

The Breakthrough
INTERCESSOR
SPRING 2020

Remember
THE
Reason



The Magazine About Prayer

An Insomniac's Prayer

*Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep...
I pray these words as I lie down
and darkness and quiet is all around...
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take...
Eyes closed, head on my pillow,
perhaps tonight to sleep I'll go...
Wanting dreams but they don't come,
Counting sheep up to a huge sum...
Lord, I surrender, Lord, I give in...
can I just be in your company, then?
Let me rest in your presence and peace
and may my anxious thoughts now cease...
and when the morning comes too soon,
may my life and strength be found in You.*

“For anyone who enters God's rest also rests
from their works, just as God did from His.”

Hebrews 4:10

Cindy J. Evans is a published poet living in the Atlanta area. When she's not writing, you will find her working in her receptionist role at a Christian ministry or volunteering at a Christian counseling center. She also enjoys trail mix, prayer walks, and date nights with her husband.

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SPRING 2020

Founders Catherine Marshall
Leonard LeSourd

ABOUT BREAKTHROUGH

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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.



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. (Prayer requests are identified by first name only, and are never sent to intercessors in the same geographic location as the prayer requester.) 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 over 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.

The 21-day prayer period was chosen based on the story in Daniel Chapter 10. Daniel prayed 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 greatly 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 and joy to pray for you.

From the Chairman

By way of introduction, I am the new Chairman of Breakthrough International's Board of Directors. I was elected to replace our previous Chairman, Brian Wells, only because we have term limits for officer positions. Brian was an outstanding Chairman, and I hope and pray I can closely approach the outstanding leadership and direction he gave Breakthrough. He still serves on the Board as Vice Chairman.

Even though I have served on the board for about fifteen years, it occurred to me that it would be good to revisit the organization's reason for being and its history; so, this Intercessor magazine's title is *Remember the Reason*.

It's true, we pretty much all know the reason for Breakthrough – to pray for others. It's a simple ministry in many respects, but revisiting the vision that produced Breakthrough will be helpful in giving us clear vision for why our ministry exists, and the importance of our role as intercessors.

Catherine Marshall is the founder and visionary of Breakthrough, but it's clear God started this ministry. Catherine married Peter Marshall, a famous preacher and Chaplain of the United States Senate. He died at 46, leaving Catherine as a young widow with a nine-year-old son. To perpetuate her husband's extraordinary life (and as a means of support), she published two books about him, the most famous being *A Man Called Peter*, which was later made into a popular movie.

She then began writing some biographical books, one sharing her healing from tuberculosis. As a result, she began receiving thousands of letters from around the world from readers expressing the grief they felt due to their own personal struggles and trying circumstances. Others wrote asking for advice on how to pray for those requesting prayer. Catherine felt compelled to help alleviate the suffering so many expressed, and gradually sensed a burning desire in her heart to address the needs of her readers. So, SHE PRAYED!

God showed her in a vision two components of supply and demand, she said: "One was of this huge group of people, wounded, thirsty, frightened sheep who had lost their way and were reaching out frantically for help. The second group was a growing number of Christians – those with the time and desire to do something for others. They were saying: 'All around me people are in need. My heart goes out to them, yet how can I help?'"

Breakthrough International is the vision that God gave Catherine to solve her burning desire to help the hurting and equip those that wanted to help them. This is the genius of Breakthrough – confidential prayer requests being prayed for by committed intercessors, all facilitated by a praying staff.

Catherine's vision, given to her by God, is now in its fortieth year. 125,000 prayer requests are being processed yearly, with now over 5,000

intercessors interceding on behalf of the requests. All of this is done in the name of Jesus without anyone seeking any kind of recognition for it.

And the good news – God answers your prayers! He listens to our passionate and fervent intercessions. Praying twenty-one days straight for the same requests is truly fervent prayer. THANK YOU. Our intercessors are the reason Catherine’s vision is still being carried out and will be, Lord willing, till Jesus comes back.

Again, the reason for Breakthrough is prayer for the hurting, and we know it works. Chinese church leader Watchman Nee said that everything good happens because of prayer and nothing good happens without it. One of our past Chairmen, my wife, Elizabeth Smith, said: “The Bible tells us we have a responsibility to pray. We [Breakthrough] assist people to develop faith to know that God absolutely answers prayers.”

One of the goals of this magazine, through recitation of real-life events where God answered prayer, is to encourage us to keep praying while believing. For me, I was encouraged again to remember why Breakthrough began, who was behind it, and what its motivation was (and is).

The single most encouraging thing for me about the story of Breakthrough is that God started it through the clear vision/revelation He gave to our founder. We never have to wonder if this ministry was ordained by God. And because God ordained it, as long as each of us will faithfully fulfill our role that God has called us to at Breakthrough, God will bless our purpose – PRAYER.

Thank you for your service to Breakthrough as we partner together to remember our reason and carry out God’s vision for us through Breakthrough. And until next time, God bless you all.



J. Michael Smith, Esq
Chairman of the Board



Thank you for faithfully supporting our ministry!

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WAYS TO GIVE

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Q. How can Breakthrough maintain a network of nearly 4,000 intercessors who pray faithfully and individually for each request they receive?

A. Your support.

Thank you for
your support.

One Hour

BY SHEILA Y. SMITH

Jesus asked the twelve “Could you pray for me one hour, just one?”
Do you pray for your desire or ‘Thy will be done’?
They tried but were too weary to seek Him one hour
By their own will they lacked the power
Alone in the garden, Jesus prayed, “Father, have thine own way.”
As you stand before Him, what do you say?
Jesus prayed in the garden with sweat and tears
In His presence, do you have righteous fears?
Daily in His presence, they lived for years, three
If they would have yielded, they would have had sweet victory
The twelve gave in to their own way
Had they really listened to what He had to say?
For just one hour He did ask
Just one hour was not an impossible task
Alone in the garden Jesus cried
In the beginning, the twelve tried
They were called by the Father, their life to give
They had things in their own life for which they wanted to live
In the presence, Jesus did bow
He pleaded until blood dropped from His brow
What the Father asked Him came with a great price
To the Father, Jesus surrendered His life
Will you wait in the garden and listen close?
Will you surrender to the One who loves you the most?
Will you spend one hour alone with the Son?
Will you pray for your desire or His will to be done?
Will you kneel when you are too weary to stand?
Will you fall on your knees and surrender to the Son of Man?
Will you pray as you wake to start your day?
Will you take one hour to pray?
One hour may seem ever so long
But one hour before Him is where you belong
Will you pray for one hour, taking time from the Father to hear?
Will you listen for one hour to the Father, so dear?
Will you pray for one hour when you are tired so?
When He calls, to your knees will you go?
You have so much to do. So much to be done
Will you pray for one hour that His will be done?
Will you listen for one hour with all of your heart?
Will you listen before your requests start?
Will you spend time with Him all alone?

In your heart does Jesus have a home?
When He speaks are you still?
Are your needs greater than His will?
Every day for one hour will you pray?
With Him, will you come away?
Prayer is not a last resort, but first place
Do you long to see His face?
Do you take time to praise Him, the Almighty King?
Do you praise Him as you lift up your voice and sing?
Every day spend one hour with Him, you will not be the same
May you give glory to His name
Listen, He calls you, come away
Stop! Spend one hour to pray
Alone in the garden, the garden of prayer
Listen, worship, there your heart share
One hour will set your spirit free
One hour with Him is where you should be
Whether it is morning, noon, or night
Alone in prayer is always right
Come to the garden of prayer, wherever that may be
The Spirit calls, "Come away with Me"
Come to the garden of prayer.
Come to the garden, receive His power
Come for a day, come for one hour
Come to the garden
Come for one hour.

Sheila Smith began writing in her teens to fill an empty place in her life. At first, she wrote to express her feelings and pain, but now her current writings are guided by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Lunch with Lazarus

BY BOB HOLLINGSHEAD

My wife Peggy and I stopped by Linda and Don's home for a Christmastime visit. Don mentioned that a few days earlier, he had had a check-up with his cardiologist.

When the doctor entered the room, he smiled and enveloped Don in a bear hug. Then, he said, "Don, when I saw you that night in the hospital, I knew you were not going to make it...certainly not with a fully functioning brain." Don noticed my questioning look and said, "Today is the anniversary of my death – December 17th, 2018."

Wait a minute – what? I responded, "Tell me that again." (Or, as Len LeSourd would frequently remind us, "There is a story to be told.")

Don started to tell the story, but Linda stopped him. "You were dead. I get to tell this story." So she began:

"A few days earlier, we had returned from a visit to Mexico. Thank God, this did not happen in Mexico or on our drive home. Don had gone to bed early. I was watching TV. Then, from the bedroom, I heard Don gasping to take a breath. Once. Twice. So loud. Entering the room, I saw him lying there, mouth open, tongue extended, not breathing, no pulse.

"After a quick prayer, I called the EMT, unlocked doors, and called my neighbor. Time was moving slowly – where was the EMT? Actually, it was less than six minutes. Don was in cardiac arrest.

"They attempted to use the bed as a platform. It did not work. They moved him to the living room floor. Quickly hooking up the external defibrillator, they placed the pads over Don's heart. Once – no result. Twice – no result. Three times – no result. Four times – a heartbeat. EMT rushed Don to the hospital ER.

"When I arrived a few minutes later, I was greeted by a representative of the medical team working to restore Don's life. Their collective wisdom was reflective of Martha's comment to Jesus in John 11:39, i.e. 'We know from past experience that Don only has a 5% chance of living, and less than that to recover with a fully functional mind and body. Our recommendation is that we discontinue any further efforts.'

"I told them no – do everything possible to return Don to me completely healed. When asked by the doctor what I planned on doing, I responded, 'I am going to pray, believing that God will help you heal Don!'"

Struggling to make the reality of Don's situation clear to Linda, the doctor said, "I have personally watched family members in similar conditions. I know that prayer does not work for a person in Don's condition." Linda responded, "You work medically, I will continue in prayer, we'll see what happens!" (John 11:40-45)

Linda gathered her family and friends to ensure that prayers formed a

continuing stream. The prayers focused on Don's total healing against the doctor's expectation (and fear) of a loss of mental functions. The prayers were matched by an ever-expanding team of doctors that gathered to restore Don's health.

Week one after cardiac arrest – no major shift, week two – more tests. Finally, on week three, Don regained consciousness. Linda was overjoyed. In the blink of an eye, Don had become like the Samaritan Woman at the well: he was telling everyone within the sound of his voice that they should know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

The family was amazed at Don's bold statements to anyone who passed his room. They could not imagine Don walking the halls, supported by a nurse, engaging both patients and staff by asking if they knew Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

He also amused them with a newfound sense of humor. Imagine – their father, an eighty-year-old businessman, encouraging his son to steal a passing cart so they could 'blow this place'. (God does have a sense of humor.) Friends who had never expressed any Christian faith were able to look at Don's healing as an opportunity to draw near to God in their own lives. Among them, the cardiologist gave a different kind of professional opinion – "I now believe. He does hear our prayers."

Study Notes: John's Gospel – Chapters 11:1-45 and 12:1-3 – relates Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus and His later dinner with Lazarus where Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with a pound of genuine spikenard ointment. Think about this healing, realizing that more verses are devoted to Lazarus' resurrection than any other healing, and that it is Jesus' last recorded healing. What can we learn as intercessors?

1. How do I pray? The perfect model for an intercessory prayer for healing – John 11:3
2. Lord, teach me how to pray – John 11: 11, 23, 25-26, 40-42
3. Express faith in Jesus – John 11: 4, 22, 24, 26, 27
4. Know that it is not Jesus' fault – John 11: 21, 32, 37
5. How do I know what Jesus is feeling? – John 11: 15, 33, 35, 38

Bob Hollingshead was Breakthrough's Chairman of the Board from 1997 to 2002. On the board with Len LeSourd and John and Elizabeth "Tib" Sherrill, he learned to look for the story in God's answers to prayer. He has also led several retreats on intercessory prayer, and is now writing a book designed to set forth the absolutes of Christian prayer. Currently, he lives in Oro Valley, Arizona with his wife, Dr. Peggy.

Teach Me to Pray

BY ROY A. BORGES

“Teach me to pray,” Jesus’ disciples asked Him.

It seems like a childish request, but the apostle Luke knew that we all need to improve our praying. I know I do. When we recognize our need to improve our praying, we will become serious about praying like Jesus did. Jesus is qualified to teach, since He is God and was with God. He knows how we should pray to God. “He bears witness to what He has seen and heard.” (John 3:31-32)

When we imitate the prayer life of Jesus, we share in His effectiveness. He is the secret to successful prayer.

Prayer should be serious. So, when I pray, I get on my knees alone in my cell. Instead of complaining and doubting God, I trust Him. Fasting and God’s Word help me to stay focused on my prayer to Him.

Jesus was serious about prayer. It’s more important to meet the needs of the spirit than the needs of the body. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)

Disciplining oneself to pray is not easy. Jesus’ disciples discovered that “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Mark 14:37-38) Therefore, we must aim high. If the Son of God needed prayer, how much more do we? Serious prayer is part of what it means to “deny [yourself] and take up [your] cross and follow Me.” (Luke 9:23)

Prayer should be secret. Why was Jesus alone when He prayed to His Father? What do we do when we pray? We meet with God. Talking with the Father is the main part of praying. No one else need be there. It’s a direct conversation between you and God. Matthew says: “When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:5-6) If my relationship with God is real, I will find the time and place to be with Him.

Prayer is not a “fire escape” or “emergency exit” to be used only in a crisis or as a last minute resort when trouble arises. Jesus prayed “not my will, but Your will.” (Matthew 26:39) I don’t want to get my way that always lands me flat on my face. I want Your way, Father. Shall I seek my benefit or God’s glory?

Wrongly motivated prayers will fail, as James explains: “You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passion.” (James 4:3) God wants an attitude of total surrender. “Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8)

John shows us the attitude he learned from Jesus: “And this is the confidence that we have towards Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know He hears us in whatever we

ask, we know that we have the request that we have asked of Him.” (1 John 5:14-15)

Let God be God – He is the Creator. We are the creatures. He is the Master – we are His servants. He is the Father – we are His children. We rejoice in His answers, because His love endures forever. In prayer we receive our requests or something even better. We may not see immediately how God is working everything out for our good, but of this we can be sure: God’s wisdom is always greater and His love is always better than ours.

Left to ourselves, we will always turn things upside down. If prayer was a matter of giving, the creature would force the Creator to give. The thing made would manipulate the Maker. The student would teach the Teacher. The servant would give orders to the Master. The child would lead the Father. In short, we would attempt to take the place of God.

Let God be God by respecting His right to fulfill His promises in His own timing. We acknowledge His wisdom over ours, and like Job we can say “Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.” (Job 13:15)

Learning to surrender our prayers to God like Jesus did brings a new attitude to our prayers, one that sees God working it all out for the best, that we should have thankfulness in every development and would “Pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances – for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thess. 5:17-18)

Roy Borges’ 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.



Insight Into Anointing

BY BARBARA GORDON

Shivering and pulling my sweater tighter, I shifted in my office chair.

With a frown on her face, my co-worker, Janet, cleared her throat.

“This room feels uneasy. I need to find my oil and anoint this place.”

My swinging foot suddenly went still. “Uneasy” did describe the atmosphere in the room. Jan’s two sentences sent me on a personal quest. What is anointing? How is the practice related to prayer?

As I opened to the Old Testament, who, what, when, where and why questions swirled in my mind. In Leviticus 8, I read how Moses sprinkled anointing oil on his priestly brother, Aaron, along with Aaron’s sons. He even anointed the garments worn by the priests. Then my searching led me to 1 Kings 19:16 where God instructed Elijah to anoint Jehu as king and Elisha as the next prophet. Exodus chapter 30 outlined instructions to anoint items in the Jewish temple.

I read a familiar story in Genesis 28. After his father, Isaac, blessed him, Jacob journeyed towards Haran to find a wife among his family’s people. No doubt weary from his travels, he stopped for the night. After choosing a stone to use as a pillow, Jacob fell asleep. Vivid dreams of a stairway and angels and promises of God filled his nighttime hours. When he awoke, Jacob realized he had experienced an awesome encounter with God and he did an interesting thing; he poured oil on his rock pillow and renamed the place Bethel.

I discovered the practice of anointing with oil also appears in the New Testament. Mark 6:13 records what happened when Jesus sent out his twelve apostles, “They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.” (NIV)

James 5:14-15 discusses the powerful combination of prayer and anointing with oil. “Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.” (NIV)

After pondering the verses, I concluded that while many of the references to anointing in the Bible spoke of anointing people, places and objects were also mentioned. One purpose of anointing was setting apart people and things as holy to God.

As a result of my research, the practice of anointing my home emerged. Praying for my family was already a habit, but adding the discipline of anointing has energized my passion to dedicate my house to God. I know the oil itself contains no supernatural authority, but the act symbolizes my faith in the power of God.

Entertaining guests or a family reunion prompts me to anoint our home. The Holy Spirit has nudged me to do so at other times, too, like before a Bible

study or during a season of sorrow.

I do not have a prescribed process or script. In my early days of anointing, I used olive oil from the grocery store. Now I have a small jar of fragrant oil I bought at a Christian bookstore. I go from room to room, touching each door frame with a tiny dot of oil and praying a prayer at each location. I also put oil on the doorpost of each entrance to the house. Sometimes I anoint the chairs—praying for the ones who will sit in them.

Here are some prayers I have prayed:

Front door: “Father, I pray that everyone who enters this house will feel Your presence in an undeniable way. I pray no one will come in this door who has not been sent by/approved by You.”

Family room: “Lord, I ask that the conversations in this room honor You.”

Kitchen/dining room: “Jesus, remind us man does not live by bread alone. Feed everyone around this table spiritually as well as physically.”

Bathroom: “Father, just as You designed our bodies to rid ourselves of waste products, help all who enter here rid their lives of attitudes and habits that are not of You.”

Bedroom: “Jesus, when we lay down to sleep tonight, give us perfect rest. Direct our dreams and refresh our bodies to serve You more faithfully.”

Door to garage/outside: “Father, when anyone leaves this house, may he/she be closer to You than when he/she came. Direct each one to confess with the mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in the heart that God raised Him from the dead and be saved.”

My friend, Janet, now lives in heaven where no “uneasy” feelings or need to anoint the place exist. I am thankful, though, for her prompting to study this practice that symbolizes the power and faithfulness of God.

Barbara Gordon began freelance writing when she retired from teaching and school administration. She writes monthly for the Christian Writers’ Fellowship of the Four States newsletter, and has been published in *Live*, *The Secret Place*, *Keys for Kids*, and *Pray* magazines.



Are you a writer?

The
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welcomes
submissions!



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Articles should be 500 to 1,000 words. Poems should be at least 12 lines.

Topic must focus on prayer: an experience or teaching supported in Scripture.

Authors give Breakthrough permission to edit material for length and content.

Email: editor@intercessors.org
Mail: Breakthrough Editor,
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Prayer for More Love

BY PETER MARSHALL

Father, as I draw near to Thee in prayer, I am aware of the poverty of my love for Thee.

I have often given my heart to unworthy causes.

I have loved money and sought my security in it.

I have loved comfort and ease.

I have loved power and influence over others.

How strange is it that of all the things we humans love, our Lord, who is love and goodness and grace, should Himself receive so little love.

Yet I cannot manufacture the love I should bear Thee, even as I have not manufactured the love I feel for others. Thou art the giver of love. Except Thou bestow it, I cannot have it.

And so, my Father, wilt Thou give me the gift of love? Then I shall love Thee, and loving Thee, shall love other men - and compassion shall rise within me, warm and sweet.

But I ask not merely to love those easy to love.

Help me to love those that are hard to live with.

Give me a concern for the needs of others, not on the basis of barter or exchange - not love given for love received - but love given to the unlovely for Christ's sake.

Then shall my love partake of Thine, who dares to own me still. In the name of Him who is the King of Love, Amen.

Taken from *The Prayers of Peter Marshall*.
Used with permission from Marshall-LeSourd LLC.

Heart to Heart

BY JOHNNY L. WOOTEN

Sometimes, life can become so frustrating that we just cannot deal with it anymore. During those times, the only one we can pour our hearts out to is God.

There's no need to use long and profound words or dress it up – prayer is a heart-to-heart talk with God where we get to pour out everything to Him. Fenelon put it this way: “Tell God all that is in your heart, as one unloads one's heart, its pleasures and its pains, to a dear friend.”

In our frustration and grief, we may cry, yell, scream, or become angry – but God is forgiving and wants to know how we really feel. Praise, worship, supplication, cries, and sincere prayers always come from the heart.

We see an example of this in 2 Kings 20:2-3, where King Hezekiah decided that the best thing to do in the midst of life-threatening sickness was to get away from it all and have a heart-to-heart talk with God.

“Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, ‘Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.’ And Hezekiah wept bitterly.”

When we as believers go to God in prayer, the Holy Spirit is there to help us and intercede for us. Romans 8:26-27 tells us that the Holy Spirit speaks on our behalf – “...the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings.”

The Spirit searches our hearts and intercedes for us in accordance with God's will, which means that God is going to answer back in His own time with what He knows is best for us - not what we want, but what He wants.

God answers our prayers because He wants to have a relationship with us, a heart-to-heart talk. Communication with God is never a one-sided effort, unless we stop talking. God is always there waiting to talk with us.

Going back to King Hezekiah, he's lying sick in bed, pouring everything out to God. The prophet Isaiah has just left him after telling him that he will die. But God sends Isaiah back to the king.

2 Kings 20:5 reads, “Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people: ‘This is what the Lord God of your ancestor David says: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Look, I will heal you.’”

When we yield to God and obey His admonition to pour out all of our hearts to Him, He answers us – sometimes in unbelievable and miraculous ways.

Four words in that verse say so much: Says, Heard, Seen, and Healed. The word SAYS lets us know that He is always willing to respond to our prayers and conversation with Him. HEARD tells us that

He wants to listen to us. SEEN tells us that He cares for us and is always watching over us. HEAL tells us that when we come to Him with open, honest hearts, and lay all of our burdens before Him, He is willing to act on our behalf.

1 John 5:15 says, “And if we know that He hears us in regard to whatever we ask, then we know that we have the requests that we have asked from Him.” Prayer with God is always two-way communication. If we want God to talk with us, we have to be willing to talk with Him. In *All The Prayers of the Bible*, Herbert Locker said, “If we expect answered prayer, we must seek habitually to live near God.”

As Christians, we sometimes start out strong in our walk with Christ, but over time the things of this world take our devotion away from God. Our eyes are taken off of Him, and soon our heart-to-heart conversations dwindle away.

It is tough – sometimes the world closes in around you, and you don’t know if you are going to make it out alive. Hezekiah thought he was down for the count, but the one thing he had going for him is that he trusted in God with all of his heart (2 Chronicles 31:20, 21).

King Hezekiah had both shortcomings and accomplishments. But when the king, along with the residents of Jerusalem, humbled themselves before God, God turned away His wrath.

We may fall, but when we humble ourselves and accept the grace and help of God, we are able to get up again. During those times in our lives, we need to “run the race” until the end with all of our heart, despite the stumbles.

The way to do that is to be in constant communion with God – coming before Him each day, pouring out our heart to His – not with half a heart, but with all our heart.

Johnny L. Wooten is an inmate who recently graduated from the Therapon Bible College and Seminary. He is the Unit Reporter for the *ECHO* newspaper. This article is adapted from a book that he is currently writing, titled *With All of My Heart*.



The Waiting Prayer

by Catherine Marshall

One day not long ago I was flipping through a beloved, dog-eared old Bible that I had not used for a while when I came upon a series of little egg-shaped pieces of paper. I smiled, remembering what they were all about.

When my son Peter John was small and I was in a typical motherly mood of worrying about him, I came across a seemingly almost child-like piece of “how to” writing by Dr. Glenn Clark. Part of our problem in praying for our children, he suggested, is the time lag, the necessary slow maturation of our prayers. But that’s the way of God’s rhythm in nature. For instance, the duck must patiently sit on her eggs to incubate them before the baby chicks hatch.

With this picture in mind, Dr. Clark suggested that we parents spend some time each day for at least a week thinking through our hearts’ deepest desires for our children. After listing them on paper, ask for Jesus’ mind on them, sifting out everything superficial or selfish until we have reached the kernel of the Spirit’s hopes and dreams for this particular person.

Then, said Dr. Clark, copy these hopes in the form of prayers onto slips of paper cut roughly into the shapes of eggs. And then give these petitions to our Father to fulfill in His own time and way. To help dramatize the recognition that visible answers may be slow in coming, insert the slips of paper between the pages of some favorite Bible - signifying leaving them in God’s keeping.

At the time I followed these suggestions, I did not mention to anyone what I had done for fear of seeming naive. Yet, today I think just the opposite. I feel that those little paper eggs represent a very profound principle indeed. For when I came across them in my Bible, I found to my astonishment that a loving Father had fulfilled every single request.

Why? What was there about that form of prayer that He honored so dramatically? Certainly it wasn’t that I had cut the pieces of paper in a particular shape, or that there was any power in the physical presence of the Bible. As I pondered this, it occurred to me that part of the secret lay in the waiting. Waiting itself, if practiced according to Biblical patterns, seems to be a strange but dynamic kind of communication between man and God.

Waiting certainly plays an enormous role in the unfolding story of God’s relationship to man. It is God’s oft-repeated way of teaching us that His power is real and that He can answer our prayers without interference and manipulation from us.

But we have such trouble getting *our* will, *our* time schedules out of the way. Much of the time we act like a child who brings a broken toy to his father to be mended. The father gladly takes the toy and begins work. Then after a little while, childlike impatience takes over. Why is it taking so long?

The child stands by, getting his hands in the father’s way, offering a lot of meaningless advice and some rather silly criticism. Finally in des-

peration, he snatches the toy from his father's hands and walks off with it, saying rather bitterly that he hadn't really thought his father could fix it anyway. Perhaps it isn't even "his will" to mend toys.

On the other hand, whenever we are trustful enough to leave our "broken toy" with the Father, not only do we eventually get it back gloriously restored, but are also handed a surprising plus. We find for ourselves what the saints and mystics affirm, that during the dark waiting period, when self-effort has ceased, a spurt of astonishing spiritual growth took place in us. Afterwards we have qualities like more patience, more love for the Lord and those around us, more ability to hear His voice, greater willingness to obey.

The divine Husbandman has been teaching us the lesson of the Life in the Vine. During that waiting period (what seemed like a dark night of the soul) we were learning the great secret of *abiding*. Abiding is the key to unlock heaven's treasures.

Our human hang-up is thinking that spirituality is something that we *do*. "Not so," says Jesus. "Rather it is My life in you." The branch does not have to stretch and strain to grow and produce fruit. The branch's part is simply to remain connected to the Vine, to abide there so that the life-giving sap can flow. Then only do we "bear much fruit."

Jesus also had a great deal to say about His Father's timing, the principle that there is a God-given sequence and rate of growth for everything in His creation:

"...first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand," Jesus might say. Or when certain disciples were trying to get Him to act prematurely, "My time is not yet come..." Later, as the shadows deepened around the Cross, "My time is at hand." Always *His* timing. We force and hurry the divine schedule at our peril.

God does have His "fullness of time" for the answer to each prayer. It follows then that He alone knows the magnitude of the changes that have to be wrought in us before we can receive our hearts' desires. He alone knows the changes and interplay of external events that must take place before our prayer can be answered. That's why Jesus told us, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power."

Thus the Lord seems constantly to use waiting as a tool for bringing us the very best of His gifts. He made the children of Israel wait generations for their freedom from slavery in Egypt. Because of their stubborn disobedience, they had to wait forty years before they were ready to enter the Promised Land. Waiting was the keynote of the exile. The whole story of the Old Testament is the patient waiting for the "fullness of time" of the Savior's birth. And after Jesus' Ascension, those gathered in the upper room had to wait a full ten days for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

No wonder some of God's promises are predicated upon our waiting

trustingly for His timing: “The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him...” “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Waiting seems to be a kind of acted-out prayer that is required more often and honored more often than I could understand until I saw what remarkable faith-muscles this act develops. For isn't it true that waiting demands patience, persistence, trust, expectancy - all the qualities we are continually beseeching God to give us?

I remember once being in a situation where the Lord told me to wait, to stand silently by, saying nothing, even though I thought I knew the answer to a problem...it was an astounding experience in poised expectancy.

I had not seen Helen in nearly two years. Her telephone call was a shocker because she told me that her husband, Steve, was leaving her for a younger woman. She wanted to talk. “Please, Catherine, may I come and see you?”

“Helen, I have no qualifications as a marriage counselor,” I said.

“But you will pray with me, won't you?”

Yes, that I could certainly do and said so, little realizing what a strange form that prayer was to take.

Now, as Helen stood in the doorway of our home in Boynton Beach, Florida, I looked at her with a sinking heart. She was carelessly dressed, her eyes dull and bloodshot from weeping. She was overweight and her blonde-red hair needed attention.

As we settled down onto the sofa in our living room, Helen launched into a story that had one recurring theme - throughout, she was constantly putting herself down. They had three children, but Steve had wanted more. Steve spent most of his home hours in front of the TV, but then - she had never been much of a conversationalist. He hadn't taken her out in years, but she didn't mind much. Helen wasn't sure who the other woman was, but doubtless it was someone more stimulating - and so on and on.

As Helen talked on, I suddenly realized that I knew what the problem was. Not that it took much insight: Helen had been screaming the news to me from the moment she walked in. This woman couldn't stand herself. And the minute this became clear, I knew something else. I was to say nothing. The Lord spoke to my heart crisply. I was to wait. I was to sit on this piece of insight until the Lord gave it to Helen Himself, in His own time and in His own way. The self-control required of me was incredible, as for two hours Helen spelled out in a score of different ways what I already knew. But incredible also was the sense of expectancy as I watched the Lord at work. He had brought Helen there for the specific purpose of giving her time - time to think coherently and connectedly about her problem. I was there only to keep her thoughts on the track. Helen needed to reach her understanding on her own, and He was giving

me supernatural supplies of patience (for me) while He led her there ever so gently.

With this gift of grace, the two hours sped by as I found myself almost leaning forward in anticipation. The time was a blend of talking, reading Scriptures, silence, and listening. At last Helen asked me if she might go out into the garden to be alone for a while. When she returned, her words came tumbling out, “That Bible verse, Catherine, about Jesus loving us before we loved Him - recently it’s been hard to believe that *anyone* loves me. But out there in your garden I got to thinking. When you really believe that God loves you as a person, well then you’ve got to love yourself, too.”

I nodded, not daring to speak, and she went on: “Well, it just occurred to me that I’ve dishonored Him, in a sense, by the way I let myself and the house get run-down. I mean my weight, TV dinners all the time, beds never made...”

As I listened, I marveled at God’s ways. If I had tried to say these things to Helen as a friend giving advice, chances are she would have taken offense, or at best accepted my suggestions reluctantly. Needless to say, this did not solve the problems in Helen’s marriage overnight; there were many rough months to follow. But eventually, as Helen cleaned up her house and her person, swept out resentments and smothered angers, and came to see herself for the cherished person she was in God’s eyes, the marriage too was healed. As I know from the amazing long-distance phone call that came from her over a year later - “I just thought you’d like to know, Catherine, that Steve and I are back together. We’re off on a sort of second honeymoon now. We’re spending hours just talking...”

So the Bible extols waiting, partly because it requires qualities which the Lord wants to encourage in us, like patience, which I need so badly. But there is another reason too. Waiting works. It is a joining of man and God to achieve an end, and the end is always a form of the Easter story.

An incident I’ve never forgotten is related by Patt Barnes of Milwaukee, who tells of an aged flower vendor he once met who taught him the secret of the “three days.” Patt Barnes was so impressed by the old woman’s visible, radiant joy that he commented that her life must be remarkably trouble free. Oh no, she said, she had as many troubles as the next one, but she knew that problems held a resurrection hidden within them. When Jesus died, all looked black, but then three days later came Easter. “So that’s why I’m happy,” she said. “I know the secret. When trouble comes, give God a chance - wait three days.”

We can allow an apparent defeat to turn into victory through trusting in the principle of resurrection. The time may not be a literal three days, but the principle is always the same. Nor, as the Bible prototype (Easter) was not a passive event, neither is this kind of waiting. Here too, something must be put to death, usually worry or trying to “do it yourself.”

Some years ago a friend of mine in Washington confided to me a kind

of prayer she was saying for her son, then a boy of ten. “Already I’ve begun praying for that just-right marriage partner for Bobby. I pray for this future wife’s protection from evil, for her proper growth, both physical and spiritual,” she told me.

That was a new idea to me. But it struck me as so right that I acted on it. Each morning for some days, I worked on that creative type of prayer which, I had learned from experience, God delights to honor. I asked myself, “What would be the characteristics of spirit and mind and heart of that just-right girl for my son?” I was not so much concerned with whether she would be a blonde or a brunette; surely, the inner beauty would indicate the outer.

Item by item - quite specifically - the lineaments of my dream girl were put on paper. Most importantly, she would have met Jesus Christ for herself and would have fallen in love with Him. She would have a good mind, enough education for mutual intellectual stimulation. She would have a lot of the joy of life in her, a sense of humor, a certain zing - and so on.

Then when the portrait seemed complete, one morning I gave it to the Lord, asking Him to correct any flaws in it and bring it to fruition in Peter’s life in His own time and His own way. I buried it, as it were, as a farmer buries his seed, by placing the notes about my dream girl between the pages of the same favorite Bible.

In the years that followed, it was difficult not to dig the seed up again and examine it as in time, as procession of girls passed through Peter’s life. Many were attractive; some would have been hard to accept. But the time of creative waiting came to an end when Peter John was in his middle year at Princeton Seminary. The girl’s name was Edith.

Sometime after Edith and Peter were engaged, I came across those written notes and reread them with amazement. There - detail by detail - was Edith. Of course, as always, God had thrown in a few extra goodies for dividends. She was tall, like Peter; blonde, like Peter; a wonderful cook - what man wouldn’t like that? She was strong physically, with joyous vitality. And she was interested in gardening and handicrafts and other hobbies which Peter enjoys.

I loved her immediately, and have never stopped thanking God for such a marvelous answer to the mysterious, triumphant Waiting Prayer.

Excerpt from *Adventures in Prayer* by Catherine Marshall.
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Teaching Your Child to Pray

BY CHARLES WHITE

The most important lesson your child will ever learn:

$$1 + 1 = 3$$

Which is more real to your child – math, or prayer? If the answer is math, then our little effort at addition is quite wrong. If, however, the answer is prayer, you and your child will know that $1 + 1$ truly does make three. “Where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.” (Matthew 18:20) Like math, however, there is much more to be learned than $1 + 1$. Try filling out the following report card for each of your children. Have them initial each box they can answer yes to, and check the boxes they need to work on. You might even fill out a report card for yourself.

I believe God is there every time I pray. Do you believe? Do you pray about your doubts? Do you doubt God is real? Do you doubt God loves you? Do you doubt creation? Do you doubt invisible things like the Holy Spirit? The first step to a sound prayer life is asking God to help get rid of your doubts. “I believe, help thou my unbelief.” (Mark 9:24)

I know there are two parts to prayer: the part where we talk to God and the part where he talks to us. I stick with my prayers until they are complete...until God answers. A great lesson for a child is to write his or her prayer on a piece of paper and put it in a jar or ziploc bag. Keep praying with the child until you can write the answer on the back. If necessary, ask others to pray with you. If it is still not answered, ask your pastor if there is something wrong with the prayer itself. Prayers, like cars, sometimes need to be fixed. This is an important lesson. If a child has not stuck with at least one prayer until God answers, why would he bother praying again?

I know that praying with someone else can help keep me accountable. Who could be a prayer partner for you? We hope all parents everywhere pray with their children at least once a week. We hope too that every Sunday School teacher in the country assigns “Prayer Partners” and asks these partners to pray together at least once a week. The child who does not pray with others is less likely to pray on his own.

I know the only way to pray powerful prayers is PRACTICE. If I keep my prayer car parked I won't get anywhere. I plan to get my prayer car in gear and give it a little gas...daily. (For very young children, you

might even try this lesson actually sitting in your car or with a toy car.) Prayer is meant to take you to a new place. Let God show the way from doubt to faith, from sadness to joy, from fear to trust, from anger to love.

I have read the instruction manual. You can't pray rightly without Scripture, and you can't understand Scripture without prayer. We recommend you look up the following verses about prayer and pray that God helps you understand them and store them in your heart. John 5:39, Hebrews 11:6. Isaiah 40:29, 1 John 3:22, Jude 1:20.

I know there are things that may hinder the answers to my prayers. If I am angry with someone, I do my best to forgive them. If I have sinned, I repent and ask God to cleanse my heart. If I feel ungrateful, I thank God for past prayers answered. If most of my prayers are selfish, I make a list of others to pray for.

I pray at the beginning of the day. Everybody prays when they are in trouble...Daniel in the lions' den, Joseph when his brothers threw him in a pit, Jonah when he got swallowed by a whale. Jesus' way of praying is BIGGER. He teaches us to pray before we get into trouble, prayers like: "Give us this day our daily bread" and "lead us not into temptation." If your child has not yet memorized the Lord's Prayer, we highly recommend the Learning Puzzle at www.teachustoprayer.com. There really is no better habit than praying in the morning...going to God FIRST.

I know what it is to pray "in the spirit." The only way for a child to break free of the worldly influences that surround us all is an ever-increasing sensitivity to the alarms sent by the Holy Spirit. That path begins with prayer...with a HABIT of prayer. Today, pray with your child for the gift of the Holy Spirit...his or her personal prayer teacher.

It is the children who can put their initials in all the boxes who are most likely to grow up to be all God intends them to be: children who escape the sins that surround us all, children who lead their families and our nation. We pray your child is among them.

Charles White is a retired Christian preschool teacher, national facilitator of The Christian Child Care Coalition, and editor of www.bibleparent.com and teachustoprayer.com.

Answers to Prayer

You have prayed for a very painful situation in my family...I felt as though I carried a dagger through my heart for the past 5-6 years. Since November, the Lord has taken away that oppressive sorrow. I thank God for His relief, for His heart to forgive and to keep praying and loving in spite of their tragic behavior.

- Joanne

My daughter has returned to church after 12 years...and recommitted her life to the Lord Jesus.

- Selina

My son-in-law in his Alzheimer's condition has... turned from anger with God to watching/listening to Gospel programs. Praise the Lord!

- Ruthye

Just reporting a healing - mine - from the PT scan...no cancer!
Husband lost wallet during this time. Recovered all...Praise the Lord!

- Mary Ann

My daughter quit smoking. Praise the Lord! It has been a battle that keeps recurring.

- Paula

THANK YOU GOD FOR A MIRACLE!!!!
My brother went to get a biopsy on his nose, and the doctor said "I can only see some small precancerous cells that I can burn off right now!"
PRAISE GOD!! Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the intercessors praying on his behalf! God is GOOD!!!

- Cindy

I just received a random card saying that I would be prayed for starting 9/3/2019. Only our Heavenly Father knew that I was having extensive eye surgery 9/4!!!! When the card was postmarked, I didn't even know. God is good, and it was such a comfort... to know that God knows our needs before we do.

- Karen

My husband has returned to church! He's turned away from his addiction to porn!

- Linda

I had an amazing conversation with my friend last night. I asked for prayers last month. We hadn't talked...the conversation that followed was, "I never doubted our friendship, it's just been a tough time. I have a new job...I was praying for you the whole time. I know you care...God's been working on me, and I know He's worked on you." Amazing answer to prayer that I had no idea would end so well.

- Dean

God restored my 34-year marriage. Thank you Jesus!!! Thank you, Breakthrough ministry.

- Deborah

I am praising God for grace entering into the lives of our 5 children in answer to prayer for VICTORY in their spiritual lives...it is wondrous what God is doing now. Praise Him with us!!

- Nora

My brother came to see my mother after 4 years... all is well within the family. Praise God!

- Sheila

Thanks for your prayers. My daughter with a heart attack healed after prayer. Doctors called it a miracle.

- Karen

Myself and my husband got back together. The Lord showed us the way and saved our marriage. I want to thank everyone who has prayed.

- Ebony

Praise report - a secure, safe place to stay! I am now in a beautiful work trade arrangement, where I am loved and appreciated, where I can focus my energy toward bringing forward the gift I have been called to share. Glory to God!

- Rachael

God has heard and answered our prayers marvelously! God has given me a newly produced flat...He has also given me a new job as a secondary school teacher in modern foreign languages in a nearby town...He has also raised my salary..Glory to God! Please share my joy and the results of our prayers!

- David

His tumors on lung have gone down...not yet healed, but so grateful that prayer is helping him.

- Sharon

God brought my daughter and husband back together.

- Cindy

God was speaking to my son...during the prayer time. He was able to hear that God had not abandoned him in his job as well as his marriage. He is trusting God more with both his career...and his relationship with his wife. He was also able to get a winter job that will help with their finances. Thank you Breakthrough intercessors! God is on the throne and PRAYER CHANGES THINGS!!

- Kathy

Hallelujah - Faithful God - six years ago today, I broke my leg, and He used the whole incident to change my life for His glory!!

- Anonymous

I asked you to pray for two dependable men to work for my grandson. He was able to purchase a small business. He now has an office, two secretaries, and three more men to work with him.

- Etta

My friend received healing for his kidneys and colon. Praise God!

- Lee

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