers will not bring us returns from heaven. Oh, we need to press our petitions! Ask in faith, wait in faith, receive in faith, rejoice in hope, for everyone that seeketh findeth. Be in earnest in the matter. Seek God with all the heart. . . . With intense earnestness learn

the trade of seeking the rich blessings that God has promised, and with persevering, determined effort you shall have His light and His truth and His rich grace."—*Our High Calling*, page 131

How to face temptation and trial: "When temptations and trials rush in upon us, let us go to God and agonize with Him in prayer. He will not turn us away empty, but will give us grace and strength to overcome, and to break the power of the enemy."—*Early Writings*, page 46

How greatest victories are gained: "The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 203

A "*shaking time*" reveals the faithful: "I was shown the people of God, and saw them mightily shaken.... Firmness and great earnestness were expressed in their countenances, while large drops of perspiration fell from their foreheads."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 179, 180

"*The time of trouble*": "The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint though severely tried. . . . Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it."—*The Great Controversy*, page 621

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Do we really know what it means to pray wholeheartedly? As we pray, after a while do our thoughts wander? Or do we discipline ourselves by God's help to concentrate on prayer as if our very lives were at stake?

Because much more than our mortal life is in the balance, we need a wholehearted commitment to heaven.

Salvation is freely given and after we are saved Satan's attacks intensify. He sends additional evil angels to harass and tempt us and they put multitudes of opportunities in our way and they will do all they can to entice us and lead us into sin. Temptation is allowed by heaven to test us and to teach us how to overcome the enemy. Casual short prayers will not give us the victory. We need to learn now how to resist temptation and win the battles by the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. But His help only comes when we are determined, persevering, and we ask in faith. Sometimes our earnestness will be manifested by perspiration and tears in our eyes. The

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battles that we win now will prepare us for the times ahead when the ultimate tests will come.

Thank you dear Lord, for we are able by your instant help to win our battles against sin, self and pride, the lust of the flesh and the world and the temptations of Satan.

Praise God for the victory!

❁ 36 ❁

WATCH AND PRAY

BIBLE GEM

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."—Luke 21:36

QUESTION

Why is it imperative now, as never before, that Christians diligently watch and pray?

ANSWER

Time is short: "The great conflict that Satan created in the heavenly courts is soon, very soon, to be forever decided. . . . Now, as never before, Satan is exercising his deceiving power to mislead and to destroy every unguarded soul."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 141

Satan's methods: "When he finds himself foiled upon one point he takes new ground and fresh tactics, and tries again, working wonders in order to deceive and destroy the children of men. The youth should be carefully warned against his power. . . . They should be led to cling to the Word of God and give attention to counsel and advice."—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 212

Tested individually: "Satan is to make most powerful efforts . . . in the last great conflict.... The faith of individual members of the church will be tested as though there were not another person in the world."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 983

Evil angels assist: "He [Satan] has legions of evil angels that he sends to every point where light from heaven is shining upon the people. Here he stations his pickets to seize every unguarded man, woman, or child and press them into his service."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 210

Constantly on guard: "Let every soul be on the alert. . . . Be vigilant,

watching diligently lest some carefully concealed and masterly snare shall take you unawares. . . . Unless we are constantly on guard we shall fall an easy prey to his unnumbered deceptions."—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 99, 100

A comforting assurance: "Satan leads many to believe that prayer to God is useless and but a form. He well knows how needful are meditation and prayer to keep Christ's followers aroused to resist his cunning and deception."—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 295

"The prayer of faith is the great strength of the Christian and will assuredly prevail against Satan."—*Ibid.*, p. 296

Walk prayerfully: "The enemy cannot overcome the humble learner of Christ, the one who walks prayerfully before the Lord. . . .

"Had Satan been suffered to have his way, there would have been no hope for Peter. He would have made complete shipwreck of faith. But the enemy dare not go one hairbreadth beyond his appointed sphere. There is no power in the whole satanic force that can disable the soul that trusts, in simple confidence, in the wisdom that comes from God."—*My life Today*, page 316

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Church leaders, administrators, ministers and their wives, families and church officers are under special intense, sophisticated cruel attacks of the enemy.

Satanists spend lengthy periods of time praying to the devil especially from midnight to three a.m., for the downfall of the Christian ministry. They will teach their children from an early age and especially train them as they grow in everything that is evil. They also teach them what Christians believe and when they grow up then they are sent to infiltrate and join Christian churches with only one purpose in mind, to drag down people into sin and hell, especially through sexual sins. They are serious and totally dedicated to the work of Satan. They even fake to become baptized members. They are rewarded when they seduce anyone, especially those in leadership.

Do we need to pray? You better believe it! Only those that are vigilant in prayer and constantly on guard at all times, indwelt and under the constant control and guide of the Holy Spirit will be safe.

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WATCH THEREFORE

BIBLE GEM

"Watch therefore—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning—lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch."—Mark 13:35-37, R.S.V.

QUESTION

What is meant by our Saviours admonition to "watch"? What are some of the things we are to watch or guard against?

ANSWER

Keep looking up: "A company was presented before me. . . . They were waiting and watching. Their eyes were directed heavenward, and the words of their Master were upon their lips: 'What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.'"—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 192

"I saw that it was impossible to have the affections and interests engrossed in worldly cares, to be increasing earthly possessions, and yet be in a waiting, watching position, as our Saviour has commanded."—*Ibid.*, p. 193

Watch the first symptom: "Watch, brethren, the first dimming of your light, the first neglect of prayer, the first symptom of spiritual slumber."—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 124

Watch your habits: "Watch against old habits and natural inclinations, lest they assert themselves; force them back, and watch."—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 410

Other things to watch: "Watch, lest you should speak hastily, fretfully, and impatiently. Watch, lest pride should find a place in your heart. Watch, lest evil passions should overcome you, instead of you subduing them. Watch, lest... you ... become light and trifling, and your influence savor of death,

rather than life."— *The Faith I Live By*, page 224

Watch for opportunities: "Watch over the souls whom Christ has purchased with His own blood. Watch for opportunities to do them good."— *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 410

Watch unto prayer: "We are to pray and watch unto prayer, that there may be no inconsistency in our lives. We must not fail to show others that we understand that watching unto prayer means living our prayers before God, that He may answer them."— *Selected Messages*, b. 1, pp. 116, 117

Be ready for Christ's coming: "We should watch and work and pray as though this were the last day that would be granted us. How intensely earnest, then, would be our life. How closely would we follow Jesus in all our words and deeds."— *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 200

" 'Pray always;' that is, be ever in the spirit of prayer, and then you will be in readiness for your Lord's coming."— *Ibid.*, p. 235

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

When we have set our spiritual standards by the people around us or by our peers and we do not sense or feel a need for a closer and more intimate walk with the good Lord and we think that our lifestyle is acceptable and accepted by the Lord as is in our present degraded or low spiritual condition, then we become spiritually deceived by ourselves and misled by Satan.

I recently visited a Christian home where usually when I come the TV is on and programs are watched continuously. There is no regular daily morning and evening worship. They go to church once a week and they think they have done their religious duties. They sense no need of spiritual awakening and to spend an hour or two on their knees alone with God in prayer in preparation for eternal life. We need to examine ourselves and see if we are still in harmony with God's will. If Jesus came today, are we sure that we are ready in our present spiritual condition?

Precious Father, please help us to watch, pray, and prepare for the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

❁ 38 ❁

PRAYING IN GROUPS

BIBLE GEM

"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."—Matthew 18:19, 20

QUESTION

Is there spiritual benefit to be received by forming small groups for study, prayer, and testimony?

ANSWER

Let small companies assemble: "Let small companies assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning to study the Bible. Let them have a season of prayer, that they may be strengthened, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This work Christ wants to have done in the heart of every worker. If you yourselves will open the door to receive it, a great blessing will come to you. Angels of God will be in your assembly. You will feed upon the leaves of the tree of life. What testimonies you may bear of the loving acquaintance made with your fellow workers in these precious seasons when seeking the blessing of God. Let each tell his experience in simple words."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 195

Praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit: "Why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit, since this is the means by which we are to receive power? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, preach concerning it? The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to us than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the baptism of the Spirit every worker should be pleading with God. Companies should be gathered together to ask for special

help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely."—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 22

The praying ones in the shaking time: "As the praying ones continued their earnest cries, at times a ray of light from Jesus came to them, to encourage their hearts and light up their countenances. Some, I saw, did not participate in this work of agonizing and pleading. They seemed indifferent and careless. They were not resisting the darkness around them, and it shut them in like a thick cloud. The angels of God left these and went to the aide of the earnest, praying ones. I saw angels of God hasten to the assistance of all who were struggling with all their power to resist the evil angels and trying to help themselves by calling upon God with perseverance. But His angels left those who made no effort to help themselves and I lost sight of them.

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans."—*Early Writings*, page 270

Spending time together in prayer: "We must be much in prayer if we would make progress in the divine life. When the message of truth was first proclaimed, how much we prayed.... Frequently we spent hours in earnest prayer. . . . Our perils are greater now than then."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 161, 162

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

When we do earnestly hunger, thirst and sigh and cry in our prayer with singleness of mind for a double portion of the gift of the Holy Spirit, He will come! When He is a resident inside of us then we will be strengthened, enlightened, sanctified, empowered and prepared to do God's will. Then only can we talk with conviction and preach and teach concerning this all important personal experience.

We can no longer afford to be indifferent or careless. We must be earnest and take the time to agonize and plead for a greater outpouring and infilling of God's Holy Spirit. Only as we ask and pray will we receive! Angels of light will come to assist us as we pray for greater spiritual strength and Holy Spirit power, alone or in a small group or in our churches.

There are plenty of preachers, teachers and church members today, but God is looking for champions of faith! Are you going to be one?

Come, loving Heavenly Father, in Jesus' name we earnestly pray, and may we experience your powerful presence by receiving a double portion of your Holy Spirit, then this dark world will be filled with Your true light, love and glory.

✿ 39 ✿

HOW MAY WE KNOW GOD'S WILL?

BIBLE GEM

"I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also."—
1 Corinthians 14:15

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the
Lord is."—Ephesians 5:17

"If any man will to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine."
—John 7:17

QUESTION

How may I know God's will? How may I know that my will is in accord
with His will?

ANSWER

Will of God expressed in His law: "God will draw near to every seeking
soul."—*Selected Messages*, b. 1, p. 116

"The will of God is expressed in the precepts of His holy law, and the
principles of this law are the principles of heaven. The angels of heaven
attain unto no higher knowledge than to know the will of God, and to do
His will is the highest service that can engage their powers."—*Thoughts
From the Mount of Blessing*, page 109

Some ways in which God's will is revealed: "There are three ways in which
the Lord reveals His will to us, to guide us, and to fit us to guide others.
How may we know His voice from that of a stranger? How shall we
distinguish it from the voice of a false shepherd? God reveals His will to us
in His Word, the Holy Scriptures. His voice is also revealed in His
providential workings; and it will be recognized if we do not separate our
souls from Him by walking in our own ways, doing according to our own
wills, and following the promptings of an unsanctified heart, until the senses

have become so confused that eternal things are not discerned, and the voice of Satan is so disguised that it is accepted as the voice of God.

"Another way in which God's voice is heard is through the appeals of His Holy Spirit, making impressions upon the heart, which will be brought out in the character. If you are in doubt upon any subject you must first consult the Scriptures. If you have truly begun the life of faith you have given yourself to the Lord to be wholly His, and He has taken you to mold and fashion according to His purpose, that you may be a vessel unto honor."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 512

Attraction and desire not enough: "But many are attracted by the beauty of Christ and the glory of heaven, who yet shrink from the conditions by which alone these can become their own. . . . They look toward the narrow way and the strait gate; but selfish pleasure, love of the world, pride, unsanctified ambition, place a barrier between them and the Saviour. . . . They desire the good, they make some effort to obtain it; but they do not choose it; they have not a settled purpose to secure it at the cost of all things."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 143

To know His will, faith and prayer needed: "True faith and true prayer. . . . are as two arms by which the human suppliant lays hold upon the power of Infinite Love. Faith is trusting in God,—believing that He loves us, and knows what is for our best good. Thus, instead of our own way, it leads us to choose His way."—*Gospel Workers*, page 259

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

When we receive Heavenly guidance, it is always in harmony with God's revealed truth and His ten commandments. The Bible and the Bible only is our only sure guide to distinguish between light and darkness, truth and error.

A lady thought that she was listening to the voice of God while she still loved one pet sin. Sometime later she was told by the same voice to go and kill somebody. She did it. And she is still sitting in jail today. It is obvious that she was listening to the voice of the devil. We must make sure that every sin has been confessed and forsaken and then we need to pray, read the Bible, and meditate on Christ's love filled life. Even then, we will hear two voices, the tempter's and the still small voice of the Holy Spirit. By God's Word alone we will know whose voice is speaking to us. We cannot go by feelings. We must depend on the Word of the living God.

Dear Jesus, please help us to so read the Bible and pray that we may at all times know the difference and follow only that which is right and honorable and in harmony with Your revealed will.

ASKING FOR A SIGN

BIBLE GEM

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."
—John 20:29

QUESTION

Is it safe to ask for a sign in answer to prayer?

ANSWER

Avoid uncertain tests: "The Lord works in no haphazard way. Seek Him most earnestly in prayer. He will impress the mind, and will give tongue and utterance. The people of God are to be educated not to trust in human inventions and uncertain tests as a means of learning God's will concerning them."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1054

"It is written": "Jesus met Satan with the words of Scripture. 'It is written,' He said. . . . Satan demanded of Christ a miracle as a sign of His divinity. But that which is greater than all miracles, a firm reliance upon a 'Thus saith the Lord,' was a sign that could not be controverted."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 120

The Word of God our guide: "The Word of the eternal God is our guide. Through this Word we have been made wise unto salvation. This Word is ever to be in our hearts and on our lips. 'It is written' is to be our anchor. Those who make God's Word their counselor realize the weakness of the human heart. . . . Their hearts are ever prayerful, and they have the guardianship of holy angels."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 160, 161.

Unsafe guides: "Impressions and feelings are no sure evidence that a person is led by the Lord. Satan will, if he is unsuspected, give feelings and

impressions. These are not safe guides. All should thoroughly acquaint themselves with the evidences of our faith, and the great study should be how they can adorn their profession and bear fruit to the glory of God."—*Ibid*, vol 1, p. 413

No human device or plan: "There is no chance work with God in the directing of His people. Let us never forget that His providences guide in every circumstance of life, and that in the determination of important questions regarding His work and people there is no uncertainty. . . .

"Our faith in Christ is not to be exchanged for any human device or plan. Those who have faith in Him . . . will never resort to a game of chance for an understanding of their duty. God is not glorified by such experiments."—*Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 17, pp. 38, 39

Christ was guided by God's will: "Before He came to earth, the plan lay out before Him, perfect in all its details. But as He walked among men, He was guided, step by step, by the Father's will. He did not hesitate to act at the appointed time. With the same submission He waited until the time had come."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 147

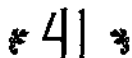
Warnings: "With some the evil has revealed itself in the form of man-made tests for ascertaining a knowledge of the will of God; and I was shown that this was a delusion which became an infatuation, and that it is contrary to the will of the Lord."—*Selected Messages*, b. 2, p. 28

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

When we depend on the revealed will of God as it is written in His Word, we will never falter. The Holy Spirit inside of us will give us strength, guidance and assurance, and He will confirm God's will for our lives, sometimes through visions, dreams, by an angel visitor, or by His still small voice. God delights in our trust and confidence in His guidance. He is more willing than we are to guide and give the very best of gifts to our own children. The question is not whether He will guide, but will we listen?

Before I became a Seventh-day Adventist I fasted one day in every seven on water for many months and prayed for heavenly guidance. God in His mercy showed me in three dreams that it was His will for me to become an SDA Christian and that I should marry this angel by the name of Maria who has been my faithful loving wife for the last 39 years.

Help us Father, to trust and believe that you will hear and answer our sincere heartfelt prayers of faith.



GETTING INTO THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

BIBLE GEM

"He shall pray unto God, and He will be favorable unto him: and he shall see His face with joy: for He will render unto man His righteousness."—*Job 33:26*

QUESTION

So often it is difficult to pray! How can a person get into the spirit of prayer?

ANSWER

Placed in the presence of God: "Prayer, whether offered in the public assembly, at the family altar, or in secret, places man directly in the presence of God."—*My Life Today*, page 18

A time set for meditation and prayer: "We, too, must have times set apart for meditation and prayer and for receiving spiritual refreshing. We do not value the power and efficacy of prayer as we should. Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 509

Set a place where one can be alone with God: "Have a place for secret prayer. Jesus had select places for communion with God, and so should we. We need often to retire to some spot, however humble, where we can be alone with God.

"In the secret place of prayer, where no eye but God's can see, no ear but His can hear, we may pour out our most hidden desires and longings."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 84

Reading the Bible prepares the mind for prayer: "Prayer, oh, how is this precious privilege neglected! The reading of the Word of God prepares the mind for prayer. . . . Prayer is the strength of the Christian. When

alone he is not alone; he feels the presence of One who has said: 'Lo, I am with you alway.'"—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 504

"We should come with reverence to the study of the Bible, feeling that we are in the presence of God. . . . Every student, as he opens the Scriptures, should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit; and the promise is sure, that it will be given."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 107, 108

Song a weapon against discouragement: "Let praise and thanksgiving be expressed in song. When tempted, instead of giving utterance to our feelings, let us by faith lift up a song of thanksgiving to God.

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"Song is a weapon that we can always use against discouragement."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 254

Thinking of and praising God: "If we would but think of God as often as we have evidence of His care for us we should keep Him ever in our thoughts and should delight to talk of Him and to praise Him."—*Steps to Christ*, page 102

What to do when we don't want to pray: "When we feel the least inclined to commune with Jesus, let us pray the most. By so doing we shall break Satan's snare, the clouds of darkness will disappear, and we shall realize the sweet presence of Jesus."—*Historical Sketches*, page 146

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

The devil will do anything and everything to keep us from lengthy periods of time in prayer. He will keep us so busy with TV and other entertainment, to make sure that our time is wasted and we have no time to spend with God. Or else the forces of darkness will involve us in arguments and contentions, and complaining and murmuring and criticizing, and by those things negate the desire to pray.

We need to find a quiet place where we regularly go to communicate with Heaven. This is where alone with God we open our heart and mind and lay our burdens down, ask for help, seek for wisdom, guidance, and for the reanointing of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. Let us pray, magnify, glorify, adore, and worship the Lord in prayer and songs of thanksgiving.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise His holy name.

✻ 42 ✻

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO OTHERS

BIBLE GEM

"Pray one for another. . . . The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—James 5:16

QUESTION

Who are some of the special ones for whom we are to pray?

ANSWER

Relatives and friends: "Let those who desire to work for God begin at home, in their own household, in their own neighborhood, among their own friends. Here they will find a favorable missionary field."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 428

"In private prayer all have the privilege of praying as long as they desire and of being as explicit as they please. They can pray for all their relatives and friends."—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 578

"God has promised to give wisdom to those that ask in faith, and He will do just as He said He would. He is pleased with the faith that takes Him at His word. The mother of Augustine prayed for her son's conversion. She saw no evidence that the Spirit of God was impressing his heart, but she was not discouraged. She laid her finger upon the texts, presenting before God His own words, and pleaded as only a mother can. Her deep humiliation, her earnest importunities, her unwavering faith, prevailed, and the Lord gave her the desire of her heart. Today He is just as ready to listen to the petitions of His people."—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 322, 323

Young men in service for our country: "When they [your children] went into the Army, your prayers followed them. They were wonderfully preserved from harm. . . . How many prayers were lodged in heaven that these sons might be preserved to obey God, to devote their lives to His glory!"—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 275 (From a personal testimony to a mother after the Civil War.)

The discouraged: "There are many from whom hope has departed. Bring back the sunshine to them. Many have lost their courage. Speak to them words of cheer. Pray for them."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 418

Those who hurt us: "The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed, not only for himself, but for those who were opposing him. When he felt earnestly desirous that the souls that had trespassed against him might be helped, he himself received help. Let us pray, not only for ourselves, but for those who have hurt us, and are continuing to hurt us. Pray, pray, especially in your mind. Give not the Lord rest; for His ears are open to hear sincere, importunate prayers, when the soul is humbled before Him."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1141

Encouragement to pray for those mentioned, and others: "The redeemed will be sharers in His [Christ's] joy, as they behold, among the blessed, those who have been won to Christ through their prayers, their labors, and their loving sacrifice."—*The Great Controversy*, page 647

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

We need to pray and never give up, no matter what happens, for our precious wives or husbands and children, their husbands and wives, and grandchildren, and all of our relatives and friends. Then we also need to pray for many people who have asked us to pray for them. Let us also pray for God's children within and outside of our church and pray for all people in all religions whether they are Jews, Moslems, Christians or otherwise.

Very soon every believer in Jehovah, who is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, will be tested and tried like Job was to see if we are going to be true and faithful. Every person on the face of this world will have to make a decision, either to follow the "New World Order," the "One World Government," the "One World Church," which eventually will be clearly seen is the reestablishment of the New Roman World Empire, or follow the Word of God. We are going to take on the mark of the beast or be sealed by the Holy Spirit for God.

Help us Father, to pray with compassion that the population of this world may know the difference and that those of us that know may not give up our precious faith.

Lord, please have mercy and keep us faithful.

✻ 43 ✻

LISTEN FOR GOD'S VOICE

BIBLE GEM

"Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you."—Jeremiah 7:23

QUESTION

What can we do to enable us to hear God's voice speaking to our hearts?

ANSWER

We must listen: "Christ is ever sending messages to those who listen for His voice."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 509

Get away from human voices: "When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 363

Study and pray: "Through study of the Scriptures, through earnest prayer, they [every soul] may hear His message to them, 'Be still and know that I am God.'"—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 441

"He who does nothing but pray will soon cease to pray, or his prayers will become a formal routine."—*Steps to Christ*, page 101

The Bible—God's voice: "The Bible is God's voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears."—*Testimonies*, vol 6, p. 393

"The Scriptures are to be received as God's word to us, not written merely, but spoken. . . .

"So with all the promises of God's Word. In them He is speaking to us individually, speaking as directly as if we could listen to His voice."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 122

"Never attempt to search the Scriptures unless you are ready to listen . . . to the Word of God as though His voice were speaking directly to you from

the living Oracles."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 919

The voice of duty—God's voice: "Nothing will give such clear views of self as secret prayer. . . . Plain, simple duties that must not be neglected will open before you."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 163

"There is no help for man, woman, or child who will not hear and obey the voice of duty, for the voice of duty is the voice of God."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 402

Conscience—God's voice: "**Conscience is the voice of God.**"—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 120

"We must resist and conquer inclination, and obey the voice of conscience without parleying or compromise, lest its prompting cease, and will and impulse control."—*Selected Messages*, b. 1, p. 28

The Holy Spirit: "Another way in which God's voice is heard is through the appeals of His Holy Spirit, making impressions upon the heart."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 512

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Eventually every sincere and true believer in the Holy Trinity will hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. That voice will become stronger and clearer as we obey revealed truth and follow with all of our hearts and minds. When by God's help we bring our whole being under the control of the Holy Spirit, we will hear His voice. There are no shortcuts, there is no easy way, casual seekers will not be guided by that still small voice.

Loving Trinity, please help us to develop a relationship that is real, alive, vibrant and ongoing by heartfelt earnest prayer of faith. Thank You that You have promised! and we wholeheartedly believe it! that we will hear a voice behind us saying: This is the way, walk ye in it. Thank you Lord, for your voice that guides us.

44

PRAY IN CHRIST'S NAME

BIBLE GEM

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it."—John 14:13, 14

QUESTION

What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus? Why is it supremely important that we pray in His name?

ANSWER

More than the mention of His name: "To pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works."—*Steps to Christ, pages 100, 101*

Vital power in Christ's name: "The disciples were to carry their work forward in Christ's name. Their every word and act was to fasten attention on His name, as possessing that vital power by which sinners may be saved. . . . In His name they were to present their petitions to the Father, and they would receive answer. . . . Nothing was to be recognized in His kingdom that did not bear His name and superscription."—*The Acts of the Apostles, page 28*

His name gives efficiency: "'Ask in My name,' Christ says. . . . 'This will give your prayers efficiency, and the Father will give you the riches of His grace. Wherefore ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.'"—*Testimonies, vol. 8, p. 178*

God honors Christ's name: " 'If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know

that we have the petitions that we desired of Him' (John 5:14, 15). Then press your petition to the Father in the name of Jesus. God will honor that name."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 148

The secret of success: "As yet the disciples were unacquainted with the Saviour's unlimited resources and power. He said to them, 'Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name' (John 16:24). He explained that the secret of their success would be in asking for strength and grace in His name. He would be present before the Father to make request for them. . . .

"There is no one living who has any power that he has not received from God, and the source whence it comes is open to the weakest human being. 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name,' said Jesus, 'that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' 'If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, page 667

God delights to answer: "We must not only pray in Christ's name, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This explains what is meant when it is said that the Spirit 'maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered' (Romans 8:26). Such a prayer God delights to answer. When with earnestness and intensity we breathe a prayer in the name of Christ, there is in that very intensity a pledge from God that He is about to answer our prayer 'exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think' (Ephesians 3:20)."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 147

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

There is no other name in Heaven or earth whereby we can be helped, saved, redeemed, protected, healed or restored.

The name of Jesus is above every name. Happy, contented and blessed are His children who trust and obey and follow His counsel and guidance.

He has defeated Satan and all his evil angels at Calvary. Therefore, when we pray in Jesus' name we are assured of definite victory over the powers of darkness, over our evil nature, the world, and all the temptations of the enemy.

Glory to God in the Highest! Praise and honor and thanksgiving be to Him who lives forever and ever.

Thank you Lord for your loving and caring provision and for your eternal salvation through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

✻ 45 ✻

THE CHIEF BURDEN OF CHRIST

BIBLE GEM

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."—John 16:7

QUESTION

When Christ lived on earth, how did He spend much of His time? What was the chief subject upon which He preached?

ANSWER

Christ spent much time in prayer: "Entire days were devoted to labor, and entire nights were spent in prayer, that He might be braced to meet the foe and fortified to help those who came to Him for relief."—*Gospel Workers*, page 115

Prayer a part of His daily program: "From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 139

The disciples deeply impressed as they heard Him in secret prayer: "The hearts of the listening disciples were deeply moved. They had marked how often He spent long hours in solitude in communion with His Father.... It was from hours spent with God that He came forth, morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. The disciples had come to connect His hours of prayer with the power of His words and works."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pages 102, 103

"He had often spent entire nights in the mountains in prayer."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 419

The chief burden of His preaching: "Christ, the Great Teacher, had an infinite variety of subjects from which to choose, but the one upon which He dwelt most largely was the endowment of the Holy Spirit. What great things He predicted for the church because of this endowment. Yet what subject is less dwelt upon now? What promise is less fulfilled? An occasional discourse is given upon the Holy Spirit, and then the subject is left for after consideration."—*Selected Messages*, b. 1, pages 156, 157

Brings all other blessings: "The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the 'former rain,' and glorious was the result. But the latter rain will be more abundant. . . .

"The promise of the Spirit is a matter little thought of; and the result is only what might be expected—spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the attention, and the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in its infinite plenitude.

"It is the absence of the Spirit that makes the gospel ministry so powerless."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 21

"Plead for the Holy Spirit. God stands back of every promise He has made."—*Ibid*, p. 23

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

The promise of the Holy Spirit is as sure and as certain and we can rely on it just like we know the sun will rise every morning. But He will not come with power unless He is invited. Yes, He is with us at all times, but only the early birds get the worms. Only those that rise early or make an earnest effort during the day to seek for an ever greater infilling and empowering will receive Him.

Christ has promised if we ask, seek and knock, we will for sure receive, pressed down, shaken together, in absolute abundance.

Loving Saviour, please help us to believe in Your word and especially in the mighty gift of Your Holy Spirit. And may we with great joy experience the power of Your Holy Spirit flowing through us in love and compassion to this perishing world.

✻ 46 ✻

CHRIST OUR MEDIATOR

BIBLE GEM

"There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."—1 Timothy 2:5

QUESTION

How may one comprehend Christ's work as mediator?

ANSWER

"Study His mediatorial work": "To the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos were revealed the things which God desired him to give to the people. Study these revelations. . . . Behold the life and character of Christ, and study His mediatorial work. Here is infinite wisdom, infinite love, infinite justice, infinite mercy."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 59

Christ the connecting link: "Christ is the connecting link between God and man. He has promised His personal intercession. He places the whole virtue of His righteousness on the side of the suppliant. . . . As we approach God through the virtue of the Redeemer's merits, Christ places us close by His side, encircling us with His human arm, while with His divine arm He grasps the throne of the Infinite. . . . He promises to hear and answer our supplications.

"Yes, Christ has become the medium of prayer between man and God. He has also become the medium of blessing between God and man."—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 178

Jesus our representative: " 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' embraces humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. . . . The glory that rested upon Christ is a pledge of the love of God for us. It tells of the power of prayer,—how the human voice may reach the ear of God, and our petitions find acceptance in the courts of heaven. . . . The

voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, "This My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 113

Divinity united to humanity: "The Saviour was deeply anxious for His disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united to humanity. . . . God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. Jesus revealed no qualities and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was."—*Ibid.*, p. 664

Essential to the plan of salvation: "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. . . . Jesus has opened the way to the Father's throne, and through His mediation the sincere desire of all who come to Him in faith may be presented before God."—*The Great Controversy*, page 489

Significance of praying in Christ's name: "To pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. . . . He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 668

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

I am so happy, thankful, and grateful that Jesus Christ of Bethelhem, the only begotten Son of the Father, came into this world to save unworthy sinners like me. I am free from the power, condemnation and bondage to sin and Satan. Sin has no dominion over me.

Am I sinless or perfect? Oh, no. I wish. My wife wishes, too. But I can have the sinless perfection of Jesus Christ given to me as a free gift and by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, I can be an overcomer. Do I still sin? Sad to say, yes. Every time I take over and do my own thing. However, I am determined by God's help to daily, hourly and moment by moment choose to love and obey and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. And to the extent I choose Him, His ways and His example, to that degree, but only to that degree, He comes in and gives me victory over self, pride, the lust of the flesh and the temptations of the devil. Satan cannot force me to sin.

Thank God that Jesus Christ will save us from sin.

Thank You loving Jesus for your salvation rich and free. Thank you for dying in our place so that now unquestionably we are the children of the King of Kings, saved by grace alone. What a joy it is to be a Christian.

✻ 47 ✻

PRAYER DEFEATS SATAN

BIBLE GEM

"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."—Ephesians 6:11

QUESTION

How only may we be victorious over Satan in the Christian warfare?

ANSWER

The price of safety: "In the conflict with satanic agencies there are decisive moments that determine the victory either on the side of God or on the side of the prince of this world. If those engaged in the warfare are not wide awake, earnest, vigilant, praying for wisdom, watching unto prayer, . . . Satan comes off victor, when he might have been vanquished by the armies of the Lord.

"Spiritual vigilance on our part individually is the price of safety. Swerve not to Satan's side a single inch, lest he gain advantage over you."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1094

"Prayer brings Jesus to our side, and gives to the fainting, perplexed soul new strength to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 250

Warfare against Satan lifelong: "We have before us a warfare—a lifelong conflict with Satan and his seductive temptations. The enemy will use every argument, every deception, to entangle the soul; and in order to win the crown of life, we must put forth earnest, persevering effort."—*Messages to Young People*, page 104

"We must have on the whole armor of God and be ready at any moment for a conflict with the powers of darkness. When temptations and trials rush in upon us, let us go to God and agonize with Him in prayer. He will

not turn us away empty, but will give us grace and strength to overcome, and to break the power of the enemy."—*Early Writings*, page 46

Suppose we neglect to pray, or pray only occasionally: "Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God. The spiritual faculties lose their vitality, the religious experience lacks health and vigor."—*Gospel Workers*, page 255

Beware! "Beware how you neglect secret prayer and a study of God's Word. These are your weapons against him who is striving to hinder your progress heavenward. The first neglect of prayer and Bible study makes easier the second neglect."—*Messages to Young People*, page 96

Satan's insinuation: "The prayer of faith is the great strength of the Christian and will assuredly prevail against Satan. This is why he insinuates that we have no need of prayer. The name of Jesus, our Advocate, he detests; and when we earnestly come to Him for help, Satan's host is alarmed. It serves his purpose well if we neglect the exercise of prayer, for then his lying wonders are more readily received."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 296

"An appeal to heaven by the humblest saint is more to be dreaded by Satan than the decrees of cabinets or the mandates of kings."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1008

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Unfortunately, as long as we live, Satan will tempt us to sin. This is how we are tested and tried to see who we really want to serve. Praise God that every child of His who engages in persevering prayer of faith against temptation, and submits their will to God, the Holy Spirit will make a victorious Christian. Sin will have no dominion or power over us if we choose Jesus Christ as our Lord and Master.

Thank You loving Father, that you will clothe us in Your armor to fight the good fight of faith in Your strength. There is no power on Heaven or on earth that can overcome a child of God who fully and completely trusts and obeys.

Praise God for His love and mercy and mighty power to save.

✿ 48 ✿

MOTHERS' PRAYERS

BIBLE GEM

"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."—Isaiah 54:13

QUESTION

What can I do to prepare my children for eternal life?

ANSWER

Heaven is open to every mother's prayers: "When Christ bowed on the banks of Jordan after His baptism and offered up prayer in behalf of humanity, the heavens were opened; and the Spirit of God, like a dove of burnished gold, encircled the form of the Saviour; and a voice came from heaven which said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

"What significance does this have for you? It says that heaven is open to your prayers. It says that you are accepted in the Beloved. The gates are open for every mother who would lay her burden at the Saviours feet. It says that Christ has encircled the race with His human arm, and with His divine arm He has grasped the throne of the Infinite and united man with God, and earth with heaven."—*Child Guidance*, pages 525, 526

A precious privilege: "This is an encouraging lesson to mothers for all time. After they have done the best they can do for the good of their children, they may bring them to Jesus. Even the babes in the mother's arms are precious in His sight.... He will receive and bless them; He will give peace, hope, and happiness to mother and children. This is a precious privilege which Jesus has granted to all mothers."—*The Adventist Home*, page 274

Christian mothers' prayers will bear fruit: "The prayers of Christian mothers are not disregarded by the Father of all. . . . He will not turn away your petitions and leave you and yours to the buffetings of Satan in the great day

of final conflict. It is for you to work with simplicity and faithfulness, and God will establish the work of your hands."—*Child Guidance*, page 526

"The lifework performed on earth is acknowledged in the heavenly courts as a work well done.

"With joy unutterable, parents see the crown, the robe, the harp, given to their children.... The seed sown with tears and prayers may have seemed to be sown in vain, but their harvest is reaped with joy at last. Their children have been redeemed."—*Ibid.*, p. 569

Influence lasts forever: "The influence of a praying, God-fearing mother will last through eternity. She may die, but her work will endure."—***Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 500**

A call to pray: "If ever there was a time when every house should be a house of prayer, it is now."—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 42

"By sincere, earnest prayer parents should make a hedge about their children. They should pray with full faith that God will abide with them, and that holy angels will guard them and their children from Satan's cruel power."—*Ibid.*, pp. 42, 43

"Let parents seek God for guidance in their work. On their knees before Him they will gain a true understanding of their great responsibilities and there they can commit their children to One who will never err in counsel and instruction."—*The Adventist Home*, page 321

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Thank God for earnest, sincere, heartfelt prayers of loving mothers. They seem to be able to enter into the experiences, the heartaches, problems, sorrows, trials, and temptations of their children. There is something tender, extremely loving kind, considerate, sensitive and compassionate about a mother's heart. Thank God that He made them like that. Through loving mothers, the love of God is manifested to us even before we are born, and I praise God for a loving mother and an extremely tenderhearted, soft and gentle, kind and compassionate, loving and forgiving angel that He gave me for a wife.

I am where I am only because of their earnest heartfelt prayer and many tears they shed for me.

Let us honor and cherish our mothers and wives and show appreciation by kind words and love expressed by little deeds like bringing flowers to them on a regular basis.

Thank God that He has vividly demonstrated His tender love and care to us through our mother, wife and daughters.

Men, let us honor them.

✻ 49 ✻

A SPECIAL INVITATION

BIBLE GEM

"We do not have a High Priest who is unable to understand and sympathize, . . . but One who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning. Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace—the throne of God's unmerited favor [to us sinners]; that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need—appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it."—Hebrews 4:15, 16, Amplified

QUESTION

Does "help for every need" include help in temporal as well as in spiritual matters?

ANSWER

A special invitation: "We come to God by special invitation, and He waits to welcome us to His audience chamber. . . . Let those who desire the blessing of God knock and wait at the door of mercy with firm assurance, saying, For Thou, O Lord, hast said, 'Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.'" — *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 131

Ask help for every need: "We may tell the Lord, with the simplicity of a child, exactly what we need. We may state to Him our temporal matters, asking Him for bread and raiment as well as for the bread of life and the robe of Christ's righteousness. Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things, and you are invited to ask Him concerning them. It is through the name of Jesus that every favor is received. God will honor that name, and will supply your necessities from the riches of His liberality." — *Ibid.*, p. 133

"The gift of Him who has all power in heaven and earth are in store for the children of God. Gifts so precious that they come to us through the costly sacrifice of the Redeemer's blood; gifts that will satisfy the deepest craving of the heart, gifts lasting as eternity, will be received and enjoyed by all who will come to God as little children."—*Ibid.*, pp. 133, 134

God earnestly desires to give temporal blessings: "He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 146

In trial: "' Come unto Me,' is His invitation. Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 329

Come boldly: "Heaven is open to our petitions, and we are invited to come 'boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' We are to come in faith, believing that we shall obtain the very things we ask of Him."—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1078

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Thank God, He has made every provision for us to make us victorious overcomers and we have no excuse for sin. However, even when we choose or accidentally sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, pleading on our behalf for our cleansing and forgiveness.

We have no excuse for sin!

God will send His holy angels and the power of His Holy Spirit to assist us in our struggles against our cultivated or inherited tendencies to sin. There is no temptation too powerful for God to handle. It is so wonderful of God that He never condemns us for the wrongs we have done. If we come in genuine repentance and are willing to turn from every known sin, His heart of compassionate love is always ready to cleanse and forgive.

Praise God for His unfathomable love and mercy that reaches to the lowest hell and picks us up from there and quickens us together with Christ Jesus.

What a glorious loving God He is! He provides for every temporal and spiritual need we have, more abundantly than we can ask or think.

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COUNTERFEIT ANSWERS TO PRAYER

BIBLE GEM

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."—Jeremiah 33:3

QUESTION

Is it possible for Satan to counterfeit God's work by assuming to answer prayer?

ANSWER

For every blessing Satan has a counterfeit: "Whenever and wherever the Lord works in giving a genuine blessing, a counterfeit is also revealed, in order to make of none effect the true work of God."—*Selected Messages*, b. 1, p. 142

Experience of those who rejected light given in 1844: "I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, 'Father, give us Thy Spirit.' Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. Satan's object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God's children."—*Early Writings*, page 56

In the time of great revival Satan will introduce a counterfeit: "Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. . . . The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise,

Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world."—*The Great Controversy*, page 464

Satan gives an experience to those who pray while unwilling to obey God: "In the face of the most positive commands of God, men and women will follow their own inclinations and then dare to pray over the matter, to prevail upon God to consent to allow them to go contrary to His expressed will. The Lord is not pleased with such prayers. Satan comes to the side of such persons, as he did to Eve in Eden, and impresses them, and they have an exercise of mind, and this they relate as a most wonderful experience which the Lord has given them. A true experience will be in perfect harmony with natural and divine law."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 72, 73

Our need: "Every phase of fanaticism and erroneous theories, claiming to be the truth, will be brought in among the remnant people of God."—*Selected Messages*, b. 2, p. 14

"We must have our discernment sharpened by divine enlightenment, that we may know the spirit that is of God. . . . Unless we are constantly on guard, we shall be overcome by the enemy."—*Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15

"If we build ourselves up in the faith, we shall be safe in the keeping of the Mighty One."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 297

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

If we have unforgiveness, critical attitude or known sin in our lives, small or great, and we are unwilling to confess and forsake it, then Satan has a legal right to give us counterfeit answers to our prayers. So we have counterfeit signs and wonders, slayings in the spirit, miracles and tongues. For almost everything God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit has ever done, Satan has a counterfeit.

How can we tell the difference?

Every supernatural miracle we see must be tested. We test the spirit behind the manifestation by the scriptures. 1 John 4:1-4. The spirit must answer to the Father (because they will lie to you and me). I have witnessed my minister brother cast out in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ the counterfeit spirit of tongues.

There may be a multitude of counterfeit manifestations of Satan, but at the same time there are genuine powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit of the living God.

Let us not throw out the baby with the bath water.

The very fact that there is all this counterfeit proves that in the first place there is also the genuine.

Loving Father, please help us to depend one hundred percent on Your Word and not to depend on our feelings or miracles. We thank You that in the name of Jesus and by the Scriptures we can test the spirits that we may never be misled or deceived by what we see and hear.

FAITH THE KEY TO ANSWERED PRAYER

BIBLE GEM

"Now faith is a confident assurance of that for which we hope, a conviction of the reality of things which we do not see."—Hebrews 11:1, *Weymouth*

"And without faith it is impossible to please Him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him."—Hebrews 11:6, R.S.V.

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."—Romans 14:23

QUESTION

To what extent are answers to prayer dependent upon faith? What is "the prayer of faith"?

ANSWER

Faith is the one and only avenue of approach to God: "Faith is the spiritual hand that touches infinity."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 467

"Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 431

"True faith and true prayer—how strong they are! They are as two arms by which the human suppliant lays hold upon the power of Infinite Love."—*Gospel Workers*, page 259

Faith is not our Saviour: "Through faith we receive the grace of God; but faith is not our Saviour. It earns nothing. It is the hand by which we lay hold upon Christ, and appropriate His merits, the remedy for sin."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 175

God reaches for our hand: "God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character."—*Ibid.*, p. 123

Faith sees Jesus as our Mediator: "Faith sees Jesus standing as our Mediator at the right hand of God."—*Gospel Workers*, page 259

"Today He is standing at the altar of mercy, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 90

"As the sinner's sincere, humble prayers ascend to the throne of God, Christ mingles with them the merits of His own life of perfect obedience. Our prayers are made fragrant by this incense. Christ has pledged Himself to intercede in our behalf, and the Father always hears the Son."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 22

The prayer of faith defined: "The prayer that comes from an earnest heart, when the simple wants of the soul are expressed just as we would ask an earthly friend for a favor, expecting that it would be granted—this is the prayer of faith."—*My Life Today*, page 19

The foundation of genuine faith: "Genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures."—*Gospel Workers*, page 260

"We are not to trust in our faith, but in the promises of God."—*Messages to Young People*, page 111

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

If we want our prayers to be answered, then without a doubt unwaveringly with a steadfast faith we need to claim and expect what God has promised to be given to us.

God has not changed His mind. He still says: Ask, seek, knock and you will receive and find and heavens blessings will be poured out upon us.

Father, please help us to diligently seek in faith and so live our lives by Your help in harmony with Your will, that our earnest prayers may be answered and nothing may hinder.

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HOW ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD

BIBLE GEM

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."—
Genesis 5:24

QUESTION

What is the meaning of the statement, "And Enoch walked with God"?

ANSWER

Silent petitions while in daily work: "While engaged in our daily work, we should lift the soul to heaven in prayer. These silent petitions rise like incense before the throne of grace; and the enemy is baffled. . . . It was thus that Enoch walked with God. And God was with him, a present help in every time of need. . . .

"Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted, and the health of the soul be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Wellspring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience."—*Gospel Worker*, pages 254, 255

Unceasing Prayer: "I wish I could impress upon every worker in God's cause the great need of continual, earnest prayer. They cannot be constantly upon their knees, but they can be lifting their hearts to God. This is the way that Enoch walked with God."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 596

"Enoch's walk with God was not in a trance or a vision, but in all the duties of his daily life. . . . In the family and in his intercourse with men, as a husband and father, a friend, a citizen, he was the steadfast, unwavering servant of the Lord."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 85

Type of remnant: "The godly character of this prophet represents the state of holiness which must be attained by those who shall be "redeemed

from the earth" (Revelation 14:3) at the time of Christ's second advent. . . . Like Enoch, God's people will seek for purity of heart, and conformity to His will, until they shall reflect the likeness of Christ. Like Enoch . . . by their holy conversation and example they will condemn the sins of the ungodly. As Enoch was translated to heaven before the destruction of the world by water, so the living righteous will be translated from the earth before its destruction by fire."—*Ibid.*, pp. 88, 89

Lived in heavenly places: "Enoch's heart was upon eternal treasures. He had looked upon the celestial city. He had seen the King in His glory in the midst of Zion. The greater existing iniquity, the more earnest was his longing for the home of God. . . .

" 'Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.' For three hundred years Enoch had been seeking purity of heart, that he might be in harmony with heaven. For three centuries he had walked with God. Day by day he had longed for a closer union; nearer and nearer had grown the communion, until God took him to Himself. He had stood at the threshold of the eternal world, only a step between him and the land of the blest; and now the portals opened, the walk with God, so long pursued on earth, continued, and he passed through the gates of the Holy City. . . .

"To such communion God is calling us."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 330, 331

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

God is lovingly and tenderly calling. Like Enoch, let us respond with all of our hearts and minds. Then God will make our bodies His holy temple and dwelling place. We can so walk with God that He will live inside of us. This can be our joyous privilege from now on until Jesus comes.

There is no greater joy, pleasure or privilege than to fall in love and unite our hands and hearts with the lover of our soul. Completely united, lost in His arms of love, He will tenderly cherish and care for us and finally take us to our heavenly home.

Don't let anything stop you or Satan rob you from this most exciting and rewarding experience.

This is the only thing worth living for!

Please help us, loving Jesus, to value above all else an intimate relationship and a close walk with you.

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OUR EXPERIENCE AND OUR WORK

BIBLE GEM

"And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."—Luke 1:17

QUESTION

How does the experience of Enoch and of John the Baptist relate to God's remnant people?

ANSWER

Represents our experience: "The experience of Enoch and of John the Baptist represents what ours should be. Far more than we do, we need to study the lives of these men—he who was translated to heaven without seeing death, and he who, before Christ's first advent, was called to prepare the way of the Lord, to make His paths straight."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 329

Preparation for service: "The life of John was not spent in idleness, in ascetic gloom, or in selfish isolation. From time to time he went forth to mingle with men; and he was ever an interested observer of what was passing in the world. From his quiet retreat he watched the unfolding of events. . . . The burden of his mission was upon him. In solitude, by meditation and prayer, he sought to gird up his soul for the lifework before him."—*Gospel Workers*, page 57

"John the Baptist in his desert life was taught of God. He studied the revelations of God in nature. Under the guiding of the divine Spirit, he studied the scrolls of the prophets. By day and by night, Christ was his study, his meditation, until mind and heart and soul were filled with the glorious vision."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 331

Results of spiritual vision: "He looked upon the King in His beauty, and self was lost sight of. He beheld the majesty of holiness and knew himself to be inefficient and unworthy. It was God's message that he was to declare. It was in God's power and His righteousness that he was to stand. He was ready to go forth as Heaven's messenger, unawed by the human, because he had looked upon the Divine. He could stand fearless in the presence of earthly monarchs because with trembling he had bowed before the King of kings. With no elaborate arguments or fine-spun theories did John declare his message."—*Ibid.*, pp. 331, 332

Vision produced humility: "Looking in faith to the Redeemer, John had risen to the height of self-abnegation. He sought not to attract men to himself, but to lift their thoughts higher and still higher, until they should rest upon the Lamb of God. He himself had been only a voice, a cry in the wilderness."—*Ibid.*, p. 333

"The soul of the prophet, emptied of self, was filled with the light of the Divine."—*Ibid.*, p. 334

Ours a similar message: "In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, such a work as that of John is to be done."—*Ibid.*, p. 332

"In order to give such a message as John gave, we must have a spiritual experience like his. The same work must be wrought in us. We must behold God, and in beholding Him lose sight of self.

"John had by nature the faults and weaknesses common to humanity; but the touch of divine love had transformed him."—*Ibid.*, p. 333

SUMMARY AND PRAYER THOUGHT

Repent and be converted and prepare for the coming of the Lord was the message of John the Baptist. When, like John, we will be prepared to even give our lives for preaching a fearless message to rebuke sin, then our heaven given Bible based sermons will be powerful and effective and thousands will be converted.

God is challenging us to give His last warning message in the power of the Holy Spirit with compassion and love for this sin sick world.

Are we going to be faithful to cry loud and clear declaring God's message? Only a Christlike, love-powered, totally surrendered servant, filled with compassion will be effective to prepare others for everlasting life and the second coming of the Lord.

May God bless and lead us as we determine to labor faithfully for our soon coming King.

FINAL REMARKS

We have come to the end of this book on prayer, but don't despair, you can continue a joy filled meaningful two-way communication with the Creator of the Universe.

Don't let the devil discourage or stop you. May your meaningful prayer life continue until Jesus comes to take His loved ones home, and then it will continue face to face through the endless ages of eternity.

As long as we remain in a saved condition by making sure that every known sin has been confessed and forsaken and we have asked for a daily empowering and infilling of the Holy Spirit to make us ongoing, victorious, joy filled overcomers, then we have reached the mountaintop of Christian experience, add to all this the pleasures of two-way communication with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This is the key to optimal joy and limitless happiness and lasting satisfaction.

My wife and I and multitudes of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world are experiencing the goodness and love of God and we hear that still small voice leading, teaching, instructing, guiding, and commissioning the work of the Lord.

Please tune into Heaven by prayer and you will love and enjoy your daily lengthy two-way communication with the Trinity.

May God bless you as you continue your most meaningful adventure of your Christian life. We dedicate this book with much love to all of our precious brothers and sisters in Christ.

Yours in the Master's service,

Tibor and Maria Shelley

"You will find Me when you search for
Me with all your heart."

Communion With God is a dynamic devotional book that will open an exciting new understanding of your prayer relationship with heaven. Drawn almost entirely from the writings of Ellen G. White, Communion with God will inspire you to spend more time in prayer and you will find your prayer time takes on deeper meaning. If you are tempted to take your prayer life for granted, this book will open your eyes to a beautiful and growing relationship you can experience with your Savior. First, thoughtfully read a page for the day. Next, ponder the spiritual gems, asking the question, "Lord, how can I apply this to my own life?" Then you are ready to enter into the most important, sacred, and thrilling experience for the Christian believer - prayer! Remember, God's promise is for you, personally. "You will find Me when you search for Me with all your heart." When you start experiencing this book, you'll want to share it with everyone you meet. Our Lord is eager to hear from us and eager to respond. Communion With God will help you start each day with Jesus at your side.

"You will find Me when you search for
Me with all your heart."

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