

40 DAYS OF PRAYER

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Aug. 22 - Sept. 30 - - Live out our commitment to be a praying church

Monday, August 23

[How to pray effectively](#)

Please remember what you told your servant Moses: "If you sin, I will scatter you among the nations."
(Nehemiah 1:8)

Here are four secrets to answered prayer from the life of Nehemiah:

1. **Base your request on God's character.** Pray like you *know* God will answer you: "I'm expecting you to answer this prayer because of who you are. You are a faithful God. You are a great God. You are a loving God. You are a wonderful God. You can handle this problem, God!"
2. **Confess the sins of which you're aware.** After Nehemiah bases his prayer on who God is, he confesses his sins. He says, "We've sinned." He says "I confess . . . myself . . . my father's house . . . we have acted wickedly . . . we have not obeyed." It wasn't Nehemiah's fault that Israel went into captivity. He wasn't even born when it happened and he was most likely born in captivity. Yet, he's including himself in the national sins. He says, "I've been a part of the problem."
3. **Claim the promises of God.** Nehemiah prays to the Lord, saying, "I want you to remember what you told your servant Moses." Can you imagine saying "remember" to God? Nehemiah reminds God of a promise He made to the nation of Israel. In effect, he prays, "God, you warned through Moses that if we were unfaithful, we would lose the land of Israel. But You also promised that if we repent, You'd give it back to us."
1. Does God have to be reminded? No. Does He forget what He's promised? No. Then why do we do this? Because it helps us remember what God has promised.
4. **Be very specific in what you ask for.** If you want specific answers to prayer, then make specific requests. If your prayers consist of general requests, how will you know if they're answered?

Rick Warren

Tuesday, August 24

Prayer Discovers God's Agenda

Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and then He prayed. (Mark 1:35)

It was common knowledge among the disciples that they would find Jesus praying during the early morning hours. When they needed Him, they knew to go to the place of prayer. When Judas betrayed Jesus, he led his cohorts to Jesus' place of prayer.

Every time the Lord Jesus faced an important decision, He prayed. When He was being tempted to do things by the world's methods instead of the Father's, He prayed. (Matt 4). When it was time to choose His disciples, He prayed the entire night (Luke 6:12). If the Son of God required a night

of prayer in order to determine the Father's' mind, how long might it take us in prayer to clearly determine our Father's will?

Because Jesus was so often surrounded by crowds, He knew He must find a quiet place so He could clearly hear His Father's voice. Jesus had many people seeking to influence the direction of His life. His disciples wanted Him to go where the crowds were (Mark 1:37). The crowds wanted to crown Him king (John 6:15). Satan tempted Him to make compromises in order to draw a following (Matt 4:3, 6, 9). Jesus knew that His mission was not to attract a crowd, but to remain obedient to His Father. It was prayer that set the agenda for Jesus' ministry (Luke 6:12). Prayer preceded the miracles (John 11:42-43); prayer brought Him encouragement at critical moments (Luke 9:28-31); prayer enabled Him to go to the cross (Luke 22:41-42); and prayer kept Him there despite excruciating pain (Luke 23:46). Follow the Savior's example, and let your time alone with God, in prayer, set the agenda for your life. Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Wednesday, August 25

What do you want?

Do you seek great things for yourself?" (Jeremiah 45:5)

Are you seeking great things for yourself, instead of seeking to be a great person? God wants you to be in a much closer relationship with Himself than simply receiving His gifts...He wants you to get to know Him. Even some large thing we want is only incidental; it comes and it goes. But God never gives us anything incidental. There is nothing easier than getting into the right relationship with God, unless it is not God you seek, but only what He can give you.

If you have only come as far as asking God for things, you have never come to the point of understanding the least bit of what surrender really means. You have become a Christian based on your own terms. You protest, saying, "I asked God for the Holy Spirit, but He didn't give me the rest and the peace I expected." And instantly God puts His finger on the reason...you are not seeking the Lord at all; you are seeking something for yourself. Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you..." (Matt, 7:7). Ask God for what you want and do not be concerned about asking for the wrong thing, because as you draw ever closer to Him, you will cease asking for things altogether. "Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him (Matt. 6:8). Then why should you ask? So that you may get to know Him.

Are you seeking great things for yourself? Have you said, "Oh, Lord, completely fill me with your Holy Spirit"? If God does not, it is because you are not totally surrendered to Him; there is something you still refuse to do. Are you prepared to ask yourself what it is you want from God and why you want it? God always ignores your present level of completeness in favor of your ultimate future completeness. He is not concerned about making you blessed and happy right now, but He's continually working out His ultimate perfection for you "...that they may be one just as We are one..." (John 17:22).

My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers

Thursday, August 26

A Fatal Moment

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Mark 14:36)

At times your spirit must demand supremacy over your flesh. Your spirit will know what your Lord wants you to do, but your flesh will cry out for its own fulfillment. There are times when sleep must be denied, even when you are exhausted, because it would be disastrous for you to rest at such a time. When the Lord commands you to "watch and pray," it is crucial that you obey.

As Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, He knew that the pinnacle of His ministry was quickly approaching. He was aware that the legions of hell were marshaling their forces to defeat Him.. If there were ever a critical time for His closet friends to be undergirding Him in prayer, this was it. Jesus told them that He was deeply distressed, even to the point of death. Surely they could have sensed the intensity in His voice and the urgency of His demeanor, and surely they could have found

the strength to obey His request. Yet He found them asleep. No excuses. They had fallen asleep at the most pivotal moment in human history, not once but three times.

Jesus asks you to join Him in what He is doing. He may ask you to watch and pray for an hour. You may have to leave the comfort of your bed or your home. You may even have to sacrifice your safety in order to be where Jesus is. Seek to bring every physical desire under the control of the Holy Spirit so that nothing will impede your accomplishing what Jesus asks of you.

Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Friday, August 27

Praying after the High Points

And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. (Mark 6:46)

What do you do after a spiritual victory? Where do you go after reaching a high point in your Christian life? Jesus went to pray. Jesus had just fed a multitude with only five loaves of bread and two fish. (Mark 6:34-44). If there were ever a time to relax and bask in the glow of God's power, it should have been then. Instead, Jesus climbed a mountain to pray. When Jesus prayed, the Father clearly revealed His will and His ways to His Son. It eventually dawned on Jesus' disciples that Jesus prepared for every major decision and difficult challenge with a time of prayer. (Luke 11:1).

As Jesus prayed on the mountain that day, the Father knew His Son was about to face a fierce storm (Mark 6:48). The disciples raced headlong into the tempest unprepared, but Jesus entered the storm after communing with His Father in prayer. The Father had prepared Jesus for what was coming, and Jesus met the crisis with all the power of God.

It is tempting to relax after a spiritual victory, but a crisis could follow at any time. You must stand guard over your high points. It is at these times when you experience God mightily that you should immediately get alone to pray. Then you will not be caught unprepared when trials come. Have you experienced a spiritual victory? Follow your Lord's example and go immediately to a place of prayer so the Father can prepare you for what is coming.

Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Saturday, August 28

The Agony of Prayer

"And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Luke 22:44

Prayer is not difficult to understand. It is difficult to do. When was the last time your heart so grieved for those you were interceding for that your entire body agonized along with your mind and heart? (Heb. 5:7)

We are a generation that avoids pain at all costs. This is why there are so few intercessors. Most Christians operate on the shallowest levels of prayer, but God wants to take us into the deep levels of intercessory prayer that only a few ever experience. Deep, prolonged intercession is painful. It involves staying before God when everyone else has gone away or sleeps. (Luke 22:45) It involves experiencing brokenness with the Father over those who continually rebel against Him. How many of us will experience this kind of fervent intercession?

We long for Pentecost in our lives and in our churches, but there is no Pentecost without Gethsemane and a cross. How do we become mature in our prayer life? By praying. When we do not feel like praying is precisely the time we ought to pray. There are no shortcuts to prayer. There are no books to read, seminars to attend, or inspirational mottos to memorize that will transform us into intercessors. This comes only by committing ourselves to pray and then doing so.

Why not accept God's invitation to become an intercessor? Don't allow yourself to become satisfied with shallow, self-centered praying. Stay with God in prayer until He leads you to pray at the level He wants.

Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Sunday, August 29

Praying but Not Believing

When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel." (Acts 12:14—15)

You can say prayers in your mind but doubt in your heart. At times God will answer such prayers as He did when Peter was in prison, scheduled for execution. The believers in Jerusalem were powerless to free him, so they prayed. When God released Peter, their reaction revealed the doubt in their hearts. They argued that Peter could not possibly be free, even as he stood outside knocking on the door!

Is it possible to be a "person of prayer" and yet not have faith? Is it possible to fool yourself into believing that because you ask God for help, you have faith in His ability to meet your needs? Is your faith so weak that you are surprised when God answers your prayer? As a child of God, you ought to expect God to answer your prayers. Do you ask God to do something without adjusting your life to what you are praying? If you are praying for revival, how are you preparing for its coming? If you are praying for forgiveness, are you still living with guilt? If you have asked God to provide for your needs, do you remain worried and anxious?

Ask God to increase your faith, and then begin living a life that reflects absolute trust in Him. Out of His grace, God may choose to respond to your requests despite your lack of faith, but you will miss the joy of praying in faith.

Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Monday, August 30

Effective, Fervent Prayer

The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:16b)

God promises all believers that if we live righteously and pray fervently, our prayers will be effective and produce significant results. How do we treat a promise like this? We might argue, "But I do pray, and nothing happens!" Our problem is that we do not hold ourselves accountable to the Scripture. God's Word says that prayer should accomplish much. If our prayer life is not accomplishing much, what should we do? If we are praying but seeing no results, should we conclude that his promise is untrue? Should we excuse this Scripture as impractical and unrealistic? Or should we examine ourselves to see if we meet its conditions?

James says that fervent prayer avails much. Could it be that we are not as fervent in our praying as we should be? Fervent prayer means we do not quit easily. Fervent prayer means we purposefully spend sufficient time in intercession. Fervent prayer means we cry out to the Father, sometimes in tears, with our heart and soul. Fervent prayer comes as the Holy Spirit assists us in praying with groaning too deep for words (Romans 8:26).

According to James, our righteousness will ensure effective prayer. God's standard of righteousness is different from ours, for He looks beyond our actions, even beyond our thoughts, directly to our hearts. How then should we hold ourselves accountable if our prayers are accomplishing little? If nothing happens when we pray, the problem is not with God. The problem is with us. For God's Word is absolutely reliable. If we adhere to what God requires, He will lead us to pray for things that align with His purposes, and God will answer our prayers in a mighty way.

Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Tuesday, August 31

Far Be It from Me!

Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. (1 Samuel 12:23)

It can be tempting at times to give up on God's people! They are so imperfect and can be so sinful, yet they are His people. Samuel had thoroughly warned the Israelites of the dangers in appointing a king over Israel. Yet they wanted to be like the nations around them, insisting that they

were willing to pay any price. Almost as soon as the people were granted their desire, they recognized their sin. But it was too late. What was Samuel to do? They had ignored his warning. Now they wanted him to continue to minister to them. It would seem appropriate for Samuel to abandon them and allow them to suffer the consequences of their actions.

Samuel knew, as Jesus knew, that God sends His servants to the sick, not the healthy (Matt. 9:12). Samuel did not take the people's response as a rejection of him but as an indication of their walk with God. Samuel was serving God, not the Israelites. When God commanded him to minister to them, he could do nothing else, despite their resistance to his message.

At times people will not respond as they should to the message God speaks through you. Don't be discouraged; it is a reflection of their relationship with God. You are God's servant; if Jesus spent His time with the spiritually needy, you can expect Him to ask you to do the same. Don't lose your patience with God's people. Keep in mind that God loves them as much as He loves you.

Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Wednesday, September 1

Prayer is Preparation

When the Day of Pentecost had full come, they were all with one accord in one place. (Acts 2:1)

Prayer does not give you spiritual power. Prayer aligns your life with God so that He chooses to demonstrate His power through you. The purpose of prayer is not to convince God to change your circumstances but to prepare you to be involved in God's activity.

The fervent prayer of the people at Pentecost did not induce the Holy Spirit to come upon them. Prayer brought them to a place where they were ready to participate in the mighty work God had already planned.

Jesus told His followers to remain in Jerusalem until the Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:4-5). The disciples obeyed His command, waiting for God's next directive. As they prayed, God adjusted their lives to what He intended to do next. As they prayed, a unity developed among them. For the first time the disciples used Scripture as their guide in decision making (Act 1:15-16). The day of Pentecost arrived, and the city of Jerusalem filled with pilgrims from around the world. When God released His Holy Spirit upon the disciples, He had already filled the city with messengers who would carry the gospel to every nation. Prayer had prepared the disciples for their obedient response.

Prayer is designed to adjust you to God's will, not to adjust God to your will. If God has not responded to what you are praying, you may need to adjust your praying to align with God's agenda. Rather than focusing on what you would like to see happen, realize that God may be more concerned with what He wants to see happen in you.

Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Thursday, September 2

The Glory of the Lord

When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. 2 Chronicles 7:1

The glory of the Lord is His presence. When God occupies a place, His glory is unmistakably evident! God has high standards for where He will make His presence known. He does not respond to our whims or come on our terms.

Solomon longed for God's presence to be obvious in the temple that he had painstakingly built for Him. Solomon had spared no expense or effort in building this magnificent temple as a house for the Lord. Yet he understood that constructing a spectacular building was no guarantee that God would choose to inhabit that place. So Solomon prepared himself and the people in the hope that God would look upon them with favor. The priestly choir sang and played instruments in reverent praise to God (2 Chronicles 5:11-4). The priests sacrificed so many animals on the altar that they could not count them (2 Chronicles 5:6). Solomon prayed, and when he finished, fire came down from heaven and consumed their offering. The glory of the Lord filled the temple! God's glory was so overpowering in Solomon's temple that the priests could not carry on their normal activities (2 Chronicles 7:2).

There is no mistaking when God inhabits a place. God's glorious presence fills a place, and it is impossible to carry on business as usual! The New Testament teaches that our lives are temples because Christ abides in us (1 Cor. 3:16). We cannot assume by this that our lives are pleasing to Him. Like Solomon, we must thoroughly prepare ourselves so that God will choose to reveal His presence in our lives. When He does, there will be no doubt that it is God!

Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Friday, September 3

Confession

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:16)

Confession is God's provision to clear obstacles that hinder our relationships with God and with others. Confession is not just for those who don't mind admitting their faults. Confession is a command, given to every Christian. James advised that when we sin, it is important for us to confess not only to God but also to our fellow Christians. There is a tremendous freedom that comes as we openly acknowledge the sinfulness of our actions to others.

If confession does not come out of repentance, it is merely admission, and not true confession. It is important to confess your sins specifically and not hide behind generalities. It is one thing to pray, "O Lord, forgive my sin." It is quite another to identify your sin specifically in painful honesty. Whenever possible, confession ought to be made directly to those whom your sin has hurt. You are not to confess the sins of others but only your offenses. Confession is not a sign of weakness; it is evidence of your refusal to allow sin to remain in your life.

Significantly, James linked confession with prayer. Your prayers will be hindered if you hold on to unconfessed sin. When James promised that the "effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." He did so in the context of confession. If you wish to have a powerful prayer life, you must regularly confess your sin. Only when there are no obstacles separating you from God and others will your prayers be effective. Pride will discourage you from admitting to others the sinfulness of your heart. A desire to please God will compel you to confess you sin and rid yourself of its oppressive burden.

Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Saturday, September 4

Faithfulness in Prayer

Now there was one, Anna, ...a widow of about eighty-four years/ who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day. (Luke 2:36-37)

Your faithfulness allows God to reveal greater insight to you than to the less faithful. Faithfulness brings opportunities to you that are not given to the unfaithful. God takes pleasure in answering prayers that come from a faithful heart.

Anna had been a widow for many years. In her day, a widow had little status in society and was virtually helpless on her own. Anna spent her time, day and night, in prayer and fasting in the temple. As she prayed, she yearned to see the Messiah. God chose few people to encounter the Savior when He was born, revealing His Son only to those whose hearts were faithful and pure. Anna was one of those few. Jesus would later say to His followers, "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear...it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given." (Matt. 13:16,11)

Anna continued faithfully in prayer until her prayer was answered. The answer to her prayers did not come immediately. In fact, it came near the end of her life. But God honored her faithfulness. God's redemptive plan to send the Messiah included answering the prayers of a humble widow.

Faithful praying may mean a lifetime of waiting to receive an answer. God is looking for intercessors who are willing to continue to pray and to believe until they see God's answer.

Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Sunday, September 5

Prayer Changes You

Yet now, if You will forgive their sin-but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written. (Exodus 32:32)

Prayer is not designed to change God; it is designed to change us. Prayer is not calling God in to bless our activities. Rather, prayer takes us into God's presence, shows us His will and prepares us to obey Him.

Moses climbed Mount Sinai and spent forty days communing with God. God showed him the wickedness of the Israelites (Exod. 32:7). Moses had not known their desperate condition, nor had he realized the imminence of God's judgment upon them until God revealed it to him. As God made Moses aware of all that was at stake, Moses felt the same compassion for the people that God felt. Moses became willing to sacrifice his own life for his obstinate people. In a compelling and selfless prayer of intercession, Moses offered to have his own name blotted out of the book of life if God would spare the people. In Moses' time with Him, God had formed a mighty intercessor for His people.

God will use your prayer times to soften your heart and change your focus. As you pray for others, the Holy Spirit will work in your heart so that you have the same compassion for them that God does (Tom. 8:26-27). If you do not love people as you should, pray for them. If you are not as active in God's service as you know He wants you to be, begin praying. You cannot be intimately exposed to God's heart and remain complacent. The time spent with God will change you and make you more like Christ.

Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Monday, September 6

While He Prayed

When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

The greatest moments in a Christian's life come through prayer. When Jesus prayed, heaven opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. The Spirit came upon the disciples as they gathered to pray on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:14; 2:1). When the disciples prayed together after Pentecost, their gathering place was shaken, and they were emboldened to proclaim the gospel throughout the city (Acts 4:31).

Prayer is not a substitute for hard work...prayer is the work! God does things in and through our lives by prayer that He does in no other way. As we pray and as our attention is turned toward God, we become more receptive to aligning our lives with His will. God will not equip us with His power while we are racing off to our next appointment! His Spirit will not empower us if we are oblivious to what He is saying. He requires our complete attention before He will fill us with the powerful presence of His Spirit.

If you want to learn how to pray, use Jesus as your model. Jesus did not always receive what He asked for, but His prayers were always heard and always answered (Mark 14:36; Heb 5:7). If you do not sense the Holy Spirit's power in your life, you may not be spending adequate time in prayer. Perhaps you are pursuing your own agenda rather than seeking the Father's will. You may have abandoned the place of prayer before God's answer came. If you will commit yourself to spend sustained time in prayer, asking for God's kingdom on earth, God will work in your life just as He did in the lives of Jesus and His disciples.

Taken from Experiencing God Day-by-Day by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Tuesday, September 7

The Explanation for our Difficulties

"...that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us..." (John 17:21)

If you are going through a time of isolation, seemingly all alone, read John 17. It will explain exactly why you are where you are...because Jesus has prayed that you "may be one" with the Father

as He is. Are you helping God to answer that prayer, or do you have some other goal for your life? Since you became a disciple, you cannot be as independent as you used to be.

God reveals in John 17 that His purpose is not just to answer our prayers, but that through prayer we might come to discern His mind. Yet there is one prayer which God must answer, and that is the prayer of Jesus...“...that they may be one just as We are one...” (17:22). Are we so close to Jesus Christ as that?

God is not concerned about our plans; He doesn't ask, “Do you want to go through this loss of a loved one, this difficulty, or this defeat?” No, He allows these things for His own purpose. The things we are going through are either making us sweeter, better, and nobler men and women, or they are making us more critical and fault-finding, and more insistent on our own way. The things that happen either make us evil, or they make us more saintly, depending entirely on our relationship with God and its level of intimacy. If we will pray, regarding our own lives, “Your will be done” (Matt. 26:42), then we will be encouraged and comforted by John 17, knowing that our Father is working according to His own wisdom accomplishing what is best. When we understand God's purpose, we will not become small-minded and cynical. Jesus prayed nothing less for us than absolute oneness with Himself, just as He was one with the Father. Some of us are far from this oneness; yet God will not leave us alone until we are one with Him...because Jesus prayed, “...that they all may be one...”.

My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers

Wednesday, September 8

Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:24

When my little son was about ten years old, his grandmother promised him a stamp collecting album for Christmas. Christmas came and went with no stamp album and no word from Grandma. The matter, however, was not mentioned, until his friends came to see his Christmas presents. I was astonished, after he had listed all the gifts he had received, to hear him add, “And a stamp album from my grandmother.”

After hearing this several times, I called my son to me and said. “But George, you didn't get a stamp album from Grandmother. Why did you say you did?”

With a puzzled look on his face, as if I had asked a very strange question, he replied, “Well, Mom, Grandma *said*, and that is the same as”. Not a word from me could sway his faith.

A month passed and nothing else was said about the album. Finally one day, to test his faith and because I wondered in my own heart why the album had not been sent, I said. “George, I think Grandma has forgotten her promise.”

“Oh no, Mom,” he quickly and firmly responded. “She hasn't.”

I watched his sweet, trusting face, which for a while looked very serious, as if he were debating the possibility I had suggested. Soon his face brightened as he said,

“Do you think it would do any good for me to write Grandma, thanking her for the album?”

“I don't know,” I said, “but you might try it.” A rich spiritual truth then began to dawn on me.

In a few minutes a letter was written and mailed, as George went off whistling his confidence in his grandma. Soon a letter from Grandma arrived with this message:

My dear George,

I have not forgotten my promise to you for a stamp album. I could not find the one you wanted here, so I ordered one from New York. It did not arrive until after Christmas, and it was not the right one. I then ordered another, but it still has not arrived. I have decided to send you thirty dollars instead so that you may buy the one you want in Chicago.

Your loving Grandma

As he read the letter, his face was the face of a victor. From the depths of a heart that never doubted came the words, “Now, Mom, didn't I tell you?” George “against all hope...in hope believed” (Romans 4:18) that the stamp album would come. And while he was trusting, Grandma was working, and in due time faith became sight.

It is only human to want to see before we step out on the promises of God. Yet our Savior said to Thomas and to a long list of doubters who have followed, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:20). *Mrs. Rounds*

Streams of the Desert by L.B.Cowman

Thursday, September 9

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him. (Psalm 37:7)

Have you prayed and prayed and waited and waited, and still you see no evidence of an answer? Are you tired of seeing no movement? Are you at the point of giving up? Then perhaps you have not waited in the right way, which removes you from the right place...the place where the Lord can meet you.

“Wait for it patiently” (Romans 8:25). Patience eliminates worry. The Lord said He would come, and His promise is equal to His presence. Patience eliminates weeping. Why feel sad and discouraged? He knows your needs better than you do, and His purpose in waiting is to receive more glory through it. Patience eliminates self-works. “The work of God is this: to believe” (John 6:29), and once you believe, you may know all is well. Patience eliminates all want. Perhaps your desire to receive what you want is stronger than your desire for the will of God to be fulfilled.

Patience eliminates all weakness. Instead of thinking of waiting as being wasted time, realize that God is preparing His resources and strengthening you as well. Patience eliminates all wobbling. “He touched me and raised me to my feet” (Daniel 8:19). God’s foundations are steady, and when we have His patience within, we are steady while we wait. Patience yields worship. Sometimes the best part of praiseful waiting is experiencing “great endurance and patience...joyfully” (Col. 1:11). While you wait, “let {all these aspects of} patience have her perfect work” (James 1:4 KJV). And you will be greatly enriched.

Streams of the Desert by L.B.Cowman

Friday, September 10

Then Jacob prayed, “O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper’... Save me, I pray.” (Genesis 32:9,11)

There are many healthy aspects to Jacob’s prayer. In some respects it could serve as a mold into which we pour our own spirits while we are being melted in the fiery furnace of sorrow. Jacob began by quoting God’s promise twice and by saying, “Who said to me” and “You have said” (vs. 12). See how he has God in his grasp! God places Himself within our reach through His promises, and when we can actually say to Him, “You have said,” He cannot say no; God must do as He has said.

If Jacob was so careful over his words, what great care will God take over His promises? Therefore while in prayer be sure to stand firmly on a promise of God, By doing so, you obtain enough power to throw open the gates of heaven and to take it by force.

Jesus desires that we would be very specific in our requests, asking for something definite. “What do you want me to do for you?” (Matt. 20:32) is the question He asks everyone who comes to Him during trials and affliction. Make your requests earnestly and specifically, if you desire definite answers. It is the aimlessness of prayer that accounts for so many seemingly unanswered prayers. Be specific in your petitions. Fill out your check for something definite, and it will be cashed at the bank of heaven when it is presented in Jesus’ name.

Frances Ridley Havergal once said, “Every year I live...in fact nearly every day...I seem to see more clearly how all the peace, happiness and power of the Christian life hinges on one thing. That one thing is taking God at His word, believing He really means exactly what He says and accepting the very words that reveal His goodness and grace, without substituting other words or changing the precise moods and tenses He has seen fit to use.”

Take Christ’ Word (His promise) and Christ’s sacrifice (His blood) with you to the throne of grace through prayer, and not one of heaven’s blessings can be denied you. (*Adam Clarke*)

Streams of the Desert by L.B.Cowman

Saturday, September 11

He will do this. (Psalm 37:5)

I once believed that after I prayed, it was my responsibility to do everything in my power to bring out the answer. Yet God taught me a better way and showed me that self-effort always hinders His

work. He also revealed that when I prayed and had confident trust in Him for something, He simply wanted me to wait in an attitude of praise and do only what He told me. Sitting still, doing nothing except trusting in the Lord, causes a feeling of uncertainty, and there is often a tremendous temptation to take the battle into our own hands.

We all know how difficult it is to rescue a drowning person who tries to help his rescuer, and it is equally difficult for the Lord to fight our battles for us when we insist upon trying to fight them ourselves. It is not that God will not but that He cannot, for our interference hinders His work. Spiritual forces cannot work while we are trusting earthly forces.

Often we fail to give God an opportunity to work, not realizing that it takes time for Him to answer prayer. It takes time for God to color a rose or to grow a great oak tree. And it takes time for Him to make bread from wheat fields. He takes the soil, then grinds and softens it. He enriches it and wets it with rain showers and with dew. Then He brings the warmth of life to the small blade of grass, later grows the stalk and the amber grain, and finally provides bread for the hungry.

All this take time. Therefore we sow the seed, till the ground, and then wait and trust until God's purpose has been fulfilled. We understand this principle when it comes to planting a field, and we need to learn the same lesson regarding our prayer life. It takes time for God to answer prayer.

Streams of the Desert by L.B.Cowman

Sunday, September 12

Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly. (James 5:17)

Thank God Elijah was "just like us!" He sat under a tree, complained to God, and expressed his unbelief – just as we have often done. Yet this was not the case at all when he was truly in touch with God. "Elijah was a man just like us," yet "he prayed earnestly." The literal meaning of this in the Greek is magnificent; instead of saying, "earnestly," it says, "He prayed in prayer.." In other words, "He kept on praying." The lesson here is that you must keep praying.

Climb to the top of Mount Carmel and see that great story of faith and sight. After Elijah had called down fire from heaven to defeat the prophets of Baal, rain was needed for God's prophecy to be fulfilled. And the man who could command fire from heaven could bring rain using the same methods. We are told, "Elijah...bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees" (Kings 18:42), shutting out all sights and sounds. He put himself in a position, beneath his robe, to neither see nor hear what was happening.

Elijah then said to his servant, "Go and look toward the sea" (1 Kings 18:43). Upon returning, the servant replied, "There is nothing there." How brief his response must have seemed! "Nothing!" Can you imagine what we would do under the same circumstances? We would say, "Just as I expected!" and then would stop praying, But did Elijah give up? NO. In fact, six times he told his servant, "Go back." Each time the servant returned saying, "Nothing!" Yet , "the seventh time the servant reported, 'A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea'" (1 Kings 18:44). What a fitting description, for a man's hand had been raised in prayer to God before the rains came. And the rains came so fast and furiously that Elijah warned Ahab to "go down before the rain stops you."

This is a story of faith and sight – faith cutting itself off from everything except God, with sight that looks and yet sees nothing. Yes, in spite of utterly hopeless reports received from sight, this is a story of faith that continues "praying in prayer."

Do you know how to pray in that way – how to prevail in prayer? Let your sight bring you reports as discouraging as possible, but pay no attention to them. Our heavenly Father lives, and even the delays of answers to our prayers are part of His goodness.

Each of three young boys once gave a definition of faith that illustrated the important aspect of tenacity. The first boy defined faith as "taking hold of Christ," the second as "keeping our hold on Him," and the third as "not letting go of Him."

Streams of the Desert by L.B.Cowman

Monday, September 13

A Day in the Life of Elijah

As told by Elijah
1 Kings 17:7-24

I can't believe what has taken place – he's breathing. I guess I should start from the beginning. The Lord told me to meet this widow who would feed me. I definitely could use a free meal, especially since there's been no rain. The famine is another long story, but I want you to hear this one.

The widow graciously prepared her last bit of food for me. I was extremely honored. After eating, I told her how the Lord would bless her with food until it rained again. Some time had passed, and the widow's son became so ill he died. The widow in her grief blamed me as though I had something to do with her son's death. I took the boy and carried him upstairs and prayed for him to come to life, now he is breathing. Guess who now believes in prayer? You guessed it, the widow. Honestly, I have so much faith in the Lord that I knew if I would just ask, He would answer.

Why do people pray? People pray every day and then wonder if the Lord will actually answer them. He has promised over and over, even shows us examples, daily, that He answers prayer. Surely, the Lord must be frustrated with our lack of confidence and faith in Him. Today, when you pray, believe it will be answered. You will make a difference.

The Difference a Day Makes...with God's people by Michael Todd

Tuesday, September 14

A Day in the Life of Hezekiah

As Told By Isaia
2 Kings 18:14-16; 20:1-11

Never have I seen a more prayerful man than King Hezekiah. The Lord told me to tell Hezekiah to put his affairs in order because he would not recover from his illness. I hated to give news like that to him, but I did as the Lord wanted. When I delivered the news, he began to pray as I thought he would.

This prayer, like many others, was sincere, but there was some difference to this one. I don't know if you have ever prayed in desperation to God, but this was the kind of prayer he was praying. He knew his only hope was God, and he wanted God to hear his plea. His thoughts must have gone back to the treaty made with the king of Assyria.

Hezekiah knew he shouldn't have stolen what belonged to God, but to appease the Assyrians, he took money from the temple. His actions had to be haunting him as he prayed. He prayed for mercy, and the Lord answered. The Lord gave him another fifteen years and promised to deliver him from the Assyrians, which he did.

Do not let your past mistakes keep you from talking to God. He wants to hear from you, and He wants to help you. He will deliver for you every time. Trust God to take control. Trust Him enough to follow Him. Before you spend any more of your day today, ask God to forgive and deliver you, and you will make a difference.

The Difference a Day Makes...with God's people by Michael Todd

Wednesday, September 15

A Day in the Life of Hezekiah

As Told by a Messenger
2 Kings 19; 14-35

All I'm supposed to do is make sure the message gets to the right person, get the signature, watch their expression, and then I'm off to the next delivery. When people see me coming, they usually get excited. I love to see how the eyes light up from the good news they read. I especially wanted to see the effect of this message.

This one was sent to the king, so you can imagine the story I could tell after this experience. As I watched the king read the message, his face grew worried. I thought he would take the bad news out on me; instead he went to the temple. My curious nature forced me to follow. I saw the king spread out the message on the floor, and he began to pray.

Never have I seen so powerful a man humbly bow and pray. He talked to God like it came naturally. He asked for delivery from the Assyrian army. At first I thought that was a ridiculous request,

because they've destroyed any and every army that stood against them. As I said, that was my thought at first. I heard what happened to the Assyrian army, and now I know it was anything but a ridiculous request.

When we have exhausted all possibilities, we pray. Unlike us, Hezekiah sought help from the Lord first. After seeing the success he had, why would we not want to follow his example? Today, before you get too busy with life, take it before the Lord. You will make a difference.

The Difference a Day Makes...with God's people by Michael Todd

Thursday, September 16

Know Who Your Father Is

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (1 John 3:1)

Thank you, Father God, that

When I need hope, You are my HOPE (Psalm 71:5).

When I am weak, You are my STRENGTH (Isaiah 12:2).

When I am weary, You are my RESTING PLACE (Jeremiah 50:6).

When I need freedom, You are my DELIVERER (Psalm 70:5).

When I want guidance, You are my COUNSELOR (Psalm 16:7).

When I need healing, You are my HEALER (Malachi 4:2).

When I seek protection, You are my SHIELD (Psalm 33:20).

When I am going through a difficult time, You are my STRONGHOLD IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE (Nahum 1:7).

I am privileged and glad to receive all You have promised Your children. Thank you for being my heavenly Father and the answer to my every need.

The Power of a Praying Life by Stormie Omartian

Friday, September 17

Receive All Jesus Died for You to Have

"We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. (1 John 4:14-15)

Lord Jesus, I know You came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Thank You that You saw my lost condition and have saved me for Yourself and Your purposes. Thank You that because You died for me, I have eternal life and your blood cleanses me from all sin (1 John 1:7). Now I can live free of guilt and condemnation. I believe "there is no other name under heaven" by which I could ever be saved (Acts 4:12). Thank You, Jesus, that I am a joint heir with You of all our Father God's blessings. Thank You for reconciling me to Yourself (2 Corinthians 5:18).

The Power of a Praying Life by Stormie Omartian

Saturday, September 18

Seek God's Kingdom and His Gifts

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

Lord, I come humbly before You and seek Your kingdom and Your dominion in my heart and life above all else. May Your kingdom be established wherever I go and in whatever I do. Make me a pure vessel for Your power to go forth and proclaim the rule of King Jesus where You have given me influence and opportunity to do so. Thank You, Lord, for Your many gifts to me. Thank You for Your gifts of salvation, justification, righteousness, eternal life, and grace. Thank You for Your gifts of love, peace and joy. Thank You that these will never fail in my life because You are my everlasting Father and You will never fail.

The Power of a Praying Life by Stormie Omartian

Sunday, September 19

Put Your Hope in the Lord

...and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:5)

Lord, when I pray for a person or a situation and don't see changes, help me to not put my hope in answered prayer, but rather to put my hope in You, the One who answers my prayers. Where I have put my hope and expectations on people or circumstances, I confess that as a lack of faith in You and Your Word. I take comfort in Your Word and Your promises. I trust in You – God of hope – who has given me every reason to hope. Help me to see that having hope is a big issue, and that it is a clear indicator of the condition of my heart. In Your presence is where my heart has found a home.

The Power of a Praying Life by Stormie Omartian

Monday, September 20

Treat Your Body As Though It Belongs to God

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (Romans 12:1)

Lord, help me to rest at night, as you created me to do, “for I know that a heart at peace gives life to the body” (Proverbs 14:30). Help me to exercise as I should so that my body stays strong. Where I have long-entrenched bad habits when it comes to proper care for my body, I ask You to reveal them all to me and enable me to take the necessary steps to get free. Help me to love and appreciate my body and not be critical of it. Enable me to choose life (Deuteronomy 30:19). Even though my flesh and heart may fail, You are the strength of my heart forever (Psalm 73:26). Enable me to go from “strength to strength” (Psalm 84:7).

The Power of a Praying Life by Stormie Omartian

Tuesday, September 21

The God of Comfort

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort. (2 Corinthians 1:3-7)

When I am praying about a situation, I call upon the Lord, using one of His names that identifies my need. So in periods of difficulty or pain, I ask for my Comforter to come (Isaiah 40:1, 51:12, 66:13). I trust that He will encourage my heart, relieve my burdens, and help me through trials.

However, many people cannot see God as a comforter. They misinterpret names like “Judge” to mean a tough disciplinarian or “King” to mean a distant and distracted Deity. They imagine he is either waiting to rain down punishment or too busy to notice our puny life. Someone with such a wrong concept won't even notice the Lord's offers of consolation as they walk through valleys. Instead, that person is likely to struggle with unbelief, frustration, and perhaps bitterness toward God.

Jesus Christ was the representation of God the Father on earth ...and the symbol of all His names. He always responded to hurt and distressed people with soothing words and kind actions. He did not judge the Samaritan woman for her serial marriages. Instead, Jesus offered her new life (John 4:14). He gave relief to the bleeding woman (Luke 8:48) and solace to Jairus' grieving family (Luke 8:52). And the Lord is as ready to comfort and strengthen believers today as He was back then.

Dr. Charles Stanley, In Touch

Wednesday, September 22

When I Have Anxiety, Fear, and Discouragement

"This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear him, and delivers them." (Psalm 34:6-7)

Lord, I give all of my anxiety and fear to You. I surrender my hold on them and release them into Your hands. I lift my eyes to You, for You are my help in time of trouble. I will praise You in the midst of all that happens in my life. I know that in Your presence I don't need to be anxious or afraid of anything. I refuse to entertain discouragement and instead choose this day to find my encouragement in You. Your love comforts me and takes away all my fear. Your power in my life gives me strength and makes me secure. Thank You for giving me the courage to go forward and fulfill the destiny You have for me. The Prayer that Changes Everything by Stormie Omartian

Thursday, September 23

Let the nations renew their strength

"Be silent before me, you islands! Let the nations renew their strength! Let them come forward and speak; let us meet together at the place of judgment." (Isaiah 41:1)

All things on earth need to be renewed. No created thing continues by itself. "You renew the face of the earth," the Psalmist uttered. Even the trees, which don't wear themselves out with anxious concern, nor shorten their lives with work, must drink the rain of heaven and draw on the hidden treasures of the soil. The cedars of Lebanon, which God has planted, live only because each new day they are full of fresh sap drawn from the earth. Likewise, our lives cannot be sustained without renewal from God. We know the only way to prevent the body from wasting away is to eat meals frequently. It is just as necessary, in order to restore the soul, to feed on the Book of God, listen to the preached Word, and partake of the Lord's table.

How diminished our graces become when the means of grace are neglected. What poor starvelings some saints are who live with the diligent use of the Word of God and secret prayer! If piety can live without God, it is not divinely created by God but a fantasy; for if God had begotten it, our piety would wait upon Him as the flowers wait upon the dew. Without constant restoration, we are not ready for the perpetual assaults of hell, or the stern afflictions of heaven, or even for the strife within. When the whirlwind shall be loosed, woe to the tree that has not drawn into itself fresh sap, and grasped the rock with many intertwined roots. When tempests arise, woe to the sailors who have not strengthened their mast, nor cast their anchor, nor sought the haven. If we allow the good to grow weaker, the evil will surely gather strength and struggle desperately for mastery over us; and, because of this situation, a painful desolation and a lamentable disgrace may perhaps follow. Let's move close to the footstool of divine mercy with our humble appeals; only then shall the promise that "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength" be fulfilled in us.

Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon

Friday, September 24

Devote yourselves to prayer

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful." (Colossians 4:2)

It is interesting to notice how many pages of Sacred Writ are taken up with the subject of prayer, either by providing examples, enforcing precepts, or pronouncing promises. We can scarcely begin reading the Bible before encountering a phrase such as, "At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord," and, just as we are about to complete our reading, the "Amen" of an earnest supplication meets our ear. There are numerous examples of this. Here we find a wrestling Jacob...there a Daniel who prayed three times a day...and a David who, with all his heart, called upon God. On the mountain we see Elias; in the dungeon Paul and Silas. We have multitudes of commands and myriads of

promises. What do these examples teach us? Specifically, the sacred importance and necessity of prayer!

We may be certain that whatever stands out prominently in God's Word is intended to be observable in our lives. If He has said a great deal about prayer, it is because He knows we have great need of it. Our necessities are so deep that, until we are in heaven, we mustn't stop praying. Don't you lack anything? Then, I am afraid you do not know the extent of your poverty. Don't you have some mercy to ask of God? Then, may the Lord's mercy show you your misery! A prayerless soul is a Christless soul. Prayer is the lisping of the believing infant, the shout of the fighting believer, the requiem of the dying saint falling asleep in Jesus. It is the breath, the watchword, the comfort, the strength, the honor of a Christian. If you are a child of God, you will seek your Father's face and live in your Father's love.

Pray that...you may be holy, humble, zealous, and patient; have closer communion with Christ; and enter more often into the banqueting house of His love. Pray that you may be an example and a blessing to others, and that you may live more to the glory of your Master. The motto ...must be: "Devote yourselves to prayer."

Morning and Evening Charles H. Spurgeon

Saturday, September 25

"Let the nations renew their strength." Isaiah 41:1

All things on earth need to be renewed. No created thing continues by itself. "You renew the face of the earth," the Psalmist uttered. Even the trees, which don't wear themselves out with anxious concern, nor shorten their lives with work, must drink the rain of heaven and draw on the hidden treasures of the soil. The cedars of Lebanon, which God has planted, only live because each new day they are full of fresh sap drawn from the earth. Likewise, our lives cannot be sustained without renewal from God. We know the only way to prevent the body from wasting away is to eat meals frequently. It is just as necessary, in order to restore the soul, to feed on the Book of God, listen to the preached Word, and partake of the Lord's table. How diminished our graces become when the means of grace are neglected. What poor starvelings some saints are who live with the diligent use of the Word of God and secret prayer! If piety can live without God it is not divinely created by God but a fantasy; for if God had begotten it, our piety would wait upon Him as the flowers wait upon the dew. Without constant restoration we are not ready for the perpetual assaults of hell, or the stern afflictions of heaven, or even for the strifes within. When the whirlwind shall be loosed, woe to the tree that has not drawn into itself fresh sap, and grasped the rock with many intertwined roots. When tempests arise, woe to the sailors who have not strengthened their mast, nor cast their anchor, nor sought the haven. If we allow the good to grow weaker, the evil will surely gather strength and struggle desperately for mastery over us; and, because of this situation, a painful desolation and a lamentable disgrace may perhaps follow. Let's move close to the footstool of divine mercy with our humble appeals; only then shall the promise that "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength" be fulfilled in us.

Morning and Evening Charles H. Spurgeon

Sunday, September 26

Prayer Makes a Difference

1 Timothy 2:1-8

¹ *First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,*

² *for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.*

³ *This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,*

⁴ *who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

⁵ *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,*

⁶ *who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.*

⁷ *For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher*

of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

⁸ *Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.*

After observing the godless condition of our nations, we readily recognize the need for change. But God's solution for our predicament is surprising. Paul instructs Timothy to establish some priorities in the church, and top on the list is prayer "for kings and all who are in authority" (v.2) The reason for our petitions is so that we can live tranquil and godly lives and thereby have unhindered opportunities to tell others about the Savior (v.2-4).

Paul would never have given this command to Timothy if he didn't believe that the church's prayers made a difference in achieving God's purposes for their nation. Our problem is not with the Lord's promise or power, but with our lack of faith. By focusing on the enormity of the problems or the power of those in office, we lose sight of our sovereign God who waits for us to ask for His intervention.

Political policies and legislation are not ultimately determined in conference rooms and governmental chambers, but in prayer closets. The voices that shape the direction of a nation are not necessarily those that ring out in legislative halls, but those that approach the throne room of God with bold faith (Heb. 4:16), As the church believes and prays, the Lord will respond.

Dr. Charles Stanley, In Touch

Monday, September 27

When I Don't See Answers to My Prayers

"Don't throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised you." (Hebrews 10:35-36)

Lord, I know that what I may see as unanswered prayer may not be unanswered at all. It means that You are answering according to Your will. Whether I understand Your will or not doesn't affect the fact that I trust it and praise You for it. Thank you for Your unfailing Word and that You always keep Your promises to me. I thank You that Your power is infinite. Your judgments and Your will are perfect, and I trust them. Whether or not my prayers are answered the way I pray them, I will praise and worship You above all things. For You are my Wonderful Counselor, my Everlasting Father, my Stronghold in the Day of Trouble, and my Resting Place. I rest in You today.

The Prayer that Changes Everything by Stormie Omartian

Tuesday, September 28

Psalm 46:1

God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

Father, I thank You for the people in my life who seem to bring more pain than joy, for I believe You have let our paths cross for important reasons. Thank You for the good things You want to do in my life through the things that bother me (their irritating habits? Their moodiness? Their unloving ways? Their demands? Their insensitivity? Their unrealistic expectations?) I'm grateful that You are with me, to meet my needs when others ...even those close to me...fail to do so. I'm so glad that You are also within me, working to make me more like Jesus...more patient, more gentle, more loving...through the very things I dislike.

Thank You too that You love these people and that Your love is adequate to meet their deep needs and to transform their lives, however willful or unwise they may sometimes be. Thank You that You care for them deeply and that each of them has the potential of being a vast reservoir from which You could receive eternal pleasure. And so, though I may not feel grateful, I give thanks for them by faith, trusting Your goodness, Your wisdom, Your power, and Your love for them as well as for me.

And I praise You that I need not fret about these people, or be envious, or mull over angry thoughts to prove I'm right. Thank You that by Your power I can receive them as You receive me; just as I am, warts and wrinkles and hangups and all...that I can choose not to judge them, but to forgive them...to cancel any debts I feel they owe me...any apologies, any obligations...that through Your grace I can choose to wipe clean any slate of grievances I have within me and to view these people with a heart that says, "You no longer owe me a thing." Thank You for Your Spirit who empowers me,

so that I can do them good, delight in You, and commit my way to You, resting in You as You unfold Your good purposes in these relationships...in Your time.

Ruth Myers: 31 Days of Praise

Wednesday, September 29

Ephesians 6:18

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

Dear Jesus,

I love living close to You: it satisfies deep longings in me. I confess, though, that I'm a creature of habit. When I find a way of approaching You that works, I stick with that method...making it part of my routine. As I discover other means of drawing near to You, I add them to my routine as well. This approach helps me to be faithful in praying, but it is definitely not a way of continual newness. I would like to be more creative in my relationship with You, yet I don't want to abandon my old ways completely.

Beloved, your desire to live close to Me delights My heart. I'm also pleased that you are committed to praying for people and situations on a regular basis. I understand the tension you feel between being faithful in your prayers and being creative. Because your mind is both fallen and finite, you are not capable of continual creativity. Your routine prayers help you cover a wide range of praises and petitions without over taxing your brain, But that very efficiency carries with it a danger you can sleepwalk through you regular prayers. To avoid doing that, make use of the massive Power source within you...the Holy Spirit. He will help you stay alert, as you invite Him to empower your prayers with Life.

I'm not asking you to abandon your old ways of praying, but I am challenging you to seek new ways of communing with Me. You are capable of much more creativity than you realize, because I made you in My own image and put My Spirit within you. As you ponder ways to bring Me pleasure, I "tiptoe" closer to you. If you listen attentively, I will whisper some ideas in your mind. Seeking fresh ways to commune with Me will awaken your soul and enliven your relationship with Me.

Sarah Young: Dear Jesus

Thursday, September 30

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

⁷ *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Dear Jesus,

I really desire to receive Your Peace. Yet I know I spend way to much time trying to figure things out. Actually, many of the problems I try to solve are not even my own. My overactive mind clamps on to other people's difficulties...trying to work out what the best solution might be. I'd like to think my motive is compassionate concern, but I know that there is also a strong element of seeking to play god in people's lives. Help me relinquish this role, which was never meant to be mine, so I can rest in You...the One who has everything figured out.

Beloved, your very active mind definitely causes you problems, but it can also be a source of blessing. You need to practice directing that mental energy toward Me. I have taught you to us My Name as a reminder that I am with you: lovingly whispering "Jesus" can turn your day around. Giving thanks is another wonderful way to come into My Presence frequently, I also want you to use brief prayers of praise and petition, which glorify Me and soothe your anxious thoughts. None of this is new to you, but you need practice in these delightful disciplines.

If you use your mental energy to focus on Me. You will have no problem receiving My Peace. My Presence and Peace are inseparable; when your mind is stayed on Me. I keep you in perfect

Peace. I understand that your ability to stay focused on Me is limited. I do not expect perfection from you....only perseverance. Never give up!

Sarah Young: Dear Jesus

An Extra Devotion

LISTEN TO ME

Effective immediately, please be aware that there are changes YOU need to make in YOUR life. These changes need to be completed in order that I may fulfill My promises to you to grant you peace, joy and happiness in this life. I apologize for any inconvenience, but after all that I am doing, this seems very little to ask of you. I know, I already gave you the 10 Commandments. Keep them. But follow these guidelines, also:

1. QUIT WORRYING

Life has dealt you a blow and all you do is sit and worry. Have you forgotten that I am here to take all your burdens and carry them for you? Or do you just enjoy fretting over every little thing that comes your way?

2. PUT IT ON THE LIST

Something needs to be done or taken care of. Put it on the list. No, not YOUR list. Put it on MY to-do-list. Let ME be the one to take care of the problem. I can't help you until you turn it over to Me. And although My to-do-list is long, I am after all... God. I can take care of anything you put into My hands. In fact, if the truth were ever really known, I take care of a lot of things for you that you never even realize.

3. TRUST ME

Once you've given your burdens to Me, quit trying to take them back. Trust in Me. Have the faith that I will take care of all your needs. YOUR problems and your trials. Problems with the kids? Put them on My list. Problem with finances? Put it on My list. Problems with your emotional roller coaster? For My sake, put it on My list. I want to help you. All you have to do is ask.

4. LEAVE IT ALONE

Don't wake up one morning and say, "Well, I'm feeling much stronger now, I think I can handle it from here." Why do you think you are feeling stronger now? It's simple. You gave Me your burdens and I'm taking care of them. I also renew your strength and cover you in my peace. Don't you know that if I give you these problems back, you will be right back where you started? Leave them with Me and forget about them. Just let Me do my job.

5. TALK TO ME

I want you to forget a lot of things. Forget what was making you crazy. Forget the worry and the fretting because you know I'm in control. But there's one thing I pray you never forget. Please, don't forget to talk to Me - OFTEN! I love YOU! I want to hear your voice. I want you to include Me in on the things going on in your life. I want to hear you talk about your friends and family. Prayer is simply you having a conversation with Me. I want to be your dearest friend.

6. HAVE FAITH

I see a lot of things from up here that you can't see from where you are. Have faith in Me that I know what I'm doing. Trust Me; you wouldn't want the view from My eyes. I will continue to care for you, watch over you, and meet your needs. You only have to trust Me. Although I have a much bigger task than you, it seems as if you have so much trouble just doing your simple part. How hard can trust be?

7. SHARE

You were taught to share when you were only two years old. When did you forget? That rule still applies. Share with those who are less fortunate than you. Share your joy with those who need

encouragement. Share your laughter with those who haven't heard any in such a long time. Share your tears with those who have forgotten how to cry. Share your faith with those who have none.

8. BE PATIENT

I managed to fix it so in just one lifetime you could have so many diverse experiences. You grow from a child to an adult, have children, change jobs many times, learn many trades, travel to so many places, meet thousands of people, and experience so much. How can you be so impatient then when it takes Me a little longer than you expect to handle something on My to-do-list? Trust in My timing, for My timing is perfect. Just because I created the entire universe in only six days, everyone thinks I should always rush, rush, rush.

9. BE KIND

Be kind to others, for I love them just as much as I love you. They may not dress like you, or talk like you, or live the same way you do, but I still love you all. Please try to get along, for My sake. I created each of you different in some way. It would be too boring if you were all identical. Please, know I love each of your differences.

10. LOVE YOURSELF

As much as I love you, how can you not love yourself? You were created by me for one reason only -- to be loved, and to love in return. I am a God of Love. Love Me. Love your neighbors. But also love yourself. It makes My heart ache when I see you so angry with yourself when things go wrong. You are very precious to Me. Don't ever forget that! With all my heart, I love YOU!

GOD

-- Author Unknown