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FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME

God and I Time

Thirst

Rand Hummel

Keys to Your Own "God and I Time"

Kelly Collier

Meditation! Let's Think about It

Rand Hummel

God and I Time



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Greetings

In the early 1960s Dr. Walter Fremont and I were invited to conduct a weekend teen retreat in Charlotte, North Carolina. The theme for the weekend was 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." That passage gripped my life, but an item in the daily schedule really caught my attention. It was the phrase "God and I Time." This was the first time I heard that phrase used to refer to a time of devotions. It so aptly described, in my opinion, what I needed every day, and I adopted it for my own personal devotion time. It meant so much to me that I have used the name in the schedule of every camp I have directed since then. I instituted it from the very first day of The Wilds camping ministry, and now with our CampsAbroad program it is being used in camps around the world. We often receive correspondence from our campers who will mention that "God and I Time" had a great impact on their lives both at the camp and in their daily life since leaving camp.

Psalm 1:1, 2 gives Christians the Biblical basis for having a daily personal time in God's Word: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." This verse is the basis of why we emphasize and practice a daily "God and I Time" for our campers at The Wilds. It is our desire to jump start the campers' devotional lives by setting aside thirty minutes each day

to personally study and meditate on the Word of God. Each camper is given a devotional booklet that includes a worksheet on a topic that was taught in the prior chapel service. With the supervision of their counselors, the campers are to personally read the Scripture passage, fill in the blank spaces, and pray into their lives what they just heard and read. After some time alone, the campers gather with their counselor for a follow-up session that we call "Counselor Q&A." This process allows the campers to hear the passage taught (in chapel), study it individually ("God and I Time"), and discuss ways to personally apply the passage to their lives ("Counselor Q&A").

It is our desire that every camper, teen, and adult will incorporate a personal "God and I Time" into each day of his or her life. As Psalm 119:9-11 says, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Sincerely yours,
Ken Hay

Ken Hay, a graduate of Bob Jones University, has been in the ministry for over fifty years. He has served as a youth pastor, pastor, and Bible institute administrator and professor. He is one of the founders of The Wilds Christian Camp and Conference Center and served as the director and president for over thirty-five years. He is currently the chairman of the board. He and his wife, Diane, continue to conduct family and parenting conferences in local churches.



FrontLine magazine sincerely appreciates the staff of The Wilds for providing the articles in this issue. The Wilds has hosted the South Regional FBFI several times, and this issue was designed for release in conjunction with the 2013 South Regional FBFI meeting there on February 21-23, 2013. We are happy to present the January/February 2013 edition of *FrontLine* as a promotional issue for The Wilds.

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Couples' Conference 1
Ladies' Retreat 2
Father/Son Campout
Couples' Conference 2

Speakers

Kelly Collier
Alan & Michelle Benson
Chuck Bonadies
George Stiekes
Ryan & Christy Dupee
Debi Pryde
Michael Free
Rand Hummel

Dates

March 15-16
March 22-24
April 5-7
April 9-12
April 12-14
April 19-20
May 3-4
May 3-5

Issue after issue, *FrontLine* continues to bring enabling, Biblical information to our home and ministry. Even though the magazine has a monotheistic approach, the teaching reaches into so many areas of our Christian life. Every issue provides me with much to pass on in my adult Sunday school class. We began a study of Deuteronomy shortly after the arrival of the "Making Disciples" issue, and I found several direct references and several more clear applications. . . . In our ranch ministry, we tend to deal with a younger group, but *FrontLine* has also proved relevant to our evangelistic and discipleship activities there. Thank you for producing such a valuable and Biblical resource.

*Curt Doherty, Director
TW Quarter Circle Ranch Ministries
Travelers Rest, SC*

I enjoyed reading [Roger Duvall's] article in *FrontLine* magazine about his father and World War II. It was a great tribute to his father and all who took part in that event. I'm glad for the late honor that came to [his] father; our veterans deserve every recognition that comes their way. At this same time my uncle, Mel, was in the Philippines firing his howitzer at the Japs. I was a nine-year-old boy at this time, but I remember.

Thanks for a great job on the article and for filling me in on a lot of details about what took place back then.

*Warren Stuber
Taylors, SC*

I would like to receive your FBFI magazine, which brings gospel light into the world. . . . Also I would like to join as a member in your FBFI. I am in agreement with the doctrinal position of the FBFI as you have given. I am the old student of Berean Baptist Bible College, Bangalore. . . . I read your articles often, which made me Fundamentalist. Thank you.

*Dr. C. Velmurugan
Tamil Nadu, South India*

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We want to hear from you!

Let us know what you like or don't like about *FrontLine*. Address your comments to **Managing Editor, *FrontLine***
2801 Wade Hampton Blvd, Suite 115-165,
Taylors, SC 29687 or send them by e-mail to info@fbfi.org.

You may request that your letter not be published or that your name be withheld, but anonymous letters will not be accepted.



Dr. Jim Berg, seminary professor at Bob Jones University, was recently appointed executive director of Rebuilders Counseling Ministries, a ministry of Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina. Rebuilders (formerly L.E.A.D. Ministries) offers one-week intensive counseling for hurting ministry families whose marriages and ministries have been shaken by sexual sin, conflict, depression, anxiety, bitterness, etc. For hope and help contact Rebuilders at 864.322.0700, ext. 108, or go to www.RebuildersCounseling.org.



Randy and Karen Wilkins serve the Lord in Spain under Baptist World Mission. They rejoice that the Lord has answered their prayer this year about the first stage of their "hot water project," which they started praying about in October of 2011. In addition, while the Wilkins family is sad at the loss of Karen's brother, they rejoice that he received Christ just two weeks before his death.

Clare and Linda Baughman

have served the Lord in France for many years. Clare has some physical needs that make mobility difficult and that require him to use a wheelchair. Their landlord had intended to sell the house where they have been living, but the Lord answered prayers for them in allowing them to remain in their home. Linda recently participated in a junior Bible camp in Belgium. They also praise the Lord for the opportunity to travel to Israel two years ago.



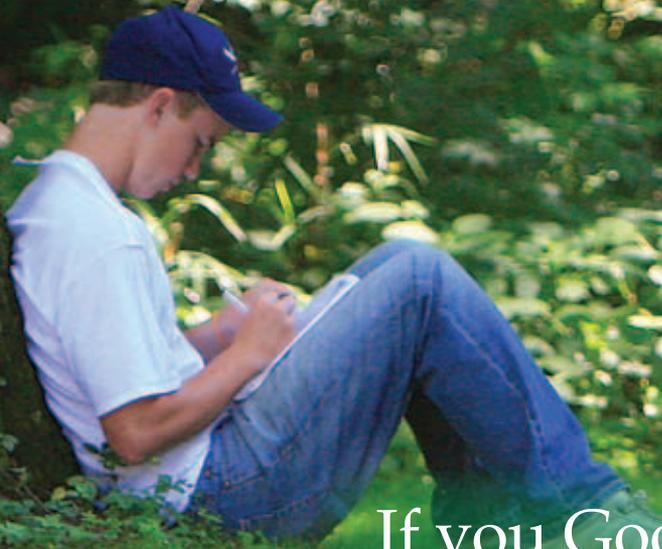
Yoichi and Yoko Izu

serve the Lord in Iruma, Japan. They praise the Lord for blessing their outreach ministry to the community as well as for the ministries of the summer mission teams and camps. Yoichi enjoys teaching English classes as well as teaching an Old Testament class at Fundamental Baptist Seminary.



Continued on page 35

Establishing Long-Lasting, Life-Impacting, Heart-Revealing, Devotional Habits



If you Google “good habits,” you will immediately find a plethora of articles with such titles as “24 Daily Habits,” “17 Good Habits for a Successful Life,” “Tips for Breaking Bad Habits and Developing Good Habits,” “30 Habits That Will Change Your Life,” “9 Tips on How to Form a Good Habit,” “The Good Habits Blog,” etc.

The dictionary defines the word “habit” this way: “a. A recurrent, often unconscious pattern of behavior that is acquired through frequent repetition. b. An established disposition of the mind or character.”

Among those long lists of life-changing habits you will normally find items such as . . .

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Wake up early | 9. Exercise |
| 2. Exercise | 10. Be Proactive |
| 3. Write a “to do” list | 11. Wind Down |
| 4. Exercise | 12. Read |
| 5. Take a multivitamin | 13. Exercise |
| 6. Exercise | 14. Go to bed early |
| 7. Prioritize | 15. Exercise |
| 8. Floss | |

All of the habits above are good, even great, and can help us handle the stresses of life, but none can claim true “life-change” like the habit of daily spending time with God in His Word. Habits, whether good or bad, are long-lasting, life-impacting, heart-revealing actions that prove to you, others, and God what is really important in your life. Think about it! If your teeth are important to you and you shudder at the thought of taking them out and soaking them in Polident each night, you will habitually brush, floss, and schedule regular visits to your dentist. If controlling your weight is important to you and the fear of fat is ever present in your mind, you will habitually exercise, diet, count calories, say “no” to seconds, refuse dessert, and learn to control your portions. If your relationship with God is important to you, you will habitually spend precious one-on-one time with Him.

Your daily habits reveal not only what is important to you but what you love! We are all in the “habit” of doing what we love to do, whether it is sleeping, watching TV, playing with our hobbies, watching sports, Facebooking, eating, exercising, hunting, reading, hanging out with friends, talking, texting, typing, Skyping—or spending valuable time with our Lord.

I have always heard that it takes twenty-one days to establish a habit, but after some research on that magical number I’ve found that although bad habits can be established in just three days (like having a doughnut with your coffee each morning), a more realistic number of days to establish a more difficult “good” habit is sixty-six. So, if you want to establish a good habit, let’s double the twenty-one-day magical number to forty-two days (six weeks) to see if our desired “good” actions become automatic rather than simply a result of dogged determination.

Anything that brings consistent “joy” into our lives (again, the Boston cream doughnut with a sixteen-ounce cup of Dunkin’ Donuts coffee—cream, no sugar) we want to repeat over and over again. Repetition aids in learning, and the constant repetition of spiritual truths consistently reminds us of God’s wondrous love, care, patience, and presence. Habitual sin brings pleasure for a season—a short, limited time. Habitual fellowship with our loving God far surpasses any limited, fleshly feeling. Why? Sensual joys have that constant fear of costly consequences

Your daily habits reveal not only what is important to you but what you love!

lingering in their shadows. The spiritual joy of drawing near to God has only the potential of a wonderful, positive, eternal consequence—God will draw near to you.

Some habits must be seasoned with variety to keep them new and alive. Today’s teens (and many adults), whose attention spans are increasingly challenged, need variety to keep their time with the Lord fresh each day. A variety of Bible helps and devotional guides will accomplish this task.

Since the inception of The Wilds in 1969, “God and I Time” has always had a special place in the daily camp schedule. God and I Time booklets (designed for each day of a camp week) are provided to help walk the campers through the book or character study chosen for that year. For the past fifteen years, we have expanded the weekly God and I Time studies into a six-week Bible study made available for the campers can take home with them. For instance, the summer we studied the book of Philippians each speaker and counselor helped the campers tackle an entire chapter a day. On our first full day of camp, Philippians 1:1–21 was taught in chapel, personally studied in God and I Time, and then discussed during Counselor Q & A later that morning. Each day we studied another chapter of Philippians. The expanded six-week Bible study on Philippians (“The Fourfold Secret of Outrageous, Contagious Joy”) gives forty-two days instead of just four to enable the campers to dig a bit deeper when they get home.

Although people change, cultures shift, and methods of communication have progressed from cave drawings to text messages, the problems we face as selfish sinners seem to stay the same. Just because Paul could not Facebook Titus his burden for the island of Crete did not change his concern for those people. Even though Joseph could not Skype his family from the prison in Egypt, he still was burdened for their well-being. Unless Jonah had a waterproof cell phone, there was no way he could communicate his three-day ordeal with anyone on dry land. Our world has changed, but our problems have stayed the same. The Word of God is as relevant today with unmanned drones and satellites as it was in Abraham’s day with camels and parchments. David may have not struggled with a laptop, but he certainly did have his issue with a rooftop. Sinful habits must be attacked with devotional habits. The way to not spend time in sin is to spend time with God. Establishing strong devotional habits was as important to David and Paul as it is for us today.

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Sharing Our Quiet Times with God— with Others!

Pastor Mark hails a faithful layman, Jim, as he goes about his ministry getting things in shape for Sunday morning. Instead of the usual “How’s it going?” Pastor asks him, “Hey, Brother, how is it going—really?” Out comes a story of confusion and woe. Pastor Mark pauses to share with Jim the truth the Holy Spirit had used in his heart over coffee and his open Bible this

morning. It is just the encouragement Jim’s heart needs! Jim goes on his way thinking about God’s care for him in his problem, and Pastor Mark goes away thanking God for the right words to help a friend at just the right time.

At the barber shop, Mark’s long-time barber, William, makes conversation about a cataclysmic event that just captured the headlines. “Why, this has never happened in the history of the world!” William declares. Not only has it happened, but Mark just read about it in his personal time with God yesterday. The barber is intrigued about the

fact that the Bible not only refers to such events but even tells us what to do when something like this overtakes us. Mark smiles and thinks, "That's another good step in deepening spiritual discussion with William, who needs Christ."

Pastor Mark is called on to jot a note of comfort to a church member who is in deep trial. He pauses at the end of the note, searching his mind for just the right hopeful word from God to tie things together. Ordinarily, he would be able to choose between a few recently encountered passages that apply, but this has been a dry time in his own devotional life. Preparations and assorted ministry duties have made his quiet time with God more guilt-enhancing than fresh blessing. He is now forced to sit, think, and eventually use an online search to find an appropriate verse or two. Mark thinks, "I've got to get back on track. This is not the way it ought to be."

We have all been in Pastor Mark's place. Have you noticed that as we are faithful to tend our own relationship with our God, that, beyond rescuing us, He uses it to help others along the way? We get the distinct impression that God is always multitasking, using His truth in our lives as we meet Him early with an open Bible and a humble heart; He then turns around and uses that very truth to minister to others! Sharing our quiet times with God with others is good stewardship. The definition of "share" is to "enjoy a common resource with others." Our resource happens to be the life-giving words of God! There is no bad time to share His Truth.

Two questions arise here for Christian servants: (1) Do we faithfully have a time with God separate from our preparations for the next public presentation of the Word? (2) Do we look for occasions to simply share those simple truths with others? No time alone with God will ever be wasted in our lives! We should be *alive* to the opportunities to interject the personal lessons God is teaching us in our own daily time in our conversations with others.

Why share?

It is the most natural thing in the world for a Christian. Colossians 3:16 is a command for life. We allow the Word to reside and be settled in our lives, and it cannot help but have an outlet in our daily conversation, teaching, and counseling. Showing that God's Word is "at home" in us should be as natural as breathing.

It assures others that we know we need God. We know we desperately need God, but sharing how God is active in our lives "this morning" encourages others that we're all in the same boat! "Pastor struggles with this problem as well, but he went to God's Word for help!"

It encourages others to share in return. Isn't it special to get caught up in a conversation sharing fresh truth with ones we lead? It's hard, if not impossible, to keep the passion and enthusiasm for the Word from pouring out, and it encourages others to verbalize what God is doing in their lives as well.

God will use it. His Word never returns void. As we go on our way, we place God's truth into the minds of men. Just as now is the best time to do the right thing, now is the best time to share the personal truth God is teaching us.

Sharing truth shows care and unifies the heart. It's

impossible to be distant with a co-laborer when we mutually share personal truth from God's Word. Time spent "talking blessing" from devotions with a different person each day—priceless!

It always comes back to "haunt" us in a blessed way! This happens, and it's all of grace! Weeks or months after an informal talk with a brother or sister in Christ, he or she testifies, "Pastor and I were just chatting one day, and he said something I'll never forget. (Pastor, I don't know if you'll remember this or not, but I do.) He said to me . . . and it changed my life." We had no idea God was using that "by chance" conversation in someone's life. Amazing!

How share?

Naturally. We should be *alive* to opportunities to share our personal time with God with others and let conversation proceed nonforced and naturally.

Prayerfully. Dawson Trotman said, "Touch a life a day for God." Shouldn't we pray intentionally that God would bring someone across our path *today* to whom we can minister the truth He has given us in our personal time with Him?

Purposely. Are we doing as well challenging people to consider eternal things as we are pointing out temporal things? At some point "nice weather" or "great game" has got to give way to "I saw something incredible in God's Word this morning."

Encouragingly, with kind questions. Dr. Les Ollila drilled into the mind of this once-young minister, "A question stirs the conscience, an accusation hardens the will." Sometimes as simple a question as "What are you learning these days?" or "What is God teaching you?" or "Is there anything I can pray for?" paves the way for a natural, purposeful time of mutual discipleship.

Simply. Not all of our thoughts in our daily time with God are fully developed theological treatises. It is good for us to verbalize how God is meeting the needs of our hearts through His Word, the way He does with any other of His children. We need to hear simple truth. Our family, friends and co-laborers need to hear it as well.

When share?

Now.
Today.
In the next hour.
At dinner.

Sharing is enjoying a common resource with someone else. There is no better resource than the personally applied, living truth of God. We have our time with God, let's *share* our time with God! "Let the word of Christ dwell *in you* richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing *one another* in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

After receiving his degree in Church Administration at Bob Jones University, Ken Collier joined The Wilds staff. Currently holding the position of director of The Wilds in North Carolina, Ken has also served as the program director and assistant director. Ken has participated in every summer program in the history of the camp. Ken and his wife, Mardi, have four children and eleven grandchildren.



Thirst

"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee."
Psalm 63:1

Have you ever been thirsty? I mean, really thirsty? Have you ever thought that you were going to die of thirst and actually believed it? What do we know about real, genuine thirst?

If you're ever lost in the wilderness, remember what survival experts call the "Rule of Threes." You can live three minutes without air, although this is something I would not want to try. You might be able to make it three weeks without food, although it would be a very unpleasant experience. But after only three days without water, you will probably die.

Just imagine a deer or a gazelle barely surviving a severe drought, walking, falling, tongue swollen . . . without water, any water; it is just a matter of time before it will die. "As the hart [deer] panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God" (Ps. 42:1).

Thirst is a longing.

Thirst is driven by desire.

Thirst causes a sense of craving.

Thirst is a natural consequence to an essential need.

Thirst, unquenched, can drive a person to insanity, delirium, and even death.

Many people are dehydrated and don't even know it. Dehydration can lead to heat exhaustion, heat stroke, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, headache, shallow breathing, forgetfulness, aches, pains, hallucinations . . . and then you go crazy before you die. Not a pretty picture.

It is actually quite difficult to die from dehydration because your brain is watching out for you and is extremely good at reminding you to drink. It won't let you think about anything else! If there is something, anything, available to quench your thirst, you will run to it before you would die.

Have you ever experienced real, genuine thirst for God?

Thirst is a longing.

Thirst is driven by desire.

Thirst causes a sense of craving.

Thirst is a natural consequence to an essential need.

Thirst, unquenched, can drive a person to insanity, delirium, and even death.

The Spirit of God puts within us a thirst, a longing, a desire, a craving for His Word, His righteousness, and Himself. Too many ignore this thirst and live weak, powerless, anemic lives—even though the ability to quench such a thirst is always available.

When David wrote, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee," (Ps. 63:1), why did David's soul thirst for God? Because he recognized God as God! I love what *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* says about the name David used for God, *Elohim*.

When the word is used as the generic designation of God, it conveys in Scripture that God is the Creator (Genesis 5:1); the King (Psalm 47:7); the Judge (Psalm 50:6); the Lord (Psalm 86:12); and the Savior (Hosea 13:4). His character is compassionate (Deuteronomy 4:31); gracious (Psalm 116:5); and faithful to His covenant (Deuteronomy 7:9). (*The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, AMG Publishers, 2003)

In addition, he recognized God not only as God, but *his* God. What did David do about it?

He committed himself to earnestly seek God. He sought for a time when he could meet with God without distractions. He looked for an opportunity to speak to God without any interruptions. He desired to spend time with God. Just him and God. No one else. Nothing else.

Our noisy lives are surrounded by people, traffic, sirens, cell phones, e-mail alerts, and there are precious too few times in a day when we can quietly meet with our Lord.

Phillip Keller, in his classic book *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, explains the importance of David's words "early will I seek thee" as he illustrates with the normal tendency of thirsty sheep.

Most people are not aware that sheep can go for months on end, especially if the weather is not too hot, without actually drinking, if there is heavy dew on the grass each morning. Sheep, by habit, rise just before dawn and start to feed. Or if there is bright moonlight they will graze at night. The early hours are when the vegetation is drenched with dew, and sheep can keep fit on the amount of water taken in with their forage when they graze just before and after dawn.

The good shepherd, the diligent manager, makes sure that his sheep can be out and grazing on the dew-drenched vegetation. If necessary, it will mean he himself has to rise early to be out with his flock. On the home ranch or afield he will see to it that his sheep benefit from this early grazing.

In the Christian life it is of more than passing significance to observe that those who are often the most serene, the most confident, and able to cope with life's complexities are those who rise early each day to feed on God's Word. It is in the quiet, early hours of the morning that they are led beside the quiet, still waters where they imbibe the very life of Christ for the day. This is much more than mere figure of speech. It is practical reality. The biographies of the great men and women of God repeatedly point out how the secret of the success in their spiritual life was attributed to the "quiet time" of each morning. There, alone, still, waiting for the Master's voice, one is led gently to the place where, as the old hymn puts it, "The still dews of His Spirit can be dropped into my life and soul."

One comes away from these hours of meditation, reflection, and communion with Christ refreshed in mind and spirit. The thirst is slaked

and the heart is quietly satisfied. (*A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970)

What do we know about Abraham who was called "the friend of God"? "And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD" (Gen. 19:27).

Do you remember what Jacob did the night after his wrestling match? "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first" (Gen. 28:18, 19).

Hannah, a praying woman, met the Lord early. "And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her" (1 Sam. 1:19).

David showed that you cannot be a "man after God's own heart" without some early morning times with God. "Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations"; "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up"; "I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word" (Ps. 57:8, 9; 5:3; 119:147).

Isaiah sought the Lord early. "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9).

And we should never ignore or overlook our Lord's example of early morning prayer. "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35).

If Jesus Christ found it necessary to rise "up a great while before day" and found a "solitary place" to pray, should we not endeavor to do the same? Henry Ward Beecher says, "Let the day have a blessed baptism by giving your first waking thoughts to God. The first hour of the morning is the rudder of the day."

In our world of seventy-hour weeks, late night news, and incorrigible schedules, how can you build the habit of *rising up a great while before day*?

1. Get enough sleep. Try to get at least seven hours of sleep each night.
2. Turn the TV off and go to bed at a sensible hour.
3. Be careful what you eat right before bed.
4. Be consistent. You won't miss the late hours once you start seeing the benefits of spending the early hours with your Lord.
5. Don't go to bed angry.
6. Remind yourself why you are getting up early. Learn to love meditation.
7. Ask God for getting-up grace.

Rand Hummel serves as the director of The Wilds of New England in Deering, New Hampshire.





"God and I" or "My iPhone and I"?

It doesn't matter where we are—the grocery store, a child's music recital, in the middle of dinner, or even at church—when we here a beep or chime, we instinctively grab our phones or tablets to see who needs us or to find out what information we might be missing out on.

Whether you are a teen, a twenty-to-forty-something, a youth pastor, layperson, or a senior pastor, the effects of technology on our time with God are important for each of us to understand.

I am typing this article on my MacBook Pro, my iPhone next to me is ready to notify me of any incoming texts or phone calls, and my iPad is open with my notes. We live in a technologically saturated world. That's the reality.

While all this technology can be a great help, it can take a toll on our time with God. Many of us spend countless minutes that we never used to use to check Facebook, update Twitter, and play the latest free game in the App Store. Time spent with technology affects our time with God, and it is changing the way we spend time with God.

The way we view sermons, articles, and books has changed forever. We see this change every morning on Facebook and Twitter. If it's not worth a tweet or status update then it's not worth listening to, reading or hearing about. Many feel that others might not think they are very

close to God if they don't post a Bible verse or spiritual quote each morning.

Are we a generation that is looking for a quick-hitting devotional thought rather than sitting down with a cup of coffee and putting in the time and effort necessary to really meet with God?

The Distraction

We wake up to the sound of our alarms (which also happen to be our phones) and upon waking up we notice the dozen or so e-mails and texts that have already accumulated since we put our heads on our pillows. As we open our laptops or get our tablets out to spend some time in the Word, we are quickly reminded of those unchecked e-mails. So starts our morning. What could have been a quiet hour spent meditating on Scripture has turned into a spiritual battle for our attention. Those who live on a constant technological diet will always be haunted with distractions.

Multitasking Efficiency

Apps are being created by the minute to get things done better and faster! The other day as I was looking over our property at The Wilds of New England for a potential spot for a zip-line, I began to wonder what the elevation changes were in the starting and landing spots. Instead of thinking about what math equation or surveyor's tool I could use, I pulled out my iPhone with hopes of finding an app that would help

me. And sure enough, in the middle of the woods, I was able to download an app that told me my elevation using the built in GPS. In less than two minutes I was able to have the solution to my problem. Talk about efficient!

Multitasking and efficiency are expected of us in our modern world. But when these things creep into our devotional lives, we do ourselves a disservice.

"The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12), and it must be taken seriously without feeling rushed, hurried, or pressured.

When we open the Word of God (in physical or digital form) we are to approach it with fear and reverence. We must acknowledge the weight it holds and its power to change our lives. We should guard ourselves from skimming through our devotional book or Bible passage just to see which quote we can use to post or Tweet. God's Word was not given to us for a status-filler; it was given to us to break us, shape us, and mold us into the image of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Let's strive to ignore e-mails, blogs, and messages until our meditation fills our hearts with God's wonderful Word.

The Power of "I"

Are you desperate for a new "iDevice"? Remember that God said to Moses, "I AM that I AM" (Exod. 3:14). Let's remind ourselves of the great "I AM."

As well, Jesus taught "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58).

"I AM the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

"I AM the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

"I AM come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

"I AM the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

"I AM the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

What to Do?

So what can we do in the midst of a distracting world? How do we make our time with God a top priority? Here are some ideas that can help make your time with God less distracting and more fulfilling.

Put it in your calendar. Schedule your meeting time with God. It may seem silly at first, but when your phone chimes to remind you that it is time to meet with God, meet with God and refuse to miss or reschedule that time.

Get a good location. Find a place where distractions will be minimal. Don't choose the dining room table if that is the pathway to the kitchen or bathroom. Don't choose the living room if the TV is on. Choose a place that is free of distractions and watch your meditation skills increase.

Avoid the media touch-base. Just don't do it! Don't check e-mail. Don't check Facebook. Let the text messages wait. My generation truly struggles with this as we seem to be afraid to go device-free for more than five minutes at a time. I think we can all give God a disconnected hour or device-free half hour if we truly want to get to know Him better.

God is the great I AM. He is everything we need. God, not our iPads, is our strength. God, not our MacBook Pros, is our refuge. God, not our iPhones, is our hiding place. We must never allow technological toys to take our time, our focus, or our attention away from our wonderful Lord. As a product of the iPhone generation, I challenge those, like me, who are easily distracted by the multitude of iDevices to be committed to the great I AM.

Josh Prather currently serves as the program manager at The Wilds of New England in Deering, New Hampshire. In addition to his responsibilities at the campsite, Josh is a speaker for The Wilds of New England. He earned a degree in Biblical Studies from Maranatha Baptist Bible College. He and his wife, Marcie, have one child.



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Keys to Your Own “God

Make sure you have a

- Set time
- Set place
- Set study

Bring the proper materials

- Bible
- Notebook
- Pencil
- Plenty of time

Principles to Follow

- Begin with prayer. Ask God to open your eyes. “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law” (Ps. 119:18). The Holy Spirit is the only One who can “open our eyes” to spiritual truth. By praying, I demonstrate my dependence on God. I need God’s help!
- Be willing to stay in a passage or a study until God changes you. Give God time to work in your heart.
- Look for God in every page of Scripture. What He writes reveals His character, His likes/dislikes, His will for us, etc.

- Ask questions as you study the passage: What do I learn about God, about Christ, about the Holy Spirit, about sin, about pleasing God? Be a good “hearer” as God speaks to you. Keep a journal of everything you learn.
- Be a good “doer” of what God shows you in His Word (James 1:22–25). Consider how this truth affects your personal life. Ask God to show you how you need to change to become more like Christ.
- End your daily time in prayer. Thank God for the privilege of getting to know Him.
- Throughout your day, apply what you learned in your “God and I Time”!

Bible Study At-a-Glance

PREPARATION: Getting My Heart Ready to Meet With God

God wants me to ask Him to “open my eyes” to His truth. I need God’s help to understand His Word. Through prayer I demonstrate a humble heart and dependence on Him. Begin your time in the Word each day by thoughtfully praying these words of Scripture back to the Lord:

- **Psalm 119:18** *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*
- **Psalm 119:34** *Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.*
- **Psalm 25:4, 5** *Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.*
- **Job 34:32** *That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

Get out your Bible, a notebook, and a pen. Settle into a quiet place and dig in.

Write out in full the portion of Scripture you plan to study.*

Use a journal to record insights and observations. Ask “three big questions” each time you read the Word: *What does it say? What does it mean? What should I do?*

OBSERVATION: What Does It Say?
Start with the most obvious, simple observations about



and I Time"

Compiled by Kelly Collier and The Wilds Staff



the text, and then probe more deeply for further understanding.

Simple Observations

- Ask observation questions:
 - ❖ *Who* wrote it? said it? about whom? speaking to?
 - ❖ *What* happened? What are the main events? the major ideas? What is the theme?
 - ❖ *When* was it written? Have the events taken place? Will they yet happen?
 - ❖ *Where* did this happen? *Why* was this written?
- Use a Bible commentary or a study book to study
 - ❖ a book of the Bible. (Read the book through a couple of times before you start.)
 - ❖ a woman or man of the Bible (Ruth, Mary, Hannah, Joseph, Daniel, Esther, Dorcas, Abigail, David).
 - ❖ the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31.
 - ❖ a doctrine you don't understand, such as sanctification, baptism, or the Holy Spirit's work. (A Christian high school doctrines book may be very helpful.)
 - ❖ a familiar passage: i.e., the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7), the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5), Biblical love (1 Cor. 13), communication (Eph. 4:15–32), the joy chapter (Phil. 4), the tongue (James 3).

- ❖ the Good Shepherd and His sheep (try Phillip Keller's *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*).

- Read the Psalms regularly.
 - ❖ As part of your daily devotions
 - ❖ On the weekends as a change or to prepare you for Sunday
 - ❖ To help you know the character of your God
 - ❖ For comfort and strength during times of trial
 - ❖ Memorize a psalm (e.g., Ps.100; Ps.19; Ps. 34:1–9; Ps.139) and repeat it often—when you wake up in the morning, around the house, while driving, before church, etc.
 - ❖ During a difficult time read or quote Psalm 23 five times a day for a week: when you wake up, after breakfast, after lunch, after supper, before bed.
- Study issues that are pertinent in your life.
 - ❖ How to lead someone to Christ; how to raise your children Biblically; how to be a godly wife, daughter, friend, etc.
 - ❖ Problem areas: anger, depression, lack of contentment, bitterness, pride, lying, selfishness, worry, fear, envy, family problems, guilt, etc.
 - ❖ Issues: abortion, addictions, cults, divorce, homosexuality, music, politics
- Purchase a Bible study book or a published devotional guide. Be careful that you get one that helps you study the Bible. Sometimes even good books get us away from studying our Bibles.

Continued on page 22



A young man with dark hair, wearing a red t-shirt, is looking down at an open book he is holding. He is outdoors, with green foliage in the background. The t-shirt has some text on it, including "ENGLAND" and "Wilds".

Meditation is essential for those who desire to handle anger and bitterness God's way.

Meditation is essential for those who desire to overcome immoral, selfish thinking.

Meditation is essential for those who desire to be victorious over fear, worry, and discouragement.

The word translated "meditation" throughout Scripture is also translated "imagine" (Pss. 2:1; 38:12), "studieth" (Prov. 15:28; 24:2), "utter, mutter, talk, or speak" (Job 27:4; Pss. 37:30; 71:24; Prov. 8:7); and "mourn" (Isa. 16:7; 38:14; 59:11). It is usually defined as "murmuring" or speaking to oneself. How often do we as believers devote a full morning to studying, imagining, talking through, or speaking to ourselves (meditating) about one specific characteristic of God taught in His Word?

Meditation!

Let's Think about It

Meditation is a form of creative thinking. Through word studies, comparisons with other passages, and a good study Bible we can understand what God is saying and how to apply it in a life-changing way. For instance, if we set aside an entire hour to "think about" or meditate on how much God loves righteousness and hates evil, our thinking will be affected in such a way that we will personally begin loving good and hating evil more.

Meditation is essential for a full understanding of God's Word. Most of us have developed lazy habits in reading, grammar, syntax, and word study. We often glance over a word we think we know rather than gaze into its true intent and purpose. For instance, when Paul uses the phrase "for this cause," it is so easy to just keep reading rather than to stop and think, "What cause?" "What is this driving force in Paul's life?" "What was his essential reason for living?" "What is my ultimate reason, purpose, or cause for living?" "Have I attached myself to a cause bigger than myself, my wants, my time, and my life?" Now Paul's simple phrase "for this cause" takes on a new relevance and my heart is convicted because I have been living for my own "causes" and not God's!

Rand Hummel

We can live kind, gentle, forgiving lives free from bondage to the sins of anger and wrath as we begin thinking like God thinks. That takes time! That takes energy! That takes meditation!

Meditation should delight us!

- *I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.* (Ps. 119:15, 16)
- *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.* (Ps. 1:1, 2)
- *My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.* (Ps. 104:34)

Meditation should consume us!

- *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.* (Ps. 19:14)
- *O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.* (Ps. 119:97)
- *Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word.* (Ps. 119:148)

Meditation should control us!

- *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.* (Josh. 1:8)

The Mechanics of Meditation

Many might ask, "How do you do this?"

In some areas of life, there is danger in being a "do-it-yourselfer." I know enough about working on cars to get a job started but often not enough to finish it. Some do-it-yourself plumbers, with the goal of simply replacing a faucet, can turn their bathroom into a waterpark complete with fountains and pools. There are other times when it is essential to be a do-it-yourselfer. Meditation is one of those times. It is something that we must learn to do ourselves. We can read books, listen to messages, and allow others to meditate for us, or we can study, labor, and master the art of meditation for ourselves. This is definitely a do-it-yourself discipline of the Christian life.

Anyone can meditate. Everyone should meditate. Most don't even try. What you need is a meditation toolbox that is filled with the proper meditation tools. I would encourage you to get one tool at a time and practice using it until you have mastered it. Don't fall into the trap of filling up your toolbox with specialty tools that you never use.

Tool 1: Your Bible. Read . . . read . . . READ! Read the passage you are

studying over and over again. I sometimes type the book or passage out to myself in letter form without any verse or chapter markings. I start with the letter addressed to myself.

Dear Rand,

(Type the passage and then end the letter with the author's name.)

Your friend,

Paul, Peter, John, or whoever

Tool 2: A study Bible. Study Bibles are a tremendous help in understanding the intent and purpose of any given passage. Sometimes a simple clarification of the audience, customs, geographical considerations, or unusual word usages can help you to understand what God was saying to those people at that time. Bible scholars have given their lives to help those who may not have the time or the training to fully understand why God wrote what He wrote in His Word.

Tool 3: Word-study helps. There are many words in our English Bible whose meanings have changed over the years and have almost become obsolete in conversation today. Words such as "concupiscence," "superfluity," "wantonness," "lasciviousness," "lucre," "guile," and "quicken" are not found in most of the letters or e-mails we read on a daily basis. Word-study helps such as *Strong's Concordance*, *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, *Zodhiates*, *Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures*, *Vincent's New Testament Word Studies*, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, and Greek and Hebrew lexicons open up the meanings to words we commonly glance over as we read. Words are powerful. Because we often do not know the true meanings of certain words, we miss their intent and cannot personally apply the passage as we should.

Tool 4: Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias. Most of us have not grown up in the Holy Land, lived in Egypt, or sailed the Mediterranean. I personally have never fished with a net, hunted with a bow, or plowed with an ox. A good Bible dictionary or encyclopedia can help you feel the heat of the desert and understand the difficulty of sailing through a stormy sea. I would suggest *ISBE (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)*, *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, or *Unger's Bible Dictionary* to start with.

Tool 5: Commitment of time. All the tools available are to no avail without a commitment of time and a commitment to concentration. Meditation takes time. We seem to have the time to do what we want but not the time to do what we should. Consistency in spending extended periods of time in God's Word is a key to proper meditation. Any time is a good time, but if you give God, say, one-half hour every morning before you get pulled into your fast and furious

Continued on next page

**"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."
1 Timothy 4:15**

daily routine, you will actually wake up in the morning looking forward to spending that time with God. (By the way, if you think you are too busy, consider that this kind of meditation in God's Word will simply replace the wasted time it takes to sin.)

Tool 6: A set place. Finding the right place to ensure complete concentration is also a must. Unless you have a set place to meditate, distractions can easily cause your mind to drift. Find a place where you are isolated, or at least insulated, from the distractions of TV, newspapers, radio, children, friends, and weariness. Find a place where it is just you and God, and it is almost like the whole world disappears for those few minutes each morning.

Tool 7: Pray. Talk to God. Ask God to open your eyes and your heart to what He is saying. Ask God for wisdom; He promises to give it to you. Ask God for understanding; He wants you to understand. Ask God for insight into His heart. Ask God to help you think as He thinks, to look at sin as He looks at sin, to love kindness and forgiveness as He loves kindness and forgiveness. Your goal is to defeat the anger in your heart by having the mind of Christ. When your meditation becomes your mindset, you will be amazed at your understanding of Scripture and your progress in consistent victory over selfish, sinful thinking. You'll also be pleasing God and not self.

Let's walk through one short passage using the tools mentioned above. What is God saying to us in Proverbs 5:22? What words do we need to study and understand so we do not miss their meaning and intent? What word pictures do these words bring to mind that will help us not only fully understand what they are saying but also apply in such a way that they evoke a stronger love for God and a more intense hatred for sin?

This is what God says: "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins" (Prov. 5:22).

Now think about it.

"His, himself, he, and his" are referring to whom? (This is where you look at the sentence grammatically and find out whom these personal pronouns are referring to. This one is easy. They are all pointing to a wicked one.) A wicked, sinful, selfish person. A person just like you and me!

What are "iniquities" and "sins"? (Studying your *Strong's Concordance* or a Bible dictionary will reveal not only that iniquity is sin but also that in the Old Testament it includes the concept of "worthless" or "nothing"—a moral worthlessness. It is foolish, vain, worthless, and does absolutely nothing good for your life and relationship with God. Those involved in iniquity are simply wasting their lives away. Sin is that defiant rebellion against God. It is choosing your way above God's way. It is making a god of yourself, worshipping yourself, and putting yourself in an esteemed position above the true God.)

What are the words "take," "holden," and "cords" referring to? The word "take," according to Strong's, means to catch in a net, a trap, or a pit; to capture. The

word "holden" means "to keep or to restrain." "Cords" are best described by something that is intertwined as a noose, or ropes that confine or shackle. Put these three words together and you think of either a hunter trying to trap game, a medieval enemy seeking to capture and imprison slaves in a damp, dark dungeon, or a life of imprisonment as a wicked criminal behind bars. All three examples involve a life of captivity or servitude. These word pictures help to understand and apply this simple verse.

How can this affect me?

Who wants to be entrapped and destroyed like a wild animal? Who would volunteer to be the slave of a selfish, lying, uncaring master? Who wants to be treated like an imprisoned criminal? Who wants to spend the rest of his life in prison, separated from his wife and kids, forgotten by his friends and coworkers, surrounded by ungodly, angry men who have experimented and perfected every sinful perversion imaginable with their depraved minds? The answer? The person who allows his anger to control him. The guy who abuses those he is supposed to love through his rage and fury. Do you really want to be a slave to sin for the rest of your life?

The more you meditate, the better you will meditate. It really does not take too long to become somewhat of a pro. After a while, you will find yourself simply reading a passage as your mind begins to race with synonyms, word pictures, explanations, applications, and illustrations. Your meditation toolbox will gradually fill with your favorite tools, whether they live on your bookshelf or hide on the hard drive of your computer. Your understanding, teaching, preaching, counseling, and everyday life fellowship will be enriched by your grasp of God's Word.

May we all agree with what David shared in Psalm 119:97: "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day."

Rand Hummel is the director of The Wilds of New England in Deering, New Hampshire. Prior to this position, Rand was the assistant director of The Wilds in Brevard, North Carolina, where he served as the program director for twenty years. Each year he ministers to thousands of teenagers and their families. He has dedicated his life to encourage all ages "to hate sin and love God more."

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SOUND WORDS

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS—2 TIMOTHY 1:13

First Partaker

Stubborn, Ceaseless Civil War

All Christ's followers, ministers or otherwise, are in one of three states of spiritual warfare: (1) some have given up battling almost entirely, (2) some are battling weakly but generally unsuccessfully, and (3) some are battling energetically and generally victoriously. But there is no such thing as a child of God who is not confronted with stubborn, spiritual resistance every day. John Owen warned, *When sin lets us alone, we may let sin alone. . . . There is not a day but sin foils or is foiled, prevails or is prevailed on; and it will be so whilst we live in this world.*¹

Robert Murray M'Cheyne observed, *A believer is to be known not only by his peace and joy, but by his warfare and distress. His peace is peculiar: it flows from Christ; it is heavenly, it is holy peace. His warfare is as peculiar: it is deep-seated, agonizing, and ceases not till death.*²

This is why, during His earthly ministry, our Lord said to them all, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me* (Luke 9:23).

The Nature of This Struggle

The thing that is the most confounding, and therefore the most discouraging, about this struggle, is its nature. Although we're told that in the world we will experience tribulation (John 16:33) and that we wrestle against unseen, demonic adversaries (Eph. 6:12), we come to know from bitter experience that our spiritual struggle is not chiefly between external, but internal powers. That is, it is a civil war. In order to *take up his cross daily*, every one of Christ's followers must *deny himself*.

This is what creates the feeling in even a mature believer that he is still distressingly double-minded.

After nearly twenty years in pastoral ministry, the saintly Andrew Bonar lamented, *I sometimes feel as if there were two sides to my soul, the one looking earthward, the other heavenward.*³

"The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits" (2 Tim. 2:6)

Bonar had become familiar with (though not complacent about) living with a divided soul. But how unexpected this is to an inexperienced child of God. On the day that we accepted Christ, we had assumed that we did it with "all our heart." How soon and startlingly we discovered that our heart was not nearly as united for Christ as we had thought. We found, in the words of the apostle, that though we might *delight in the law of God after the inward man*, we found *another law* in our members warring against the law of our minds and bringing us *into captivity to the law of sin* (Rom. 7:22, 23).

Revival services, repeated responses to invitations, and tearful recommitments to Christ renewed many sincere resolves. Yet none eventuated in the decisive breakthrough we anticipated. But then, finally, months or years later at a summer camp or a college retreat, when we determinedly threw a stick on a bonfire symbolizing total surrender, we felt that at last we had struggled through to one hundred percent commitment—body, soul, and spirit. But how quickly we again were bitterly disappointed and dispirited.

Even older, more mature believers sometimes anticipate that undertaking great sacrifices in order to follow the Lord into some daring venture of Christian service will be finally the long-sought catalyst to total triumph. Yet again, how quickly they are distressed to discover that their venture has only accentuated just how divided they remain. After dramatically sacrificing nearly everything to arrive in India, William Carey confessed to his journal (March 7, 1794),

In the morning had a very miserable, unhappy time for some hours. O what a body of death do I carry about. How little can I bear, how little patience

Inside

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 Straight Cuts—An exegetical study 6
 Windows—Themed sermon illustrations 7

I have under the contradictions I meet with; and the afflictions I meet, how little are they sanctified. Instead of growing in grace I almost conclude myself to be destitute of the grace of God at all. How can a wretch like me ever expect to be of use to the heathen when I am so carnal myself?⁴

Very similar is David Brainerd's journal entry the evening of the very day on which he had been examined for acceptance by the missions society sending him to take the gospel to the Indians. In the morning, he records: *Spent much time in prayer and supplication.* But after being interviewed, he confessed to having had

the most abasing thoughts of myself, I think, that ever I had. I thought myself the worst wretch that ever lived. It hurt me and pained my very heart that anybody should show me any respect. Alas! methought, how sadly they are deceived in me; how miserably would they be disappointed if they knew my inside! Oh, my heart! And in this depressed condition I was forced to go and preach to a considerable assembly, before some grave and learned ministers.⁵

The Normalcy of This Struggle

One of the most critical spiritual truths which a Christian must come to understand and accept in order to begin winning this struggle more consistently concerns Christian normalcy. What is the *normal* Christian condition? Is it Scriptural to be always fighting a civil war? Consider what the following passages reveal.

Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust (James 1:14).

Christian normalcy, then, is that all Christians are subject to the same experience (*every man is tempted*), due to a possession which is common to them (*his own lust*), but which is in some ways *individual* to each (*his own lust*).

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other (Gal. 5:17).

Christian normalcy, then, is that the origin of our individual lusting is the *flesh*, which is actively doing what the Spirit of God is (lusting), but the lusts are in mutual contradiction and opposition (*against . . . against . . . contrary the one to the other*).

What, then, is a normal Christian? John Newton attempted a description in a letter to a friend. He's writing a full eighteen years after his own conversion and two years after entering the Christian ministry.

What a contradiction is a believer to himself! He is called a Believer emphatically, because he cordially assents to the word of God; but, alas! how often unworthy of the name!

If I was to describe him **from the Scripture character**, I should say, he is one whose heart is athirst for God, for his glory, his image, his presence; his affections are fixed upon an unseen Saviour; his treasures, and consequently his thoughts, are high,

beyond the bounds of sense. Having experienced much forgiveness, he is full of compassions of mercy to all around; and having been often deceived by his own heart, he dares trust it no more, but lives by faith in the Son of God, for wisdom, righteousness and sanctification, and derives from him grace for grace; sensible that without him he has not sufficiency to think a good thought.

In short—he is dead to the world, to sin, to self; but alive to God and lively to his service. Prayer is his breath, the word of God his food, and the ordinances more precious to him than the light of the sun. Such is a believer—in his judgment and prevailing desires.

But was I to describe him **from experience**, especially at some times, how different would the picture be? Though he knows that communion with God is his highest privilege, he too seldom finds it so. On the contrary, if duty, conscience and necessity did not compel, he would leave the throne of grace unvisited from day to day.

He takes up the Bible, conscious that it is the fountain of life and true comfort. Yet perhaps, while he is making the reflection, he feels a secret distaste, which prompts him to lay it down and give his preference to a newspaper.

He needs not to be told of the vanity and uncertainty of all beneath the sun; and yet is almost as much elated or cast down by a trifle as those who have their portion in this world.

He believes that all things shall work together for his good, and that the most high God appoints, adjusts, and overrules all his concerns. Yet he feels the risings of fear, anxiety, and displeasure, as though the contrary was true.

He owns himself ignorant, and liable to be deceived by a thousand fallacies; yet is easily betrayed into positiveness and self-conceit.

He feels himself an unprofitable, unfaithful, unthankful servant, and therefore blushes to harbor a thought of desiring the esteem and commendations of men, yet he cannot suppress it.

Finally (for I must observe some bounds), on account of these and many other inconsistencies, he is struck dumb before the Lord, stripped of every hope and plea, but what is provided in the free grace of God, and yet his heart is continually leaning and returning to a covenant of works.⁶

What did Newton call a normal Christian? A normal Christian is *a contradiction to himself*. Or, in Scripture's words, I am so often doing the very thing I *would not* (Rom. 7:20).

A Christian's daily spiritual struggle is by nature a civil war, and this is normal Christian experience.

The Enormity of This Struggle

Though everything described thus far is the normal experience of all Christians, it isn't their experience

to the same degree. Nor does any particular believer experience it to the same degree at all times. In fact, sometimes the flesh, or sin (as Scripture occasionally refers to the flesh), seems to lie dormant. But is it? John Owen cautions, *Sin is never less quiet than when it seems to be most quiet, and its waters are for the most part deep when they are still.*⁷

So just how great is the scope of this civil struggle? We gauge the magnitude of earthly conflicts in various ways, including when they break out, and where. We may gauge the scope of this struggle in these same ways.

Consider, for instance, the following journal entry (1768) of the author of “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me,” Augustus Toplady:

In secret prayer this morning, before I left my chamber, the fire of divine love kindled, and the Lord sensibly shone upon my soul. I could not forbear saying, “O, why art thou so kind to the chief of sinners?”

I was so taken up, and as it were circumfused with the love of God, and the perception of my union with him. . . . Thus I walked in the light of his countenance, for, I suppose, two or three minutes: when, alas! evil wanderings intervened, my warmth of joy suddenly subsided, and I was, in great measure, brought down from the mount.⁸

John Newton confessed to the same kinds of experiences. Adding significant weight to what he records is the fact that he’s now been a believer for twenty-six years, and in the ministry for eight:

I would not be the sport and prey of wild, vain, foolish, and worse imaginations: but this evil is present with me. My heart is like a highway, like a city without walls or gates: nothing so false, so frivolous, so absurd, so impossible, or so horrid, but it can obtain access, and that any time, in any place. Neither the study, the pulpit, nor even the Lord’s table exempt me from their intrusion.

I sometimes compare my words to the treble of an instrument, which my thoughts accompany with a kind of bass, or rather anti-bass, in which every rule of harmony is broken, every possible combination of discord and confusion is introduced, utterly inconsistent with, and contradictory to, the intended melody.⁹

These testimonies underscore two things as we consider the scope of our struggle with sin: (1) the times when one’s spirit can be reversed (Newton says it can happen at *any time*), and (2) the places or activities in which this can occur. Toplady says that it happened to him while he was walking *in the light of his countenance*. Newton says that *neither the study, the pulpit, nor even the Lord’s table* are exempt from sin’s intrusion.

So there doesn’t seem to be a single sacred frame of spirit or even any kind of sacred service which is insulated against this reversal. Scripture confirms this conclusion: *I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me* (Rom. 7:21).

Notice the words, *when I would . . . evil is present*. Of this phenomenon David Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes,

Notice how he expresses the matter—“evil,” he says, “is present with me.” That means, “always at hand,” “always lying near.” “Whenever I will to do good, evil is always there, always asserting itself, jumping forward. The moment I act with this mind of mine, evil jumps in, persistent in its opposition, never absent. The moment I will to do good, evil is there.” I thus paraphrase what he is saying.¹⁰

This explains how our spirit can be reversed so suddenly: at the very moment *when I would . . . evil is present with me*. It would be more accurate to say that it is *especially* at the moment that we will to do good that we experience evil’s presence. For Paul relates earlier in Romans 7 that his own preconversion experience had been that it was not until *the commandment came*, that *sin revived* (v. 9). From this statement we discern that it is not until the actual moment that it is threatened with some new revelation or resolve concerning God’s pleasure, that sin is really roused up to the pitch of antagonism that we’re able to sense. We may feel that our experience of sin is sudden and surprising. But that’s only because our flesh had not been provoked until then. Actually, sin is never dormant. That’s the first fact by which we may gauge the enormity of our struggle—that though we are not aware of it until it surprises us, *sin is always acting, always conceiving, always seducing and tempting* (John Owen).¹¹ This is the time factor—when may it break out? At any time.

Then, secondly, as to where sin’s assault can break out, Newton testified that there is no spiritual service, no matter how sacred, that is in any way immune to it. We’re told that Eli’s wicked sons, Hophni and Phineas, profaned the offerings of *all the Israelites who came to Shiloh*, and they molested *the women that assembled [served] at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation* (1 Sam. 2:14, 22). So sin lusts to profane our every offering and molests us in all our service. So, for example,

- At the very moment he was exercising miraculous power in bringing forth water from the rock, Moses was failing to believe and exalt the Lord (Num. 20:12).
- Gehazi witnesses Naaman’s miraculous cleansing, remarkable conversion and great gratitude, and is tempted to covetousness (2 Kings 5:20).
- Jonah sees Nineveh’s repentance and God’s merciful response, and is stirred up to fleshy displeasure and anger with God (Jonah 4:1).
- The disciples experience miraculous success and are diverted away from their greatest cause for thanksgiving (Luke 10:17, 20).
- Martha is preparing energetically for the Lord’s comfort but all the while resenting her sister for not doing the same, leading to her even accusing the Lord of not caring about this apparent inequity (Luke 10:40).

- In the very act of walking on water, Peter fears and doubts (Matt. 14:30, 31).
- Peter beholds our Lord transfigured and responds by proposing an arrangement exceedingly selfish (Matt. 17:4).
- During the Passover supper the disciples dispute about which one of them was the greatest (Luke 22:24).
- Paul's experience of being caught up into Heaven and hearing revelations of surpassing greatness would, apart from the Lord's intervention, have betrayed him into exalting himself (2 Cor. 12:7).
- Any spiritual gift may be exercised, and any personal sacrifice may be made, entirely apart from the only motive which makes it spiritually profitable (1 Cor. 13:1–3).
- Even prayers may be offered for all the right things, but with all the wrong motives (James 4:3).
- In any act of devotion to God—giving, praying, and even fasting—one may be only exalting himself (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16).

John Owen asks a question which is critical, then, for each of us to answer in order to come to the right conclusion about the magnitude of the hostility to God that wars within our souls: *Who can say that he had ever anything to do with God or for God, that indwelling sin had not a hand in the corrupting of what he did?*¹²

That's a very humbling question that no Christian likes to face. Yet inexperienced believers have an even greater difficulty with it. They question the question! *Can its inference possibly be right? Isn't it far too extreme?* But they've not yet become sufficiently acquainted with the spirituality of obedience and the subtlety of sin.¹³ They may have to be taught by many disappointments.

A seasoned Christian, on the other hand, knows from long experience exactly what Owen was getting at. William Cowper, author of many of our most beloved hymns, testified in *Olney Hymns*,

*My God! how perfect are Thy ways!
But mine polluted are;
Sin twines itself about my praise,
And slides into my prayer.*

In terms of earthly conflicts, then, the scope of this struggle is truly “universal.” The civil war within us is a kind of “world” war. It can flare up at any time, in any place, to interrupt any blessed frame of mind, or to encroach upon any form of sacred activity. No surprise, then, that Octavius Winslow (1808–78) concluded,

There is, then, in every child of God, the innate principle of departure. Notwithstanding the wonders of grace God has wrought for the soul . . . this unsanctified, unmortified principle would bear

him away. Is there not in this aspect of our theme something truly heart-breaking?—the subject of a kind and benevolent government, and yet to be always rebelling against the Sovereign; dwelling under a kind and loving Father's roof, and yet to be perpetually grieving him, and departing from him; to have received so many costly proofs of his love, and yet rendering the most ungrateful returns,—oh, it is enough to sink the soul in the deepest self-abasement before God!

Reader, what has the Lord been to thee? . . . Has he not blended kindness with all his rebukes, tenderness with all his chastisements, love with all his dealings, and has not his gentleness made thee great? Then why hast thou departed from him? . . . Is not the cause of all thy departure, declension, unkindness, unfruitfulness in thyself, and in thyself alone?¹⁴

The Progress in This Humiliation

Humiliation over this stubborn, ceaseless struggle within ourselves is no defeat. Rather, it is the absolutely necessary preparation for more consistent victory. John Calvin perceptively observed,

I think he has profited greatly who has learned to be very much displeased with himself, not so as to stick fast in this mire and progress no farther, but rather to hasten to God and yearn for him.¹⁵ ☞

¹ *Of The Mortification of Sin in Believers*, in vol. 6 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (1850–53; reprint Banner of Truth Trust, 1991), 11. Emphasis added.

² Andrew Bonar, *Memoir & Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (1844; reprint Banner of Truth Trust, 1995), 428. Emphasis added.

³ *Diary and Life*, ed. by Marjory Bonar (1893; reprint Banner of Truth Trust, 1984), 254.

⁴ *The Journal and Selected Letters of William Carey*, ed. Terry G. Carter (Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 17–18.

⁵ *The Life of David Brainerd*, vol. 7 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Norman Pettit (Yale University Press, 1985), 188.

⁶ *Cardiphonia; or The Utterance of the Heart*, in *The Works of John Newton* (1820; reprint, Banner of Truth Trust, 1988), 433–34.

⁷ John Owen, *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers*, in vol. 6 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (1850–53; reprint Banner of Truth Trust, 1991), 11.

⁸ *The Complete Works of Augustus Toplady* (1794; reprint Sprinkle Publications, 1987), 14.

⁹ *Cardiphonia; or The Utterance of the Heart*, 444–45.

¹⁰ *Romans: An Exposition of Chapters 7.1–8.4, The Law: Its Functions and Limits* (1973; Zondervan Publishing House), 215.

¹¹ *Of The Mortification of Sin in Believers*, 11.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Personal Declension and Revival of Religion in the Soul* (1841; reprint, Banner of Truth Trust, 1993), 173.

¹⁵ *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill (Westminster Press, MCMXL), I, 615.

Bring . . . the Books

G. H. Knight, *The Cloudy and Dark Day*

God gifts some authors to pen fit words. Solomon picturesquely describes such words as golden fruit served attractively in silver bowls (Prov. 25:11). The words uttered are so customized and appropriate to the situation that they simply fit and their value soars.

The Scottish pastor George Halley Knight (1835–1917) in *The Cloudy and Dark Day* (1910) offers words fitly spoken to those whose faith is being tested. His subtitle? *God's Messages of Peace to the Weary, the Sorrow-laden, the Troubled, and the Tried*. Very little is known of Knight's life, but it is apparent that his counsel is tested not only by Scripture but by life experience. Through twenty brief meditations spanning 190 pages, Knight models how to see the bitter waters of Marah transformed into refreshing sweetness. His meditations are a gold mine to fit the people of God not only to discipline ourselves but to minister in a timely and understanding way to others.

His introductory meditation ponders Eliphaz's profound observation, "Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:6, 7). Knight notes,

He was not a bitter pessimist who said that. It was not the petulant wail of a disillusioned man with whom everything had gone wrong. It was the calm, sad verdict of one who looked the world in the face, and his words are as true today as they were three thousand years ago. Grief is a universal baptism—the only baptism that is universal. The cup is always going around; and, at some time or other, in some way or other, in some measure or other, every child of Adam has to drink of it, and many have to drain it to the bitter dregs. All the world over, the chalice passes from hand to hand, from lip to lip.

If it is strange how often deep trouble comes in unexpected and inexplicable ways, it is stranger still that it comes not merely upon those who are living *without* God—there would be small wonder in that—but upon so many who are living humbly, and holily, and faithfully *with* God, and on those who have done nothing to bring it down, but are the innocent victims of other men's iniquity. In such a case, it comes not as a punishment for any definite sin, but only as a gracious, though hard, discipline leading to larger and diviner good; but, one way or other, there is no escaping it, however fiercely, sometimes, we may rebel against the blow.

Nearly all the great promises that lie scattered over the pages of this Book were promises made to men in great difficulties and straits. As soon as we come into the same or any similar position, the promise is there for our faith also to grasp; and we never know till then how great is its sustaining

power. The promises are like bridges across a torrent-bed, which do not seem to be of much use when the water is low, and the channel is dry, but which will be used most thankfully when the floods are out, and a raging stream is sweeping between the banks.

“. . . when
thou comest,
bring with thee
. . . the books”
(2 Tim. 4:13)

Subsequent chapters mine other Bible passages to speak to the needs of the tried soul, probing both the varied purposes for which God sends the pain and the means by which the believer is enabled in the pain to taste and see that the Lord is good.

“Suffering is . . . a prophet speaking in God's name, but one of those prophets whom you must go out into the wilderness to hear.”

“If it is the strange mystery of grace that ‘Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth,’ then those whom he loveth much He chasteneth much, and they whom He chasteneth most are the dearest of them all.”

“It is not the intensity of the suffering but the weary length of it that most sorely depresses the heart.”

“The same heat that reveals the dross removes it too: and it may comfort some who are in the furnace and are alarmed at what the fire is revealing to them, to remember that they see their evil only because God is in the act of taking it away, in order that He may bring them forth as gold.”

“We are staggered, sometimes, as we look around, by the strange way in which His Providence runs counter not only to what we expect, but all that we think right and good.”

“Poor wounded soul! As you grope your way through the tangled briars, bleeding afresh at every step, will it not comfort you to see, on the blood-stained grass, signs that Another Sufferer had been there before you, to discover Who that Other was by recognizing the footprints of your Lord Himself . . . ? What a heart His is to lean upon! What a Pattern of holy trust is His to copy!”

“As our chief temptations come from looking *around*, and our chief dangers from looking *down*, so our chief miseries come from looking too far *in front*. We need to learn the blessed art of constantly looking *up*.”

Anyone who desires to learn from a wise counselor will find an abundance of wisdom stored in these pages. ☞☞

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Those who adopt an allegorical method of interpretation often appeal to Galatians 4:21–31. After all, Paul says these things “are an allegory” (v. 24). The question of whether this passage justifies adopting an allegorical hermeneutic, however, is best answered by examining what Paul is actually doing in this passage.

Paul highlights Abraham’s two sons to exemplify two ways in which Abraham sought to receive the promises. In Genesis 15 God reaffirmed the seed promise and further specified that Abraham himself would have a son (15:4, 5), and Abraham believed God (15:6). But chapter 16 reveals that Yahweh, the giver of the promise, had kept Sarah from having children. Abraham and Sarah see in Hagar a way to bring about the fulfillment of the promise. But unlike 15:2–4, Abraham does not consult with God. Because they sought the promise through their own efforts, Paul says, “he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh” (Gal. 4:23).

Genesis 21 records the birth of Abraham’s second son. Here Moses notes twice that Isaac was born “as [God] had said” and “as he had spoken” (21:1). He reinforces the fulfillment of the promise by noting that the birth took place “at the set time of which God had spoken to him” (21:2). Moses also emphasizes God’s involvement in the birth of Isaac by specifying that the Lord “visited” Sarah, indicating God’s special involvement. Abraham’s personal righteousness had nothing to do with the fulfillment, for he had failed once again in the previous chapter. His old age (21:2, 5, 7) also indicates that God fulfilled His promise. On the basis of this passage Paul says that the son of “the freewoman” was born through the “promise” (Gal. 4:23).

The circumstances of the birth of Abraham’s two sons parallel the two options that lie before the Galatians. They can seek to achieve the promises of God through human effort, or they can trust God to bring about what He has promised. Paul exploits this parallel by a figurative application that draws further parallels between the mothers of those sons and the two covenants that the Galatians may live under: the Mosaic covenant or the new covenant.

The connection between the Judaizers and the Mosaic Law is self-evident. But Paul must demonstrate the connection between the Galatian Christians and Sarah / the free woman / the new covenant / the Jerusalem above. He does this by quoting Isaiah 54:1. This passage ties together the Abrahamic covenant (54:1–3), the new covenant (54:10), and Gentile salvation (54:2, 3) while also having a nice verbal connection through the word “barren” (KJV “desolate”). Verse 1 connects to the Abrahamic covenant by speaking of Zion in terms of a barren woman having offspring. The

connection continues with the reference to “spread[ing] abroad” (compare Gen. 28:14 and Isa. 54:3). Genesis 28:14 not only promises numerous offspring to Abraham but also says the blessing of Abraham’s seed would be to “all the families of the earth.”

Isaiah brings those two ideas together in his exhortation for Zion to enlarge her tent because her seed will possess the nations (54:2, 3). This will happen not by natural means (as when a married woman has children), but it will be a supernatural work (like a deserted, barren woman who has never been in labor having more children than the married woman). Paul concludes that the Galatians, “as Isaac was, are the children of promise” (4:28). These Gentiles have become part of the people of God not through their own efforts but through the supernatural working of God and in accordance with his promise to Abraham (Gen. 28:14).

After establishing the identity of the Galatian Christians, Paul identifies the Judaizers: they are like Ishmael, for they persecute those “born after the Spirit” (4:29). This connection is made on the basis of Ishmael’s treatment of Isaac in Genesis 21:9. Paul then applies the judgment that falls on those aligned with Ishmael (that is, those who say it is necessary to remain under the Mosaic code): they will not receive the promised inheritance.

In verse 31 Paul reiterates the conclusion that he reached in 4:28 about the identity of Christians. In 5:1 he concludes his exhortation and prepares the way for the following section by exhorting the Galatians to stand firm in their freedom and not to submit to the slavery of the Mosaic code.

Throughout this passage Paul exploits surface similarities to illustrate aspects of his present situation (Hagar’s bondage with the bondage of the Law; Sarah’s freedom with the freedom of the new covenant; Sarah’s barrenness and later fecundity with Zion’s barrenness and later fecundity). But these surface similarities have deeply rooted, substantive connections. It is these roots that set Paul’s practice in this passage apart from the allegories of the patristic and medieval eras. For instance, Augustine extended Paul’s allegory to apply also to Abraham’s children by Keturah. Those sons, according to Augustine, represented “heresies and schisms” because they are sons of a free woman who are nevertheless born after the flesh and not according to the promise. Augustine’s allegory does make superficial connections, but an examination of Genesis 25 reveals that it lacks the roots of Paul’s “allegory.” Paul’s figurative approach in Galatians 4 remains rooted in the literal sense of Genesis and Isaiah. It does not provide a warrant for an allegorical method of interpretation. ☞

“Rightly
dividing
the Word
of Truth”
(2 Tim. 2:15)

Jesus commands us to love our spouses, brothers, neighbors, and enemies. Consistently responding with loving thoughts, treatment, and talk to these who may at times act like enemies seems like a colossal command. Seeing illustrations of the love of Jesus lived out helps us better apply His love in our dealings with others. The following illustrations are taken from the two-volume life of Whitefield, entitled *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the 18th Century Revival* by Arnold Dallimore. Meditating upon Whitefield's responses in these situations will help us better apply love in our difficult situations.

Loving Brothers Who Make Continual Disturbance about Nonfundamental Doctrines

Whitefield introduced John Wesley to his Bristol congregation in 1739 and intended on leaving much of his ministry in Wesley's hands while he was preaching in America. Whitefield instructed Wesley "to enter into no disputes, least of all concerning predestination." But four weeks to the day that Whitefield introduced Wesley, Wesley preached against predestination and Whitefield. During this time, Wesley made himself superior to Whitefield in the leadership of the church. When Whitefield heard of these things, he prayed, "The Lord give him ten thousand times more success than He has given to me."

But John Wesley printed "Against Predestination," and for the nineteen months that Whitefield was in America John and Charles Wesley preached against Whitefield in their daily ministry, creating disharmony in England and a burden in Whitefield's mind. John sent letters across the ocean provoking Whitefield and challenging him to debate the points of doctrinal difference.

Notice that Whitefield's responses to Wesley were never contentious but always peaceful, loving, and courteous. Whitefield wrote to Wesley, "From my soul I wish you abundant success. . . . I long to hear of your being made a spiritual father to thousands. . . . Do not be angry with, but pray for, Honored Sir, Your unworthy brother and servant in Christ, G. W."

Loving Brothers Who Continually Attack and Tear Down the Ministry

In 1741 Whitefield traveled from America for England, where for the previous nineteen months the Wesleys had daily preached against him. John Wesley had also taken over usage of two buildings that Whitefield had raised virtually all the money to erect.

Whitefield bares his heart in a letter written to the Wesleys while on board ship heading to England. "My Dear, Dear Brethren . . . Why did you throw out that bone of contention? Why did you print that sermon against predestination? . . . Do you not think, my dear

brethren, that I must be as much concerned for truth, or what I think truth, as you? God is my judge. I always was, and I hope I always shall be, desirous that you may be preferred before me. . . . O my dear brethren, my heart almost bleeds within me! Methinks I would be willing to tarry here on the waters forever, rather than come to England to oppose you."

Whitefield had spoken in England to crowds of 20,000-plus; because of John Wesley's preaching against Whitefield, Whitefield now spoke to two or three hundred. Many of Whitefield's former hearers would rush by him with their fingers in their ears so as not to hear Whitefield's "heretical" doctrine; this instruction to the people had come from John Wesley. Whitefield wrote, "Many, very many of my spiritual children who at my last departure from England would have plucked out their own eyes to have given them to me, are so prejudiced by the dear Messrs. W's dressing up the doctrine of election in such horrible colors, that they will neither hear, see, nor give me the least assistance: Yes, some of them send threatening letters that God will speedily destroy me."

But Whitefield still speaks of the Wesleys as "my dear, dear old friend, Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, whom I still love as my own soul."

Whitefield believed that he had no choice but to publish a reply to John, and he began the document by stating his strong hesitation to print anything critical of Wesley: "Jonah could not go with more reluctance against Nineveh than I now take pen in hand to write against you. Was nature to speak I had rather die than do it; and yet if I am faithful to God, and to my own and others' souls I must not stand neutral any longer." In his reply Whitefield communicates his unmovable doctrinal convictions clearly but never a discourteous word. His disposition toward Wesley was always one of respect as he refers to him as "My Honored Friend" and "Honored Sir."

With such a response, Whitefield began to win back his congregations. The loss provoked Wesley so much that he began to make charges against Whitefield that were exaggerated, fabricated, and misrepresented.

Some of Whitefield's hearers were angry that he had been so forgiving to Wesley. But Whitefield responded, "My heart doth not reproach me for my kindness and friendship to those that differ from me. . . . At the same time I would love all that love the Lord Jesus, though they differ with me in some points. . . . I have not given way to the Moravian Brethren, or to Mr Wesley, or to any whom I thought in error, no not for an hour. But I think it best not to dispute when there is no

"To every preacher of righteousness as well as to Noah, wisdom gives the command, 'A window shalt thou make in the ark.'"

Charles Spurgeon

probability of convincing.” At another time Whitefield reflected, “It is good for me that I have been supplanted, despised, censured, maligned, judged by and separated from my nearest dearest friends. By this I have found the faithfulness of Him who is the friend of friends.”

Loving Brothers Who Separate and Attack Regarding Minor Denominational and Doctrinal Differences

In 1741 the Erskines, a godly family in Scotland who had separated from the Presbyterian Church of Scotland to form the Associate Presbytery, invited Whitefield to come to Scotland and preach. Upon arrival, Whitefield found that the Erskines wanted Whitefield to preach only for the Associate Presbytery and no other denomination. Whitefield replied that he came not just to preach for them. On exiting that meeting, Whitefield reported, “A portly well-looking Quaker, taking me by the hand, said, ‘Friend George, I am as thou art; I am for bringing all to the life and power of the everliving God: and therefore, if thou wilt not quarrel with me about my [Quaker] hat, I will not quarrel with thee about thy [Anglican] gown.’ I wish all of every denomination were thus minded.”

Whitefield decided not to limit the gospel from other denominations in Scotland. As a result, the Erskines not only forbade Whitefield to preach for them, but they began to preach against Whitefield, declaring that Whitefield pocketed the money pledged for orphans, and that “He is but a scandalous idolater, being a member of the idolatrous Church of England. He is a limb of Anti-Christ, a boar, and a wild beast.”

In his reply, Whitefield communicated to the Erskines, “I highly value and honor you. I applaud your zeal for God, and though in some respects I think it to be leveled against me, yet I feel no resentment, and would joyfully sit down and hear you and your brethren preach. . . . I earnestly pray for you. I could drop a tear. O when shall the time come when the watchmen will see eye to eye?” In a letter to a friend, Whitefield stated, “The dear Messrs. Erskine have dressed me in very black colors. Dear Men, I pity them.”

Lovingly Admitting Wrongs When Confronted

In 1744 the professors of Harvard College in Boston published an article against Whitefield stating that he was “an enthusiast, a censorious, uncharitable person, and a deluder of the people.” They also accused him of relying on “impressions” for decision making and for incomplete financial records concerning the orphanage that Whitefield established. Whitefield admitted that his earlier years were immature and apologized for them in a spirit of love and peace-making.

Loving Close Brothers Who Abandon Laboring Together

One of Whitefield’s greatest assistants in the ministry was John Cennick, who had been with

Whitefield for years. At the end of 1745, though, Cennick joined the Moravians. Whitefield’s cause suffered severely, and Whitefield himself was greatly disappointed. But Whitefield replied, “Dear John: Though I am quite sick and weak in body, yet the love I owe thee for Jesu’s sake constrains me to answer your last kind letter. . . . It has been thy meat and drink to preach among poor sinners the unsearchable riches of Christ. May’st thou continue in this plan, and whether I see thee or not . . . I shall always pray that the work of God shall prosper in thy hands. . . . Go where thou wilt, though thou shouldst be in the purest society under heaven, thou wilt find that the best of men are men at best.”

Loving Highly-Esteemed Brothers Who Separate over Minor Issues

In November of 1748 the pastor and “Father of English Hymnody,” Isaac Watts, was on his deathbed. Both Watts and Phillip Dodderidge had been severely critical of Whitefield’s newer methods and irregular proceedings of ministry and would not participate with Whitefield. Unknown to Whitefield, Watts’s opinion of Whitefield had begun to change. Upon returning to London, Whitefield heard of Watts’s sickness and immediately went to see him. Whitefield had to wait but was eventually shown in. Whitefield helped the weakened Watts sit up, take nourishment, and receive his medicine. He shared Scripture and prayed with Watts and then left. A half-hour later, Watts was in the presence of the Lord.

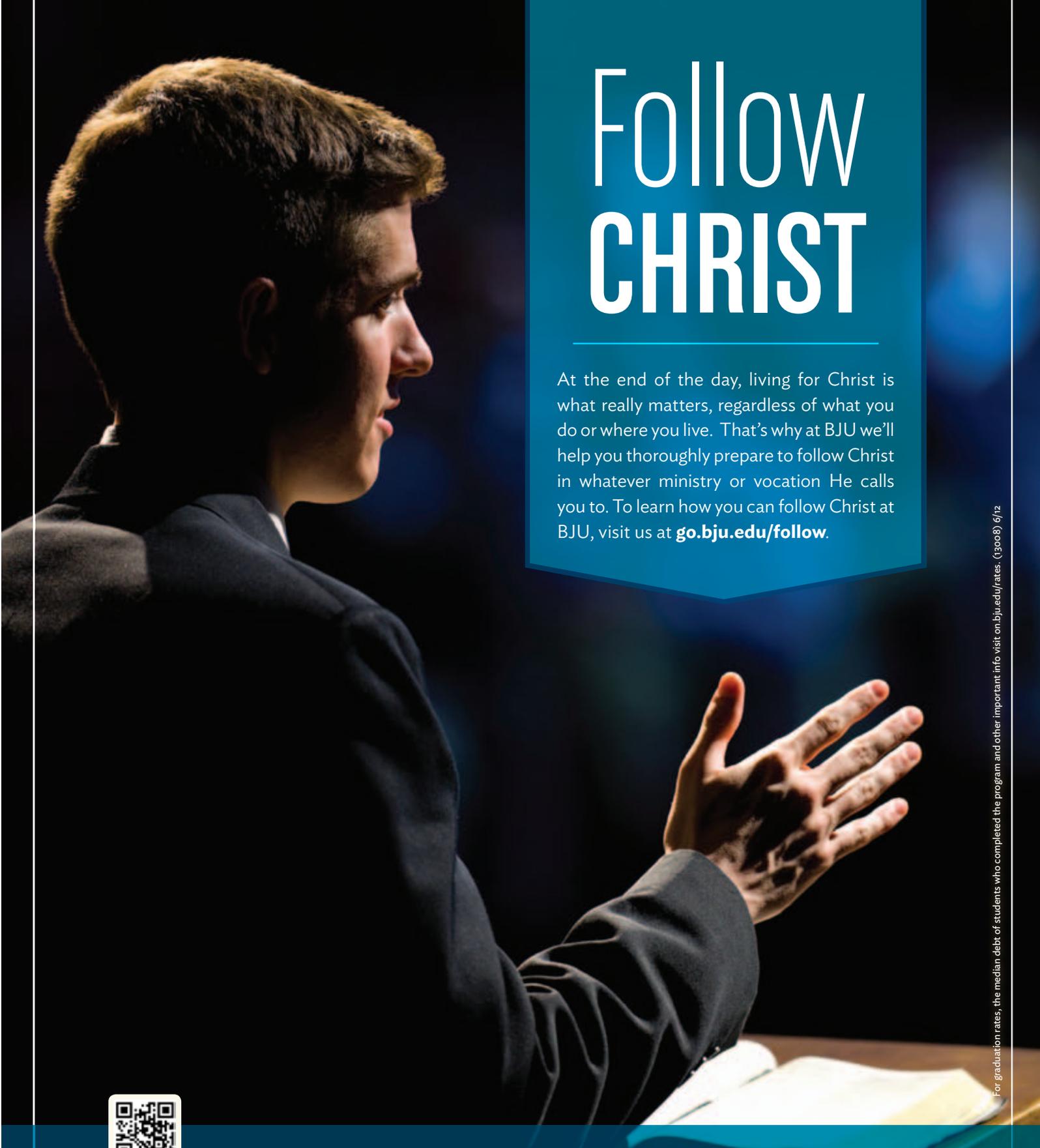
Loving Self-Sacrifice for the Sake of the Ministry

Though the Wesleys improved their relations with Whitefield, John still had a spirit of competition against Whitefield within the Methodist movement. Determined to overcome that spirit of rivalry, Whitefield stepped down as a leader of the Methodist movement, saying, “Let the name of Whitefield perish, but Christ be glorified.”

A Loving, Lasting Symbol of Union

Whitefield’s efforts constructed a few chapels in England. Under one, he made sure there were vaults for burials. He told his people, “I have prepared a vault in this Chapel, where I intend to be buried, and Messrs. John and Charles Wesley shall also be buried there. We will all lie together.” Whitefield left instructions that he wanted his official memorial service in England to be conducted by John Wesley. By the time of Whitefield’s death, Charles, having been influenced by Whitefield’s forgiving nature and friendship, was closer to Whitefield than he was to his own brother theologically. In the memorial message John Wesley particularly mentioned Whitefield’s tenderheartedness, charitableness, friendliness, purity, and courage.

God commands love to brothers even when there are differences among us (Rom. 12:9–21; 13:8–10; 15:1–7). May God grant each of us personal reflection that results in Biblical and Christlike love. 



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Keys to Your Own “God and I” Time

Continued from page 15

Examples of good devotional guides from The Wilds:

- ❖ *God & I Time Treasures I, II, III* by Ken Collier and Rand Hummel
- ❖ *6-Week Bible Studies* (James, Joseph, Colossians, Titus, Philippians, 1 Peter, New Testament Postcards, etc.) by Rand Hummel
- Ask other Christians for their favorite Bible study ideas.
- Read Proverbs.
 - ❖ Study the different types of people found in Proverbs. Make a page for each one (e.g., the fool, the scorner, the wise man, the virtuous woman, the sluggard).
 - ❖ Study through Proverbs, verse by verse, recording everything you learn about a specific topic (e.g., friends, the tongue, work, wisdom, the fear of the Lord).
 - ❖ Study everything God says about the family: obedience to parents, listening to instruction, giving instruction, rearing children, husband/wife relationship, etc.
 - ❖ The book of Proverbs has 31 chapters. Read one proverb for each day of the month.
 - ❖ Find a life principle that applies and write it in a notebook and meditate on it.
- Study various Bible doctrines (e.g., sanctification, abiding, salvation).
- Read a passage once a day for a full month (e.g., James, 1 John, Titus).
- Write your own commentary on a passage. Fill a notebook with everything God teaches you as you study.
- Read through the Bible.
 - ❖ Read a certain number of chapters a day.
 - ❖ Use a One-Year Bible that has assigned daily readings: a passage in the Old Testament and a passage in the New Testament, plus part of Psalms and Proverbs.
 - ❖ Read through the Bible chronologically.
 - ❖ A good study Bible is very useful in helping you understand difficult passages or words.
- Read through a specific book of the Bible. Use a single-volume commentary or the introduction to the book in a study Bible to try to learn the overall theme of a book before reading it; then read with colored pencils in hand, looking for one specific theme. Examples:
 - ❖ Jeremiah—pluck up/destroy; build/plant
 - ❖ Isaiah—predictions of the Messiah
 - ❖ Hosea—Trace the storyline of his wife’s adultery and the comparisons to God and Israel.
 - ❖ Zechariah—character traits of God seen in the book

- ❖ Leviticus—holy, holiness, set apart, sanctified
 - ❖ Minor Prophets—the wrath of God; the purpose for His wrath
 - ❖ Philippians—joy
 - ❖ Galatians—law and grace
 - ❖ 1 and 2 Peter—suffering and glory; how they relate
 - ❖ Hebrews—the preeminence of Christ
- Outline the chapter, labeling the major sections with your own title. Try to locate the key verse.
 - Look for patterns—repeated words or phrases (and mark them with colored pencils) to help you understand what the author intends to emphasize.

Deeper Digging

- Use Hebrew and Greek dictionaries to look up the meaning and usage of various words in the passage.
- Look for cross-references.
- Read the passage in various translations.
- Paraphrase the passage, putting it into your own words.
- Consult commentaries and study Bibles only after you have done your own reading, meditation, and study of the passage.

INTERPRETATION: What Does It Mean?

Ask the following kinds of questions to help understand the implications of the text:

- What does this passage teach me about God?
- What does this passage teach me about Jesus?
- What does this passage teach me about man?
- Are there any promises to claim?
- Are there any commands to obey?
- Are there any examples to follow?
- Are there any sins to avoid?

APPLICATION:

What Should I Do?

Record your responses to the Word of God. Plan to use what you learn!

- How does this truth apply to my life? to my situation?
- In view of this truth, what changes need to be made in my life?
- What practical steps can I take to apply this truth to my life?
- Do I need accountability in this area?

Write out your response in the form of a prayer expressing your commitment to the Lord.



Ideas for Getting to Know Your God

One of the keys to successful Bible reading is keeping your mind engaged; *always* be looking for *something* as you read. Also, remember that every page of Scripture reveals God, so *always* be looking for *Someone* as you read!

- Choose a Bible passage and ask the following questions (write the answers in a notebook):

- ❖ What do these verses teach me about God?
- ❖ What do these verses teach me about Jesus Christ?
- ❖ What do these verses teach me about the Holy Spirit?
- ❖ What do these verses teach me about Satan's lies?
- ❖ What do these verses teach me about others?
- ❖ What do these verses teach me about myself?
- ❖ Is there a command for me to keep?
- ❖ Is there a sin that I need to avoid or confess?
- ❖ Is there a promise for me to claim?
- ❖ Is there a way my thinking or my actions need to change?

- Create a notebook on the character of God; this is called a *Biography of God*. You simply read the Bible and seek to answer the question: *What do I know about my God?* (A study guide and book by Mardi Collier by this title are available.)
- Study the names of God.
- Study different aspects of God's character (His attributes) in depth (e.g., His omniscience, omnipresence). (Ken Collier's *Renewing Guide* is one possible resource.)

- Study the character of God. (*Knowing Your God* study guide by Pat Berg is available.)
- Choose a Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John) to read through. Look for one specific truth about Christ as you read (topics listed below). Keep a notebook of everything you learn about Christ in that specific area. As you study the life of Jesus, consider how you can be more like Christ—applying what you learn to your personal life.
 - ❖ How did Jesus spend His time?
 - ❖ How did Jesus treat others? With whom did He associate?
 - ❖ How was Jesus an example of a servant?
 - ❖ How did Jesus demonstrate humility? What did Jesus teach about pride and humility?
 - ❖ What did Jesus teach that He wants me to do in my life?
 - ❖ What characteristics did Jesus have that I should have in my life?

- ❖ What does Jesus hate? What does Jesus love?
 - ❖ What did Jesus have to say about my relationships (to Him and others)?
 - ❖ What did Jesus say about Himself? What did He say about His relationship to the Father?
 - ❖ What do we have in Jesus? What has He given to me? What is He to me?
- Study the "I Am" statements of Christ (John 4:26; John 6:35; John 7:37, 38; John 8:12, 23, 58; John 9:5; John 10:7, 11, 36; John 11:25; John 13:13; John 14:6; John 15:1; Revelation 1:8, 17).
 - Study through the Epistles. Make a list of everything you have "in Christ."
 - Study 1 Corinthians 13. (A study guide by Ken Collier is available.)
 - Read through the New Testament, marking all of the references to prayer. Catalog the references in a journal. Apply what you learn to your life.
 - Read through Jeremiah marking any reference to pride (in word, action, or thought) in one color and any reference to humility (in word, action, or thought) in a contrasting color. Catalogue the references in a journal. Consider which characteristics you display in your life.
 - Do a biographical study on different characters in the Bible (e.g., Joseph, Ruth, Daniel).
 - ❖ What can I learn about God from their lives and circumstances (Joseph's God, Ruth's God, etc.)?
 - ❖ Record what *they* knew and believed about God and how that affected their lives.
 - ❖ What can I learn from observing their lives (situation/reaction/outcome)?
 - Do a word study on an area of needed growth in your life.
 - ❖ Use an exhaustive concordance such as Strong's or Young's to find many references to that word.
 - ❖ Study verses on a particular topic that you especially struggle with (i.e., selfishness, joy, contentment, trust, complaining, serving, the "one anothers," prayer, pride/humility, the tongue, praise). Answer the question, *What does God say about this issue?* Record what God teaches you and how you will change.
 - ❖ Work on getting to the "heart" of your spiritual struggle with *The Renewing Guide* by Ken Collier.

Kelly Collier is the wife of Matt Collier, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church in Brevard, North Carolina, and director of CampsAbroad, the missions arm of The Wilds Christian Camp. Kelly had the privilege of traveling with Matt for many years to help establish and assist camps all over the world. She enjoys helping with the counseling needs at The Wilds and is also involved with the ladies' ministries in her local church.



*This Bible study method is taken from Chapter 9, "Getting the Word into You," in *A Place of Quiet Rest* by Nancy Leigh DeMoss.

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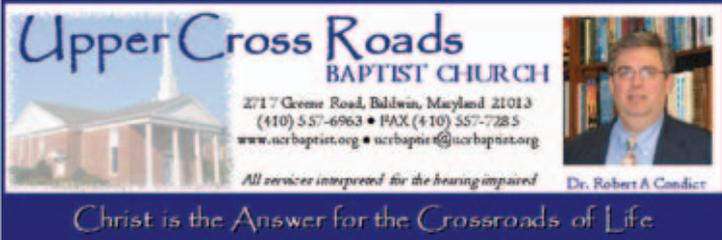
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Those who indulge their appetite too much on a Sabbath are fitter to sleep on a couch than pray in a temple.
—Thomas Watson

The modern world is full of lawless little men and mad little movements.
—G. K. Chesterton

To worship God vicariously through the medium of program is ineffective. There must be heart-to-heart communication daily.
—Raymond Kitchen

Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength.
—John Wesley

The great tragedy of life is not unanswered prayer, but unoffered prayer.
—F. B. Meyer

It is sheer nonsense for us to imagine that we can learn the high art of getting guidance through communion with the Lord without being willing to set aside time for it. It is no accident that the Bible speaks of prayer as a form of waiting on God.
—Paul Rees

Prayer is the one approach that can transform drudgery into doxology.
—William VanderHoven

Christ went more readily *ad crucem* [to the cross] than we to the throne of grace.
—Thomas Watson

It hath ever been the manner and posture of God's servants, when . . . they pray, to do it on their knees. Never tell me of a humble heart where I see a stubborn knee.
—Thomas Adams

First worship God. He that forgets to pray bids not himself good-morrow or good-day.
—Thomas Randolph

It is only when men begin to worship that they begin to grow.
—Calvin Coolidge

Behind every work of God you will always find some kneeling form.
—Dwight L. Moody

The desire after God and holiness is back of all real spirituality, and when that desire becomes dominant in the life, nothing can prevent us from having what we want.
—A. W. Tozer

The Infinite and the Eternal are as essential for man as the little planet on which he dwells.
—Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Everyone has a first love, present tense. —Bill Popejoy

Compiled by Dr. David Atkinson, pastor of Dyer Baptist Church, Dyer, Indiana.



Regional Fellowships

Chesapeake Bay Regional Fellowship



The Chesapeake Bay Region of the FBFI met on November 12 and 13, 2012, hosted by the Upper Cross Roads Baptist Church in Baldwin, Maryland. Dr. David Innes, FBFI board member and pastor of the Hamilton Square Baptist Church in San Francisco, California, was the keynote speaker. Those who joined for the fellowship were blessed as Dr. Innes shared from his extensive work on Biblical Fundamentalism. He provided workbooks for each of the participants and heart-stirring teaching as well. Those attending were also blessed by the preaching ministries of Dan Fox, Faith Bible Church in Elkrigde, Maryland; Dr. Kent Ramler, Peoples Baptist Church in Frederick, Maryland; and Tobe Witmer, Lighthouse Baptist Church in Newark, Delaware.

In addition to the fellowship around God's Word, the group enjoyed an afternoon at the inner harbor of Baltimore, Maryland, and a tour of the historical buildings related to Jewish immigration and worship in downtown Baltimore.

New Mexico Regional Fellowship



Pastor Dan Mauldin and the people of Grace Baptist Church in Farmington hosted the **New Mexico Regional Fellowship** on October 22 and 23, 2012. Thirteen pastors representing New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah attended. They were encouraged by the preaching and fellowship and even discussed the possibility of meeting more than once each year. Dr. Ron Ehmann, the director of Northwest Baptist Missions, was the keynote speaker. Dr. Ehmann's travel as director and his experience as a church planter were valuable assets as he spoke to the group.

Northern California Regional Fellowship



The **Northern California Regional Fellowship** was held at the Grace Baptist Church in Sonora, California, on November 15 and 16, 2012. Forty-nine attendees traveled in from several "Nor Cal" cities, including San Francisco, Antioch, Fairfield, Marina, Pleasant Hill, Stockton, Los Banos, Campbell, Fremont, Hollister, Delano, Plymouth, Loomis, and Castro Valley.

Dr. Marty Marriott, the president of Maranatha Baptist Bible College in Wisconsin, was the primary speaker. Other speakers included Dale Whiting, a businessman and investment advisor from Des Moines, Iowa, and Brent Snow, pastor of the Cornerstone Baptist Church in Pleasant Hill, California. Miriam Marriott also led two different workshops for the ladies. The delegates received great encouragement and instruction as each speaker addressed the practical theme "The Pastor's Family, Friends, and Finances."

Besides the wonderful fellowship and the forming of new friendships, the delegates also enjoyed the relaxing pace and small-town charm of Sonora, an historic gold rush town in the Sierra Nevada Mountains near Yosemite National Park.



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How Important Is My Thinking?



When I first started this study, I was actually having fun finding new verses on all of the facets that make up the character of God. It was a wonderfully eye-opening project, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. After a couple of years, though, I saw that not only was it a special study but also it was changing me in ways that I hadn't even realized. Before I share more about my Bible study idea, I want to give a little of my testimony so that you might better understand my background.

I was not raised in a Christian home. My mom was a devoted stay-at-home mother, but she did not attend church. My dad was a non-practicing Catholic and a career army master sergeant. Because he was a gourmet cook, his job in the army was to manage the officers' or noncommissioned officers' club, which is like a country club. He was a kind, likeable, and generous man, but he was also a habitual drinker and a compulsive gambler. Dad was rarely at home, but when he was, he and Mom often had marital problems. Along with all of the normal military moving, we temporarily left my father a number of times throughout my growing-up years.

When I was in the eighth grade, we returned to the States, and my baby Christian mother began to wonder if maybe we should be attending church somewhere. Graciously, God directed us to a Bible-teaching church. It was there that Mom began to grow and serve. And it was there that I was saved at the age of thirteen during evangelistic services.

I don't believe in using my background as an excuse for sin, but not being raised with the basics of the Christian faith as a child, I have seen that I have a lot of wrong ideas and thinking ingrained in my mind. Unless I am constantly meditating on God's Word and allowing it to change me, I will be guilty of wrong thinking and of being swayed by my feelings.

I have a dear friend, Pat, whose husband underwent an unexpected open-heart surgery at the age of forty-six. I called her before the surgery to ask how I could pray, and she gave me the most amazing answer. I probably would have asked prayer for Ken to come through the surgery safely and successfully or that it wouldn't be as bad as they thought or for wisdom and strength for the doctors. Instead her response was, "Mardi, pray that I'll think right." She just wanted to trust God and glorify Him no matter what course He chose for them to follow—even if He chose to take her husband home to Heaven.

That really made an impression on me, and I realized how often we, as women, don't "think right." We tend either to believe Satan's lies about God or operate according to our feelings rather than believe the truth that God's Word tells us about our God. That's when we get into trouble. God wants us to "think Bible" instead of doing whatever we feel like doing or responding according to whatever mood we're in. He wants us to know Him so well that we can think about Him and then respond to a situation according to what we know about Him.

Dr. Amy Knicely has a little saying about controlling one's thoughts that has been helpful to me: "You do what you do, and you say what you say, because you think what you think." When I shared this statement with Ken, he added something that has further helped me: "You do what you do, and you say what you say, because you think what you think; and you think what you think because you believe what you believe about God, His Word, and yourself." It is vital that we know God and what He says in His Word so that we can think the way that He wants us to think and then please Him in what we do and in what we say.

One of the newer categories in my notebook is **My God wants me to “think right.”** I was surprised at the number of verses on the mind, thinking, and thoughts, as well as the wonderful passages that help me to think right. It’s obvious that God knows we struggle with wrong thinking. Many of these verses point us back to the importance of knowing our God.

Isaiah 26:3, 4: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever.”

Philippians 2:5: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

Have you noticed that all of us have struggles, sinful tendencies, blind spots, areas of weakness, and strongholds (summed up in the word *sin*) in our lives that we have a hard time getting victory over? In his book *Changed into His Image*, Jim Berg says, “Our biggest problem . . . is not the environment in which we have been reared; it is not the evil that has been done to us by others; it is not the limitations that we feel so acutely. Our biggest problem is a heart that wants its own way in opposition to God’s way.” Isaiah 53:6 clearly points this out: *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.*

For many years I was an “up-and-down person”—happy-happy one day and down in the dumps the next. It was also my tendency to overreact or fall apart in response to a circumstance or situation that wasn’t according to my plan. My tongue can get me into trouble when I am critical, opinionated, negative, or judgmental. I could confess numerous other sins, but in short, when I do things “Mardi’s way,” I can be a real rascal.

I am finding that the more I learn about my God, the more I see the real me. As I focus on what God says about Himself in His Word, the Holy Spirit is slowly and kindly pointing out my sinful ways and wrong thinking and showing me that I need to change. It’s not a pretty picture, but how much better it is to deal with it now instead of having to answer for it when I stand before God someday.

I cannot study God without seeing myself in comparison to Him.

- As I see His greatness, I see my smallness. (My God is great.)
- As I see His control, I see my inability. (My God is in control.)
- As I see His strength, I see my weakness. (My God is strong.)
- As I see His holiness, I see my sinfulness. (My God is holy.)
- As I see His power, I see my helplessness. (My God is powerful.)
- As I see His righteousness, I see my disobedience. (My God is righteous.)
- As I see His humility and submission, I

see my pride. (My God wants me to be a servant like Jesus.)

- As I see His giving heart, I see my stinginess or thoughtlessness. (My God is giving.)
- As I see His wisdom, I see my foolishness. (My God is all-wise.)

He is God! I am not. Ken once read a quote in a Sunday school class that made me smile and has a lot of truth in it: “There is a God in Heaven, and you ain’t Him.” I am the one who must change to become more and more like Jesus. Jim Berg says that God “has made us dependent by design and must humble us. . . . There can be no Biblical change without [humility].” As I get to know God, He humbles me, and I see how fruitless and useless it is to try to live life in my own strength and how utterly dependent I must be on Him.

Even after more than twelve years of almost daily using my notebook full of Scripture to get to know God, I know that I have just barely seen the tip of the iceberg. Knowing God should be an ongoing lifelong study for all of us as we strive to grow in our relationship to Him and seek to bring glory to Him! Our God is so awesome that any study of Him is inexhaustible.

Mardi Collier is a wife, mother, and grandmother who enjoys serving alongside her husband, Ken, the president of The Wilds Christian Camp and Conference Center. She supervises the camp Craft Shop, is involved with the ladies’ ministries in her local church, and enjoys the privilege of speaking to women about topics that concern them.



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Establishing Long Lasting . . . Devotional Habits

(Continued from page 7)

Each book in God's Book has its specific goal and point of emphasis. If we were to play a matching game, what book of the Bible would you match with the following questions or statements?

- Who is the visible icon of the invisible God?
- How can we live a Christ-centered life in a self-centered world?
- What is the fourfold secret of outrageous, contagious joy?
- What do you do if you feel rejected, ridiculed, and misunderstood?
- What does God say about truth, love, and forgiveness?
- What is God's view of truth, love, and obedience?
- What is God's mind on truth, love, and discernment?
- What do truth and love have to do with apostates?
- Is there a written guidebook to spiritual maturity?
- What does God think about my sin?
- What does God look like?

Man ruined his life with sin; God's remedy is Jesus Christ. How can I spend my life thanking God for what He has done for me?

Remember, there are many good and even great habits that can help us handle the stresses of life, but none can claim true "life-change" like the habit of daily spending time with God in His Word. Habits, whether good or bad, are long-lasting, life-impacting, heart-revealing actions that prove to you, others, and God what is really important in your life. So, what is important to you? What is so important that you would be willing to set aside an hour a day to study, learn, think about?

Is your relationship with God important enough to you to establish a consistent, devotional habit?



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Pro-Life Equals Misogyny

Laurel Broten, who is Ontario's Minister of Education, stated that publically funded Catholic schools would no longer be able to teach that abortion is wrong. Such teaching, in her opinion "amounts to misogyny." As such it is prohibited by the nation's anti-bullying law.

The law to which she referred (Bill 13) states that schools must provide "a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting, regardless of race ancestry, place of origin, color, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability." This same bill demands that all publically funded schools (including Catholic institutions) form "gay-straight alliances."

This article can be referenced at *The New American*, November 5, 2012, p. 8.

Giglio and Inaugural Prayers

Pastor Lou Giglio had been scheduled to offer a prayer at President Obama's January inauguration. That is, until bloggers found that Giglio preached a sermon in the mid 1990s stating that Christians should "lovingly but firmly respond to the aggressive agenda of not all, but many in the homosexual community."

In the ensuing firestorm Giglio wrote the president and withdrew his name from involvement in the inauguration. Addie Whisenant, the spokes-

woman for the inaugural committee stated, "As we now work to select someone to deliver the benediction, we will ensure their beliefs reflect this administration's vision of inclusion and acceptance of all Americans." Apparently the desire to reflect both the strength and diversity of our nation no longer includes anyone who does not agree with this administration's policies.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/obama-inauguration-committee-to-replace-louie-giglio-with-pro-gay-pastor-88066/>.

National Cathedral Sponsored Perversion

The National Cathedral belongs to the Episcopal Church's diocese of Washington, DC. The Very Rev. Gary Hall, dean of the National Cathedral, announced in January that the cathedral would be performing same-sex weddings. In July of 2012 the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops voted to sanction same-sex union, calling the rite "The Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant." The measure was approved there by a vote of 111 in favor of and 41 negative votes. To be fully ratified it needed to pass the TEC's House of Deputies. There it received 78 percent of the laity vote and 76 percent of the clergy vote.

In his announcement Hall stated, "We enthusiastically affirm each person as a beloved child of God and doing so means including the full participation of gays and lesbians in the life

of this spiritual home for the nation."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/washington-national-cathedral-to-perform-same-sex-weddings-87978/>.

In ___ We Trust

West Marion Elementary School in Mc Dowell County, North Carolina, planned a November 8th Veterans Day Ceremony. A first grade girl wrote a poem in honor of her grandfather who served during the Vietnam War. In that poem she wrote, "He prayed to God for peace, he prayed to God for strength." When one parent complained about the mention of God in the poem, the first grader was forced to remove the lines before reading her poem.

The rationalization for the action was stated thus: "We wanted to make sure we were upholding the school district's responsibility of separation of church and state from the Establishment Clause."

Many local residents lined up to support the girl and to decry the school's actions.

This article can be referenced at *The New American*, January 7, 2013, p. 6.

Christian Receives Court Support

Last year, *FrontLine* reported about the case regarding expelled Eastern Michigan University graduate student Julea Ward. Her offense was the referral of a homosexual patient to another counselor. The penalty was expulsion from the graduate program in which

she was participating.

Arguments were heard in the 6th US Court of Appeals regarding the validity of her expulsion. The court responded in its written decision, "What exactly did Ward do wrong in make the referral request? If one thing is clear after three years of classes, it is that Ward is acutely aware of her own values. The point of the referral request was to *avoid* imposing her values on gay and lesbian clients. And the referral request not only respected the diversity of practicum clients, but it also conveyed her willingness to counsel gay and lesbian clients about other issues—all but relationship issues—an attitude confirmed by her equivalent concern about counseling heterosexual clients about extra-marital sex and adultery in a values-affirming way."

Instead of continuing their defense, EMU settled with a payment that will cost their insurance company \$75,000. Yet the school would boast that the settlement left all "policies, programs, and curricular requirement" intact.

Read more at <http://www.wnd.com/2012/12/university-pays-for-expelling-christian/#X2sy6CXdt0Vw1Hy8.99>.

Red Letter Vision

Tony Campolo, professor emeritus of Eastern University, challenged a crowd recently in the "Following the Call of the Church in Times like These" conference. The theme of his teaching is that younger Christians are moving away from

NOTABLE QUOTES

doctrinal teaching of the Epistles in favor of living out the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels.

“As young people are forcing us to shift to the red letters of the Bible—to the words of Jesus highlighted in red—the first thing we have to deal with is the Kingdom of God,” Campolo said. “This has incredible ramifications, because the Kingdom of God stands in opposition to the kingdoms of this world.”

Campolo claims that doctrine still is important, but by living out “kingdom principles” Christians become more focused on the here and now.

This article can be referenced at http://www.abpnews.com/faith/theology/item/8126-campolo-sees-future-%E2%80%99red-letter%E2%80%99-church#.UPCT_6yCWS0.

Teen Girls and Binge Drinking

According to a recent report from the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention), an estimated one in five high school girls participates in binge drinking. Binge drinking is defined as four drinks in one sitting for girls and five drinks in one sitting for boys.

Over half of the estimated 23,000 annual deaths that impact our teen girls result from binge drinking. Fifty percent of alcohol consumed by adults is consumed while binge drinking. That number rises to ninety percent when describing the habits of teenagers. Sixty-two percent of high school senior girls who acknowledged using alcohol also acknowledged that it involved binge drinking.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.religiontoday.com/blog/cdc-one-in-five-high-school-girls-binge-drink.html>.

School Prayer Revisited

Indiana State Senator Dennis Kruse introduced

It is very easy to trust in God when there is no difficulty, but that is not trust at all. It is simply letting the mind rest in a complacent mood. But when there is sickness in the house, when there is trouble, when there is death, where is our trust in God? The clearest evidence that God’s grace is at work in our hearts is that we do not get into panics.—Oswald Chambers

The word of God is His perfect message to men. If that be spurned, He has nothing more to say to them until they meet Him in judgment. Wherever that word is proclaimed, it puts those who hear it in the place of responsibility such as they never knew before. The light shines from the word. If they refuse its testimony, they prove that they love darkness rather than light. That word contains all that is necessary to show the way of life. Moses and the prophets all spake of Him. But in the New Testament we have the full-orbed revelation of Him who has come in grace to seek and to save the lost. He who believes finds deliverance. He who turns away will perish in his sins.—H. A. Ironside

It is easier to belong to a coterie (small exclusive group) which tells what Jesus Christ has done for me, easier to become a devotee to divine healing, or to a special type of sanctification or to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Paul did not say, “Woe is me if I do not preach what Christ has done for me,” but “Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!” This is the gospel—“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”—Oswald Chambers

It can be summed up in a phrase—watch your strength. Not so much your weaknesses: it is your strengths you have to watch, the things at which you excel, your natural gifts and aptitudes. They are the ones that are most likely to trip you because they are the ones that will tempt you to make a display and pander to self.—D. Martin Lloyd-Jones

If I am a child of God, distress will lead me to Him for direction. The distress comes not because I have done wrong, it is part of the inevitable result of not being at home in the world, of being in contact with those who reason and live from a different standpoint.—Oswald Chambers

legislation this year that “allows the governing body of a school corporation or the equivalent authority of a charter school to provide for the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer at the beginning of each school day.” This bill is labeled SB 251.

The authority for recitation will lie with the governing board of the school, and children will be allowed to opt out if they or their parents so desire.

Read more at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/ind-legislator-introduces-bill-putting-lords-prayer-into-public-schools-88052/#Yv54vziy7hmpVJC.99>.

Faith on Capitol Hill

The Pew Forum has done some extensive research on the stated denominational preferences of the members of the 113th Congress. Comparisons were made with previous Congresses and trends discussed. The last ten years have presented a number of firsts. America elected its first Buddhists in 2006. There are three in the 113th Congress. The first Muslim was elected in 2006. There is still only one Muslim in Congress. Eleven members of Congress demonstrated no religious preference, but this year provided the first to ever have no religion at all. Protestants still make up the majority of elected officials, at 56 percent. The list of Protestants, however, is rather broad. Catholics made the largest advance this year, gaining six seats.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.pewforum.org/Government/Faith-on-the-Hill--The-Religious-Composition-of-the-112th-Congress.aspx>.

Compiled by Robert Condict, FBF1 Executive Board member and pastor of Upper Cross Roads Baptist Church, Baldwin, Maryland.

Newsworthy is presented to inform believers. The people or sources mentioned do not necessarily carry the endorsement of the FBF1.

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What Kind of Friends Do You Have? (Part 2)

In the last article we examined the wrong kind of friends and the devastation they bring with their ungodly counsel. Now I want to address the matter of the right kind of friends that we should have. May I state that a person is wealthy if he has friends? One of the greatest blessings in our ministry is the friendships we have built across America and on foreign fields. The same will be true in your life; your greatest blessings will come from the friends you build around your life. Let's take a look at the characteristics of a true friend.

First, true friends will encourage you. In the Old Testament David had a friend named Jonathan. In 1 Samuel we find that David's life was threatened by Jonathan's father, King Saul, and that David was hiding from him. Jonathan knew of the danger David was in and went to him for the purpose of encouraging him in this critical hour. First Samuel 23:16 says, "And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God." The word "strengthened" means to encourage. He encouraged David to trust in the Lord, and what a comfort this must have been to David. Jonathan also told David that the Lord was going to make him king over Israel and not himself—this kind of friend is rare! Jonathan was not a self-ambitious friend; he was a friend who wanted David to know that God was going to promote and bless him as king over Israel. I have friends who have been nothing but an unusual encouragement to me; what they have done for me is too precious even to write on paper, and they have enriched my life by their kindness and respect for my ministry.

Second, a true friend will deepen your walk with the Lord. Proverbs 27:17 says, "Iron sharpeneth iron: so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." When we have conversations about the things of the Lord

with another person who loves and walks with the Lord, he will sharpen our understanding of the Word of God. There is a Chinese proverb that states, "A single conversation across the table with a wise man is worth a month's study of books."

After I started out in evangelism, Pastor Dale Simpson in Winter Haven, Florida, had me in his church for meetings for nineteen straight years. We had wonderful meetings with him, and we will never forget our times there. However, the greatest blessing to me was the fact that every year when I would go there, Pastor Simpson would call me into his office and share with me what he had learned from the Scriptures. He was like a child in a candy store! The excitement he had for desiring more of the sweetness of God's Word was contagious. His walk with God encouraged me in my walk with Him; his knowledge of the Word encouraged me to know more of the Word. Proverbs 27:9 says, "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel." It should be our desire to also encourage our friends in the things of the Lord.

Last, a true friend will aid you in your walk with the Lord. Proverbs 18:24 says, "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly." It has been my observation that the people who have most impacted my life were friends who exhorted me to give more of my life and energy in serving the Lord. I have known many pastors and laymen who have been so gracious and generous to me that there is a special gratitude in my heart for them. For those friends who have impacted your life, why don't you contact them and express the gratitude you have for their friendship?

Evangelist Jerry Sivnksty may be contacted at PO Box 141, Starr, SC 29684 or via e-mail at evangjsivn@aol.com.

I have gone through the January 2012 issue of *FrontLine* magazine. The articles are very encouraging. I am a graduate of People's Baptist Bible College in Trivandrum. I am a Sunday school teacher of the local church in Trivandrum. I would like to get the issues regularly.

*Mr. V. J. Jacob
Kerala, INDIA*

I have a friend who lives in Phoenix and is looking for a good church. I was looking at *FrontLine* magazine and noticed Northwest Valley Baptist Church (Dr. Kevin Schaal) in Glendale. What is your opinion of this church? The Lord has been working in my friend's heart and he is close to accepting Christ.

*George Opalak
Simpsonville, SC*

Editor: Northwest Valley is an excellent church. The pastor, Dr. Kevin Schaal, is a long-time friend, did his internship at Faith Baptist Church (Taylors, South Carolina) many years ago, and is the Chairman of the Board of FBFI. I have preached there many times. Great people. I highly recommend it.

My family and my students at Bob Jones Memorial Bible College (Philippines) have been greatly blessed by *FrontLine*. I bind each year's volume of magazines and put them in our college library and then require students to read articles. Our thanks go to all the staff of the magazine, as well as the many fine writers. The Lord is using you all in wonderful ways.

*Doug Bachorik
Bob Jones Memorial College
Philippines*

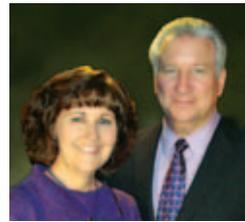


Ron and Kim Smith are missionaries with Armed Forces Baptist Missions. Ron serves as the chaplain for the Edwards Air Force Base in California. He and his family praise the Lord for the opportunity for him to run the coffee shop on the military base on Friday nights. He praises the Lord for freedom to share the gospel as well as for fruit from his ministry with the soldiers there.

Johnny and Barbara Daniels serve the Lord in Puerto Rico. Dr. Daniels is the pastor of Calvary Baptist Tabernacle. He is also the head of Calvary Baptist Tabernacle Ministries. Their ministries include a Christian school for kindergarten-through-college-age students and another ministry to the deaf community in the Caribbean area. The Lord has



burdened Pastor Daniels's heart to have Bible institutes in the countries where Calvary's graduates and national pastors live.



Jerry and Linda Craven are missionaries to New Zealand under Gospel Fellowship Association. They are thankful for the growth of their church family. Two Romanian families drive one hour one way to attend their church. Linda enjoys having a weekly Bible study with one of the Romanian ladies. Several church families enjoy hosting activities of an evangelistic or discipleship nature.

Bob and Joyce Landis lead a ministry called "Make a Timothy Today" (MTT). Bob has a burden to disciple missions-minded young people and to help prepare them for missionary service by taking several young men and women at a time on short-term mission trips to different places in the world. During the spring and summer months of 2012 they traveled thirteen thousand miles with teams to New York City, the Western United States, and Canada. Most recently, a team ministered through the Christmas holidays in Antigua.



Joel and Alice Korver faithfully travel to different mission fields helping other missionaries with construction projects. Recently their ministries took Joel to Peru to assist young missionaries; to Bolivia to assist veteran missionaries; to Yap, Micronesia, to help build a church building; and to Puerto Rico to design and build a new building. The Korvers can be reached at korveroutreach@juno.com.

Gary Small is the retired pastor of Liberty Fundamental Baptist Church of Lynden, Washington. He and his wife, **Annetta**, are the founders of a new ministry, Serving Our Servants Ministry. SOS encourages pastors and their families and church families. The Smalls desire to provide help in any way that they can, especially through furlough relief, short-term help, preaching, and visitation. Contact the Smalls at servingourservants@comcast.net.



Supporting the Chaplaincy

As a Department of Defense-approved Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agency, FBFI serves our fifty-three chaplains in all branches of the US Military and various civilian agencies. In addition, we actively recruit new chaplains, especially through the efforts of Chaplain Recruiter Dr. Bob Ellis. Backing him up are other FBFI leaders who promote the chaplaincy and counsel young men who are interested in learning more about the chaplaincy.

Dr. John Vaughn regularly attends the graduation ceremonies of our chaplains from training courses, such as CH-BOLC, the Chaplains Basic Officers Leadership Course, conducted at the joint service Chaplains School, Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Since Fort Jackson is just over two hours from the FBFI Home Office in Taylors, South Carolina, the drive to and from the Chaplains School House, as it is called, provides an effective opportunity to mentor young men interested in chaplaincy. Recently, BJU seminary student Evan Charles accompanied Dr. Vaughn to Columbia. Others are invited to take an orientation trip. Interested young men should contact the Home Office at info@fbfi.org.



Chaplains School Graduation



Graduates Chaplain Kevin Caldwell and Chaplain Matt Ortega

feed an army!) Our two graduates were Kevin Caldwell and Matt Ortega. Both of these men have distinguished themselves as chaplains and leaders. A church planter in Utah, Chaplain Ortega serves with the Utah National Guard and received the Iron Chaplain Award for his top performance in physical fitness. Chaplain Caldwell brought with him to Fort Jackson a reputation earned as a Michigan State Trooper prior to adding Army Reserve Chaplain to his duties.

Fellowship

One of the primary ministries of FBFI is fellowship. At our meetings, fellowship is planned into the schedule, but the best fellowship is spontaneous. Pictured here are four Army chaplains and one police chaplain enjoying



CH (1LT) Matt Ortega, Evan Charles, CH (1LT) Drew Paul, CH (COL) Joe Willis, Dr. John Vaughn, CH (1LT) Kevin Caldwell

some spontaneous fellowship after an event at the School House. (If you have never been to Five Guys Burgers, our chaplains will tell you they serve enough French fries to



In the Line of Fire

In May 2009 Chaplain Caldwell had just finished a seminary class at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary when he noted that just in front of his personal vehicle was a local police cruiser. Suddenly, both officers heard repeated gunfire in a nearby neighborhood. Swinging into the neighborhood, the lead officer sustained fire, exited his patrol car, and was severely wounded—struck over thirty times by the heavy shot of several shotgun blasts. Trooper Caldwell left his vehicle and under fire was able to secure his fellow officer and move him behind an adjacent low wall where he rendered first aid until another officer arrived. Both Trooper Caldwell and the arriving officer loaded the shot officer into the arriving patrol vehicle and the two departed shortly to the local emergency room. As Caldwell was the only officer on scene at this time and feared

the gunman would emerge from his home to harm others, he borrowed the injured officer's AR-15 duty rifle as he loaded him into the patrol vehicle. Together with his own service weapon, Caldwell returned back into the fight and endured a three-hour gun battle with the suspect. Trooper Caldwell was fired on multiple times and several rounds from the gunman struck all around him, but he was not shot. In the meantime multiple officers from many local agencies arrived; Caldwell was on the inner circle of the perimeter and could not move from his location. Eventually the suspect was killed by gunfire, and officers breached the now silent fortress. Caldwell was retrieved from his location in an armored vehicle. Published and televised accounts reported that the shooter had armed himself with an arsenal of nearly forty weapons and a large cache of ammunition.

As reported by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) (<http://www.nleomf.org/officers/month/otm-archive/june-2010-officer-of-the.html>, accessed 01.02.13), Trooper Caldwell received the Michigan State Police Bravery Award, one of the department's highest honors, for his actions in the May 2009 incident. The article states, "That was just the latest recognition for the 11-year law enforcement veteran. He was named

2010 Trooper of the Year for the First District and also has received Lifesaving Awards from both the Michigan State Police and Mothers Against Drunk Driving." A humbling video testimony by Trooper Caldwell, "Gunfight on the



Way Home from Church," came from an interview with *Police, the Law Enforcement Magazine*. In that interview Caldwell explains that he has since added Reserve Army Chaplain to his ministry resumé.

Located in Washington, DC, NLEOMF "is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring the service and sacrifice of America's law enforcement officers. The NLEOMF Officer of the Month Program began in September 1996 and recognizes federal, state and local officers who distinguish themselves through exemplary law enforcement service and devotion to duty." During National Police Week in May 2011 Caldwell was honored at a special awards luncheon in Washington. His story was also featured in the Memorial Fund's 2012 calendar.

During our time of fellowship after Chaplains Ortega and Caldwell graduated from CH-BOLC on December 14, Chaplain Caldwell humbly shared the story with us. We rejoiced with him to learn that the Colonel of the Michigan State Police has placed him in charge of the chaplaincy program for the state department. In that capacity Chaplain Caldwell recruits, trains, and supervises the chaplains of the Michigan State Police. Since that appointment Caldwell has finished his MDiv, received the Medal of Honor from Michigan's governor, and has been promoted to the rank of sergeant within the state police. Caldwell has been recently assigned to the 406th Combat Sustainment Battalion in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he is the sole chaplain for 1200 soldiers.

A Special Note

FrontLine received the following note from Chaplain Jeff Campa.

During the week of October 8 Amy and I received a letter from Pastor Ken Endean of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Scarborough, Maine. Through it they let us know that the church had prayed for each of us specifically as well as for my ministry as an Army Chaplain. He had included a copy of Cornerstone's weekly prayer bulletin, which listed us and our ministry. Each year we receive a similar letter (or two) from FBFI churches around the country, and usually a birthday card as well.

These notes, cards, and letters are all very encouraging and remind us of the network of support and accountability provided through the FBFI.



CH (CPT) Jeff & Amy Campa with their dog Lambeau



Continued on next page

This letter stands out for several reasons. First, Pastor Endean and Cornerstone had no idea that the week Amy and I received the letter was the scheduled Battle Assembly (i.e., "Drill") weekend for my Army Reserve unit. What timing! Second, we had several new soldiers and officers attend our Chapel service. Later that day two of them pulled me aside to discuss how God had really spoken to their hearts through the service. Their testimonies indicated a humble and obedient response to God's Word. Third, the weekend ended on a somber note as we learned that one of our soldiers had passed away from a sudden medical condition. The unexpected shift in ministry focus as the duty day came to a close is a prime example of the need Chaplains have for prayer support.

Each of the cards, notes, and letters we've received from FBFi churches is always an encouragement, but the timing of this one deserves special note. The blessings, challenges, and opportunities that were contained in that one weekend were dealt with through God's grace and the prayers of our faithful "family" in Scarborough.

CH (CPT) Jeff Campa
89th Sustainment Brigade, USAR
Kansas City, MO

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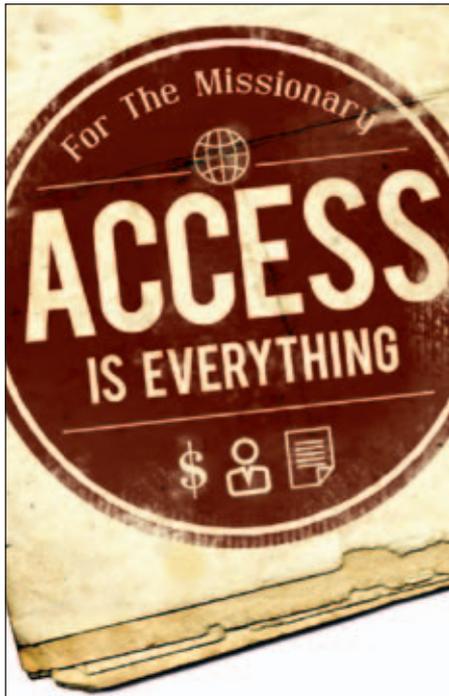
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