

SPRING 2006

# infuse

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**E**very relationship worth having, requires time to develop. The deeper the relationship one desires, the more time given to it. One's relationship with God the Father is no different. It requires that time be spent with Him in prayer and Bible study. There are no shortcuts.

The story of the woman at the well in John 4:1-26 reveals that just as our bodies thirst, so do our souls. The soul needs spiritual food and water. If you find you are a thirsty Christian that feels unfulfilled and empty, it could be you are failing to drink regularly from His Word.

There have been times in my walk with Christ, that I have felt like I was stagnating and thirsting for change. My life was full of worry and it didn't seem like change in my life was happening fast enough. When I began to set-aside regular time for prayer and Bible study, my love for His Word deepened and my heart was transformed. It is easy to look good on the outside, but to change one's heart takes true commitment. In order to conform the heart to the will of God, one needs to have a deeper relationship with Him.

The only way to be transformed is to read and study the Bible, meditate upon it and pray daily. Romans 12:1-2 speaks to this very fact. The following articles discuss the importance of prayer, Bible study, meditation and fasting. It is my prayer that these articles will give you the necessary tools to help motivate you to draw closer to God.

Sincerely,

Noni McVey  
Editor in Chief

Correction to "Consequence or Condemnation" by Dr. Ab Abercrombie, Winter 2005/2006: The first sentence of the second paragraph was edited and not the words of the author. It should read, "As followers of Christ, we can find great comfort in our Savior's words."

**How You Can Contribute  
to the Summer 2006  
Issue of infuse**

We're looking for articles, short stories, artwork, poetry, essays, personal experiences and reviews from you.

**GUIDELINES:** Articles should be approximately 750-1,000 words. Only electronic versions are accepted. Submissions should be centered on the next issue's theme of **The Law of God**.

**DEADLINE:** All submissions must be received by **May 1, 2006**.

If you are interested in contributing to the next issue of **infuse**, contact Noni McVey by writing to [infuse@cgi.org](mailto:infuse@cgi.org) or call 831-625-0231.

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# MEDITATION

... prayer is communicating to God while  
meditation is listening to God.

By Mike James

**M**editation is often confused with prayer,

but although similar, there are differences between the two. I would say the major difference between praying and meditating is, in prayer you are actually talking to God, while in meditation you are just thinking about things.

One scripture that comes to mind is Psalm 5:1-2. In the first verse the writer mentions meditating and in verse two he talks about praying. This could be understood by the fact that meditation is a perfect “segue” into prayer. By thinking about the law and God’s works, we may come up with something we need to talk to God about and that would lead us seamlessly into prayer. I have also heard prayer described as someone communicating to God while meditation is someone listening to God. This would be a good understanding when we look at the scriptures on this topic. Many of the scriptures on meditation address thinking about God’s law and His mighty works. When your mind is focused on God’s law you are in a sense listening to the will of God. Since many of us are more familiar with prayer let’s look at a number of scriptures pertaining to meditation and see what we can learn.

In Hebrew the term for meditate is “Haga.” Haga could mean “growl,” “utter,” “moan,” “meditate,” or “muse.” Another Hebrew word used for meditate is “Sihach” which means to rehearse in one’s mind, contemplate or muse. In Greek the words translated meditate include “Meletao” and “Promelatao.” These words mean “to take care of,” “revolve in one’s mind,” “imagine,” and “premeditate.” The root of both of the Greek words is “Melo,” which means “to be of interest to” or “to concern.” By looking at a number of scriptures that address this subject we can obtain a better grasp of this particular word. In doing so we will be able to determine how meditation differs from praying.

Psalm 77:6 provides us with the idea that meditation is an inwardly focused activity. In verses 11-12 of this same Psalm we have more information that provides us the clue that meditation is thinking about God and His ways. Notice verse 11 states the Psalmist will remember the deeds and miracles of the Lord, then in verse 12 the words meditate and consider seem to be used as synonyms. Notice also Psalm 143:5. Here we read again how the Psalmist

remembers and considers things about God when mention is made of meditation. Rather than a conversation with God this seems to be a thinking process that takes place with God in mind. Meditation can take place during the day or in the evening (Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:2) like prayer. As in Joshua 1 and Psalm 1 the focus of meditation would appear to be God’s law (Psalm 119:15, 48, 99, and 148).

Another item you need to think about before meditating is you will need to be focused and serious about what you are doing. Meditation cannot take place with a cavalier attitude. Notice Psalm 19:14 and Psalm 49:3. In both these scriptures meditation is something that involves your heart (feelings). Therefore there should be some passion or intensity involved in it.

If God wants us to meditate, especially on His law, the question may be asked why? Well, think about it. What you think, you are. If you fill your mind with garbage you will become garbage. If instead you think about God and His law, you will be much more focused on obeying it. When I read the Bible regularly I am more attuned with God’s ways as I function throughout the day. As I meditate on God’s awesome plan the problems or issues I face pale in significance. Worries and concerns of life do not get blown out of proportion because God is with me.

One other form of meditation I’d like to address is Eastern meditation. This is very popular today but it is not the form of meditation that the Bible addresses. In Eastern religions (Buddhism, Hinduism) the focus in meditation is to clear your mind of any thoughts and then to focus on one sound or phrase. Biblical meditation has a firm focus in the God of the Bible and His law and works.

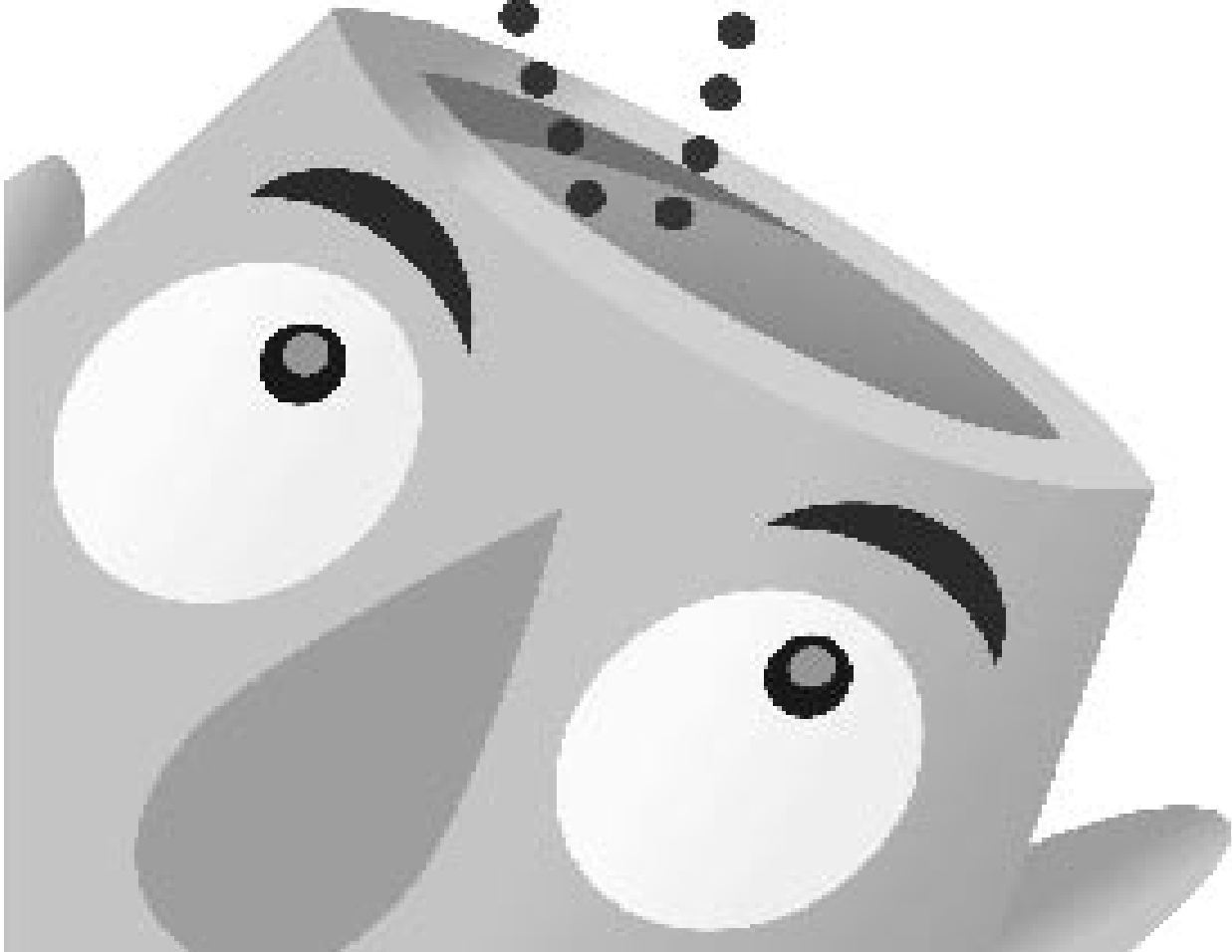
It is probably best to meditate in a quiet place with few distractions. In Genesis 24:63 Isaac went to a field at night to meditate. Psalm 63:6 makes mention of meditating at night. In these ancient cultures night was a much more quiet time than the day. Even though night may be a good time for meditation there is nothing wrong with meditating in the day time.

Regardless of when we meditate, we need to focus on pleasing God in our actions. Along with prayer, fasting, Sabbath observance and Bible study, meditation is another activity that can lead us to a closer relationship with God. **i**

**inf**

**KEEPING  
YOUR INSIDE  
CLEAN**

**BATH, OHIO  
JUNE 16TH-18TH**



# use retreat '06

*"...whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him...  
evil things come from within and defile a man." -Mark 7:18-23*

Come join us as we inquire into the meaning of Mark 7:18-23. If what enters us can't defile us, why do we keep the food laws? How can I control what I think, say and do? We will address these and similar questions this June in Bath, Ohio.

## **SCHEDULE** (subject to change)

### FRIDAY JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup>

6pm: Dinner at Ghent Christian Church  
7pm: Icebreaker  
7:40pm: Scriptures Supporting Food Law by Mike James  
8:25pm: Planning for Infuse at the Feast of Tabernacles

### SATURDAY JUNE 17<sup>TH</sup>

7am: Breakfast at Ghent Christian Church  
8am: Controlling Your Language by Mike James  
9am: Scriptures Used Against the Food Law by Bill Watson  
10am: Free Time  
11am: Church Service  
1:30pm: Potluck Lunch  
2:50pm: Controlling Your Actions by Jeff Reed  
3:55pm: Planning for Infuse at the Feast of Tabernacles  
5:15pm: Free Time  
7:30pm: Activity and Dinner at Summit Mall  
11pm: Return to Hotel

### SUNDAY JUNE 18<sup>TH</sup>

7am: Breakfast at Ghent Christian Church  
8am: Controlling Your Thoughts by Anika Sandy-Hanson  
9am: Health/Nutrition by George James  
10am: Game Addressing Retreat Sessions by Herb Hanson and Anika Sandy-Hanson  
10:40-11:20am: Planning for Infuse of the Future

**To register, contact Mike James at (301) 916-6767. Registration is free. Deadline for registration is May 12th.**

### **RETREAT LOCATION**

Ghent Christian Church  
4200 Granger Rd.  
Bath, Ohio

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

Super 8  
79 Rothrock Road  
I-77 & Route 18, Exit 137A  
Akron, Ohio 44321  
(330) 666-8887

Group Rate: \$50.99/night

Two double beds

To receive the group rate mention the Infuse Retreat arranged by Mike James.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Rides to and from the airports (Akron/Cleveland) to the hotel and meeting hall can be arranged. Please contact Mike James for more information.

### **FOOD**

Friday night dinner at 6pm, Saturday morning breakfast, Saturday afternoon lunch and Sunday morning breakfast will be provided free of charge by the Bath, OH congregation. Saturday night dinner will be at a restaurant.

# Understanding *Prayer*

By Loren M. Chamberlain

There is an abundance of prayer in the Bible; beginning from the time of Seth when we are told, “At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord” (Genesis 4:26) to the culmination of history in Revelation, the people of God pray.

Recorded in the Scriptures are some fifty lengthy prayers in prose sections and several hundred shorter prayers or references to praying. Those who wrote the Scriptures seem far more interested in showing people at prayer than in telling about prayer. Therefore, the Bible shows us *the actual practice of Prayer*. “Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went

home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before” (Daniel 6:10).

## CONVERSATION WITH GOD

Prayer in the Bible is *Conversation* with God. In the Hebrew Scriptures the primary image of prayer is simple *asking*, in a conversational manner. It presupposes that the asker is both humble and expectant. The godly are those who are faithful and devoted to God. David knew that God would hear him when he called and would answer him. “Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for Himself; the Lord will hear when I call to Him” (Psalm 4:3). We too can be confident that God will listen to our prayers and answer us when we call upon Him wholeheartedly.

There are certain primary elements such as speaking, waiting and listening in Biblical prayer, suggesting a tone of conversation face to face with God the Father and Jesus Christ. “I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to Him are radiant; and their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; He saved him out of all his troubles” (Psalm 34:4-6).

David also notes there are times when we must wait on God in prayer. “I waited patiently for the

Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry” (Psalm 40:1). Again, David also describes *calling* out to God and receiving an answer. “In your distress you called and I rescued you, I answered you out of a thundercloud; I tested you at the waters of Meribah *Selah*” (Psalm 81:7).

We must never fall into the trap of thinking that because we have fallen short of God’s high standards for holy living God will not hear us. If we have trusted Christ for salvation, God has forgiven us, and He will listen to our prayers. We have been set apart, Jesus having reconciled us to God, and He loves us. He does hear and He does answer, however, sometimes His answers may not be what we expect or necessarily want. We must always look at our problems in the light of God’s power, instead of looking at God in the shadow of our problems.

We find in the prayer of Abraham for Sodom the elements of ordinary speech and even a persuasive tone. “The men tuned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Then Abraham approached Him and said: Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked alike, Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right” (Genesis 18:22-25). Did Abraham change God’s mind? Of course not! What is more likely is that God changed Abraham’s mind. Abraham knew God is just and that He punishes sin, but he probably had a question about God’s mercy. Abraham seemed to be probing God’s mind to



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*We must always look at our problems in the light of God's power, instead of looking at God in the shadow of our problems.*

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see just how merciful He really was. When he left off his conversation with God he was convinced that God was both kind and fair.

### OUR PRAYING SAVIOR

It was Jesus Himself that models for us the intimate nature of prayer as conversation. He revealed much to us by always referring to God as His Father, using the Aramaic *abba* (an intimate term for "father"), yet this intimacy in no way diminished His sense of God's holiness, and neither should it ours. Except for the time of His crucifixion when He cried out in agony "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*"—that means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46), He always addresses God as Father in prayer and taught His disciples to follow His example. In answer to their request to be taught how to pray, Jesus said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come" (Luke 11:2). This prayer Jesus taught his disciples was not intended to be a formulaic prayer, but rather, it was a "how to" prayer. These were not meant to be magical words prayed like an incantation over and over. It was simply meant to be a pattern for prayer.

### SHARING OF TRUST

When we come before God in prayer we assume the stance of a trusting child and pray with faith that is matched by obedience. God remembers our frailty, reaching out to us and loving us as His children.

God is not impressed with symbols of prayer, such as certain times and postures, bowed heads, closed eyes, folded hands, or a kneeling position. While all are mentioned in relationship to prayer none are absolutely necessary. When Hezekiah prayed for deliverance he took a threatening letter to the temple and "spread it out before the Lord" (Isaiah 37:14).

Whether the prayers were offered

in the Old Testament or the New Testament, all agree the main goal of prayer should be for the power to come to the aid of others. Abraham, Moses, Joshua and Daniel all prayed for the well being of the Israelites, as did all the prophets. The Apostles all prayed for the churches and requested prayer from the churches for their ministry, "Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there" (Romans 15:31). "May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever" (Hebrews 13:20).

Jesus taught His disciples that prayer was never to be used as a means to personal power, but to be used as a way of service to others. Jesus prayed for those seen as a burden such as children. Jesus said, "let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14).

Prayer is quite unique, allowing God's children to take part in two worlds. In Revelation the elders who minister before the Lord hold "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (Revelation 5:8)

Many times our prayers are like inarticulate groans coming from a little child. Only a loving father can listen to our confused complaint and respond to what is deeply wished but not well expressed.

### CONCLUSION

If we take the time to study God's Word, we will come to "know" God is love, and that His will is for our good. His revealed word to us will help us to

*continued on page 12*

## Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire

By James Montgomery

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,  
Unuttered or expressed;  
The motion of a hidden fire  
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear  
The upward glancing of an eye,  
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech  
That infant lips can try;  
The upward glancing of an eye,  
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air,  
His watchword at the gates of death;  
He enters heaven with prayer.

O Thou, by Whom we come to God,  
The Life, the Truth, the Way;  
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod:  
Lord, teach us how to pray!

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,  
Returning from his ways,  
While angels in their songs rejoice  
And cry, "Behold, he prays!"

The saints in prayer appear as one  
In word, in deed, and mind,  
While with the Father and the Son  
Sweet fellowship they find.

No prayer is made by man alone  
The Holy Spirit pleads,  
And Jesus, on th'eternal throne,  
For sinners intercedes.

O Thou by Whom we come to God,  
The Life, the Truth, the Way,  
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod:  
Lord, teach us how to pray.



# CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

By Brian Christensen

This is a popular advertising slogan used by a cellular phone company. In reality, God has the best communications network in the world. It's not digital or analog, but rather, it is Divine. He can hear us anywhere, is always available, and has a third dimension crew. His army is filled with legions of angelic beings, which carry out God's will. Sound far-fetched? Although we cannot see angels or begin to conceptualize the vast network God has, it does not mean they are not there.

We tend to fear Satan and the turmoil he stirs up around the world. This fear begins to eat away at our faith and trust in God. In the Bible, we are told of a time before man when a third of the angels fell to the Earth in support of Satan. "He replied, I saw Satan fall like lightning from Heaven" (Luke 10:18). This is quite a network of demonic beings that devote themselves to fighting God's plan and His people. "Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down" (Revelation 12:10). Fear is one of their greatest weapons. We must overcome that fear and look at the facts. If one third of the angels fell, then two thirds still remain with God. Be comforted by the fact that God outnumbers Satan 2:1! Satan truly has no power over us, unless we allow him to.

We should not wait for a tragic event to communicate with God. Strive to talk to God daily and build a deep relationship with Him and understand His ways. Share your joy, give thanks for your blessings, seek wisdom, and involve God in every aspect of your life. These are some of the many ways you can pray often to draw closer to God. "And pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all saints" (Ephesians 6:18). Be assured he hears you now, and always!

## WHO ANSWERS PRAYER?

As we become closer to God, we begin to understand His awesome plan. This wisdom helps us to trust and contemplate the results of our prayers. God always answers our prayers, even though the answer may not be one we desire or even see. Our relationship with God helps us to realize His will is always done and is always right. The reasons may not be immediate or ever known. We must



have faith in God's ability to read our hearts and trust He will do what is best for us. Our God is a jealous and loving God. He has a massive network of angels available to Him along with His power. Jesus is also there at God's right hand to help us and intercede on our behalf. "Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and He will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels" (Matt. 26:53)? By His teachings, we can learn the ways of our God and deepen our relationship with Him through prayer and study.

## WHO SHOULD WE GO TO FOR HELP?

All too often, people get caught up in the day-to-day activities of life and forsake their relationship with God. Tragedy and desperation will usually push most people toward God and prayer, seeking His help when alone and nowhere else to turn. Unfortunately, this can lead to blame and animosity towards God. It is difficult to accept and trust God's decision when we don't know Him or have a deep understanding of His ways or plan. Many times the trials we face seem overwhelming, leaving us to feel depressed or alone. This is when reinforcements are needed and we should call for help. Our pride will try to prevent this, but don't let it. This is an emotion Satan loves to use as a tool to isolate us from God.

Call someone from God's people, a Minister or a close friend. They may not be able to solve the immediate problem, however, they can help with a very powerful tool for us, prayer. When we gather our Brethren or are anointed by one of God's Ministers, we begin to multiply the effects of our prayer. This will also help tremendously in our feelings of despair. In addition to being comforted, surrounding ourselves with God's people will keep us focused on God and be positive. Support from our Brethren will make us stronger and we will begin to read God's Word, study, and pray more. Our prayer will then become more powerful as it spreads and is multiplied throughout our support network. This will involve more angels and soon an army is formed creating a loud voice to God.

As time passes, we move forward, God's will is done, and we are stronger. Study will deepen our wisdom, however, prayer will deepen our faith. Together, we are saved. Yes, He can hear you now. **i**



# Responding to Your Enemies

By Jeff Reed

I had only been on the job for a few months. I was hired to be an assistant manager and was eager to do a great job for my new employer. My training was not exactly what I had expected, but I felt confident that I could perform my new role effectively. In the restaurant I had been assigned to, I had a friend who had worked with me from my previous job. My general manager did not like him at all. My friend was very arrogant and would sexually harass her and others. She wasn't aggressive or experienced enough to take the correct actions when dealing with his behavior.

My friend was a different person than when I had worked with him before. He was once a very nice, likable young man and treated everyone with respect. He was a fun person and one of the most dependable people I had the opportunity to work with. But he unfortunately had fallen in with the "wrong crowd" and drug abuse changed his character. It was on my third day working in this restaurant that I would have a confrontation with him.

It was the end of his shift and he made himself a sandwich. It was company policy for employees to eat for half price. He placed it in a bag and began to leave. I politely asked him, "Are you going to pay for that sandwich before you leave?"

He replied, "No, I'm just going to take it. I don't ever pay for my food."

I responded, "You can't take food without paying for it. That would be stealing."

"I don't care. Hey, its just one sandwich," he told me as he left with the bag in his hand.

I informed my general manager later that day what had happened and she told me to call him up and fire him. She wanted to get rid of him and this was her chance. I now understand that calling someone on the phone to terminate his employment is not a very professional action. But I was a lot younger then and inexperienced, so I did as my boss asked me to do. I called him up. I explained to him that I was forced to terminate him for stealing. His response was not very positive. In fact,

it was very scary.

He cussed me out pretty fiercely. He used language that I wouldn't dare repeat in this article or in person. He ended his tirade with a very real physical threat on my life. He had now become a very real enemy. His hatred for me was intense.

Although this was probably the first time I made a real enemy, it unfortunately wouldn't be the last. It's strange how we can make enemies even when are trying to do the right things in life. Being a Christian, it is easy to make enemies because we naturally have to stand up for things that are right. Regrettably this Satan-inspired world improperly labels many of those same things as wrong or evil.

For example, if we believe homosexuality is a sin and that those who practice it need to repent, the world labels us homophobic and full of hate. This gives people opportunity to hate us because we trust the Creator. It seems like this attitude toward God's people is becoming more widespread. Because we are Christians, there are

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## Movie Time: CINDERELLA MAN

PG-13

**THEME:** We must pray for our church brothers and sisters.

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 12:1-17

**SYNOPSIS:** Mae walks into church, telling her priest that she's come to pray for her husband, Jim. He responds, "So did they." Mae turns to see the church packed with people.

**GOSPEL FILTER:** This is what it's all about—praying for one another. If we can't take the time as a body of believers to pray for one another, how do we expect to make a serious impact for God's kingdom? Encourage your young people to be transparent—sharing their joys, concerns, and fears so they can bring each other's needs before God in prayer.

**THINK ABOUT IT:**

- Why were all the people there praying? Do you think prayer works? Think about a personal example.
- What's the purpose of prayer anyway? Can we change God's mind? Why or why not?
- Read Acts 12:1-17. Why didn't the disciples believe Peter would be set free? Do you generally expect your prayers to be answered? Why or why not?
- What does this Scripture passage tell us about prayer? About praying for others?
- What prevents us from asking others to pray for us? Will God answer differently depending on prayer? Why or why not?
- How can we get into the habit of praying for one another? How will doing so draw us closer to one another? Closer to God?

# This Is A True Story

Author's name omitted to protect privacy.



A girl, an ordinary carefree eight-year-old girl, went through something that no girl of any age should.

She went to a small charter school in Chandler, Arizona. It was an agricultural school, the first of its kind. So, it taught stuff about farming and animals. It had horses, goats, sheep, an occasional cow, ducks, chickens, geese, a peacock and even a camel once. She had gone there since kindergarten. Nothing bad had happened. Not yet.

At the end of third grade, that's when the trouble started, when the "improper touching" from her math teacher, the principal's husband, started. It only happened once or twice, right before school ended for summer break, so she just pushed it aside. She didn't think much of it.

But when she came back, it happened again. And again, and again and again. She knew it was wrong, not right. And even though he acted like it was innocent, she knew he knew it wasn't. She knew because every time his wife would come by his classroom, he would stop.

It's not like she wanted it to happen. She would forget something or be last out and he'd call her back. He would start and she'd make an excuse to leave. She didn't tell anyone. Not her parents because she thought they would get angry. Why, she had no idea. She couldn't tell her friends because her best friend was the teacher's daughter. The only person she told was her sister because she just had to tell someone.

After it had been happening a while, she found out that it wasn't just happening to her. It was happening to a few of her friends. They didn't tell the teacher's daughter but she found out anyhow. She told them that he did it to her but he was only showing his affection. She said it was innocent. But none of them believed her.

One day, the girl's sister ended

up telling her mom. Her mom told her that if it happened again they would have to do something. It happened again soon after but before she got a chance to tell her mom, the group of girls decided to have a pizza party so they could decide what to do.

The girl couldn't go but during that party, the mom of one of the girls called the police. She told them everything. The mom told the police about what happened to every girl including the girl who didn't show up.

Now the whole time, the girl had been praying, praying that he would stop. So when the teacher was taken away, her prayers were answered but her experience was not even close to over.

She continued to go to the same school. But her best friend was mad at her because her dad was taken away. The girl prayed and soon after her best friend wasn't mad at her anymore.

She thought it was over but she was wrong. Since the teacher was denying that he had done the "improper touching," there was going to be a trial. The court wanted the girl to testify. So, she got her own lawyer from the government. The lawyer asked her about what happened so the girl went over the whole thing while being video taped.

Then, the lawyer got her ready to testify. She showed the girl what to do when she was up on the witness stand. She told the girl that only once would she have to look at the man who had done this to her and that was when she had to point him out.

Now even though she was older, more mature and it was only one time where she would have to look at him, she was so scared. She was frightened. So, she prayed. She asked God to let her be able to go through with it. She asked God to let her say the right things. She asked Him to let her be calm, not scared and trembling.

God answered her prayer, just not the way she imagined. She pictured being up on the witness stand, all cool and collected or, as I should say, calm. "But there was no trial, no testifying." Instead the teacher decided to take the lesser years in prison by saying he was guilty.

After the court thing, the girl prayed to God and asked him to not let this experience effect her life. He answered her prayer but in a different way. The experience only affected her life in a good way.

The school stayed open for two and a half more years. It just shut down a few months ago.

The girl left the school after fifth grade but not because of this experience. She went to a new school for sixth and seventh and found two great new friends. She is now in eighth grade.

She no longer feels like this happened to her. The only thing that connects her to it is the memory. Even when she does hear about the teacher, like in the paper, she doesn't feel anything. It's as if it were only a dream.

But she does watch out for strangers more. She doesn't trust everyone all the time anymore. She tells her parents almost everything bad that happens to her. She is safer. The experience made her more aware. It had a "positive" effect.

So now the girl lives on like this never happened. In fact, most of her friends don't even know it occurred. She's an ordinary, mature, responsible (as her parents would say), thirteen-year-old girl.

Oh, by the way, that girl is me. i

Up ahead is the one  
the Almighty, God and his son.  
(Although he's been here forever  
my life has just begun)

I'm so far away from him  
and I want to be close,  
closer than I am.  
That's what I want the most.

So for a day here and there  
I eat no food and drink no drink.  
I get a little closer than I was  
to the place where we will meet.

I take out my Bible  
every single day  
and each time I do  
I take a step his way.

I bow my head,  
get on my knees,  
talk to him like a friend  
tell him what's bugging me.

And just like a friend,  
I get closer to him everyday.  
I get closer than I was  
cause I live life his way.

Now, I'm not complaining.  
I'm actually filled with delight.  
Cause living the way he wants me to live,  
now that's a happy life.

But sometimes I don't do what's right  
and I take a few steps backwards.  
I go with the flow  
or say a few bad words.

But then I repent  
and get back on track.  
I regain the steps  
that I had to go back.

So with everyday I get closer  
and he doesn't move away.  
He waits for me to catch up  
and when I do, we'll go on our way.

I go on towards him  
cause I know up ahead is pure delight.  
I live life his way.  
I live a happy life.

I have a lot of friends,  
and with the music, my head does still nod.  
And with everyday and every step,  
I draw closer to God.

## praying to our GREAT CREATOR

By Rory Ries

**M**any have often wondered if God does answer prayer. Over the years a not so uncommon thought that mankind has had is why should we even bother with praying? Is God involved in your life? Do you want God to be involved in your life? Or do you believe it is just a waste of time? Some have even said it doesn't matter if you pray or not because as long as you try to be a good person that is the only thing that matters. Is that true?

What is your impression of God? Do you believe there is a God? When you look at all of the beautiful surroundings and the magnificent sky above, do you think this all came about because of a "big bang" theory? How about when you dig in the dirt and you see all of the life in it? Even when you look in the mirror and you see this young person staring back at you, what do you think? This beautiful image you see is made in the image of the great Creator (Genesis 1:26). You are a miracle and a gift God has given to your parents and the world (Psalm 127:3).

Everyone who is reading this is specially made. It wasn't just by accident you came about. Do you think your birth is like the "big bang theory" where things just happen to run into each other and now we have the universe? That seems to be pretty empty and that way of thinking doesn't appear to offer much hope as far as having any meaningful future. You were not created by accident or by cells frantically bumping into each other. You are a unique design and you are wonderfully made.

Now stop and think for a moment, if you were wonderfully made by hand and created for a purpose by the only perfect Creator that exists, then wouldn't you think this Creator would love to have a relationship with His creation? Not only does God want a relationship with His creation, He wants His creation to multiply and produce others that will have the opportunity to be just like the Creator (Genesis 1:28). This is an awesome plan. The Creator loves His creation so much He is willing to share everything with those who are willing to acknowledge He is the Creator (Genesis 1:1).

How do we acknowledge the Creator? God has made it possible for us to communicate with Him. He talks to us through His Word. It is important for us to study His Word daily and to learn more about Him. The other tool He has given us is prayer and when we pray we communicate with God. We have direct access to God because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gave up his life that we may know who the Creator is (Matthew 27:51).

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think like He thinks, and our prayers will then be within His will.

God has made many promises to us in the Bible, but if we do not “*believe*” God in faith we cannot expect to receive what we pray for. We must trust God implicitly to fulfill His promises.

In this world of some six billion people, we find few who know the true God. God is the real authority in life, but few accept Him and look to Him as the real authority in their lives. If we do not have an awesome respect for Him and “*obey*” Him, how can we say we know Him?

Modern man has a very self-sufficient attitude and thinks he can get along fine without God. He neither fears God nor respects God’s word as an authority in his life. Man is vain, egotistical, self-important, and full of vanity, jealousy, lust and greed. This is a very dangerous overall attitude that man has. All Christians are well aware that an attitude of “*fear and humility*” is a must in our relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father if we expect an answer to our prayers.

What we learn from those who prayed in the Bible is

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people in this world who would kill us if given the opportunity.

So what is a Christian’s response to his enemies? Christ tells us in Matthew 5:43-45, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.”

Why should we love and even pray for those who hate us, want to harm us, or kill us? Our typical human reaction is to pray that God wipe out our enemies for us. Aren’t we the ones who are practicing the doing of His will? But Christ explains further in Matthew 5:45-48, “He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Christ explains here that God loves the righteous as well as the unrighteous. We are all His children. God created mankind for the purpose of being born again spiritually as literal children in His family. His plan is perfect and He has a timetable for every person who has ever lived to bring them to a knowledge of the truth. Christ tells us to be perfect like the Father in heaven. We should love everyone like he does. Praying for our enemies gives God opportunity to put His love and perfect character in us. We should pray that when their time comes that they respond to God’s call. We should pray for the day when we can all be true loving brothers and sisters.

Fortunately the threats that were made against me by my friend were never acted out. I had been a Christian for about six months and was able to pray for him. Even today, I still need to pray for him and all my enemies so that I can be like my Father in heaven. **i**

that they prayed in a very “*fervent*” manner. They put their whole heart into their prayers. Jesus of course is the best example of how to pray. “And being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground” (Luke 22:44). Time is running out, especially for us for we are living in the “Last Days.” Being fervent in our prayers is very important and necessary if we expect to be taken seriously by our Father.

In these “last days” we must be “*persistent*” in our prayers until the answer comes. However, to be persistent in prayer does not mean endless repetition or painfully long prayer sessions. Always praying means keeping our requests constantly before God as we live for Him day by day, always believing He will answer. God may delay answering, but His delays always have good reasons with our welfare in mind. No matter what trials we face it is comforting to know that we are not alone, God the Father will be with us through the power of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ our Lord and soon coming King! **i**

## **GOD’S LOVE** *Brought Me* *Home*

By Sandra L. Garcia

I was searching for the path  
That would lead me home  
Never finding my way  
Always stumbling in the dark  
Walking in circles, losing hope  
Afraid of the darkness

You found me wandering  
Lost and alone  
You took my hand  
Guiding me to the clearing  
Showing me the path I missed  
That would lead me back home

You stayed with me  
Never losing patience  
While I kept falling back  
Letting distractions grab my attention  
Your love for me never faltered  
Because of it, I found my way home

# Good Stewards of Time

By Noni McVey

While there are many imbalances in today's world, there is definitely one thing everyone has been given an equal amount of, the same twenty-four hours in each day. If there ever was a society that should have more time for leisure, the U.S. is one. And as Christians, there should be ample time for prayer and Bible study.

We have telephone, fax, email and guaranteed next day delivery from miles away. There are household conveniences such as dishwashers, washer and dryers, vacuums, lawn mowers, electric hedge clippers and the list goes on and on. Yet, there just does not seem to be enough hours in the day to get everything done and for many Christians there is never time for prayer and Bible study on a regular basis.

The stewardship of the time each of us has been given by God is something of great importance and should not be ignored. This is not just the time in each day, but the years God has allotted each of us. One can buy a new paper or electronic calendar, or take a course on management scheduling and still find oneself coming up short of time. Unfortunately none of the benefits will be felt until one first understands and values time. The apostle Paul understood the importance of using time wisely.

Paul told the Ephesians, "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Ephesians 4:1). "Be imitators of God" (Ephesians 5:1). "Be children of light" (Ephesians 5:8) and to live careful, not unwise. Making the most of every opportunity (vs. 15, 16). Time is a priceless resource and God does care about how it is used.

## A MEDITATION AND PRAYER

In Psalm 90 Moses meditated on God's greatness (vs. 1-11). Moses

prayed that God would "establish the work of our hands" (vs. 17). Moses who had been used by God to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land was now leading a humdrum nomad's life. For forty years the Israelites had no specific place to go. There was not a final destination in their immediate future. Moses asked God to give him some kind of assurance that there was significance to the roaming. "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).



Moses understood and valued time. He knew how quickly life passes away. "The length of our days is seventy years or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow for they quickly pass, and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10). As we grow older, we look back over time and wonder where the time went. Moses did not want his life to be pointless. His desire was to please God and make the life God had given him meaningful. Moses wasn't living in the moment, but looking toward eternity.

## LOOK TO CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

There have been times in my life I have been on overload, juggling too

many balls at once. Every ball in the air represented a task that was truly important to me. Things I wanted to get accomplished and yet every time an unfinished task was about completed another ball went up in the air. I had the feeling of frustration, guilt and anxiety. There was just too much work for me to ever get it all done and get it done right.

Whether addressing the needs of others, work or leisure, there will always be more to do than one can ever get accomplished. While on earth, Jesus Christ had three years of ministry. Did Christ ever appear frustrated? I can't think of a scripture. While He certainly was busy and was tired at the end of a long day, He never seemed rushed, agitated or in a dither about all the work He had to complete. Instead, He had an open door policy. Interruptions in His schedule were welcomed opportunities to help those in need and teach His disciples (Mark 6:30-44; 10:13-16).

## PLAN TIME FOR STUDY

1. Create achievable goals. Such as choosing one day out of the week other than the Sabbath for Bible Study. Slowly increase the number of days you do Bible study as you learn to manage your time more efficiently.
2. As with the number of days you study, the length of time you study can also increase. Start out small.
3. Choose a subject to study that you are interested in and will be able to focus on throughout the week.
4. Be committed to the decision you've made. If it's important to you, you will find a way to get your priorities straight.
5. Is your life pointless, without direction or goals? Or are you using your numbered days to draw closer to God and gain a heart of wisdom? Is your time managed well? **i**

# 10 STEPS TO AN Effective Bible Study

By Lloyd W. Cary



Many wonder, how do I study my Bible? Are there any guidelines to help me? The answer is a resounding “Yes!” The ten points presented in this brief article will assure that you will derive the most benefit from the time you invest in your personal Bible study.

**I**t is self-evident that the existence of the world must depend upon something

other than itself. The world did not create the world. The Bible states, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). God also wrote a book to mankind: the Bible (2 Timothy 2:16).

God’s Book can be found almost anywhere on the earth. It has been translated into more than 2,000 languages and dialects. It is the world’s all-time “best seller.” Yet, the Bible remains a “mystery” to many. It is our duty as aspiring Christians to do our best to understand what our Creator is saying to us.

Because the Bible is God’s Word, it is essential that we study it diligently. Without Bible truth, no one ever becomes a true Christian and no true Christian ever grows.

Many wonder, “How can I understand the Bible and study it for myself? Where do I begin?” Good questions! Let’s ask God, since He is the author of it. *He* should know how to study it.

## OUR STARTING POINT

The Scriptures ask, “*Whom* shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.” And the answer, “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little (Isaiah 28:10, *KJV*)!” In other words, we must put *all* the verses on a particular topic together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, to see the whole picture. This is called “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2

Timothy 2:15).

Here is our starting point: we read in Ezra 7:10 that Ezra, “prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord.” Ezra was in a *receptive frame of mind*. We must begin with *right attitudes*. We must be humble enough to realize God, who made the heavens and the earth, knows more about everything than we do and we must be willing to be corrected when wrong.

We are next told to “*Study* to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, *KJV*). Just as with any other worthwhile endeavor—math, music, sports, or writing—we must exact effort.

## HOW DO I STUDY MY BIBLE

Here are ten brief points condensed from the booklet, *How To Study Your Bible*.

### Pray for guidance and understanding and then reflect upon what you have learned.

Before you begin, pray about what you are about to study. Ask God to reveal His truth to you and to help you obey what you learn. David said, “Open my eyes, so I may see the wonderful things in your law” (Psalm 119:18).

**Have a goal—a reason to study.** Do not study haphazardly, hoping to find something to catch your interest. Determine what you want to study *before* you begin.

**Study with the intent to recall or teach.** Study with the thought in mind of being able to share your findings with others (1 Peter 3:15) and you will automatically remember and study more effectively.



**4 Mark your Bible and take good notes.**

A well-marked Bible is an excellent memory aid and becomes like an old familiar friend enabling you to find what you are looking for faster.

**5 Your attitude should be one of self-correction.**

Take the Scriptures personally, as though God is speaking directly to you.

**6 Realize God inspired the entire Bible.**

The Bible never contradicts itself! It is always safe to assume any problem in understanding is with us, not with the Bible and that we will find the answers upon further study.

**7 Let the Bible speak for itself.**

Do not come to conclusions based upon partial facts, insufficient information, or the opinions and speculations of others. Take the Bible literally wherever possible. When the passage is obviously a parable, metaphor, or analogy, look for the literal truth it is trying to impart.

**8 Read the Bible from cover to cover.**

In order to study God's word we must

first read it. *Most people simply do not read the Bible!* Reading the Bible is vastly different than studying the Bible. Reading and studying are like a right and a left leg: they must work together to do the job. There is a handy check-off reading guide in the back of the *How To Study Your Bible* booklet to help you keep on course.

**9 Be familiar with study aids.**

A Concordance is a book listing the words used in the Bible often giving their basic root meanings as well as other places the words are used. *Young's Analytical Concordance* is a good book to begin with. Bible dictionaries such as *Smith's*, *Unger's*, or *Peloubet's* give you the meaning of words as they were when the Bible was written. A Topical Bible, such as *Nave's*, lists the Scriptures by topics for easy reference. Bible Commentaries can be useful, but every author has his or her own slant or biased paradigm. Important: *never* establish doctrine with Bible helps! There are many Study Bibles on the market and each has its strong and weak points. The *Thompson Chain*

**Don't know what to study first? The Home Bible Study Course can get you started. Visit [www.cgi.org](http://www.cgi.org) to download the course for free.**

*Reference Bible* is among the best because, instead of commentary, the margins are filled with thousands of cross chain-references that propel you ahead into Scripture.

**Live by what you learn.** Use, or live, what you learn—or lose it, “For it is not those who *hear* the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who *obey* the law who will be declared righteous” (Romans 2:13). James says, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. *Do* what it says” (James 1:22)!

By applying these ten guidelines, you'll find your Bible study is easier, more profitable, and, yes, much more *exciting* than ever before. **i**

## HOW I STUDY THE BIBLE

By Margie Marang

**I**t's easy! I need to study my Bible everyday. If I don't, I feel like something is missing. I feel void of something all day long.

I have a routine I go by every day. I get up at five a.m. and put in an hour of study. I get the HOME BIBLE STUDY COURSE, and go by that. I feel like I should set aside another hour sometime later in the day for more study. My day seems to go right after my hour of study. Before I start my study I have my prayer.

This isn't the only time I pray. I can talk to God anytime. I pray before my study for guidance, understanding and for a better memory. God always answers my prayers—either my way or His way. They are always answered. Then I start my study. I have my home study course and my Bible at hand. I look up every scripture and write it down. This is as good way to memorize the scriptures.

The next morning before I continue where I left off I re-read the scriptures and start from there. I found out an hour isn't long enough. There is not enough hours in the day to get a lot done, but I treasure my hour alone with God. “And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Siles away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men” (Acts 17: 8-12).

When we hear anyone preaching we should check it out for ourselves. Make sure his sermon agrees with the Bible. This is one good way to study your Bible. **i**



# FASTING: When, What For & How Often

By Andra Garbes

**L**ike me, many of you probably haven't taken serious notice to the numerous times that fasting is mentioned in the Bible or paid attention to the significance and impact it can have. Perhaps, like me, it's never really been brought to your attention in a topic of discussion or talked about with you much. A while ago however, a close friend of mine did just that for me. He showed me the importance of fasting and I discovered what I had unfortunately been missing out on. Yet, since then, fasting has been of great benefit to my relationship with God. The peace of mind and closeness I've felt with our Father as a result of fasting is indescribable. "God is very good."

You may be asking yourself and wondering, "Ok then, when and what should I fast for? And how often should I fast?" Well, lucky for us, the Bible gives us those answers by providing many examples and revealing a number of accounts of fasting for us. It shows us that many times a fast should be personal between an individual and God and done with humility and in secret, yet there are also instances where it is appropriate to fast as a group or family as well. It also shows us that fasts may vary in length and be either absolute (excluding food and drink) or partial (excluding all/certain foods only). In regards to the length of a fast, I have come to note that people from the Bible either fasted and sought God diligently until they obtained from God what they wanted (such as Hannah in I Samuel 1 and Paul in Acts 9:9,17-19) or until God made it evident that they simply would not obtain what they requested (like David in II Samuel 12:15-23). In addition to examples in the Bible showing differences in fasts pertaining to their length and wholeness or partiality, we are also shown examples from the Bible of the type of occasions people fasted for. Below, I have set aside many Biblical accounts of the examples of fasting that I've described to you above.

## INDIVIDUAL FASTS

- In II Samuel 12:15-16, 22-23 David fasted for the life of his son born by Uriah.
- I Kings 21 tells us about how Ahab, the king of Israel, fasted and humbled himself before God after he had been given word from God by Elijah that He would bring destruction upon him for murdering Naboth and seizing his property.
- Psalm 35:11-14 shows us how David even fasted for his enemies as though they were family.
- In Daniel 9:3, 15-19 Daniel prayed and fasted to God to turn his anger and wrath away from Jerusalem for their sins.
- Luke 2:36-37 describes how the prophetess Anna

stayed at the temple and worshiped night and day with prayers and fasting.

- Acts 9:9 mentions how Saul was blind for three days and did not eat or drink anything.

## GROUP FASTS

- I Samuel 7:3-6 tells how the Israelites assembled in Mizpah and fasted that day to be delivered out of the hands of the Philistines.
- In II Chronicles 20:3 Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast for all of Judah to seek the LORD's protection after hearing that an army from Edom was coming to make war against him.
- Ezra 8:21-23 tells us that Ezra proclaimed a fast among those with him to humble themselves and ask God for a safe journey from Ahava Canal to Jerusalem.
- Nehemiah 9:1-3 gives us an account of the Israelites gathering together to fast and confess their sins.
- In Joel 2:12-16 the LORD tells us to rend our hearts and turn to Him with fasting and mourning and weeping.
- Also, in Jonah 3:5-10, the Ninevites declared a fast when Jonah delivered the message from God that Ninevah would be destroyed in forty days for its wickedness.

## VARIOUS LENGTHS OF FASTING

### One Night

- Daniel 6:18: King Darius fasted when Daniel was thrown into the lions' den.

### One Day

- I Samuel 7:6: As Samuel said, the Israelites fasted to be delivered from the hands of the Philistines.
- II Samuel 1:12: David and the men with him fasted for Saul, Jonathan, and the army of the LORD and the house of Israel.
- II Samuel 3:35: King David mourned and fasted for the death of Abner when he was murdered by Joab and his brother Abishai, because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.
- Judges 20:26-28: The children of Israel went to the house of God and fasted, inquiring of Him whether or not they should go to battle again the next day against the Benjamites.

### Three Days

- Esther 4:16: Esther told Mordecai to have him and all the Jews fast for her before she went to the king to plead for the lives of the Jews.
- Acts 9:9,17-19: Saul (or Paul) fasted when he was blinded for three days for persecuting the LORD.

**Seven Days**

- I Samuel 31:13: The people of Jabesh Gilead fasted after they had found the bodies of Saul and his sons, which the Philistines had slain, on the wall of Beth Shan and buried them.
- II Samuel 12:15-23: David fasted for the life of his son conceived by his wife Uriah, which he had taken from Nathan.

**Fourteen Days**

- Acts 27:33-34: The 276 men with Paul didn't eat during the terrible storm at sea on their ship while they journeyed towards Italy.

**Twenty-One Days**

- Daniel 10:3-13: Daniel fasted after he received a revelation concerning great war in the end times.

**Forty Days**

- Exodus 24:18; 34:28: Moses fasted when he went up on Mount Sinai to meet the LORD.
- Deuteronomy 9:9,18,25-29; 10:10: Moses fasted for the sins of the people and to ask God to spare them for their iniquity.
- I Kings 19:8: Elijah was able to travel for forty days and forty nights to reach Horeb, the mountain of God, with the food that the angel of the LORD had provided him with.
- Matthew 4:2; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2: Jesus fasted in the desert, where he was tempted by Satan.

**ABSOLUTE FASTS**

- In Deuteronomy 9:9,18 we note Moses fasted for forty days and forty nights on two different occasions. "...40 nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water"
- Ezra 10:6 reveals to us Ezra fasted after he told the Israelites to make a covenant to God to no longer marry and give up foreign wives (people with detestable practices-Ezra 9:1-2). "...did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned.."
- Esther 4:16 tells us Esther, Mordecai, and the Jews fasted for her before she went to King Xerxes to plead for the lives of the Jews. "Go, gather together all the Jews.... and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day.."
- In Acts 9:9 Paul fasted when the LORD blinded him for three days. "...and neither did eat or drink"

**PARTIAL FASTS**

- Daniel 10:3 tells us Daniel fasted when he was given revelation of war during the end times. "I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over."

**DIFFERENT OCCASIONS OF FASTING**

**The ordination of elders and commissioning of apostles to ministry.**

Acts 13:3 "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." (The Holy Spirit said to have Saul and Barnabas set apart). Acts 14:19-23 "...Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for

**INTERNET EXCLUSIVE ARTICLE**  
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 By Anika Sandy-Hanson  
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them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the LORD in whom they had put their trust."

**Intercession for God's people.**

Exodus 24:18; Deuteronomy 9:9,18,25-29 (Moses fasted for the Israelites); Ezra 10:6 (Ezra fasted for the Israelites); Daniel 9:3-4 (Daniel fasted for Jerusalem); Joel 2:12-14,17-18 "...Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, 'Spare your people, O LORD.'"; Jonah 3:5-10 (The Ninevites fasted).

**Humbling and chastening oneself.**

I Kings 21:27-29 "...Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me?.." (Ahab fasted after Elijah brought him a message from the LORD of his coming destruction for the murder of Naboth); Psalm 35:13 "Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting..." (David fasted for his enemies); Psalm 69:10 "When I weep and fast, I must endure scorn.."

**Seeking God and His ways.**

Judges 20:26-28 (The Israelites fasted to inquire of God whether or not to go to war again against the Benjamites); II Chronicles 20:3 (Jehoshaphat proclaimed of fast for all of Judah to seek the LORD's protection from the army of Edom); Ezra 8:21-23 (Ezra proclaimed a fast and besought God for a safe journey from Ahava Canal to Jerusalem)

**Repentance and confession of sin.**

I Samuel 7:6 (The Israelites fasted); I Kings 21:27-29 (Ahab fasted); Ezra 10:6 (Ezra fasted for the Israelites); Nehemiah 1:4-7 (Nehemiah fasted for his sins and the sins of the Israelites); Nehemiah 9:1-3 (The Israelites fasted for their sins); Jeremiah 36:6-10 (the prophet Jeremiah told Baruch to read from the scroll the words of God, that he dictated him to write, to the people of Judah on a day of fasting; and so he did as he was told and a time of fasting was proclaimed for all the people of Jerusalem and the people from the towns of Judah); Daniel 9:3-5,20 (Daniel confessed his sins and the sins of his people); Jonah 3:5-10 (the Ninevites fasted).

**For healing.**

I Samuel 1:5-11,18-20 (Hannah fasted and prayed to God to open her womb and she conceived and Samuel was born); II Samuel 12:15-16,22-23 (David fasted for the life of his son); Isaiah 58:8 "Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear..."

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(Chapter 58 of Isaiah describes the correct way to fast); Acts 9:9,17-19 (Saul, or 'Paul', fasted to be healed from his blindness).

**When petitioning to God to withhold His hand in judgment.**

Deuteronomy 9:18, 25 (Moses fasted for God to spare the Israelites); Isaiah 58:9 "Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help and He will say: Here am I" (revealing the results of fasting).

**When preparing to receive instruction from God.**

Deuteronomy 9:18,25 (Moses fasted); Isaiah 58:9 (calling on God).

**For spiritual deliverance.**

Isaiah 58:6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?" (describing the correct ways to fast); Mark 9:29; Matthew 17:21 (Jesus told the disciples that only with prayer AND fasting could the evil spirit be rebuked).

**Seeking assistance in times of fear.**

II Chronicles 20:3 "Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all of Judah."

**When mourning over someone's death/safety.**

II Samuel 1:12; 3:35 (David fasted for the life of his

son and he fasted over the death of Abner, who was murdered); Daniel 6:18 (King Darius fasted for Daniel when he was in the lions' den); Esther 4:3; 9:1-3 (the Jews fasted and mourned for their lives and safety).

**When seeking God for protection.**

Ezra 8:21-23 (Ezra proclaimed a fast and besought God for a safe journey from Ahava Canal to Jerusalem).

**When in need.**

II Chronicles 11:27 "I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. " (Paul speaks of his sufferings).

Through these scriptures, I pray all of you who read this will see the need to apply fasting as a very important aspect of your spiritual life and commitment to God. Go to Him and seek Him diligently with prayers and fasting in your times of/great need, fear, mourning, healing, protection, instruction/guidance, deliverance, correction, confession, and repentance. From the Word of God we receive teaching. "All scripture is God-breathed and it is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 4:16-17). Therefore, let us take knowledge and wisdom from His Word and apply it to our lives. **i**

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We can walk with God and we can talk to Him at anytime (Genesis 5:22).

The first step is to realize there is a God. When God is working with you He will lead you to Christ (John 6:44). It is the individual's responsibility to answer to that call. God is opening a door to a way of life that brings about peace, joy and an abundance of love. You are also being offered eternal life (Deuteronomy 28:1; 30:19).

This calling leads us to repentance which leads to baptism (Acts 2:36-39). One of the things we normally repent of is not putting God first in our lives (Exodus 20:3). When we don't pray and communicate with God, we are allowing other things to take His place and we are looking to the worldly things to comfort us (1 John 2:15-17). Sadly, the worldly things will never replace the peace and joy God can bring about in our lives. That includes love.

The love the world has to offer is temporary and not fulfilling. The love God offers is perfect and it lasts forever (1 John 2:5; 4:18). The worldly matters may bring some happiness, but it is only

for a short period of time. God can give you the things you need and they will last for an eternity.

One of the ways we let God know what it is we need is by prayer. There are even times when we don't need anything and we pray from a grateful heart letting God know how much we do appreciate Him and Christ. There are also times we need to overcome a problem. The challenge may be wearisome and heavy on our hearts. This type of a challenge may take much prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:19-21).

Christ gave us the example of how to pray (Matthew 6:9). We always pray to the Father through Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14). God will answer our prayer and that is something you can hang onto and cherish. The answer may not come in the time we desire but the answer will come. We pray to God on our time and He answers our prayer on His time. His time is always perfect. The answer may be totally different than what we expected, but He will provide us with what we need.

Paul prayed for healing three different times and he felt God did not

answer him (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Yet, God did answer Paul and it was enough for Paul once it became clear to him. Even though the answer was not what Paul was expecting, it still gave him comfort. Paul did not let his trial interfere with the mighty work he had to do.

God knows you and loves you and He will give to you whatever it is you need. What we think we need may be totally different than what God thinks we need. Growth and development comes when we get to know God better and we can start to think just like He thinks. This process doesn't happen over night and it takes much prayer and fasting as we walk with God.

It may be hard to comprehend having a God who created you and who loves you so much He was willing to give up His only begotten son (John 3:16). God is there and He desires to have a relationship with you. He is waiting to hear from you. Stop what you are doing and just let God know you know He is there and you are thinking about Him. He would love to hear from you. **i**

# FEAST OF TABERNACLES

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in the next issue:

# ***THE* LAW OF GOD**

Summer 2006

**OE** Does God put conditions on our obedience?

**OE** What's the difference between the Ten Commandments and the civil regulations given to the Israelites?

**NE** Has God's Law been done away with?

**NE** When was it affirmed that all of mankind, not just Jews, needed to be law keepers?

Want to  
contribute  
to the next  
issue?

*See page 02 for details.*

