

The Breakthrough
INTERCESSOR

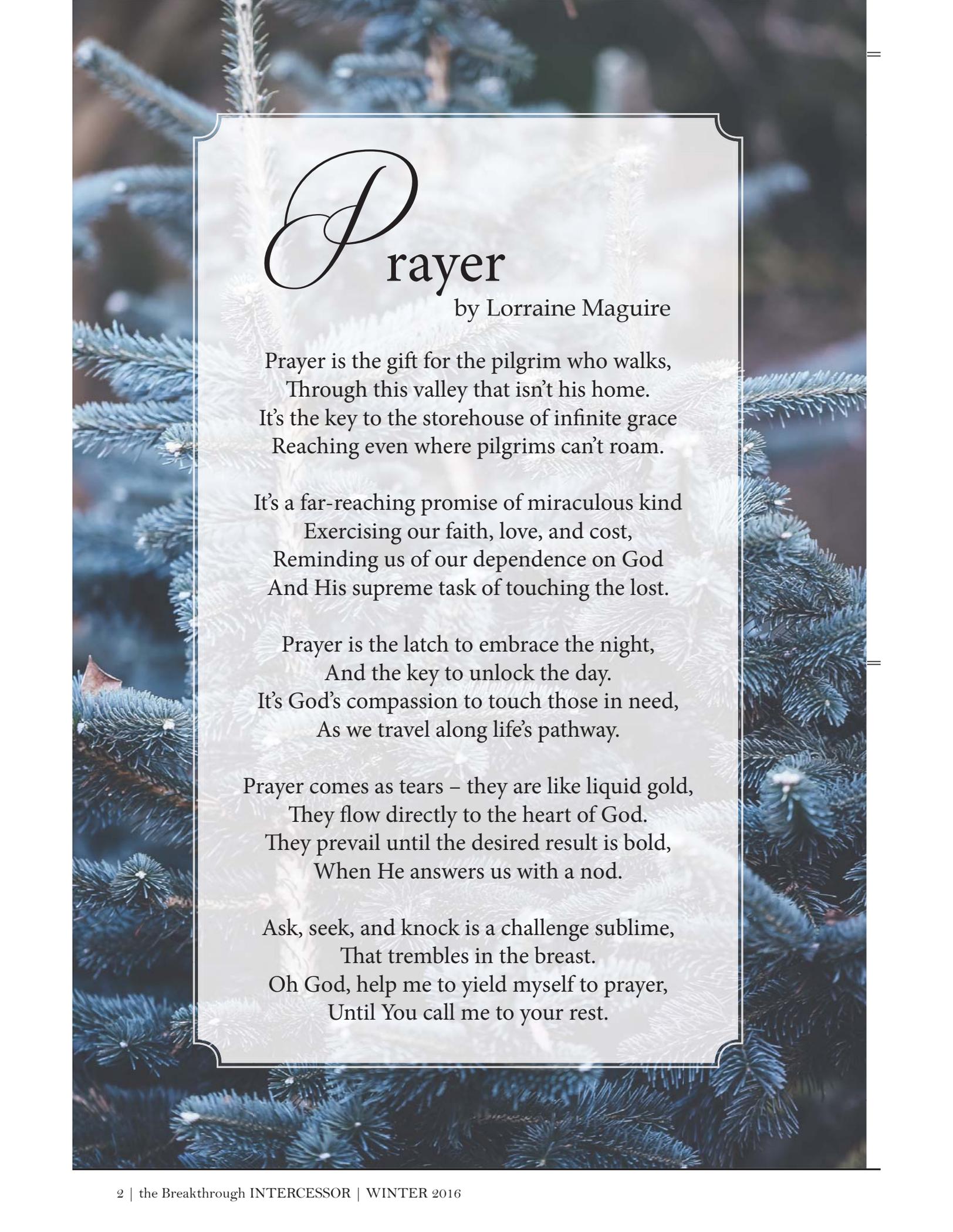
Winter 2016

An Increase of Joy

The Magazine About Prayer

Boldly receiving His gracious gifts | p. 6

**The blessing of giving even when there's
none to spare | p. 18**



Prayer

by Lorraine Maguire

Prayer is the gift for the pilgrim who walks,
Through this valley that isn't his home.
It's the key to the storehouse of infinite grace
Reaching even where pilgrims can't roam.

It's a far-reaching promise of miraculous kind
Exercising our faith, love, and cost,
Reminding us of our dependence on God
And His supreme task of touching the lost.

Prayer is the latch to embrace the night,
And the key to unlock the day.
It's God's compassion to touch those in need,
As we travel along life's pathway.

Prayer comes as tears – they are like liquid gold,
They flow directly to the heart of God.
They prevail until the desired result is bold,
When He answers us with a nod.

Ask, seek, and knock is a challenge sublime,
That trembles in the breast.
Oh God, help me to yield myself to prayer,
Until You call me to your rest.

*The people that in darkness walked
 Have seen a wondrous light,
 A light that beamed afar,
 The bright and morning star,
 And those that dwelt in death's dark vale
 Have felt their joy increase,
 Their constant theme shall be,
 "All hail the Prince of Peace."
 Grant Colfax Tullar, 1903*

ABOUT BREAKTHROUGH

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 Leonard LeSourd

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Our Mission: Bringing together anonymously those needing prayer and Christians willing to pray for them; calling, equipping and encouraging people for this work.

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our mission

Breakthrough Intercessory Prayer Ministry is here for anyone who wants prayer. Prayer requests may be sent to us by mail, phone, email, fax, or through our website. Your prayer request is sent anonymously to six of our nearly 4,000 intercessors around the world who agree to pray for 21 days for each request they receive.

You will have your own prayer team of dedicated intercessors holding your needs up before the Lord. People often report an increased sense of peace during the prayer period. As you read this magazine, you will learn about many prayers that have been answered.

Catherine Marshall was given the inspiration for Breakthrough nearly 40 years ago. She was a best-selling Christian author who became concerned about the many prayer requests sent to her by her readers. At the same time, other readers were writing to tell her that they longed to be used by God but had no idea what they could do. God gave Catherine the vision of matching these two groups of people: those with prayer needs and those Christians who wanted to be part of a ministry. Thus Catherine and her husband, Leonard LeSourd, began the Breakthrough ministry.

Prayer requests are identified by first name only and are never sent to intercessors in the same geographic location as the prayer requester. The 21-day prayer period was arrived at based on the story in Daniel chapter 10. Daniel was praying for three weeks before the angel of the Lord was able to come and help him. The angel had been detained by spiritual forces from the first day of Daniel's prayer.

Our intercessors may receive scriptural insights from God for the prayer requester. Those messages, in the form of Scripture verses, are sent to the office and then forwarded to the person requesting prayer. In turn, prayer requesters send their answers to prayer to the staff which are then forwarded to the intercessors as encouragement for their faithfulness in praying.



We want to hear from you. Pray about becoming one of our intercessors. It is a small expenditure of time compared to how it will impact your life and change the lives of others. As you read this magazine, think of your own stories of answered prayer that you would like to share. Our editorial committee will consider them for publication in *The Breakthrough Intercessor*. Remember also to send us your prayer requests. It is our privilege to pray for you.

kingdom keys

Hello Beloved,

Revelation 5:10 says, “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.” (NIV)

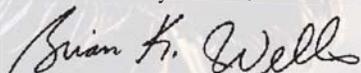
Priests bring petitions before God. Kings decide those matters and render judgments. Part of our responsibility for ruling and reigning on the Earth includes speaking these judgments into the Earth in the form of decrees. Only Kings issue decrees.

Job 22:28 says, “Thou shall also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee...” (KJV)

What good is it to go to court, receive a judgment, and never proclaim the outcome? We must be bold to declare the Word of the Lord. Whenever Jesus made decrees, he was declaring and repeating what he had already heard in Heaven’s Court. Jesus’ decrees were bringing Heaven’s judgment into the Earth, speaking it into existence! Without His decrees, nothing on Earth would have changed. The fig tree would not have withered, unclean spirits would not have come out, and lepers would not have been cleansed.

Decrees are powerful statements given to us by the Spirit of God, injecting His words into the atmosphere, changing the status of something or someone’s condition, bringing it in line with our covenant provisions. Let’s not do a half job. After waging the warfare, and fighting the good fight of faith, finish the job by decreeing the end result, and watch God bring it to pass. This is true Kingly intercession!

God bless you all,



Brian K. Wells
Chairman of the Board

Breakthrough’s statement for financial accountability is available upon written request from the Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs: P.O. Box 526, Richmond, VA 23218





The Unspoken Request

by Nicole Goodfellow Horsch

My family decided years ago that the adults in the family would not exchange gifts at Christmas time. It had become an added stress and financial burden. All of us grown-ups already had much of what we wanted, so we focused on purchasing gifts for only the children. The holidays are now less stressful.

A few Christmases ago, we sat in my living room watching the kids open their gifts. Toward the end of the evening, my parents brought in two very large, beautifully wrapped boxes and placed one at my feet and one in front of my sister-in-law. We were perplexed! I couldn't imagine what might be inside the silver and white packages. We were instructed to unwrap them. The kids all buzzed with delight and squealed; they loved seeing their moms open gifts. To my surprise, my gift was a VitaMix blender. I had admired them for years, but the cost seemed extravagant so I never purchased one. My sister-in-law found a beautiful Cuisinart Stand Mixer in her package. She also wanted one for years; but as moms do, went without. We were shocked that our parents would give us such wonderful gifts.

Although we really admired these appliances, we never made formal requests for them. Our parents were sensitive and attentive to know those were the desires of our hearts. I learned that Christmas that sometimes the very best gifts of all are the ones not asked for but received because the giver noticed and gave with pleasure. Being noticed and remembered are universal desires of the human heart.

Mary had an encounter with an angel who announced a gift she hadn't specifically requested. As a devout Jewish girl, she had likely participated in family prayers for the Messiah. Her people had been seeking a Savior for centuries, the One told about

in prophecies who would save their people from the unending problem of sin and separation from God. But we do not have record of Mary asking to specifically be the mother of God. How could she even fathom such a thing? The extravagance of Jesus and being the one to carry Him would be a prayer she likely couldn't have conjured up on her own.

The Bible tells us that upon hearing Gabriel's declaration, Mary first felt troubled and confused and then declared boldly, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38) What a brave and obedient response to this gift from God. Later, Mary beautifully declares God's goodness

in a song of thanksgiving, known as “The Magnificat” - the most beautiful thank you note ever written for a gift:

*“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked on the humble estate of
his servant.
For behold, from now on all generations
will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great
things
for me, and holy is his name.
And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the
thoughts
of their hearts;
he has brought down the mighty from
their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring
forever.”*

Jesus is the ultimate answer of unasked prayers for ALL of us. Before we even realized our need to be saved from our sins, God sent the gift of Jesus by way of a young girl who couldn't fathom why He chose her. God tells us His thoughts are not like our thoughts and His ways are not like our ways (Isaiah 55:8); I'd say this qualifies Him to be the best gift giver of all.

I think of the excitement my

sister-in-law and I felt over luxury kitchen appliances. How much more excitement should we have for the gifts and answers to prayers we dare not utter or even know to ask? Sometimes, we can be like the adults in my family and assume we already have everything we need or want. I marvel how God really knows exactly what we need before we do and makes the provision. This Christmas season, follow Mary's example and give thanks for the gifts great and small and the answers to unspoken prayers.

Nicole Goodfellow

Horsch lives in Round Hill, Va., with her husband and three beautiful daughters. She is a home-schooling mom who also manages a home based business. At the prompting of friends, she began writing “Another Blog About Jesus” (found at www.anotherblogaboutjesus.com) where she shares insights from the Word.



Not My Problem

by Marleen McDowell

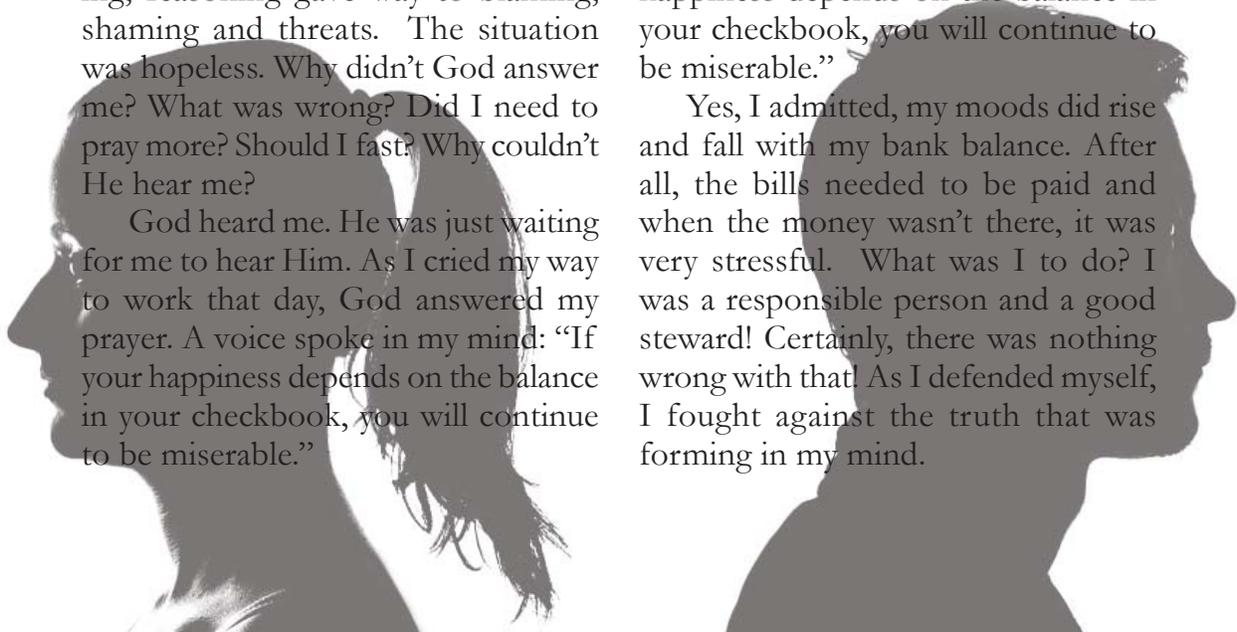
Where, Lord? Where? Where is that victorious life you promised?" I pleaded for an answer. Tears were pouring down my face, blurring the road ahead. It was hopeless. Our finances were an endless rollercoaster ride. We had just finished the long, slow, laborious climb back to the top and here we were again, speeding over the suicide drop to the pit below. Uphill, downhill. In debt, out of debt. It was crazy. We both worked and had enough for a comfortable living but instead we were always broke, always struggling, always worrying, and always fighting.

For years, I had prayed for the Lord to change my husband. But now, ten years into the marriage nothing was different. Repeatedly, he made promises and broke them. Talking, pleading, reasoning gave way to blaming, shaming and threats. The situation was hopeless. Why didn't God answer me? What was wrong? Did I need to pray more? Should I fast? Why couldn't He hear me?

God heard me. He was just waiting for me to hear Him. As I cried my way to work that day, God answered my prayer. A voice spoke in my mind: "If your happiness depends on the balance in your checkbook, you will continue to be miserable."

I was shocked! This wasn't fair! I wasn't the one who spent all the money! My mouth opened, I tried to speak, to explain but I could only repeat what I had just heard: "If your happiness depends on the balance in your checkbook, you will continue to be miserable."

Yes, I admitted, my moods did rise and fall with my bank balance. After all, the bills needed to be paid and when the money wasn't there, it was very stressful. What was I to do? I was a responsible person and a good steward! Certainly, there was nothing wrong with that! As I defended myself, I fought against the truth that was forming in my mind.



There was something wrong. Money was too important to me. It was my security, the answer to all my problems. It meant more to me than my husband or my marriage or... the thought forced its way into my mind... I could not deny it... I trusted money more than the Lord. There it was. The ugly truth - money was my god. "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." (1 Timothy 6:10 ESV)

I wanted to hide. Here I was, feeling so self-righteous putting all the blame on my husband. Yet I was the one with a serious problem. My sin was directly against God.

"For you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." (Exodus 34:14 ESV) I was worshipping an idol. The tears started again, only this time they were tears of repentance. Sincere confession filled the remainder of the drive.

With the truth out in the open, a junction lay before me. I could

continue on the same path or I could make a turn and choose to break the hold money had on me. It was not in my power to change my husband, but I could change myself. I made my decision and the helplessness dissolved away.

That evening I confessed my sin to my husband. I needed his prayers and his help to tear down my "money idol." We decided on a fast. For one month, I would not touch money in any form. He would pick up my paychecks, pay the bills, do the grocery shopping, keep my car gassed up and handle any financial matters.

It was a long month. Co-workers invited me to lunch, friends asked me to go shopping but each time a polite, "Not today," excused me from the activity. The first week was filled with the frustration of being penniless. The second week was spent just marking time, a bit resentful, waiting for the month to end. The time wore on slowly.

However, a change was happening. Financial worries and responsibilities no longer consumed me, my moods did not rise and fall with

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?... But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Matthew 6:25, 33

my bank balance, the bondage was broken, and joy became a shy companion who replaced the stress. The Lord had used my husband's financial weakness as a means to set me free from my sin.

Trusting in the Lord instead of my income took time. The roller coaster continued to storm around the track. On the steep downhill rides, I learned to seek the Lord first, [Matt 6:33] to stay in the Word and to trust God's promises. Gradually, I learned to be content [Phil 4:12] with what I had rather than dwell on what I didn't have, to be thankful for small things, and to look deeper for the hidden blessings. Most importantly, I learned to take the log out of my own eye before I looked for the splinter in my husband's. [Matt 7:3]

So many times I wanted to quit and walk away from that wild ride. Now I am thankful both of us chose to stay and work through our problems because the Lord used that ride for our good. [Rom 8:28-29] When God allows tough times in our lives, He has a purpose. [Rom 3:3-5] He wants us to mature and draw closer to Him as we pray and feed upon the Word. It is through these experiences where we learn to have compassion for others so we can offer a steady hand to those who are walking the same rough path.

God is faithful and when the time was right, He did answer my prayers; my husband sought counseling and learned to successfully manage our finances. Today we are retired and

our income has been cut in half - yet we are rich. Not in the treasures of this world but in our strong marriage and our walk with the Lord, for a threefold cord is not easily broken. We are blessed beyond measure and we are living a simple but victorious life. "And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." (Matthew 6:28-29 ESV)

Marleen McDowell

and her husband Aaron, have been married 40 years. They live off the grid in the backwoods of the South Oregon Cascade Range. She enjoys the wild flowers and animals as well as gardening.





He Is More

by Joanna Bean

I am one of those people who asks a lot of questions. I don't just want a cliché answer; I want to know why that is the right answer. I'm interested in the details about how something works and why. When we pray, we inevitably ask questions. We want to know things, and our all-knowing God should give the best answers, right? But even when we don't hear the how and the why, He provides so much more than answers to our questions.

As we seek Him through prayer, He grows us in faith and relationship. When we have to wait for an answer, He is clearly growing us in patience and trust, the "action verbs" of waiting. We read in James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." If we delight in Him, He will give us our hearts' desires.

Through a diligent personal prayer life, our desires will become what His desires for us have been all along.

Last year, I was plunging toward a very low point in my life. I had to make a tough life decision, which was followed by a moment-by-moment renewal of that decision after the initial choice. The most difficult part of it was the anger and jealousy I felt toward several people in my life. I asked God at one point, "Why do I have to sit over here, wait for Your leading, submit to You, and not tell anyone how I feel? Why do these other Christians get to do whatever they want? Couldn't they stop being blind for two seconds and see how wrong their intentions are?"

The answer was no, not yet. It wouldn't have helped if I had gone on some sort of tirade trying to make them see the truth. God reveals Himself in



His time.

I am thankful that God led me to trust Him and His perfect will even if it wasn't revealed yet. Multiple times a day I would offer up a prayer to God: Here is how I want to respond, but I know this is not a godly reaction. Give me the strength to allow the Holy Spirit to work through me. Your will be done, Father, and not my own. Help me to not live according to the flesh. My flesh was weak and struggling. But my powerful Lord made me strong, able to stand in the evil day. Even when there came ample opportunity for me to speak out and try to take control, I was able to yield to God and say "God, your will be done in my life, not my own."

In time, He answered me even though He didn't give me all the details when I first asked. He continues to answer my prayer whenever I am in a

struggle on any given day. I understand now why Jesus told His disciples to "watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation." (Matthew 26:41)

Joanna Bean is passionate about sharing through writing what God is doing in her life. That was not always the case, but God has grown



her out of her comfort zone to bring her to that place. She is in a gospel singing group based out of Hannibal, Missouri, spreading the gospel and encouraging the hurting. She spends her free time working and counseling at a church camp and spoiling her nieces and nephews while seeking to follow God and His perfect plan for her writing and her life.

I had just completed several frustrating trips around the crowded hospital lot looking for an opening to park when I observed a couple heading for their car. I positioned myself (most obviously) to move into the slot which I of course considered my parking spot. Suddenly a young woman quickly and expertly maneuvered around the end of a parking line and into the slot just vacated by the other car.

The Poor in Spirit

by Walter Maris



The woman hastily exited her car, flashed me a smile and moved off rapidly toward the hospital. I don't know what she meant to communicate with her smile, but I gave it a very negative interpretation as I sat there doing a slow burn. Later, in my quiet time with the Lord I realized my reaction and my response could have been much better. Perhaps the woman was in the midst of a life emergency, and her smile was an appeal for me to understand or to forgive her. Whatever the situation, I realized I needed to respond in a way that was pleasing to the Lord. Jesus, with infinite wisdom, gave us the guidelines and direction in the Beatitudes that would help us to be more like Him.

We know our own short-comings, our sin, and our limitations. I have often missed out on opportunities of service simply because I didn't release my irritations of the moment, instead letting them affect my whole day. When we are in a negative mode we are not really capable of fulfilling the selfless, blessing-filled lifestyle taught in the Beatitudes.

I know that in much of my life I have been so distant from the Beatitude of "Poor in Spirit." Who are the "Poor in Spirit?" Where do we find them—are they in our neighborhood, or in our church? Are you acquainted with them and, if so, are you among them? If you are, you are blessed as you will have the Kingdom of Heaven, a promise of God.

Worldly View

As we consider the message of the "Poor in Spirit," the first thought of many might be, who wants to be poor in anything? The natural mind revolts against poverty in any situation. We have no desire to be poor financially, poor in natural abilities, in wisdom, in social acceptance

or poor in any human experience. We want to be at the top at whatever we are involved in. It is the nature of the human race to seek power, recognition, social and political standing as well as wealth and all the things that wealth can bring. Many will spend a lifetime struggling to achieve some type of worldly goal perceived as necessary for desired success. In the struggle to get to the top, people have resorted to fighting in various ways, scheming, manipulating, lying, stealing, and just striking out in whatever way seems necessary to reach the goal.

Many people obtain success, at least in some measure as the world looks at success. The sad fact is that the sought after and achieved goals seldom result in supplying any lasting happiness to the individual. There are many books that carry stories that include records and interviews that reveal people are often left with emptiness after reaching their worldly goals. People get to the point where they question whether true happiness is possible, but we have always had the message of happiness — a true joy in the Lord available to us.

The guidelines and the fulfillment can be found in living the Beatitudes.

A Life In Christ

The word "blessed" can be translated as "happy" or "fortunate." A careful study of Scripture reveals that the word "blessed," in a biblical context, implies more than a short-lived or passing emotion. "Blessed" describes an inner contentment and peace with God regardless of our circumstances.

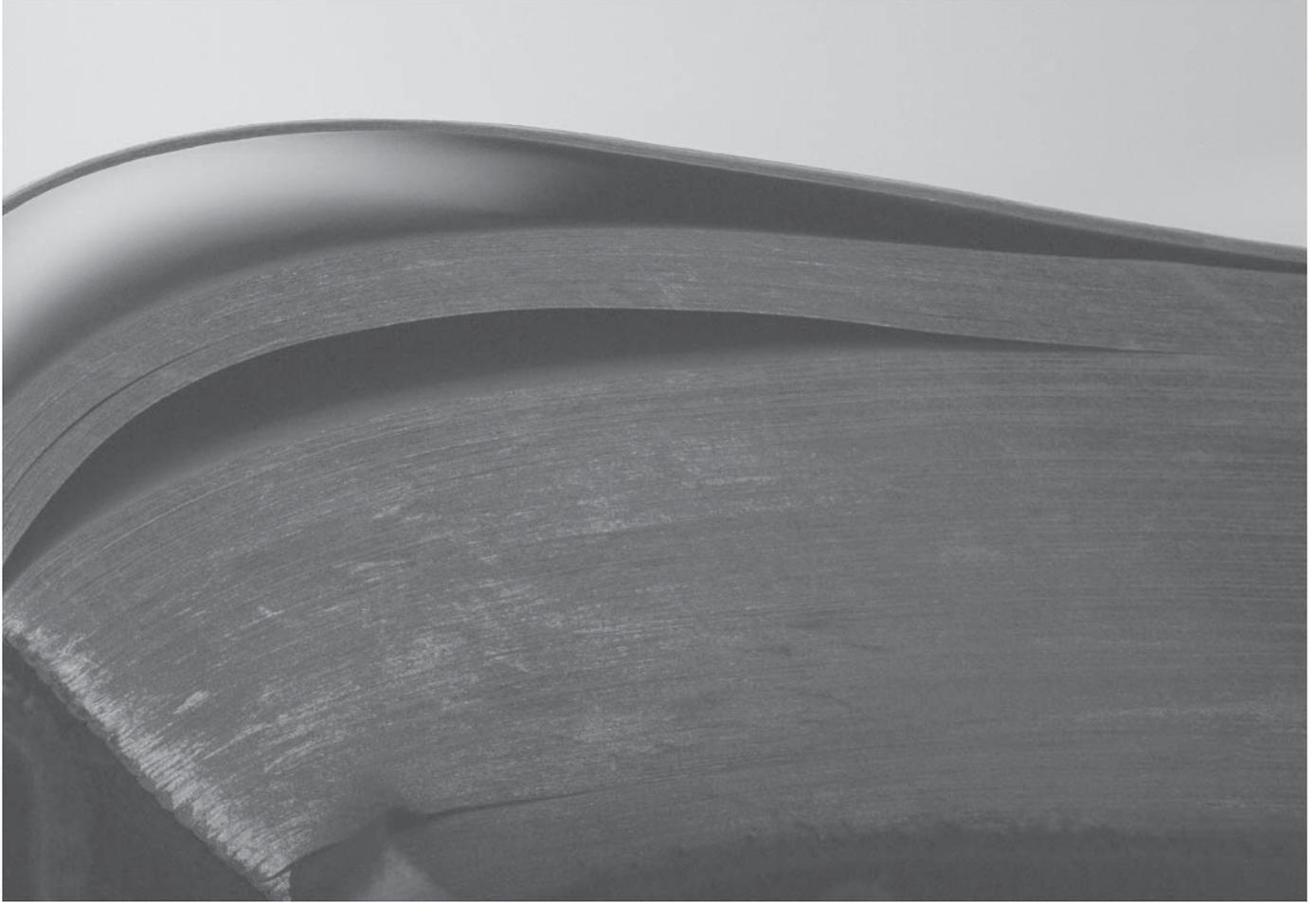
As we examine and study Jesus' message of "Poor in Spirit" in the scriptures (the first beatitude, Mathew 5:3), it becomes quite clear that He is teaching on



humility. If one is poor in spirit he is not prideful or arrogant, and certainly is not burdened with visions of grandeur or self-sufficiency. The word “spirit” in the Greek is “pneuma” (as used in this verse) and when used in a human context refers to the “rational soul, (by implication) vital principle, mental disposition, etc.” Obviously, if Jesus is instructing to be poor in spirit, we could not have a mental disposition of a natural-born “winner,” indeed we would have a recognition that anything and everything we have is because of God’s grace.

Considering the nature of man, it would appear that few if any are born with a humble spirit. One might point out a very quiet or bashful person and conclude that here is a person that truly is poor in spirit. However, there are natural introverts and people that

have little confidence that anyone would want to hear what they might have to say. To assume someone is “poor in spirit” solely by outward appearances would in many cases be no more than speculation. However, we can certainly see over a period of time evidence of true humility by testimony and consistent living when someone desires to be humble before the Lord. We see humility in people when they are continually putting others ahead of themselves, allowing the less capable to go before them, and relinquishing personal agendas so that others can meet their goals. We know that God knows the heart, and he will strengthen those who are serving in true sincerity and true humility. To be poor in spirit, to live a life of humility opens the door to God’s grace. This is a promise woven



throughout the scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments. We are given a very clear directive and promise of God in 1 Peter 5:5b (which quotes Proverbs 3:34). “And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” It doesn’t appear there is any way that one could misunderstand this command from God.

Never Too Late

God in His mercy gives us opportunity to receive the blessings described in the Beatitudes, and the Bible gives account of great changes in the life of a number of great men and women who were once great sinners who responded positively to God’s call upon their life. Present in each case was testimony by the individual

of their inadequacy on their own, and a desire for God’s grace for empowerment to live a godly life and to handle the task before them.

Blessing, true happiness (the joy of the Lord) from this day forward is possible for all of us if we will make the message of the Beatitudes our way of life.

Walter Maris is a freelance author of articles and devotionals. He is in his 55th year of teaching the Bible in church Sunday School and small group Bible studies. He and his wife live in rural Missouri on an acreage and gardening is one of his favorite hobbies.



Give and It Shall Be Given to You

by Jean Roach

Please fill out the pledge cards.” It was a financial appeal to help support Fr. Ernie Brunelle, a Maryknoll priest visiting from Africa. Instead of a sermon, he told us about his mission work. *Pledge five dollars per month.* The thought came out of nowhere. I had just started a part-time job after years of being a stay-at-home mom. I had my budget all figured out and knew I did not have five dollars per month – 60 dollars per year – to spare. *Fill out the pledge card for five dollars per month.* The thought persisted.

I was confused and tried to figure out where this thought came from by using the process of elimination. It wasn't the voice of the world. The world would reason, "You already give more than your fair share. You're far behind in saving for your children's college. You shouldn't even be tithing. Think how much five dollars would have grown in ten years if you put it in an IRA. You have responsibilities. And you really need another car. You won't have enough money if you keep giving it all away."

It wasn't the voice of the enemy. The enemy never wants anyone to give anything to anybody at any time. The voice was not mine. Fearful little me didn't want to give away more money.

It was the Lord's voice. I am one of His sheep and I know His voice.

"Why are you asking me to do this? I tithe! I give to those in need! How much more do I have to give?" I cried in my heart.

Reluctantly, I filled in my name, address, and the five dollar monthly pledge amount. In my head I had already started to refigure my budget to see how I could squeeze out another five dollars. As I put my card in the collection basket, I was not the cheerful giver the Lord loves so much. My only consolation was that my money would help with Father Ernie's ministry in Africa.

The next morning at work, I was preparing to write the payroll. My employer called me into her office and told me that it was time for the employees' raises. Together, we went through the list and she indicated the amounts of the raises for each one of them.

I knew I would not be getting a raise since I had only just been hired and was still in my probation period. So when

she said "Give yourself a raise," I was totally surprised. She gave me an amount. When I figured the numbers, the increase amounted to exactly 60 dollars more per month. I was stunned. In one day, the Lord had multiplied my five dollar monthly pledge back to me, times twelve!

From the very beginning of my walk in the Spirit, the Lord has shown me over and over again that He is the God of more-than-enough, the God of multiplication, the God of lavish supply.

Regarding the expenses that I was so concerned about: when I needed a new car, I had enough to buy it, and when my children were ready for college, their financial part had been all worked out.

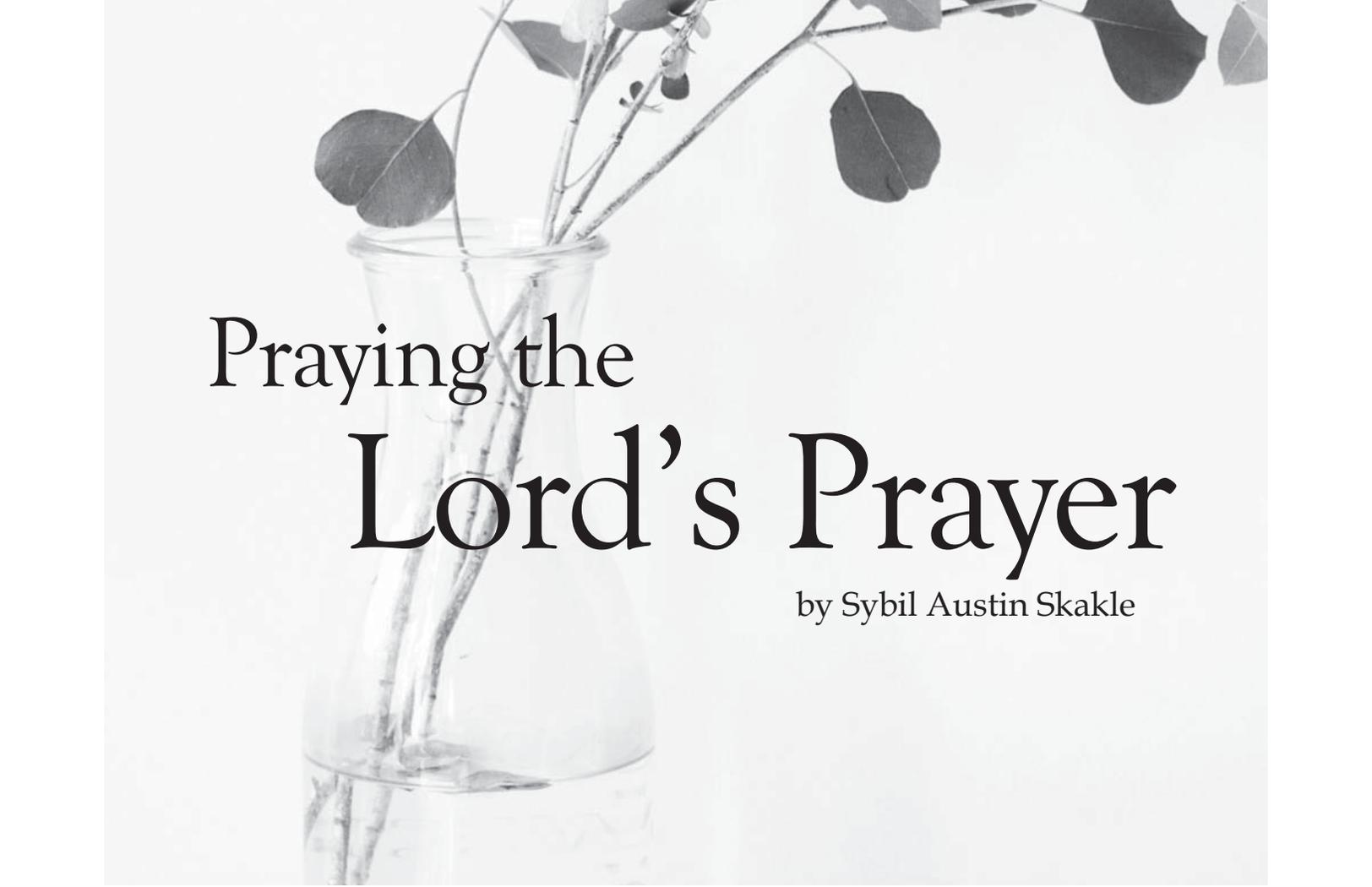
The words spoken to the Philippians by the Apostle Paul still apply:

"And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, ... no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." (Philippans 4:15-19)

Jean Roach lives in Gainesville, FL, and has five grandchildren. She has been involved in intercessory prayer for over 35 years. Jean believes the



Holy Spirit is calling her to lift up the name of Jesus through her writing.



Praying the Lord's Prayer

by Sybil Austin Skakle

Can you imagine what would happen if every Christian in the world, with the faithfulness of a devout Muslim, entreated God in Jesus' name five times a day as Christ instructed us to do?

"Our Father, which art in Heaven..." Who are the vast numbers represented here? Every believer is a child of God and may entreat God in the name of Jesus, for Jesus sits at God's right hand interceding for us.

"Hallowed be thy name..." We proclaim God "holy" because Christ instructed us to praise God. By our praise the power of God's love is released into the world.

"Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven..." we intone and think

of the vast reaches of the earth and the universe, realizing that God's love extends to every believer everywhere.

He desires all people to know His love for them. All! "Of one blood God made all nations..." Believers belong to God's kingdom on earth, but Heaven is our *home*.

"Give us this day our daily bread..." When we pray, we are requesting not for ourselves alone but that every mouth will have bread and every soul be fed with living bread.

"And lead us not into temptation..." Lord, for every precious soul on earth we pray. You will be merciful because Your Son was "tempted in all ways as we are..." We ask help for



believers everywhere.

We long, with Your longing, for all to be free to be all You planned them to be; not thwarted by discouragement, disease, addiction, greed, envy, prejudice, jealousy, hate, anger, etc.

“But deliver us from evil...” We need your intervention for we are mortal, sold out to sin. As we pray, in our imaginations we see the enemies of your love fall before the fervor of your love.

“For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever...”

Your love, Father, is the order of your reign. “Principalities of darkness,” against which we are arraigned and struggle, cannot stand before the great tsunami of your love. In every victory

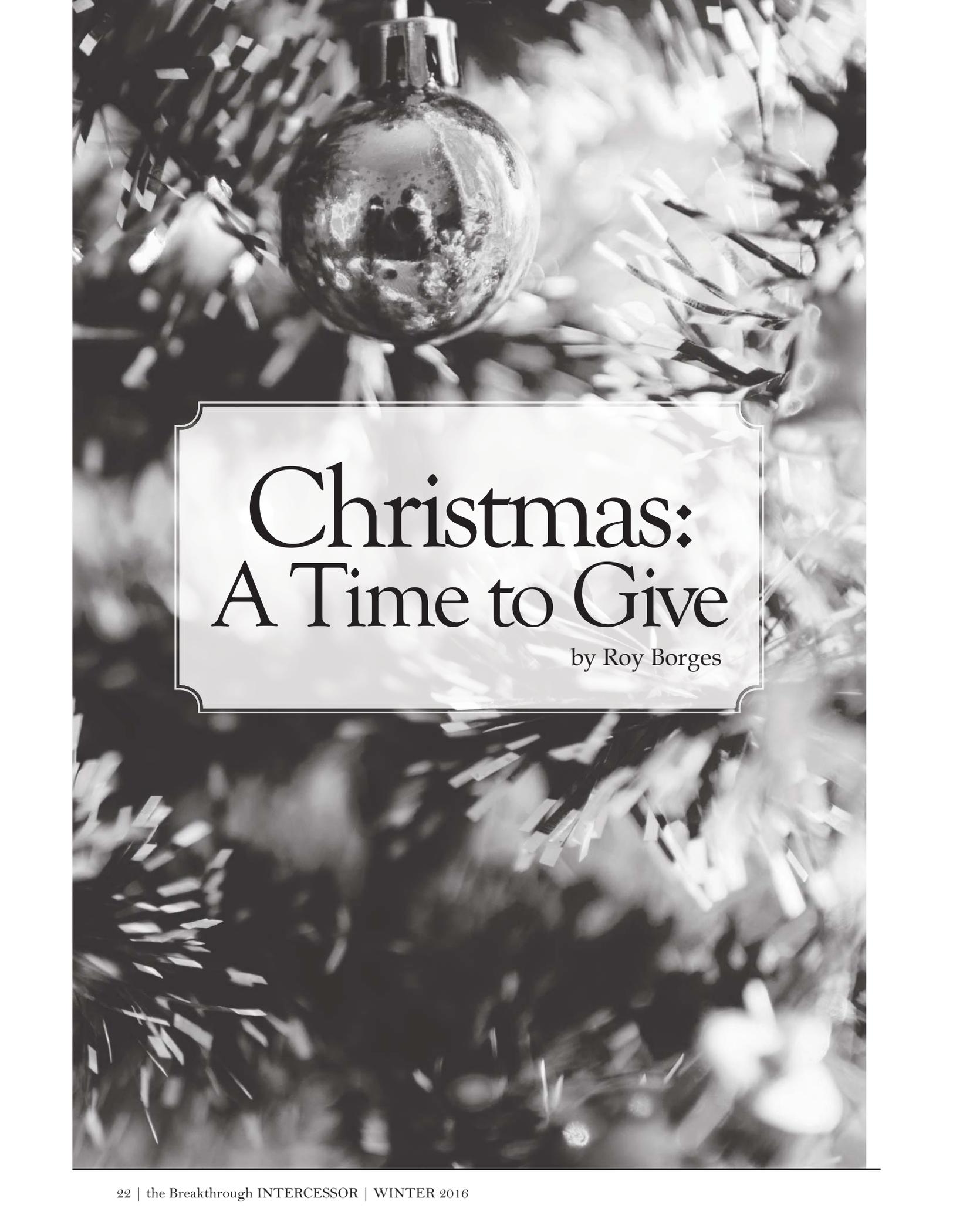
your glory is displayed. It is so!

“Amen.” So be it!

Sybil Austin Skakle, a native of Hatteras, North Carolina, has been a faithful member and leader at Amity United Methodist Church since 1959. She



taught church school and sang in the choir for 56 years. She enjoys playing bridge, travel, music, reading, writing, and people. Since 1990, she has published five books of poetry and prose, and now resides in Chapel Hill, NC.



Christmas: A Time to Give

by Roy Borges

Christmas is one of the happiest holidays of the year. It's a time to give. Something about giving from the heart makes you happy. Every year at Christmastime, I try to do something kind for the other prisoners. One year I put a bag of coffee and cookies underneath the pillow of five inmates in my dormitory that I knew never receive any money from anyone. When everyone went to the chow hall, I stayed back in the bathroom; and when they had all left, I put the coffee and cookies underneath their pillows. My reward came when I saw their faces after finding the goodies.

Last year I assembled a "goulash." It consisted of ramen noodle soups, mixed with sardines, salmon, tomatoes, sour cream and onion chips that I bought from the canteen. It was delicious—try it.

I invited eight inmates who didn't receive much from others for Christmas to the party in my cell. I was rewarded by knowing that they had something good to eat that Christmas.

Giving someone something for Christmas is not a recent innovation. For over 2000 years since the first Christmas when Jesus was born, people have been giving gifts. Everyone in the story gave something.

For example, when Mary submitted to God's plan, she gave her body to be

according to your word." And the angel departed from her." (Luke 1:38 ESV)

Joseph offered his love and protection to Mary and the child who was not his own. (Matthew 1:18-25)

Angels gave an announcement of Messiah's birth to some lowly shepherds watching their flocks at night.

A heavenly host of angels offered praise and glory to God.

The shepherds shared the first personal testimony about the Messiah.

The wise men relinquished the comfort of home to seek the newborn King and gave Him gifts worthy of royalty. (Luke 2:1-11)

These gifts didn't just apply to that first Christmas. They have application for us today. It was the divine gift, how-

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights. "

James 1:17 KJV

the first home of the incarnate Savior. "And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me

ever, that forever changed the course of human destiny. When the tiny baby entered our world in Bethlehem, God

showered praise on mankind.

But it was Jesus who gave the ultimate gift. He gave His life so we would have eternal life. He became one of us and died so that we could live forever as sons and daughters of the Most High. While all the glory belongs to Him, He showered blessings on His followers.

What does it mean to follow Jesus? As a soldier follows his captain, so we should follow Christ, our commander – our Lord. When we give something to others, whether for Christmas or another occasion, we are following after Christ. He told His disciples, “I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:12, KJV)

Jesus Christ is the Creator of life and His life brings light to mankind. In His light, we see ourselves as we really are, sinners in need of a Savior. When we follow Jesus, the true light, we can avoid walking blindly and falling into sin. He removes the darkness of sin so we can see the right path to walk. Have you allowed Christ’s light to shine in your life? When you let the light of Christ guide you, you will not stumble in the darkness.

Christ’s light challenges us to change our way to be more like Him – the light of the world. To be a giver, we show the world our love and that His light is in our hearts. Making goulash for eight people in this dark world of prison life may not seem like a big deal, but God uses it to change others and me.

Though prison can be a dark and lonely world, when I follow Jesus I “shall have the light of life.” Even in the darkness where tranquility can be easily disturbed, where happiness can be clouded and relationships severed, God

promises to remain true and His character is unchanged. So when I consider the trifling events of this transitory life I can say with the Apostle James, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights.” (James 1:17, KJV)

Roy Borges's stories have appeared in many Christian publications. He won AMY Foundation awards in 1998, 2002, and 2003. Roy's book "Faith and Love Behind Prison Fences" was published in 2002.



A top-down view of a wooden desk. On the left, a silver laptop is open, showing its keyboard. To the right of the laptop is a white ceramic cup filled with coffee. Further right, two yellow pencils are lying on the desk. The background is a light-colored wood grain.

Same magazine, brand new format!

Beginning this spring,
The Breakthrough Intercessor will
transition to online publishing.

Look for the March edition
on intercessors.org!

What Can Happen when You Pray God's Word

by Leonard LeSourd

For many years I watched my wife, Catherine, disappear in the early morning to be alone with God. It was a time during our devotional period when we separated for half an hour to read and pray and listen. There in her office she would kneel in front of her upholstered chair, Bible open in front of her.

"What is Your Word for Ginny?" she might pray, concerned over a friend's failing marriage. Often a scripture verse would come to her mind, or a Psalm. Sometimes a whole chapter of the Bible. Quickly she would turn the pages. The passage reached might have an answer, or be a clue to another verse that might be helpful.

If she was deeply upset about something or someone, Catherine would clutch the Bible fiercely, beseeching heaven for help, saying in effect: "Lord,

You have the answer right here in Your Word. I just know You do."

If no passage came to mind, she would open her Bible at random and read, then pray, then read, then pray some more until an answer came. Sometimes it took hours.

Thirty years ago when my world seemed to be falling apart, I found myself repeating the twenty-third Psalm over and over: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want..." I didn't exactly think of it as a prayer at the time, but of course it was...a desperate call for help. The scripture words were a balm to my spirit. The Lord truly became my shepherd.

A mother concerned about her son, Jerry's errant life-style prayed this way:

"Jerry, the Lord is your Shepherd, you shall not want... He leads you in

the paths of righteousness....”

Repeating the words from many of the Psalms can be effective prayers. Try it this way for a friend you want to help resist temptation:

“Blessed is Gary who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. Gary’s delight is the law of the Lord. Gary shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.” (Psalm 1:1-3)

Or try it this way for the wife you want to remain pure:

“Lisa is far more precious than jewels... the heart of Lisa’s husband trusts her... Lisa does him good and not harm all the days of her life...” (Proverbs 31:10)

This type of scripture prayer nourished Catherine. I could tell how much of a cherished time it was by the excited look in her eyes when she returned to our bedroom.

What is scripture praying? It is a form of prayer that many of us practice, perhaps instinctively, without giving it a name. Some refer to it as praying God’s word.

What comes out of scripture prayer is not only a deeper knowledge of the Bible, but a more intimate relationship with God. He is there with you. Would it surprise you to learn that we minister to the Lord as we pray His Word back to Him? (Proverbs 15:8b)

With the millions of believers now arising early in the morning for one to two hour prayer sessions, either alone or in groups, scripture praying is becoming more and more common. At a conference outside St. Louis, a group of us got up each morning to pray from 5-7:00 AM. We came armed

with Bibles. Scripture readings not only refreshed us, they guided our prayers into new areas. Petitions for personal concerns soon became intercession for our leaders, nations, and even for our adversaries.

What I learned during my prayer times is that if I try to pray quietly for a lengthy period, I often run out of people and situations to pray for. Then can come restlessness, tiredness, even boredom. But the Word anoints the prayers. The Word somehow releases the Holy Spirit to supply extra power in prayer.

Another method of scriptural prayer is to take a meaningful passage and let God teach its deeper meanings. Try, for example, the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:2-11). First, read it through and ask God to reveal what His teaching is for you in these verses.

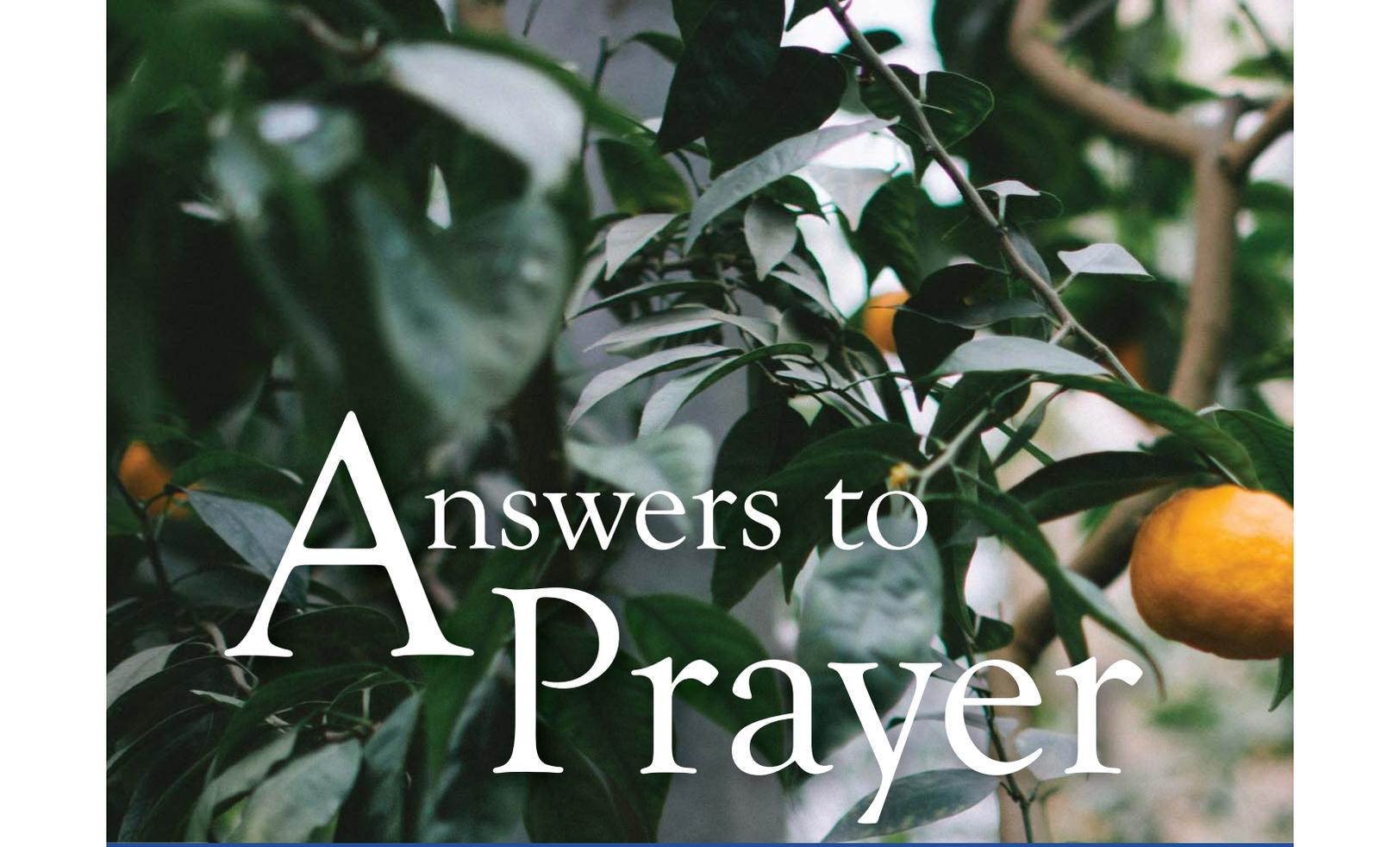
Next, read the words again slowly, prayerfully. Linger on those words that seem meant for you. Do you identify with the accusers? The sinner? Both? None?

Then listen. What is God saying? Let yourself be like a child nestled in God’s lap, listening to His words.

Last, let Him take over. Let Him love you. Let Him console you. Let Him forgive you.

This kind of prayer gets you out of the way so that God’s Word can edify you and heal you, restoring you to the person He wants you to be.

Leonard LeSourd (1919-1996) was the husband of Catherine Marshall. Article used with permission.



Answers to Prayer

ABLE TO HEAR AGAIN

Jan reports that her loved one, Geoff, has been healed from hearing loss, and their audiologist says his hearing is completely restored. She asks for continued prayers for Geoff's hearing to be maintained and continue restoration. "Praise the Lord!" she writes. "Thanksgiving for you and your faithfulness."

CANCER GONE

Glenda writes that her daughter was healed of melanoma metastatic cancer only nine weeks after her diagnosis. We praise God for this incredible gift of healing!

GOD AT WORK

Anjele writes that she and her husband felt God's hand over them on their honeymoon and she was able to eat and drink things that had been causing allergic reactions for years. Join us in continued prayers for Anjele that these allergic rashes will continue to heal and subside.



JOY RESTORED

One intercessor writes that she had recently requested prayer for a sense of depletion, discouragement, and being unable to catch up with a cluttered household. “Thank you for your prayerful support,” she writes. “I have felt life and enthusiasm returning by degrees. Before, I had felt so deadened. I ask for continued prayer that may life may come into harmony as God would have it to be! I long for my life to reflect Him.”

A PLACE TO DWELL

Diane had lost her home to foreclosure and requested prayers to find a decent place to live. God answered her prayer and provided a home. Additionally, her youngest son was blessed with a job at the post office.

VICTORIOUS CHANGE

Maureen requested prayer to be able to lose excess weight and resolve other health concerns. She has met and surpassed her original goal, making outstanding progress toward a healthier life. Praise God!

continued on next page



FAITHFUL STUDY

Shawnee writes that her husband, Rob, has been working toward a Ph.D. in Old Testament history for many years while they have raised their family. They have had an overwhelming amount of challenges along the way, such as illnesses, deaths in the family, and a major move. Recently, Shawnee requested prayer for Rob's health as his immune system seemed compromised from stress over the years. The Lord answered their prayers – for the past few weeks, Rob has been free of symptoms while he attempts to finish his dissertation. She asks for continued prayer as he awaits a decision regarding a professorship at a well-respected university. “God is so kind and hears your prayers.”

A NEW PATH

Janet requested prayer for her son's struggle with alcoholism and for healing in his liver. He is now 65 days sober and his health has greatly improved. He is reaping the benefits of sobriety, has gotten a new job, and is working with a sponsor to maintain his new life habits.

Answers to Prayer are edited for publication.



CONFIDENCE IN HIM

Terri writes that she desperately needed to be reminded that as a child of God, she was blessed and secure in Him. “With Him, all things are possible and I have experienced His grace over the past five years. He has given me the courage to stand up for myself as He has protected me in difficult work situations, home arrangements, and my former marriage. The Holy Spirit fills me up with joy so I once again want to share the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

PILOT ME

Gary had requested prayer as he took a ten-day trip to Mississippi to visit a few relatives and high school classmates, as well as the gravesites of parents and friends. “I had prayerfully asked the Lord to be my pilot, and I am still overwhelmed at how wonderfully Jesus took care of everything.”

GIFTS

*A gift from Sylvie Huffman in honor of
**Pastor Brian Wells, chairman of
Breakthrough, Inc., on his birthday***

*A gift from Mae W. Brooks in honor of
Marty Bruton*

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