



THE PRAYER CLOSET

*Transforming Lives Through Intercessory
Prayer And Fasting*

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THE BASICS OF JOURNALING

Journaling fascinates most believers who are exposed to it. The writing and preaching of those who have kept spiritual journals are filled with tremendous spiritual insight. Deep faith and ongoing transformation characterize the lives of those who kept a spiritual journal.

In past centuries, it was commonplace for believers to keep a spiritual journal. The journals of some believers have been turned into books. Believers today can profit from the discipline of past saints who recorded the ups and downs of their relationship to God. Even the Bible contains examples of God-inspired journals. Many of the Psalms record David's relationship with the Lord. Lamentations is a divinely inspired journal of how Jeremiah felt about the fall of Jerusalem.

In this issue of *The Prayer Closet*, we are going to focus on the discipline of spiritual journaling. I want to encourage and challenge you to keep a spiritual journal. If you are journaling

now, it my hope and prayer that you will gain fresh insights and encouragement concerning this beneficial spiritual discipline. If you have never done this or started and then quit, I pray that the Holy Spirit will enable you begin keeping a record of your amazing journey with God.

What Is A Spiritual Journal?

A journal is a book in which a person writes down things. It is often synonymous with a diary. A journal is a book in which you keep a record of the events of your life, of your different relationships, of your response to things. It is a quiet and silent space where you reflect on your life-its meaning and direction. A journal can be used for a variety of things: to record history, to reflect on the events of your life, to write out goals, to gather materials for writing and speaking.

There has been a renewed interest in journaling in the secular world. Yet, a Christian keeps a "spiritual" journal. It is a place to record the ways and works of God in your life. Your journal can include a variety of things: an account of daily events, a diary of personal relationships, a list of prayer requests, and a notebook of insights into Scripture. It is a place where you can keep a record of your progress in faith and holiness. Through a journal you can hold yourself accountable. A spiritual journal is a place to record the ups and downs, the ins and outs of your relationship to God.

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What Are The Benefits of Journaling?

Why should you keep a record of the ups and downs, the ins and outs of your relationship to God? The practice of journaling is not commanded in the Word of God. Although it is not commanded, it certainly is modeled. An example of this is the book of Psalms. There are several benefits to keeping a spiritual journal.

Keeping a spiritual journal will help you in understanding and evaluating yourself. Keeping a spiritual journal does not guarantee that you will overcome self-righteousness or conceit. Yet, it will give you an opportunity to see yourself as you really are. The simple discipline of recording the events of your day and your reaction to them will cause you to examine yourself much more thoroughly than normally. This thorough examination will help you battle against pride and self-righteousness.

If you are to be a victorious Christian, useful to God and to others, you must know yourself. You must know your temperament, your gifts, your strengths, and your sins. This is not an easy process. In **Romans 12:3**, the believer is urged to have a balanced self-image, "For I say, through the grace, given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith." Too many times a believer is blinded to his or her strengths and sins. He or she fails to see the wrong motives or lack of faith.

A journal then can be used by the Holy Spirit to teach you about yourself. As you look back over the events of your life and your response to them, He can show you your gifts, strengths, and sins. He can show you an area of weakness or sin, insight into your motives, clear guidance for a decision, or the emptiness of a path that has been chosen. He can turn your journal into an altar for seeking God.

Think of a spiritual journal as a mirror in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Through it He can reveal His perspective to you concerning your attitudes, thoughts, words, responses, and actions. Since you will be held accountable by God one day concerning these things, evaluating them by any

means is wise. The Holy Spirit can use a spiritual journal to teach you about yourself.

Another benefit of keeping a spiritual journal is that it will enable you to remember the Lord's works in your life. Believers are prone to forget what the Lord has done in their lives. We fail to remember how God has answered prayer, provided a need at the right time, or powerfully worked in our lives. Having a spiritual journal gives you a place to record these wonderful works of the Lord. A spiritual journal can prevent a believer from forgetting the works of the Lord.

"If a man write little, he had need have a great memory."

Francis Bacon

Unless you have a "great" memory, you need to record the marvelous works of God in your life! A spiritual journal can help you with this.

A spiritual journal gives you a place to record God's works in your life. It gives you the opportunity to write down what God is doing in your life. By doing this, you will not forget what He has done in your life. You can be like Asaph in **Psalms 77:11-12**, "I will remember the works of the LORD; surely I will remember your works of old. I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of all Your deeds."

Not only will a spiritual journal enable you to remember the works of the Lord, it will also encourage faith and prayer. When you look back and see what God has done for you and how God has answered your prayers, it will strengthen your faith to trust Him for the future. It will encourage you to pray because He has answered you powerfully in the past. As you remember God's works in the past, it prepares you to face the challenges of tomorrow with faith and prayer.

A spiritual journal can assist you in expressing your thoughts and feelings to the Lord. There are times when it is very difficult to share our thoughts and feelings with others. Even when we

have an intimate relationship to someone, we cannot always tell others what we are thinking or feeling. Yet, the thoughts and feelings are so strong that we must find a way to share it with someone. Your heavenly Father is always willing and available to you. The Word of God says in **Psalm 62:8**, "Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah." A spiritual journal can help you "pour out your heart before Him." You can unashamedly pour out your feelings and thoughts to the Lord.

You may be wondering, "Why would writing in a journal help you express your thoughts and feelings to the Lord? Why not go ahead and talk with Him about the thoughts and feelings you are having?" Writing out your thoughts and feelings in a spiritual journal slows you down. It forces you to think deeply about God, His ways, and His works. Because you slow down, it causes you to think and feel more deeply. It enables you to think through your circumstances and your feelings and responses to those circumstances. This in turn makes you better able to talk to God with both mind and spirit. It will help you better express to God what you are thinking and feeling.

Keeping a spiritual journal can be a help to guidance and decision-making. As Christians we desire that our lives be in line with the will of God. We know that God's will is for our best. In some areas of our lives we have clear guidance from the Word of God. For example, we know that we are not to murder or covet. But in many specific areas of our lives, discerning the will of God is difficult. What we should do is often not as clear. An example of this is whether to take a particular job or to turn it down and stay at a present job.

When you are faced with decisions, a spiritual journal can help you sort things out. You can write down Scriptural teachings or principles that apply to your decision. You can write down the pros and cons of the decision. By doing this, you can then pray and weigh the alternatives. You can call on the Holy Spirit to give you guidance as you go through this process. By doing this, you can gain perspective on the decision and be open and yielded to the Spirit's leadership.

Not only will this help you make decisions, it will also give you strength to carry them out. You will have a record of the process. You will be able later to recall the reasons why you made your

choice. Being able to look back on how you made your decision gives you a significant advantage. When things get difficult because of the decision, you can look back and see how God guided you through the process. Your journal can then be a record of how God guided you and can give you strength to live out what God has called you to do.

"But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

James 1:22

Journaling enables you to move from being a hearer of the Word to a doer of the Word. As God speaks to you through hearing and meditating on the Word, you can record what He speaks to you. You can write down what God wants you to know or what God wants you to change. This will help you hear and do the Word!

Keeping a spiritual journal can help you monitor your goals and priorities. A journal is a good way to keep a record of things that you want to do and to emphasize in your life. There are some that put a list of goals in their journal and review it on a daily basis. There are other ways to do this. Yet, the key is to keep a record of the goals that you want to accomplish. A journal allows you self-accountability. It enables you to see the progress or lack of progress that you are making toward your spiritual goals.

Some may feel that this is legalism. And it could be easily abused. There is always a danger of turning the spiritual disciplines into a dead routine that creates guilt rather than living exercises that produce obedience and godliness. Yet, the fact of the matter is that you have to have a certain amount of discipline if you are going to make progress toward spiritual maturity. Paul declares that he "pressed" toward the mark or goal of Christlikeness (**Philippians 3:12-16**). It does not happen by accident or coincidence. A believer must strive toward spiritual maturity. There also has to be a certain amount of accountability. By keeping a spiritual journal, you can record spiritual goals and

priorities. Then you can hold yourself accountable by reviewing these goals and priorities daily, weekly, monthly, or annually.

At the same time, a spiritual journal can help you with the other spiritual disciplines. Just as you can monitor your goals and priorities, a journal can help you maintain other spiritual disciplines like prayer, fasting, Bible study, giving, and witnessing. In your journal, you can record your progress in these matters. The journal can be a reminder that you need to practice these things. It is easy to let these things slide. Unless we labor to grow spiritually, our progress in the faith will be very slow. Unless we find practical ways to cooperate with the Holy Spirit against our tendency to be spiritually lazy, we will not build ourselves up in the faith. If we are to grow and mature as Christians, we must practice the spiritual disciplines. When I use the term "spiritual disciplines", I am referring to things like Bible study, prayer, fasting, giving, witnessing, and solitude. **1 Timothy 4:7** states that the believer is to "exercise yourself rather to godliness." Through the practice of these disciplines we can grow spiritually. Your journal can help you keep a record of your exercise of these disciplines.

Not only will your journal help you maintain the other spiritual disciplines, it will also create a joy and desire in you concerning these things. When you look back and see the Scripture that you have memorized and your meditations on those Scripture, it will fill you with joy and give you a desire to continue in this. When you review your record of people with whom you have shared the gospel, it will produce inexpressible delight. When you see how God is working in your life, it will bring joy to your heart and renew your commitment to pursue spiritual maturity.

As I review my journal, God creates a hunger for fasting in my heart and life. Fasting is a difficult spiritual discipline. Yet, when I look back at how God has blessed, how God has spoken, and how God has worked, it is sheer joy for me. It intensifies my desire to fast. Your journal can bring you the same joy and delight.

Sometimes the journal can be used of God to bring conviction to your heart. As you look at your lack of progress, it should convict you and motivate you to pursue spiritual maturity. God stands ready to forgive you and to empower you. If not used

rightly, a journal can produce guilt and despair in a believer. A believer can look at his or her lack of progress and feel guilty. It can cause the believer to despair of any possibility of spiritual growth. But, that is not the purpose of a spiritual journal. Rather than giving in to guilt and despair, let it motivate you to cry out to God for mercy and grace. Let it move you to depend on the Spirit and labor for spiritual maturity.

A spiritual journal allows you the opportunity to create and preserve a spiritual heritage. Keeping a spiritual journal is not just for you. It is for the generations that come after you. It gives you an opportunity to speak even after you are gone. It will enable you to share with your descendants and others the faith that you had and lived out. Many spiritual journals of past believers are now classics that are read by Christians across the world. Your journals may never be published or read by Christians across the world. Yet, your children and family will. They can have a living record of your relationship with God. This could provide spiritual encouragement and help to your children and your family even after you have entered into eternity. Never underestimate the power of a written record of your faith. This can provide you with a powerful spiritual impact. You have the opportunity to teach and model your faith now. Yet, even when you have gone on to be with the Lord, your journal can still testify to a life of faith and obedience. You can help in transmitting the faith to the future generations of your family (**Deuteronomy 6:4-7; 2 Timothy 1:5**).

Using a spiritual journal can help you clarify and articulate the insights or impressions that God gives you. Writing down the insights that God gives you will enable you to remember them and put them into practice. Too many times we forget the insights or impressions that God grants to us. If you will write down those impressions or insights, it will be easier to remember them. If you do not write them down, it will be difficult to remember them at the end of the day. At the same time, writing these things in a journal can help you better articulate what the Lord is speaking to you. An old saying declares that thoughts disentangle themselves when passed through the lips and across the fingertips. As you write these things down, it gives you a clearer understanding of them. According to Francis Bacon, reading makes a man

full, dialogue makes a ready man, but writing makes an exact man. Writing down the insight or impression helps you have a better understanding of what God is speaking to you.

A spiritual journal can help you clarify what you believe. As a Christian, you need to be certain about what you believe. One of the ways that this certainty comes is through the study of the Word of God. Yet, another way it comes is by writing down what you believe in your journal. One of the things that I put in my journal is a statement of belief. I write out what I believe about various doctrines of our faith. I review this from time to time. On an annual basis, I will write out a statement of belief about the major doctrines of the faith. This enables me to keep these truths fresh in my mind. By keeping a journal you can take time to think through and clarify your beliefs. When you do this, you can have greater courage and ability to witness to others (1 Peter 3:15).

How Do You Keep A Spiritual Journal?

You may be thinking, "How is it done? How do you keep a spiritual journal?" There are no rules for keeping a spiritual journal. It is a record of your unique relationship to God. For this reason, you can develop it as you desire. In order to keep a journal, there are some basic questions that need to be answered.

The first question that you need to answer is: what type of journal will I use? There are a wide variety of books on the market today that can be used as a journal. These books are cloth-covered, hardback, and paperback. Most of these will have inspirational thoughts or devotional questions in them. Other will provide blank spaces with headings to guide you in your writing. If this is what you desire, that is fine.

I usually recommend that a person get an everyday notebook to use as a journal. The notebook will give you the freedom to put whatever you want in the journal. You will not have to follow a format that has been preprinted, as is the case in many journals. Some believers like to use loose-leaf notebook paper rather than a spiral-bound notebook. There are some believers who keep a journal on their computer. They feel more creative

at a computer and can type faster than they can write. Having said all this about where to keep the journal, I still say that your way of keeping a journal is the right way. Use the method that is best for you. These suggestions are presented only as a way to help you find the best way for you. I would even suggest that you practice variety in this matter. Do not get bound to one method of keeping a journal.

Another question that you need to deal with is: how often do I write in my journal? I believe that a believer will benefit the most from a journal if he or she writes daily. By doing this, a certain rhythm of reflection and writing is established. You will develop a habit of writing. You will be surprised at how the words and thoughts flow out of you. Even the words "journal" and "diary" mean a "daybook," carrying the thought of daily writing. Yet, it is not necessary that you write in your journal every day. Some believers find it more natural to write weekly or just occasionally. If you are convinced that you cannot write in a journal on a daily basis, I would still recommend that you keep one. Write in your journal when you can. You might want to consider writing frequently enough that nothing significant is lost.

Another question that you need to answer is: How much do I write? Abraham Lincoln was once asked how long a man's legs should be. He replied, "Long enough to reach the ground." The same answer can be applied to this question about journaling. Write as much as you need or want. There are times when I will write a page or two in my journal. Then there are other times when I will write three or four sentences. The amount that I write depends on my schedule and my circumstances. There are times when I will feel the necessity to write more than others.

When you first start journaling, do not feel the necessity to write large amounts for your entries. You might want to start by limiting yourself to a paragraph or half a page. Some limit themselves by time. You might commit yourself to spend fifteen minutes a day journaling.

When you commit to keep a spiritual journal, you will need to decide when you will write in the journal. As you can tell from reading this, keeping a journal is a highly individualized matter. There is no "right" or "wrong" way to do it. You will need to examine your own schedule and

determine when is best for you. When you begin to keep a journal, it would be helpful to do it at the same time every day. This will help you establish this holy habit and you will find it easier to do.

Morning and evening seem to lend themselves to your journal writing. In the morning, you can reflect on the previous day and make goal and plans for the new day. At night, you look back on the day and sort out what is significant. It can also be a time of examination. You can look back and see where you have sinned and seek God's forgiveness.

If neither of these times suits you, look at your schedule and determine a time when you can do this. You need to find a time that works for you. You might even consider experimenting at different times to see which one works best.

You might also want to find a particular place for your journal writing. This is especially true for the beginner. The ideal is to find some quiet spot where you can write regularly. When your mind realizes that you are in the writing place, it will slow down and get into gear. Again, you need to find a place that works for you. Once you have established the habit of journal writing you will probably be able to do it anywhere. The key is to try out places until you find the one that works for you.

When I teach on keeping a spiritual journal, the most frequently asked question is, "What do I write in my journal?" There are a variety of things that you can place in your journal. The following list suggests things that you might want to consider placing in your journal. These are only suggestions of what you can place in your journal. Do not let the list overwhelm you. You will not write all of these things in your journal on a daily basis. This list is offered to you to help you know what you can place in your journal.

- (1) **The personal events of your life**-This is the most basic material that you will place in your journal. You will answer the questions, "What did I do today?" and "What happened to me today?"
- (2) **Your reaction to events**-In your journal, you need to move beyond simply recording what took place during your day. You need to record your reaction to the events of your day. What

do you think about the events of the day? How is God working in the events of the day? What was God saying to you through the events of your day? Look for the meaning of the events and record this in your journal.

- (3) **Your insights from the Word of God**-As you read the Word of God, you need to record the insights that you get from the Word of God. Write down those things that stand out to you as you hear and read the Word of God. This will help you to remember what you have learned and help you in applying it to your life.
- (4) **Prayer requests**-Your journal can be a place where you record prayer requests and keep a record of how God is working through your prayer. It will also help you make changes in your praying.
- (5) **You can write out prayers**-You can write out prayers in your journal. These prayers may deal with things in your personal life or your intercession for others. I write out prayers for others in my journal. I also record prayer strategies and insights in my journal. Much of the material that you read in *The Prayer Closet* has come from my journaling and writing out prayers for others.
- (6) **You can write out your goals and plans in your journal**-Your journal can be a place where you record the goals and plans that you want to carry out. It is one thing to have goals and plans. It is another thing to write them out. By writing them down, it causes you to focus on them and provides a certain amount of self-accountability. You can also monitor to your progress toward reaching these goals.
- (7) **A catalog of God's blessings**-One of the things you might consider putting in your journal is a catalog of God's blessings. You can have a place in your journal where you write down the blessings that God grants you on a daily, weekly, or annual basis. In my journal, I have a section where I record God's blessings in my life. Each day I will write down at least five to ten things that God has blessed me with in that day. I strive to record different blessings each

day rather than duplicating them from one day to the next. By doing this, it moves me to thank and praise God. It helps develop a thankful spirit. And it builds faith to trust God and pray for His blessings in my life and the lives of others.

- (8) **You can have a “sin sheet” in your journal-** When I use the term “sin sheet”, I am referring to a section in your journal where you write down sins that are particularly troubling for you. The believer is to daily confess his or her sin (1 John 1:9). Yet, there are some sins that we allow to get deeply rooted in our lives. We must labor to get rid of these things from our lives. The “sin sheet” is the place in your journal where you write these down. It is a place where you are totally honest about your sin. You can also write out Scriptures that deal with this sin. By doing this, you can use the Word, the sword of the Spirit, to attack and destroy this sin from your life. You can also write down when you are the most vulnerable to this sin. You might even write down a plan of action to overcome sinful habits.
- (9) **Notes from sermons and Bible studies-** Your journal is an excellent place to record the insights that you gain from sermons and Bible studies. You can either take your journal with you or you can transfer them into your journal when you have the opportunity.
- (10) **Notes from your personal reading-** This is a great way to remember the ideas and insights that you glean from your reading. It will help you to remember them and to implement them into your life.
- (11) **You can determine how you are using your time-** In your journal, you can record how you used your time during the day. You might even consider having a part of your journal where you record this. You do not have to go into great detail about how you used your time. Just jot down some notes about how you used the hours in your day. You will begin to see how to use your time more effectively for God and yourself.

- (12) **Your journal can help you make decisions-** When you need to make decisions, you might consider having a place in your journal for this. You will simply need to set up two columns. Label one column REASONS FOR. Then label the other column REASONS AGAINST. Jot down everything that you can think of in these two columns, even the most trivial of concerns. If you have the time, wait a day and come back to the list. At that time, you might want to make changes to your list. Pray through the list, asking God to give you wisdom (James 1:5). You can also ask yourself the following questions:

- ◆ Is this decision consistent with the Word of God?
- ◆ Is this decision consistent with my sense of where God is leading me?
- ◆ Will this decision hurt me or anyone else now or in the future?

How Do I Get Started?

Journaling is a spiritual discipline that can deepen your relationship to God. It can also enable you to obey God’s Word more faithfully. It is my hope and prayer that you will begin journaling. If you are already doing this, I pray that you will continue. In order to help you do this, there are some basic facts about journaling that you need to keep in mind. As you start journaling or continue in this discipline, remember these basic facts.

When you write in your journal, just write. You may feel awkward about this, especially if you are just beginning. Don’t worry about your spelling or grammar. Don’t try to evaluate your style of writing. Turn off the critical voices inside of you and just write. In order to keep a spiritual journal, you must simply start. As you write, you will have more ideas of what you need to write and what you need to put in your journal. The old saying, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step” applies to journaling. You must start writing.

You need to remember that journaling can be fruitful at any level. You can profit from it regardless of how you think you write, compose, or spell. Whether you write every day or not, whether

you write little or much, journaling can help you grow in grace.

Write in your journal during the dry times. I experienced great joy when I first began journaling. Yet, that joy soon wore off. I began experiencing the spiritual version of “writer’s block”. There were times when I just didn’t feel that I had anything to write. You will probably have those times. Yet, the key is to push through that barrier. You may not write as much, but keep writing. You will eventually push through this barrier and enjoy the benefits of journaling. Don’t quit journaling simply because the joy and excitement of it wears off. Plan on being persistent in this matter. Your persistence will pay off!

A final fact that you need to remember about journaling is you must do it before you experience its benefits. Journaling probably sounds interesting and exciting to you. You can see the benefits of it. Yet, you will not experience benefits until you practice it. If the words never find their way to the paper, you will not fully understand or experience the benefits of journaling. If you will practice it, you will experience its benefits. Over time, keeping a spiritual journal will have a positive and powerful impact on your relationship to God.

Prayer Evangelism: Praying The Person Of Jesus Christ

The Word of God declares in **Acts 4:12**, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Jesus Christ is the only way to genuine salvation. He is the only Savior of sinners, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (**John 14:6**).” In order to be made right with God, the sinner must understand who Christ is and surrender to Him, “Knowing that a man is not justified (*made right with God*) by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified (**Galatians 2:16**).”

A sinner must trust in Christ in order to be saved. This requires that the person understand who Jesus Christ is. This does not mean that he or she has to have a fully developed understanding of Christ before he or she can be saved. Yet, it does mean that there has to be a basic understanding of who Jesus Christ is. How can you commit yourself to someone you don’t know anything about? How can you trust someone that you do not understand?

Praying the person of Jesus Christ is one of the ways that you can intercede for lost people. What I mean by “praying the person of Jesus” is that you pray that the lost person will understand who Jesus is. You pray that the lost person will gain an understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Then you pray that the Holy Spirit will draw that person to Christ (**John 6:44**).

The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Jesus, “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of me (**John 15:26**). By praying the person of Jesus, you will be praying in line with the work of the Holy Spirit. You will be praying for Jesus to be made known to people so that they can surrender to Him and glorify Him. This is the basis for powerful evangelistic praying.

The following are prayers that you can use to intercede for lost people concerning the person of Jesus. You can use these or develop your own from them. The key issue is to pray that this person will understand who Jesus is and will surrender to Him in faith and repentance. Plead especially for the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth about Jesus to this person. Call on Him to draw the person to Jesus Christ.

His Deity: “Father, I plead that _____ will understand that Jesus is God in human flesh. I ask that the Holy Spirit will reveal this to _____ and will convict him/her of this truth (**John 1:1; Matthew 1:22-23**).”

His Humanity: “Father, I pray that _____ will understand that Jesus Christ is fully human. I ask that _____ will see that Jesus became a man and lived a life of perfect obedience. Cause him/her to understand that Jesus has died on the cross as a substitute for sinful men and women. Holy Spirit, testify to this truth in

_____’s heart (John 1:1, 14; 1 Peter 2:24).”

His Power: Lord God, I pray that _____ would know that Jesus Christ has the power to save and change him/her. I plead that he/she will realize that it is only through Jesus’ power that he/she can be saved. Strip _____ of any confidence or hope in his/her own strength (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:19-21; Revelation 1:8).”

His Love: “Father, I plead that _____ will know and understand that Jesus is a loving Savior. Holy Spirit, convict _____ of the love of Jesus for sinners (John 3:16).”

His Willingness: “Father, I ask that _____ will know that Jesus is willing to receive and save him/her. Holy Spirit, I plead that You will teach him/her this truth. Burn this truth into _____’s heart (John 6:37; Matthew 11:28-30).”

His Friendship: “Lord, I pray that _____ will know that Jesus is the friend of sinners. Cause _____ to know that Christ calls sinners to repentance. Holy Spirit, teach _____ that Christ receives people as they are and changes them into what He wants them to be (Luke 15:1-2).”

His Calling: “Father, I pray that _____ will know that Christ has come to seek and save sinners. I pray that _____ will realize that Jesus has come to save and not to judge (Luke 19:10).”

His Lordship: “Lord God, I ask that _____ will understand that Jesus is the Lord of all. Holy Spirit, teach _____ that Jesus Christ demands faith and repentance from him/her. Show _____ that He has every right to demand this of him/her (Romans 14:9; Philippians 2:5-11).”

His Justice: “Father, I plead that _____ will know that all judgment has been placed into Jesus’ hands. Show _____ that if he/she does not surrender to Jesus now, he/she will face this same Jesus at

judgment. Grant him/her a sober spirit about this fact. Cause _____ to know that if he/she will not surrender to Christ, that he/she will face Him as a righteous Judge who will sentence him/her to hell (John 5:22; Acts 17:31).”

His Mercy: “Father, I pray that _____ will understand that Jesus will forgive him/her regardless of his/her condition. Grant _____ the assurance that Christ is merciful and that He will have compassion for him/her (Luke 7:36-50).”

His Grace: “Father, I ask that _____ will know that Jesus will save him/her and will pour out blessing upon blessing in his/her life. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Enable _____ to understand that Jesus will strengthen, protect, and secure _____ when he/she commits his/her life to Him (John 10:11-12, 27-29).”

His Compassion: “Father, I pray that _____ will understand that Jesus will completely forgive him/her. I ask that _____ will have no doubts about the depths of God’s forgiveness through Jesus (Ephesians 4:32; 1 John 1:9).”

While you are praying for this person to understand who Jesus is, you also need to pray for the Holy Spirit to powerfully work in this person’s life.

“Holy Spirit, I pray that You would work powerfully in _____’s life. I ask that You would teach _____ his/her need of Jesus Christ. Reveal to him/her who Jesus is. Open his/her eyes to the person and the work of Jesus Christ. Enable _____ to turn from his/her sin and to trust in Jesus Christ as his/her personal Lord and Savior (John 6:44).”

“It is God’s will not only to hear our prayer, but to give us the best answer which He, the almighty and omniscient God, can devise. He will send us the answer when it will benefit us and His cause the most.”

O. Hallesby

Revival In The Family

In previous issues of *The Prayer Closet*, we have dealt with the subject of praying for revival. Revival is our greatest need; it is of utmost importance that we seek God with all our heart for this blessing. The previous articles focused on revival in the church. Our churches need to experience a fresh and powerful work of God.

Yet, there is also a great need for the life-transforming power of God to be released into families. After all, families make up the church. The families who make up the church will determine the church's spiritual condition. The church will never be any stronger spiritually than the families in the church.

Satan is throwing a major offensive against families. It is his desire to destroy marriages and families. It is his goal to lessen the Biblical teaching concerning marriage and family. The only thing that will stop this onslaught is a fresh and powerful work of God.

The key to receiving this reviving work of the Holy Spirit among families is prayer. We must plead with God to grant a fresh and powerful work in our midst. The following prayer requests are offered to help you intercede for this much-needed work among families. You can use these requests or develop your own from them. You might consider using these to pray for the families of your church. Plead with God to grant revival to the families that make up your church. Call on Him to powerfully work in their hearts and lives. You might also consider pleading these requests for families across the nation. The reviving power of God is needed among families across the world.

- ◆ *Pray that each member of the family will be in a right relationship with God (John 3:16; Acts 4:12; Matthew 11:28-30).* Call on God to save each family member and then give him or her a heart for Himself.
- ◆ *Plead that the family will seek to do God's will above all other things (1 Corinthians 10:31).* Pray that obeying God will be the top priority of the family.
- ◆ *Ask Jesus Christ to protect the family from the attacks of Satan (1 Peter 5:8-9).* Satan is a hateful and spiteful enemy of God's people. He would love nothing more than to destroy the marriages and families of believers.
- ◆ *Pray that the husband and wife will have a godly and growing marriage (Ephesians 5:22-33; Proverbs 5:15-23).* Ask the Lord to grant greater commitment and love between husbands and wives. Pray that husband and wives will encourage each other in their relationship with God.
- ◆ *Plead that God would grant the parent or parents godly wisdom and insight on how to raise the children (Ephesians 6:4).* Pray that the parent or parents will teach and model the Word of God to their children. Plead that they will depend on God in raising their children.
- ◆ *Pray that the children will be submissive to their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3).* Ask that the children will love their parents and will obey their parents. Pray for the resolution of any problems between the parents and children.
- ◆ *Plead that the young people will be committed to sexual purity and will not yield themselves to immorality in word, thought, or action. (Proverbs 6:27-28; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4).* A person lays a foundation for problems in marriage and family through sexual immorality before marriage. Plead that the Holy Spirit will convict them about sexual purity.
- ◆ *Pray that the family will be committed to the Word of God (Deuteronomy 6:1-9).* Ask that the family would love, study, and obey the Word of God. Call on God to give them a hunger for His Word.
- ◆ *Plead that Jesus Christ would be the first love of each family member (Revelation 2:4-5).* Pray that each member would love Jesus Christ and actively live for and serve Him. Pray that He would remove any obstacles to this.

- ◆ *Ask that the family will overcome worldliness (1 John 2:15-17).* Busyness with the things of the world is a major spiritual hindrance for most families. Pray that the things of the world will not be more important than the things of God. Ask that the family will make time for Christ and for each other.

The Keywords of Powerful Praying

Persistence. In a modern society, this word has been neglected, if not forgotten. Think about it. We are not accustomed to waiting. We receive things instantly. Computers bring us e-mail instantly. Fax machines bring us information within a matter of moments. Fast-food restaurants give us food quickly and easily. The list could go on and on. We are a people who are accustomed to receiving immediately.

Yet, God does not always work this way in prayer. Sometimes God is pleased to grant requests immediately. There are times when His child cries out to Him and He responds immediately. But, do not expect this to be the norm in your prayer life. There will be times when you must persist in prayer.

Jesus Christ says, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you (**Matthew 7:7**)." This can be translated, "You must keep asking, you must keep on seeking, you must keep on knocking." The Father desires that you persist in prayer. Jesus even taught a parable so that believers would not give up on prayer, but would persist in prayer (**Luke 18:1**). From these verses, it is apparent that persistence will be a necessary part of your prayer life. You will be called on to persist in prayer.

Powerful praying is persistent praying. Keep praying no matter what. Do not give up! Keep bringing your petitions to Him. Persist in prayer so that He can teach You about Himself and His will. Persist in prayer so that He can teach you about yourself. Persist in prayer so that He can guide your praying. Persist in prayer so that He can prepare you for the answer. No matter how you feel, do not give up. Even when heaven seems silent, do not stop crying out to your loving and powerful Father. Do not let discouragement silence

your pleading with God. For the sake of God's glory, for the sake of the kingdom, for the sake of others, for your own good, do not stop praying! Persist in prayer! Do not quit!

New Prayer Product:

The Praying For Your Church Manual

Dr. Meador has recently finished the *Praying For Your Church Manual: Praying For The Health And Growth Of Your Church*. This manual is designed to help you intercede for your church. The manual offers Scripture prayers and suggestions on how to intercede for the various aspects of the church. The topics covered are:

- ◆ Pastor
- ◆ Deacons
- ◆ Evangelism
- ◆ Growth
- ◆ Unity
- ◆ Worship
- ◆ Discipleship
- ◆ Spiritual Warfare
- ◆ Revival
- ◆ Intercession

Each section provides suggestions on how to pray for this particular area. This manual is ready for shipment. It is available to you upon request.

Please send your requests to:

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Decatur, MS 39327
(601) 635-2180

Email: prayercloset_1998@yahoo.com

The Prayer Closet Ministries Prayer Requests

- 1. Land & Facility -** Seventy-three acres of land has been donated for the Prayer Conference Center. The clearing of the land for the facility will be a prayer concern.
The facility will be a center to train persons in praying, fasting, spiritual warfare, and healing. There will also be counseling, prayer retreats and prayer conferences. The entire Prayer Closet Ministry will be located at this center.
- 2. The Praying Parent Brochure -** This brochure is in the developing stage and will soon be ready for distribution. It contains forty-five prayers to pray for children. Our vision is to be able to put this into the hands of two million parents. The purpose of the brochure is to call for genuine revival in families.
- 3. Financial Concern -** As we are growing there are more financial needs. The areas mentioned above will require much finances. We are trusting God to lead us as we seek to build this facility.



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THE PRAYER CLOSET MINISTRIES, INC.

Reaches out to people with the transforming power of Jesus Christ.

Equips believers in the areas of prayer, spiritual warfare, fasting, and healing.

Assists local churches in developing and maintaining prayer ministries.

Provides intercession, prayer counseling and spiritual warfare for people.

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