



PRAYER HANDBOOK



MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Ever since the beginning of time God has been speaking into his creation. God still speaks, and he wants us to listen. That is what this prayer day is all about. For some of you this day is going way out of your comfort zone. You may be used to praying through a list of prayer requests. That is not what this is about. This day is mostly about listening. What is the Spirit of Jesus saying to me through his Word, through his people, and through circumstances.

Over the last year we have seen God at work. I have heard story after story of lives being changed by the resurrection power of Jesus. We've seen people transformed, relationships healed, sin confessed, eyes opened, people moving from darkness to light, prayers answered, and many baptisms.

This year I am entering into this next ministry season with more confidence in what God can accomplish through our purposeful time with him. Personally, I am going to spend some time with God expecting that he is going to reveal himself to me anew. And more than that, I am expecting that he is going to show me some more things in my heart and life that hinder my growth. **That used to be scary for me, but it's not now because know that he loves me.**

The Bible says in **1 John 4:16-19**, *We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. We love each other because he loved us first.* (NLT)

Paul prayed this wonderful prayer for the Ephesian Christians in Ephesians 3:

18 *And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.* **19** *May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.*

That humanly incomprehensible love is what God wants us to know experientially, every minute of every day — 24-7. And, both Paul and John say that knowing that love will make us complete (or mature). This means that getting to know God's love will give us the courage to give his Spirit permission to effect change in our lives.

As you enter into your quiet time with God **expect to hear from Him**. He will speak to you from His Word, and in the quietness of your heart as you are open to listen and obey. There may be some issues He brings to your mind that He wants you to deal with. **Be brave. Go there with Him.**

There may be some excess baggage that is difficult to let go of. It's painful to you. You may have hidden them in the deep recesses of your heart for so long trying to forget.

But, not dealing with those painful areas in your life is keeping you from experiencing real joy and intimacy in all your relationships. Pray for the courage to do what is necessary. You may need to forgive someone who has hurt you. You may need to ask someone forgiveness whom you have hurt. **God is waiting for you to come to Him.** He is waiting for you to ask Him to heal you of those painful memories. As you do, you will experience freedom in ways that you previously thought impossible.

Matthew 11:28-30

28 *Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”*



As you experience the love of God more fully your heart will become more aligned with His. Just like cars need to go to a garage to get wheel alignments we need to get alone with God away from distractions to get our hearts aligned. The reason this is so is because our hearts are naturally aligned with things that appeal to our senses.

In the days before your hour of prayer ask God to prepare you. Ask Him to make you ready to do business with Him. Pray for courage. Pray for eyes to see. Pray for a willing spirit. And remember, Jesus said that He is humble and gentle in heart. He wants you to grow in intimacy with Him. He's waiting for you.

Revelations 3:20

20 *“Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.*

The Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is going to meet you. Expect Him to show up and love you.

May you experience the love, joy, peace, hope, grace, and very presence of God as you join with your church family in this day of prayer.

With sincere love,

Pastor Jeff



HOW TO PRAY (A recommendation)

- **Journal your experience.** Write down what you sense the Spirit of Jesus is saying to you. Write your thoughts and insights about God. Write a prayer to him. We will leave spaces throughout each of the prayer themes in this handbook so you can do that.



- **Follow the ACTS acronym:**
Adoration; **C**onfession; **T**hanksgiving; **S**upplica- tion.

ADORATION

To paraphrase C.S. Lewis, “*What we believe about God is the most important thing about us.*” The direction of our lives will be determined by this belief. We must have a true picture of what God is like.

In order to do this we must first have our hearts focused upward. Our goal is to align our hearts with God’s. We therefore need to spend some time gazing on Him, enjoying Him, adoring Him, focusing on His attributes, and worshipping Him. We have the tendency to make a god in our own image. God **is**. We don’t make Him up in our minds. It’s important that we “worship Him in Spirit and in truth” as Jesus said in John 4:24.

The Bible says that **God is, above all, holy**. There is no one like God. He is completely separate and self-existent. He is perfect in all His attributes. He is blameless and without fault. In all of God’s attributes He is holy.

Psalm 99:1-5

The LORD is king! Let the nations tremble! He sits on his throne between the cherubim. Let the whole earth quake! The LORD sits in majesty in Jerusalem, exalted above the nations. Let them praise your great and awesome name. Your name is holy! Mighty King, love of justice, you have established fairness. You have acted with justice and righteousness throughout Israel. Exalt the LORD our God! bow low before his feet, for he is holy!

You may want to use this time to sing or meditate on a song of worship to God such as the classic hymn, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, early in the morning my song shall rise to thee. Holy, Holy, Holy, merciful, and mighty. God in three persons, blessed Trinity...

We cannot nearly describe God adequately in these pages. Even if we spent our whole lives trying to understand and know Him (which is what our life pursuit should be about), we would not have enough time.

But, the Bible does help us to know Him. Among other things, it says that He has the following attributes. He is:

Omnipotent (all-powerful): There is nothing He is unable to do. Job 42:2; Jeremiah 32:17,27; Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37; Revelation 19:6.

Isaiah 40:25-26

²⁵“To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?” asks the Holy One. ²⁶Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars? He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name. Because of his great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing.

Omnipresent (everywhere at the same time) **Jeremiah**

23:24

²⁴Can anyone hide from me in a secret place? Am I not

everywhere in all the heav-

ens and earth?” says the LORD.

Psalms 139:7-8

⁷I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! ⁸If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there.

Omniscient (all-knowing):

Read all of Psalm 139 from your Bible. Notice how it covers all three of these divine attributes of God.

Infinite (He cannot be contained. He is beyond full comprehension. He is not limited by time, space, or matter. He simply is, and has always been.) Isaiah 40:12-31.

Eternal (He has no beginning or end. There was never a time when God was not. Even when there was nothing, God was there.) Psalm 9:1-2.

Immutable (He never changes) Psalm 102:24-28

Sovereign (He is in charge of everything. Nothing happens that He does not allow.) Colossians 1:15-20; Revelations 4:11

Aside from these divine attributes, the Bible also tells us that God is faithful, completely patient, loving, merciful, just (meaning He always does the right thing), and wrathful (He has to deal with sin. If He didn't he would cease to be just, holy, and good).



Journal Notes

Use this space to write a prayer of adoration to God.

CONFESSION

When we look at God for who he really is, as opposed to making up a god in our own image, we cannot help but see our insufficiency, sin, shortcomings, failures, pride, and self-centeredness. We do not measure up. It's as simple as that.

1 John 1:8-9

⁸ If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. ⁹ But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

Confession is simply admitting that we have missed the mark. It's coming to God and asking Him for cleansing. It's asking God to wipe our slate clean, to free our consciences from the weight of our sin so that His joy can return to us. Psalm 51:1-15

Psalm 139:24-24

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

Spend some quiet time with God right now and ask Him to search your heart to see if there are ways that offend Him that you are not seeing. Ask Him for courage to deal with the sin in a way that would honor Him. Ask Him to forgive you. And then praise Him.



Journal Notes

Use this space to confess your sins to God and ask him to cleanse you. Then receive his forgiveness.

THANKSGIVING

Spend some time thanking God for what He has done for you and what He is going to do for you. Thank Him for His unfailing love. Thank Him for forgiving you.



Journal Notes

Use this space to list everything you are thankful for. Be very specific. Make the list long. Practicing an attitude of gratitude can be a very healing exercise. God can change you in this time.

SUPPLICATION

Now, here is the part where you ask Him to answer your prayers. 1. Begin by praying for what's happening in the world. 2. Then move to praying for Canada. 3. Then spend some time praying for Campbell River that God would use CRBC and other churches in our city to make inroads for the Gospel of Jesus. Pray that God would use us to redeem this city for Him. 4. Then pray for others who have need. Those who are sick, or have financial difficulties. 5. Finally, pray for what you need. Remember, God will answer our prayers as they are in line with what pleases Him.



Journal Notes

1. World:

- a. Israel
- b. Iraq
- c. Syria
- d. Russia/Ukraine
- e. West African Ebola outbreak
- f. CRBC missionaries
- g. Others

2. Canada:

3. Campbell River:



4. Others:

5. CRBC

- a. Those who were recently baptized, that they would be protected from the enemy of their souls. That they would grow in the knowledge of Christ, and know the breadth of his love for them.
- b. That we would grow in unity and love for each other, for our neighbors and for God.
- c. Praise God for answering our prayers about our finances. Pray that he would continue to meet our needs so we can accomplish all he asks us to.
- d. Pray for your pastors and the other church staff.
- e. Others

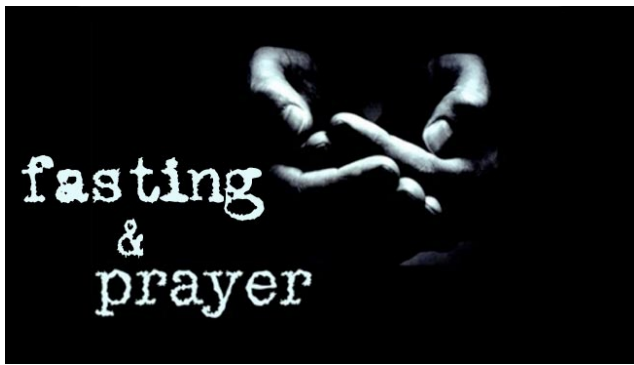
6. **Myself:** Pray the following prayer from Ephesians for yourself and then journal on the next page what you sense God is saying to you. Pray also that God would show you who he would have for you to reach to and love this year.

Ephesians 3:16–21 (NLT)

¹⁶ I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. ¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. ²⁰ Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. ²¹ Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.



Journal Notes



In the time of prayer some of you will also want to add the spiritual discipline of fasting. Fasting alongside a focused time of prayer is an awesome way that God has given us to prepare our hearts to hear from Him. I would encourage you to read the following article by the late Bill Bright of Campus Crusade.

FASTING: What is it? Why do it?

Notes by the late Bill Bright of Power to Change
(formerly, Campus Crusade for Christ)

Fasting is the most powerful of all the Christian spiritual disciplines.

Through fasting and prayer, the Holy Spirit can transform your life. Fasting and prayer can also work on a much grander scale. According to Scripture, personal experience and observation, I am convinced that when God's people fast with a proper Biblical motive - with a broken, repentant, and contrite spirit - God will hear from heaven and heal our lives, our churches, our communities, our nation and world.

Fasting and prayer bring about revival - a change in the direction of our nation, and the nations of earth and the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

The awesome power can be released through you as you fast through the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Yet fasting is one of the most neglected spiritual admonitions. In fact, it has been ignored for so long that it is difficult to find information on the "how-to's" of this life-changing experience.

The Power and Importance of Fasting

- **Fasting was an expected discipline in both the Old and New Testament eras.** For example, Moses fasted at least two recorded forty-day periods. Jesus fasted 40 days and reminded His followers to fast, "when you fast," not if you fast.
- **Fasting and prayer can restore the loss of the "first love" for your Lord and result in a more intimate relationship with Christ.**
- **Fasting is a biblical way to truly humble yourself in the sight of God** (Psalm 35:13; Ezra 8:21). King David said, "I humble myself through fasting."
- **Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life.**

The Holy Spirit will quicken the Word of God in your heart and His truth will become more meaningful to you!

- **Fasting can transform your prayer life into a richer and more personal experience.**
- **Fasting can result in a dynamic personal revival in your own life and make you a channel of revival to others.**

II Chronicles 7:14:

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

If you fast, you will find yourself being humbled as I did. You will discover more time to pray and seek God's face. And as He leads you to recognize and repent of un-confessed sin, **you will experience special blessings from God.**

Types of Fasts

The Normal Fast: Drinking only water and juice (Luke 4:1,2).

The Partial Fast: The restriction of diet, such as Daniel eating only grains, fruits and vegetables and drinking only water (Daniel 1:15).

The Absolute Fast: Refraining from both food and water. This type of fast is not to exceed three days.

Specific Fast: The abstinence from something that brings pleasure such as media, a favorite food, beverage or recreation.

Congregational Fast: Joining together with your local body and/or small group to "tag team" on an extended fast (ie. one person fasts one day, the next the next day, etc...).

Practical Steps to Fasting

1. Set Your Objective

Ask God for a specific focus for your fast, to help you pray more purposefully.

2. Make Your Commitment

Commit to which type and length of fast you will do. Decide what physical or social activities you may restrict. Set a daily amount of time you will devote to prayer.

3. Prepare Yourself Spiritually

Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit brings to mind and resolve any disputes/ sin with others. Do not underestimate spiritual opposition ~ we are dangerous to Satan!

4. Prepare Yourself Physically

Start eating less before your fast, avoiding high fat and sugar foods. Eat raw fruits and vegetables two days prior to fasting. It is not unusual for there to be some symptoms of crankiness, dizziness and tiredness during the fast.

5. Exercise moderately

Avoid high aerobic activities.

6. End Your Fast Gradually

Break your fast with fruit such as watermelon. While continuing to drink fruit or vegetable juices, slowly reintroduce fresh foods with several small snacks over the first several days, avoiding anything processed.

7. Expect Results

God has promised to move when his children humble themselves and wholeheartedly seek his face.

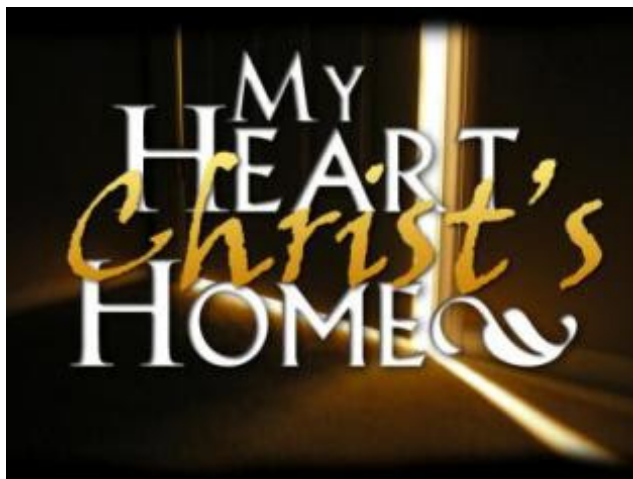


Journal Notes

My fasting objectives:

My Commitment:

In what ways would I like to hear from God during my fasting and prayer?



My Heart Christ's Home by Robert Boyd Munger

In Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, we find these words: **"That (God) would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith"** (*Ephesians 3:16*). Or, as another has translated, ***"That Christ may settle down and be at home in your hearts by faith."***

Without question one of the most remarkable Christian doctrines is that Jesus Christ Himself through the presence of the Holy Spirit will actually enter a heart, settle down and be at home there. Christ will make the human heart His abode. Our Lord said to His disciples, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). It was difficult for them to understand what He was saying. How was it possible for Him to make his abode with them in this sense?

It is interesting that our Lord used the same word here that He gave them in the first of the fourteenth chapter of John: "I go to prepare a place for you .. that where I am, ye may be also." Our Lord was promising his disciples that, just as He was going to heaven to prepare a place for them and would welcome them one day, now it would be possible for them to prepare a place for Him in their hearts and He would come and make His abode with them. They could not understand this. How could it be?

Then came Pentecost. The Spirit of the living Christ was given to the church and they understood. God did not dwell in Herod's temple in Jerusalem! God did not dwell in a temple made with hands; but now, through the miracle of the outpoured Spirit, God would dwell in human hearts. The body of the believer would be the temple of the living God and the human heart would be the home of Jesus Christ. It is difficult for me to think of a higher privilege than to make Christ a home in my heart, to welcome, to serve, to please, to fellowship with him there.

One evening I invited Jesus Christ into my heart. What an entrance He made! It was not a spectacular, emotional thing, but very real. It was at the very center of my life. He came into the darkness of my heart and turned on the light. He built a fire in the cold hearth and banished the chill. He started music where there had been stillness, and He filled the emptiness with His own loving, wonderful fellowship. I have never regretted opening the door to Christ and I never will - not into eternity!

This, of course, is the first step in making the heart Christ's home. He has said, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20). If you are interested in making your life an abode of the living God, let me encourage you to invite Christ into your heart and He will surely come

After Christ entered my heart and in the joy of this new relationship I said to Him, "Lord, I want this heart of mine to be Yours. I want to have You settle down here and be perfectly at home. Everything I have belongs to You. Let me show You around and introduce you to the various features of the home that you may be more comfortable and that we may have fuller fellowship together."

He was very glad to come, of course, and happier still to be given a place in the heart.

The Library

The first room was the study - the library. Let us call it the study of the mind. Now in my home this room of the mind is a very small room with very thick walls. But it is an important room. In a sense, it is the control room of the house. He entered with me and looked around at the books in the bookcase, the magazines upon the table, the pictures on the walls. As I followed His gaze I became uncomfortable. Strangely enough, I had not felt badly about this before, but now that He was there looking at these things I was embarrassed. There were some books were there that His eyes were too pure to behold. There was a lot of trash and literature on the table that a Christian had no business reading, and as for the pictures on the walls - the imaginations and thoughts of the mind - these were shameful.



I turned to Him and said, "Master, I know that this room needs a radical alteration. Will You help me make it what it ought to be? - to bring every thought into captivity to you?"

"Surely!" He said. "Gladly will I help you. First of all, take all the things that you are reading and looking at which are not helpful, pure, good and true, and throw them out! Now put on the empty shelves the books of the Bible. Fill the library with Scriptures and meditate on them day and night. As for the pictures on the walls, you will have difficulty controlling these images, but here is an aid" He gave me a full-size portrait of Himself.

"Hang this centrally," He said, "on the wall of the mind."

I did, and I have discovered through the years that when my thoughts are centered upon Christ Himself, His purity and power cause impure thoughts to back away. So He has helped me to bring my thoughts into captivity.

May I suggest to you if you have difficulty with this little room of the mind, that you bring Christ in there. Pack it full with the Word of God, meditate upon it and keep before it the immediate presence of the Lord Jesus.

The Dining Room

From the study we went into the dining room, the room of appetites and desires. Now this was a very large room. I spent a good deal of time in the dining room and much effort in satisfying my wants.



I said to Him, "This is a favorite room. I am quite sure You will be pleased with what we serve." He seated Himself at the table with me and asked, "What is on the menu for dinner?"

"Well," I said, "my favorite dishes: money, academic degrees and stocks, with newspaper articles of fame and fortune as side dishes."

These were the things I liked - worldly fare. I suppose there was nothing radically wrong in any particular item, but it was not the food that should satisfy the life of a real Christian. When the food was placed before Him, He said nothing about it. However, I observed that He did not eat it, and I said to Him, somewhat disturbed, "Master, don't You care for this food? What is the trouble?"

He answered, "I have meat to eat that you do not know of. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." He looked at me again and said, "If you want food that really satisfies you, seek the will of the Father, not your own pleasures, not your own desires, and not your own satisfaction. Seek to please Me and that food will satisfy you." And there at the table He gave me a taste of doing God's will. What a flavor! There is no food like it in all the world. It alone satisfies. Everything else is dissatisfying in the end.

Now if Christ is in your heart, and I trust He is, what kind of food are you serving Him and what kind of food are you eating yourself? Are you living for the lust of the flesh and the pride of life - selfishly? Or are you choosing God's will for your meat and drink?

The Living Room

We walked next into the living room. This room was rather intimate and comfortable. I

liked it. It had a fireplace, overstuffed chairs, a sofa, and a quiet atmosphere.

He also seemed pleased with it. He said, "This is indeed a delightful room. Let us come here often. It is secluded and quiet, and we can fellowship together."

Well, naturally as a young Christian I was thrilled. I couldn't think of anything I would rather do than have a few minutes with Christ in intimate companionship.



He promised, "I will be here early every morning. Meet me here, and we will start the day together." So morning after morning, I would come downstairs to the living room and He would take a book of the Bible from the bookcase. He would open it and then we would read together. He would tell me of its riches and unfold to me its truths. He would make my heart warm as He revealed His love and His grace He had toward me.

These were wonderful hours together. In fact, we called the living room the "withdrawing room." It was a period when we had our quiet time together.

But, little by little, under the pressure of many responsibilities, this time began to be shortened. Why, I'm don't know, but I thought I was just too busy to spend time with Christ. This was not intentional, you understand; it just happened that way. Finally, not only was the time shortened, but I began to miss a day now and then. It was examination time at the university. Then it was some other urgent emergency. I would miss it two days in a row and often more.

I remember one morning when I was in a hurry, rushing downstairs, eager to be on my way. As I passed the living room, the door was open. Looking in, I saw a fire in the fireplace and Jesus was sitting there. Suddenly in dismay I thought to myself, "He was my guest. I invited Him into my heart! He has come as Lord of my home. And yet here I am neglecting Him."

I turned and went in. With downcast glance, I said, "Blessed Master, forgive me. Have You been here all these mornings?"

"Yes," He said, "I told you I would be here every morning to meet with you." Then I was even more ashamed. He had been faithful in spite of my faithfulness. I asked His forgiveness and He readily forgave me as He does when we are truly repentant.

"The trouble with you is this: you have been thinking of the quiet time, of the Bible

study and prayer time, as a factor in your own spiritual progress, but you have forgotten that this hour means something to me also. Remember, I love you. I have redeemed you at great cost. I value your fellowship. Now," He said, "do not neglect this hour if only for my sake. Whatever else may be your desire, remember I want your fellowship!"

You know, the truth that Christ desires my companionship, that He loves me, wants me to be with Him, wants to be with me and waits for me, has done more to transform my quiet time with God than any other single fact. Don't let Christ wait alone in the living room of your heart, but every day find some time when, with your Bible and in prayer, you may be together with Him.

The Workroom

Before long, He asked, "Do you have a workroom in your home?" Down in the basement of the home of my heart I had a workbench and some equipment, but I was not doing much with it. Once in a while I would play around with a few little gadgets, but I wasn't producing anything substantial or worthwhile.

I led Him down there.

He looked over the workbench and what little talents and skills I had. He said, "This is quite well furnished. What are you producing with your life for the Kingdom of God?" He looked at one or two little toys that I had thrown together on the bench and held one up to me. "Are these little toys all that you are doing for others in your Christian life?"

"Well," I said, "Lord, that is the best I can do. I know it isn't much, and I really want to do more, but after all, I have no skill or strength to do more."



"Would you like to do better?" He asked. "Certainly," I replied.

"All right. Let me have your hands. Now relax in me and let my Spirit work through you. I know that you are unskilled, clumsy and awkward, but the Holy Spirit is the Master-Worker, and if He controls your hands and your heart, He will work through you." And so, stepping around behind me and putting His great, strong hands over mine, controlling the tools with His skilled fingers He began to work through me.

There's much more that I must still learn and I am very far from satisfied with the product that is being turned out, but I do know that whatever has been produced for God has been through His strong hand and through the power of His Spirit in me.

Do not become discouraged because you cannot do much for God. Your ability is not the

fundamental condition. It is He who is controlling your fingers and upon whom you are relying. Give your talents and gifts to God and He will do things with them that will surprise you..

The Rec Room

I remember the time He asked me about the playroom. I was hoping He would not ask about that. There were certain associations and friendships, activities and amusements that I wanted to keep for myself. I did not think Christ would enjoy them or approve of them, so I evaded the question.

But there came an evening when I was on my way out with some of my friends, and as I was about to cross the threshold, He stopped me with a glance and asked, "Are you going out?" I replied, "Yes." "Good," He said, "I would like to go with you."

"Oh," I answered rather awkwardly. "I don't think, Lord Jesus, that You would really want to go with us. Let's go out tomorrow night. Tomorrow night we will go to prayer meeting, but tonight I have another appointment."

He said. "That's alright. Only I thought that when I came into your home, we were going to do everything together, to be close companions. I just want you to know that I am willing to go with you."



"Well," I said, "we will go someplace together tomorrow night."

That evening I spent some miserable hours. I felt wretched. What kind of a friend was I to Jesus when I was deliberately leaving Him out of my associations, doing things and going places that I knew

very well He would not enjoy? When I returned that evening, there was a light in His room, and I went up to talk it over with Him. I said, "Lord, I have learned my lesson. I can't have a good time without You. From now on we will do everything together."

Then we went down into the playroom of the house and He transformed it. He brought into life real joy, real happiness, real satisfaction, new friends, new excitement, new joys. Laughter and music have been ringing through the house ever since.

The Hall Closet

There is just one more matter that I might share with you. One day I found Him waiting

for me at the door. An arresting look was in His eye. As I entered, He said to me, "There is a peculiar odor in the house. There is something dead around here. It's upstairs. I think it is in the hall closet." As soon as He said this, I knew what He was talking about. Yes, there was a small closet up there on the landing, just a few feet square, and in that closet, behind lock and key, I had one or two little personal things that I did not want anyone to know about and certainly I did not want Christ to see them. I knew they were dead and rotting things left over from the old life. And yet I loved them, and I wanted them so for myself that I was afraid to admit they were there.

Reluctantly, I went up with Him, and as we mounted the stairs the odor became stronger and stronger. He pointed at the door. "It's in there! Some dead thing!"

I was angry. That's the only way I can put it. I had given Him access to the library, the dining room, the living room, the workroom, the playroom, and now He was asking me about a little two-by-four closet. I said to myself, "This is too much. I am not going to give Him the key."

"Well," He said, reading my thoughts, "if you think I'm going to stay up here on the second floor with this odor, you are mistaken. I will take my bed out on the back porch. I'm certainly not going to put up with that." Then I saw Him start down the stairs.

When you have come to know and love Christ, the worst thing that can happen is to sense His fellowship retreating from you. I had to surrender. "I'll give You the key," I said sadly, "but You'll have to open the closet and clean it out. I haven't the strength to do it."

"I know," He said. "I know you haven't. Just give me the key. Just authorize me to take care of that closet and I will." So with trembling fingers I passed the key to Him. He took it from my hand, walked over to the door, opened it, entered it, took out all the putrefying stuff that was rotting there, and threw it away. The He cleaned the closet and painted it, fixed it up, doing it all in a moment's time. Oh, what victory and release to have that dead thing out of my life!



Transferring the Title

Then a thought came to me. I said to myself, "I have been trying to keep this heart of mine clear for Christ. I start on one room and no sooner have I cleaned that then another room is dirty. I begin on the second room and the first room becomes dusty again. I am so tired and weary trying to maintain a clean heart and an obedient life. I am just not up to it!"

So I ventured a question: "Lord, is there any chance that You would take over the

responsibility of the whole house and operate it for me and with me just as You did that closet? Would You take the responsibility to keep my heart what it ought to be and my life where it ought to be?"

I could see His face light up as He replied, "Certainly, that is what I came to do. You cannot be a victorious Christian in your own strength. That is impossible. Let me do it through you and for you. That is the way. But," He added slowly, "I am not owner of this house. I am just a guest. I have no authority to proceed, since the property is not mine."

I saw it in a minute and dropping to my knees, I said, "Lord, You have been a guest and I have been the host. From now on I am going to be the servant. You are going to be the owner and Master and Lord."

Running as fast as I could to the strongbox, I took out the title deed to the house describing its assets and liabilities, location and situation and condition. I eagerly signed it over to belong to Him alone for time and eternity. "Here," I said. "Here it is, all that I



am and have forever. Now You run the house. I'll just remain with You as a servant and friend."

He took my life that day and I can give you my word, there is no better way to live the Christian life. He knows how to keep it in shape and deep peace settles down on the soul. May Christ settle down and be at home in your heart as Lord of all!

I hope and pray that your time with God will be meaningful and that he will meet you in a very real way so that your faith in Him would increase. My prayer for you is that your vision of him would be enlarged, that your trust in him would be strengthened, that your resolve to follow him in obedience would be enhanced, that your relationship with him would become more intimate, and that your prayer life would be enhanced one hundred fold.

Ephesians 3 (NLT)

¹⁴ When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, ¹⁵ the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. ¹⁶ I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. ¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how

long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

²⁰ Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. ²¹ Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

Prayer for Finances

One of the reasons we called this 24 hour prayer vigil was because of our church finances. Summer is always a difficult time for churches financially and it just so happened that our budget was very heavily loaded towards the front end of the year. We had Pastor Robin and Chris Coon on staff for the first part of the year as well as some other major budget items. The other part of the equation was that this year we did not have the contingency buffer that we had in previous years which meant that we would have to somehow ride through the low months in the summer hoping and praying that God would provide.

We brought this dilemma to the attention of the congregation several weeks ago and asked you to pray about our financial situation and how the Lord would have you respond to the need. What we have seen is since doing this is God doing what he does best. He is above all a deliverer. Our prayers were answered and we have caught up with our finances. God is amazing!

A couple weeks ago the church board brought a motion forward to the congregation to ask for permission to secure a line of credit to carry us in the down months so that we can keep our financial obligations such as payments to missionaries etc. This is not a loan. It is a line of credit.