



Operation Watchmen

A Men's Prayer Ministry of Youth for Christ International

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Letter To Watchmen

Dear Watchman,

It is YFC's desire that each of you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ so we begin The Inheritance by asking a question . . .

Do you know Jesus?

If your answer is "no" or if you are unsure, please consider the following:

1. First, the Bible says that mankind has a problem, and that problem is called sin. Sin is any action or attitude that falls short of God's perfect standard. Every one of us has the problem of sin (Romans 3:23). And the Bible teaches us that there is a consequence to sin-sin separates us from a holy God (Habakkuk 1:13). In fact, the Bible tells us that the end result of sin is death (Romans 6:23) and that there is nothing that we ourselves can do to solve the problem of sin.

2. Second, the Bible says that there is a solution to the problem of sin, and that solution is the person of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23). The Bible tells us that God loved us

so much that He sent Jesus, His only Son, to die in our place (John 3:16). Jesus paid the penalty of your sin so that you would not have to be forever separated from God (1 John 4:10). The Bible also tells us that Jesus is the only solution for our sin problem (John 14:6).

3. Third, the Bible demands a decision. It is not enough to just know about Jesus Christ and His death on the cross for you. You must choose to put your trust in Christ, to receive this free gift of salvation that God offers (John 1:12).

The decision is yours!

1. To say “yes” is to accept God's free gift of salvation by putting your trust in Jesus Christ.
2. To say “no” is to reject God's offer of salvation. The Bible says that those who make this choice will spend eternity separated from God in a place called Hell.
3. To say “maybe” is to try to put off the decision to a more convenient time. The Bible does say that God is patient, wanting everyone to come to the point of accepting His gift of salvation (2 Peter 3:9). But none of us is promised that we will be here tomorrow, so putting off our decision puts us in the "no" category.

If you would like to begin a relationship with Jesus Christ right now, you need only to ask Him: Father in Heaven, I know that I am a sinner and need forgiveness. I believe that Your Son Jesus died in my place to pay the penalty for my sin, and rose again for my salvation. I want to turn from my sinful ways, so I now ask you, Lord Jesus, to come into my life as my Saviour and my Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Zeoli, Bill. "The Message", <http://www.gospelcom.net/guidance/gospel/>. Used with permission.

Introduction

Prayer is not an argument with God to persuade Him to move things our way, but an exercise by which we are enabled by His Spirit to move ourselves His way.

-Leonard Ravenhill

The Inheritance is a tool to intimacy rather than a teaching on prayer. Its chapters touch on intimate intercession, intimate worship, personal growth in prayer, a call to watch over in prayer, and a choice for blessing. It is meant to equip fathers to walk in personal intimacy with the Father offered them through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. This sacrifice afforded each the dynamic of an intimate, personal relationship with a magnificent God and Father--to which each was created.

I am convinced of this one thing: all of heaven worships! All of earth from its beginning was created to worship. The Hebrew word for worship is shachah or to bow (self) down, crouch, fall down (flat), humbly beseech, do (make) obeisance, do reverence, make to

stoop, worship. This attitude of homage is a place not many find. The Lord is beckoning, "Come, come my love!"

God is calling men into a deeper place of worship: beyond the veil, beyond the courts, past the throne, into a romancing like no other, bound by vows, forever faithful, captivated, lovestruck . . .

I am my lover's and my lover is mine . . .
Song of Songs 6:3

I pray that God will use something in this booklet to move you His way through a greater revelation of Himself and His love. You will not be able to resist.

Let the romance begin!

CHAPTER One Operation Watchmen

Mission of Operation Watchmen

Operation Watchmen is a nondenominational prayer movement
dedicated to the preparation and mobilization of fathers
who are called to be watchmen over
a new generation of young people
who will be characterized by prowess in spiritual warfare,
boldness in evangelism,
passion in social involvement,
godliness in leadership . . .
thus reflecting an exemplary Christian life.

Vision for Operation Watchmen

To see a concerted group of fathers interceding for the conversion, consecration and commission of young people.

How to become a "Watchman"

1. Commit to pray for a minimum of fifteen minutes on a daily basis for your children as well as for the children within your nation.
2. Fill out the card found in booklet and return it to its appropriate address.
3. Join other "Watchmen" in your area on a once a month basis, praying in agreement for your children and those of others.

How to become a "Local Coordinator"

The Local Coordinator should be a committed “Watchman” who models prayer, who leads an exemplary Christian life, who has a passion to train, motivate and challenge others to invest in the lives of young people through prayer and who desires to partner with churches to see “Operation Watchmen” become a reality.

1. To apply for the position of Local Coordinator, contact by letter the Youth for Christ Chapter in your area. The YFC program will send you an application that should be filled out and returned. After receiving your application, it will be reviewed and prayed over. You will receive a phone call or a reply by mail.

Responsibilities of a “Local Coordinator”

1. Organizing periodic meetings of “Watchmen” in your city for the purpose of praying together, discussing ideas, encouragement, etc.
2. Partnering with the Body of Christ.
 - Meeting with pastors of churches to share the vision.
 - Asking for a meeting with fathers in the church.
 - Recruiting fathers from the church.
3. Interceding for the “Watchmen.” *
4. Communicating with the YFC Director of “Operation Watchmen” (i.e. sending a bi-monthly letter testifying of answers to prayer or setting up a meeting or call by phone)
5. Facilitating training seminars for the purpose of training fathers to pray effectively.
6. Collecting commitment forms from fathers who wish to join.
(This will provide you a list of names for the purpose of intercession.
*See 3 above.)

CHAPTER Two

A Father’s Prayers

This is the story of a man named Mordecai. “He was the son of Jair, of the tribe of Benjamin. He resided at Susa, the metropolis of Persia. He adopted his cousin Hadassah (Esther), an orphan child, whom he tenderly brought up as his own daughter.

He brought up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The maiden was beautiful and lovely, and when her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter. Esther 2:7, AMP

You can say of Esther that she was a "woman of deep piety, faith, courage, patriotism, and caution, combined with resolution; a dutiful daughter to her adopted father, docile and obedient to his counsels, and anxious to share the king's favour with him for the good of the Jewish people. There must have been a singular grace and charm in her aspect and manners, since 'she obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her' (Esther 2:15). That she was raised up as an instrument in the hand of God to avert the destruction of the Jewish people, and to afford them protection and forward their wealth and peace in

their captivity, is also manifest from the Scripture account.” (Easton’s 1897 Bible Dictionary)

Interesting is the fact that Esther was orphaned at an early age without the benefits of a mother to nurture and a father to guide. But this by no means is the end of the story for out of the annals of history comes a hero unlike any other.

His name is Mordecai. On the scene comes Mordecai to rescue Hadassah and take her as his own. I imagine the moment Mordecai received word of the death of both Hadassah’s parents, (we don’t know if it was a tragedy that took both lives at the same time or if the deaths followed each other) but in any case, loss and grief was felt by both. Consideration of where the child was to be placed was probably not the first thing that came to mind, or was it? It says that Mordecai “took” her as his own. Adoption, the giving to some one the name and place and privileges of a child who is not a child by birth, was not embraced readily by the Hebrews. But it is certain that this man did not act according to the preferred customs of the time. He intently received her as his own and because of this, Hadassah became Esther, the woman you read about in Scripture.

Would it be presumption to read between the lines of Scripture and assume that Esther’s spiritual and emotional character was fostered by Mordecai’s parenting and modeling. I must assume so as she was a woman of deep piety and of faith much like her father. Undaunting, unwavering, unyielding in the face of her enemy. Could this have been taught her by a father-teacher?

And to think after being told by Mordecai not to flatter herself in thinking that she will escape death in the King’s palace any more than all the others Jews, Esther prompted Mordecai to gather together the Jews and fast for her and she would fast as they do (Esther 4:13). That was a discipline taught. Who was her teacher? She must have learned well the discipline of fasting from her father as well as the discipline of prayer.

The next several pages present the story of Esther but it’s far from the story of one individual. Behind the scenes is the father, praying, fasting for his Queen, in subjection, but yet in authority for this is his beloved daughter in whom he is well pleased. The chapter that follows has a two-fold purpose:

- 1) To elaborate on the influence of a godly father in a daughter’s life.
- 2) To impress upon the reader an unlimited access of intimacy to the King of all kings--Jesus.

Filter the next several pages through these guidelines. Rather than it being about a woman, strain to recognize the deep truths of fatherhood found in its pages and a style of honor and adoration available to manhood.

A Father’s Legacy

There is something about Jesus’ life of prayer that riveted the attention of the disciples as they watched Him from day to day. They watched Him pray over individuals with a

profound effect, and they watched Him in the intimate moments of His personal times with the Father. There was such a vibrancy, such a joy about His times alone with God that He would come forth from them refreshed. So intrigued were they that occasionally they would inquire about this dynamic, and so Jesus would instruct them.

What must be seen about the prayers of Jesus is that they are first and foremost the prayers of a human being uttered in the context of a human relationship with God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus related to other humans as the One sent from the Father, He was exercising that dimension of the Priesthood that consists of God representing Himself to mankind, the Word of God addressing His Beloved. But when Jesus was ministering to the Father in prayer, He was doing so from the opposite dimension of the Priestly office, namely, that of redeemed mankind coming before the God of grace in order to receive from His hand the necessary provision for the day. In this way, Jesus stands in the place of prayer as the prototypical Bride, the representative of humanity before the Father, and His prayer life may be seen as the model prayer life for Bridal intercessory prayer and worship.

Therefore, in the prayer life and ministry of Jesus, through observing not only what He says, but also by considering His attitude and posture before the Father, we may discern the truth of how we are to pray. His prayers are succinct, often just one or two words, and one never gets the sense of anxiety over the embattlement.

Even in the Garden of Gethsemane, during the most intense prayer imaginable, one has the sense of deep intimacy and trust as the context of the pleading. Along with His personal examples, Jesus also gives us the Lord's Prayer, that wonderful rabbinic instruction that gives us a topical prayer list in the text of the prayer itself, and several passages that specifically instruct us in the matter of prayer.

One of the key points of instruction that He used to draw the disciples further into prayer was the compelling "Parable of The Persistent Widow," found in the eighteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel. Here is the text as recorded by the Gospel writer:

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8)

Because this is a parable that is so profoundly pointed at persistent prayer, and is straight from the mouth of the Lord Himself, it must be seen as a paramount teaching in the matter of learning effective intercession. And so it has been, but with what I believe to

be a misplaced emphasis rooted in a misunderstanding of Jesus' intent and of the nature of God that underlies the story. Let's examine it for a moment.

Jesus begins with a clear statement that the purpose of the parable is that believers "should always pray and never give up." That's clearly the point of the tale, and I know of no confusion concerning that issue. However, I believe that what comes next is, in the common interpretation of the parable, a misperception of Jesus' objective in telling the story. It concerns a widow woman who had an issue (more likely a number of issues) for which she needed justice to be invoked by someone with the authority to do so. In other words, there were life-situations, matters of horizontal relationships that were desperate for her, and because of the hopelessness of her situation and her inability to bring about justice in any other way, her only recourse was to go to the judge.

What we must understand here is that in the Middle Eastern culture of that day, it was a difficult thing, at best, to be a widow. A widow-woman, especially if she had no living son, was fundamentally a non-entity in the culture, and could only survive by: begging, prostitution, being redeemed by a kinsman, or becoming a ward of the Temple. So the woman in our story was probably alone, with no advocate, no defender, and to make matters worse, she was stuck with a judge who, in the chilling words of the Lord, "did not fear God nor regard man."

What Jesus, as the Master Teacher and story-teller, is doing in this fable is that He is building tension upon tension to focus our awareness on the critical nature of this woman's circumstances. Her only hope was for intervention from the one who was supposedly a representative of righteousness, but who apparently was anything but that. In the Rome-dominated, corrupt governmental society of the day, many government officials were in their positions by fraud, deception, or treachery, and their one aim was to gain wealth and power. Matters of human rights, opportunities to be magnanimous to the poor, the use of authority as a means to establish righteousness - these were foreign concepts to the power brokers of the day. And this judge, whom Jesus labeled as "unjust," was no different. In it for the prestige and the power, he held his position with arrogance and ruthlessness, caring nothing for the needs of this pathetic widow. She meant nothing to him, and he meant to do nothing for her.

So she chose the only weapon she had left at her disposal - sheer, unrelenting, strenuous, and vocal appeal. The text merely states that "she came to him" but the verb tense in the original language indicates a repeated action, that "she kept coming and kept coming." Her persistence is noted in the judge's eventual response to her in verse 5 of the text, "her continual coming." She came to the judge, unceasingly and relentlessly asking for her needs to be met. She became a perpetual presence in his court, so much so that the judge himself used the phrase "she troubles me with her continual coming." This word "troubles" is an intriguing word here, for it means that she "joined herself to him," right alongside his person. She became his shadow. She tailed him, she was his thorn in the flesh, his right-hand agitator. She grabbed hold of the feet of this judge and would not be denied, until he finally relented and avenged her, just because she was wearing him out!

One can almost see the tension mounting in the heart and mind of the judge. Initially hoping to just silence her with a curt refusal, he shrugged off her initial appeal, and thought that would be the end of it. But that would not be the case. This woman was desperate; she had a need and would not be denied. Now, I have been in the nation of Israel, and have had one or two small encounters with Hebrew women who did not want to be denied. Even in the benign setting of a market-place in the Old City, one can easily get the sense that if you are wise, you will not get into an adversarial relationship with one of those women. There is a tenacity of spirit that is a marvelous thing to behold!

This judge was no match for the widow. She beat him to death with her appeals, until he finally could not endure it another moment, and gave her what she wanted. Justice was served, the widow got what she needed, and the parable is complete.

Or is it?

Almost every time I have heard this story referenced with regard to intercessory prayer, it has been presented as a model of how we should approach God in intercession. The effectiveness of the widow-woman is held up as the standard for dynamic, efficacious prayer, and intercessors are urged to approach the Lord with the same tenacity and purposefulness that is exhibited by our heroine in the parable. Yet, the reality of the story in Luke 18 is that Jesus was building tension for the purpose of contrast. His intent was not to say "here is what prayer is about, and this is how you should pray." He was in fact saying "if that kind of appeal by one who has no rights and no standing is eventually effective even with an unjust judge, how much more will the prayers of God's beloved Bride be effective with Him whose heart is ravished with love for her? Will He not hear the cry of His elect ones, and answer them speedily when they cry out to Him night and day? "

Bridal Intercession

In the parable of the persistent widow, Jesus leaves His followers with a sense that there is a higher way of prayer, a way of approaching the Lord in intercession that is more effective than the model of the woman in the story.

It is found in the Old Testament story of Esther, an historically accurate series of events that really happened, but that are arranged in such a way as to form a marvelous portrait of how God intends Bridal Intercession to work among His people. I believe that Jesus could very well have had this story in His mind when He was giving the parable of Luke 18, because His central point was that in prayer the believer may fully presume upon the delight that exists in the heart of God for His Bride. Let's consider the story briefly.

Somewhere around the year 450 B.C., the High King of the Medes and Persians was a man named Ahasuerus (hereafter referred to as "the King," for obvious reasons). By most historical accounts, he was a pagan King, and as such, was no doubt ungodly in many ways. But in this story, it is my opinion that he stands in a symbolic place,

representing the King of Heaven, the glorious Bridegroom of the people of God, who are represented by the beautiful Queen Esther. As the story begins, the King is hosting a huge celebration, a banquet held for all the lesser kings and national officials of the region. The purpose of the feast, according to Chapter 1, was . . .

"to show the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendor of his excellent majesty for many days, one hundred and eighty days in all."

This was a six-month feast to demonstrate the greatness and generosity of this King! Then on the tail-end of that celebration, he hosted another seven-day affair for the denizens of the capital city of Shushan, or Susa, which was even more lavish than the first one.

In the midst of that second celebration, the King made the decision to summon his wife, Queen Vashti, that she might come and be exhibited before the nobles and kings, that they might behold her beauty, and thus hold the King in even higher esteem. It was a common thing in the culture of that day for the beauty of the Queen to be seen as a major enhancement of the glory of the King. While many commentators take the posture that the King was wrong in summoning Vashti in this way, and even go so far as to laud her decision to refuse his summons as one that was morally right, I am convinced that this position does not reflect the Biblical understanding of this situation.

All through the Scriptures, the people of God are seen as the primary entity for the exhibition of His glory. In Isaiah 62:3, we are told that God will hold His people as a crown of glory in His hand, with the express purpose of exhibiting their beauty as a testimony of His power and grace. In 1 Corinthians 11, we are instructed that the glory of a man is his wife and that man is "the glory of God." Furthermore, according to Ephesians 3:10, there is coming a day when through the Christian Church the wisdom and glory of God will be manifested to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. In other words, God is going to exhibit the beauty and glory of His Bride, the Church, and the end result will be that the spiritual powers in heavenly places will fall down before the Bride and before her King, declaring His glory and power as His wisdom is vindicated for all to see. The King of Kings, exhibiting His matchless glory as revealed through His glorious Bride, the redeemed and sanctified Church! What a picture of grace!

This is the symbolic reality of this invitation that the King extended to Vashti. He wanted to exhibit her beauty so that the officials of the land would honor his greatness and praise him even more. However, the unthinkable happened. She refused to come. She was busy with her own party and didn't want to be interrupted, and so to the horror of the King and his aides, without considering the impact that her decision would have on the women of the nation, she declined the invitation. By this act, Vashti incurred the wrath of the King and set the national advisors in turmoil. They got to work, and before the day was out, the letters had been drafted and sent to the officials of the land, censuring Vashti for her refusal to obey the King, and removing her from her place as Queen. I would suggest that this is a picture of the reluctant people of God, refusing to

take the place of glory that God has given for them. Whether this is applied to national Israel for a season, or to anyone in the same position of refusal is not the central point. The point is that the King desired to bring glory to his own name by the exhibition of the beauty of his Queen, and she refused, to her own demise.

Once the rage of the King had subsided, he began to rue the fact that he had no Queen, and so a massive search project was undertaken to find a replacement Bride suitable for the King's affections. A nation-wide search was instigated, and all the beautiful young virgins were brought to the palace to be prepared in the harem for presentation to the King. This preparation process, involving twelve months of bathing, perfuming, and training, was overseen by one Hegai, who was the Chief Eunuch over the King's harem. After their preparation, each one was presented in turn to the King, that he might make his choice for the new Queen.

The text of the Book of Esther is clear that this young Jewish girl had more favor with all those around her than anyone else, and on top of that, she possessed great wisdom. When the time came for a girl to be presented to the King, she was allowed to bring with her anything that she thought might win the King's affection - sort of her favorite song-and-dance, if you will. But in the wisdom of God that was upon Esther's life, she approached the King's man, Hegai, and inquired of him what would please the King. Thus, when she went in to Ahasuerus she was prepared in the manner that she knew would be pleasing to him.

I believe that all of this is a picture of the Church's preparatory process of growing in holiness under the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God, operating often through the ministry of the prophetic, instructs the Bride in her preparations, making sure she is washed and perfumed with the appropriate oils and scents, all of which have specific symbolic meaning. As the process is completed and it becomes Esther's turn to go in to the King, she is fully prepared. She is adorned in the perfect garments, chosen by the Counselor to the King, she has the favor of God upon her, and she is a beauty! Of course, the King is stunned by her loveliness, his heart is captured in an instant, and Esther becomes the Queen of the Medes and Persians.

As time goes on, the King appoints an advisor by the name of Haman, an Agagite, to a significant place of authority in the Kingdom, the place of second-in-command to the King. An order is given that all people in the nation shall bow down to Haman, and he is so honored by everyone except one man named Mordecai, a Jew who was a cousin and surrogate father to Queen Esther. Mordecai was a righteous man, a God-fearer, and so he refused to bow in homage to another human being, especially an Agagite. Mordecai had also uncovered a plot to kill the King, had reported it to Esther, and had received a written record of his heroic act. However, this was unknown to Haman, and when he saw that Mordecai would not honor him, the King's regent was thrown into a rage. His undisguised anti-Semitism rose up in his belly, and he conjured a plan to destroy Mordecai and all his people, not realizing that Queen Esther was implicated in his scheme.

It is at this point that our story begins to converge with the situation of Luke 18. Here is a woman who has a major need - she and her people are about to be legally slaughtered by an enemy. This is a clear representation of the intent of Satan to bring destruction to the people of God, and there is much evidence in Scripture that he is even within the boundaries of God's authority in the design of his ruinous program. Like God, the King has allowed a strategic threat to be set in place that will force the Queen to take her place in the role of intercessor before the King. Like many in the Body of Christ today, Esther finds herself to be a reluctant participant in this matter, but she is firmly reminded by her cousin Mordecai that it is for this very reason, to intercede for the people of Israel, that she was brought to this place of intimate authority with the King. I want to emphasize this point as clearly as I am able to do so. God sets the Bride in a place of favored intimacy for the very purpose of intercession, that the human beings, who are the focus of God's romantic passion, may be delivered from their dilemma. The King is obviously the Deliverer, but the Lord has set the Bride in place to have an integral role in the deliverance through the ministry of intimate intercession.

It is here that the true model of Bridal Intercession begins to come into play. There is a loud and bitter cry that is raised about the situation, but it is not the Bride that does that. Mordecai, who is not part of the King's court, but is outside the Holy Place and has no entrance is the one who mourns and cries bitterly over the situation. Like the widow-woman, he stands outside the context of intimacy, and is therefore gripped with anxiety and fear over the situation. But Esther is in a completely different posture. While the gravity of the circumstance does not elude her, she nevertheless prepares herself for a very different style of intercession, one that is based in and presumes upon a relationship of affection and intimacy with the King.

Esther instructs Mordecai to call all the Jews in Shushan for a three-day season of fasting and prayer over the situation. The Queen and her handmaids join them in this, for they know that everything depends upon Esther being received favorably by the King. There is an appropriate fear of the King evident in her, for she fully understands that her very life is held in his hands. As the day arrives, Esther dresses in her royal robes, the garments of righteousness that are the garments in which she won the King's heart in the first place. She approaches the inner court, and boldly enters into his presence, and, knowing that her life is forfeit, simply waits before the King. She doesn't shout. She doesn't raise her voice. She's not hysterical, or weeping, or anguished in any external way. She is presuming upon the King's favor and affection, and in that presumption is her only hope.

I can picture the situation. The King is engaged in the affairs of state, deeply involved in a session with his advisors. Haman may even be one of them. Suddenly, he hears an unexpected sound. The doors to the inner court are opening, but there has been no appointment, there has been no summons issued. As he raises his head, surprised at the interruption, the official of the court announces her presence: "May I present Esther, Bride to King Ahasuerus, and Queen of the Medes and the Persians."

Something happens to the King's countenance. Her fragrance fills the room. She's even more lovely than he remembered. The favor of God is upon her, and suddenly, he can't recall what he's been doing. His eyes are transfixed, gazing only upon her, seeing and hearing nothing else. The policy meeting is over. With an absent-minded wave of the hand, the King dismisses his courtiers, reaches for his scepter without taking his eyes off his Queen, and with great drama, extends the scepter toward her, inviting her into the most powerful place in the land - the heart of the King.

She walks forward in regal splendor, and with every step, her grip on the King's heart grows stronger. She touches the scepter, and by the time she is standing before him, any resistance he might have had to her is gone. She is stunning! The aroma of her perfume arouses his senses, and everything at his disposal now belongs to her, and he tells her so: "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you - up to half the Kingdom!" Those are the King's opening remarks! He's ruined! His heart is on his sleeve! And in an incredible stroke of wisdom, Esther responds, not with her intercessory burden, but with an invitation to a dinner to be given that night by the Queen in the King's honor. Specifically, she invites him, along with his regent Haman, to a Banquet of Wine.

In the culture of the Middle East, a Banquet of Wine was the banquet style of the day. It was rooted in a most romantic tradition, namely, the engagement feast given at the time of the public announcement of the betrothal of a man and his prospective bride. In The Song of Solomon, when the Shulamite is taken by the King to his "Banqueting House," the literal translation is "the House of Wine." The House of Wine, with its banner of love overarching all the interactions of the relationship, was the formal setting for the betrothal feast. Subsequent Banquets of Wine were given to rehearse and celebrate the romance and intimacy of the days of first love.

During the course of a Banquet of Wine, the prospective groom would at some point fill a glass with wine, and set it on a table in plain view of the bride-to-be, and of everyone else. In so doing, the groom was saying "Here I am. This cup of wine represents everything I am, all that I own, and I am here pouring out my life for you in this moment of proposing marriage. Will you have me to be yours?"

It was a tremendously vulnerable and poignant moment, for the heart of the groom was on display for all to see, and everything about his heart was exposed and unprotected. The expected response from the bride was that at some later point in the evening, she would approach the table, and take the cup in her hand to make a response. If she was a bit playful, she might move close to the cup, lean toward it, and then move away, sending the groom's heart into fibrillation. But at some point she would take the cup in hand, drink it, and by doing so, say "Yes, I will have you. My life is now sustained by yours, and you and I are now one." And the betrothal was set in place.

There is an immediate and powerful point of connection for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper, given at Passover, was just this kind of feast. The mingling of the symbols, the bread and meat from the Passover meal, the cup of wine from the

betrothal banquet, was in fact the proposal of marriage from Jesus, the Eternal Bridegroom, to His disciples, who stood in place as the mystical Bride of Christ. "This is my body and my blood, broken and shed for you. I will not eat of it again until I do so with you in my Father's House." Jesus was extending his heart to His people, with all the vulnerability and exposure of a groom at the Banquet of Wine, saying to you and to me "Will you have me? I long to have you as mine alone." And when the disciples received the bread and wine, and ate and drank, they said "yes" to His proposal, and the betrothal was set in place. In the same way, when we as contemporary believers partake of the Lord's Supper, we are coming to Him as in a Banquet of Wine, recalling to our minds and His the romance and joy that drove Him to the cross on our behalf. It is the place of the marriage covenant where we renew our vows, and by so doing we pledge our troth again, looking forward to the day when we will eat and drink with Him in the unmitigated pleasure of our Heavenly home.

In the aftermath of the Banquet of Wine, the groom would then leave the bride for a season, for the purpose of returning to his father's estate. There he would make a place ready for the bride, and would return to claim her and consummate the marriage only when his father said it was time to do so. Meanwhile, she would be made ready for the marriage, keeping herself pure and undefiled, all the while anticipating his return with great eagerness. Then one day, the shofar would sound, and the voice of the bridegroom's friend would ring out through the land:

"The bridegroom is coming! Let all be made ready!"

The bride would go out to meet her beloved, the marriage ceremony would take place, and the groom would take her away to her newly prepared home, there to live out their days together.

It's a profound picture, isn't it?

The Banquet of Wine that Queen Esther prepared for the King was rooted in this cultural understanding. She prepared a lavish dinner, with the best of wine, and presented it to the King that evening. And the whole purpose of the dinner party was to stir up the romantic inclinations and emotions of the King. Esther was reminding him at every turn how much he loved her, how excited he had been at the prospect of their marriage, how thrilled he was at the prospect of giving himself to her, and of knowing her intimately. She was standing before him in all her glory, not ashamed to be called his own, not hesitant to allow the nobles to see her beauty, and thus bringing honor to his name. She was saying to him, in the presence of all his nobles and attendants, "I choose you again. I say 'yes' to you again, in the same passion and joy with which I said 'yes' the first time. You are my Beloved, and I am yours forever!" The King was pleased, every emotion, every sense of commitment and protection was engaged, and Haman was there to see it all.

Esther understood that she had an issue to bring before the King, but she also understood the place of adoration and romance. She ministered to him, and served him, and declared

to all those observing that her affections were toward him. His heart was stirred, and during the course of the evening, he asked her again: "What is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request, up to half the Kingdom? It shall be done!" Now see this point: the King knows exactly what Esther is doing. He knows she has a big issue that she's working with. He knows there's something on her heart. And he loves it! He's the King! He can give her what she needs, and he's glad to do so! He loves her, for she is his beauty, his bride and Queen.

This is a picture of worship as a necessary component of intercession. The essential place of the Bride of Christ ministering in adoration to her Bridegroom is such an integral reality in the matter of prayer. It is imperative that we see this, and that we understand that the Lord Himself set it up this way! This is how He likes it! In this prophetic portrait called the Book of Esther, He is inviting us to approach intercession through the doorway of romance, to dial up all His daring and passionate emotions, to tell Him all over again that we say "yes" to His proposals, that we choose Him again even as at the first, to presume upon His grace and mercy, to enter the Holy of Holies with confident boldness, knowing that His scepter of righteousness is extended toward us at all times, because He is a King in love, and we are His Bride!

In response to the King's inquiry about her petition, Esther does another remarkable thing. Once again, she restrains herself from going to the matter of her intercessory issue. Once again, she invites the King and Haman to come to a Banquet of Wine, and she promises that there she will make known to the King what is on her heart. She wants to worship some more! She takes full advantage of her place of favor, of her prerogative to stir the heart of the King with her beauty. The issues are secondary, for she is coming to understand that if the King's heart is ravished over her, he will deal with the issues that present themselves. And so the plans are made for the following night.

Some have suggested that the Holy Spirit restrained Esther from making her request, because it was the Lord's timing to vindicate Mordecai in public. That night the King was restless. Awake in the night, he asked for a reading of the Chronicles (the Books of Chronicles were used back then as a sleeping aid, as well as today) and discovered that nothing had been done to honor Mordecai for the heroic action he had undertaken on the King's behalf. So the next day, Haman was humiliated and made to honor the very one whom he desired to murder. It was the beginning of the end for the King's regent.

At the banquet that evening, things progress as they should, until it is time for Esther to unveil her request. It is important for us to see that she is focused on speaking to the King about her issue. She never once speaks to Haman. She doesn't curse him, or rebuke him, or command him away from her. She doesn't bind him, or consign him, or have anything to do with him. She speaks to the King about what is on her heart, knowing that because of his love for her, he will take her issue as his own. So once again, the King asks what is troubling her, and she begins to reveal the plot of Haman to destroy her and her people. The wisdom of including Haman in the Banquets of Wine now becomes apparent, because up until this moment he has had no idea that Esther is Jewish! Haman has now had opportunity on two evenings to observe first-hand the affection and romance between

the King and his Queen, and now it only serves to increase his sense of impending doom. As the story unfolds, Esther does not reveal Haman's identity as her nemesis until the last moment. With incredible drama, the fury of the King waxes hotter and hotter, until finally he can stand it no longer.

"Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?"

The enemy of the Queen has become the personal adversary of the King!

And Esther responded "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!" And the text of Esther 7 tells us that Haman was terrified before the King and Queen.

Do we begin to get understanding here? The Queen ministers to the King in the presence of her enemy, and his heart is gripped with terror when she mentions his name to the King. This is precisely what God is promising us in Psalm 23 when the writer says: "He prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies." It's the banqueting table for the bridal feast, the Banquet of Wine, the place of worship that God sets up in the face of the evil one. It's provided for us specifically for the purpose of reinforcing the bridal relationship before the eyes of the enemy, so that he will become terrified of the King and of the Queen, the Bride.

Beloved, the enemy is not too impressed with our shouts and protestations and sword rattling. That's his turf, and he's an expert at it. But what strikes sheer terror into the heart of Satan is the Bride ministering to King Jesus, singing the love songs of the Lamb, agreeing with God concerning His opinions and His agenda, coming to the place of intimacy in which her heart is at rest in the knowledge of the love of God for her. In that place, she is a formidable foe.

Haman was destroyed that day. His plan came back on his own head. He was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai, and that righteous man was given the place of authority in his stead. The Jews were given the right to defend themselves against the attempted slaughter, and with the King's blessing, tens of thousands of enemy warriors were killed, and many of the citizens of Medo-Persia were converted to Judaism because of the fear of God and of His people.

CHAPTER Three

A Model for Personal Prayer

The prayer model we will use is The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from the evil one.
(Matthew 6:9-13)

First, we are to talk to Father about the Father - His person: "Our Father in heaven." Then we talk to God about His program, and His purpose: "Hallowed be Your Name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done." Then we speak to the Father about His family - His children's need for provision, pardon, protection: "Give us day by day our daily bread, Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us, and lead us not into temptation." We end by turning our attention once again to the majesty of His kingship, His mighty power, and His magnificent glory.

God's Paternity: "Our Father"

But as many as received Him [Christ], to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name. (John 1:12)

When Christians bow before God and call Him Father, they are acknowledging that at the heart of the universe there is not only ultimate power but ultimate love. The address "Our Father in heaven," not only recognizes the intimacy that we have with God as our Father, but it also speaks of the awe we should have as we come to Him in prayer. Jesus is saying that this One to whom we come as Father is the sovereign God of heaven, the God of all power, and the God of all authority.

The Bible keeps the tension between intimacy and awe. The writer of Hebrews says, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (4:16). The fact that we come to a throne should fill us with awe. But because it is a throne of grace, it is approachable. The sovereign, almighty God of the universe has allowed us, because of Jesus Christ, to approach Him in prayer and address Him as Father.

God's Person: Hallowed Be Your Name

And those who know your name will put their trust in you. (Psalm 9:10)

When we pray, "Hallowed be Your name," we are talking about the character and person of God. To hallow means "to sanctify, to set apart, to make special." When we say, "hallowed be Your name," we are praying that God may be God to us, that He will be set apart in our prayers in such a way that it will be clear that we reverence God.

Nature (Character, Essence) of God by Charlene Adams

Sovereign:

God is Supreme Being of the Universe. He has absolute authority and volition (Psalm 83:18; Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 12:11).

Righteous:

God is absolute righteousness and perfect goodness, free from sin, perfect in His character and Person, as well as in His attitudes and actions (Isaiah 51:8; 1 John 2:1; Jeremiah 23:6).

Just:

God is just in every commandment He gives and every decision He makes. It is impossible for Him to be unfair with anyone (Deuteronomy 32:4; 11 Timothy 4:8; John 16:8).

Love

God is eternal, unchangeable love. He does not depend on emotion to sustain or express His love (1 John 4:8; John 13:34, 35; Romans 5:5).

Eternal

God is! He is absolute existence, the self-existing One, the great I AM (Exodus 3:14), who has neither beginning nor end (1 John 5:11; Revelation 1:8).

Omniscient

God is all-knowing. Infinite in wisdom and understanding (Job 37:16; John 18:4; Isaiah 11:2).

Omnipresent

God is everywhere (Jeremiah 23:23, 24; Matthew 28:20; Psalm 139:7).

Omnipotent

God is all-powerful, unlimited in His ability and in His authority (Romans 1:20; Romans 1:4; Acts 1:8).

Immutable

God is unalterable. He is neither capable of nor susceptible to change; therefore, He is absolute stability (James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8; John 14:6).

Veracious

God is absolute truth. He says what He means and means what He says (John 7:28; John 14:6; 1 John 5:6).

Names of God (Excerpts from Names of God by Nathan Stone)

Your Name is as ointment poured forth . . . Songs 1:3

A name imposes some limitation. It means that an object or person is this and not that, is here and not there. And if the Heaven of heavens cannot contain God, how can a name describe Him? Even so, the Old Testament contains a number of names and compound names for God which reveal Him in some aspect of His character and dealings with mankind.

Adonai (Lord, Master)

Confirms the idea of a trinity and is translated Lord, signifying ownership or mastership and indicates the truth that God is owner of each member of the human family, and He consequently claims the unrestricted obedience of all.

El

Mighty, strong, prominent, omnipotence, transcendence. The word “El” itself is translated God and frequently indicates, in circumstances, the great power of God.

Elohim (Creator)

Contains the idea of creative and governing power, of omnipotence and sovereignty; the supreme power and glory of His Being. Elohim as a name is usually given in the Scriptures to the ever blessed Trinity by which they represent themselves as under the obligation of an oath to perform certain conditions.

El-Shaddai (The All-Sufficient One, Almighty God)

As a beneficent and bountiful Bestower of powers, gifts, blessings, and fruitfulness for service. Shaddai signifies one who nourishes, supplies, satisfies. When connected with the word for God, El, it then becomes the One mighty to nourish, satisfy, supply.

Jehovah (The Self-Existent One, LORD)

Reveals God as the eternal, self-existent One, the God of revelation, the God of moral and spiritual attributes - righteousness, holiness, love and therefore, of redemption, the God who stands in special covenant relation to Israel in contrast to Elohim, the general name of God in relation to all nations.

In the names below, there is a progressive revelation of Jehovah meeting every need as it arises in the experience of His redeemed people - saving, sustaining, strengthening, sanctifying; and not only for the redeemed of that day but for God's saints in all ages. A Scottish divine writes, “It is the balance of all the attributes of Deity--power without holiness would degenerate into cruelty; omniscience without holiness would become craft; justice without holiness would degenerate into revenge; and goodness without holiness would be passionate and intemperate fondness doing mischief rather than accomplishing good.”

Jehovah-jireh (God will provide)

Jehovah's great provision for man's redemption in the sacrifice of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jehovah-M'Kaddesh (The Lord who Sanctifies)

The word kaddesh is “to set apart or separate.” The idea is most nearly rendered by the words sanctify or hallow, and the word holy stands for that which is hallowed or set apart. It is the glory and beauty of His holiness that God wishes to impart.

Jehovah-nissi (The Lord My Banner)

A banner, in ancient times, was not necessarily a flag such as we use nowadays. The word here for banner is translated variously as pole, ensign, standard, and among the Jews it is also a word for miracle. As an ensign or standard it was a signal to God's people to rally to Him. It stood for His cause, His battle. It was a sign of deliverance, of salvation. Jehovah is the banner of our warfare, and God's mighty power in redemption.

Jehovah-rohi (The Lord My Shepherd)

Rohi means to feed or lead to pasture, as a shepherd does his flock. Jehovah-rohi is not only the Shepherd of His people, He is my shepherd. As the God of the individual He is intensely personal.

Jehovah-rophe (The Lord That Heals)

Rophe means to restore, to heal, to cure, or a physician, not only in the physical sense but in the moral and spiritual sense also. The will, and the power, and the longing are present in Jehovah to heal.

Jehovah-shalom (The Lord Is Peace)

Jehovah in His own person is perfect peace. This He must be if He is to be the source of peace to mankind.

Jehovah-shammah (The Lord Is There)

Jehovah-shammah is the promise and pledge of the completion of that purpose in man's final rest and glory, for man's end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Jehovah-tsidkenu (The Lord Our Righteousness)

Tsidkenu signifies God's dealings with men under the ideas of righteousness, justification, and acquittal. The manifestation and provision of that righteousness of Jehovah which alone can make men acceptable to God was fully realized in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Elohim revealed God to us as the triune Creator
and Sovereign of the universe, of life, and of all nations.

As Jehovah, He was seen as the eternal, self-existent God
of revelation and especially as the God of His covenant people.

The name El-Shaddai revealed Him as mighty, sufficient, and satisfying One. As

Adonai, He was seen as our sovereign Lord,
the Master of our lives and service. Jehovah-jireh revealed Him
as the One who provides the sacrificial lamb of our redemption.

Jehovah-rophe revealed Him as the Healer
of life's sicknesses and sorrows.

In Jehovah-nissi He was seen as the standard of our victory
in life's conflicts. As Jehovah-M'Kaddesh He sets His people
apart for His own peculiar possession and to His holy service.

As Jehovah-shalom, He is the God of our peace.

And as Jehovah-tsidkenu He Himself is that righteousness
to His people which alone is the basis of their justification
and acceptance. As Jehovah-rohi, He is our Shepherd.

Jehovah-shammah revealed Him as the promise
of man's final rest and glory.

God's Program: Your Kingdom Come

The second request that we direct to the Father about the Father is not only devoted to the person of God but also to the program of God. The second request is "Your Kingdom come." Jesus was speaking here about His future messianic reign on the earth. So when we pray, "Your Kingdom come," we look toward to that time when God's messianic kingdom prophesied throughout the Old Testament will be established by Jesus' return to earth. As we pray, we direct our gaze to the day when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. When we pray, "Your kingdom come," we also ask for something else. We plead that on the small bit of earth we occupy now, we will submit our will to God's will. When we pray, "Your kingdom come," we

acknowledge God's right to rule all people, including us. Unless I am sufficiently concerned about God's sovereignty to make my life His throne, and make it my daily purpose to bring every individual whose life I touch into willing and glad submission to Him, I cannot pray these words with integrity. We dare not pray for His rule over others unless we honestly desire His rule over us.

Thy kingdom come . . .

The petitioner asks for the establishment of God's rule, not only in its consummation in the age to come, but in lives and in situations now.

From the Spirit Filled Life Bible

God's Purpose: Your Will Be Done

We are to pray for the person of God, that His name will be hallowed; for the program of God, that His kingdom will come; and for the purpose of God, that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Praying for His will to be done provides us a foundation for our prayers. We must recognize the importance of conforming our will to His will. Prayer is not getting God to do my will; it is asking that God's will be done in my life, my family, my business, and in my relationships, as it is done in heaven.

Prayer is not an argument with God to persuade Him to move things our way, but an exercise by which we are enabled by His Spirit to move ourselves His way.

Leonard Ravenhill

God's Provision: Give Us Our Daily Bread

When Jesus taught us to pray, He gave us a comprehensive blueprint to follow. The first three requests deal with God's glory. The last three requests deal with the family of God. While the petitions to the Father talk about His Name, His kingdom, and His will, the last three requests have to do with us: "Give us, forgive us, and lead us." After we have prayed for what is cosmic and eternal, we are to pray about that which is temporal.

The word translated "daily" is found only once in the Bible. Strong's defines the Greek word "daily" to mean "subsistence, i.e. needful." Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible

The focus of the request is for daily bread. The word bread refers to the food that sustains our bodies. In the larger sense, bread refers to all that we must have to live. Our Father in heaven concerns Himself with the items on a grocery list. Food for our next meal matters to Him. When we pray, "Give us our daily bread," we ask for others in the family as well as ourselves. If I pray this prayer in sincerity, it delivers me from selfishness and hoarding. If the Father supplies me with two loaves and my brother or sister with none, I understand that God has indeed answered our prayers. My extra loaf is not for storing, but for sharing.

God's Pardon: Forgive Us Our Sins

After we ask the Father for provision, we ask for pardon: "Forgive us our sins." Forgive follows give.

To sin is human, to forgive divine. We are never closer to God's grace than when we admit our sin and cry out for pardon. We are never more like God than when, for Christ's sake, we extend forgiveness fully and freely to those who have sinned against us.

Haddon W. Robinson

Augustine labeled this request "the terrible petition" because if we pray, "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us," and at the same time harbor an unforgiving spirit, we are actually asking God not to forgive us. Think of how the confession of sin works. If I honestly pray for forgiveness, then I revise my estimate of myself downward on the scale, and I admit my own sin and guilt. Without that, I can regard myself as so important, so dignified, so honorable that it would be unthinkable to forgive anyone who dared offend someone as righteous as I; that is self-righteousness. Forgive as you have been forgiven.

God's Protection: Do Not Lead Us Into Temptation

Why should we have to ask God not to lead us into temptation? To ask Him to keep us out of temptation would be more understandable. Professor D.A. Carson suggests that Jesus is using a figure of speech called litotes, which expresses something positive by negating its opposite. For example, if I say, "This is no small matter," I mean it is a big matter. When we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," then, we are really crying out, "Keep me away from temptation." We are praying, "Don't let Satan ambush me. Don't let the foe of our souls catch us in his trap." We are recognizing that God has the power to lead us past all the lures to sin that threaten us; then we are asking, "If the opportunity to sin presents itself, grant that I will not have the desire. If the desire springs up within me, grant that I will not have the opportunity."

When tempted, no one should say,
"God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil,
nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when,
by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then,
after desire has conceived it gives birth to sin; and sin,
when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

James 1:13-15

When we pray "Deliver us from the evil one," we recognize Satan's power, affirm our weakness, and plead for the greater power of God.

God's Preeminence: The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory

The Lord's Prayer, as we commonly recite it, concludes with a trumpet blast of praise. "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." Since those words seem like an appropriate and fitting way for the prayer to end, it is somewhat unsettling to discover that the sentence does not appear in the earliest and best manuscripts of either Matthew or Luke. Evidently, the doxology was not part of the prayer as Jesus originally gave it. In fact, it appears for the first time in the second and third centuries.

While this doxology may not have been directly spoken by Jesus, it can claim broad biblical support. After King David assembled the building materials for the future temple, he declared, "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty . . . Yours is the kingdom" (1 Chronicles 29:11). Echoes of this doxology vibrate at the end of time in the chant of the four living creatures, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!" (Revelation 5:13). The affirmation makes a fitting conclusion to the prayer: "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (Matthew 6:13).

The doxology, however, is not an assumption that we must accept in order to pray, but rather a confidence to which repeated prayer draws us. When God's kingdom and the dignity of God's name get first emphasis in our lives, then money and bottom lines stop bringing us anxiety and strife. Then, and only then, as we ask for daily bread, we recognize that apart from God full stomachs often come with empty hearts. Through prayer we experience that God actually forgives our sin - not simply shuts His eyes to our disobedience - and provides us with power to forgive others and lead us away from Satan's traps. In a life of prayer we discover a Father rich and generous and inexhaustible beyond measure: His is the kingdom and the power and the glory.

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness,
the power
and the glory,
the victory
and
the majesty . . .
1 Chronicles 29:11

CHAPTER Four Intimate Worship

The contention we face daily in our prayer time is whether we go with "all form and no freedom or no form all freedom." Kenneth Boa in his book *Face to Face*, speaks of this predicament: "The problem with prayer is heightened by the fact that people often succumb either to the extreme of all form and no freedom, or the opposite extreme of all freedom and no form. The first extreme leads to a rote or impersonal approach to prayer,

while the second produces an unbalanced and undisciplined prayer life that can degenerate into a litany of one gimme after another.”

This chapter deals practically with the teaching found in chapter three--Model for Personal Prayer. This could be viewed as “all form and no freedom” but even using this model (form) gives way to freedom as you will see. For all practical purposes, we will use the word “outline” when we speak of the model of The Lord’s Prayer. The outline is as follows:

1. “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your Name”
Adoration (praise for who God is)
Thanksgiving (praise for what God has done)
2. “Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is
in heaven”
Surrender (yielding to His rule and will)
3. “Give us our daily bread”
Petition for our needs
Intercession for others’ needs
4. “And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors”
Confession of sin
5. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one”
Protection from evil
6. “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever”
Acknowledgement of His preeminence

The next several pages of this chapter are divided into two sections: A 7- Day Devotional and the Journal of Prayers.

7 Day Devotional

The “7-Day Devotional” is designed to pray the Bible to God. Because it is based on the Word of God, you can be assured that you are praying His will. The devotional is divided into six categories: Adoration/Thanksgiving, Surrender, Petition/Intercession, Confession, Protection, and Acknowledgement. After each entry, the words Meditate, Search, Petition, or Pause will follow. This is the time for personal reflection.

Journal of Prayers

After using the 7 Day Devotional, you are encouraged to find Scriptures that fit each of the six categories so that your devotional time will become personal. Adapt Scriptures into prayers and add your name or pronoun to its text to make it personal. Write down your prayers and when you see God answering your requests, thank Him. (Make copies of the Journal Page.)

Suggestion:

Disciple other men in this method and begin sharing your devotionals with them. As they become comfortable with this method, ask them to share their devotions with the group.

This will expand the groups' knowledge of the Scriptures and challenge others to pray some of the same Scriptures for themselves.

Prayer is calling one into a deeper
place of worship--
beyond the veil,
beyond the courts,
past the throne,
until the only words on your lips
as you seek His face are . . .
My Beloved King,
I want only you.

7 Day Devotional

DAY 1

Adoration
(Praise for who God is)

For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary. Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. -Psalm 96:4-9

Meditate on Him. Make the Scripture personal by addressing Him in the first person. (The prayer below is an example of how to make the above Scripture personal.)

You are great and most worthy of praise, O Lord.
You are to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the nations are idols,
But You made the heavens.
Splendor and majesty are before You;
Strength and beauty are in your sanctuary.
I will ascribe to You glory and strength.
I will ascribe to You the glory due Your Name
and worship you in the beauty of Your holiness.
-Psalm 96:4-9

Thanksgiving
(Praise for what God has done)

O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago. -Isaiah 25:1

Pause to give thanks.

Surrender

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. -Matthew 6:33

Pause to add your own words to this prayer of surrender.

Confession

And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. -Hebrews 12:5-8

Search and confess as the Holy Spirit brings to mind sin.

Petition (for our needs)

Intercession (for the needs of others)

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. -Matthew 6:7-8

Petition God for spiritual needs, physical needs, emotional needs, and mental needs.
Intercede for others' needs.

Protection

Hear my prayer, O LORD; listen to my cry for mercy. In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me. For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God. -Psalm 86:6-7; 10

Ask God for His power and protection today.

Acknowledgement

Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you-- majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? -Exodus 15:11

Pause to consider His preeminence, His worth, His person, and His authority.

DAY 2

Adoration

(Praise for who God is)

I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together. -Psalm 34:1-3

Meditate on Him. Make the Scripture personal by addressing Him in the first person.

Thanksgiving

(Praise for what God has done)

I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. - Psalm 34:4;17

Pause to give thanks.

Surrender

Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning. -Psalm 30:4-5

Pause to add your own words to this prayer of surrender.

Confession

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. - Matthew 6:14-15

Search and confess as the Holy Spirit brings to mind sin.

Petition (for our needs)

Intercession (for the needs of others)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. -Philippians 2:3-4

Petition God for spiritual needs, physical needs, emotional needs, and mental needs. Intercede for others' needs.

Protection

Hear us, O our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders. -Nehemiah 4:4-5

Ask God for His power and protection today.

Acknowledgement

The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.

Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the LORD, O my soul. -Psalm 103:19-22

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! -Psalm 8:3-9

Pause to consider His preeminence, His worth, His person, and His authority.

DAY 3

Adoration

(Praise for who God is)

Praise the LORD. Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD. Let the name of the LORD be praised, both now and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the LORD is to be praised. The LORD is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens. Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people. He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the LORD. -Psalm 113

Meditate on Him. Make the Scripture personal by addressing Him in the first person.

Thanksgiving

(Praise for what God has done)

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. -Psalm 103:2-5

Pause to give thanks.

Surrender

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." -Matthew 4:19

Pause to add your own words to this prayer of surrender.

Confession

All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD. - Proverbs 16:2

Search and confess as the Holy Spirit brings to mind sin.

PEtition (for our needs)

Intercession (for the needs of others)

Do not profane my holy name. I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the LORD, who makes you holy. -Leviticus 22:32

Petition God for spiritual needs, physical needs, emotional needs, and mental needs. Intercede for others' needs.

Protection

I will set before my eyes no vile thing. The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me. Men of perverse heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil. No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.

Every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land; I will cut off every evildoer from the city of the LORD. -Psalm 101:3,4,7, 8

Ask God for His power and protection today.

Acknowledgement

For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted. -Psalm 47:7-9

It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts. -Isaiah 45:12

For this is what the LORD says--he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited--he says: "I am the LORD, and there is no other." -Isaiah 45:12;18

Pause to consider His preeminence, His worth, His person, and His authority.

DAY 4

Adoration

(Praise for who God is)

Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." -Revelation 4:9-11

Meditate on Him. Make the Scripture personal by addressing Him in the first person.

Thanksgiving

(Praise for what God has done)

God's voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding. -Job 37:5

Pause to give thanks.

Surrender

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. -Matthew 5:3-10

Pause to add your own words to this prayer of surrender.

Confession

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent. -Isaiah 5:21-23

Search and confess as the Holy Spirit brings to mind sin.

Petition (for our needs)

Intercession (for the needs of others)

Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time. -Deuteronomy 4:40

Petition God for spiritual needs, physical needs, emotional needs, and mental needs. Intercede for others' needs.

Protection

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." -Matthew 26:41

Ask God for His power and protection today.

Acknowledgement

To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. -Deuteronomy 10:14

Pause to consider His preeminence, His worth, His person, and His authority.

DAY 5

Adoration

(Praise for who God is)

I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds. They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

-Psalm 145:1-7

Meditate on Him. Make the Scripture personal by addressing Him in the first person.

Thanksgiving

(Praise for what God has done)

The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. -Psalm 145:8-9

Pause to give thanks.

Surrender

Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. -Matthew 6:1

Pause to add your own words to this prayer of surrender.

Confession

In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah (pause). Offer right sacrifices and trust in the LORD. -Psalm 4:4-5

Search and confess as the Holy Spirit brings to mind sin.

Petition (for our needs)

Intercession (for the needs of others)

I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. -Psalm 119:10

Petition God for spiritual needs, physical needs, emotional needs, and mental needs. Intercede for others' needs.

Protection

The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him. -Ezra 8:22

Ask God for His power and protection today.

Acknowledgement

Who should not revere you, O King of the nations? This is your due. Among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like you. They are all senseless and foolish; they are taught by worthless wooden idols.

But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure his wrath. "Tell them this: These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth, will perish from the earth and from under the heavens." But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.

When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses. - Jeremiah 10:7-8; 10-13

Pause to consider His preeminence, His worth, His person, and His authority.

DAY 6

Adoration

(Praise for who God is)

As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." -Daniel 7:9-10

Meditate on Him. Make the Scripture personal by addressing Him in the first person.

Thanksgiving

(Praise for what God has done)

Praise the LORD. I will extol the LORD with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly. Great are the works of the LORD; they are pondered by all who delight in them. Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever. He has caused his wonders to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and

compassionate. He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever. He has shown his people the power of his works, giving them the lands of other nations. The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. They are steadfast for ever and ever, done in faithfulness and uprightness. He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever-- holy and awesome is his name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise. -Psalm 111

Pause to give thanks.

Surrender

“Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you--and even more.” -Mark 4:24

Pause to add your own words to this prayer of surrender.

Confession

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. -Psalm 51:1-4

Search and confess as the Holy Spirit brings to mind sin.

Petition (for our needs)

Intercession (for the needs of others)

As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. -1 Samuel 12:23

Petition God for spiritual needs, physical needs, emotional needs, and mental needs.
Intercede for others' needs.

Protection

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. -Isaiah 43:1-2

Ask God for His power and protection today.

Acknowledgement

Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen! -Revelation 7:12

Pause to consider His preeminence, His worth, His person, and His authority.

DAY 7

Adoration

(Praise for who God is)

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." -Revelation 1:8

Meditate on Him. Make the Scripture personal by addressing Him in the first person.

Thanksgiving

(Praise for what God has done)

I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations. -Isaiah 61:10-11

Pause to give thanks.

Surrender

I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps. Correct me, LORD, but only with justice--not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing. -Jeremiah 10:23-24

Pause to add your own words to this prayer of surrender.

Confession

"This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word." -Isaiah 66:2

Search and confess as the Holy Spirit brings to mind sin.

Petition (for our needs)
Intercession (for the needs of others)

Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings. Selah. (Pause)

For you have heard my vows, O God; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name. Increase the days of the king's life, his years for many generations. May he be enthroned in God's presence forever; appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him. Then will I ever sing praise to your name and fulfill my vows day after day.
-Psalm 61:1-8

Petition God for spiritual needs, physical needs, emotional needs, and mental needs.
Intercede for others' needs.

Protection

My enemies turn back; they stumble and perish before you. For you have upheld my right and my cause; you have sat on your throne, judging righteously. -Psalm 9:3-4

Ask God for His power and protection today.

Acknowledgement

Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.' -Daniel 7:27

Pause to consider His preeminence, His worth, His person, and His authority.

Journal of Prayers

It was prayer that set the agenda for Jesus' ministry;
prayer preceded the miracles;
prayer brought Him encouragement at critical moments;
prayer enabled Him to go to the cross;
and prayer kept Him there despite excruciating pain."
-Henry Blackaby

Paul was taken advantage of in 1 Thessalonians 2:18. Satan gained on him (pleonekteo) in the ongoing war over spreading the gospel: “For we wanted to come to you - I, Paul, more than once and yet Satan thwarted us.” The verse clearly states that Satan hindered his plans. We know Paul won more battles than he lost but at times Satan blocked his goings.

Two more verses give additional insight into what we will label as “watchman prayer.” The first is Ephesians 6:18: “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. The Kings James Version uses the word “watching” for the phrase “be on the alert.”

The second verse is found in 1 Peter 5:8, “Be sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” Again, other translations use the word “watchful.”

Four conclusions are to be drawn:

- 1) Protection from the attacks of our enemy - even for believers - is not automatic.
- 2) God’s plan is to warn or alert us to Satan’s tactics.
- 3) We must be alert - remain watchful - or we won’t be aware of God’s attempts to warn us of Satan’s attacks and plans.
- 4) If we are not alert and watchful, if we are ignorant of Satan’s schemes, he will take a bigger portion.

The context of the above verses is spiritual warfare. Each mentions our adversary and challenges us to alertness or watchfulness.

Definition of Watchman

The three primary Hebrew words in the Old Testament for watchman are natsar, shamar, and tsaphah. These words have both a defensive or protective connotation and an offensive or aggressive application. Combining the definitions of these three words, which are used almost synonymously, their defensive concept essentially means to guard or protect through watching or concealing. While applied to many subjects - crops, people, cities, etc. - the concept is usually preservation. The New Testament Greek word for “watching,” gregoreuo and agrupneo, also refers to protection but they have the literal meanings of “being awake” or “sleepless.” The picture is that of a sentry, lookout or night watchman who is supposed to remain awake and alert, watching for signs of trouble, hence the translation at times “be on the alert” (see Luke 21:36, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Ephesians 6:18, 1 Peter 5:8).

Defensive or Protective Connotation

The defensive or protective aspect of a watchman is the most prominent in the Scriptures. Its meaning depicts a protecting, keeping, guarding, preserving, gatekeeping by covering in prayer. Watchmen build boundaries of protection around others through intercession.

Protector

Protect or protector are translations of the Hebrew words for “watchman.” The English word protect comes from two Latin words: pro, meaning “before,” and tego, meaning “to cover; to cover or shield from danger or injury.”

Keeper

Keep and keeper are also ways the words are used. Adam was instructed to keep (shamar) the garden (see Genesis 2:15). He was the watchman, assigned by God to protect what was given him, keeping it from the serpent. Keeping the serpent out of our gardens is the primary assignment of watchmen.

Guard

Guard or bodyguard are also usages of the watchman words. We must guard carefully that which is entrusted to us.

Doorkeeper and Gatekeeper

Two more protective usages of the watchman words are doorkeeper and gatekeeper. We are responsible and able to determine who or what is allowed into homes, churches, cities, etc.

Preserver

Preserving and preserver (to keep in the same state; keep from decay or spoilage) and maintain are also watchman words. Watchman are maintenance people. They maintain things, keeping them in good operating condition.

Offensive or Aggressive Application

There is more to the watchman anointing than defensive or protective connotations. There is also an offensive or aggressive aspect of watching. The Hebrew words are translated “to besiege,” “spy” and “ambush” (see Judges 1:24; 2 Samuel 11:16; Isaiah 1:8; Jeremiah 4:17; Psalms 56:6; 71:10) because all of these involve watching.

Role of the Watchman

Let’s broaden our understanding of Biblical watchman by looking at the two most prominent contextual usages of the word in the Old Testament:

- * Watching over and protecting crops
- * Watchmen on the walls of cities

First, those who watched crops were stationed on rocks, buildings or towers to provide a better range of vision. Towers or outposts in the fields usually had sleeping quarters because it was necessary to keep watch day and night during the harvest. The watchman would take shifts - one working, one sleeping - and thereby “watch” 24 hours a day. (Seasons of harvest necessitate a more urgent need for watchmen, as the “thief” is going to do all he can to steal the harvest and keep the greater portion -John 10:10.)

Secondly, watchman were also posted on the city walls usually near the gates, where they functioned as sentries (Isaiah 21:6-8; Jeremiah 51:12; Isaiah 62:6). From the walls of the cities, they watched for two things: messengers and enemies. Their purpose in watching for messengers was to inform the gatekeepers when to open the gates and when to keep

them closed. (Seasoned watchmen are often alerted by the Holy Spirit, before ever having any concrete evidence, that certain messengers are not to be trusted -Hebrews 5:14.)

The Watchman's Ally

The single greatest key to eternal success in any Christian endeavor is allowing the full work of the Holy Spirit in and through us. It is He, the Spirit of the Living God, who guides us, empowers us, illuminates our minds with insights into the mind of Christ. We must become increasingly led and instructed by the Holy Spirit. Watchmen watch Him! He was Christ's helper, and He must be ours as well. Jesus was filled with, led, empowered and anointed by the Holy Spirit (see Luke 4). Acts 10:38 again says Christ derived His power from the Holy Spirit, and our power flows from the same source - the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:8). How tremendous is the power available to us who believe in God. The Holy Spirit has been sent to help us in every aspect of our life and ministry. He is the key to success! We must lean heavily on Him, watchmen!

CHAPTER Six **Praying Children into** **God's Kingdom**

Have you given much thought to why some come to Christ sooner than others? Could it be someone is praying?

This chapter deals with praying your children into God's kingdom. It begins at the beginning (Genesis) and makes a case throughout Scripture for praying for the lost.

Genesis 1— In the beginning

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness (Genesis 1:26) . . .’” The Hebrew word for image (tsalem) is the concept of a shadow and the word likeness in the Hebrew (demuwth) is to compare. Adam was to be similar to, or comparable to God. When creation looked at Adam, they were supposed to see God. The Bible states that humankind is the glory of God (1 Cor. 11:7). The word for “glory” in the Greek is doxa or the concept of recognition. God was to be recognized in humans so that humans could accurately represent Him.

Without giving away ownership, God gave rulership of creation to humankind: “. . . and let them rule over the fish, birds of the air, over livestock, over all the earth . . .” (Genesis 1:26). The Hebrew word for “rule” is mashal or manager, steward, governor, mediator, or go-between. Adam represented God with full authority and was to manage and rule for Him (Psalm 115:16). God chose, from the time of creation, to work through humans, not independent of them.

THE FALL OF MAN

Genesis 2:1-7 describes the fall of humankind. Adam sinned and fell short of the glory of God. God was no longer recognized in fallen humankind. So complete and final was Adam's authority over the earth that he, not just God, had the ability to give it away to

another. Adam gave away the earth's dominion to Satan. (Jesus called Satan 'the ruler of this world' three times in the Gospel of John—12:31; 14:30; 16:11.) So complete and final was God's decision to do things on earth through human beings that it cost God the Incarnation to regain what Adam gave away. God became one of us. Though God is sovereign and all-powerful, Scripture clearly tells us that He limited Himself concerning the affairs of earth to working through humans. He limited Himself and became man." Jesus "is the image of the invisible God . . . For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him" (Colossians 1:15; 19). He came to represent God to the world. He came to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). He came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

Jesus came to take back authority. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me" (Matthew 28:18). This power and authority He now gives to His followers. "When Jesus had called the Twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1). In Luke 10:19, Jesus speaks to His disciples saying, "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." We, as believers, have been given authority to overcome all the power of the enemy.

THE WAR FOR SOULS

. . . the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.
-1 John 5:19

Fight the good fight! Put on the full armor! The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world! These admonitions from Scripture reveal the truth about the invisible and the raging battle the human race faces. The whole world lies in the grip of the enemy. Yet, it is not a battle that can be fought on human terms. It is a spiritual battle and must be fought with weapons of divine power for ". . . we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they are divine power to demolish strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:3-4). A stronghold is a place from which to hold something strongly. Satan has a place of strength within unbelievers from which he can hold on to them strongly.

Hence . . .

- all are born under the power of Satan, living in darkness, in the kingdom of darkness. "I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins . . ." (Acts 26:18). ". . . the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19).
- all are born blinded to the Gospel. "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:3,4). The word veil in the Greek (kalupsis) means "to hide, cover up, wrap around." The word blinded (tuphloo) means "to dull the intellect." From the same root comes a word (tuphoo) that is

used for being high-minded, proud or inflated with self-conceit. There is a definite connection between blindness and pride. Sometimes we talk people into a salvation prayer without true illumination or revelation (unveiling), but there is no real change. The reason is that there is no true biblical repentance which only comes from biblical revelation. Repentance means to have a “new knowledge or understanding—a change of mind.”

- Jesus came to defeat the works of Satan. “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work” (1 John 3:8).
- Jesus gave believers a weapon to war for the souls of man. 1 Timothy 2:1-4—“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone . . . [God] wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth.” The Hebrew word for intercession *para*, means “to meet”—we meet with God asking Him to meet with someone else.

PRAYER—A WEAPON OF WARFARE

The passage in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 says that the god of this world (Satan) has placed “a veil or covering over the minds of unbelievers that keeps them from clearly seeing the light of the gospel. It is important to know they don’t see the gospel because they can’t see it. They don’t understand it because they can’t understand it. What unbelievers hear is filtered through a belief system—a veil—that causes them to hear something totally different. This means that unbelievers don’t hear what we are saying, they hear what we are saying plus what they already believe. The fourth verse of 2 Corinthians 4 clearly states this: “that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” They simply do not see the same “image” of Christ as we do.

Armed with the weapon of prayer comes the divine power to demolish these strongholds. “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

- Speculations—*logismos*. This word speaks of their accumulated reasoning, wisdom or logic. *Logismos* is the sum total of the accumulated wisdom and information learned over time. It becomes what one really believes.
- High thing (KJV)—*hupsoma*. The word means “any elevated place or thing” and is the same root word for “Most High” God.
- Thought—*noema*. This word means plans, schemes, devices or plots. It refers to the spontaneous thoughts and temptation Satan uses to assault the unbelievers, as well as the schemes and plans he uses to keep them in darkness.

In intercession we must boldly declare that no weapon of Satan’s will prosper—the weapon of speculations, the weapon of high things, and the weapon of thoughts. We must bind his plans and stand against them through prayer. We can and should pray that unbelievers be shielded from Satan’s thoughts and temptations.

THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Pray the following for those who are perishing:

- That God would lift the veil over _____ and give revelation and enlightenment.
- For the Holy Spirit to hover over _____ and protect _____
- For godly people to be in _____'s pathway.
- To cast down anything that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God, specifically pride and rebellion. (This is the hupsoma dimension of the stronghold.)
- To take down all known strongholds—thought patterns, opinions on religion, materialism, fear, etc. (This is the logismos dimension of the stronghold.)
- To bind Satan from taking captive; to bind all wicked thoughts and lies Satan would try to place in _____'s mind. (These would be the noema aspect of the stronghold.)
- That the armor of God would be placed on _____.”

These are other Scripture verses you can pray through:

—drawn to Jesus
(John 6:44).

—be saved
(Romans 10:1).

—not be blinded from the truth by Satan
(2 Cor. 4:4).

—seek to know God
(Acts 17:27).

—convicted of sin and guided in all truth by the Holy Spirit
(John 16:8, 13).

—repent of their sin and turn to God
(Acts 3:19).

—humbly seek Christ
(John 7:37-38).

—act with God's wisdom
(Daniel 2:20).

—follow Jesus
(Mark 2:14).

—uphold righteousness
(Isaiah 11:2-4).

—hear the Word of God
(Acts 13:7).

CHAPTER Seven **Praying the Proverbs** **for Children**

The greatest inheritance you can give a child is passing on a godly heritage. To impart godly character is a learned as well as taught behavior. Your child is watching you, studying you, and imitating you. It has been said, “Like father, like son.”

On a recent newsmagazine documentary, a young man (20 years of age), serving life in prison for a heinous crime, was being interviewed about his childhood. While speaking about his father’s infamous lifestyle, he said this profound and jarring statement. “I died the minute my father was born.”

This indeed is profound in that this young man was not a Christian yet saw and felt the adverse effects of an ungodly heritage.

Living and Praying by the Sword

With parenting comes the grave responsibility for the care, love and guidance of your child(ren). In the Old Testament, the Word is clear that spiritual responsibility for your child lies solely in your care.

Deut. 4:9-10 (KJV)

“Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; Specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that hey shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.”

Deut. 11:18-19 (GW)

“Take these words of mine to heart and keep them in mind. {Write them down}, tie them around your wrist, and wear them as headbands as a reminder. Teach them to your children, and talk about them when you're at home or away, when you lie down or get up.”

There is a direct correlation between these two Scriptures:

1. You learn to fear Me.
2. You take these words of mine to heart and keep them in mind and then teach them to your children. The responsibility for your spiritual growth is directly linked to your child’s. He will better understand “obedience” if he watches you walk in

obedience. This carries over into all areas of life. If you desire your child to love their spouse, love yours! If you desire your child be a servant, serve! If you desire your child to be a responsible citizen, don't be a lawbreaker! Your child is watching you, studying you, imitating you. Like father, like son, like daughter!

Joshua of old, made a qualifying decision that carried weight with the people of God who were watching, studying, and imitating.

Joshua 24:14-15 (KJV)

“Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Joshua 24:21 (KJV)

“And the people said unto Joshua, ‘Nay; but we will serve the Lord.’”

Praying the Proverbs

Proverbs is a compilation of timeless words of wise men concerning the way to conduct one's life in terms of what is right and what is prudent. It speaks on everyday life issues leaving circumspect to its reader as to what path to follow. It is in this book of wisdom that we will develop a unique prayer strategy geared to raising godly leaders who will lead exemplary Christian lives.

The theme of Proverbs is found in its first chapter. It will be in this context that we begin our prayers for the young leaders of tomorrow--our children--to grasp wisdom and discipline, to understand deep thoughts, to acquire the discipline of wise behavior, righteousness, justice and fairness, to give insight to others, and to give knowledge & foresight to the young.

Proverbs 1:1-6

“The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; to know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; to give subtilty to the simple; to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels . . .”

Praying With Power

Recognizing the power of God's Word (Hebrews 4:12), pray the Word with earnestness, fervency, and energy, releasing God's power into your petitions because “the prayer of a righteous man is POWERFUL and EFFECTIVE” (James 5:16). God's Word shall not

return void but shall accomplish what He desires and shall achieve the purpose for which it is sent (Isaiah 55:12).

Begin each day by praying one or two proverbs over your child(ren).

Example prayer:

Lord, I begin my time of intercession for others by bringing to you my child(ren) and asking that you bring revelation (understanding) to their mind, soul, spirit and body on how to best please You in their moral and spiritual obligation. May they never become fools who despise Your wisdom and instruction but always consider Your Word and act accordingly. Bring wisdom, bring wisdom, bring wisdom as they learn to fear You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Example prayer:

Almighty Father, deliver my child(ren) from the evil one and lead them not into temptation for they are but mere children prone to wander. Let not evil men entice these, nor allow them to walk in their evil ways but keep them close to Your breast, reliant upon Your love, Your affirmation and Your sufficiency. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Week One

Day 1

Proverbs 1:1-3, AMP I pray that you, my child, may know skill and godly wisdom and instruction, so that you may be always discerning, always comprehending the words of understanding and insight.

Day 2

Proverbs 1:4-5, AMP May God give to you prudence, knowledge, discretion, and discernment in your youth. May you also be granted wisdom that you might increase in learning. As a person of increased learning, may you acquire skill and attend to sound counsel so that your course will be steered by God. [Proverbs 9:9]

Day 3

Proverbs 1:7, AMP May God create within you a reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord for this is the beginning, the principal, the choice part of knowledge. [Psalm 111:10]

Day 4

Proverbs 1:8, AMP I pray that you will hear and obey always the instruction of your father and will not forsake the teaching of your mother.

Day 5 Proverbs 1:10;14, AMP I pray that you, when sinners entice you, will not consent to their leading. When they insist that you become a comrade in their escapades, I pray that you will not walk in the way with them, but always restrain your foot from their path (Psalm 1:1; Ephesians 5:11).

Day 6

Proverbs 1:33, AMP May God hearken you to His wisdom so that you dwell securely and in confident trust, without fear or dread of evil.

Day 7

Proverbs 2:1-6, AMP I pray that you make your ears attentive to skillful and godly wisdom and incline and direct your heart and mind to understanding, [applying all

powers to the quest for it], that you cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, that you seek wisdom as for silver and search for skillful and godly wisdom as for hidden treasures, then you will grasp the reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of [our omniscient] God.

Week 2

Day 1 Proverbs 2:11-12, AMP I thank God that discretion shall watch over you, and understanding shall keep you to deliver you from the way of evil.

Day 2 Proverbs 2:20, AMP I pray that you walk in the way of good men and keep to the paths of the [consistently] righteous, in right standing with God.

Day 3 Proverbs 3:1-4, AMP I beseech You, Father, that mercy and kindness [shutting out all hatred and selfishness] and truth [shutting out all deliberate hypocrisy or falsehood] will be written on my child's heart. Then my child will find favor, good understanding, and high esteem in the sight of God and man (Colossians 3:9-12).

Day 4 Proverbs 3:5-6, AMP I ask that You, Jesus, create within my child a sense of dependence upon You so that he always leans on, trusts in, and is confident in the You with all his heart and mind and does not rely on his own insight or understanding but rather knows, recognizes and acknowledges You in all his ways and You will direct and make straight and plain his paths.

Day 5 Proverbs 3:7, AMP May my child not be wise in his own eyes; but reverently fear and worship the Lord and turn [entirely] away from evil (Proverbs 8:13).

Day 6 Proverbs 3:9-10, AMP I ask that the Holy Spirit give you, my child, a spirit of generosity and that you honor the Lord first with your capital and sufficiency [from righteous labors] and with the firstfruits of all your income so that your storage places be filled with plenty, and your vats shall be overflowing with new wine (Deut. 26:2; Mal. 3:10; Luke 14:13, 14; Deut. 28:8).

Day 7 Proverbs 3:11-12, AMP For whom God loves He corrects, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights. May you not despise or shrink from the chastening of the Lord [His correction by punishment or by subjection to suffering or trial]; neither be weary of or impatient about or loathe or abhor His reproof.

Week 3

Day 1 Proverbs 3:13-14, AMP God's Word says, "The profit from gaining wisdom is better than fine gold." I pray that my child finds skillful and godly wisdom and gets understanding [drawing it forth from God's Word and life's experiences].

Day 2 Proverbs 3:21-23, AMP May you not lose sight of sound and godly wisdom and discretion, that they be life to your inner self and a gracious ornament to your neck [your outer self] for then you will walk in your way securely and in confident trust and you shall not dash your foot or stumble (Psalm 91:11, 12; Proverbs 10:9).

Day 3 Proverbs 3:25-26, AMP The Lord will be your confidence, firm and strong and shall keep your foot from being caught [in a trap or some hidden danger]. I pray that you, my child, will not be afraid of sudden terror and panic, nor the stormy blast or the storm and ruin of the wicked when it comes [for you will be guiltless], but rather place your confidence in Christ alone.

Day 4 Proverbs 3:27, AMP May you not withhold good from those to whom it is due [its rightful owner], when it is in the power of your hand to do it, my child (Romans 13:7; Galatians 6:10).

Day 5 Proverbs 3:29-31 AMP In Jesus' Name may my child not contrive or dig up or cultivate evil against his neighbor who dwells trustingly and confidently beside him, or contend with a man for no reason when he has done him no wrong or resentfully envy and be jealous of an unscrupulous, grasping man or chose his ways.

Day 6 Proverbs 4:8-9, AMP I beseech You, Father, that my child will prize wisdom highly and will exalt her for wisdom exalts and promotes and brings honor to those who embrace her; wisdom will give your head, my child, a wreath of gracefulness and a crown of beauty and glory.

Day 7 Proverbs 4:14-15, AMP I pray that my child not enter into the path of the wicked nor go in the way of evil men, that he would avoid it, turn from it and pass on.

Week 4

Day 1 Proverbs 4:23, AMP I ask the Holy Spirit to keep and guard your heart with all diligence as He teaches you, my child, to keep guard of your heart with all diligence for out of your heart flows the springs of life.

Day 2 Proverbs 4:24-27, AMP I thank You, Father, that you will put away from my child false and dishonest speech and willful and contrary talk; that his eyes will be fixed with purpose, that he will consider the path of his feet, letting all his ways be established and ordered aright by Him.

Day 3 Proverbs 5:2, AMP I pray that you, my child, may exercise proper discrimination and discretion; that your lips may guard and keep knowledge.

Day 4 Proverbs 5:18, AMP (Prayer for your son) My son, may you drink from the waters of your own cistern [of a pure marriage relationship], confine yourself to your own wife, be blessed [with the rewards of fidelity], and rejoice in the wife of your youth. May you always be transported with delight in her love. (Change this to read "My daughter"; "your own husband")

Day 5 Proverbs 6:16-19, AMP I pray my child will keep himself from having a proud look [a spirit that makes one overestimate himself and underestimate others], a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that manufactures wicked thoughts and plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies [even under oath], and one who sows discord among his brethren.

Day 6 Proverbs 6:24-26, AMP (Prayer for your son) I ask the Holy Spirit to keep you from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a loose woman. I pray that you will not lust after her beauty in your heart, neither let her capture you with her eyelids. For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a piece of bread, and the adulteress stalks and snares [as with a hook] the precious life [of a man].

Day 7 Proverbs 6:32, AMP I ask You Father that you grant my child moral principle and prudence in understanding the sin of adultery for he who does it is destroying his own life.

Week 5

Day 1 Proverbs 8:13, AMP God's Word says the reverent fear and worshipful awe of the Lord [includes] the hatred of evil, pride, arrogance, the evil way, and perverted and twisted speech. May my child keep from these and instead be one who will reverence and worship the Lord.

Day 2 Proverbs 9:10, AMP I thank God that my child will have the knowledge of the Holy One with insight and understanding for the reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning [the chief and choice part] of wisdom.

Day 3 Proverbs 10:1, AMP I pray that my child be wise making his father glad and not being foolish and self-confident which brings grief to his mother.

Day 4 Proverbs 10:5, AMP I ask the Holy Spirit instill in you, my child, the gathering principle for he who gathers in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.

Day 5 Proverbs 10:6-7 AMP I bless you, my child, in the Name of Jesus for blessings are upon the head of the [uncompromisingly] righteous (the upright, in the right standing with God). I will continually pray until that day when you are in right standing with God through Jesus Christ His Son.

Day 6 Proverbs 10:8-9:, AMP I beseech You once again that my child, wise in heart, will accept and obey Your commandments for he who walks uprightly walks securely.

Day 7 Proverbs 10:11-13 AMP God has spoken these truths. The mouth of the[uncompromisingly] righteous man is a well of life. Hatred stirs up contentions, but love covers all transgressions. May my child keep guard over his mouth and may discernment be on his lips for where discernment is there is found skillful and godly wisdom.

Week 6

Day 1 Proverbs 10:14, AMP May my child be wise storing up knowledge [in mind and heart], never following the foolish into present destruction.

Day 2 Proverbs 10:17, AMP In Jesus' Name I pray that my child will heed instruction and correction for his own well-being and that of others. For when he neglects or refuses reproof [not only himself] goes astray [but also] causes others to err and is a path toward ruin for them.

Day 3 Proverbs 10:19, AMP Father, Your Word says that in a multitude of words transgression is not lacking. I pray that my child would be conscious of the Spirit's prompting in restraining his lips, for You say this is prudent [sensible, wise, well-founded and reasonable].

Day 4 Proverbs 10:20-21, AMP Oh Father, I seem overwhelmed with the truth found in this proverb. I see the adverse effects of those who are not upright and in right standing with You. So I beseech You to direct my child in all his ways, even words that come from his mouth for the tongues of those who are upright and in right standing with God are as choice silver; but the minds of those who are wicked and out of harmony with God are of little value. May my child be uncompromising, upright and disciplined so that his lips might feed and guide many.

Day 5 Proverbs 10:22, AMP I bless you my child with the blessings of the Lord--for He makes [truly] rich, and He adds no sorrow with it [neither does toiling increase it].

Day 6 Proverbs 10:24, AMP Lord, you say that the thing a wicked man fears shall come upon him. I pray, Jesus, that you increase the faith of my child so that fear not come on him. As he becomes [uncompromisingly] righteous, grant his desire .

Day 7 Proverbs 10:29, AMP May my child find refuge in You as he learns Your ways for the Lord is strength and a stronghold to the upright.

Week 7

Day 1 Proverbs 10:31-32, AMP I ask the Holy Spirit to guard your tongue for the mouths of the righteous (those harmonious with God) bring forth skillful and godly Wisdom, but the perverse tongue shall be cut down [like a barren and rotten tree]. May my child's lips know [and therefore utter] what is acceptable and may he keep far from those who know [and therefore speak only] what is obstinately willful and contrary.

Day 2 Proverbs 11:3, AMP Father, I recognize that the willful contrariness and crookedness of the treacherous shall destroy them so I pray my child's character be one of integrity for integrity shall guide the [uncompromisingly] righteous.

Day 3 Proverbs 11:8, AMP In Jesus' holy name, my child will be [uncompromisingly] righteous and You will deliver him out of trouble.

Day 4 Proverbs 11:11, AMP I thank You, Lord, that the blessing of the influence of the upright and God's favor [because of them] exalts a city. I pray today for the city in which my child will live that his uncompromising stance towards the things of God will influence those around him.

Day 5 Proverbs 11:13, AMP May you be blessed with a spirit that is trustworthy and faithful, always keeping matters hidden.

Day 6 Proverbs 11:14, AMP May the Lord surround you with a multitude of wise counselors for with this comes safety. Where no wise guidance is, the people fall.

Day 7 Proverbs 11:16, AMP (Prayer for your daughter) I bless you gracious and good daughter for you will win honor [for your husband] for you will love righteousness. (Change daughter to son, husband to wife)

Week 8

Day 1 Proverbs 11:17, AMP May the Lord impart to you, a merciful, kind, and generous spirit for when you chose these your good deeds will return to bless you, my child. For he who is cruel and callous [to the wants of others] brings on himself retribution.

Day 2 Proverbs 11:18, AMP May my child sow in righteousness (moral and spiritual rectitude in every area and relation) for surely the reward will be great [permanent and satisfying].

Day 3 Proverbs 11:27, AMP May my child diligently seek good as he seeks [God's] favor for he who searches after evil, it shall come upon him.

Day 4 Proverbs 11:30, AMP O Lord, You say the fruit of the [uncompromising] righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise captures human lives [for God, as a fisher of men--he gathers and receives them for eternity]. Might my child be a wise "fisher of men" and might his conscious effort to "abide in Christ" bear much fruit for the kingdom of God.

Day 5 Proverbs 12:1, AMP May Father God give you a love of instruction for correction loves knowledge for he who hates reproof is like a brute beast, stupid and indiscriminating.

Day 6 Proverbs 12:2, AMP I thank God for this child He has given. May he always obtain favor from the Lord, for this is right. A man of wicked devices our Father condemns.

Day 7 Proverbs 12:4, AMP (Prayer for a daughter) You are unending beautiful to me and to your Father in heaven. When you are given to another through the covenant of marriage, may you be a virtuous and worthy wife [earnest and strong in character] for then you will be a crowning joy to your husband.

Week 9

Day 1 Proverbs 12:8, AMP The quest for wisdom begins with my child's reverent and worshipful fear of his God. As my child strives to walk with great respect and honor for His God, may he be commended according to his wisdom [godly wisdom, which is comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God].

Day 2 Proverbs 12:14, AMP May the Lord impart to you a heart that despises evil and abhors laziness. May the fruit of your words be satisfied with good, and the work of a your hands come back to you [as a harvest].

Day 3 Proverbs 12:15, AMP I know that the way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who listens to counsel is wise. May you listen with open ears and a discerning heart to those you take counsel from, for then you will be wise, my child.

Day 4 Proverbs 12:17, AMP May you always be a truthful witness who shall give honest testimony, breathing out truth, showing forth righteousness (uprightness and right standing with God) for a false witness utters deceit.

Day 5 Proverbs 12:20, AMP I ask God, our Father, to make you a counselor of peace promoting peace always, for where there is peace there is joy. I thank the God of peace who is already counseling you in this role, even this day.

Day 6 Proverbs 12:22, AMP As lying lips are extremely disgusting and hateful to the Lord, may my child deal faithfully and truthfully in all matters for this is delightful to the Lord.

Day 7 Proverbs 12:23, AMP May my child be prudent [sensible, reasonable] in displaying his knowledge, using discretion on whether to keep knowledge to himself.

Week 10

Day 1 Proverbs 12:25, AMP Father, post those in my child's life who will give encouraging words when needed for anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down.

Day 2 Proverbs 13:1, AMP Might my child be a wise son (daughter) who heeds [and is the fruit of] his (her) father's instruction for correction for a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

Day 3 Proverbs 13:3, AMP Set a guard, O Lord, before my child's mouth; keep watch at the door of his lips (Psalm 141:3) for he who guards his mouth keeps his life, but he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.

Day 4 Proverbs 13:5, AMP May my child be a [consistently] righteous man who hates lying and deceit for this is detestable to You, O Lord, for a wicked man is loathsome [his very breath spreads [pollution] and he comes [surely] to shame.

Day 5 Proverbs 13:10, AMP I have seen that pride only breeds quarrels. Holy Spirit, my child is in great need of your counsel so that pride and insolence does not come in, for with the well-advised is skillful and godly wisdom. May you keep him surrounded with those who will counsel him with Your divine wisdom.

Day 6 Proverbs 13:11, AMP Wealth [not earned but] won in haste or unjustly or from the production of things for vain or detrimental use [such riches] will dwindle away, but he who gathers little by little will increase [his riches]. Show my child what it is to gather little by little, keeping him from the love of money that produces waywardness.

Day 7 Proverbs 13:12, AMP Father, I know what it is to lose a sense of hope. Cause my child not to falter in his hope in You for hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire is fulfilled, it is a tree of life.

Week 11

Day 1 Proverbs 13:13, AMP In Jesus' Name, my child will not despise the word and counsel [of God] for he will [reverently] fear and respect the commandment [of God] and be rewarded.

Day 2 Proverbs 13:15, AMP The way of the transgressor is hard [like the barren, dry soil or the impassable swamp]. Bring to my child good understanding in all matters for there lies favor.

Day 3 Proverbs 13:17, AMP The Lord is watching over you to keep you, my child, for you will be faithful ambassador [trustworthy envoy] who brings healing.

Day 4 Proverbs 13:18, AMP I pray that you will always heed reproof for this will be to your honoring.

Day 5 Proverbs 13:20, AMP He who walks [as a companion] with the wise men is wise, but he who associates with [self-confident] fools is [a fool himself and] shall smart for it. May my child carefully choose those he will associate with, walking as a companion with the wise men.

Day 6 Proverbs 13:22, AMP May my child leave an inheritance of moral stability and goodness to his children's children; may the wealth of the sinner find its way eventually into the hands of the righteous for who it was laid up for.

Day 7 Proverbs 13:24, AMP Might we, as parents not spare the rod [of discipline], choosing to love rather than hate our children through careful and diligent discipline from an early age.

Week 12

Day 1 Proverbs 14:2, AMP I pray my child never be contrary and devious in his ways, despising His God but rather walk in uprightness, reverently and worshipfully fearing His Lord.

Day 2 Proverbs 14:5, AMP Lying lips are detestable to You, Lord. May my child be a truthful and a faithful witness who does not deceive nor tell lies.

Day 3 Proverbs 14:7, AMP Holy Spirit, may You urge my child to go from the presence of foolish and self-confident men for he will not find nor entertain the knowledge from their lips.

Day 4 Proverbs 14:12, AMP I thank God for pouring His Spirit on you so that you discern the straight path of life ahead for there is a way which seems right to a man and appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death.

Day 5 Proverbs 14:16, AMP I bow before the Father asking Him to grant you a discerning and wise spirit to suspect danger and cautiously avoid evil for a fool bears himself insolently and is [presumptuously] confident.

Day 6 Proverbs 14:21, AMP God's Word says that he who despises his neighbor, sins [against God, his fellowman, and himself], but happy (blessed and fortunate) is he who is kind and merciful to the poor. May the fruit of your life overflow with kindness and mercy to those in need.

Day 7 Proverbs 14:22, AMP Your destiny, my child, is to choose life. I pray that you not err in devising evil and wander from the way of life. But loving-kindness and mercy, loyalty and faithfulness, shall be to you who devise good.

Week 13

Day 1 Proverbs 14:2, 6, AMP In the reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, my child. Might my child find that quiet place of refuge in You, dwelling always in the secret place of the Most High remaining stable and unfixed under the shadow of the Almighty.

Day 2 Proverbs 14:28, AMP In a multitude of people, dear child, is the king's glory, but in a lack of people is the prince's ruin. In Jesus' Name, may the child of my youth be guided by many wise and godly counselors, never lacking this good thing.

Day 3 Proverbs 14:29, AMP In Jesus' Name, this child of mine shall be slow to anger reaping great understanding for he who is hasty of spirit exposes and exalts his folly.

Day 4 Proverbs 14:30, AMP Father, You have said in Your Word that envy, jealousy, and wrath are like rottenness of the bones so I pray that my child will have a calm and undisturbed mind and heart for this is the life and health of the body.

Day 5 Proverbs 14:31, AMP God has put great love in our hearts for others. May my child always extend kindness and mercy to the poor, for this honors You. May he never oppress the poor for this reproaches, mocks, and insults his Maker.

Day 6 Proverbs 15:1, AMP I pray and believe that you will respond correctly in all circumstances with a soft answer that turns away wrath.

Day 7 Proverbs 15:4, AMP May you always speak life into a situation for a gentle tongue [with its healing power] is a tree of life, but willful contrariness in it breaks down the spirit.

Week 14

Day 1 Proverbs 15:5, AMP May the Lord impart to you a regard for reproof, correction and instruction from your father for you will acquire prudence in so doing.

Day 2 Proverbs 15:7, AMP I exalt Him who will give you the lips of the wise that will disperse knowledge [sifting it as chaff from the grain] and will keep you from those whose minds and hearts are self-confident and foolish.

Day 3 Proverbs 15:16, AMP O Lord, You have said better is little with the reverent, worshipful fear of the Lord than great and rich treasure and trouble with it. May this be so of this precious child of mine that he be satisfied with the reverent worship of His God and satisfied with what you give unto him.

Day 4 Proverbs 15:22, AMP Where there is no counsel, purposes are frustrated. O, that my child fulfill and not frustrate Your purposes by surrounding himself with many counselors to see Your purposes accomplished upon earth.

Day 5 Proverbs 15:23, AMP Holy Spirit, guide my child's words for You exhort us to give an apt answer, and a word spoken at the right moment-how good it is! You say that this brings joy!

Day 6 Proverbs 15:24, AMP The path of the wise leads upward to life, that he may avoid [the gloom] in the depths of Sheol (Hades, the place of the dead). Bless my child with wisdom that brings life and leads upward in order to turn him away from hell below.

Day 7 Proverbs 15:28, AMP Give my child an astute mind to study how to answer for the mind of the [uncompromisingly] righteous pours out good things, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.

Week 15

Day 1 Proverbs 15:29, AMP You, Father, hear the prayer of the [consistently] righteous (the upright, in right standing with Him). I pray this day that my child at the earliest age possible come to the knowledge of your Son through divinely inspired revelation, recognizing Him, receiving Him, welcoming Him, believing on Him, confessing Him, serving Him, worshiping Him.

Day 2 Proverbs 15:31, AMP May my child be teachable with ears that listen to reproof [that leads to or gives] life for then he will remain among the wise.

Day 3 Proverbs 15:33, AMP In Jesus' Name, I beseech You above all else that this child may reverently worship You with a holy fear for this brings instruction in Wisdom and may he always display humility of heart for this comes before honor.

Day 4 Proverbs 16:3, AMP For the Lord will be your confidence and you will roll your works upon the Lord [commit and trust them wholly to Him]; then He will cause your thoughts to become agreeable to His will, and so shall your plans be established and succeed.

Day 5 Proverbs 16:6, GW Through mercy and faithfulness, peace is made with the Lord. By the fear of the Lord, evil is avoided. As my child reverently and worshipfully fears the Lord, purge iniquity from his heart so that of he will depart from and avoid evil.

Day 6 Proverbs 16:7, AMP O Lord, may my child's ways always please You causing You to make even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Day 7 Proverbs 16:9, AMP It is good to commit our ways to You but as my child plans his way, Lord, direct his steps and makes them sure.

Week 16

Day 1 Proverbs 16:17, AMP Whoever watches his way preserves his own life. By your Spirit teach my child to be tenacious in guarding his way, turning aside from evil for this will safeguard his soul.

Day 2 Proverbs 16:18-19, AMP Child, the Lord has revealed His Word to us so that we might obey it. He wishes that we uproot and repent of the pride and haughty spirit in us so I pray that you will not be deceived when this becomes an issue in your life for better it is to be of a humble spirit with the meek and poor than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Day 3 Proverbs 16:20, AMP He who deals wisely and heeds [God's] word and counsel shall find good, and whoever leans on, trusts in, and is confident in the Lord--happy, blessed, and fortunate is he. May this be so of my child that he leans on Your Word, trusts in Your counsel, and is confident in His God always and forevermore.

Day 4 Proverbs 16:24, AMP May Father God keep pleasant words on your lips as honeycomb, sweet to the mind and healing to the body.

Day 5 Proverbs 16:32, AMP May you dear child bring honor to your Lord by being a person who is slow to anger and who rules over your spirit .

Day 6 Proverbs 17:9, AMP Uncover sin that is offensive to You in my child's life; that he may be one who covers and forgives an offense quickly, seeking love above all else.

Day 7 Proverbs 17:17, AMP May my child be a friend who loves at all times, and is born, as is a brother, for adversity.

Week 17

Day 1 Proverbs 17:22, AMP May my child be blessed with a happy heart for You say this is good medicine for a cheerful mind works healing.

Day 2 Proverbs 17:27, AMP I pray that God will grant unto you knowledge to control your words, and understanding to be even-tempered.

Day 3 Proverbs 18:10, AMP I thank the Lord for His goodness to you, a [consistently] righteous man [upright and in right standing with God] who will call upon the Name of the Lord who is your strong tower; you will run into it and will be safe, high [above evil] and strong, my child.

Day 4 Proverbs 18:15, AMP May this be true you that you will be blessed with the mind of the prudent, ever getting knowledge and the ear of the wise, ever seeking (inquiring for and craving) knowledge.

Day 5 Proverbs 18:21, AMP Death and life are in the power of the tongue, my child. I pray that you speak life-giving words into circumstances for those who indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it [for life].

Day 6 Proverbs 19:2, AMP May you attain the full extent of knowledge for desire without knowledge is not good, and to be overhasty is to sin and miss the mark.

Day 7 Proverbs 19:11, AMP I pray that you, my child, use good sense in overlooking a transgression or an offense for when this happens your anger is restrained and it is to your glory.

Week 18

Day 1 Proverbs 19:17, AMP Father, may my child have Your heart of compassion towards those less fortunate. You say having pity on the poor and lending to the poor is like lending to the Lord, and that which my child has given will be repaid to him.

Day 2 Proverbs 19:21, AMP Lord, there will be many plans devised in my child's mind, but the Lord's purpose and counsel for him will be established and will stand.

Day 3 Proverbs 19:23, AMP May my child be endowed with the reverent, worshipful fear of the Lord which leads to life, for he who has it rests satisfied; he cannot be visited with [actual] evil.

Day 4 Proverbs 20:1, AMP I pray that my child not be deceived by wine that can lead one to be a mocker, or strong drink that can lead one to be a riotous brawler for whoever errs or reels because of it is not wise.

Day 5 Proverbs 20:7, AMP Jesus, you became sin so that my child be made the righteousness of God in Christ. May he always walk uprightly and with integrity for blessed (happy, fortunate, enviable) are his children after him (An Inheritance Blessing).

Day 6 Proverbs 20:18, AMP Wisdom from above is first of all pure (undefiled), then it is peace-loving, courteous (considerate, gentle). [It is willing to] yield to reason, full of compassion and good fruits; it is wholehearted and straightforward, impartial and unfeigned (free from doubts, wavering, and insincerity). Father, I petition You to grant wisdom from above as my child joins others in establishing Your purposes and plans for [only] with good advice can one make or carry on war.

Day 7 Proverbs 20:22, AMP May my child never say I will repay evil; rather he will wait [expectantly] for the Lord, for his rescue is close at hand (2 Samuel 16:12; Romans 12:17-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; 1 Peter 3:9).

Week 19

Day 1 Proverbs 20:25, AMP I pray that my child not be ensnared to utter a vow of holy consecration rashly and afterward inquire whether he can fulfill it for You do not take vows lightly, Lord.

Day 2 Proverbs 20:27, AMP Father, I thank You that the spirit of my child [that factor in human personality which proceeds immediately from God] is a lamp unto You, searching all his innermost parts (1 Corinthians 2:11).

Day 3 Proverbs 21:3, AMP For all the days of his life, may my child lead with righteousness and justice for this is more acceptable to the You, Lord, than sacrifice.

Day 4 Proverbs 21:21, AMP My child will earnestly seek after and crave righteousness, mercy, and loving-kindness and will find life in addition to righteousness (uprightness and right standing with God) and honor.

Day 5 Proverbs 21:23, AMP Set a guard over my child's tongue for Your Word says the tongue can be tamed by no man; it is restless (undisciplined, irreconcilable) evil, full of deadly poison (James 3:8). Continue to teach him the importance of setting boundaries for words spoken which will keep him from many troubles.

Day 6 Proverbs 22:1, AMP May my child attain, through Biblical discipline, a good name for himself choosing this over riches and loving favor over silver and gold.

Day 7 Proverbs 22:3, AMP My child will be a prudent man, perceiving evil and hiding himself from its seduction for the simple pass on and are punished [with suffering].

Week 20

Day 1 Proverbs 22:4, AMP May my child walk in humility and the reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord for its reward is riches and honor and life.

Day 2 Proverbs 22:6, AMP (Prayer for parents) May you train your child in the way he should go taking into consideration his individual gift or bent, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Day 3 Proverbs 22:9, AMP I pray that my child grow to be one who has a kindly, bountiful eye giving his bread to the poor and in so doing, shall be blessed (2 Cor. 9:6-10).

Day 4 Proverbs 22:24-25, AMP May my child make no friendships with a man given to anger, nor with a wrathful man will he not associate, lest he learn his ways and get himself into a snare.

Day 5 Proverbs 23:12, AMP My child will apply his mind to instruction and correction and his ears to words of knowledge, in Jesus' Name I pray.

Day 6 Proverbs 23:17, AMP I pray that my child will not let his heart envy sinners, but continue in the reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord all the day long . . .

Day 7 Proverbs 24:1-2, AMP That my child not be envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them; For their minds plot oppression and devise violence, and their lips talk of causing trouble and vexation.

Week 21

Day 1 Proverbs 24:17-18, AMP I thank You, Lord, that my child will not rejoice when his enemy falls, nor will he be glad when he stumbles or is overthrown, lest the Lord see it and it be evil in His eyes and displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him [to expend it upon you, the worse offender].

Day 2 Proverbs 24:28-29, AMP My child will not be a witness against his neighbor without cause, nor say, I will do to him as he has done to me; I will pay the man back for this deed but rather will walk in righteousness and in love, winning his neighbor to God through his deeds of kindness, in Jesus' Name I pray.

Day 3 Proverbs 25:21-22, AMP I pray that you, my child, will feed your enemy when he is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for in doing so, you will heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord will reward you.

Day 4 Proverbs 25:28, AMP Child, I pray that you will rule over your own spirit for a spirit that is not ruled over is like a city that is broken down and without walls.

Day 5 Proverbs 27:2, AMP May my child let another praise him, and not his own mouth; a stranger, and not his own lips.

Day 6 Proverbs 27:5-6, AMP Father, I pray that my child understand well this principle: open rebuke is better than love that is hidden. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are lavish and deceitful.

Day 7 Proverbs 27:9, AMP Just as oil and perfume rejoice the heart; I pray that the sweetness of my child's friend's counsel comes from the heart.

Week 22

Day 1 Proverbs 27:17, AMP Just as iron sharpens iron; so it will be that my child sharpens the countenance of his friend [to show rage or worthy purpose].

Day 2 Proverbs 27:18, AMP I pray that my child patiently and faithfully guard and heed his master and with this shall he be honored.

Day 3 Proverbs 28:1, AMP My child will be called uncompromisingly righteous and will be bold as a lion in Jesus' Name.

Day 4 Proverbs 28:5, AMP In Jesus' Name, it will be said of my child that he is one who craves and seeks the Lord, understanding justice fully and administering it faithfully.

Day 5 Proverbs 28:6, AMP Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than he who willfully goes in double and wrong ways, though he is rich.

Day 6 Proverbs 28:7, AMP My child, I pray that you keep the law [of God and man] for this is wise; that you never find yourself a companion of gluttons and the carousing, self-indulgent, and extravagant for this brings shame upon your father.

Day 7 Proverbs 28:9, AMP May it be said of my child that he never turned away his ear from hearing the law [of God and man], that even his prayers were heard and responded to.

Week 23

Day 1 Proverbs 28:10, AMP I pray that my child never be misguided or led astray for if one tempts my child to wandering may he himself fall into his own pit, for my child will have a godly inheritance.

Day 2 Proverbs 28:13, AMP In Jesus' Name, my child will confess and forsake his sins and will obtain mercy.

Day 3 Proverbs 28:16, AMP May my child be one who hates covetousness and unjust gain, for then You, Lord, shall prolong his days.

Day 4 Proverbs 28:18, AMP I pray that my child will walk uprightly and shall be safe for he who willfully goes in double and wrong ways shall fall in one of them.

Day 5 Proverbs 28:20, AMP O Lord, my child be a faithful man and abound with blessings from on high; never making haste to be rich [at any cost] for this shall not go unpunished.

Day 6 Proverbs 28:23, AMP May my child have the resolve to rebuke a man in humility for afterwards he will find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue.

Day 7 Proverbs 29:10, AMP I pray my child be upright in caring for the blameless and seeking [to save] their life.

Week 24

Day 1 Proverbs 29:18 AMP May my child walk with vision [a redemptive revelation of God] from above; keeping the law [of God, which includes that of man] and blessed (happy, fortunate, and enviable) will he be.

Day 2 Proverbs 29:23 AMP May my child have a humble spirit for then he shall obtain honor.

Day 3 Proverbs 29:25 AMP My God, this child will lean on, trust in, and put his confidence in the Lord and he shall be safe and set on high.

Day 4 Proverbs 30:5 AMP My God, be a shield to my child as he learns to trust and take refuge in You for every word of God is tried and purified.

Day 5 Proverbs 30:7-9 AMP (Family Prayer) Two things have I asked of You [O Lord]; deny them not to me before I die; Remove far from me and my child falsehood and lies; give us neither poverty nor riches; feed us neither poverty nor riches; feed us with the food that is needful for us, Lest we be full and deny You and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest we be poor and steal, and so profane the name of my God.

Day 6 Proverbs 31:9, AMP May my child open his mouth to judge righteously, and administer justice for the poor and needy.

Day 7 Proverbs 31:8; 10; 11; 17; 18; 20; 25; 26, 27; 28; 30, AMP (Daughter's Prayer--Woman-Child of Noble Character) May this be true of my daughter I pray . . . she open her mouth for the dumb [those unable to speak for themselves], for the rights of all who are left desolate and defenseless; that her value is far above rubies or pearls; that the heart of her husband trusts in her confidently and relies on and believes in her securely; she comforts, encourages and does him only good as long as there is life within her . . . she girds herself with strength [spiritual, mental, and physical fitness for her God-given task] . . . she tastes and sees that her gain from work [with and for God] is good . . . she opens her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her filled hands to the needy[whether in body, mind, or spirit] . . . strength and dignity are her clothing and her position is strong and secure; she rejoices over the future [the latter day or time to come, knowing that she and her family are in readiness for it] . . . she opens her mouth in skillful and godly wisdom and on her tongue is the law of kindness [giving counsel and instruction]. . . she looks well to how things go in her household, and the bread of idleness (gossip, discontent, and self-pity) she will not eat . . . her children rise up and call her blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied); and her husband boasts of and praises her . . . a woman who reverently and worshipfully fears the Lord.

CHAPTER Eight **Blessing or Curse**

Both blessings and curses are major themes of Scripture. The word “bless” or “blessing” occurs in the Bible some 430 times. The word “curse,” in various forms, occurs about 160 times. In other words, the Bible has a great deal to say about both. Both are real. They are so real that Jesus had to be made a curse so that we might be redeemed from the curse and receive blessing. The basis of all God’s provision for us is the divinely-ordained exchange which took place when Jesus died on the cross. God permitted the evil due to our rebellion to come upon Jesus, so that the good due to Jesus’ obedience might be made available to us.

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law,
having become a curse for us (for it is written,
“Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”)
that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus . . .
-Galatians 3:13-14

The exchange between evil (curse) and good (blessing) is obvious. We will focus on this exchange from curse to blessing, the transition by which we pass from under the curse and into the blessing.

Blessings and curses generally take the form of words. They may be spoken, written, or merely uttered inwardly. These words are not just ordinary words but are vessels of supernatural power. A very important point to remember is once released, both blessing and curses tend to continue through time until they are revoked. Normally, once a curse or a blessing has been released, it will continue until something cancels it or revokes it. This means that there can be forces at work in our lives which were originally set in motion in previous generations.

Consequently, we may be dealing with things in our lives, circumstances, families or temperament which are not to be explained solely in terms of what has happened in our lifetime or our personal experience. The root cause for them may go back a long time, even hundreds or thousands of years.

Biblical history contains many examples of the outworking and continuance of both blessing and curses.

BLESSING--GENESIS 22:15-18

“Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said, ‘By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son . . .’”

This was the point at which Abraham was willing to actually offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. Then God continues, because you have not withheld your son, your only son:

“ . . . in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed [in your descendants] all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”
(NKJ)

This blessing was pronounced 4,000 years ago and is still at work today.

CURSE--2 Samuel 1:21 OLD TESTAMENT

“O mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be no dew,
nor let there be rain upon you,
Nor fields of offerings.

For the shield of the mighty
is cast away there!
The shield of Saul,
not anointed with oil.”
(NKJ)

When David said to that group of hills (approximately 3,000 years ago), “Let there be no dew nor . . . rain,” that was a curse to that ground. As you know, the Jewish people have been remarkably successful in restoration. They have planted trees on every hill and mountain but they cannot succeed in making them grow on Mount Gilboa. Why? Because David pronounced a curse 3000 years ago!

CURSE--Mark 11:20-21 NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus went to the fig tree looking for figs to eat and found none. He cursed the tree saying, “Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.” Jesus did not lay His hands on the fig tree nor did He lay an axe to it, but in the Spirit God He spoke words charged with supernatural power and within twenty-four hours, those words caused the fig tree to wither.

“Now in the morning, as [the disciples] passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to [Jesus], ‘Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away!’”
(NKJ)

How to Recognize a Curse

Blessings and curses are words charged with supernatural power for good and evil and, once released, they generally continue from generation to generation until they are revoked and canceled.

In Deuteronomy 28, there are sixty-eight verses: fourteen verses are blessings and the remaining fifty-four verses are curses.

Blessings--

exaltation (being lifted up), health, reproductiveness in every area, prosperity, victory, and God’s favor.

Curses--

humiliation, failure to reproduce (barrenness, in almost any area, mental and physical sickness, family break down, poverty, defeat, oppression, failure, God’s disfavor.)

There are guidelines that will help you recognize a curse at work in your life. A curse is something like a dark shadow or an evil hand from the past--oppressing you, pressing you down, holding you back, tripping you up, and propelling you in a direction you do not really wish to take. It is like a negative atmosphere that surrounds you which seems to be stronger at times than others but from which you are never totally free. It is very

probable that you have been struggling with this for some time but unable to master or overcome it.

In dealing with people, the author of Blessing or Curses, has identified seven common indications that a curse may be operating in one's life. (This was done purely on the basis of experience and observation.) The seven indications are as follows:

1. Mental and/or emotional breakdown.
2. Repeated or chronic sicknesses, especially if they are hereditary or without clear medical diagnosis.
3. Repeated miscarriages or related female problems.
4. The breakdown of marriage and family alienation.
5. Continuing financial insufficiency, especially where the income appears to be sufficient.
6. Being accident prone.
7. In a family, a history of suicides or unnatural deaths.

Both blessing and curses are not limited to an individual but may be related to a family, a community, a nation or sometimes a whole civilization.

What Causes Blessings or Curses

It is very important to understand that there is always a cause for both blessings and curses. In connection with curses, Solomon says in Proverbs 26:2:

“Like a flitting sparrow,
like a flying swallow,
So a curse without a cause shall not alight.”
(NKJ)

In other words, wherever a curse alights there is a cause behind it. In dealing with a curse, it is often important to discover the cause. We need to distinguish between the primary and secondary causes.

The primary cause of both blessings and curses is simple.

BLESSING--Deuteronomy 28:1-2

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently
unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do
all his commandments which I command thee this day,
that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these
blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee,
if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Lord thy God.
(KJV)

The primary cause of all blessing are: listening to God's voice and doing what He says.

CURSE--Deuteronomy 28:15

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee . . .

Therefore, the primary cause of all curses is not hearing and not obeying God's voice.

A list of twelve secondary causes of curses is found in Deuteronomy 27:15-26. God warns Israel, "If you do these things, you'll come under a curse." These twelve secondary causes can be summed up in four:

1. Idolatry, false gods, and the occult.
2. Dishonoring parents.
3. Illicit or unnatural sex; that is, adultery, fornication, incest, homosexuality, bestiality, etc.
4. Injustice to the weak or the helpless.

Other secondary causes are:

5. Trusting in the arm of the flesh (Jeremiah 17:5-6).
6. Stealing or perjury (Zechariah 5:1-4; Malachi 1:14).
7. Being stingy with God financially (Malachi 3:8-10).
8. Words spoken by persons with relational authority: such as parents, husbands, teachers, or pastors (Genesis 31:32).
9. Self-imposed curses, curses which people pronounce upon themselves (Genesis 27:46).
10. Words pronounced by persons representing Satan: witch doctors, etc. (Deuteronomy 23:4-5).
11. Soulless prayers and utterances spoken in wrong attitudes and gossip (Jeremiah 18:18).
12. Unscriptural covenants--being united by covenant with people who are united with forces of evil and alien to God (Exodus 23:32), for example: freemasonry.

The basis of all deliverance from a curse is the sacrificial atonement of Jesus. In order to come into the blessings and out from under the curse, we must move from what I call "legal" to the "experiential." Jesus made the provision. He was punished that we might be forgiven. He was wounded that we might be healed. All that has been done. However, in order to receive forgiveness, we must do what God requires. In order to be healed we must do what God requires. We must appropriate this provision in our own personal lives. This is what is termed "passing from the legal to the experiential."

In order to do this in the case of curses, we need to discover the cause or source of the curse which was covered in the last several pages. Once we have identified the cause or source, then there are four things that we must do: recognize, repent, renounce, and resist.

Recognize

We must recognize the true nature of our problem and if possible the source or the cause of the curse: that is, the sin or

problem through which it originally entered.

Repent

We must repent of whatever initially exposed us to the problem, whether it was our own sin or the sin of our ancestors.

Renounce

We must say, "It no longer belongs to me. I do not accept it. Through Jesus I have the right to be free from it."

Resist

We must take a definite, active stand against the power of Satan.

The Prayer of Release

Once you have taken the four steps--recognize, repent, renounce, and resist--you are ready to claim your release through a specific prayer. There are seven requirements that this "prayer of release" must have:

1. Must be based on the Word of God.
2. Must confess your faith in Christ.
3. Must commit yourself to obedience.
 4. Must confess any known sin of yourself or your ancestors.
 5. Must forgive all other persons.
 6. Must renounce all contact with the occult or secret societies and get rid of all contact objects.
 7. Release yourself in the Name of Jesus from the curse.

Read the prayer through before committing it to the Lord. You need to be sure you want to say the prayer because to do so requires a commitment on your part. It must be your faith.

Lord Jesus Christ,

I believe that You are the Son of God and the only way to God; that on the cross You died for my sins; and that you rose again from the dead; that on the cross You were made a curse, that I might be redeemed from the curse and receive Your blessing.

I trust You now for mercy and forgiveness and I commit myself from now on by Your grace to follow and obey You.

I ask you to forgive and blot out any sins committed by me or by my ancestors that exposed me to a curse. (At this point, name any specific sins of which you are aware.)

If people have harmed me or wronged me, I forgive them, as I would have God forgive me. (Name these people.)

I renounce all contact with Satan, occult practices and unscriptural secret societies. If I have any contact objects that link me to these things, I promise to destroy them. (Name the specific practices and/or secret societies with which you were involved.)

With the authority You have given me as a child of God, I release myself from every curse that has come upon me or affected me in any way. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Jesus has heard your prayer. Receive your release by faith. The simplest way to do this is to begin to thank God. Thanksgiving is the simplest and purest expression of faith.

This prayer has been prayed for you as you pray for release:

O God,

I thank You that you allowed Jesus, on the cross, to become a curse that we, through faith in Him, might be redeemed from the curse. I thank you for every one that has prayed this prayer of faith, meeting Your conditions.

Lord Jesus, I claim their release for them now, as they are thanking You. I claim a full release. I break every satanic power over these lives. I revoke every curse. I declare that satan is a defeated enemy, that all his claims have been canceled by the shed blood of Jesus. I pronounce them free in the Name of Jesus. I declare that satan's authority is revoked and cancelled forever, in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

CHAPTER Nine

Right of Passage

This chapter is devoted to providing you a step-by-step program on how you can incorporate a Christian Bar-Mitzvah or Right of Passage into your child's life. In the tradition of the Jewish faith, a Bar-Mitzvah/Bot-Mitzvah is used to instruct a child in his/her Jewish faith and traditions so that the child will accept responsibility to carry on his/her Jewish faith. The child is then viewed as:

- 1) an adult and is given added responsibilities in the Jewish community.
- 2) a spiritual man/woman.

It becomes a strong connecting point for the young man/woman between his/her faith, traditions and community.

The Christian Bar-Mitzvah borrows from this age-old tradition, incorporating Christian truths from the Word of God.

I wish to give credit to the man who has put into practice what he has written . . .

To a man named Jim Weidmann who exemplifies all that is written within the pages of this book. I commend you, sir.

Your children are rich.

And the world is richer for it.

I commend you, sir.

While heritage is passed,
yours is one of moral uprightness and spiritual prowess,
and your children's also.

I commend you, sir.

Your legacy lives on through your children
and touches the world.

I commend you, sir.

The world is a better place and God's Kingdom is greatened
because of your consistent dedication to raising godly offspring.

I commend you, sir.

Right of passage

What is a Christian Bar-Mitzvah or Right of Passage?

- * Entrenched in Jewish tradition.
- * Bar-Mitzvah means Son of Commandment. In the Jewish community, the Bar-Mitzvah is used to instruct the child from the Jewish Talmud (the Book of Jewish code), instructing the child in his Jewish faith and traditions so that the child will accept his responsibility to carry on his Jewish faith.
- * This child is recognized as an adult and give added privileges and responsibilities in the Jewish community by the Jewish community.
- * Also known as the "Right of Passage" where a child is accepted by the community as a spiritual. (Based upon the "truism" found in 1 Cor. 13:11: "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child. When I became a man I childish ways behind me.")
- * The Jewish Bar-Mitzvah is a strong connecting point for the young man between his faith, traditions and community.

The Christian "Right of Passage" has its focus, not on church doctrine, but rather on the Word of God. It incorporates Biblical truths into this Jewish tradition. Its goals are:

- * To provide instruction on what a godly man is--he is a man of priorities and has the discipline to live them out in the everydayness of life (Provides identity in Christ).
- * To create a point of acceptance for the child as he owns the responsibility for the disciplines of a godly man and becomes responsible for his own spiritual growth.
- * To invoke a blessing on the son by the parents. The blessing is the act of asking for divine favor to rest upon someone. The patriarchs of the faith pronounced blessings upon their children and the children knew the spiritual significance of the father's blessing and longed for it. Each child received a blessing according to his own uniqueness. (Genesis 49:28: "giving each the blessing appropriate to them.")

Six Week Mentoring Process

Teaching the child in the disciplines of a godly man begins at a early age. It entails years of training, teaching and modeling these disciplines in front of him. For all practical purposes, we will stay focused on the six weeks leading up to the “Right of Passage” ceremony.

1. Mentoring Sessions

Six weeks out, the father and son meet on a weekly basis for a period 30 minutes. The father is the teacher/facilitator. During this time, the father defines the six disciplines of a godly man from a biblical, experiential, and practical perspective spending one week on each discipline. The six disciplines are (from Kent Hughes book, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*):

- A man and his God
- A man and his wife
- A man and his family
- A man and his ministry
- A man and his world
- A man and his relationships

The structure of the meeting should entail the following:

- * Define the discipline.
- * Read Scripture verse(s) pertaining to the discipline
- * Discuss the verse’s meaning and relevancy.
- * Share views, feelings, thoughts on the verses.
- * Contribute success/failures by the father.
- * Call the “Man of Discipline who is responsible for this discipline and summarize what was discussed that evening, asking him for his input/wisdom in the application of this discipline.
- * Make a list of questions (2-3 per discipline) for the “wisdom” sharing session the day of the ceremony.

2. Lesson Planning

The father is the teacher/facilitator for the six week course on the disciplines of a godly man. (Suggested reading on these disciplines is the book by Kent Hughes called *Disciplines of a Godly Man*.)

Begin preparation by using a good concordance to help with verses that pertain to this week’s discipline. Do a personal study on the verses, jotting down how you have applied the verse(s) to your life. Jot down failures as well as successes in your approach to this discipline. (IMPORTANT: Give time for your son to discuss the verse(s) and LISTEN to him carefully. The “discussion time” will be centered around what he has to say.)

Call the “Man of Discipline” several days before the phone call/personal meeting, giving him time to prepare for the upcoming call/meeting.

3. Identifying and Assigning Men to Each Discipline

Ask your son to identify six men that have had a significant spiritual impact on his life. Assign each man one of the disciplines. Have your son contact each of the six men to ask if they would prayerfully consider being involved in his “Right of Passage.” Have your son communicate what is expected from them as a “Man of Discipline.” (See below.)

Objective of “Men of Discipline”

- * To understand the child’s level of understanding on critical spiritual issues related to the discipline.
- * To share your understanding and experience on the discipline.
- * To encourage the child as he starts his journey as a spiritual man serving in God’s family.

Responsibilities of “Men of Discipline”

- * Personal counsel over the phone or in person in the week that their discipline is being discussed (30 minutes). Preparation time for this discussion (30-60 minutes).
- * Meet for two hours the day of the “Right of Passage” ceremony for a “wisdom” sharing session, bringing two or three questions to the session to be discussed (2 hour meeting).
- * Five minute talk on the discipline assigned to them (day of the ceremony) and preparation time to outline their talk (1-3 hours).
- * Available to counsel with the young man as the need arises. Pray for your mentee when the Lord brings him to mind.

4. Day of Ceremony

- * If you are serving food, make preparations with those responsible for the cooking and serving of the food.
- * Bring the child’s Bible.
- * Bring the six cords: purple, gold, green, blue, red, and white.
- * Bring pictures, memorabilia of child’s life. Set up a table displaying these items.
- * Sound equipment (mic, speakers, CD/tape player for background music, etc.).
- * Christian Tapes/CD’s.
- * Family cross or object that has spiritual significance to the family unit that can be passed to the son.

IMPORTANT:

This material can be adapted for a daughter’s “Right to Passage.” The Hebrew term for this passage from girl to spiritual womanhood is “Bot-Mitzvah.” The difference lies in the fact that the mother of the child and “Women of Discipline” oversee the child’s Bot-Mitzvah.

Sample of a Christian Right of Passage Ceremony (Bar-Mitzvah)

1. Welcome (before dinner or dessert reception)--Father speaks.
 - * Welcome guests, thanking them for joining the family in this “Right of Passage” Ceremony.
 - * Explain the logistics of the dinner or dessert reception (optional).
 - * Bless the food.

2. Ceremony--Father speaks.
 - * Welcome the six “Men of Christian Disciplines” and their families.
 - * Introduction of family.
 - * Invocation (possibly done by an immediate family member).
 - * Introduction
 - Traditions (example):
 - a. Chuck Swindoll refers to “traditions” as the living faith of those now dead.
 - b. They serve as bearings upon which our faith glides from generation to generation and creates milestones for our children’s spiritual growth in Christ.
 - c. Tonight's Christian Bar-Mitzvah or Right of Passage is based upon an old tradition.

What is a Christian Bar-Mitzvah?

- * Entrenched in Jewish tradition.
- * Bar-Mitzvah means Son of Commandment. In the Jewish community, the Bar-Mitzvah is used to instruct the child from the Jewish Talmud (the Book of Jewish code), instructing the child in his Jewish faith and traditions so that the child will accept his responsibility to carry on his Jewish faith.
- * This child is recognized as an adult and given added privileges and responsibilities in the Jewish community by the Jewish community.
- * Also known as the “Right of Passage” where a child is accepted by the community as a spiritual man. (Based upon the “truism” found in 1 Cor. 13:11: “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child. When I became a man I put childish ways behind me.”)
- * The Jewish Bar-Mitzvah is a strong connecting point for the young man between his faith, traditions and community.

Goals of a Christian Right of Passage

Tonight’s Christian Right of Passage has its focus, not on church doctrine but rather on the Word of God. It incorporates Biblical truths into this Jewish tradition. Its goals are:

- * To provide instruction on what a godly man is--He is a man of priorities and has the discipline to live them out in the everydayness of life (provides identity in Christ).
- * To create a point of acceptance for the child as he owns the responsibility for the disciplines of a godly man and becomes responsible for his own spiritual growth.

- * To invoke a blessing on the son by the parents. The blessing is the act of asking for divine favor to rest upon someone. The patriarchs of the faith pronounced blessings upon their children and the children knew the spiritual significance of the father's blessing and longed for it. Each child received a blessing according to their own uniqueness. (Genesis 49:28 "giving each the blessing appropriate to them.")

A key part of our Christian growth is our experience and participation in our Christian family. That is the reason that the honor of your presence was requested, to stand as witnesses to (child's name) acceptance of his responsibility and to stand as brothers and sisters in Christ to encourage and support him in his Christian walk.

The expectation for (child's name) after tonight is that he will take the responsibility upon himself for training himself in the disciplines of a godly man. As Kent Hughes says in his book, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*:

"Personal disciplines is the indispensable key for accomplishing anything in this life. It is, in fact, the mother and handmaiden of what we call genius. We will never get anywhere in life without discipline, be it in the arts, business, athletics or academics This is doubly so in spiritual matters where none of us can claim an innate advantage. In reality we are all equally disadvantaged for it says in Romans 3:10, 'There is no one righteous, not even one: there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.' Therefore, as children of grace, our spiritual discipline is everything--everything. This being so, the statement from Paul to Timothy regarding spiritual discipline in 1 Timothy 4:7 reminds us to: 'Train ourselves to be godly.' This implies both personal commitment and discipline."

John Paul Jackson states, "Spiritual disciplines enable us to draw upon a supernatural power beyond ourselves. The term spiritual discipline does not mean we discipline our spirit. Rather, it means that our spirit disciplines our soul and our body. Our spirit brings our flesh into submission to the Holy Spirit. When this occurs, the Holy Spirit will be able to direct our spirit and lead us into the paths of righteousness."

How did we get to this point?

- * Six weeks of instruction in the areas of discipline by the father.
- * Commitment by the son to adhere to the six disciplines that constitute the priorities of a godly man in which he is to live by:
 - Discipline of a Man and His God
 - Discipline of a Man and His Wife
 - Discipline of a Man and His Family
 - Discipline of a Man and His World
 - Discipline of a Man and His Relationships
- * Identify six men who have had a spiritual impact on the child's life and who

model these disciplines.

- * “Wisdom” sharing session earlier this afternoon with the six men chosen by my son to walk with him through the Disciplines of a Godly Man.
- * Weight lifting or physical activity that took perseverance and endurance for a person who is disciplined physically can be disciplined spiritually for both require a disciplined mind.

Child takes the stage with father. Father hands off the child’s Bible to him.

Father speaks:

“ (child’s name) and I have discussed one of these disciplines each week for the last six weeks and then met with each of these men individually to discuss what we had learned and to seek their wisdom on their respective disciplines. These six men came together to meet with (child’s name) and myself this afternoon for 2 hours in an open discussion, sharing and prayer.”

Child speaks and introduces each of the six men, by name and why he chose them.

First man to speak (the man and His God) says, “Tonight we are representing each discipline with a cord to be placed around (child’s name) neck. After tonight’s ceremony, the family will inter-twine all the cords for a visual reminder of the different disciplines and how they inter-twine with one another:

- * The purple cord represents a man and his God. Purple symbolizes royalty acknowledging Jesus’ rightful place in the child’s life--Lord
- * White symbolizes a man and his ministry and represents his call to be a light to a dark world.
- * Gold symbolizes a man and his wife and represents a union that is to remain of great value and pure.
- * Red symbolizes a man and his relationships and is to remind him of Christ’s servanthood and sacrifice as a standard for all relationships.
- * Green symbolizes a man and his family (the color green is a mixture of blue and yellow) and represents a family made up of different personalities, talents and giftings.
- * Blue symbolizes a man and his world and represents the calm needed in setting his priorities in order: God, family, ministry and career.”

The five men speak on their respective disciplines. (Five minute talk, ending in prayer for the child.)

3. Blessing

Mother takes the stage with father and child. Father speaks:

“(Child’s name), this being your 15th birthday (fill in year of his birthday), Mom and I want to affirm you with our blessing as you take your place in God’s family as a spiritual man of God. Your life will never be the same. You are entering a new season.”

Mother speaks about son's accomplishments and spiritual prowess. (See "A Mother's Blessing To Her Son" at the end of this chapter.)

EXAMPLE: You have always been deep in your understanding. You have been strong in your convictions. You have been knowledgeable in God's Word. You have been richly gifted by God. (List talents.) I see you as a man after God's own heart.

Father speaks.

"As your father and seeing what God is doing in your brother's life, I anxiously await to see the plans God has for you. Please join me as we go before the Lord:

O Lord, may You show favor on (child's name) and protect him. May he always seek Your face and thirst after Your word. May he come to know Your wisdom and instruction. May You Lord God give too him knowledge and discernment. May he truly listen and increase in learning, always seeking wise counsel, as from these godly men. May You bless him with a godly wife and a profession where he can serve You. May he come to understand the greatest of all Your instructions, to love You with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength.

Thank You, Lord for our son (child's name). We ask that You be the source of his joy and the source of his life. Help us as parents to love as You would have us to love him. Thank You for the way he is already growing into the unique person You designed him to be. Lord, we know how special (child's name) is to You, and tonight, may he realize how valuable he is to us now and forever. May he become all You intended him to be and we are honored that we are his parents. Bless us all now, for it is in Jesus' Name we pray.

(Child's name), we give to you our family cross to symbolize the commitment you are making tonight. (Child's name), as I turn this ceremony over to you, I leave you with a verse I claim for myself:

2 Timothy 4:7

As Paul's ministry is nearing an end, he declared, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.'

Father and mother says in unison, "This is my son in whom I am well pleased."

Child speaks addressing the audience.

4. Benediction (given by a family member).

A Mother's Blessing to Her Son (Example)

Jacob (insert your child's name), from the moment you were placed into my arms after your birth, I knew you were a gift from God. I remember in the minutes following your birth how wonderful it would be for you and your brother to be best friends and it has been so much fun to see your relationship unfold. You have always held such a special place within our family. There has been a joy, gentleness and love that surround you. You were a cuddler as a little boy, always coming downstairs in your Carter football

pajamas and crawling up on my lap for a morning snuggle time. You no longer climb on my lap, thank goodness, but you're always there to give me a hug when you walk by me and tell me how much you love me. You're also also an encourager to me when I need a little lift. You are now not only my son, but you are one of my best friends. Raising you has been a joyous journey and I look forward with anticipation to the years ahead, if that be God's will.

Today I bless you with a mother's heart that is full of enormous pride in the child you were, the young man you are and the incredibly awesome man you will become.

I have prayed many things for you even from the time that you were in my womb and I bless into your life those things I have prayed for you.

I bless you in prayer with:

- * an honest heart with utmost integrity
- * a tender and compassionate spirit
- * a strong and healthy body
- * many deep and loyal friendships
- * a loving and devoted wife and children
- * courage and strength of character to face all the challenges of life that will be placed before you
- * a life full of joy
- * and most of all, I pray that you will always enjoy a deep relationship with God all the days of your life.

You will always have my love and my blessing, Jacob. I am so proud to be the one you call mom. I love you so. Mom

CHAPTER Ten **Blessing Your Children**

To value something means to attach honor to it. This is the meaning of the verb "to bless." In Hebrew, the word bless literally means "to bow the knee." This was used in showing reverence, even awe, to an important person.

Words of blessing should carry with them the recognition that this person is valuable and has redeeming qualities. Anytime we bless someone, we are attaching high value to him or to her. In the Scriptures, recognition is based on who they are, not simply their performance.

From Old Testament times to today, the blessing has been an important gift offered to Jewish children. In fact, it has been a duty of parents to their children.

Several Scriptures (KJV) document the passing of the blessing from parent to child:

Genesis 27:30

“And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.”

Genesis 27:35

“And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.”

Genesis 27:36

“And he said, ‘Is not he rightly named Jacob? For he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?’”

Genesis 27:38

“And Esau said unto his father, ‘Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.’ And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.”

Genesis 27:41

“And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, ‘The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.’”

Genesis 49:28

“All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.” (Jacob gave each the blessing appropriate to him.)

Deuteronomy 33:1

And this is the blessing, where with Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

The Blessing

The blessing has several key elements:

It begins with a meaningful touch.

It continues with a spoken message of high value,

a message that pictures a special future

for the individual being blessed,

and one that is based on an

active commitment

to see the blessing come to pass.

Each is important

to giving the blessing.

1. Meaningful Touch

Each time the blessing was given in Scripture, meaningful touch provided a caring background to the words that would be spoken. Kissing, hugging, or laying on of hands were all a part of bestowing the blessing. The act of touch is a key to communicating warmth, personal acceptance, affirmation, even physical health.

Interesting enough, the act of laying on of hands has become a focus of a great deal of modern-day interest and research. Dr. Dolores Krieger, professor of nursing at New York University, has made numerous studies on the effects of laying on of hands. What she found is that both the toucher and the one being touched receive a physiological benefit. How is this possible? Inside our bodies is hemoglobin, the pigment of the red blood cells, which carries oxygen to the tissues. Repeatedly, Dr. Krieger found that hemoglobin levels in both people's bloodstreams go up during the act of laying on of hands.

When Isaac blessed Jacob, an embrace and a kiss were involved. (Genesis 27:26) Ephraim and Manasseh were certainly moved on their day of blessing as the old patriarch gently touched them (Genesis 48:13-17).

In the New Testament, Jesus was a model of someone who communicated the blessing to others by touch.

Mark 10:13-16

“People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.’ And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.”

Mark 1:40-42

“A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, ‘If you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.”

2. Spoken Words

Words have incredible power to build us up or tear us down emotionally. Abraham spoke a blessing to Isaac. Isaac spoke a blessing to his son Jacob. Jacob spoke it to each of his twelve sons and to two of his grandchildren. And God has always been a God who communicates His blessing through spoken words. A blessing is not a blessing unless it is spoken.

James points out the power and the importance of a spoken word as well as the destruction caused by words unkindly spoken. “When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example.

Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body” (James 3:3-6).

There is power in the tongue. It can be used for both good and evil, for building up and tearing down. “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Proverbs 18:21).

Good Words spoken . . .

words of love and acceptance, words of affirmation and blessing, will grace and mold a child positively.

Negative words . . .

can shatter children emotionally rather than shape them positively.

Absence of words . . .

cause suffering to all.

3. Expressing High Value

As we mentioned earlier, to “value” something means to attach great importance to it. When we bless someone, we are deciding that he or she is of high value.

This valuing is exactly what the patriarchs in the Old Testament did in blessing their children with the family blessing. Threads of love and value run throughout the fabric of the blessing. We can see this in the words Isaac spoke to Jacob: “Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed. May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness - an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed” (Genesis 27:27-29).

Word pictures were used to communicate the blessing. Jacob used a different word picture with each of his sons to bestow the blessing. We read, “And that is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, every one with the blessing appropriate to him” (Genesis 49:28). Each of Jacob's sons was an individual, and each of them received a blessing that depicted his value to his father in the form of a word picture he could remember always.

Word Pictures: Four Keys to Communicate Value

- * Use an everyday object. Try to capture a character trait or physical attribute of your beloved child in an everyday object.
- * Match the emotional meaning of the trait you are praising with the object you've picked. In the Song of Solomon, Solomon uses word pictures that capture the emotional meaning behind the trait he wants to praise.

- * Word pictures unravel our defenses. We will listen to praise more intently when it comes packaged in a word picture. That is one reason why our Lord used word pictures to communicate both praise and condemnation through parables.
- * Word pictures point out a person's potential. This illustrates the underdeveloped traits of a person.

4. Picturing a Special Future

Communicating a special future to a child is such an important part of giving the blessing. When a person feels in his or her heart that the future is hopeful and something to look forward to, it can greatly affect his or her attitude on life.

In the Old Testament, the patriarchs pictured a special future for their children. We can see this by looking at the words Isaac spoke to Jacob. "May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness, an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed" (Genesis 27:27-29).

When Isaac spoke these words, much of his son's blessing lay in the future. The picture of a "fulfilling future" was a powerful gift.

Children are filled with the potential to be all God intended them to be. It is as if the Lord places them on our doorstep one day, and we as parents are left as stewards of their abilities. During the years we have children in our home, the words we speak to them can wrap themselves around them like a cocoon. What we say shapes and develops their thoughts and thinking patterns. Loving words that picture a special future help children change and develop in a positive way.

"For I know the plans I have for you,"
declares the LORD,
"plans to prosper you
and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future"
(Jeremiah 29:11).

Spend time in prayer asking God to show you a glimpse of your child's future. For He knows the plans He has for him, plans to prosper and give hope. Speak them over your child.

5. An Active Commitment

Commitment is important because, as we have seen, words of blessing are not enough. They need to be backed by the commitment of a person to see the blessing come to pass.

Step 1: Commit the Person Being Blessed to the Lord

When you look at the blessing in the Old Testament, something that stands out is the way the patriarchs committed their children to the Lord. One reason they called on God to confirm their child's blessing was because they were sure of His commitment to them.

Step 2: Commit Our Lives to Their Best Interest

It takes commitment of our time, energy, and resources. However, Jacob observed another important principle in blessing children. He recognized that every one of his children was unique. In blessing a child, we need to take a personal interest in each child. The better we know our children and their unique set of needs, the better we will be able to give them their own unique blessing. Blessing our children involves understanding their unique bent. In addition, it means being willing to do what is best for that person - even if it means having to correct them when they are wrong.

Step 3: Become a Student of Those We Wish to Bless

One thing in becoming a student of your child is to be lovingly persistent in communicating with the one you are blessing. A second way is the importance of sharing activities. Not only do they draw us closer together, but sharing activities with our children offers tremendous opportunities to learn about our children. Taking the initiative in asking questions can be a third important way to become a student of our children. A fourth practical way is to listen to them with our full attention.

Commitment is costly. If you are serious about committing yourself to blessing those you love, expect to pay a price. Not in monetary terms, rather think in terms of time, energy, and effort.

Is the price worth it? You bet!

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