

# PRAYERCONNECT

Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer

## Stand Firm & Strong

*Wrestling Against  
the Powers of  
This Dark World*

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***NO NEED* for Ordinary Christians**

An American flag is shown in the upper left corner, with its stars and stripes visible against a dark, starry background.

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# PRAYERCONNECT

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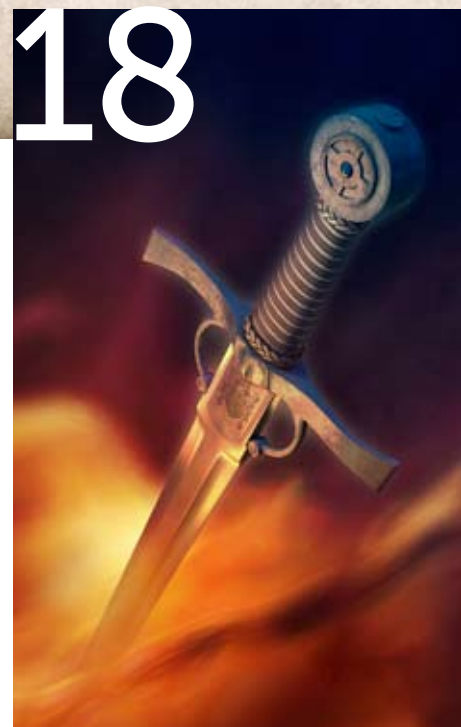
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## Need a Speaker for Your Prayer Conference or Event?

There are a number of gifted speakers associated with *Prayer Connect*. Jonathan Graf regularly ministers in churches of varying sizes. Carol Madison is also available to minister in the area of prayer for revival and community transformation. Our parent organizations, Harvest Prayer Ministries and the Church Prayer Leaders Network, have many speakers associated with their ministries. You can find their contact information at the respective emails or websites.

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The mission of **PRAYERCONNECT** is

1. To encourage and equip believers toward a deeper walk with Jesus Christ through prayer—our experiential connection to God.
2. To resource prayer leaders and pastors with tools to help them motivate, disciple, and mobilize believers in churches to be a part of an army that seeks to pray the purposes of God for churches, communities, and the nations.
3. To be a unifying force between prayer ministries, community transformation groups, and churches.

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## Previously in Prayer Connect

It was in a corporate prayer meeting that the Holy Spirit moved and shook a building. There is extraordinary power in praying together, but corporate

prayer is often a weak practice in the church. In the July/August 2012 issue, "The Place Was Shaken," prayer leaders Dennis Fuqua, James Banks, and Jon Graf testify to the importance of corporate prayer—and share the hindrances that often keep pastors from leading in this way. This issue can help ignite your church in greater prayer. Order at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).



## When God Sets His People Praying

I have to admit I waver at times over whether God will bless America with His favor again—or whether He is simply done with us. But in recent months my hope for a fresh outpouring of His blessing on our nation has been hugely restored. How did it happen?

When my boss, Dave Butts, felt compelled of the Lord to lead the charge to raise up prayer during the 40 days prior to America's elections this fall, my priorities suddenly changed.

When a boss gets a sense of urgency about something, employees hop to! On our websites, we started putting together *40daysofprayer.net*. I was not ready for what I would find—and it changed my perspective.

I am truly amazed at how many people and organizations are at the same time being called to launch similar prayer initiatives. That tells me this is a God-thing. And what some of these believers are doing is truly wonderful: Summonses, 50 days of prayer, 40 days of prayer, and prayer rallies are springing up everywhere. Many are nonpartisan. Many are right-wing conservative.

Regardless of political bent, all these Christians are finally recognizing that the United States is out of solutions—man-made solutions—to its plight. This land once called on God for blessings, but now forces Him out of most parts of society. So only He can bring about the needed change.

In our news section in this issue, read about one of the most exciting prayer initiatives that has sprung up, called David's Tent DC. A young YWAMer (Youth with a Mission) named Jason Hershey has received a permit to put a tent on the White House property (on the Ellipse) for 40 days of 24/7 worship prior to the elections. That means that in a tent right next to the White House, Jesus Christ will be praised, magnified, and exalted for 40 days and nights from September 28 through November 6.

Anyone can come to the tent and participate. You can check out a video about this event at [davidstentdc.org](http://davidstentdc.org). Only God could orchestrate this unprecedented opportunity.

## Spur Others On

What does it mean that all this prayer stuff is coming together? When God sets His people praying, you know He is up to something! This restores my hope that America is in for a fresh outpouring or blessing from God. What it looks like, I don't know. But I am hopeful.

Join me in being hopeful. With just a few weeks to go before these 40 days begin, consider what you can do to spur on other believers around you to pray. Encourage your church and friends to participate in praying for the elections and for our nation. You can find guides and suggestions at *40daysofprayer.net*.

Let's ask God to release His solution for our nation!

—Jonathan Graf

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## Prayer Leaders Summon Believers for Solemn Assembly in D.C.

**W**ith a sense of urgency and by the prompting of God, the National Day of Prayer (NDOP) Task Force has called a solemn assembly in Washington, D.C. for October 3-7, 2012. Described as “a moment in time for God’s people to stand in the gap on behalf of all Americans,” the leaders of this gathering are inviting hundreds of like-minded believers to come to the nation’s Capitol to pray.

According to Dave Butts, chairman of America’s National Prayer Committee, “A unified gathering of several national prayer ministries is about to take place that may shape the course of history—and you have been summoned!”

This special prayer gathering will focus prayer on all the institutions of government within the D.C. area. The solemn assembly will also include outdoor corporate worship near the steps of the Capitol building and at the base of the Washington Monument.

### Prayer Assignments

A variety of prayer assignments will be given to the participants, including all of the government office buildings that house Senators and Representatives, the Supreme Court, the White House, National Archives, Arlington Cemetery, Mount Vernon, the Pentagon, war memorials, and the Lincoln Memorial. It



is described as being “not for the faint of heart,” as it will include walking to various locations regardless of the weather.

There will also be large group gatherings at the Sheraton Hotel, featuring speakers and prayer leaders that include Shirley Dobson, Tony Perkins, Dick Eastman, Paul Cedar, David Kubal, Negiel Bigpond, Vonette Bright, Dave Butts, Jeremy Story, and Bishop Harry Jackson.

Some of the partnering ministries include America’s National Prayer Committee, NDOP, International House of Prayer, The Call, Intercessors for America, Harvest Prayer Ministries, and the Family Research Council.

Just as Moses stood in the gap on behalf of Israel (Ex. 32, Ps. 106), prayer leaders believe the time is now for believers from across the country to gather in Washington, D.C. to pray for the nation. Find more information at [summons2012.com](http://summons2012.com).



PHOTOS BY MATT STEPHENS

## Students Ignited for Prayer and Global Harvest

**T**hroughout history, spiritual awakenings around the world have resulted in the student generation seizing the opportunities to take the gospel to all the nations. From September 30 to October 20, 2012, an international call is for students to again “pursue God for spiritual awakening in the student generation and global harvest in our lifetime.” The challenge is for student ministries to gather daily to pray for

“21 Days for Global Harvest.”

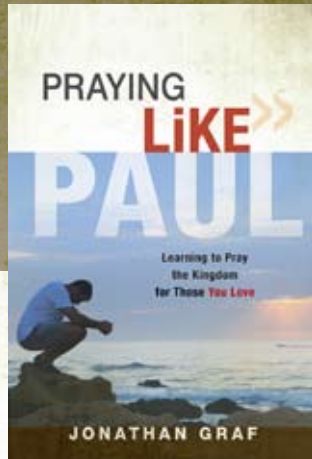
Led by the Student Volunteer Movement II (SVM2), the goal of the prayer campaign is to mobilize 100,000 new workers to the harvest among the least-reached peoples. With the theme, “Let My People Go” (taken from Exodus 8), small groups of students and young adults involved in student ministries from many nations will be praying for 387 unengaged, unreached people

groups. This includes churches, campus ministries, and Christian colleges and universities.

According to Ryan Shaw, international lead facilitator for SVM2, the hope is that 1,000 prayer groups from 50 nations will participate. The International Prayer Council is one of the “stakeholders” in the campaign. Sign up to participate at [21daysofprayer.net](http://21daysofprayer.net).

Taken from *International Prayer Connection*.

## How did the Apostle Paul DO IT?



**God used Paul to change the Gentile world. Prayer was the key. What did he pray for those under his care? What did he ask friends to pray for him? Now you can learn to pray like Paul.**

Written by the publisher of *Prayer Connect*, Jonathan Graf, *Praying Like Paul* can radically change the way you view prayer and how you pray for others.

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## Solemn Assembly in Philadelphia to Focus on America for Jesus

**T**he United States is in a state of spiritual emergency, and there is only one answer: *Jesus*. That is the reason for the call for a solemn assembly in Philadelphia, PA, on September 28-29, 2012, at Independence Hall.

Leaders of America for Jesus are calling upon Christians to return to Philadelphia, the site where the Declaration of Independence was signed and where the Constitution of the United States was debated and ratified after much prayer. It is also the city that hosted the writing of the Bill of Rights. And in 1751, the Pennsylvania General Assembly commissioned a foundry in England to forge a bell to honor William Penn, a Quaker who founded the Pennsylvania government based on principles of liberty and equality. The Liberty Bell is inscribed, "Proclaim liberty throughout the land



unto the inhabitants thereof" (Lev. 25:10).

Leadership includes Anne Gimenez, John Blanchard, Billy Wilson, Cindy Jacobs, Lou Engle, Ron Luce, Jane Hansen, and Samuel Rodriguez. Those leading in prayer will focus on humility and repentance based on 2 Chronicles 7:14.

The gathering also features an "Awakening Youth Rally" on Independence Mall on the evening of September 28. Youth and young adults will join for prayer, worship, and teaching—taking a stand with their generation to pursue the presence of Christ for the nation.

For updated information, go to [aff2012.org](http://aff2012.org).

## National and Unified Call to Prayer for Elections

**B**elieving that the United States is clearly a nation in trouble, diverse leaders from across the U.S. Church are joining their voices in an urgent call to 40 days of prayer for the upcoming national elections. This call is not based on a particular program or resource, but rather a plea for all Christians to do something proactive and powerful in prayer leading up to the elections.

The call for "unrelenting intercession" from September 28 to November 6 is focused on three areas:

1. Revival in the Church—that another Great Awakening will sweep across America as the Lord's people humble themselves in repentance and prayer (2 Chron. 7:14).



2. A standard of righteousness to be raised over this nation (Prov. 14:34).
3. The elections—that God will intervene. This is not a partisan or political effort, but a plea to bring God into a process that desperately needs His wisdom and direction (Is. 48:17).

A special website has been set up where you can sign a declaration to join this prayer effort. Resource suggestions and prayer initiative links are also available at [40daysofprayer.net](http://40daysofprayer.net).





## Calling Families to Prayer at the White House

A unique prayer experience features a tent pitched at the White House Ellipse for 40 days prior to the national elections. Considered an unprecedented opportunity, the Washington House of Prayer in D.C. (associated with Youth With a Mission) has obtained a permit from the National Park Service to set up a tent for 40 continuous days “across the fence from the President’s backyard.”

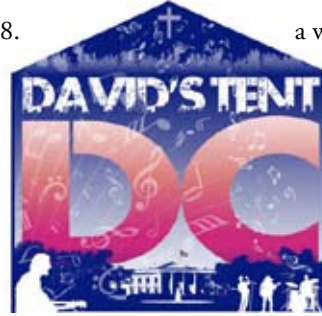
Called “David’s Tent DC,” it is available for 24/7 day and night prayer and worship from September 26 to November 6. Organizers recognize that “our fathers stood in the gap” in 1997 with the Promise Keepers’ gathering of perhaps a million men in 1997, and again with hundreds of thousands of students (and children of those men) answering

“The Call” in 2000 and 2008.

This call to prayer is now targeted toward entire families.

In addition, the hope is that worship teams from all 50 states will be represented during the 40 days to “do nothing but enthrone Jesus.” Founder Jason Hershey casts the vision as one of worship rather than “crisis-praying.”

Hershey explains, “As King Jehoshaphat went up against an army much larger than his, in much crisis, he instructed the worshippers to go out in front singing, ‘Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever’ (2 Chron. 20:21). As they sang, the Lord set ambushes and Jehoshaphat came out



a winner that day. David’s Tent DC is fueled by the same prayer Jehoshaphat prayed: ‘We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you’ (2 Chron. 20:12). In the face of great destruction, Jehoshaphat

sent out singers—what kind of strategy is that? A victorious one!”

Hershey describes this as a chance to establish worship on part of the White House grounds (and even under the surveillance of the Secret Service) to “get the Presence by the palace” in the Capitol city.

For more information about attending or sending a worship team, go to [davidstentdc.org](http://davidstentdc.org).

## Crossing Borders in Europe for Prayer

Prayers toward “redigging the wells of revival” were the focus of The Borderline Prayer Initiative in June 2012 among neighboring European countries. This strategic prayer gathering brought together 30 local participants—Czech and Slovak leaders and families from four “houses of prayer” in the Czech Republic and Slovakia—with prayer leaders Brian Mills (Interprayer), Sam Hofmann (Youth With a Mission), and John Robb (International Prayer Council). They met in a Methodist church in a town on the Czech border with Austria—a church pastored by a Jewish believer from the original Jewish population uprooted during the Holocaust.

It was also from this same region of Moravia that the Moravians of the 18<sup>th</sup> century initiated a prayer movement that brought a time of deep revival, and later resulted in the 100-year prayer chain in Hernnhut, Germany. The Moravians also

deeply inspired and impacted both England and the United States through the lives and ministries of John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield, who were mightily used of the Lord in the Great Awakening.

The prayer leaders crossed over the border into Austria to pray at the battlefield where centuries before the Hapsburg emperor defeated the Bohemian ruler and stained the ground with the blood of many thousands of the ancestors of the Czechs and Slovaks. To this day, there remains a sense of spiritual and psychological hindrance affecting the relationship of nations in the region. Leaders believed it was an encouraging time of prayers for reconciliation and repentance, based on God’s heart for these nations together.

John Robb is the chairman of the International Prayer Council. Taken from *International Prayer Connection*.

### Prayer Calendar

- Cry Out America**  
**Tuesday, September 11**  
[awakeningamerica.us](http://awakeningamerica.us)
- See You at the Pole**  
**Wednesday, September 26**  
[syatp.com](http://syatp.com)
- America for Jesus**  
**September 28-29**  
[afj2012.org](http://afj2012.org)
- 40 Days of Prayer for America**  
**September 28 – November 6**  
[40daysofprayer.net](http://40daysofprayer.net)
- Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem**  
**Sunday, October 7**  
[daytopray.org](http://daytopray.org)
- Prayer for Persecuted Church**  
**Sunday, November 11**  
[idop.org](http://idop.org)



# Breaker of Dawn Ministries

Jerry and Judy Ball

## Mission

TO BRING SUPERNATURAL UNITY TO THE BODY OF CHRIST THROUGH THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.

Jerry and I spend hours before the Lord separately and together studying His word and praying in agreement. We discern His broken body and His resurrection each day with communion. We establish our position with Him in Psalm 91. We practice entering His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise and entering the holy of holies by the blood of the lamb. During this time He searches us and finds us and we repent and surrender and die to self to be filled with His life and His will for our lives. Our meals are ones where Jesus is invited to eat with us.

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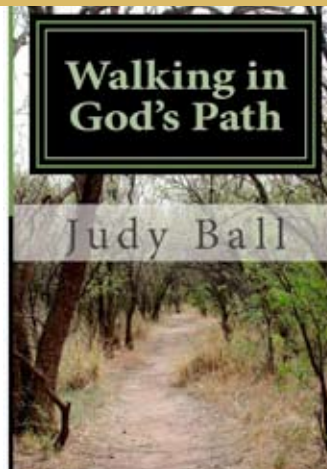
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Judy has had a heart for prayer from an early age. She currently ministers around the globe with her husband Jerry.





# Stand Firm and Strong

## *Wrestling Against the Powers of This Dark World*

**A**fter editing many lessons of a children's club program over multiple years, I had grown tired of the same lesson themes related to spiritual warfare. Whenever we addressed the issue of Satan, illustrations were usually along the lines of not yielding to temptations to disobey your parents or steal yet another cookie from the cookie jar.

I knew in my spirit there must be more that God wanted children to understand about warfare. So I began researching various Christian authors who addressed spiritual battles and ways Satan is at work in the world, especially his strategies with children. There weren't many books on the topic back then, but I read enough to understand it was time to warn children with greater urgency about the surrounding evil. They needed assurance that Jesus is their hope and victory.

That night I came home and experienced a form of demonic oppression that convinced me I was on the right track! Warfare suddenly became very real for me—and I knew we needed to make greater strides in teaching children, their parents, and all believers about the dangers they faced by virtue of being a follower of Christ.

We then developed some lessons for the club program that delved into the many ways evil has worked its way into our daily lives, including books, movies, computer games, and experimentation with occult practices.

### **A Spiritually Healthy Perspective**

Spiritual warfare is probably best defined by Paul in Ephesians 6, when he speaks of wrestling against spiritual

forces of evil and taking a firm stand in the victory of Jesus Christ. Not surprisingly, Christians take different positions on the topic of warfare. Some are consumed with worry and fear, convinced that every struggle they experience is the direct result of demonic influence. They don't consider the fact that believers are responsible for their own fleshly lusts and desires that lead them into sin.

Others take a more cavalier approach, choosing to ignore the realities of warfare, believing instead that Satan is nothing but a toothless lion who just roars loudly. Both of these views leave believers vulnerable to enemy attack.

Paul knew the realities of the spiritual warfare that often engulfed him. He kept his eyes focused on Jesus and always pressed forward, yet he warned fellow believers to stay alert at every moment—putting on both offensive and defensive gear. Paul, perhaps more than anyone else in Christian history, knew that life is war.

In this issue, you will learn about some of Satan's most treacherous strategies to defeat Christians in their personal lives—and thus hinder the spread of the gospel. Dave Butts helps us identify the four *D*'s of warfare: doubt, deception, discouragement, and division. Marcus Warner draws on his warfare ministry experiences and writes about legal ground and authority. The theme section closes with a reminder that we've got to watch each other's backs in prayer.

In these spiritually dark times we need to be battle-ready and grow more confident in the wonderful gift of the power of prayer. Rest assured, our victory is in Jesus!

—Carol Madison, editor, *Prayer Connect*





*Discerning the Devil's Schemes and*




# The Key of Awareness

**W**ar is dangerous business. Lives are lost. Bodies damaged. Families painfully torn apart. Nations destroyed. Knowing the horrors of war, we strive to avoid it as much as it depends upon us.

But what if it's not possible to avoid war? What if war is thrust upon you—and the only question is whether you win or lose? That's the picture the Bible presents regarding the reality of the spiritual war we face daily.

Though we can find spiritual battles throughout the Bible, literally from Genesis to Revelation, the Apostle Paul focuses deliberately on the imagery of war. In his great teaching in Ephesians 6 (see page 15), Paul employs the metaphor of Roman armor and our understanding of physical warfare in order to help us deal with ongoing spiritual battles in our lives today. God never presents spiritual warfare as an option, but rather as a reality we must face.

*Staying Alert in Prayer*  **By Dave Butts**



That's why I am convinced that the key to spiritual victory is an awareness of the warfare that rages around us—and sometimes in us. Paul, warning the Corinthians about how Satan works to "outwit" God's people, says, "We are not unaware of his schemes" (2 Cor. 2:11).

Sadly though, I'm afraid much of the Church today would have to confess, "We have no idea what the devil is up to." Battlefields are dangerous places, but there is nothing more dangerous than not knowing you are in the midst of a strategic war.

## Put on His Armor with Prayer

How can we learn to walk in daily awareness of the spiritual battlefield surrounding us? The always-practical Scriptures give us an easy approach. In Ephesians 6, Paul couches his teaching on warfare and

armor in the context of prayer. I believe one of the simplest ways to walk in awareness of our spiritual battlefield is to daily put on the armor of God through prayer.

Part of the teaching on the armor has to do with our responsibility to live a godly lifestyle. But it is also appropriate to pray over this lifestyle armor and to accept it daily through prayer. Remember the old hymn, "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus"? One of the verses reads, "Put on the gospel armor, Each piece put on with prayer." Rather than just sing it, let's do it! Putting on the armor *every day* continually reminds us of the battlefield we enter *every day*. We don't get up each morning headed off for a picnic. We're headed into battle! This simple act of prayer can heighten our awareness and prepare us for what's to come.

Awareness of warfare in the Church allows us to deal with issues in spiritual ways rather than with carnal thoughts and

attitudes. When we forget that we are at war, we begin to look at people, events, and situations in the same way those with no spiritual basis do. Awareness of warfare, however, causes us to see that "problem person" at church as one of the walking wounded. Opening our spiritual eyes will help us see that so many of our attempted solutions to problems are merely Band-aids in a situation needing extensive surgery.

With our armor fully in place and our eyes opened to the warfare around us, we will begin to see that one of the major recipients of the attacks of the devil is, in fact, the Church. That shouldn't surprise us because the Church is the only real threat to Satan on earth. Satan knows that the people of God are the ones who can, through prayer, release the power that defeats him. As those dearly loved by the Lord, we find ourselves hated by this enemy of Christ—thus making Satan our enemy as well.

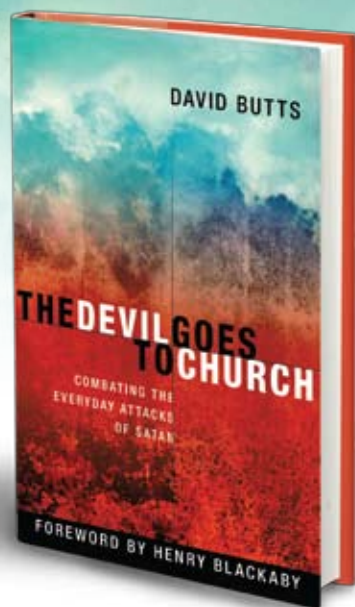
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## Four D's of Warfare

Walking in awareness allows us, like Paul, to declare that “we are not unaware of his schemes.”

So what are the schemes of the devil against the Body of Christ? Though there are certainly others, I believe we can lump together the bulk of satanic attacks into four areas: *Doubt*, *Deception*, *Discouragement*, and *Division*. Understanding these tactics allows us to know how to pray and live in such a way that we blunt the force of the attacks and we achieve victory.

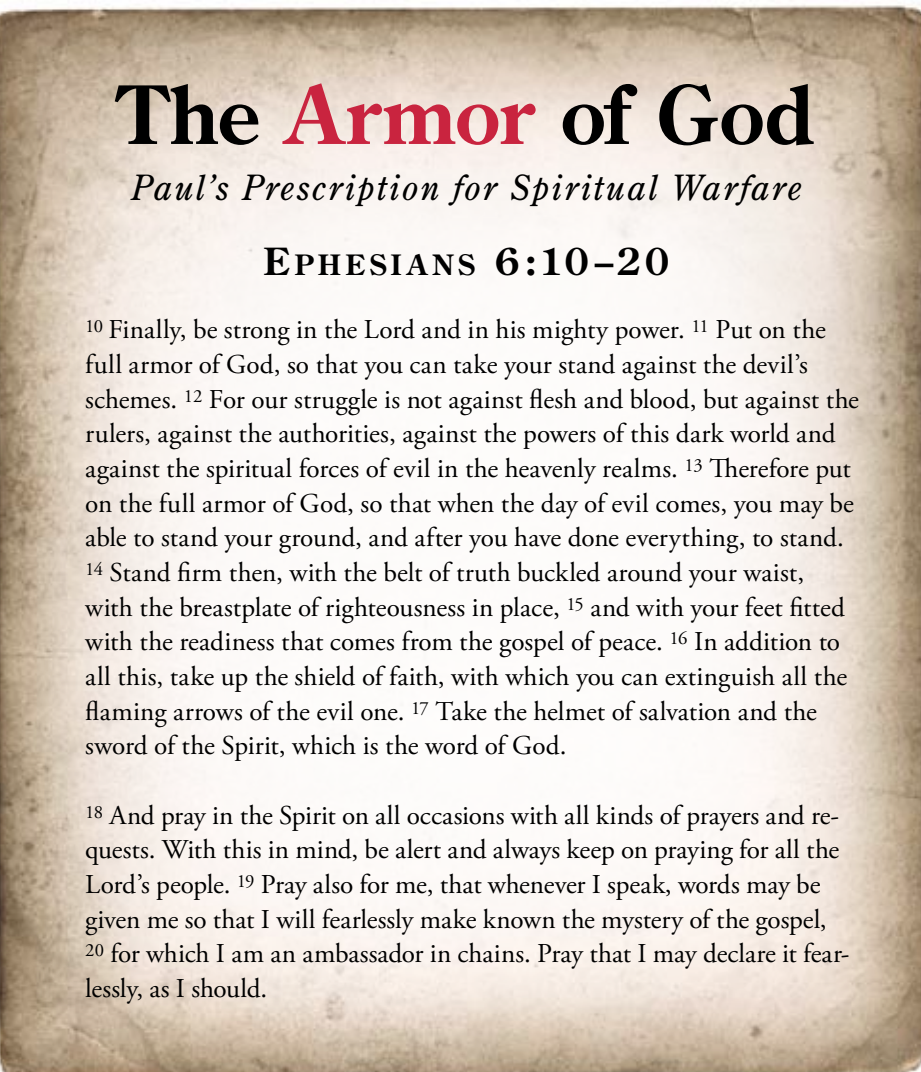
**Doubt.** The devil has always attempted to get God's people to fall into doubt, especially regarding the Word of God. As far back as the Garden of Eden, the voice of the serpent encouraged this kind of doubt: “Did God really say. . . ?”

That same voice with the same message still tries to get Christians to doubt the authority and accuracy of God's Word. Perhaps you've been in a discussion in a Bible study and heard, “I know the Bible says that, but I believe. . . .” However, God's Word is the ultimate authority.

Another area of doubt the devil uses is whether or not God truly loves us. Most of us have heard that insidious whisper, “How could God love *you*?” Even if we have an intellectual understanding of the truth of God's love, sometimes we do not allow ourselves to rest in and enjoy the Lord's deep love for us. This is Satan's attack on the very nature of the God who is pure love.

Satan goes after the Word of God and the nature of God with his relentless attempts to sow seeds of doubt. When we learn to recognize these attacks, we will see how serious they are. This isn't just a side issue that can be ignored. We must begin our counterattack by praying prayers of faith. When, as a way of life, we combat doubt with faith, we gain the victory.

**Deception.** The second area of attack is deception. Jesus, who knew Satan from the beginning, said that Satan is a liar



# The **Armor** of God

*Paul's Prescription for Spiritual Warfare*

## EPHESIANS 6:10-20

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

<sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. <sup>19</sup> Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

(John 8:44). Of course we see many obvious marks of deception in the church, with the growth of false doctrines, including false doctrines regarding demons. What is not so obvious is the way the devil deceives even those of us who hold to the Word and to sound doctrine.

Perhaps the most significant example is the way Satan has deceived us into confusing *hearing* the Word with *doing* the Word. Across the board, I believe this is the most prevalent, serious deception in the Church today. Sunday after Sunday, millions of us sit under the teaching of the Word, yet we walk out of church and fail to accept the responsibilities of living out what we have heard. How is it that a man can sit in church for 50 years, hearing the Word of God taught, yet he gets meaner and less loving as he ages?

Satan's deception spares no one. I often find myself at a conference, listening to a great speaker. I walk out thrilled by his passion and power and the truth I have heard. That's the first step of deception. I feel good because I agree with what I heard. Yet I haven't made a commitment to do anything. I just enjoyed what I heard. As a matter of fact, I will often ask, “When is he speaking again?” An addiction to hearing the Word is often tragically divorced from actually doing the Word.

Recognizing the hand of the great deceiver, though, will cause us to begin to live differently. We find ourselves praying passionately that we ourselves will be doers of the Word and not just hearers. We pray that the Church will hear the truth, discern the truth, and act

*continued on page 17*



# Seven Tools to Prepare Yourself for Warfare Prayer

**S**o many believers are blindsided when Satan messes with them mentally, physically, or spiritually. Not everything that happens is caused by Satan, but Scripture says “he is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short” (Rev. 12:12).

As followers of Jesus, we don’t have to be afraid that we might be attacked at any moment. But our Lord has given us many ways to prepare ourselves for whatever battles come. Here are seven specific prayer tools, designed by God, to help us defeat the enemy of our souls.

**1. Put on the full armor of God** (Eph. 6:11) is not a suggestion. It is a command! As you pray each morning, deliberately dress for battle by placing on each piece of armor and asking God to protect you from attack. Also ask Him to make you dangerous for the sake of the Kingdom. *Suggestion:* Pray something like this: “Lord, today I put on the belt of truth. Protect me from listening to any lies of Satan and convict me when I am tempted to speak any exaggerations or untruths. Help me to discern truth from error.”

**2. Train yourself to be self-controlled and alert.** Proverbs 25:28 says, “Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.” A city with broken-down walls is easy for an enemy to penetrate. By exercising self-control—especially when we face temptation—and learning to be alert for signs of the devil’s attacks, we can train ourselves to be in a state of continual readiness. *Suggestion:* Ask God to keep you self-controlled, alert, and ready to fight temptation. This is a prayer He wants to answer!

**3. Know your enemy is *not* flesh and blood** (Eph. 6:12). Jesus tells us to love and pray for our enemies and those who mistreat us (Matt. 5:44). Sometimes the devil will use others, or even us, to do his work. *Suggestion:* The next time you are tempted to fight the wrong enemy, ask the Spirit to prompt you to pray for others rather than retaliate or respond in anger.

**4. Learn to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.** Jesus is our greatest example

of using the Word of God against the devil. During His time of temptation in the desert (Matt. 4), Jesus consistently thwarted the attempts of Satan by saying, “It is written. . . .” This weapon is the only “offensive” part of the armor of God. *Suggestion:* Practice praying the Word of God back to God.

**5. Pray out loud so Satan can hear you.** Jesus responded to the temptations of the devil out loud and with Scripture! He also commanded evil spirits to come out of people. There is power in praying out loud, as Satan likely cannot read your thoughts. Therefore, ask God to make you bold enough to speak your prayers aloud. *Suggestion:* If praying out loud is difficult for you, practice by praying Scripture out loud.

**6. Respond to the attacks of the enemy with worship.** Worship is prayer! It keeps our hearts, minds, and spirits focused upon Jesus and His power rather than upon our problems or attacks of Satan. At the same time, the devil abhors our worship. So God gets the victory. *Suggestion:* When you are tempted by the devil, turn on worship music. Worship silences the foe and the avenger (Ps. 8:2).

**7. Pray in the powerful name of Jesus.** All the power and authority of Jesus to overcome the devil is in His name (Phil. 2:9–11). Paul, Peter, and others commanded demons to come out of people in the name of Jesus. *Suggestion:* Do a search of “name of Jesus” and “in my name” using [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) or something similar. Note the emphasis Scripture puts on the name of Jesus.

The power of God is stronger than any of the enemy’s weak attempts, but only if we are prepared to use the tools God has given us. Prayer defeats Satan, and he will do everything he can to keep you from praying or growing in prayer. Stand firm!

**KIM BUTTS** is co-founder of Harvest Prayer Ministries.



upon the truth. We stand against the lie and for the truth!

**Discouragement.** One of the most effective weapons of our enemy is discouragement. He knows that we will need courage to walk in victory throughout all of life, so he goes all out to steal our courage. That's really the root meaning of *discourage*—to take away courage. You've seen "the discouraged" at church haven't you? They used to be involved in church activities, but a failed program here, a criticism there, failure to receive help—and soon they are barely involved or even rarely attending. The enemy has stolen their courage.

Jesus said that the devil is a thief who "comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10). Tragically, the enemy uses *other believers* to steal that courage too. In Hebrews 10:25, the Lord warns us against failing to meet together. Why? Because God designed our times of gathering with other believers to be times when we give courage to one another for the great tasks we have ahead of us—for life itself. When we come together as the Body of Christ, we are literally to hand out courage to each other. That's encouragement!

But the thief comes in, and we find ourselves stealing courage from (discouraging) others through our criticisms and even through a failure to pass along courage (encourage).

Once again, awareness helps us discern what the enemy is doing. We begin to pray for courage for our brothers and sisters. We commit to speaking words that encourage and not discourage. That which the enemy tries to steal, we come to bring abundantly—that is, the courage to live a life that pleases Christ.

**Division.** The last of these attacks, one of the most deadly, is that of division. It is not just the division of denominations, but the divisiveness within those denominations and within individual congregations. Satan has truly been successful in bringing about division within the Church, leaving multitudes without shepherds and countless millions

walking away from the Church.

One thing we can count on in spiritual warfare is that *whatever Jesus loves, Satan hates*. Even a cursory reading of Jesus' great high priestly prayer in John 17, shows us how much Jesus longs for unity within His Church. Satan mocks Jesus' passion for unity. And Christ's own people often ignore it. The best way we can walk with Jesus in unity is to learn to pray with Him. As we join our prayers for unity with the prayers of Jesus in John 17, we find that our own hearts begin to change. We come to the point where we would rather die than cause division in the Body of Christ. A church that prays with Jesus over the things that Jesus prayed for is unstoppable!

## Live in Reality

The Christian who walks in awareness is not engaged in a paranoia that sees the

devil behind every bush. Rather, perhaps only the "aware Christian" has a firm grasp of the reality of the demonic realm spoken of in the Scriptures.

After teaching us about the armor of God and the reality of spiritual warfare, Paul closes by saying, "With this in mind, *be alert* and always keep on praying for all the saints" (Eph. 6:18, emphasis added). Not only can we pray for ourselves (putting on the armor of God); we can intercede for our brothers and sisters in Christ fighting in rank beside us. We are at war, so pray as one who is fully engaged and living in the reality of the ever-present battlefield. **PC**



**DAVE BUTTS** is president of Harvest Prayer Ministries and the chairman of America's National Prayer Committee. He is the author of several books, including *The Devil Goes to Church*, available from [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).

## Imagine What God Would Do . . .

If we cried out with one voice . . .

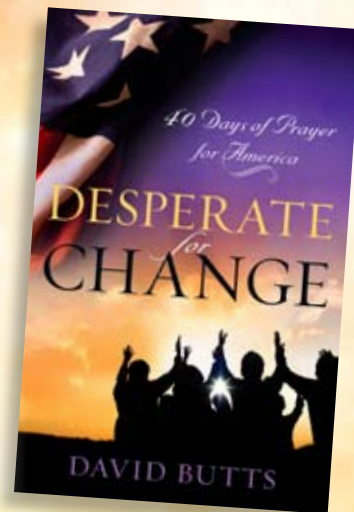
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## *Using the Spiritual Authority*



# More *than* Conquerors

**I** grew up in a family that understands spiritual warfare. My dad has written two books on the subject<sup>1</sup> and spent several years on staff with Neil T. Anderson and Freedom in Christ Ministries. While in seminary I joined my parents in their ministry of setting people free from demonic strongholds and the emotional baggage that keeps them from going deeper in their walk with God. I have been involved in hundreds of situations in which demons manifested themselves in people's lives and had to be evicted.

In 2006, I became president of a ministry founded by Dr. Mark I. Bubeck. Today I travel the country and the world, teaching about spiritual warfare, emotional healing, and maturity development.

I write all of this simply because a lot of wacky ideas and practices regarding spiritual warfare are circulating, and I want you to know that I come from a background that takes very seriously the importance of a biblically rooted and biblically balanced approach to the subject.

*Given to Believers*  **By Marcus Warner**



## Foundations of Warfare Prayer

Spiritual warfare ministry builds on two solid foundations: 1) legal ground and 2) authority. These two legal terms remind us of a courtroom. Whether we see it or not, these two rules govern spiritual warfare in the courtroom of heaven. Satan can't do whatever he wants—or we would all be dead. He needs permission to do what he does.

He needed permission to harm Job and his family (Job 1:9–12, 2:3–6). He needed permission to “sift” Peter (Luke 22:31). In this present evil age, God has granted Satan permission to roam the earth like a roaring lion (Job 1:7, 2:2; 1 Peter 5:8). As this age comes to a close, God will grant him even more permission to wage war on the saints (Rev. 13:7).

**1. Legal ground.** In this age, Satan receives permission in two ways:

- Sometimes God simply decrees that the devil will have greater freedom.

(See the cases cited at left.)

- Sometimes *we* give him permission through the choices we make. When we give Satan permission to act, we call that *legal ground*. Our choices give him rights he otherwise would not have. Common areas in which we surrender ground to the enemy include sin, the occult, unforgiveness, lies we believe, and generational iniquity.

### 2. The authority of the believer.

Authority over Satan is not a gift some Christians have and others don't. We each have this authority because of our legal position in Christ: we are “seated . . . with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6). This is the unique privilege of believers. The archangel Michael did not have this kind of authority over Lucifer (Jude 1:9). Michael and Lucifer were equals. Christians, however, are seated with Christ at the right hand of God

far above the “principalities and powers” we war against (Eph. 6:12).

Some time ago, a young lady who had received a demon that gave her psychic powers, came to see me. She got the demon when she went to a church for help and the leaders there sent her to a yoga class they were hosting. A Hindu guru was leading the class, and when he laid his hand on her head, she felt energy release throughout her body with a focus in her forehead. She received what is called “the third eye of Shiva.” From that moment on, she had psychic abilities she had not had before. She came to me because, as a Christian, she was concerned that this was not right. What an understatement!

As I led her to renounce her involvement and command the demons to leave, she asked, “Do I really have the authority to command them to leave? Shouldn't I simply ask Jesus to do it for me?”

Good question. Together, we read

*continued on page 22*

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# A Warfare *Prayer*

**H**eavenly Father, I bow in worship and praise before You. I cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as my protection during this time of prayer. I surrender myself completely and unreservedly in every area of my life to Yourself.

**Heavenly Father,** come and open my eyes that I might see how great You are and how complete Your provision is for this new day. I do, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, take my place with Christ in the heavenlies with all principalities and powers of darkness and wicked spirits under my feet. I am thankful that the victory the Lord Jesus Christ won for me on the cross and in His resurrection has been given to me and that I am seated with the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenlies; therefore, I declare that all principalities and powers and all wicked spirits are subject to me in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**I am thankful** for the armor You have provided, and I put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the sandals of peace, the helmet of salvation. I lift up the shield of faith against all the fiery darts of the enemy and take in my hand the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. I use Your Word against all the forces of evil in my life; and I put on this armor and live and pray in complete dependence upon You, blessed Holy Spirit.

**I am grateful,** heavenly Father, that the Lord Jesus Christ spoiled all principalities and powers and made a show of them openly and triumphed over them in Himself. I claim all that victory for my life today. I reject out of my life all the insinuations, the accusations, and the temptations of Satan. I affirm that the Word of God is true, and I choose to live today in the light of God's Word. I choose, heavenly Father, to live in obedience to You and in fellowship with Yourself. Open my eyes and show me the areas of my life that would not please You.

**Work in my life** so that there is no ground to give Satan a foothold against me. Show me any area of weakness. Show me any area of my life that I must deal with so that I would please You. I do in every way today stand for You and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in my life.

**I am thankful,** heavenly Father, that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds, to the casting down of imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring every thought into obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore in my own life today, I tear down the strongholds of Satan, and I smash the plans of Satan that have been formed against me. I tear down the strongholds of Satan against my mind, and I surrender my mind to You, blessed Holy Spirit. I affirm, heavenly Father, that You have not given me the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. I break and smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my will today, and I give my will to You and choose to make the right decisions.

**Heavenly Father,** I pray that now through this day You would quicken me; show me the way that Satan is hindering and tempting and lying and counterfeiting and distorting the truth in my life. Enable me to be aggressive in prayer.

**I surrender myself to You.** I refuse to be discouraged. You are the God of all hope. You have proven Your power by resurrecting Jesus Christ from the dead, and I claim in every way Your victory over all satanic forces active in my life, and I reject these forces. I pray this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ with thanksgiving. Amen.

Written by Victor Matthews, professor emeritus, Grand Rapids, MI, Theological Seminary. Reprinted from *The Adversary* by Dr. Mark Bubeck, p. 140.

Ephesians 1:19–2:6, and I explained that she had authority because she was “seated with Christ” and did not have to be a victim of this anymore. She understood, and within a few minutes God set her free.

But we need caution here. Most people who get in trouble with spiritual battles do so because they rely totally on their *authority* and do not deal with the *legal ground*. This was driven home to me when a pastor in a very unusual situation called me. A woman under demonic attack sat in his office, making growling noises I could hear in the background. He was at his wits’ end. He had commanded the demon to leave several times with increasing volume each time. He tried praying. Nothing happened. He tried reading Scripture and singing. Still nothing.

His problem was that he did not understand legal ground. I walked him through the process of using his authority to bind the demon and command

it to be silent and still. I could hear the room grow quiet. I then told him to ask the lady if she or her family had ever engaged in occult practices. He already knew the answer. This woman was related to him, and her mother was a witch. The woman in his office had herself engaged in several occult practices as she grew up. Though now a Christian, she had never renounced her involvement or dealt with the demons she had given permission to enter her life. Once the pastor understood legal ground and how to remove it, he said, “I think I get it. I’ll call you back if I need more help.”

A few days later he called and said, “It took two sessions, but I think we got them all.” Then he said something else I have never forgotten, “You know, I was taught in seminary that this couldn’t happen. I was told that Christians couldn’t have demons.” He and his wife later came for more training as he began to understand just how many Christians are burdened by

the effects of spiritual warfare—with no understanding of how to fight.

## Practices of Warfare Praying

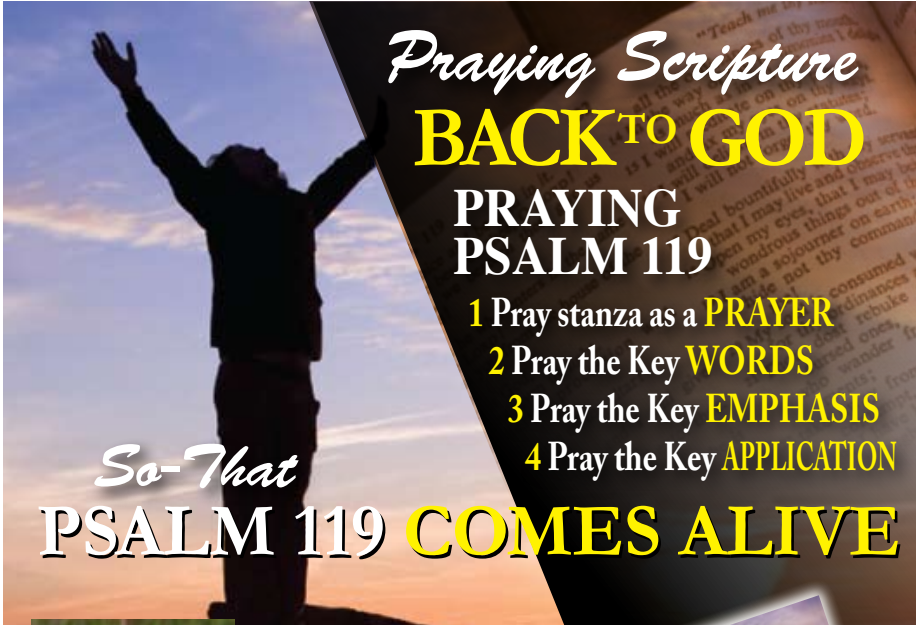
Prayer is crucial in spiritual warfare because we are truly wrestling against rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph. 6:12). Recognizing that we are “more than conquerors” (Rom. 8:37), we can use the following helpful practices in warfare praying:

**Binding.** The purpose of binding demons is to limit their ability to act until their legal ground can be removed. Prayer for binding is almost always needed when demons are involved. In one simple case, a seminary student, an active disciple-maker with a campus ministry, ran into a road block. He was dealing with an intelligent guy who couldn’t follow the simplest thought processes when they read the Bible together. In fact, his eyes seemed to glaze over, and he became easily distracted. I suggested that the seminary student insert one line into his opening prayer the next time they met: “In the name of Jesus I bind any demons from interfering with our time of study.”

The next week he came back very excited. “You won’t believe it,” he said. “He followed every word this time. It was our best study yet. We found out that his family had been involved in a lot of occult activity, and he also confessed, for the first time ever, that he had been a practicing homosexual for the last seven years.” Clearly there was legal ground in this man’s life.

**Loosing.** There are a variety of ways to “loose” ourselves, our property, and others from demonic activity. Two of the most important are forgiveness and repentance. Since sin and unforgiveness give legal ground to the enemy, we loose ourselves from that legal ground by canceling their right to exist. Sometimes this is all that is needed.

In other cases, demons may still need



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to be evicted. Another type of loosing is cleansing. This occurs when we cancel any demonic claims to a location or an object. I know a man who cleansed his hotel room with a simple four-step prayer: "Lord, (1) if any demons claim a right to be here, (2) I cancel that claim in the name of Jesus, and (3) I command them to leave. (4) I now commit this room to Christ and ask Him to cleanse and fill it with His presence."

The man got halfway through this prayer when every light bulb in the room burst! He thought this was odd, so he went to see the hotel manager. "Just out of curiosity," he said, "who stayed in my room before me?"

The manager replied, "You know, it is funny you should ask. There was a fortune teller in there for the last several days with clients coming in and out to see her."

Those demons weren't going to leave until someone with authority in Christ cleansed the room.

**Hedge of protection.** In the Book of Job we read that this righteous man offered sacrifices to God every day. In order to temporarily remove the resulting hedge of protection around his family, Satan needed a divine decree from God Himself.

Personally, I pray for a hedge of protection around my family every day. It is like taking a shower or washing my hands. It is just part of what I do. Satan gets enough permission without my giving it to him through negligence.

**Fasting.** A fast is a type of sacrifice. We are denying ourselves food (or something else) for a period of time. Fasting is often involved in making very serious petitions. It is often a statement of desperation (Esther 4:16). It is also a statement of worship and honor that the One we petition is worth our sacrifice. Fasting is not magic, but it is an important form of petition that God honors.

**Doctrinal prayers.** A doctrinal prayer is a scripturally based and doctrinally sound prayer written by an experienced prayer warrior (see page 21). Such prayers

can serve as tracks on which our prayers are guided. We don't necessarily have to pray them word for word, but they can serve as guides to lead us. Several doctrinal prayers written by Dr. Mark I. Bubeck can be found in his books *The Adversary* and *Overcoming the Adversary*, as well as at our website as free downloads ([deeperwalkinternational.org](http://deeperwalkinternational.org)). John Eldredge also has a very helpful daily prayer available at his website ([ransomedheart.com](http://ransomedheart.com)) and in his book *Waking the Dead*.

**Listening prayer.** While the foundations of spiritual warfare are legal and relate to God's sovereign rule over this world, the practice of applying those principles requires the guidance of the Spirit. Because of this, warfare prayer should be anchored in intimacy with God. As we learn to quiet ourselves and listen, the Spirit will lead us to understand issues of legal ground and how to remove them. He will also guide us to know how to pray or simply to trust Him that He understands and knows what to do.

## A Believer's Crucial Role

Warfare prayer is not magic. It is not a supernatural key to unlock every door nor an elixir to solve every problem. But in a world growing increasingly dark, where Satan is gaining more and more permission to steal, kill, and destroy (see John 10:10), it is crucial that every believer learns to pray effectively from a position of authority, guided by the Spirit, and with an understanding of the devil's schemes and how to overcome them. **PC**

<sup>1</sup>*Spiritual Warfare: Victory Over the Powers of This Dark World and Beginner's Guide to Spiritual Warfare*, by Timothy Warner.



**MARCUS WARNER** is president of Deeper Walk International and serves as the primary teacher for their Deeper Walk seminars. He is the author of several books, including *What Every Believer Should Know about Spiritual Warfare* (available at [deeperwalkinternational.org](http://deeperwalkinternational.org)).

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## *Watching Each Other's Backs in*



# Persistent Prayer *for* All the Saints

**M**y friend Jean will tell you—no matter what the circumstance, no matter how impossible it may seem, regardless of how much Satan has done to destroy your child's life—never give up praying for God's glorious work. I must admit I wasn't always hopeful for her daughter Joey, but Jean never stopped rallying intercessors to pray for a miracle.

Although Joey grew up in the church, attended a Christian high school, and knew the

promise of Jeremiah 29:11 (God has plans for her future), Joey chose a hard life—rebellion, addiction, prostitution. She knew the darkest of the spiritually dark places.

It wasn't until after years of her mom's faithful prayers (and nine stints in treatment centers), that Joey found her freedom in Christ. God turned Joey's life around in a dramatic way. She has been clean for 13 years and now works for a Christian drug treatment center.

*Spiritually Dark Days*  **By Carol Madison**

## Group Effort

Jean and Joey recently gave their powerful testimonies on a Sunday morning in Jean's small church in northern Minnesota.

Jean thanked those who prayed week after week, year after year, for Joey to return to the Lord. She recounted the many times that assurance of people's faithful prayers encouraged her.

On one occasion, when she walked into a children's Sunday school classroom, she saw her daughter's name written on the whiteboard. Suddenly she realized all the children were praying for Joey.

Another time, a volunteer firefighter, tragically paralyzed in an accident during a fire, asked about Joey from his hospital room. He had been praying for her in spite of his own traumatic injuries.

Joey, hearing these stories for the first time as her mom spoke, was stunned to realize how many people had not given up on her.

This little church recognizes that spiritual warfare exists and that Satan intends to consume believers and families. But the Christians there are committed to praying persistently for all believers everywhere. As fellow soldiers, they "watch each other's backs."

## Warfare Prayer Mode

The Apostle Paul closed his letter to the Ephesians with a dire warning and a plea for his fellow believers to "stand firm" against the devil's schemes. He didn't paint a picture of Utopia for the Church; rather, with sobering language, he described the darkness churning around them. And he urged them—and us—to take both defensive and offensive battle postures (Eph. 6:10-17).

Paul then told them how to pray. His instructions, loaded with wise exhortations, came from the experience of this man who knew how to battle "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and

against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (v. 12).

Paul knew how to approach battles with the strongest arsenal possible—prayer in the Spirit always, without giving up, and for every believer. He knew that all believers, the "saints," are engaged in a serious battle for the sake of the gospel:

*Pray in the Spirit* at all times and on every occasion. *Stay alert* and *be persistent* in your prayers for all believers everywhere. And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. *So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should* (Eph. 6:18-20, NLT, emphasis added).

Paul did not instruct people to pray quick "fix-it" prayers to get themselves out of a jam or make their lives more comfortable. If that were the case, he might have said, "Please pray that I'm not beaten or stoned today. And pray that I won't be shipwrecked *again*. And one more thing—prison is getting old. Please pray I am found innocent immediately."

Instead, Paul pursued greater purposes in prayer—that God might equip all the saints to know and share the love of Christ, while at the same time destroying the works and arguments of Satan (Col. 2:2-3; 2 Cor. 10:4).

So how can we pray effectively for each other with this warfare mindset?

**1. Pray in the Spirit for one another—always.** Seek the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to guide your prayers. Tune in to the urgency of the day and the seriousness of Satan's prowling around us (1 Peter 5:8-9). The Holy Spirit knows all things and helps us to pray even when we don't know how.

Paul gave us a wonderful truth and prayer tip in Romans 8:26-27:

The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

Partnering with the Holy Spirit will open our hearts to "prayer prompts" *aligned with God's purposes*. We may not have perfect insights in the spiritual battles raging around us, but the Spirit has perfect knowledge to guide us.

I have established a habit of praying for all my Facebook friends on a regular, systematic basis. One early morning while on a walk, I asked the Spirit to guide me in how to pray for a friend. I sensed the Spirit directing me to pray for her relationship with her teenage daughter. I knew of no struggles or issues between them, but I prayed anyway. I later emailed her, telling her how I felt led to pray—and she responded in tearful amazement. A spiritual struggle was indeed going on, and that prayer echoed the cry of her heart exactly.

Several months later, she phoned to say that God had answered those prayers in a profound and restoring way.

### 2. Stay alert in prayer for one another.

When Jesus asked the three disciples to stay awake and watch with Him in the hours before His death, Peter, James, and John discovered that good intentions to stay alert on behalf of their friend were not enough. Jesus returned to them three times, and three times He found them in a sleepy stupor.

He warned them to step up their prayer efforts: "Keep alert and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you. For though the spirit is willing enough, the body is weak" (Mark 14:38, NLT).



We cannot take anything for granted regarding the spiritual lives of our fellow believers. When we are tired, overwhelmed, or just plain careless in our prayers lives, we may open a door for Satan to slip in to tempt us—or our brothers and sisters—toward destruction. So stay awake and alert at all times in prayer for the saints—because one quick “nod off” may be all Satan needs to move swiftly.

**3. Stay persistent in prayer for one another.** As long as we remain here on this earth, engaged with demonic and subtle evil forces surrounding us, there is no safe moment to let up on our prayers.

My mom is one of the most persistent pray-ers I know. She has various lists of people she prays for, and her prayer schedule is multilayered. She prays for some people daily. Others on a certain day of the week. Still others one day a

month. If you get on her prayer list, you don’t get off until God has answered her prayer or dramatically changed your life. She is always alert and ever persistent in her prayers for fellow believers. I’m thankful that includes me!

**4. Pray toward the future faith of one another.** Imagine being Peter and knowing that Jesus was continuously praying for you, always encouraging you, and that He had the insights of heaven to pray specific prayers that framed your destiny. That must have been a comfort to Peter, that is, until Jesus warned him that Satan had asked to sift Peter like wheat—and that it was going to be painful.

Yet Jesus prayed toward Peter’s future despite Satan’s plan. Jesus assured him, “I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:31–32).

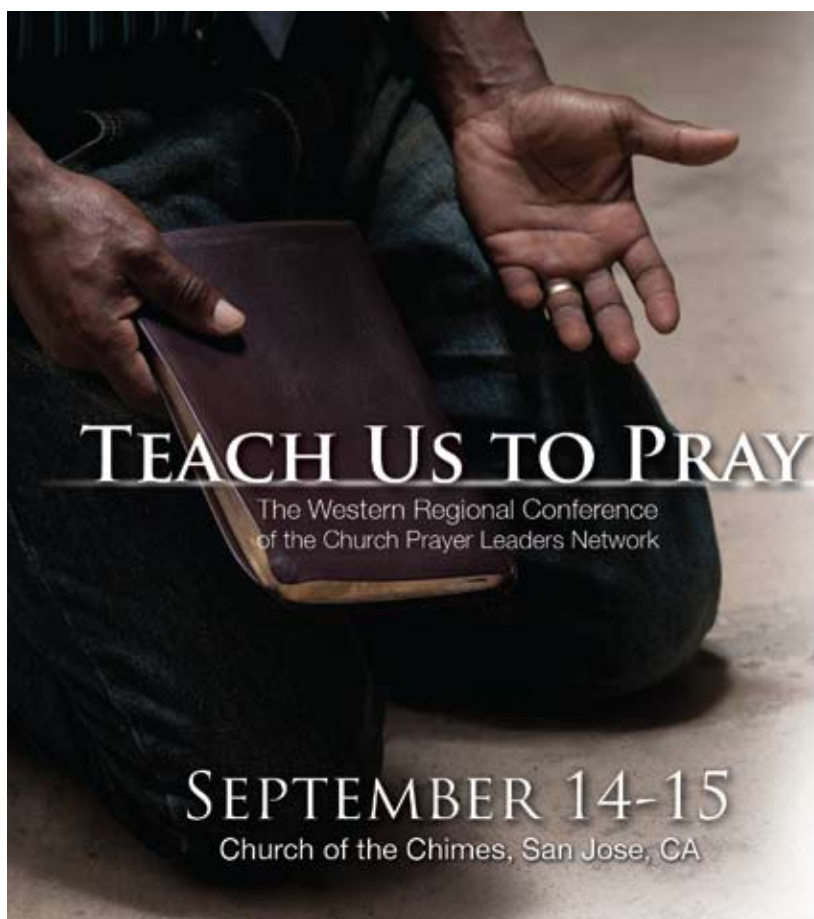
Of course, God answered that prayer powerfully following Peter’s denial of Christ and subsequent repentance, and it culminated in significant ministry.

It’s possible that Satan has asked to sift each of us. We live in such a dark and tempting world that we are just one poor decision away from personal devastation.

Recognizing that our children, spouse, or friends might at any time succumb to the sifting of Satan, we need to pray toward their future. Regardless of the potential sin or failure, we can be *praying in advance* that our loved ones will not fall away from the faith but will eventually repent and experience the good future God has planned for them.

## Battling Together

Paul pleads for his beloved friends to pray for him, but first he asks that they



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pray for *all believers everywhere*. If you are a follower of Christ who is committed to the advancement of the Kingdom of God—and you live in this fallen world ruled by evil principalities and powers—you can expect trials and opposition. In fact, Peter wonders why we are surprised when opposition rises against us (1 Peter 4:12).

But Peter also reminds us that fellow believers around the world experience extraordinary suffering and persecution for the sake of Christ (1 Peter 5:9). We have the opportunity to pray for friends we may never meet on earth.

British journalist Dan Wooding describes the plight of Alexander Ogorodnikov, a Christian dissident who spent many years in the Gulag. After five years of imprisonment, he wrote to Mikhail Gorbachev and asked if he could be executed by a firing squad. During his long, hopeless years in prison, he had not

received one visit or even a letter from a Christian.

Wooding heard of this fellow believer's anguish and organized a letter-writing campaign, urging Christians around the world to pray for Alexander and send messages of hope.

Although Alexander was never allowed to read the letters, his guards took him into a room to see sacks of mail addressed to him. He was overwhelmed to realize that people really did care about him.

From that point on, he felt the prayers of God's people. When the guards placed him in a punishment cell, hoping he would freeze to death, Alexander would suddenly feel God's arms wrap around him, warming him. He sensed God was waking people up at that moment to pray for him night after night.

Eventually Alexander was released. And he testified that he knew unknown

friends around the world were faithful to pray for him.<sup>1</sup>

## We Need Each Other

If you are a follower of Christ, Satan has targeted you for destruction, discouragement, and despair. That's the reality of spiritual warfare. In this evil world, we desperately need God—and we most certainly need each other.

Let's keep on praying always for all the saints. And let your fellow believers know "you've got their backs." **PC**

<sup>1</sup> Assist News Service, May 20, 2012, "One Down, Two More to Go" ([assistnews.net](http://assistnews.net)).



**CAROL MADISON** is the editor of *Prayer Connect* magazine and the communications director for Prayer First/Converge Worldwide.

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# *Wrestling Against the Powers of This Dark World*

## A Bible Study

By Sandra Higley

*Note: This Bible study is formatted for small group discussion. If you use this study by yourself, we suggest that you journal your answers to the discussion questions. Also, please use suggested translations where indicated. Biblegateway.com is an excellent source for looking up passages in translations you may not have on hand.*

**A**s I write this, I've been evacuated from my home in a beautiful residential area near Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, CO. You may have seen the national coverage and dramatic footage of the firestorm that swept through our neighborhoods in June 2012. Although the mandatory evacuation areas are expanding at the time of this writing, our home still stands. We are hopeful.

I mention this because these events were the catalyst for the time of spiritual warfare prayer initiated by a dear brother in Christ early this morning. He recognized that our struggles are “not against flesh and blood, but against rulers . . . authorities . . . powers of this dark world and

. . . spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12). With the authority given him as a child of the Most High God, this brother did battle in prayer on behalf of those threatened by the fire.

Some may doubt the ability of Satan to have any power over a believer. To them, “greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4, KJV) means there is no need to do battle: Christ won the victory, end of story. But the truth of “greater is He that is in you” and “Jesus won the victory” does not preclude the need to fight. Christ appropriated the right to fight and the weapons by which we win—but the enemy will take any ground we give him through disengagement.



## Discussion Questions

Read Ephesians 6:10–18. What action words in this passage indicate that the battle is continuous for the believer?

Dave Butts is “convinced that the key to spiritual victory is an awareness of the warfare that rages around us—and sometimes in us.” He identifies four major areas of attack: *doubt*, *deception*, *discouragement*, and *division*. Break into small groups of 2–4 people, assigning each a portion of the following passages. Analyze and discuss which of those four categories the attacks mentioned in these verses fall into, taking note that a single attack may fit in multiple categories at the same time: Gen. 2:17; 3:1–5; 1 Chron. 21:1–7; Job 1:16, 19; 2:7; Zech. 3:1–2; Matt. 12:22, 24–25; 13:19; 16:21–23; Luke 13:11; 22:31–32; Acts 5:3; 16:16; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 2:10–11; 4:4; 11:3, 14; 12:7; Eph. 4:26–27; 1 Thess. 2:18; 1 Tim. 3:7; 4:1; 2 Tim. 2:26; James 3:15–16; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 2:15–16; 5:19. Afterward, reassemble as a large group and share your findings.

Carol Madison’s call to “watch each other’s backs” through persistent prayer is both a defensive and offensive battle posture. We are called to pray first (1 Tim. 2:1) and always (Eph. 6:18). Discuss ways you see prayer and its counterpart—praise—as battle tactics found in the following passages: 2 Chron. 20; Job 42:10 (KJV); Ps. 8:2; Isa. 54:16–17; Mark 9:17–29 (KJV); Rom. 12:14; Eph. 6:18–20.

Legal ground and the authority of the believer are the two solid foundations that support the ministry of spiritual warfare, according to Marcus Warner. Satan needs legal permission to attack—permission granted by request or our wrong choices. Discuss where you find evidence of this truth in the following verses: Deut. 7:25–26; Job 1:7, 9–12; 2:2–6; Matt. 6:12–15;

7:1–2; Luke 22:31; Eph. 4:26–27; James 3:3–12, 14–18; 1 Peter 5:8; Rev. 13:7.

Discuss ways the following verses show the authority of the believer to do battle against the evil one: Matt. 16:19; Eph. 1:17–23; 2:4–7; 3:10–11; 6:10–18; 2 Cor. 10:3–5; Mark 9:17–29; Luke 10:18–20; Rev. 12:10–11.

God intends for His children to use the authority they have been given. What types of things do you think constitute *exploits* or *greater things* as mentioned in Daniel 11:32 (KJV) and John 14:12–14?

## Action Steps

Unless you know who you are in Christ, you will not step out in courage to face the battle that rages around you. Remember: Christ is the Head, you are His Body, and the enemy is under your feet!

As you look up the following references and note your position in each, ask the Holy Spirit to use these assurances to build up your courage: Joel 2:12–32; John 8:31–36; Rom. 8:1, 15, 35–39; 1 Cor. 2:16; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; 2:4–6; 6:10; Col. 1:13; 2:12; 2 Tim. 1:7; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 4:18; Rev. 21:7.

There are so many benefits to your position in Christ. Recount them daily—or hourly if needed—and thank God for them! **PC**

*Epilogue: We are back safely in our home that was untouched by the fire or smoke damage. Praise God! Our hearts go out to those who lost so much. Two lives and 346 homes were lost in the fire at the date of this writing, making it the most devastating fire in Colorado history.*

**SANDRA HIGLEY** is the author of *A Year of Prayer Events for Your Church*, a book designed to enhance corporate prayer experiences (available at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org)). She is a regular contributor to *Prayer Connect*.



# WHEN JESUS IS ALL YOU HAVE

By Gordon Meier

## A Church without a Plan—and Only a Prayer

“You know that Bible you got for me?” a man said to me recently. “I read it already. Do you have another one?” He thought maybe there was a sequel.

“There is just one Bible, George,” I said, “but what you need to do is read it again and again.” The spiritual hunger that George and scores of others have expressed is something I had never personally experienced until planting a church nearly three years ago.

My family history is filled with a long line of missionaries and pastors. I spent ten years in the pastorate before serving as church-planting director and later as a district superintendent in my denomination. And what happened in my last year as superintendent profoundly changed me.

## Lost Health with Spiritual Surgery

**A**fter many years of back problems, I had to have surgery because I was no longer able to walk. During the operation, I contracted a serious hospital-borne infection—one of the super bugs. Eighty percent of those who contract this infection don't leave the hospital alive, but I went home without knowing I had it.

My incision burst open, and the doctors did a second surgery to clean out the wound. They nicked the dura (the sheath covering the spinal cord), and the infection raged through my body.

After receiving massive doses of antibiotics, I was sent home. I spent several months in a bed in our family room, on IVs around the clock. I was extremely weak, had blurred vision and migraine headaches, and was in a lot of pain. Physicians told me that I would be unable to preach again. I was told to prepare for disability. In many ways, this was my dark night of the soul. But God did deep spiritual surgery.

My life had been defined by title and position—where I was serving and the success I was experiencing. But when I lost my health, suddenly title and position meant absolutely nothing. God peeled back the layers of my life like an onion. All I had was Jesus—and He became more precious to me than ever. Though I would never want to go through that experience again, I wouldn't trade it for the world.

When I finally returned to the office part time and in a weakened condition, I was coming to the end of my tenure as superintendent and wondered what God had for me. Jonathan Schaeffer, pastor of Grace Church in Cleveland, OH, told me that his congregation was ready to plant a church about ten miles south of their location. As soon as he said that, something tugged my heart. I thought, *I would love to do that.*

"Honey," I asked my wife Barb, "what do you think about planting a

church in Brunswick?" At that time I still experienced physical difficulties from the infection.

"Well, that would be cool," she said, "but are you sure you can do it?"

"I sense this is what God wants me to do," I answered.

## Born Out of a Prayer Meeting

After my experience with Jesus and His Word during the worst part of my illness, I had a tremendous vision to be involved in something that could only be explained by God Himself. Up to that time, most of my success could be attributed to my education, experience, and gifts. I managed to do it well. God graciously allowed me to enjoy good ministry in a variety of settings for 30 years.

But years earlier, I heard the late Armin Gesswein explain that the early Church was born out of a prayer meeting. He reminded us that after Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples immediately went back to the upper room and waited on God—waited and worshiped as they prayed and sought the Lord (Acts 1:14). After ten days, the Holy Spirit fell on them at Pentecost. Three thousand people believed and were baptized in one day; within a few days there were 5,000 new followers. People were being healed, transformed, and changed by God's power. That's what I wanted to experience.

Over the years, I had collected more than a few books on church planting and church growth. I had shelves devoted to the mechanics of long-range planning and strategies to implement. I had DVDs and tape series, and I had been certified in everything related to "how to do it." But when I left the district office, all my books were packed in storage—except one. I had the profound awareness that all I needed was Jesus and His Word.

And so when we moved to Brunswick, I knew no one in the community. But I was convinced that prayer was the answer. We told a few people that we were starting a prayer meeting in our living room.

Barb and I didn't know how many people would come, but that first night ten people joined us. Those prayer meetings have never ended—only grown consistently.

Hope Church held its first service in the large auditorium at the high school performing arts center. God gave us our church name because our burden was to bring hope to the 36,000 residents in the community and 50,000 unchurched people in a five-mile radius. He wanted us to bring them this simple message: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13).

## God's Surprise Provision

**O**ur goal has not been to plant a church but to reach a city. And there is a big difference. If we only wanted to plant a church, we could pat ourselves on the back and say, "We did it." But we are far from done because of the many people who are still lost.

Six months after our first service, God miraculously provided us with a building—the bingo hall of a Ukrainian Orthodox Church. After the priest died, his wife (Orthodox priests are allowed to marry) tried to carry on, but when the economy crashed, the church's primary source of income (bingo) also declined. The entire property, including the onion-domed church, went into foreclosure.

During this time, Hope Church was still in the "prayer meeting in the living room" phase. We hadn't taken our first offering. We didn't have elders. We didn't have a board. But I looked at that 13,200-square-foot brick bingo hall and knew that God wanted me to pursue it. I went to our prayer meeting group and said, "Would you pray? I have no idea what God has in mind."

Earlier, I had communicated clearly that "the church is people. We're not going to have a building at Hope Church.



If we have to move multiple times, that's what we're going to do. We are not going to get strapped with a building."

Well, we prayed—and we ended up purchasing that building, which was listed in foreclosure at \$1.3 million, for \$800,000. After we purchased the bingo hall, we gutted it. The Lord miraculously provided \$250,000 to help us get the building ready. We never had a campaign or pledge cards. We didn't have a thermometer on the wall showing our giving. We never begged people for money. Every week at prayer meeting, we simply prayed.

Six months after our first service in the high school auditorium, we moved into our new building and held two services. Six months later we started Hope at Five, a Saturday night service that coincided with evening Mass, since our community is 50 percent Catholic. In that first Saturday night service, a family walked in that didn't know Christ. The next week they found the Lord and have been in church every week since.

### Who Are They Talking To?

The prayer meeting has been the centerpiece of our ministry. New believers have never heard that they are not supposed to like prayer meetings or that such services are for seasoned Christians. So we tell every new believer to come on Wednesday night, because that's when we really meet with God.

A woman who had never been to a Protestant church or a prayer meeting visited one night. When we broke into small groups, the two women in her prayer triplet asked her how they could pray for her.

"Who are they talking to?" she asked, looking around at the other groups.

"God," they answered. "God is here. God listens when we pray; God answers."

"I don't know God," the woman said. "Could someone explain the Bible to me? I bought one, but it might as well be in Russian or Chinese. I don't understand it."

My wife Barb went to her home the next day and shared the gospel. The

woman came to faith in Christ and is now being discipled.

### No Plan Beyond Asking the Lord

Nearly 200 people have come to faith in Christ since Hope Church started, and most are being discipled. On Easter Sunday 2012, we had almost 1,200 people in four services. God has continued to do amazing things, including physical healings, financial provisions, and spiritual deliverance.

These things have not happened because I'm strong; I'm weak. It's because the Lord is on the move in our community. We have no specific goals. We have no contemporary strategies. We have no long-range plans. We just pray that the Lord of the harvest will stretch forth His hand and bring hungry people to Himself. And every week, people drive past the building, stop, come in, and find Jesus. People visit our prayer meeting regularly, and we have many new

families every Sunday.

When God says that He wants us to ask, He means it. After 30 years of ministry and participating in multiple prayer summits, I've never seen God miraculously answer prayer like He has in the past three years. To see the Lord at work has been a tremendous blessing.

We don't have a lot of fancy programs at Hope Church, and we don't have it all together. We're just simple people who trust God, believing that "if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven" (Matt. 18:19). This has been the most exhilarating, stretching, humbling experience I've ever had. **PC**



**GORDON MEIER** is the senior pastor of Hope Church, Brunswick, OH, a church plant launched in 2009. He has also served in denominational leadership with the Christian & Missionary Alliance.

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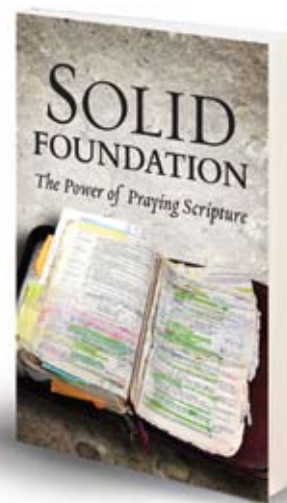
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# STAYING CONNECTED


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# Simple Prayers for an Abiding Relationship

# Lesson



**R**ecently I met with a pastor who shared that he had missed his customary morning prayer time with the Lord due to an unforeseen schedule conflict. He went on to tell me that this occurrence led him to question what it might be like for the people in his church when they, too, miss regular times of prayer. Would they struggle with feeling out of sync and slightly “off” for the day?

As we mulled this over, we explored what the Lord might have to say. Must we experience a “disconnect” with ourselves or a sense of things not being quite right just because we occasionally miss our usual prayer appointment with the Lord? How can we remain connected all the time?

## One Formula that Works

Whether or not we miss a set appointment with the Lord on any given day does not change the fact that Jesus came to live among us and to form a unique relationship with us. John 1:14 tells us, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” God did not simply send us a manual to live by. He sent us the living text in the form of His Son, Jesus Christ. By the very nature of His relationship with us, He has set the stage so that you and I can remain vitally connected to Him.

Relying on formulas can sometimes get us in trouble, but here is a promise from God’s Word that is simple, straightforward, and works without fail: If we abide in Christ, He abides in us (John 15:4, NASB). The Greek meaning for the word “abide” is to remain, to continue, to stay. Abiding has to do with the concept of *being* rather than *doing*, which is not an easy accomplishment for overscheduled people or task-driven Type-A personalities.

Let’s look a little more closely at what it means to abide:

*Definitions of “abide”:*

- To wait for, await
- To endure without yielding, withstand

BY GINNY KISLING

- To bear patiently, endure
- To remain in one place

*Synonyms (strict and slang) for “abide”:*

- To stay, dwell, remain
- To hang around, stick around
- Tarry

In Silicon Valley where I live, “hanging out,” “sticking around,” or “tarrying” without an agenda is almost unheard of. If one wants to survive and get ahead, multi-tasking is the name of the game in most sectors of the population. In fact, “tarrying without an agenda” is another name for “loitering,” and violators may be prosecuted to the full extent of the law!

## A Relationship Renewed

Abiding is about being in relationship with Christ, and the relationship is

more important than the things we do or don’t do. This truth was driven home to me earlier in my Christian life when the Lord took my family to live in Maui for 19 months. We had just come off an intensive time of ministry where our lives had been filled with doing many good things for the Lord, but I was on the verge of serious burnout from the intensity and non-stop ministry commitments.

When I first arrived in Maui, I immediately put into motion plans for getting involved in the work of the Lord. But something was very wrong. I began to enter a season of spiritual dryness such as I had never known before. It was as if I’d arrived in the wilderness instead of the place of peace and rest I associated with Maui. Accompanying this was a complete lack of energy that soon forced me to withdraw from everything I had signed up for.

This was a harsh adjustment for

me, and only when the swirl of activity ceased did I begin to understand that this dry season had its particular purpose—and that *where I was* would be vital to *where I was going*.

A shocking first revelation was that God, in removing me from ministry for a season, was removing *from* me a false sense of security—one based on ministry accomplishments. He hadn’t at all minded that I drew great satisfaction from my teaching, writing, and various other gifts and abilities, but He drew the line at seeing the shift to my trusting in these things as the source of my self-worth. He wanted to be the focal point, the centerpiece of my life. Thus He began to firmly root my security in Him.

I settled into life on Maui which, by most people’s standards, was enviable. I managed a small resort with the ocean right outside our door, and spending my days caring for the lovely grounds provided a much-needed tonic for my weary body, soul, and spirit. Long, leisurely walks on the beach and meeting people from around the world worked miracles of rejuvenation.

Without the external demands of ministry, I fell into a new rhythm with the Lord that was filled with a joyful flow of continuous communication. As long as I *abided* with Jesus and kept my eyes fixed on Him, my life on Maui was nurturing and healing. A new level of intimacy was developing with my Lord.

Even so, something happened regularly that was perplexing to me. At some point in my daily communications with the Lord, He would ask, “Am I enough?” Without hesitation I would reply, “Yes, Lord, You are enough.” This exchange became a daily ritual for us. Needless to say, I was puzzled.

One day, many months into my stay on Maui and when I was feeling stronger and more spiritually revived, I asked the Lord, “Why do You continue to ask, ‘Am I enough?’ Haven’t I answered that question to Your satisfaction?”

Surprisingly, He answered with yet

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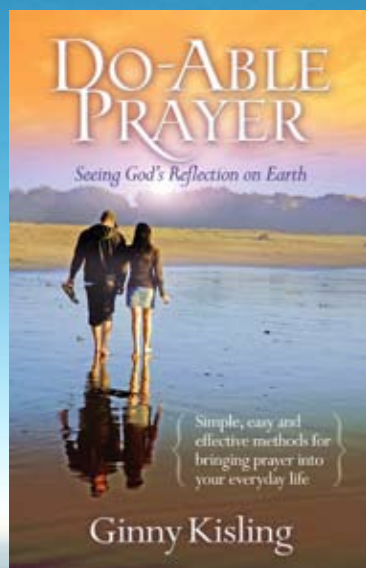
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another set of questions that revealed His longing for me to understand what it actually means that He is with me at every turn, in every situation in life.

“Ginny,” I heard, “am I enough for you if I do not return to you any of your former gifts, talents, and abilities? Am I enough for you if I do not return you home?”

“Am I enough,” He continued, “if I do not restore your friendships or your ministry?”

This time there was only silence on my part. I had no quick answer, but I finally understood the depth and meaning of His questions. I was to look deep within and ask myself, “Do I really believe He is sufficient for all my needs? He calls Himself the *I AM*. What does that mean to me?”

I knew He hoped my answer would be, “Lord, You are whatever I need at any point in my life, and I long to know and stay connected to You at a deep heart level. I want to experience more and more of how *enough* You are.” And that would eventually be how I answered Him.

## Do-Able Prayers for Abiding

During my times of meditation and contemplation on Maui, I learned to offer up very simple *do-able* prayers that helped keep me in the place of *abiding*. Frequent reading of His Word restored a “moisture” to my life, keeping me refreshed and encouraged. We are not to be peddlers of God’s Word, but people of sincerity who are commissioned by Him. And when we have found our place of *abiding* with Christ, the fragrance of Christ is spread by us, for we are to God the aroma of Christ and we carry the fragrance of life (2 Cor. 2:14–17).

Here are some do-able prayers that I offered up frequently during my stay on Maui.

- Lord, have mercy on me (Ps. 86:3).
- Lord, impart Your thoughts to me (1 Cor. 2:10, Isa. 55:8).
- Lord, help me to take every thought

captive to You (2 Cor. 10:5).

- Lord, test and examine my ways (Lam. 3:40, Jer. 17:10).
- Lord, make my desires Your desires (Ps. 37:4).
- Lord, help me to be faithful in small things (Luke 16:10).
- Lord, show me which way I should turn today (Isa. 30:21).
- Lord, keep me in Your dwelling place (Ps. 84:1).
- Lord, keep me on track today (Phil. 3:12–16).
- Lord, give me Your mind (1 Cor. 2:16).
- Lord, help me to set my mind on things above (Col. 3:2).
- Lord, help my speech to be gracious (Col. 4:6).
- Lord, keep me in Your shelter and give me Your rest (Ps. 91:1).
- Lord, more of You and less of me (John 3:30).

## Jesus, Our Ultimate Model

Jesus is our ultimate model for *abiding*. He was always in the place of abiding with His Father when He was on earth. At one point, when His anxious parents were looking for Him, He asked, “Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49). Truly, one can only be about God’s business if they are in a place of *abiding*.

At a recent Pastors’ Prayer Breakfast we broke into small groups to pray for one another. As I was praying for one of the pastors, the Lord brought to my mind’s eye an image of the Pool of Bethesda. You may recall this pool from John 5 and how it was renowned for its curative powers. As I continued to gaze into this mental image in prayer, I could see the pool located right next to the left arm of this pastor. In fact, the pastor was as close to the pool as he could possibly be without jumping right in. As I allowed the Lord to increase my understanding of this image, I could see the Holy Spirit busily stirring the waters

and welcoming the pastor in. I saw that the pastor’s right side was conducting his ministry work uninterrupted while at the same time his left side, which was barely touching the water, was receiving all the refreshment and benefit needed. There was no need for him to stop what he was doing for this to happen.

We can see in this vision a great present-day application for ourselves because of the intercession of Jesus. Did you know that He is interceding for us all the time? Yesterday, today and tomorrow? The prophet Isaiah referred to the Messiah’s intercession in Isaiah 53:12, and Jesus continues in intercession for each of us individually, stirring up the waters of our faith. He is speaking into the Father’s ear on our behalf around the clock. Yes, even now (Heb. 7:24–25, Rom. 8:34)!

## Step into the Stirring Waters

Just as the Holy Spirit was engaged in rousing the curative powers in Bethesda’s waters, Jesus is busy stirring up the waters of faith and life for us with His continuous intercession. And even as we go about our day-to-day responsibilities, we can enter into that miraculous place of *abiding* and receive the full benefits of the water of life He is moving for us right where we are!

Abiding in Christ is not about performance or what we can do for Him; it is about a relationship that we engage in on an ongoing basis. We can be in relationship with Jesus at all times, even in the hectic pace of a given day. Jesus is interceding for us 24/7, stirring up the waters of life and faith for us to step into in any given moment. When we *abide* in Christ, His fragrance emanates from our life to those around us. ☞



**GINNY KISLING** is the western regional director for the Church Prayer Leaders Network. She is available to speak in churches. Contact her at [ginny@harvestprayer.com](mailto:ginny@harvestprayer.com).

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# *The Power of Prayer*

## WAYS TO

WHEN OUR YOUNGEST SON WAS around four years old, he told me he didn't want to go out to breakfast with his grandma and me anymore. When I asked why, he said it was because the two of us always fight when we are out to eat. I was baffled by this explanation since I always made it my goal to try to avoid conflict with my mother. When I asked him to explain, he told me that we always argue just before leaving the

restaurant. I realized that he was referring to us each adamantly trying to pay the check!

I don't mind those kinds of conflicts. It's the real ones that have taken me so long to learn how to see through the love and light of Christ.

A former student of mine wanted to get together to catch up, but I was not able to find a convenient time toward the end of the school year. Then I had a significant deadline to meet



A close-up photograph of two hands, one from the left and one from the right, firmly grasping a thick, light-brown rope. The hands are positioned horizontally across the middle of the frame, with the rope running from the left edge to the right edge. The background is a mottled, greyish-green surface with a subtle texture. The lighting is soft, highlighting the skin tones and the texture of the rope.

# *in Redeeming Conflict*

## PRAY BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER

the following month, so I had to again delay a meeting with her. Soon I received a follow-up email from her, telling me how disappointed she was in me because I could not find a time to meet. I remember sitting in a frozen-like state as details of her disappointment unfolded before my eyes. My initial shock turned quickly to a mixture of defensiveness and guilt. But I prayed for the Holy Spirit to guide my reactions and response, and

then listened for a solution that was much more redemptive than simply trying to justify myself.

As much as we may desperately desire to live conflict-free, that's not possible this side of heaven. Conflict can make us emotionally and physically sick. It can ruin individual lives, families, communities, and even nations.

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By Mary Albert Darling

In all the plentiful, respected research out there on conflict management, one crucial piece of guidance is lacking: *What do we do when intense emotions come into play during our conflict?* All the advice on handling conflict can look good on paper, but what do we do when we are deeply hurt or angry? What do we do when we cannot even begin to see how we could feel differently about the situation and the person or persons involved?

I am thankful for what we can learn from the Bible regarding how to not only *manage* conflict, but also *redeem* conflict for the glory and Kingdom of God.

## *What the Bible Teaches about Conflict*

The Bible gives followers of Christ many guidelines for relating to each other. Jesus calls us to be models to the

rest of the world of what it looks like to love one another. That's especially important when it comes to how we deal with conflict. Jesus prayed, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:23).

To that end, there are more than 30 "one another" Scripture verses that specifically show us how to live in harmony. Here are a few:

- "Be kind and compassionate to one another" (Eph. 4:32).
- "Don't grumble against each other" (James 5:9).
- "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Rom. 12:18).
- "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Col. 3:13).

As followers of Christ, our calling in conflict is to redeem the conflict and preserve the relationship "as much as it depends on us." To redeem means to make something that has gone wrong, "right" again. So the question becomes, *In this particular conflict, what role can I play in "making things right" in the most God-honoring way?*

Ephesians 4:15 gives us the starting point: "Speaking the truth in love. . . ." That verse does not give license to speak truth whenever we want. Quite the contrary. We aren't to speak the truth unless we can speak it in love.

Scripture also gives us many examples of what love looks like. If we convert some of them to questions, they look like this:

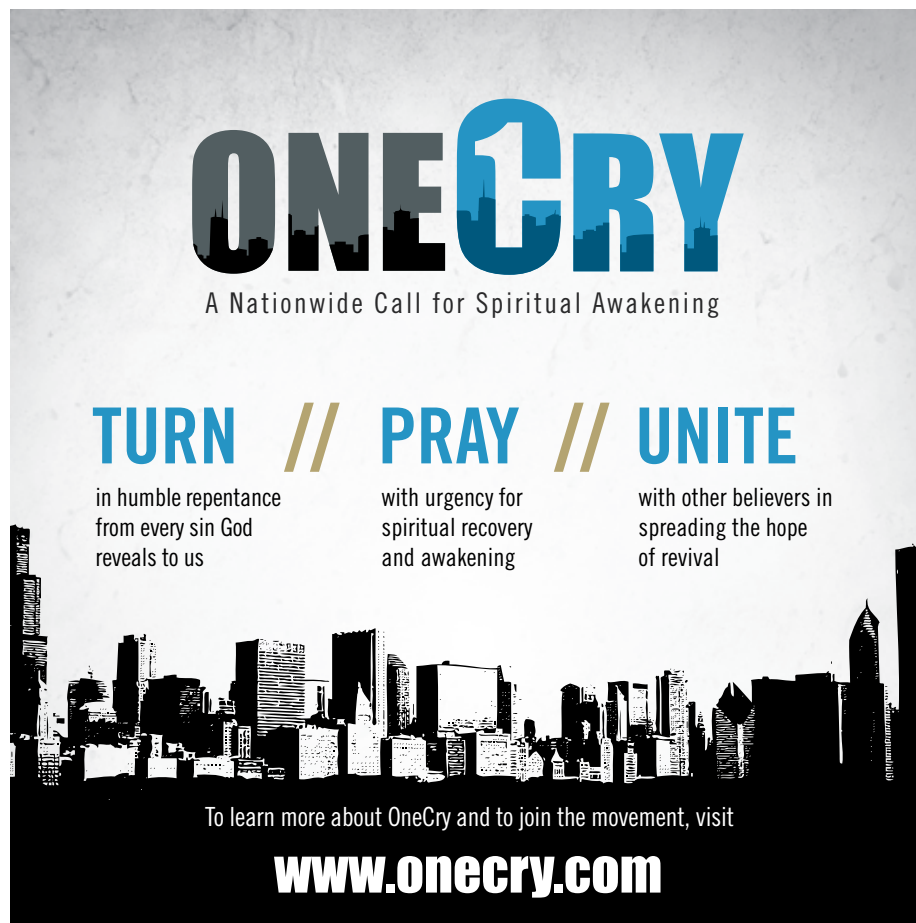
- Am I being patient and kind? (1 Cor. 13:4)
- Am I regarding another as better than myself? (Phil. 2:3)
- Am I caring about not only my interests, but also the interests of the other person? (Phil. 2:4)
- Am I being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry? (James 1:19)

Or we could ask them a different way, based on 1 Corinthians 13:4–5:

- Am I dishonoring someone in the way I'm handling the conflict?
- Am I seeking my own interests?
- Am I jealous? Am I keeping a record of wrongs?

If I am responding more in line with the second list of questions, then I need to wait before I speak because I won't be speaking out of love. Or maybe I am not to speak at all. When the Apostle Paul learned that some conflicts within the Corinthian church were leading to lawsuits, he said the lawsuits indicated the believers had already been defeated. Then came a question they likely didn't expect: "Why not rather be wronged?" (1 Cor. 6:7).

*Why not rather be wronged?*  
Really?



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Is it possible there are times I am not supposed to defend myself? And if I choose not to defend, is it possible not to build up resentment in the process? Yes! The good news is that it is possible. But not on our own. And that is actually good news, too.

## *Redeeming Conflict Is Possible*

One day a rich young man came to Jesus and asked what he might do to be saved. After the man told Jesus he had followed the Ten Commandments since he was a child, Jesus told him to sell all he had and give it to the poor. The man walked away sad because he was very rich. Jesus then told His disciples that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven.

Very troubled, they asked, “Who then can be saved?”

Jesus responded, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” (See Mark 10:17–27.)

The young man had walked away too soon. He walked away before entrusting his will and spirit to the *Holy Spirit* to do what was impossible *without* the Spirit. We need to believe the good news that with God *all* things are possible—even redeeming the most difficult of conflicts.

If you are in the midst of a conflict that seems impossible to handle, don’t walk away too soon, like the rich young ruler did. Instead, keep asking the Holy Spirit—or perhaps you need to keep pleading with the Spirit—to give you the strength and power to handle the conflict in the most redemptive way.

Strength will come if you keep asking. So will freedom that you never

imagined possible. That is the power of prayer in redeeming conflict.

When conflict arises, we can often miss the obvious—to *pray*. We can run ahead and forget that we have the power of the Spirit in us to make a difference in both how we feel about the conflict and how we handle it. We forget that the best thing we can do with a potentially divisive situation is take it to God in prayer.

## *Prayer Practices for Redeeming Conflict*

There are several specific ways we can pray before, during, and after conflict that can help us to redeem conflict. Here are some that can be particularly powerful:

- **Pray breath prayers.** A breath prayer is simple, but when emotions flare in conflict, we need to remind ourselves to pray this way. Take a

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of *Personal Prayer* and *Praying*  
*Like Paul*.

President of Church Prayer  
Leaders Network



long, deep breath and ask the Holy Spirit to help you to be "quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry." If you feel led to speak, then take another deep breath and pray for the Spirit to show you a way to say what you want to say that will lead to more harmony than division.

• **Pray for God's will.** If you ever wonder how to pray about anything, including conflict, the "Lord's Prayer" (Matt. 6:9–13) is a great place to start. Note, specifically, the way Jesus taught His disciples to pray "Your will be done." That is a crucial prayer during conflict. If you're not yet willing to pray that prayer—if you want *your* will, not God's—then ask the Holy Spirit for help in making what may seem impossible possible. Ask the Spirit to empower you with the transforming love of God. Only God's love can melt and mold our hearts to want what God wants, helping us find the *true* desires of our hearts.

• **Pray for the other person by name.** Another great step toward redeeming conflict is to pray for those we are in conflict with—by name. We ask the Holy Spirit to work in both of our hearts for the outcome that pleases God, not us. If we cannot pray for people we are in conflict with by name, then that is a good sign we may have some serious heart work to do. We may need to first pray for the Spirit to make us willing to pray for the person—or even make us willing to be willing.

• **Pray for forgiveness.** Also in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus demonstrates to His followers that we need to pray for forgiveness of sins in the same way we have forgiven those who sinned against us (Matt. 5:12). That means our sins are forgiven when we forgive others, and our sins are not forgiven if we do not forgive others. It is hard to forgive when we harbor resentment and anger toward others.

But forgiveness is necessary, not only to free the other person, but to free ourselves too.

• **Pray in stillness.** If you feel you cannot yet pray any of these prayers, then instead sit in silence with God. Be still. Wait on God. Let God's love wash over you and heal your soul. This is prayer too—silent communion, resting in the presence of the One who loves you most. Waiting in stillness before God is a powerful way to begin to redeem conflict.

Isaiah 40:31 tells us that those who "wait on the Lord shall renew their strength" (KJV). So be still and allow God's Spirit to renew your strength and give you all you need in order to do what may seem impossible.

On our own, it is impossible to handle conflict the way God desires us to. Committing to prayers like these can help us realize and remember that the power to redeem conflict comes from God's Spirit, not ours. *How we respond* becomes more important than the actual conflict. And when we yield to God's Spirit, He can free us to see and respond to conflict in ways we never believed possible.

If we can show the world what it looks like to approach conflict in redemptive ways, we will also hasten the day that God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:5–6). **PC**



**MARY ALBERT DARLING**

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## Refreshing for Missionaries and Leaders

**P**ayer First, the national prayer ministry team of the Converge Worldwide movement, makes it a practice to offer prayer appointments for missionaries on home assignment—most often during the denomination's biennial gathering in the summer. New missionary recruits who are awaiting approval by the conference are also offered the prayer opportunity.

"It's the highlight of our time as a prayer team while at the conference," says Bryan Moak, chairperson of Prayer First. "And our missionaries say over and over again that it is also a highlight for them."

The appointments are generally an hour and a half long to allow plenty of time for dialog and prayer. Those who sign up for the appointments know they will have significant time to simply talk about whatever is on their hearts or any struggles they may experience related to

ministry or family. They are assured of confidentiality, and the Prayer First team is trained to spend the majority of the time listening, taking notes, and encouraging the missionaries.

For the last half hour, team members pray according to what they heard, as well as how the Spirit leads.



appointment with your prayer team—perhaps in the afternoon after lunch. It might be best to have people on the prayer team who are not responsible for any decisions related to the financial support of the

missionary so that there is a freedom to share without concern about their relationship to the church.

The Prayer First team has also taken prayer journeys to visit mission fields for the sole purpose of offering the same prayer sessions for missionaries on the field. They take care to be as little of a burden as possible to the missionaries they are visiting.

In addition, the team takes a couple of days during the fall semester to offer prayer appointments to faculty members of Bethel University in St. Paul, MN.

### Missionaries in Your Church or on the Field

Although this is done on a national level and coordinated through the mission's leadership of Converge, it can also be adapted to bless missionaries who visit the local church. When missionaries are scheduled to come to your church, contact them ahead of time and offer an opportunity for a prayer

## Prayer-time Enhancers for Personal Worship

**I**n the midst of busy and stressful days, it can be difficult to incorporate an attitude of worship in your prayer times. The following suggestions are prayer-time enhancers that can encourage you to keep personal worship as a priority.

- Find a place away from the distractions and pressures of the day—even if it's just in the next room. The key is to find a place where you can be alone with God. "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Luke 5:16).
- Music works wonders. It soothes the soul, helps refocus thoughts, and




gives voice to the heart's deepest feelings. God gave us a wonderful gift when He gave us music. Give it back to Him. "How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and

fitting to praise him" (Ps. 147:1).

- Light a candle and watch your stress levels melt away. Thank God for the beauty of candlelight and for the calming effect it has on your spirit. "... he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. . ." (Ps. 23:2–3).

- Kneel before the Lord. As you consider who God is and as you grow in your love for Him, you'll feel compelled to bow before Him. Even if you can't stay on your knees the entire time you pray, kneeling helps you bow your heart before God. "Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker" (Ps. 95:6).
- Read a favorite psalm. Replace the worries of the day with the Word of God. Let God's own words usher you into His presence and renew your mind and spirit. "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. . ." (Ps. 19:7).



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- Look outside or go outdoors and praise God for the wonders of His creation. "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars, which you have set in place . . . O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Ps. 8:3, 9).



- Count your blessings and see how quickly a heart of gratitude crowds out the concerns of the day. Try thanking God for things you sometimes take for granted. "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks

to him and praise his name" (Ps. 100:4).

- Be quiet before God and meditate on who He is. This can be a challenge for many of us because we're accustomed to our lives moving at a fast pace. "Be still, and know that I am God. . ." (Ps. 46:10).

Praying is a wonderful gift and privilege. Treat it like a treasure.

**CHERYL BARKER** is a freelance writer from Coffeyville, KS.

## A Simple Twist on Praying Through Services

Many churches are trying to develop teams of intercessors who pray together during the worship service. Some may not realize this practice is not new. The most famous instance of this practice was at Charles Spurgeon's Metropolitan Temple in London during the mid to late 1800s. He had a room under his platform, and often had 100 or more intercessors crying out for the power of the Holy Spirit to flow during the service.

This is a practice that a lot of good prayer leaders and churches struggle to incorporate. It is not uncommon for churches to gather the pastor and worship participants for a short prayer time prior to the start of a service, but bathing an entire service in prayer is a difficult practice to launch. Why? Most believers do not understand why it is a good thing to do, making recruiting very difficult. Also, many believers have no concept of how to pray for an hour or more, so the thought of participating in such an

endeavor is too intimidating for them.

A number of churches I know have overcome these issues by making this practice simpler and shorter. Rather than have a team of three or more pray for an hour, they schedule the time for 15-20 minutes at the start of the service. They provide prayer guides and suggestions of what to cover during that time, making it easy for even the least mature intercessor. It is far easier to get people to participate because they can still attend most of the service and are not overwhelmed by how long they think they will have to pray.

This is helpful because it bridges the gap between "almost nothing" and a full-service prayer support. The shorter prayer time provides a non-threatening training ground for intercessors. If the prayer guides are loaded with Spirit-led topics, this condensed time can be very effective.

**JONATHAN GRAF** is the publisher of *Prayer Connect*.



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## Praying Around the World

God calls believers to be global Christians, and prayer is the foundational strategy for reaching the lost and the least among the nations. In previous issues we have featured several organizations that focus on prayer for the nations—organizations such as Operation World ([operationworld.org](http://operationworld.org)) and World Intercessors Network ([win1040.com](http://win1040.com)). Operation World gives detailed historical, geographical, and religious statistics—and includes the prayer needs of every nation on the earth. World Intercessors Network is especially helpful in praying for the 10/40 Window.

### Options for Specific Nations

Numerous other prayer websites focus on individual nations or regions of the world, providing excellent prayer points. You can do Internet searches of additional nations or continents to find areas of the world that God has placed upon your heart. Here is a sampling of other websites that can assist you in praying around the world:

### Praying Through the Arabian Peninsula: ([pray-ap.info](http://pray-ap.info))

This website offers videos, prayer guides, other resources, and specific ways to pray the news in each of the following nations: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

The organization has issued a call for Christians to pray October 24–27, 2012, regarding the Hajj (pilgrimage—one of the five pillars of the Islamic religion), which begins on the eighth day of Dhul Hijjah, the 12th month of the Islamic calendar. During this time, Muslims from around the world will flock to Mecca to perform Islamic rituals and

follow the steps of Muhammad, their prophet. The website ([pray-ap.info](http://pray-ap.info)) features a downloadable prayer guide to help you seek God on behalf of Muslims participating in this annual ritual.

### Pray for Saudi: ([pray4saudi.com](http://pray4saudi.com))

Pray4Saudi is a global prayer movement dedicated to seeing Saudi Arabia transformed by the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Their site says, “We believe the Lord is preparing to remove the long-standing strongholds that have kept Saudis from experiencing the love of God and His gift of salvation. We are also convinced that strategic prayer is the key to preparing for, initiating, and sustaining this move of God.” The website features excellent materials to assist you in focused prayer for the Saudi people. Be sure to click on the “Updates” section.

### Pray for Tunisia: ([pray4tunisia.com](http://pray4tunisia.com))

Tunisia is the smallest nation in Africa (about the size of Wisconsin). It is located partially on the Mediterranean Sea, sandwiched between Algeria and Libya. At [pray4tunisia.com](http://pray4tunisia.com) you will find videos (use the arrows to scroll between them) about the power of prayer and about the need for the gospel among the unreached people groups of the world (including Tunisia). These tools are helpful for missions teams, small groups, families, and entire churches, drawing hearts towards this Muslim nation.

Through this website you can subscribe to two free resources: *Pray4Tunisia* (daily, short, strategic prayer points for Tunisia) and *Revive Tunisia* (a weekly prayer newsletter).



### Gospel for Asia: ([gfa.org/prayer](http://gfa.org/prayer))

Gospel for Asia is a ministry founded on, committed to, and sustained by the power of prayer. Through this site you can lift up the people of South Asia and receive emergency prayer requests and praise reports. This website also offers free PDF downloads, including guidelines for effective prayer meetings. Approximately once a month you can join a live-streamed prayer meeting focused on the people and issues of Asia.

### Pray for Europe: ([prayeurope.com](http://prayeurope.com))

This site was first launched in 2008 as a partnership between Momentum Europe ([momentumeurope.org](http://momentumeurope.org)) and Global Media Outreach ([globalmediaoutreach.com](http://globalmediaoutreach.com)). This very interactive website is poised to engage millions of believers around the world in “focused, diligent, revival-type prayers” for the 47 countries of Europe and Russia.

You are invited to walk through the different sections, starting with the Home page with a list of countries, maps, and links to special projects God has raised up. The Interaction page offers a blog-type venue for you to become involved—forming prayer groups and sharing prayer requests for Europe. **PC**

## What's Not to Like?



Here are some prayer pages on Facebook we encourage you to “Like.” (Add [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) before the / on each address.)

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### Harvest Prayer Ministries

[/harvestprayer](https://www.facebook.com/harvestprayer)

### OneCry

[/theOneCry](https://www.facebook.com/theOneCry)

### 40 Days of Prayer for the Election

[/prayforelection](https://www.facebook.com/prayforelection)

## Men at Prayer: Not an Oxymoron | By Mark S. Mirza

A friend of mine recently described a typical men's prayer gathering as food and fellowship for 30 minutes, a ten-minute devotional, 15 minutes to gather prayer requests, and then a closing prayer by one person.

If that is your perception, you're not alone. But I think you'll be pleasantly surprised to learn there is hope in mobilizing the men in your church toward greater—and even enjoyable—prayer!

You see, getting men together the first time, even the second and third times, isn't the problem. Just offer breakfast and assure them of the maximum time commitment. They'll show up, at least a few times anyway. The real challenge is keeping their interest. What kinds of things hinder a sustained commitment to praying together? Here are three factors to address in your planning:

### 1. Fear

Many men fear praying aloud! Pastors often tell me that unless they have heard a man pray in front of others, they always speak to a man privately about his comfort level in leading in public prayer.

The first time my friend Carrey [names changed] went to a men's prayer group, he was scared to death. He had never prayed out loud. So the first few times he attended, he didn't pray at all. When he finally did, his prayers were short. But because there were several men in his group, he didn't feel pressure about the length or quality of his prayer. Carrey eventually became a leader in this group.

### 2. Prayer idolatry

Most wives know some of the idols their husbands have—sports, jobs, their yards.

But it's also possible to make *prayer* an idol if humility is not the focus.

Gary always looked up to and even idolized men with money. When he started participating in prayer with other men, he began to see that these men had something he also wanted—a prayer relationship with God! Interestingly, Gary's predisposition to idolizing transferred to his desire to have a strong prayer life.

With help from his Bible study friends, he has learned the difference between prayer idolatry and an unconditional love relationship with his Lord in prayer. Gary is now on the phone every week with men—both leading them in prayer and simply praying with them.

### 3. Lack of loving relationships

One particular shortcoming of the typical men's prayer gathering is the lack of relationship-building. And one benefit of a commitment to pray together regularly that always catches me off guard is the love factor! I'm greatly encouraged when I see men crying with one another over issues in their lives—and hugging each other after doing battle in prayer.

Two older men friends of mine, both in their 70s, have the exact same reaction every time I see them. Tears form in their eyes, and we don't say anything until we hug each other. Then we simply say, "I miss you, man!"

On the other end of the age spectrum, Henry, a young father, has become a special friend to me although I only see him a few times a year. Recently he walked up to me with his four-year-old daughter in hand. He turned and introduced her. "This is Mr. Mark," Henry said. "He prays for Daddy every week."

You see, four years ago, when his first child was born, I stood him in front

of all the men and promised to pray for him, once a week, for the rest of my life. I then challenged him to commit to lifting up his child's name to the Lord, out loud, for her to hear every night as she lay in her bed.

Coming together to pray—in relationship—has a wonderful magnetism that keeps drawing men back.

### The Essential Ingredient

So how can we structure a prayer gathering with the essential ingredient of relationship? Here is a recipe to help you get there.

1. Start your prayer meeting with breakfast, music, and a short devotional—all lasting about an hour.
2. Split into groups (no smaller than three or four) to pray. Let the groups form organically. Don't force them.
3. Pass out a list of things to pray for related to the needs of the church, such as pastor(s), staff, ministries, and missionaries. Avoid requests unrelated to the men or ministry.
4. Use a bell or soft music to tell the men when their small-group time is over—and encourage them to pray until they hear the closing signal.

If you work hard to keep a men's group organized, nonthreatening, and focused on relationship, you can keep men coming back again and again to pray together! ☑



**MARK MIRZA** led the men's prayer ministry for Dr. Charles Stanley at First Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA. He started Common Thread Ministries to help churches and individuals with prayer. He is willing to coach men in starting prayer groups ([ctmprayer.org](http://ctmprayer.org)).





## No More Ordinary Christians | By Andrew Murray

**C**hristians need reviving to bring them back to their first love and the healthy growth of the spiritual life. When the church is not living in full wholehearted devotion to Christ and His service, is not walking in the joy of the Lord and separation from the world—we need to pray that God’s people may truly be revived and have the life of God in power restored to them.

### Intensely Devoted to Christ

What the world needs above everything is not more men and women of the ordinary type of Christians. We need Christians who are stronger in faith and holier in life, intensely devoted to Christ and His service, and ready to sacrifice all for the salvation of souls.

When God’s Spirit is poured out upon the church—and men and women, who are now struggling in feebleness, are clothed with the garments of praise and the power of the Spirit—the world will soon share the blessing. These revived believers will be ready to give themselves to God’s work; their word and witness will be in power. And the world will, in the burning fervor of the messengers of a quickened church, share in the blessing.

### Nothing Less than a Revolution

To do its work the church has the promise of the power of the Holy Spirit of God. That Spirit is given to every believer to be—within him—the power of a divine and holy life. He equips the person to boldly testify about God’s power and to communicate to others what has happened in his own life. Without the power of the Holy Spirit fully recognized and experienced, the church cannot know or fulfill its calling.

A true revival means nothing less

than a revolution, casting out the spirit of worldliness and selfishness and making God and His love triumph in the heart and life. As every birth has its travails and its pangs, so this entrance of a new divine life in power into a church must be preceded and accompanied by the pains of conviction and confession, by the earnest searchings of heart in which sin is discovered, is held up to shame, and condemned.

In such a work of grace many will learn how little truth or power there has been either in their conversion or their spiritual life. They will see things that they tolerated to be vile sin that nothing but the blood of Christ can wash away and the power of Christ can overcome.

### A Solemn Responsibility of Believers

On those who believe that a revival is needed and is possible, rests the solemn responsibility of preparing the way of the Lord. We ask Him to open our own eyes and hearts, and those of our church, to what He thinks and says of the spiritual life He finds.

We confess our own sin and the sin of our brethren. We give ourselves to stand in the gap, to take hold of God’s strength. We ask the Spirit to give us the consciousness of being intercessors, who in tender love, and yet in holy zeal and

truth, speak to God about the state in which His church is.


As one here and another there begins to see what God’s will really is concerning His church, the cause of her failure, and the path of restoration—his prayer will become more urgent and believing, and the blessing will come.

### A Revived Church: Hope of a Dying World

All this must lead to the assured faith that a revived church is a possibility, a promise, and a certainty. Yes, God is able!

It needs but an act of His will and His Holy Spirit; the mighty power of God working in His church can give new life to all who long to receive Him. He can give the joy of the Holy Spirit, first in single churches and then in larger bodies. He can awaken His people, as out of sleep, to see, consent, and rejoice that they are indeed the hope of a dying world.

And God is ready! As the sun pours its light and warmth on every tiny flower to give it growth and beauty, God’s love is waiting and longing to pour itself into hearts that reach out after Him. Sometimes it may appear as if He waits long and delays His coming. But let us be sure of this: He does not wait one moment longer than is needful.

We may depend upon it, with the utmost confidence, that if His children unite in praying for a revived church as the only hope of a dying world, He will hear the prayer. 

**Andrew Murray** (1828–1917), was a pastor and prolific writer on prayer and the deeper life. He was a champion of the South African revival of 1860. This article is excerpted from his book *Revival*.



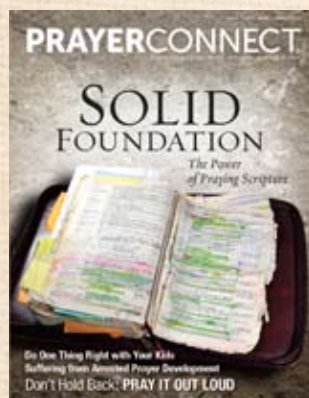
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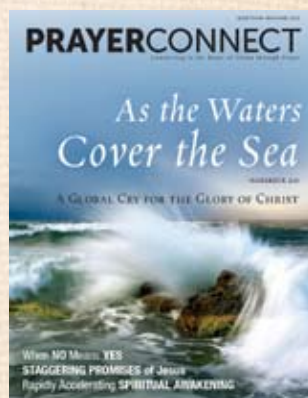
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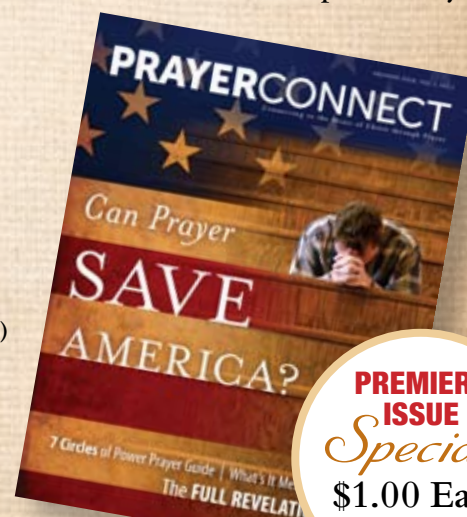
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