



# Foundation of Faith

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The Amazing Book

How to Use Your Bible

Alone with God

Prayer Changes Things

Marriage

A photograph of a green ceramic mug and an open Bible resting on a wooden surface. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light, possibly from a window or a lamp, creating a warm and peaceful atmosphere. The Bible is open, showing text on the pages.

In the Presence  
of God

# Content

## IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

### 4 The Amazing Book

### 6 How to Use Your Bible

*Practical Advice for Studying the Bible*

### 8 Alone with God

*Are you looking for someone who really understands you and to whom you can bring your cares and receive courage, comfort and advice?*

### 9 The Word of God

### 10 Prayer Changes Things

### 11 Public Prayer

### 12 How George Mueller Became a Prayer Warrior

#### RADIO BROADCAST

### 14 Prayers in a Secret Place

*What faithful prayer warriors have accomplished in their secret prayer rooms will only be revealed in eternity.*

### 3 Editorial

#### YOUTH PAGE

### 16 "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

### 17 The Invisible Enemy

*Who or what are the invisible enemies that attempt to destroy our relationship with God?*

#### CHILDREN'S CORNER

### 19 An Adventure

### 21 To Those Who Overcome

#### SOMETHING FOR THE FAMILY

### 22 Marriage

#### ON THE ROAD OF SALVATION

### 24 A Life Worth Living (Part 19)

### 26 The Single-Minded Man

*Only one desire drove this man . . . .*

### 27 Announcement

#### POEM

### 32 Word of God

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## Editorial

Dear Reader,

*Can we not all agree with the songwriter Joachim Neander, “How often in your distress has our merciful God spread His wings over you?”*

*Throughout our pilgrimage, we experience not only peaceful and sunny days but also rain, storms, thunder and lightning, and hail. We are threatened by dangers, difficulties, accidents, and illnesses. Temptations and the arrows of the wicked one are aimed at us too. All of us, whether young or old, at work or at home, in our neighborhoods or on the streets, are surrounded by unbelievers and ungodliness.*

*We read how David prayed, “Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings, from the wicked who oppress me, from my deadly enemies who surround me” (Psalm 17:8-9).*

*Throughout our entire lives, we need an anchor and a helper. Not just any kind of helper but the Son of God, Jesus Christ. “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,” and we will discover and experience that “he shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge” (Psalm 91:1,4).*

*Therefore, dear reader, we all need the Son of God, the Savior and Redeemer, not just the day we were saved, but each and every day. We need to seek His face daily, ask for His help, and draw strength from the fullness of His grace so we are armed for all of the difficulties and troubles we will encounter.*

*The Word of God must be our spiritual food. Our Lord Jesus promised all of His disciples, “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).*

*So then join in praise to God and say, “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!”*

H. D. Nimz

# The Amazing Book

It is said that the French scoffer Voltaire, who lived during the period of Frederick the Great and vehemently opposed Christianity, once said, “One hundred years from my day, there will not be a Bible on earth except one that is looked upon by an antiquarian curiosity-seeker.” Those hundred years are long gone. Voltaire is dead. He died an atheist. The house in which he lived was at one point occupied by the president of the Evangelical Society of Geneva, and some of the rooms in the house were used to store Bibles and gospel tracts. Voltaire is dead, but the Bible lives on.

The Pope in Rome repeatedly condemned Bible societies and prohibited the reading of the Bible. In 1870, when the King of Italy put an end to the Papal States and marched into the city of Rome, a small cart pulled by a large, white dog cut in front of the troops. And inside that cart was the Bible. Before anyone else could, God’s Word entered the city that had persecuted countless souls for the sake of the Bible.

Many years ago, a revision of the New Testament was released in the United States. When it was completed, the revised copy was offered for sale. What happened? In New York, people offered 500 dollars to receive a copy of this New Testament prior to the general release of its publication. On the morning of the issuance, the streets of New York were literally barricaded with wagons of those awaiting copies of this book. Hundreds of thousands of copies were sold as quickly as they could be distributed. Matthew chapter one to the end of the book of Romans, approximately 118,000 words, were telegraphed from New York to Chicago just to get it into the Sunday paper 24 hours earlier than the train could have transported it. This was the longest telegraph transmission ever!

For a book often considered “dead” and frequently condemned, mocked and derided, attacked and refuted, it continues to reveal striking signs of life.

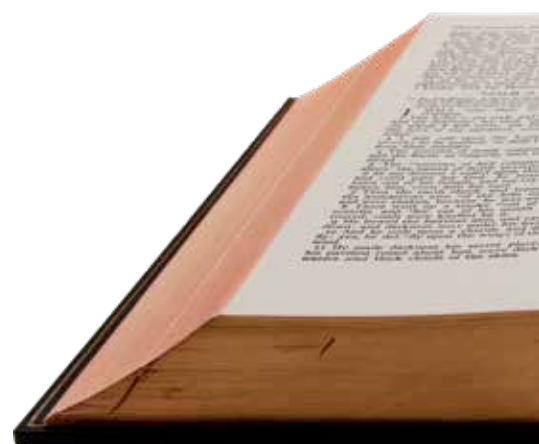
This remarkable book is alive and outlives all of its foes and critics. All denigrators of the Bible have been

ruined, and the Bible lives on. One especially striking observation is that the critics of the Bible nevertheless feel safest where this book is found.

Years ago, a young man who was not a believer went on a hike with his uncle. One evening, they felt a need to stay overnight in a solitary house, far from the main road. The owner did not appear exactly trustworthy, so they were concerned about their safety and their cash. They decided the young man would keep watch during the first half of the night. Then he was supposed to wake up his uncle to be on guard the rest of the night. The older man was barely lying down when the young man started getting ready for bed.

“Didn’t you want to stay up?” asked the uncle. “It isn’t necessary” was the reply. Through a gap in the doorway, he had seen their host take a large black book, read in it, and fall to his knees in prayer. Then the young man knew they were safe in this house.

A representative of the French Directory, L epeaux, came to the elderly statesman Talleyrand (1754-1838), and complained that his new religion “Theophilanthropy” was finding little acceptance among the people. Then Talleyrand said, “The difficulty of your pursuit is not surprising to me. It’s not easy to introduce a new religion. I have one recommendation for you,



then perhaps you may succeed.” “And what would that be?” questioned Lépeaux. “Do miracles, raise the dead, heal all sorts of diseases, and drive out demons. Then let yourself be crucified and rise up from the dead. Then you will achieve your goal,” replied Talleyrand. Lépeaux left without another word. He was incapable

and the list goes on. All manner of written language is represented.

How great a confusion there would be if it weren't for this wonderful Bible!

The Bible is as relevant today as it was centuries ago. It has a remarkable influence like no other book in the

world. Many have said, “I was lost. I broke my elderly mother's heart. I ruined my family with my drinking. I was a slave to passions—until the words of this Book made an impression on me. At that moment, my life was transformed. Truly, an astounding Book.

If only everyone would use this Book as their guide to life. There would be fewer court cases, fewer fights would interrupt the calm of the

night, and prisons would have fewer occupants if this wonderful Book ruled the hearts of men.

When Columbus saw the Orinoco River, one of his companions said he had found an island. Columbus replied, “No. Such a force cannot be found on an island. This powerful stream must collect the waters of a continent.”

That can be likened to the fountain of living water, which we call the Bible. This Book does not arise from the hearts of humans but springs from the immeasurable depth of godly wisdom, love, and grace.

May we all accept it as the Word of our God and experience the power of God that saves everyone who believes it. ■



of that. But Christ has done it, and His apostles sacrificed life and limb to communicate and substantiate these truths.

We call this amazing book “the Bible.” Actually, it isn't a single book but a library of 66 books written by 30 to 40 different people. These people came from various walks of life. They included kings, princes, poets, philosophers, statesmen, fishermen, and tax collectors. There were men educated in all the knowledge of the Egyptians, trained in the schools of Babylon, raised among the scribes of Jerusalem, and some with hardly any education. Everything possible is found in this library we call the Bible, including history, prophecy, poetry, law, ethics, health education, political science,



# How to Use *Your* Bible

## **Take Time to Read Your Bible**

Jesus, the “teacher come from God,” requires designated and uninterrupted quiet time so that He could teach us, His followers. Our minds need to be clear and alert for His Word. We must give Him our best, the first part of the day. There is not a better time than the early morning hour to take time to read your Bible. We are unable to give these holy thoughts, which shine as diamonds on the pages of the Bible, our undivided attention if we first take time to read our letters, pick up the newspaper, check out the Internet, or scatter our thoughts during breakfast chatter. During the Exodus, the manna had to be gathered before sunrise, otherwise it would melt.

We should take at least a half hour before breakfast to read the Bible with full concentration. Perhaps a half hour seems too long. However, it will not take long, and you will notice the time is rather short, for your appetite will increase the more you satisfy it. This half hour will definitely not be a waste of time. The Bible never speaks with its powerful words to those who read it in a hurry.

Of course, it is not possible for everyone to take time before breakfast. There are exceptions we must regard. Jesus Christ can also meet you at the well at noon and give you springs of living water. And even if it is only possible for you to read a few words from the Holy Scriptures before you are off to work, the promise of the manna will repeat itself. “He who gathered much had nothing left over,” which means everything we received from Bible-reading that morning is never too much for our needs during the day. “And he who gathered little had no lack” (Exodus 16:18). The meaning of the last phrase is that when compelling circumstances do not allow us to savor more than a handful of “manna,” this too will carry us throughout the day.

I will never forget a very cold morning in November when I met my friend in the early hours of the day. He joyfully shared with me how the Lord woke him at 4:00 a.m. so he could dig deeply in His Word. He proceeded to tell me it was his practice to trust the Lord to wake him, which made his early rising easier.

Couldn't we do the same? When we are weak, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (see Philippians 4:13). Trust Christ, and you will not be disappointed.

## **Ask the Holy Spirit for His Direction**

I believe no one can interpret the Word better than the One Who has written it. If it is your desire to relevantly read the Bible, then do not ignore the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit Who inspired the holy men of God to write the Bible. When you open your Bible, then lift up your heart and pray, “Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law” (Psalm 119:18).

Oddly, most commentaries shed a weak light on the depth of God's Word. A humble, believing child of God, who solely depends on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, often finds treasures that scholars have misinterpreted or overlooked. First John 2:27 explains it this way: “You do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true . . .”

Yet, clearly no judgment should be made about commentaries and books that shed light on the Bible. On the contrary, it is very helpful for every Bible reader to use these books as much as possible for help to diligently study the Bible. This will give us confidence in understanding the real meaning of an event, a promise, and God's admonishing words. When we study the Bible using these helpful in-depth materials, it is advisable to choose another time rather than in the morning, since the early part of the day is when

most of us have our more consecrated, personal time with God. This is a time where only God's Spirit should be the teacher.

### **Read your Bible Systematically**

A good plan is to read the entire Bible once a year. Many Christians read one chapter a day, which achieves an entire Bible reading over a period of three years.

Sometimes it is good to choose one book in the Bible and read it through from start to finish, and to set aside a longer time to accomplish this. Another time, you can take a certain historical event or the life of a specific person and compare everything written in the various sections of the Bible about this event or person. Occasionally, you could focus your attention on one word or theme like "faith," "eternal life," "sanctification," "prayer," etc. and with the help of a concordance, search the scriptures from one end to the other. For a Christian new to reading the Bible, it is a good idea to start in the New Testament, but to progress eventually to the Old Testament as well, for in 2 Timothy 3:16, we read, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

### **Read the Bible with a Highlighter**

In the biography of Francis R. Havergal written by her sister Maria, she writes, "She read her Bible at her desk at seven o'clock in the summer, and at eight o'clock in the winter. Sometimes, on very bitter cold days, I urged her to sit by the fireplace, but her answer was, 'Maria, then I will not be able to underline my verses neatly. Look at the discovery I just made. If you search, you find noteworthy things in the Bible.' She wouldn't stay up late and was even less interested in idle talk in the evenings that would replace reading the Bible and quiet time with God."

I believe one secret of enjoying the Bible to its fullest is by highlighting key scriptures. Highlight outstanding verses that shed beams of light on your pathway. In the margin, write down a cross reference or a word regarding a helpful thought. This way, you can preserve your treasures forever. Your Bible will become a precious memory of past times and also tell a story about your personal life.

### **Search Eagerly for a Personal Benefit**

Do not read your Bible thinking of how this applies to others, but rather to yourself personally. While you are reading, pray that a verse or a number of verses could reveal God's message to you. Sometimes it is good to stop and ask yourself what the Holy Spirit wants to teach you.

Do not regard the Bible as just a narrative, a formal written composition, or a piece of poetry, but rather a letter from your Heavenly Father to you, revealing Himself to you. In this letter there will be things you will not understand until you are in a situation where you will need it.

Turn your eyes from the printed pages in the Bible towards God in prayer. More and more, these written words in the Bible will become a personal treasure you will keep forever. In Psalm 119:97, the Psalmist speaks, "Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day." Through daily Bible-reading, you will come to the point where you can speak the words of the prophet, "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jeremiah 15:16).

Therefore, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

F. M.

# Alone With God

*“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:6).*

Sometimes, we are burdened with something we want to share with no one else except with our best friend, whom we trust and who understands us. We then look for an opportunity to speak with that friend in private. How often has someone who was burdened with sorrow or care found comfort and help through the advice of a wise and faithful friend! Yet, there are times when even the best and truest friends cannot help us or give us advice. Maybe we are faced with a problem we are not able to share with anyone else. Some situations in life are bitter and seem too dark for anyone to see through them.

In such a case, to whom can you go? In whom can you confide? There remains only one place for you to go, one heart that will lovingly understand you. You need to be alone with God. If you earnestly seek Him, you will find Him. Jesus says, “Go into your room, and shut the door” (see Matthew 6:6). That is good advice. You need to shut the door in order to be alone with God.

The devil knows how much advantage is to be gained when you are alone with God. Therefore, he will do everything in his might to prevent this. Remember, Jesus said to shut the door, not only to your friends, to the world with its cares,

to the devil with his deceitful plans and influences, but also to your own wishes and feelings. Leave them outside, and keep them outside.

When you are alone with God, share all your troubles with Him. Pour out your heart and remember you can fully trust Him. You can tell Him everything. He does not disappoint anyone who fully trusts Him; therefore, you can confidently share everything with Him. You can share all and share it completely.

Yet, that is not enough. After sharing everything on your heart with your Friend and asking Him for advice, what good would it do if you went your way without waiting for an answer? Yet that is what many people do. So many Christians come to God with their concerns, but do not allow God to speak to them, causing many of them to be burdened with care. This is not necessary. David says, “Truly, my soul silently waits for God” (Psalm 62:2), and in another Psalm, we read, “Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield” (Psalm 33:20). God wishes to speak to us and give us the strength we need. Let us take time to be alone with God and in quietness let Him speak to us. “For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: ‘In returning and rest you

shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength” (Isaiah 30:15).

Here is one of the secrets many have not yet learned. Consequently, they do not experience the real joy of being alone with God and cannot enjoy the full blessing God has in store for them. If we could only learn to be still and come before our God in quietness and with confidence.

Make a genuine attempt to be still. Listen for God’s gentle voice and discern what your Friend has to say to you. He has advice and good news for you. If you follow His advice and leading, it will be much easier for you to face even the most complicated problems in life with confidence. Even if humans have no solution, God has a way out. Not only will He give you good advice, He will endow you with strength and new energy. “He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength” (Isaiah 40:29). Yes “the LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace” (Exodus 14:14).

When you are still before the Lord, you may sometimes sense that God has a warning for you or wishes to correct you. How vital are such moments! Listen to His voice, for He has only the best in mind for you. If He shows you where



you have gone wrong or should have done better, do not close your heart against such correction, but humble yourself and give heed to His leading.

God's voice may question us, asking us if we have fulfilled our duty towards others. Have we been the good example we should have been? Have we helped carry the burdens of others? Do we weep

with those who weep and genuinely rejoice with those who rejoice? (Romans 12:15).

Do we fulfill our duty toward God's kingdom? Do we pray for the church? Do we support the Word of God with our resources? God knows and we know if we are doing our part.

Take time to be alone with God, despite all the hustle and bustle

of the world. He has comfort for those who need comfort. He has help for the helpless. He has advice for those who need counsel. If we learn to take time to be still before God, then we find rest in the midst of a restless world. We can enjoy the rest and peace in our soul, known only to those who are still before God and take time to be alone with Him. ■

## The Word of God

**A** rich and respected lady in England had furnished her beautiful, large house in lavish splendor. In addition to other richly-furnished rooms, there was also a library that housed a large selection of books by many writers. The Bible was among these books, all of which were bound in magnificent covers.

For a long time, the Bible stood untouched in the middle of these magnificent works. The lady was one of those who knew little or nothing about this precious book. Feeling bored one day, she picked up the Bible and started reading. After a while, she began to feel very uneasy. She read about sin, a holy and just God, about hell and damnation, making her increasingly uncomfortable. Finally, she laid the book aside.

Reading the Bible spoke to her heart, and it wouldn't let her go. She had to continue reading to see what else was written in it. But now the arrogance, bitterness, and

enmity that naturally dwells in the human heart rose up inside her. In outrage, she hurled the Bible into the fireplace.

At that very moment, however, she asked in horror, "What have I done?" She tried to retrieve the Bible from the flames, but it was too late. The Bible lay open in the blaze of fire and flames, right where she had hurled it. She leaned forward, as if drawn by a magnetic force, and read the words still undamaged by the flames, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

She was overcome by an indescribable fear. She wanted to destroy the Word of God, which cannot be destroyed. She had no choice. She had to get a new Bible. This time, she didn't attach any particular importance to the cover. It was just the content that mattered to her. First, she read the Word with particular attention to detail, and then with a growing desire for this Word that will nev-

er pass away. She not only found God's judgment for the sinner, but she also found the One Who, in mercy, called all the troubled and burdened to find rest for their souls.

The lady followed the voice of God. Convicted of her sins, she took refuge in the One Who showed man what is in his heart but Who also took the judgment and guilt on Himself to the cross of Calvary. She found true peace for her soul.

Everything on earth is fleeting. Only God's Word remains in spite of peoples' hostility. "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:12-13). ■

# Prayer Changes Things

**W**e know we can bring all our requests to God (Philippians 4:6), yet often we even hear believers saying, “It isn’t worth bothering God over this” or “That’s just how things are, so I’ll have to deal with it.” They turn to God only in cases of great need. Certainly, hardship teaches us to pray and stills thoughts such as: “Where could help come from?” or “Is this or that not possible?”

However, just as a loving father on earth is happy when his child comes to him even when she’s not in trouble, so it is with God, our Heavenly Father. We honor Him by talking everything over with Him and entrusting Him with it all.

At least, that is what Mrs. W. thought. She was a believer and a widow who trusted in the special promises God’s Word has for widows.

Her husband had been taken from her suddenly. His death did not plunge her into financial trouble because her married daughter lived with her and would not have forsaken her mother. However, Mrs. W. had several large bills to pay and therefore wanted to receive the first pension payment as soon as possible, although she knew this money was only paid out to a widow six months after the husband’s death. Nonetheless, with the same child-like faith she had in her Father in Heaven in all other matters, she said, “I know very well that it actually takes six months,

but it is such a small thing for You to make it go faster.”

Some weeks after her husband’s death in December, Mrs. W. was called into the local government office. Since it was far too early for her pension payout, she assumed she was being called in to answer some more questions. She arrived at the office to see people lined up and waiting in front of three tables. Joining them, she waited her turn, but when she finally got to the front of the line, the official gave her a stern look, lifted up a sheet of paper, and said for all to hear, “Mrs. W., your money is already here. It is only February, and the payment isn’t due until June. What did you do for it to arrive so early?”

Blushing and embarrassed, she stammered, “I didn’t do anything!” And that was the truth. In the way the official meant it, she had indeed done nothing.

But he was not satisfied and asked again, “What did you do? You must have done something! I just want to know what it was. I have been working here a long time and have seen a lot of claims and submissions go through, and this pension has never been paid out in less than six months. So I’ll ask you again, how did you manage this?”

A sudden silence descended on the room. The clerks at their desks paused their work and looked over. Everyone looked expectantly, and some people disapprovingly, at the woman who had been so favored. Our sister was in an awkward po-

sition. In front of so many people, including some she knew would be scornful of religion, would she have to confess that she prayed?

“Lord,” she asked silently, “should I air in public a matter that concerns only You and me?”

But her questioner’s aggressive insistence left her no choice. “What did you do? I want to know what you did!”

She pulled herself together and said, “Yes, I did do something.”

“I knew it,” thought the official.

But then she continued, her clear voice ringing powerfully into the silence, “I prayed.”

The man could only lower his gaze and sheepishly flip through his files. The clerks took up their pens again, with no change of expression, and there was not a trace of derision to be seen on any other face either. When our sister turned to walk out, everyone silently stepped aside to let her pass.

When Mrs. W. later told this story to a group of believers at a comfortable get-together at our house, one of the other guests could hardly wait for her to finish telling the story to exclaim, “That was you?” She continued excitedly, “After my sister’s husband died, she had to go to the government office so often because of the pension. The last time, the official told her, ‘Just give it up! There is really no point. In all my time here, payment has always taken half a year.’ But then he said, ‘There was just one exception—for a woman who prayed!’” ■

L. H.

# Public Prayer

In these times, it is more important than ever for us to come together to pray. May the Lord help us take this to heart, as we consider the following thoughts about public prayer.

1. When you pray in public, do not use that time to criticize and correct the mistakes of others—use it to pray. Prayer is our opportunity to express our concerns and gratitude to God.

2. Instead of searching for pretty words and refined expressions, speak so simply that a child could understand you.

3. Address God the Father or the Lord Jesus, not the congregation, and do not subject God and people to an insincere dissertation. Simply pray. This also means not just listing a series of facts; instead, present your requests “by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving” (Philippians 4:6).

4. Do not waste your time telling the Lord over and over again how great and merciful He is, and especially avoid the irreverent and wasteful repetition of requests through constant paraphrasing and the use of many words where few

would be better. This saddens the Spirit of God and is exhausting for your fellow congregants. “God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few” (Ecclesiastes 5:2).

5. Pray for a specific purpose and not for yourself or for things of a personal nature—that is for your private prayers. Think about glorifying the Lord and His Kingdom, about the things ahead of us, and about His work and His people, wherever they may be.

6. Do not say too often, “Oh Lord Jesus; oh God and Father.” Sometimes, people seem to start off every sentence this way, but this, too, is an unnecessary habit. Compare this approach to the Lord’s prayer in John 17.

7. Say what you mean. Be direct, natural, and serious, and don’t try to be eloquent. Never pray just to pray, or to pass the time, or even to make sure your fellow congregants do not forget the sound of your voice.

8. Do not make your prayers too long. If you have a lot on your heart, pray several times

instead. In private, you can pray for as long as you want and are able, but not in public.

9. Speak loudly and clearly enough so that everyone there can understand you. What can your prayer do for the other worshipers if they cannot understand you, and how can they affirm it with an “amen”?

10. Above all, let us remember that we are called to pray “in the Holy Spirit,” “lifting up holy hands,” and “calling on the Lord out of a pure heart” (Jude 20; 1 Timothy 2:8; 2 Timothy 2:22).

None of us should think we can pray for strength and anointing in public if we do not actually lead a life of prayer at home, if we do not make a habit of seeking the presence of the Lord in private and of bringing our own needs to God in sustained prayer. Not without reason is prayer called the breath of the soul. Just as the physical body can only remain strong through regular exercise, so too can our spiritual being only remain healthy through constant communion with God. In His holy presence, we gain the strength we need for difficult times. ■

# How *George Mueller* Became a Prayer Warrior

**W**ithout a doubt, this man was one of the most significant men of the 19th century. He was known with good reason as “God’s Millionaire” or “The 19th Century Apostle of Faith.” When on March 10, 1898, he closed his eyes to this world forever, he had in his lifetime prayed for millions of dollars for the construction of orphanages, support for the orphans, distribution of Bibles and tracts, support for missionaries, and the maintenance of schools. In his simple, childlike faith, he received all he asked for from his Heavenly Father.

When considering such a huge accomplishment, the question arises, “What prepared this man for such an enormous task?” Perhaps he was the son or the grandson of a devoutly religious preacher or man of prayer. Oddly enough, this assumption would be completely erroneous. Up until his twentieth year, he was living a sinful and wicked life. One day, he was invited to a Bible study held in the home of a businessman, where, to his great amazement, people knelt in prayer and openly prayed from the heart. This made such an impression on him that without delay he also started to pray. He did not rest until he had the assurance of God’s acceptance and the forgiveness of his sins.

After his conversion, George Mueller had one goal: to consecrate his life to the service of his Lord. He studied theology and traveled to England in 1826 as

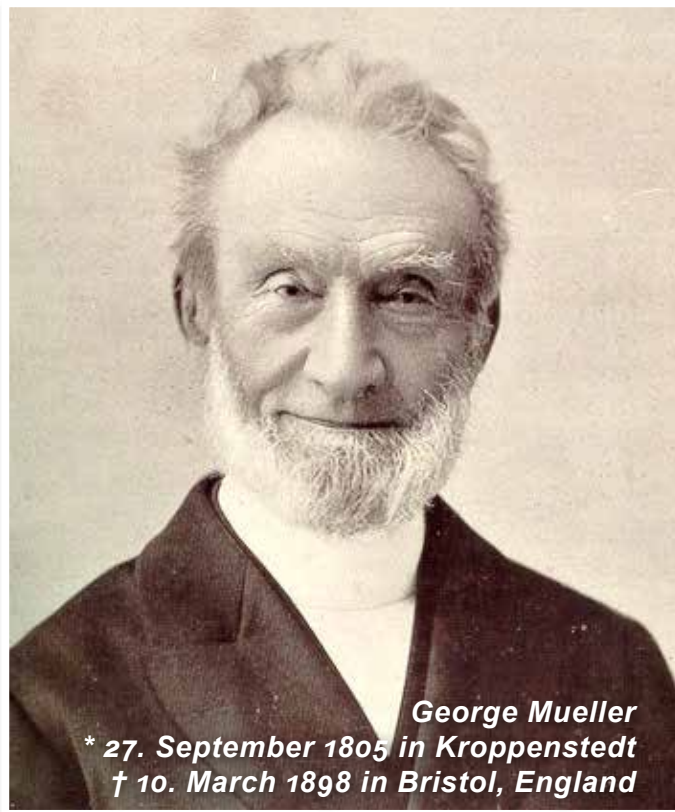
a missionary to the Jewish people. Soon thereafter, he preached the Word, serving in a small church. Since it was problematic in 1830 for this little flock to provide a regular wage for him, he proposed to rely solely on his Lord to provide for his daily bread. During this time, he often encountered people who had to work

14- to 16-hour days and naturally could not muster enough desire and energy at the end of their shift to study God’s Word and strengthen themselves in prayer.

When he admonished these people to work less, trust God more, and care for the needs of their souls, they would often reply, “What does prayer help? If we don’t work, we have no food.” That always cut into George’s heart, and he wrestled prayerfully with thoughts of how he

could prove to these people that the Scripture was still true, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

The result was that George founded “The Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad.” Shortly thereafter, his orphanage venture followed. It must be noted that Mueller strived to glorify God, the One Who answers prayers above all. To prevent anyone from saying he might secretly rely on wealthy friends or donors, he determined to never apply to any charity for monetary support. He also decided not to share the



status of his bank account. He resolved to completely and totally trust in God.

How did God respond? He revealed Himself to George because of the prayers of His faithful servant. George received donations amounting to as little as 2 cents but over the course of his ministry received millions. He was as thankful for the first amount as for the latter. At times, his bank account accumulated tens of thousands, while there were other times when he didn't know at the beginning of the day where he would find money to pay for the midday meal. However, there was never a time when his children gathered for a meal and he had nothing to give them. God always provided His help at precisely the right time.

We must marvel when we try to visualize how Mueller managed this project for 64 years and eventually housed 2000 boys and girls in five orphanages, for which he needed great daily financial resources to operate. The question arises, how was it possible that this man did not buckle under such a load of despair or lose faith?

The answer is simple: he believed the Holy Scriptures and was a prayer warrior. His Bible was his textbook for every step of his life. In his later years, he read through the entire Bible four times a year. In total, he read the Bible one hundred and fifty times, from cover to cover. To him, every promise was a divine affirmation, the directions to the unfathomable treasures of his Heavenly Father. Did he ever expect more than God could give him? No, never, because God's riches are inexhaustible.

The second source of power for George Mueller was his devout prayer life. Before meeting anyone in the morning, he spent an hour or two in prayer with his Lord. He usually read a few verses of the Holy Scriptures, thought about them for a while, and then fell on his knees to let the full truth from God make its imprint on his soul. Then he arose, continued reading, then prayed again and again. Then, when he stepped from his room, he was prepared for whatever the day would offer, having been equipped from God's storehouse. We shouldn't think, though, that when Mueller brought a petition to the Lord one day, the answer

would follow the next day. Oh no. There were concerns he continually brought to the Lord for fifty long years. And then finally, they were answered.

Isn't Mueller's prayer life like the voice of a mighty prophet calling into our unbelieving time, "You do not have because you do not ask" (James 4:2)? In the face of these facts, no one may claim, "Prayer doesn't help." Our answer to that should be, "Go to Bristol and see. Just go and see that unwavering prayer is capable not only of a lot, but of everything!"

Dear reader, why don't you try it? If your sins, or the worries of every-day life, are weighing heavily on you, why don't you just simply carry them to the Lord and Heavenly Father? Count on Jesus and the entire supply of His promises. Do not cease to pray, and soon you will be able to see and experience for yourself that God still answers prayers today. He will answer yours.

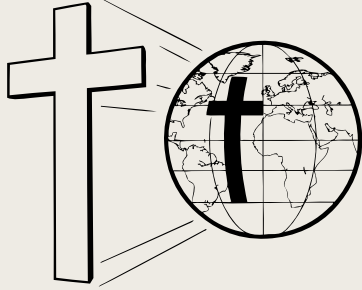
As simple and plain as his life was, so also was the end of George Mueller's life. Even at the age of 93, the entire responsibility and administration rested on his shoulders. His mail exchange was so vast that he needed seven people to assist him in this capacity. Also, he occasionally held services at his advanced age. Even on the last evening of his earthly existence, he still led a prayer service. Afterwards, without any exceptional afflictions, he went to bed as usual. The next morning, as his housekeeper knocked at his door to bring his usual 7:00 a.m. cup of tea, there was no answer.

Additional help was called, and together they found the faithful servant of God dead, lying beside his bed. The doctor determined that his death had occurred about an hour earlier. His heart had finally given up.

Tens of thousands gathered for his funeral, coming from all corners of the country. One thousand four hundred orphans grieved their beloved "father" as they formed the procession behind his casket.

Although God called this good and willing tool in His hand to his final reward, He remains the same unchangeable God. Dear reader, what hinders you from becoming a follower of Jesus Christ and a prayer warrior like George Mueller? You too can start a prayer life today.

A. H.



# Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs  
Kitchener, ON

## Prayers in a Secret Place

*“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place: and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:6).*

A man was sitting in a little room, deep in thought. For a long time already, he had determined to live within the will of God under all circumstances. He now went to prayer with a very important concern. He prayed and wrestled for mercy, strength, and success to make his decision a reality. He wanted to do God’s will in all of life’s situations. He earnestly asked to live grounded in justice, truth, and God’s favor. He knew this was the way to gain the greatest blessing of continual inner peace and a good conscience.

On a sunny spring day, an elderly couple slowly walked hand in hand through the garden. They talked about their past and their many memories. They were often in their quiet prayer room. God had given them four children, and there was a lot to pray for. But life was punishing and difficult. There were hardships, worries, and illnesses whereby they lost one beloved child after another. The memories of these painful events still depressed the mother in her old age, but she kept receiving new strength in prayer. In retrospect of all the suffering, there was always the silent consolation, “We both still have each other. We don’t want to complain. The burdens of life have only brought us closer to God. The Lord gave, the Lord took; the name

of the Lord be praised! Many parents have grief and heartache as they watch their children living in sin. But we can know ours are safe with the Lord.”

This was the result of their frequent prayers. They knew it. And knowing they were soon going home, they were happy and grateful to accept their reward from the Lord. What a comforting and blessed season of life they could enjoy! However, fruit can only be obtained if there has been adequate sowing.

Our responsibility shouldn’t just be limited to ourselves and our family. Jesus’ mission to us is to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” Hudson Taylor, the missionary to China, was so moved by this mission statement that he set out to preach Christ where He was yet unknown. No one was allowed to disturb him in the morning during a set time reserved for his private prayer. He prayed earnestly for God to open hearts for Christ among the large number of lost people in that country. His servants always stood around his tent until he came out. But one morning, he did not come out. The morning was progressing, but they silently stood watch. Finally, they looked inside. There, the servants found him on his knees; but he had already breathed his last. The fruit of his ministry undoubtedly led back to his private prayer time.





I was reminded of a song, “Silent Heroes” by Jacob Hoff:

There are silent heroes of the faith,  
By this world not recognized.  
No applause crowns their effort of grace,  
Their resolve not advertised.  
See an old man lying there in pain,  
His time on earth almost done;  
With praying lips he thanks once again  
For salvation through the Son.

And there is a sister working late,  
Assisting others in need;  
Despite the stress and obstacles great,  
She still persists in work and deed.  
A brother true is wrestling in prayer:  
“Lord, hear my anguishing cry  
And save the ones that are in despair;  
As lost souls, don’t let them die.”

How do you use and spend your time?  
See, the vineyard of the Lord  
Is needing workers while the sun shines.  
Jesus saves, go spread the Word.  
He heals the sick, frees souls from sin,

Comforts those who are at loss;  
He suffered shame, rejected by men,  
Died for us upon the cross.

These are the silent heroes of faith,  
Great is the reward that they will see;  
Although on earth they may be disgraced,  
Blessed are they eternally.

This heroism refers to the faithful prayer warriors in their private prayer rooms. Some have their secret place in their apartments; others, though innocent, pray and wrestle before God in their prison cells; others have their place of prayer in a field, like Isaac, on a stable floor, or in a barn. Faithful prayer is important. God’s Word says, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16). Only eternity will reveal what the faithful heroes of faith have wrought in their prayer rooms.

Do we also have such a quiet place of prayer? Many so-called Christians hardly know how to say grace at a meal. What a tragedy! Prayer is often compared to a weapon. What would an army be without weapons, and what would Christians be without prayer? “Go into your secret place and pray,” Jesus said. Begin today, and you will find that it will help you and others and be a great blessing. ■

## Blessed Are Those Who Have Not Seen And Yet Have Believed

Once we've become children of God and walk in faith, we might develop a desire to receive a clear sign from God that He is real. At least that is what I experienced. Let me tell you about an encounter I had in my personal life.

I had to think about the many stories written in the Bible where God distinctly appeared to different people. We may think of Moses and the burning bush, (Exodus 3:2-4), Gideon and the dew on the fleece (Judges 6:36-40), Elijah and the fire from heaven that consumed the offering on the altar (1 Kings 18:30-39), or Saul's conversion (Acts 9:3-4).

My desire was also to experience God, so I asked Him for a sign. I prayed over and over again and was convinced that God would grant me my desire. Of course, I didn't know how God would do it, but I expected something remarkable. I use my mornings before going to work as my personal prayer time, so I was already expecting extraordinary things to happen on my drive to work. Because of this, I was very attentive during my drive and waited for something to happen. One day, as I was driving, God gave me a sign, but differently than I had expected. While driving on a straight stretch, God opened my mind, and I saw an image from the Bible. It was so impactful that it seemed to be right in front of my eyes. It was the image of poor Lazarus in heaven, on the other side, the rich man in hell, and between them the insurmountable chasm with these words posed to the rich man: "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

This image opened my eyes and revealed the truth to me. If the experiences written in the Bible are not enough for me, then a special sign will not change that. I realized afresh that the written stories and experiences in the Bible are eyewitness accounts and encounters. The people truly experienced everything exactly how it is written. The written accounts of other mighty men and women of God throughout the years became even more important to me. I want to especially mention the book of Brother Byrum's experiences, and share how it strengthened my faith.

If you have such a desire within you, do not make your relationship with God dependent on signs and wonders, but believe. Although unbelief is increasing all around us, with people questioning everything, and even pastors of national churches publicly distancing themselves from the Bible as their faith decreases, we should stand firm and encourage each other more than ever. We always want to remember the words Jesus spoke to Thomas, who also didn't believe but wanted to see: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

Believe what Jesus said. Believe what is written in the Bible. Believe what others have experienced. Believe that God is mightier than Satan and that He has power to set us free from *all* bondage, addiction, and worldly lust. Believe that God has the power to give you victory. ■

Waldemar Schüle  
Pforzheim, Germany



## The Invisible Enemy

**A**pulian farmers have cultivated the olive tree as a crop for many years, and the region now has over 25 million olive trees. Every time a child is born, the birth is celebrated by planting a new tree, significantly increasing the number of olive trees. The trees are of enormous economic importance for the farmers, since they are often the foundation of their livelihood.

The olive orchards in Salento, the heel of the “Italian boot,” have some trees that are several hundred years old. They are olive trees with bark torn open, telling stories of hot summers and icy nights. They have survived lightning and thunder, the volcanic ash of Mount Vesuvius, and endured long periods of drought. The olive tree leaves, which can store tremendous amounts of water, and their roots which reach up to 7 meters deep, make olive trees true survival-experts that seem to be indestructible.

The Bible compares those who place their trust in God with trees that are planted by streams of water. In Jeremiah 17:8, we read, “For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.” Don’t we see incredible parallels with the olive trees?

Since 2013, however, the olive trees in Apulia are fiercely fighting an enemy that cannot be seen with the naked eye. It is a bacterium called xylella fastidiosa. Although it is only a few micrometers long, it has left a swath of destruction in southern Apulia. Estimates state that almost half of the 25 million trees are in- ▶

## Verse of the Month

*“But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).*

As a young person, we are often inclined to take the future into our own hands and to shape it according to our own ideas. We are afraid to miss out on outstanding offers due to hesitation and thus experience a disadvantage to our peers. But how often are our own plans quashed and everything turns out very differently than we would have wished.

Therefore, isn’t it better to take Isaiah’s words to heart and, instead of relying on our own strength, to wait on the Lord Who wants to give us the strength we need in all situations?

During my studies, I arrived at a point where I didn’t know what to do. I couldn’t manage my studies at college and was unhappy with the situation I was in. But what could I do? Should I take the path that seemed the most sensible to me or wait for God to show me the way? It required much patience to know His will, yet I can say that God helped me wonderfully.

How beautiful it would be if we, as young people, could hold fast to the words of the songwriter and say, “Teach me Lord to wait . . .” Only in this way will we be armed with the necessary strength for everyday tasks.

*Jonas Schell  
Hetzerath, Germany*

fectured with the bacteria. The financial damage is tremendous and is already into the millions. If a tree gets infected, it will become bare and end up as a small, dead stump.

Paul writes that we Christians “do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). As trees planted by the waters, we also fight against an invisible enemy. And that often makes the battle so tough. We human beings perceive about 80% of our surroundings through vision, and yet, we have to fight an invisible enemy. What does this mean for us? We need to train our “other senses” (keeping the olive tree in mind) to detect this enemy and be able to withstand him. Can the olive tree help us?

The xylella bacterium penetrates the plants in increments of about 200 cells, only half the size of a mustard seed, and settles into the pathways of the wood, which transport water and nutrients from the roots to the leaves. The bacteria bonds with other bacteria in the pathways and creates a type of bacterial slime, which protects it from the tree’s defense mechanisms. Once it has entered the tree, it feeds off of the intercepted nutrients and blocks the pathway to the leaves and branches, causing these to become malnourished. The leaves wilt, the branches dry up, and the tree begins to die. Since the pathways stretch throughout the whole tree, the bacteria spread from branch to branch and keep multiplying. Initial evidence of an infestation may only be seen after ten months. When the first symptoms are seen, it is most likely too late to save the tree.

To keep our relationship with God alive, we need to continually feed our “inner man.”

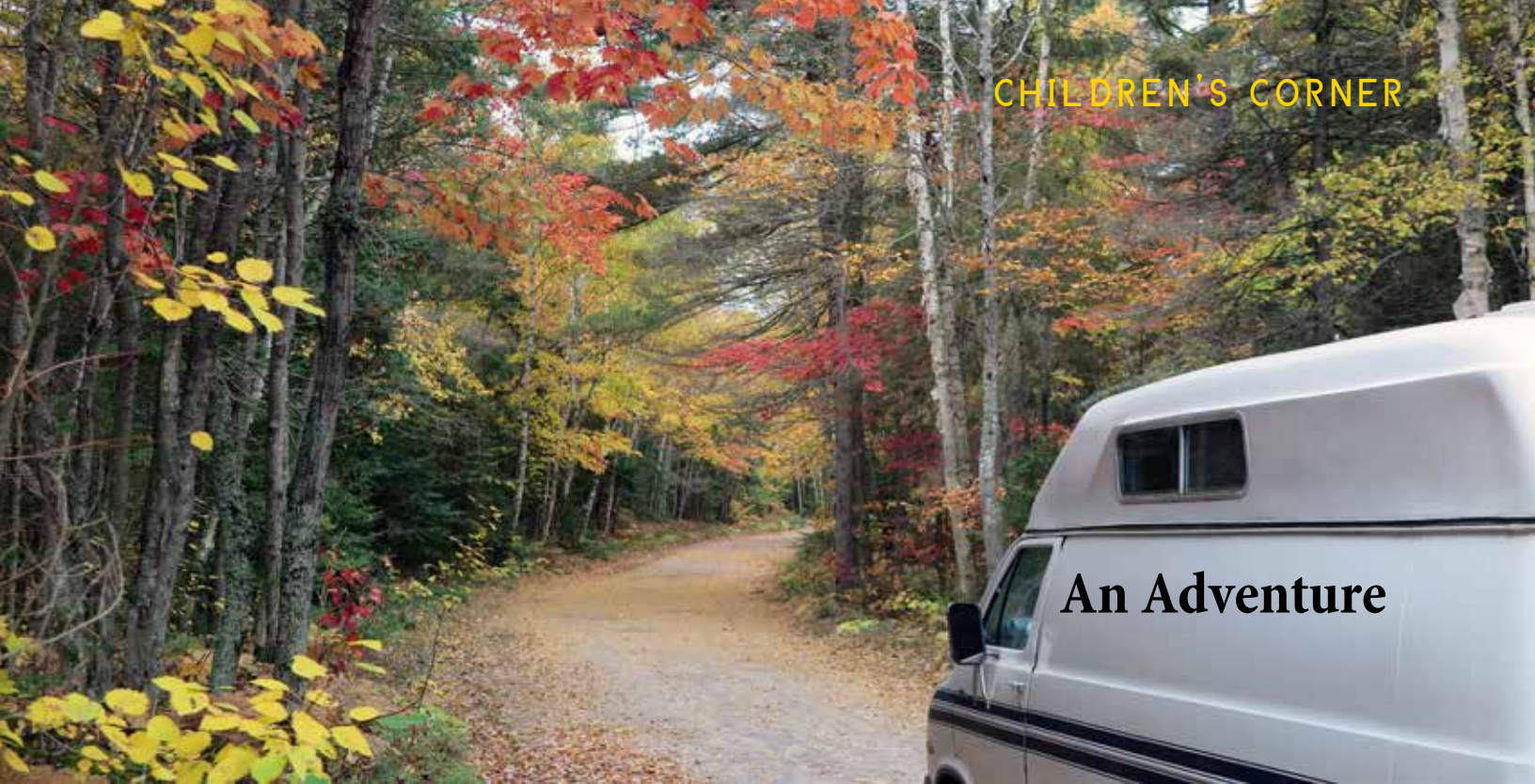
Jeremiah talks about God’s Word becoming food when he received it: “And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart” (Jeremiah 15:16). The lamentations of Jeremiah show us that this truth sustained him in the most difficult times of his life, causing him to hold on to God. Likewise, prayer was also important to him. Prayer provided constant food for his inner man. Without prayer and God’s Word, Jeremiah’s inner man would have died.

Who or what are these invisible enemies that try to keep us from reading our Bible or praying? What things want to rob us of our time? Which activities have priority over time spent with God? For me, those things can be completely different than for you. They do not always have to be obviously sinful things; sometimes they are just bad habits that represent the invisible enemy. Perhaps you find out months later that a decision you made has had a negative effect. Examine your relationship with God. How has your relationship with God changed in the last two months? Were there situations when you dismissed reading your Bible? Why? Were there times where you did not take time for prayer? What was the reason for it? Be honest with yourself and sharpen your senses to be able to recognize the reasons.

Although a lot of research has been done to find a solution to the xylella fastidiosa bacteria, nothing has been found. The only way of stopping the spread of the bacteria is to burn entire olive orchards. What a blessing to know we do not need to draw a parallel to ourselves in this last point, because we have access to Jesus Christ, Who has overcome the invisible enemy and Who can help us withstand him as well. ■

Niko Ernst  
Herford, Germany





## An Adventure

It had been a perfect day of canoeing in Killarney Provincial Park. With five paddlers—Opa, Oma, Alina, Jeremy, and Jeffrey—all engaged in paddling, we were literally skimming across the water. It was our last day and we must have looked like a native warrior party as we shouted, “Land ahoy!” and beached the canoe. Opa hoisted the 6-meter monster onto his shoulders and locked it up in the rack. We made a campfire, had hot dogs for supper, and returned by canoe in the evening for a beaver spotting tour on the still waters of Lake George. Silently we drifted into the bay where the beaver had built a house. The house had that lived-in look, yet no beaver greeted us. We circled quietly a second time. Again, no luck. They must have gotten wind of us. Nevertheless, it was an adventure just to be out there in a canoe, on the still waters of the lake late in the evening. We locked up the canoe again, piled into the camper van and returned the gear and key to Killarney Outfitters. We had just parked the van for the night at our campsite. “Opa,” Alina asked as we exited the van. “Why is your engine smoking?” And, so began the adventure of the camper which refused to scamper and almost put a damper on five campers.

Steam was rising from under the hood as the coolant hissed from the engine, flooding the ground below—the coolant appeared to be leaking from the water pump. We put everything in God’s hands and retired for the night. A loon’s vibrato pierced the silence

of the night as we fell asleep. That night, Jeremy slept with Opa in the tent, which took a lot of courage. A bear was active in the campground and a bear trap had been set close to where we were sleeping. So close, you could probably have thrown a rock at it. A raccoon, recognized by its footprints on the tent doormat, appeared to be the only visitor during the night, though.

The following morning, we broke camp, poured water back into the radiator, took an emergency supply of water with us and arrived safely at the Killarney Park entrance parking lot where we waited for four and a half hours for a tow truck—Killarney is very remote. Our van then hitched a ride on the bed of a monster tow truck all the way from Killarney to the Canadian Tire Store in Barry, 300.2 km (187 mi) away, according to Google maps.

On the way, we stopped in Parry Sound at a Canadian Tire Store, just before closing time. We purchased a can of Stop Leak and then it was time for supper. As a favor to Opa, Oma suggested McDonalds! The tow truck driver gave his enthusiastic support, and so it was unanimous. Soon we were eating at McDonalds.

After another long drive, we and our van were discharged in the parking lot of the Canadian Tire Store on Bayfield Street in Barry. Alina lingered a while. A delightful smile spread across her face, as she surveyed our new location from the top of her perch in the doorway of the tow truck. ▶

We were now alone. It was close to midnight. Alone, yet not alone. Three taxis were circling like vultures hoping one of them would be first in line to transport us to the nearest motel, when Opa would fail to fix the leak. We filled the radiator with water, started the engine and added the can of Stop Leak. The coolant seemed to be draining about as quickly as we could replenish it. It was not like Niagara Falls, but there seemed to be no hope of fixing it with just a small can of Stop Leak. Intermittently adding more water and keeping a close eye on the temperature gauge, Opa jockeyed back and forth from under the hood to inside the van. Steadily, the coolant continued to drain. He was beginning to regret that he had purchased only a single can of Stop Leak.

Meanwhile Oma and Jeremy were praying together. “We don’t want to sleep in the van in the parking lot tonight. Dear God, please let us make it home. Please help that whatever Opa is doing would fix the van so we can drive it home.” Shortly thereafter, when Opa got out of the van to check the flow, it had stopped completely.

We drove to Burlington and delivered the kids with their gear back to their parents. Not a drop of leakage as we left there! We drove home from there to Oma and Opa’s house, arriving at 2:30 am. Now if Alina had been present at that moment, and awake, she would have said, “Opa, why is your engine smoking?” The coolant was hissing out onto the driveway, the same as it had done back in Killarney. It would be hard to argue that what we had just experienced was not God’s intervention to get us home safely. It happened just as Jeremy and Oma had prayed. God is good! God is gracious! God is awesome! He answers prayer, and there is nothing He cannot do! He says, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me” (Psalm 50:15).

We hope the story of this adventure will encourage you to “trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5). ■

Hardy Sonnenberg  
Hamilton, Ontario

## To Those Who Overcome

**T**he days of our lives, what do they boast of? Moses writes in his Psalm, “The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only of labor and sorrow” (Psalm 90:10). Certainly Moses experienced this in his lifetime, for he was no stranger to labor and sorrow, as well as difficulties and obstacles to overcome.

Solomon posed the question, “For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun?” He continues and makes this observation: “For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest” (Ecclesiastes 2:22-23).

If we turn to Jeremiah the prophet, he asks, “Why did I come forth from the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?” (Jeremiah 20:18). Job states, “Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble” (Job 14:1).

Life brings its share of difficulties, trials and sorrows along the way. Life is a conflict, a battle if you will, and we’re right in the middle of it. It is a struggle between life and death, light and darkness, good and evil, liberty and tyranny.

Jesus acknowledged that “in the world you will have tribulation.” He then continues with the words that make all the difference, words that bring much comfort and hope. “But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

We have been created with the desire and ability to overcome obstacles and difficulties along the way.

As our youngest son was starting to crawl and learning the art of walking, he had a fascination for the stairs and a desire to conquer the challenge of reaching their peak. Although he tumbled down the stairs a few times, as soon as the tears had dried, he was on his way up again.

Scripture places a great emphasis on overcoming. Special promises are given to those who overcome. If we look at the letters written to the seven churches in



Asia, each church received a special promise, a promise to those who would overcome.

In the first letter addressed to Ephesus, spiritual food was promised: “To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life” (Revelation 2:7).

To Smyrna he writes, “He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death” (Revelation 2:11).

In addition to spiritual food, a new name was promised in the letter to Pergamos: “To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written” (Revelation 2:17).

Authority was to be given to the overcomers in Thyatira. “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations” (Revelation 2:26).

We notice a special emphasis placed on overcoming and persevering, not just once or twice, but until the end. Overcoming includes endurance, and at times, much endurance.

Sardis was labeled as a dead church, nevertheless there were still a few overcomers who had not defiled their garments, who were clothed with robes of righteousness. We read in Revelation 3:5, that “he who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”

Philadelphia is considered to be the faithful church. The special promise given to those who overcome is that they will be a memorial pillar. “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name” (Revelation 3:12).

Laodicea, the seventh church mentioned, is known as the lukewarm church. As a whole, many would say the church of our time is also living in this state of lukewarmness and self-satisfaction. Even in this state,

a special promise of enthronement is given to those who overcome, but under one condition: Repent! Let us consider carefully these words: “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Revelation 3:21).

A throne speaks of authority and power, which by extension is given to those who sit on it. Jesus said that all power had been given to Him (see Matthew 28:18). Therefore we may live victoriously in this age, for He has granted us the right to sit with Him on His throne. By His blood we can overcome. As written in Revelation 12:11, “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

Lastly, a promise of eternal inheritance is promised to those who overcome. “He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son” (Revelation 21:7).

Paul caught sight of this eternal inheritance and was determined to lay hold of it. He refers to his trials and persecutions as “light affliction” and then proceeds to say that it “is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17).

The Word of God is always relevant, and so the letters written to the seven churches are relevant for us today and are meant for our ears. What message applies to us today, as a church, as individuals? The Spirit expressly says, “He who has an ear (spiritual ear), let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” He is saying to us today, “Be an overcomer!”

So let us take heed of the words written to the churches, for a special blessing is promised to those who read and obey these words. “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near” (Revelation 1:3).

Jake Wiebe  
Waterloo, Ontario



# Marriage

**A**t the beginning of marriage, many couples do not think too deeply about what is important in a relationship and what makes a marriage happy. Perhaps after a few years together, some might wonder if they may have married the wrong partner. However, if you treat the “wrong” partner like the “right” one, you ultimately married the right partner. On the other hand, if you married the right partner and treat them wrongly, you will ultimately not have a fulfilling marriage. It is far more important to consider being the right partner than to question whether you have married the right partner. In other words, it all comes down to us.

Personal experiences and observations prove that a healthy and fulfilling marriage does not rely on the passion of the moment. Emotions of happiness and bliss do not always occur in everyday life; therefore, unrealistic expectations can lead to problems in many relationships. Certainly, romantic aspects can spice up or refresh a relationship. But true love that lasts and endures in difficult times is not based

on romance. We read of this true love in the Bible in 1 Corinthians 13:

*“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; Love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; Does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, Is not provoked, thinks no evil; Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; Bears all things, believes all things, Hopes all things, endures all things.”*

Feelings are given to us and certainly have their place, but they must not take the lead in our marriage and override biblical instruction. Feelings can be changed by our decisions, and adapted to match our actions. Sometimes it takes time for actions and feelings to be in harmony, but it is the right thing to do. Let us love our partner no matter how we feel.

Building a successful marriage means being ready to forgive every day. Forgiveness replaces rejection with acceptance and waives the right to retaliate.

Above all, forgiveness decides not to bring up past failures.

We live in a world that keeps us on our toes. If we are not vigilant and consciously plan downtime, we can quickly become overwhelmed with activities and drift apart as a couple without even noticing. Feelings of isolation and indifference arise. We pay increasingly less attention to our partner and, ultimately, begin to disconnect emotionally. Many marriages do not end in a quarrel but slowly die from the many small leaks through which enthusiasm and joy seep out. A main reason for the loss is that we get accustomed to our spouse and take them for granted. In a well-functioning marriage, each partner fulfills their potential when they are supported, loved, and encouraged. Time plays a significant role here. Spouses who spend a lot of time together and share moments with one another, both happy or sad ones, establish a strong bond and strengthen their relationship.

A vital skill that can be lost over the years is listening. Consumed with everyday worries and distractions, it is easy to become superficial and miss the underlying message our partner is trying to communicate. We must ask ourselves, “What needs does my partner have that I could help with?” It is important to give the speaker our undivided attention through eye contact and body language, to let them speak, to express feelings, and to repeat key statements in a paraphrased form. For example, “Did you mean to say . . . ?” or “That made you feel angry (happy, sad, glad, etc.)?” “I understand you . . . .” It is important to communicate that the spouse remains loved and recognized even when things have not gone ideally. Specifically, women are not interested in having their problems solved, but rather in “feeling understood.” It takes a lot of sensitivity to find the right words in these situations. It is helpful to consciously plan time for important matters and to create a calm and pleasant environment in which to have an undisturbed discussion.

Victor Oliver once said, “Divine wisdom and love in the truest sense leads men and women to recognize each other’s strengths and to allow those strengths to be utilized to solidify the relationship.” There are seasons of life when one is strong and the other is weak. Leadership means discovering strengths and weaknesses, agreeing on responsibility in these areas, and regularly reassessing how the relationship is working. Leadership does not mean making all decisions alone.

A happy marriage is sealed by praying together. When we do this regularly, it prevents resentment or displeasure, which, in time, makes the heart hard and listless. Prayer prevents the development of a negative attitude that can lead to bitterness. Not letting the sun go down on our anger is not an easy task, but it encourages us to strive for peace and forgiveness.

Problems and contentions often arise because we do not recognize that men and women frequently have different views on the same thing. The following suggestions can have a positive impact on a conversation:

1. Avoid a harsh start to the conversation. With God’s help, a couple should be careful at all times to start a conversation with kind words and without accusations.

2. Instead of criticizing the person, address the particular behavior or grievance. We want to resolve the situation without judging the person.

3. Avoid contempt and disrespect. Cynicism or sarcasm as well as derogatory body language prevent reconciliation. Disrespect often arises by nurturing negative thoughts about the partner, such as “typical man/woman,” “I would expect nothing else from him/her.”

4. Do not resort to self-defense. Self-defense, in other words, says, “I am not the problem. You are.”

5. Stay open and accessible. Especially if a conversation starts harshly and insensitively, there is a high probability that your partner will retaliate and put up a wall. A calm conversation will be very difficult, since what is being said is no longer heard but gets blocked.

6. Give your partner the opportunity to make amends. Trying to make up for a mistake is very important. Forgiveness plays a big role here. Attempts to reconcile reduce stress and signal the desire to give in and relent.

Marriage and family are the smallest microcosms of society and are susceptible to the devil’s attacks. With God’s help, however, it is possible to win and to have a fulfilling marriage.

Lilly Bebernik  
Edmonton, Alberta





# On the Road of Salvation

Part 19

A Life Worth Living

Ron Taron

## *God's Plan of Salvation in the Story of Israel*

*“Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed” (Joshua 23:14).*

Joshua was one hundred and ten years old and knew he was speaking to the Israelites for the last time. We do not know if he literally died on that day or shortly afterward, but it is obvious that God's people were very near and dear to his heart. He longed to direct their attention to God once more. Among many exhortations to serve God with all their heart and warnings about what would occur if they turned away from God, we find this reminder of the loving and grace-filled working of God among His people. Joshua describes God's faithfulness, His many promises, and that He had never failed to fulfill one of them. “And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you.”

Joshua had experienced many things on his pilgrimage with Israel. He personally saw God perform many astonishing wonders, experienced many answers to prayer and glorious victories, as well as battles, disappointments, and defeats. Now, at the end of his journey on earth, he summed up all these experiences in the face of God's promises. And what was the result? He could have responded with the words of his predecessor Moses, “Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who

love Him and keep His commandments” (Deuteronomy 7:9). But Joshua said it with these words: “Not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.”

### **Putting God to the Test**

We ask ourselves, what if Joshua could have come back and lived again, would he have lived differently? Would he have evaded all the trials and adversities with Israel and withdrawn to some other place? Would he have sought an easier path? I believe not. Never! On the Road of Salvation, in the place God had chosen for him, he had found the best life possible. It was a life truly worth living. It was a walk with God, a life of service to his God. In our text, as he puts God to the test, he can proclaim with a thankful heart, “God has fulfilled His Word in every detail. He has never failed or deceived us. He has never broken His promises.” This was the same God Who later in the New Testament proclaimed, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

### **How to Live a Life Worth Living**

We only have one life to live. It would be too bad to mess it up. Yet, all too many people have had to come to the sad conclusion, “I've ruined my life.” Because God gives us this one chance, and because eternal judgment awaits us at the end of our lives, we want to expend every effort to live a life truly worth living. How can I do that?

1. Recognize you are accountable to God. He is involved in every aspect of your life and He takes a posi-





tion on it. He is never ambivalent in regard to our actions, and it is His right to judge what we do or neglect to do. He is God. You cannot evade Him and at the end of your life He will determine your eternal destiny.

One more thought: Life is not worth living if it is not lived with God. He is your Creator and He made you a very specific part of His master plan. If you fail to fulfill this purpose, your life is without purpose. Sadly, millions of people are carelessly squandering their lives in this fashion. As a result, many see no purpose in living and end their own lives, only to awake in horror before their Judge in eternity. A life worth living is always a life lived with God.

2. A life worth living is a life blessed by God. God can only bless us if we live within His will. Disobedience and deviation from God's way always ends in heartache, and trouble, and elicits dire consequences, as God's blessing is removed. A life worth living is a life where we are constantly concerned about determining God's will and then living it with all our heart. Are you living such a life?

3. If our life is to be worthwhile, it must be lived in an intimate relationship with God. God said to Abraham, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless" (Genesis 17:1). Abraham took God at His word, walked before Him, and as a result became a friend of God. Can the same be said of us? Do we walk so closely to Jesus that we share our lives as friends? For all who know such a life, no other life is worth living. Dear friend, do you desire such a relationship with God more than anything, or was Satan able to convince you that you have more important things to do? Have you become accustomed to a life of fulfill-

ing spiritual obligations and somewhere along the way lost your first love and your intimate love-relationship with your Savior? Is such a life still worth living? Jesus is waiting with open arms of love to draw you back to His heart. Oh yes, a life at the heart of Jesus is definitely a life worth living!

4. A life worth living is also a life based on the Word and promises of God. Joshua looked back, saw, and testified that not one word of God's promises had not been fulfilled. God's Word enriches our lives amazingly. How glorious are His promises! Never has He broken any of His grandiose claims. God promised Israel great things and Joshua testified that He had "delivered" down to the last detail. Yet in the New Testament, Jesus seems to go even further with what He promises. For example, John 14:13-14 says, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it." In the face of these words, a life worth living has to be a life of living faith in God, because with Him we have access to the omnipotence, or unlimited power of God.

5. A life worth living ends in glory, in heaven with God. We'll look at this in more detail in the next installment of this series, yet it is obvious that a life ending in eternal damnation can never be a life worth living. It would be much better never to have lived than to have lived and be lost forever.

At the end of his life, Joshua looked back at his life lived with God. How he rejoiced over that fact! He loved his God and God's people more than ever and he gave God all the glory for His grace, His faithfulness . . . and for a life that had been wonderfully worth living. ■

# The Single-Minded Man

*Samuel Hebich is one of the most interesting personalities among the missionaries of the 19th century. For 25 years, he worked as a missionary in India among the locals and British colonial officials.*

He was a single-minded man. Besides his fiery love for his Lord Jesus, he had just one passion: to win souls for his Master. This is what drove him; this single-mindedness motivated him day and night and did not let him rest—but never to his detriment or the detriment of the people.

This zealous fisher of men had not been in India for long when he began his duties among the people to whom he was sent. One of his co-workers wrote, “[Hebich] took to frequent bazaar-preaching, in which he met with violent opposition from the Mahomedans [Muslims]. It was not long before he found himself so fully occupied on all hands that all further study of the language was thrown aside. He thought he had gathered quite a sufficient vocabulary already, an addition being now and then made to it by some expression caught up from some of his hearers; the result being that he never attained to a good style of speech or even to any correctness of grammar. [He] exercis[ed] only his office of Evangelist as herald of the simplest truths of salvation . . .”

He said, “I cannot spend my time studying languages while souls hurry towards hell. I must warn them all to escape from the wrath to come.”

Abraham Chaddyoppen, a loyal co-worker of Hebich’s, tells all kinds of precious stories of how the old fisher of men approached souls:

“There was Captain Robinson in Kannur. Father Hebich took us to his house one morning. Our father went onto the veranda. He held his long, black stick in one hand and an umbrella in the other. He never went without his stick and umbrella. With a deep bow, he said, “Good morning, Captain!”

With a loud voice, the captain called, “Who are you?”

“I am a messenger of Jesus Christ.”

The captain answered, “I want nothing to do with you. Leave! I do not want to listen to you.”

“Please, Captain, listen to me. I have two words to speak to you.”

“No, no, I do not have any time!”

He left our father standing on the veranda and ran into the house. But our father did not leave; he stood on the veranda with fingers intertwined and with his eyes closed, quietly praying.

The captain came down the stairs again, called his servant, and asked him, “Has the old man left?”

“No, Sir.” Then he came out again and asked, “What is your name?”

“My name is Hebich.”

“Are you German?”

“Yes, Captain.”

“What do you have to tell me?”

“Captain, aren’t you a sinner?” he asked, pointing his finger at him.

“What do you mean? I’m a sinner?”

“Are you prepared to meet God?”

The captain looked around confused, and then he hurried into the house, leaving our father standing alone. He called his wife and said, “Come, down here is a man of God!” The captain’s wife asked, “Are you a missionary?”

“Yes, dear woman, I am a missionary.”

Then our father asked the captain, “Do you pray? I mean, do you do devotions in your home? Do you have a Bible?”

The woman answered, “Oh yes, we have a Bible but only pray occasionally.”

Finally the captain spoke, “Would you like to come in, Mr. Hebich?”

He called to the servant, “Bring a chair.”

Our father sat down. Looking intently at the woman and pointing at her, he asked, “Have you given Jesus your heart?”

“I hope so.”

“You hope? I would like to know if you have assurance. Did you give your heart to the Lord?”



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The woman remained silent. Hebich then said, "Let me see your Bible."

She showed him a new family Bible. He picked it up and said, "O dear Captain, what a precious treasure you have!" The captain also remained silent.

After that, our father read a chapter, knelt down, and prayed. After he said "amen," the captain and his wife began to cry, and he said, "Now we see that our life is a shame. You have to pray for us!" Then our father departed from them.

When he returned to the mission house, he called everyone together by ringing a little bell and told them, "I have a new captain and his wife; you all must pray for them."

He even called his soldier brothers and said, "You must pray for the new captain and his wife."

At every opportunity, Hebich knew how to bring his message and to glorify the Lord through it. Once, at a large evening gathering during a pause in conversation, Hebich suddenly asked, "For whom did Jesus die?"

Various answers were given: "He died for sinners."—"No."

"He died for all people."—"No."

"He died for the whole world."—"No."

"He died for the Jews, Romans, and soldiers."—"No."

Finally, the shy voice of a young girl was heard from a corner of the hall: "He died for me."

The answer overwhelmed this honorable servant of the Master so much that he took out his handkerchief, wiped his eyes, and sobbed, visibly moved. "Yes, for me! For me, a poor sinner! Jesus died for me!" The Holy Spirit used this deep emotion that took hold of all who were in attendance to lead people to the cross. This charity event ended with a revival meeting. ■

Wilhelm Jörn



# *Word of God*

Word of God, abundant treasure,  
Gift from heaven here below;  
From this spring I drink with pleasure,  
Source of strength through which I grow.  
It's a light upon my pathway  
When the way grows dark and dim;  
It's my guide and comfort always,  
Refuge in this world of sin.

From the first page of the Bible  
To the last page it is true;  
Spreading grace, condemning evil,  
Eternal hope for me and you.  
It's the message of salvation  
Bringing comfort to the soul;  
Freeing us from condemnation,  
Bringing life that makes us whole.

Word of God, unmatched, unrivaled,  
How I love you and the Lord;  
Nothing can replace the Bible,  
Holy Book, the Spirit's sword.  
Saints rejoice and sinners tremble  
When the Lord will come again;  
Time will end and mountains crumble,  
But God's Word, it will remain.

*L. Besler*