

BUILDING MY HOUSE OF PRAYER



Desiring Intimacy
With the Lord

"Come near to God and He will come near to you."

James 4:8

Building My House of Prayer

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To You: for taking the time in allowing me to share my heart with you.

Jesus said in Matthew 21:13, **“My house shall be called a house of prayer.”** This verse is a beautiful reminder to the church of the importance of prayer. Another aspect to consider is that your body is the temple of God according to I Corinthians 3:16, **“Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”** Therefore, consider that you have also personally been called to be a house of prayer.

Just as Jesus sometimes used word pictures to teach about spiritual subjects, I would like to use a home as a word picture to share about different aspects of prayer. A home is important to us and we desire for our home to be a refuge, a place of rest, of comfort and even a place of fellowship. It takes work and dedication to build a home, just as it will also take time and effort to build your house of prayer.

Most of us do not live in homes as large as the one described in this material, that is not important. The illustration is only meant to give you a picture of prayer. This is not a formula you have to use every day but ideas to help you grow in prayer.

I hope this material will be an encouragement to you as you learn the importance of living in fellowship with the Lord, and as you build your own personal house of prayer. Each one of us has a house of prayer that is available to us. Some people spend more time at home than others or move through the rooms of prayer differently. No matter how your house operates, may it be your desire to learn how to build a strong life of prayer and to have an intimate relationship with your Heavenly Father.

Blessings,

Terry Gooding



The Gate

Symbolic of Salvation

As we use a house as a picture of prayer there is a gate to open in order to walk up to the entrance of this home. In your life of prayer, you must also enter through a gate to have fellowship with our Lord. Jesus gave us a picture of himself as a gate in John 10:9, **'I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.'** This scripture tells us that it is through the life of Jesus Christ and knowing Him as the Son of God that we have access to prayer and the kingdom of God. Each one of us must begin at the gate.

To have a life of prayer is to first know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. This is the first step for any person. The Bible tells us Jesus said in John 14:6, **"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."** Jesus is the only means of knowing your Heavenly Father. If you are not sure what it means to know Jesus as your Savior, please turn to page 61 for more information.

At the gate, we have access to God and entrance into His kingdom. Although we cannot at this time live physically in this heavenly kingdom with our Lord, we are a part of it through prayer. Jesus, because of His life He gave on the cross, has made this relationship to our Heavenly Father possible. You have the assurance of knowing not only that you have access to God, but also that you are in His loving care. We find in Isaiah 40:11, **"He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to**

his heart.” Do you desire to know the heart of your Lord, to live a life of closeness and intimacy with your Heavenly Father? This relationship is possible for each child of God. The above scripture makes it very clear that the Lord keeps each one of His children close to His heart.

We all have a desire to be loved and need a deeper understanding of the Lord’s love. Most of us have head knowledge of the Father’s love because of what the Word tells us. We also need heart knowledge of this love, a penetrating sense in our whole being that we are loved. One of the purposes of prayer is to work on getting the knowledge of this love from our head to our heart. This will become a great strength in your life because when it becomes heart knowledge you can stand in the midst of any trial, devastation, or circumstance and still have a sense of love from the Father.

Did you notice in the “gate” scripture from John 10:9 that not only is salvation offered but the invitation to find pasture? A pasture is a field to feed on, therefore; in a spiritual sense, Christ is the nourishment of believers so you must “feed” upon Jesus and the Word of God for your spiritual growth. You need to draw your spiritual and emotional sustenance from the Lord. Let your prayer be, “Lord teach me how to be nourished spiritually by You.”

As you walk through the gate you have the assurance of knowing that you may approach the throne of God because of Jesus. If you have accepted Him as your Lord and Savior, scripture tells us in Hebrews 4:16, **“Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.”** Go into the presence of your Father with confidence and a loving, trusting heart.

Lord, give me heart knowledge of You.





The Courtyard

A Growing Life of Prayer

In this courtyard there is a beautiful garden; a place where flowers are growing and there are shade trees and green grass. It is a place of freshness and newness. Time spent here brings a sense of peace and contentment. This is a picture to remind us that our prayer time should be one that is growing and has life.

The beautiful plants that are blooming in this courtyard need sunshine, water and the attention of someone to care for them. Your prayer life also needs daily attention and a commitment that this will be an area of your life that will continue to grow as long as you live. You also need to be nourished by the "rays of love" from Jesus the Son and to be watered by the Holy Spirit to avoid your prayer garden becoming like a desert. I live in a desert area and know how quickly plants will dry up if they do not get water on a regular basis, just as an occasional quiet time creates a dry prayer life.

Your life is a reflection of the time you spend with your Heavenly Father. The Lord has gentle ways of reminding me when I am not spending enough time in prayer. When I have neglected my prayer time it seems to show on my face. I become a walking sign that says, "Worry, anger, hurt and fear." Friends will ask if I am not feeling well, and maybe my honest answer should be, "I have not been in the presence of the Lord today."

Just as no one would ever step out their front door without first putting on their clothes, we should have the same attitude and

diligence to clothe our lives in prayer. Do you need to make a commitment to be more obedient with your prayer life? How much time do you spend in prayer on a daily basis?

When Jesus gave himself for us; the scripture refers to His act of obedience as "a fragrant aroma" in Ephesians 5:2, "**and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.**" This is a good scripture to meditate on to remind you of the sacrifice Jesus made for you. What in your life can you sacrifice or change to make more time for prayer?

The devoted life of Jesus is the example we should model our lives after. Be faithful in your daily time with the Lord and be encouraged that your prayers are a fragrant aroma before the throne of the Father. Have you ever really considered how much the Lord enjoys you and the times you share together?

If prayer has become a burden or has become boring, then you need to ask the Lord for a new freshness to fill your times together. Using the example of your prayer life being like a garden, what is missing?

Sunshine – am I making time to experience
Christ's love?

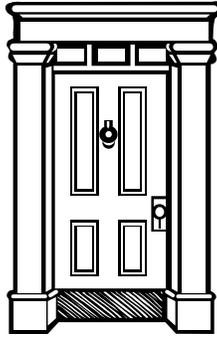
Water – am I opening my heart to the presence
of the Holy Spirit?

Attention – am I committed to a regular time
of prayer?

Spend time here in the courtyard asking the Lord to bring new growth into your life and a new desire for prayer and intimacy.

Lord, help me to have a growing life of prayer.





The Front Door

Knocking to Enter into the Presence of the Lord

When someone comes to your home to visit, they first knock on the door so they can be admitted. There is a sense of anticipation as you wait to open the door and prepare for a time of sharing with friends and loved ones. It is good to also approach your time of prayer with a sense of anticipation. "What will the Lord share with me today?"

We find in John 10:7, "**Jesus therefore said to them again, truly, truly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.**" You have access to the Father because Jesus Christ is the door through which you may enter to have fellowship with God.

As you enter through the front door, close the door and begin your time of prayer with the Lord. We are told in Matthew 6:6, "**But when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in secret.**" Shut your door to the world, because now is the time for that fellowship which your heart so longs for. It is important in your spiritual life to develop a consistent time of private and secluded prayer and a good practice to have is to pray as you go throughout your day but scripture places great importance on having times of prayer in a private place.

Has your appetite for prayer decreased or never held a place of importance in your life? Confess that maybe you have allowed so many other concerns to fill your heart that your desire for

the Lord's presence has diminished. Ask the Lord to give you more of a desire for His presence and to know Him.

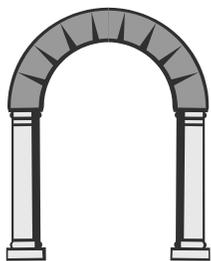
Not only do we stand at the door and knock but we find in Revelation 3:20 that Jesus tells us, **"I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me."** Jesus calls you to fellowship because He desires to have time alone with you. He wants to be with you and spend time with you. What are you missing when you ignore the "knock on the door of your heart?" Do you make yourself available for prayer, day or night?

There will be times when you sense the Lord calling you to prayer and spending more time with Him. Have you ever found yourself awake at 3:00 a.m. and could not go back to sleep? Consider the possibility this might be a call from the Lord to get up and spend time together. Of course your first thought will probably be that you need your sleep for the next day or it's too cold to get up. Trust if the Father is calling you to "come away" for a short time together then He will take care of the sleep you miss. This early morning call might be happening because the Lord wants to share with you, or it might be because you are not having a regular quiet time during the day. I have experienced some wonderful times with the Lord in those early morning hours. There have also been times when I sensed the Lord calling, and I fell back asleep. I wonder what I have missed when I was not faithful to get out of bed?

A call for prayer may come at other times, maybe even during the drive home from work. Turn off the radio and let your mind rest. Give the Lord an opportunity to speak to you or spend time sharing with Him your concerns about the day. Remember that you have permission to be in the presence of the Lord because of Jesus Christ, so take advantage of the privilege you have been given in prayer.

Lord, teach me to be faithful in my time with you.





The Door Post

The Cleansing Blood of Jesus

When you walk through a front door you walk under a doorpost or a doorframe. Let this be a picture or a reminder of the cleansing blood of Jesus. We have an example in the Old Testament of how God used blood to protect the children of Israel in Exodus 12:7, **“They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two door posts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat.”** The Lord was bringing judgment on the land of Egypt and the children of Israel were instructed to take a lamb and offer it as a sacrifice. The blood of the lamb was then placed on the doorpost or lintel (a crosspiece over a door or window) as an act of obedience and was a sign to the Lord so that He would pass over that home and the plague would not touch that household. This was a form of protection from the judgment that passed over the land.

The Old Testament law required the sacrifice and shedding of an animal’s blood to obtain forgiveness for sin. We no longer have to offer a sacrifice or shed the blood of an animal to receive forgiveness because Ephesians 1:7 tells us the blood of Christ will cleanse us from sin, **“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace.”** The blood of Jesus is the only sacrifice that will forgive your sins in the eyes of the Father. Learning to understand the significance of the blood of Jesus will change many aspects of your life. Let’s look at just a few of those areas.

Understanding the significance of the blood of Jesus will change your view of God. When you come to the place of truly knowing and receiving Christ's forgiveness for your sins, your understanding of God's love will humble you and deepen your love in return. We see this in scripture when Jesus went to have dinner in the home of Simon who was a Pharisee.

While enjoying his dinner, a woman entered the home with a bottle of expensive perfume. This woman, whose life was known to be a sinful one, knelt at the feet of Jesus and began to cry. She cried so much that His feet became wet with her tears and then she kissed the feet of Jesus, dried them with her hair and anointed his feet with her perfume.

This woman was not concerned about how she might look in such a humble position as she kissed the feet of her Lord. She only wanted to express her love to Jesus for the forgiveness she had found in Him. Simon could not understand why Jesus would allow such a sinful woman to touch him and Jesus replied in Luke 7:47, **"her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much."** What an amazing glimpse into the heart of a woman whose life had been a mess but was now forgiven and cleansed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Her love for Him was so great that she was not afraid to express it in public or even afraid to approach Him and kiss His feet.

Christ's forgiveness gave her an understanding about the nature of God that many around her did not comprehend. Even though her past life had been so mixed-up, she knew how much she was loved and was not afraid to come into the presence of her Lord. Let the example of this woman minister to your heart and ask the Father to help you receive His forgiveness and to truly know His loving nature in a deeper way. Do not let your past sins keep you from His presence when you have asked to be washed clean in the blood of Jesus. Is there an area of your life where you have not accepted the Lord's forgiveness?

Understanding the significance of the blood of Jesus will change how you pray and how you approach God's throne. Accepting the forgiveness Jesus has offered will give strength and assurance to your life. We are told in Hebrews 4:15, **"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet was without sin"** we are reminded that our Lord understands our weaknesses and the temptations we face in life.

Despite the weaknesses we possess, we are still told to go before the Lord with confidence, **"draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need."** **Hebrews 4:16.** You will not reach this place of confidence in your prayer life if you do not allow and accept the forgiveness Jesus has to offer your heart and mind. Be careful not to let unbelief keep you from the good things God has for your life. You will reach a whole new level of prayer when you accept the cleansing blood of Jesus and learn to go with confidence before the throne of God.

Understanding the significance of the blood of Jesus will change how you battle the enemy. If you allow the enemy to continually remind you of past sins and mistakes then his condemnation will hinder your prayer life. When you try to pray and desire to be in the presence of the Lord, Satan will remind you of how bad you are and why you should not even bother to pray.

In Revelation 12:10 we find something the enemy has done since the beginning of time, **"for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night."** Do you clearly see in scripture how the enemy tries to work in your life? He points the finger at all your sins and mistakes in front of the Father.

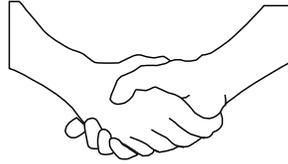
If you look at the first part of the next verse in Revelation 12:11, it states, **“And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb.”** This is the word that needs to saturate your life when you are facing the tactics of the enemy. You can overcome the spiritual battle by the blood of the Lamb who is Jesus Christ.

Please know that there is a difference between the Spirit of God convicting you of sin and your need to repent. You might reach a place when you are praying and feel remorse and brokenness over sin, but the difference is that when you confess, you will have a sense of love and forgiveness from the Lord; but the enemy will try to keep you feeling guilty. Conviction from God is very different from the condemnation of the enemy. Ask the Lord to help you know and learn the difference.

Understanding the significance of the blood of Jesus will change how you relate to others. When you accept the forgiveness of Jesus it should be your desire to also extend forgiveness to those in your life who cause you hurt. Matthew 6:15 says, **“But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”** I believe this is a very clear command from the Word of God that we are to live in a way that seeks to forgive those who offend and wound us. When you truly consider how much you have been loved, forgiven, and washed clean in the blood of Jesus then be diligent to show the same love and forgiveness to those in your life.

Lord, I thank you for the blood of Jesus that forgives my sin.





The Foyer

The Place of Greeting

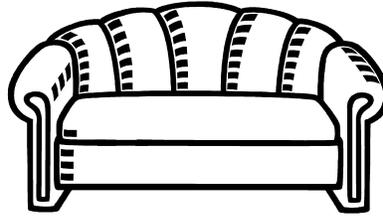
When a friend or relative enters your home, you probably greet them in your foyer or hallway with a warm welcome or even a hug and kiss. Maybe it has been a while since you have seen your visitor and the conversation at this point is not very deep but just pleasantries. Are you now at this "foyer" point in your prayer life? Do you feel that your relationship with the Lord is just a casual one or that you only know Him as an acquaintance?

There are times in our lives when prayer is lacking in depth and intimacy because of busyness, illness or a lack of commitment. But, not spending enough time in prayer will also keep the relationship on a casual or distant level. Ask the Lord to help you grow past this area so you can have more of a relationship and not just an acquaintance. The more time you spend in prayer and the Word, the more you will come to know God in an intimate way. Do you need to ask the Lord to forgive you of busyness and to show you what things you have allowed to keep you too busy to pray?

It is possible to spend years of your prayer life at this point, in the foyer. Just as it takes time to develop a friendship on a deeper level; it takes time to develop a good prayer life. Look at the promise you have in John 14:23, **"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our home with him."** Do you see the promise you have been given in this scripture? Know this is an invitation, even an assurance for a heavenly relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who love you and want to spend time with you.

Lord, give me a desire to know you more.





The Living Room

Fellowship

When you think of this room in your home it is probably the first area you want to decorate and keep clean because it's most likely the room you spend more time in or the first room that company sees when they visit. When you sit in your living room, do you remember special moments with friends and loved ones who you visit and have fellowship? The Lord also desires to have fellowship with you, to spend time sharing His heart with you and listening to your heart. We are called into fellowship with our Lord according to I Corinthians 1:9, **"God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."** Do you hear that call in this scripture to come and be together, the invitation for fellowship?

Prayer does not always have to be the place where you pray for others and your needs, but can be that place of friendship with Jesus, the place where you share your dreams, hopes and hurts. Sit and talk to your Father as a friend, tell Him the things in your heart. You don't always have to use a "prayer voice or language" but be yourself.

You might ask, "How is fellowship prayer different from other types of prayer?" I think of this room of prayer in a different way than some of the other rooms because it is just a relaxed place of sharing my thoughts. For example, one morning as I finished my prayer time I sat looking out my window. I began to think about how beautiful the tree in the backyard is and how grateful I am for the shade it gives. When you live in the desert, you are grateful for trees. I then began to talk to the

Lord and thank Him for the tree and what a reminder it was to me of how He takes care of His children. I was sharing my thoughts and not really asking or praying for anything. It was a time of fellowship and talking together just as I would with a friend. There are times in my day when I stop what I am doing and tell the Lord, "Have I told you today that I love you?" Or as I am driving I look at the beautiful sky and tell the Father what a wonderful job He did in creating the world. Sometimes my prayers are simple thoughts that express my love and gratitude or even silly desires of my heart. "Lord, when I am with you in heaven would you please let me float on a cloud?" I also have these moments of fellowship as I go about my day. I want to learn what it means to have a relationship with my Lord so I include Him in the different aspects of my life. Sometimes I ask for help as I am cooking (because I really need help in this area) or I ask Him what I should wear as I prepare for my day. One morning as I was getting in my car, I sensed the Father saying, "Don't forget your coat, you will need it today." I didn't think it was going to be a cold day but it did turn out that way. I felt loved as I drove off that morning because I knew my Heavenly Father was even concerned about the little things in my life.

I think David even had simple moments of fellowship when you read some of his writings. Look at Psalm 8:3, "**When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man, that You take thought of him?**" This is not really a prayer but just a man who is in love with his Lord and enjoys sharing his thoughts. As you go about your day, you can have moments of fellowship of bringing prayer into the simple things of your life by sharing your heart and asking the Father to share His heart with you. "**He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, will rejoice over you with singing**" (Zephaniah 3:17). How will you ever hear the Lord loving and singing to you if time is not made for these moments of fellowship?

Lord, teach me how to fellowship with You.





The Fireplace

The Place of Refining

Sitting before a fire in the fireplace on a cold evening brings such a sense of contentment. When I look at the wood that is being burned by the fire, I am reminded of a scripture in Proverbs 17:3, **“The refining pot is for silver and the furnace is for gold, but the Lord tests hearts.”** I have found that as I continue to grow and learn about prayer, there has been a refining process that the Father has allowed to bring change to the different aspects of my life.

Look at the process the Lord allowed to those who were called to serve as priests before his throne, **“He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness”** (Malachi 3:3). We no longer have the Old Testament form of the tribe of Levi serving as the priesthood, but scripture states, **“You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”** (I Peter 2:5). Do you see in the above scriptures that you have been given the privilege to be a type of priest before the throne of God? You have access to the Father because of Jesus Christ and you are called to be a house that will offer spiritual sacrifices. This is a picture of the characteristics of your life of prayer, a life of holiness and righteousness.

I believe this refining process will be needed all through our lives until the day we go into the presence of the Lord because it is necessary to bring correction to those areas of our life that are not pleasing to the Father. Proverbs 17:3 states, our heart and mind need to continually go through “the fire of testing” to burn out sin and ungodly habits and lead us to a life of righteousness.

As you go through these times of refining and testing, follow the example that Jesus gave us through his suffering, **“Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered”** (Hebrews 5:8). There are many things the Father will teach you in this place of refining. Learning to be obedient in your prayer life might be one area that will need correction. Another very important purpose of this process will be to teach you the ways of the Lord and to know Him in a more intimate way.

There is a scripture that I love and have prayed for myself for many years. It is found in Psalms 24:3-4, **“Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood.”** When I first read this verse it was such a powerful word to me and what I wanted my prayer life to be. I want to be in that special holy place before the Lord but it means that I have a responsibility to keep my heart pure. So, as I ask the Father to teach me how to have clean hands and a pure heart before Him, I am opening myself to that “refining pot” that will get rid of impurities. This is not a pleasant or easy process, but will grow kingdom fruit in your life. **“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”** (Hebrews 12:11).

Lord, help me to learn as I go through the refining process.





The Library

The Place of Studying

This room of your home is to be a reminder of the importance of including a study of the Word in your prayer time, to have a very focused time to examine and search the scriptures. You need to have a simple plan of how to study your Bible. We are challenged in II Timothy 2:15 to, **“do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”** This is a command to know scripture, to use the Word to speak and pray truth into your life and the lives of those around you. The Word has many purposes in our life, according to II Timothy 3:16 **“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”** Based on this scripture, let’s look at the purposes the Word has for us.

Training in Righteousness. One of the most important purposes to study the Word is to know God and to know His ways. Scripture teaches us about the character and nature of the Lord. If you want to know the Father better and how to live a godly life, spend time reading what the Word has to tell you about Him. You need encouragement from the promises in the Bible to walk in faithfulness, and a dedicated study time will give you wisdom for your walk with the Lord. Knowing the Word will help you to know the Father on a more intimate level. You cannot reach spiritual maturity or grow without the Word of God. In order to know the will of the Father and to know how to pray, study the Bible, it will give you more authority in prayer. **“If you abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you”** (John 15:7). You need to know the Word to learn how to pray effectively.

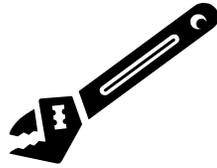
Correction & Rebuking. Another purpose of the Word is the correction it gives to your life. If your attitudes, thoughts and actions are not being bathed in the Word of God, they will become sinful and it becomes easier to develop bad attitudes and habits. We are told in Romans 12:2 to, **“be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is.”** Your mind cannot go through this process of renewal without reading the Word. Being rebuked is not something anyone really enjoys, but is necessary for us to live a godly life. The Word tells us in Hebrews 12:5, **“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you.”** Because of the love the Father has for you, He will use the Word to rebuke and correct your life. So, do not be discouraged when you feel or sense you are being corrected by the Lord, it is proof you are His child and that He loves you.

Teaching. The final purpose of the word in II Timothy 3:16 is the teaching and training it provides. Jesus told us in John 14:26, **“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you.”** Jesus explained that after His death He would return to Heaven and would send the Holy Spirit to teach us and to help us live a life of truth. The Holy Spirit will teach you and give you understanding from the Word of God to know truth as you are faithful to study and read the Word.

It is hard to imagine how words on a piece of paper can have life, but the Word of God is alive, **“For the Word of God is living and active”** (Hebrews 4:12). It has the power to speak to your life and to teach you what you need to know as you walk and serve in God’s kingdom work. The Word has the ability to speak to any situation you are facing. Study your Bible so that you will learn how to have a life that is pleasing to your Heavenly Father.

Lord, teach me to love your Word.





Maintenance

Repairs

All homeowners know there is a certain amount of responsibility in caring for a house. The upkeep can be quite a task at times. There are always little things that need to be fixed to keep your home comfortable and efficient. Your prayer life also needs a periodic “fix-up” to stay healthy and to continue growing.

Among the tools you can use in the maintenance of your house of prayer are prayer guides. These are little cards and pamphlets that offer suggestions on how to pray for a particular subject. They can be found at most Christian bookstores. They are great resources to help guide your prayers in areas where you might feel a little inexperienced, and can help grow your intercession in a deeper way. I keep prayer cards on different subjects in a notebook near my Bible and place of prayer. There are times when I have a burden to pray for a certain situation and I do not always know how to pray. The prayer cards or guides help give me ideas on how to intercede for that situation.

It is also a good idea to read a book on prayer. This resource may challenge you in new areas and teach you new things about prayer. It has been very inspiring to me when I read about the prayer lives of men and women like Hudson Taylor, Andrew Murray, George Muller and Corrie Ten Boom. Their life stories have challenged me to a deeper hunger for prayer. There are so many resources available on prayer to equip and encourage you, so set a goal to read several books a year on prayer.

Praying with other believers is another good way to grow and maintain your life of prayer. Proverbs 27:17 reminds us **“Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”** Having a prayer partner or someone that you are accountable to will build regularity in your life. This would be a good idea if you are struggling to have a consistent and daily devotional. Open up your life to that person and give them permission to do “check ups” and ask if you are walking faithfully in studying the Word and praying. It will help you to be more diligent when you know your friend is going to ask you to be accountable with your prayer time.

Attending a prayer conference is a good “weekend repair job.” Workshops and conferences usually offer some of the latest material available and will provide an opportunity to teach you new aspects of prayer. Consider asking your pastor for a recommendation of a prayer conference you can attend or ask to have one in your congregation. I try to attend one prayer conference a year because it is a time of refreshing, learning and growing for my prayer life. Even those who have had a prayer life for a long time need to have “maintenance times” to continue growing and learning.

Lord, help me to grow areas of my prayer life that are weak.





The Closet

Hidden Sins

How many of us have closets or storage areas where we pile up the things we don't use very often and hope to come back later and clean? And if anyone looked in our closets we would be very embarrassed because we have not made time to clean them out lately.

This practice can also be true of our spiritual life. We have areas that we try to cover and put in the closet because we do not want people to look in and see the mess we have made in the past or the current mess we are now living in. We might be good at covering up areas that are in disorder but scripture tells us in Psalms 69:5, **"Oh God, it is You who knows my folly, and my wrongs are not hidden from You."** God knows our failures, weaknesses and sins. He even knows the secrets of our heart, **"Would not God find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart"** (Psalms 44:21).

My dog has a silly habit of trying to hide when I want to put her outside. She sticks her head under the bed so that I cannot see her. I am sure she is thinking, "They will never find me under here." The only problem is that she is no longer a little puppy that can fit under the bed, and the rest of her body sticks out in plain sight. Have you ever hoped that God looks at you that way? When you sin or make a mistake it is easier to try and cover it up, or even to justify why you did it instead of admitting you were wrong and asking the Lord to forgive you. The Father wants to bring healing and forgiveness to your life, but you must first trust Him with your problems, mistakes and failures.

Do you have someone you can share your mistakes and struggles with who will not judge, but will help you to work through the issues and keep you accountable? The Bible tells us when we are honest about our sins we will find healing, **“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed”** (James 5:16.) Open your life to a trusted friend and let him or her help you work through the challenges you are facing.

There are some issues in our lives that are just too painful to share with a person, even a close friend. Learn to go to your Heavenly Father and pour out your heart to Him. He already knows what has happened. If there are several issues in your life, then handle them one at a time through repentance, tears, searching your heart, time in the Word, and seeking forgiveness. Don't be like my little dog who thinks she can stick her head under the bed and not be found.

All of us will be faced with sin issues for the rest of our stay here on Earth. There will be moments when sin is indulged and other times when you will be victorious and conquer sinful areas. It is important that you are working on these areas and not letting them remain hidden away in a closet. Keep your closet clean because there is nothing your Father does not see about you, **“You spread our sins before you, our secret sins, and see them all”** (Psalm 90:8). There is nothing you have ever done that the Father does not know. The enemy will use the shameful things of your life to condemn you and keep you from God's presence. It is a very effective battle tactic to keep you in guilt to prevent you from reaching an intimacy with the Father. But, when you know your sins and weaknesses have been placed before His throne, and brought into the light of God's presence, the condemnation of the enemy will not prevail against you.

Lord, help me to open all of my life to you.





The Kitchen

Spiritual Nourishment

What happens when you do not feed yourself? You become hungry, grumpy and even sick if you do not eat well. Just as your physical body needs food, your spirit needs nourishment. I believe "eating the Word" is a little different from studying the Word. When you study, it is with the purpose of being obedient to learn and know the Word of God. When you eat the Word, are you feasting upon, enjoying and loving what you are reading. It is taking delight in God's Word. We have a promise in John 7:37 as Jesus tells us that He will fulfill our needs for spiritual nourishment, **"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink."**

There is an unusual scripture in Jeremiah 15:16, **"Your words were found and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."** Do you sense the joy and delight that Jeremiah had in being in God's Word? The Word of God will also bring delight to your heart as you are faithful to read the Word. We also find another dining scripture in Psalm 34:8, **"O taste and see that the Lord is good."** There are good things that the Lord has for you, especially in His Word, as you feast upon it.

What do I mean by eating the Word? Have you ever sat down to read scripture and the Word seems to just come alive and minister to your heart. As you are reading, you begin to have a sense that this word is just for you and the situation you are facing. There is a feeling that the Lord has spoken this word to your heart to encourage and love you. The Word of God will bring as much fulfillment to your spirit as food does to your physical body.

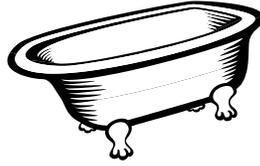
In addition to your daily study of the scriptures during your devotional time, take a “snack” from the Word. Purchase a small thin Bible that will fit in your purse or pocket. Keep it with you to read during your lunch hour or when you are waiting at an appointment. Put one in the car to read when you are in line at the bank or doing errands. Use these times to mediate on a single chapter or verse.

I carry a different translation in my purse than the one I use during my quiet time to help give me a different perspective. One day I was waiting to pick up my son after school and took out the Bible in my purse and read Ephesians 1:17, **“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.”** What a beautiful scripture that ministered to my heart and a great passage to use in prayer. It was one of those moments when I felt such delight in the Word of God and it challenged me to begin asking the Lord for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in my life so that I may know Him better.

If you are not “eating well” from the Word then your spiritual life will become unhealthy and it becomes harder to handle life’s situations. You begin to lose the mind of Christ and the Spirit of the Lord starts to be pushed out of your heart and self moves in. Learn to visit the banquet table of the Lord and to feast on His word, **“He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love”** (Song of Solomon 2:4)

Lord, increase my appetite for your Word.





The Bathroom

Cleansing

Keeping your heart and mind in a clean condition is a very important aspect of your prayer life. You need to spend significant time in repentance and confession because unconfessed sin will cause an interruption or separation in your relationship with God. Keep nothing between you and the Lord. Scripture is very clear about sin issues, and when we try to justify or hide them from God, **"Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear"** (Isaiah 59:2). You do not want to have a disconnection in your companionship and intimacy with God.

Confession needs to be a regular part of your prayer time to reflect on attitudes and words that slip into your day. We all have sin issues that need to be confessed and bathed in the Word. These issues will change as you grow as a believer. You will find victory over sin issues as you keep them protected in prayer and the Word.

Remember that Jeremiah 17:9 tells us, **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"** Take time to ask the Lord if there is anything that you have done to displease Him or anything you need to repent of. Allow him to speak to your heart and show you things you may not have realized about yourself. Psalm 51:10 is a great scripture to pray for your life, **"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."** As I apply this to my life, I go to the Father and ask Him to show me if there is anything I have said or done during the day that has displeased Him and then I wait to hear His voice. There are many times when He brings to mind a conversation that was not considerate or even unkind thoughts I had about

someone. I then ask for forgiveness and sometimes also feel the need to go back to a person and apologize for my words or actions.

My relationship to my Heavenly Father is so important to me that I do not want to allow anything into my heart and mind that will hinder our walk together. He is a Holy God and I want to treat this relationship as holy. Realize that you are in a relationship with a Holy God who loves you so very much and has offered forgiveness through the life of His son Jesus. Never take lightly the power of the blood of Jesus to cleanse you and bring forgiveness into these difficult and sinful areas.

You might ask, "what about those sin issues in my life that I have turned away from and confessed, but I still do not feel forgiven?" Your faith will grow as you learn to keep the promises from the Word before you. Ask the Father to help you know you are forgiven and to believe it in your heart. I have heard others teach "once you have asked forgiveness from the Lord then you should not keep asking for the same area." It is true that you are forgiven when you truly ask, but the mental and emotional residue of this sin issue will need further prayer, not the act itself but the effect it left on your life. There are some deeper issues that take time to process. I have gone before the Lord and said, "I know I have been forgiven but I just want you to know how sorry I am that I allowed this into my life. Please cleanse my heart and mind."

You might also wonder what to do about those sin issues that you are still presently struggling with and are working to overcome. Remember, you are forgiven at the time you ask, but it sometimes takes time to forgive yourself and for you to allow the forgiveness of the Lord to cleanse your thoughts and emotions. The point is not that you need to keep asking forgiveness for a past sin but that you are praying for that forgiveness to seep into your mind and heart to reach a point when you truly believe you've been forgiven.

Do not allow the enemy to deceive you into thinking you are not forgiven because you do not 'feel' forgiven. That goes against scripture. Ephesians 1:7 makes it very clear that, **"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."** Pray that this forgiveness will reach into your mind and emotions and that you will not allow unbelief to come into your heart.

For example, when I first married my husband Dana, I remember thinking how funny it seemed that when the pastor pronounced us as man and wife I didn't feel any different. It was a beautiful wedding ceremony but as I walked back down the aisle I did not feel like a wife. I had my wedding band on, I had exchanged vows with my husband, we had the marriage certificate, but I still did not feel like his wife. It took time for me to grow into my new role and to "feel like a wife." It was our daily life together that helped us both grow into that relationship as a couple. After years of marriage I now, very much, feel like a wife, but it took time. The same concept might apply to feeling forgiven for some of the deeper sin issues in your life.

Take the marriage concept and apply it to the same areas of sin for which you are asking to be forgiven. Just as I have a certificate that makes my marriage legal, you also have a certificate, it is the assurance from the Word of God that you are forgiven. You have a type of "spiritual wedding band," it is the promise from the Holy Spirit that He will guide you and teach you truth. Jesus represents the spouse who will live with you on a daily basis. It is the daily walk with the Lord where you will learn to accept His love and to know that you are forgiven.

You must learn how to receive God's forgiveness and allow it to saturate into your mind and emotions. It can require time and diligence on your part to keep this area of your life in prayer. The enemy will come to condemn, but by staying in prayer, you gain the assurance of knowing you have truly been forgiven

and can say to Satan, "be gone!" He no longer has the grounds to accuse you.

Elimination

Just as our bathroom facilities are used for cleansing, they are also used for elimination. We need, at times, to eliminate, expel, and get rid of some of the things of the world we come in contact with. We are told in 1 John 2:16, **"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."** Shrug off the ways of the world. It could be a habit or practice that you realize is not honoring to your Lord or even an attitude or the words you speak. Daily bathing needs to take place to eliminate the dirt we come in contact with as we walk through life. One area that I try to be careful of is what I watch on television, because it seems to creep back into my time of prayer. I start thinking about the movie, and before I know it, I am distracted and have forgotten what I was praying.

If you have to focus more time in this room of your house of prayer, then do so. Remember that the Lord has told you, **"Come now, and let us reason together, though your sins are as scarlet, they will be white as snow."** (Isaiah 1:18) Lay everything before the feet of the Lord to bring you to a point of knowing you are cleansed and forgiven, so that you can move with confidence into other areas of prayer.

Lord, show me the areas of my life that need cleansing.





The Exercise Room

The Place of Discipline

You might think at first this is an unusual room to add to your house of prayer but it does have significance. The definition of discipline that I am referring to is training that develops self-control. Proverbs 13:18 states, **“He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame.”** There is a basic concept here that I believe is important to a healthy prayer life: learning to walk with discipline in all areas of your life and to be balanced with work, family, relationships, ministry and even food and entertainment.

When too much time is spent in one of these areas, it will cause you to neglect some of the other aspects of your life. Your body needs a proper amount of attention in each area of your physical, emotional, spiritual and mental being. Yet, if you are not taking good care of your physical body, your emotional and spiritual life will also suffer. Guard your time in these areas because it will have an effect on your prayer life.

If you are spending many late hours working and not getting enough rest then it becomes very difficult to spend quality time in prayer. Or if you spend too much time watching TV, shopping, reading, entertainment or doing sporting events, your life becomes unbalanced and other areas will be neglected. It is important that you look at each area of your life to determine where you are spending too much time and make changes so that you can walk with discipline in each area of your life.

One area that I struggle with is books. I love to read. But, it is also very easy for me to get caught up in a world of books and neglect some of the other areas in my life. It is such a treat to stay up late with a good book but then it causes me to over sleep and neglect quality time in the Word and in prayer. Because of my personal weakness and lack of discipline in this area, I had to make a decision to be very careful of what I was reading until I could learn to balance the other areas of my life and guard my prayer time. I do not often allow myself to read very many books because I want to protect my time in prayer.

This can also be true of the good things in your life. Your job, commitment to help others, or service in an area of your church and community can also reach a point where you get so busy that you do not have time for prayer. It is possible to become so involved in serving the Lord and serving others that you do not spend time in prayer and fellowship with Him.

There was a time in the life of Solomon when he said in Ecclesiastes 2:10, **"All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure."** When you read all of chapter 2 you find a man who indulged himself in all areas of his life. He lived in excess with little balance and little discipline and his conclusion after he had experienced everything he could think of to satisfy himself was, **"all was vanity and striving after wind"** (v. 11). This seems like an amazing statement coming from someone who had the means to experience whatever he wanted.

I believe we learn from this passage of scripture that excessive attention to any one area of life is not going to bring pleasure. A well-balanced life is more satisfying than an over indulged one. **"For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him"** (Ecclesiastes 2:25). You must remember that scripture states we have a jealous God, **"for you shall not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God"** (Exodus 34:14). He loves you

and wants a life and relationship with you, and He will not allow anything else to bring complete satisfaction to your life. **“He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”** (James 4:5).

Our life must be centered in Christ, in time studying the Word and in prayer. These should be the center, not just pieces of your life. Letting your relationship with the Lord be the focal point is the strength that brings balance and order to all other aspects of your life.

Lord, help me to walk with discipline in all areas of my life.





The Bedrooms

For Asking (requesting)

There is a place in our prayer life where we go to pray for our needs and the needs of others. Scripture encourages us to do so in I Timothy 2:1, **“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men.”** Jesus also gave us an example in the Lord’s Prayer of the importance of requesting for our needs when He said, **“Give us this day our daily bread”** (Matthew 6:11).

We learn the importance of placing our needs before the Father and to pray for the situations and needs of our friends and loved ones. This is the area that can easily become the room where you spend the largest amount of time. It is important that you are praying for those around you, but do not let this be the biggest room in your house of prayer or the one where you spend all of your time.

For Listening

Another important aspect of your prayer life is learning to listen and hear the voice of the Lord, **“Guard your steps as you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen”** (Ecclesiastics 5:1). If you have petitioned or requested the Lord for something you need an answer for, then take time to stop and have a sense of what He is speaking to your heart and allow Him to give you direction.

You might feel this is an area you are not familiar with so the next time you pray, make a decision that you will begin to sit at

the feet of the Father so that you can hear His voice. Learn to quiet the thoughts that bring distraction. This is a discipline that takes time to develop.

It is so much easier to talk than it is to listen. This is another important aspect of your prayer life that needs to be developed, the ability to listen. You might even begin your prayer with a time to sit quietly and prepare your heart and mind in order to clear your thoughts. I feel that I have a long way to go in growing the listening part of my prayer life. But I will continue to try and add in a time each day to sit quietly and wait.

For Writing

Keeping a prayer journal will be important to your prayer life. You will need to record who you are praying for, the things God is speaking to your heart and what you are learning as you pray. Journaling will have many purposes in your life, but one thing it will teach you about is the Lord's faithfulness. Writing down your thoughts will be very encouraging to your life when you can look back and see answered prayer and how the Lord has brought you through different situations. In Exodus 24:4 you find, **"Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord."** Even Moses was faithful to write the things God was teaching him. You can use something as simple as a notebook or purchase a special journal to help guide you. Remember, journaling is a spiritual diary that is a reflection of your life.

For Resting

In the early years of our marriage, my husband and I slept on a mattress that had lumps in it. We each had our own little hole to sleep in at night. My in-laws decided they needed to rescue us from the aches and pains of a bad mattress and bought us a new set of mattresses. What a wonderful gift! Even to this day that bed is my favorite piece of furniture because it has brought such comfort to my life.

I believe there is also a place in prayer where we rest and receive comfort from the Lord. We are even told in Psalm 37:7, "**Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.**" This room is a quiet and peaceful place.

There are times when I fall asleep praying. I think of it as falling asleep in the arms of Jesus. It is a place of resting in Him. This might also be done as you are waking up in the morning and preparing to get out of bed. Your first thoughts could be a word of love and greeting to God.

It is not a good idea to have the main part of your prayer time while lying in bed because it is too easy to fall asleep. The major portion of your prayer time should be done in a place where you are awake and alert. This type of resting prayer should only be for those special moments when you have had adequate time to experience the other rooms of prayer.

For Kingdom Issues

I think this is a good time to note that a portion of your prayer time should have a focus on kingdom issues. It is very easy to slip into a pattern of praying for your own needs and not spending adequate time to focus on other issues that are on the heart of the Father.

Those who do not know Jesus. Do you have individuals in your life who do not know Jesus as their Savior and are you praying for them regularly? They could be family members, friends or coworkers. Your prayers will have a great deal of influence in their lives. I have written a small pamphlet called *Paths of Gold* that can help you to faithfully pray and intercede for your unsaved loved ones. Contact my office and I will be glad to tell you how to order this material.

Our nation and other countries. Do you have a country or nation that you are praying for on a regular basis? Do you pray for your country on a regular basis? Ask the Father to tell you

which country He wants you to develop a heart for and begin sowing your prayers into His kingdom work in that land.

People in authority. We are commanded in scripture to pray for those who are in authority. This would apply to people such as your employer, your Mayor or the President. As we are faithful to do this, the Word states in I Timothy 2:3 that this type of praying is **“good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.”**

Your church and the leadership in your congregation.

1 Thessalonians 5:12 says, **“But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction”.** If you are a part of a fellowship or attending a church, then you have a responsibility to love and appreciate your pastor and those who serve in leadership. One way to show your love is by praying for them.

Your city. Your city is also an important area to cover in prayer. **“Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf”** (Jeremiah 29:7). As you drive, pray blessings over the many areas of your city. Pray for God to bring light to those areas of darkness in your city.

You might be thinking, “How in the world will I ever have time to pray about all of these different issues?” It would be a valuable goal to work toward incorporating these different areas into your time of prayer and it might not be done daily but on a regular basis. Know this is a growing process and it takes time to reach a deeper level of commitment.

Lord, teach me to have a kingdom focus in my prayers.





The Security System

Protection

Prayer provides protection to your life. There are many issues you encounter in your day, and a good prayer life will help you to face challenges with a godlier attitude. I have found in my own life that when I have neglected to spend time reading my Bible and praying, I tend to get a little more grumpy and moody. This happens because I did not make time to drink from the living water of the Word and I have to rely on my own strength during the day. Oh, the times I have overslept and rushed out the door without any time in prayer, and then ran into a crisis that left me overwhelmed. If I had spent time with the Father, I would have been better equipped to handle the situation.

A consistent time of prayer not only provides protection but also helps to keep your life in order and will give you protection from a hard heart, sin and prayerlessness.

Hard heart. Jesus spoke of an interesting condition of the heart when He said to the religious leaders in Matthew 15:8, **“This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me.”** I believe this scripture gives the caution that it is possible to go through the motions of knowing the Lord, but not allowing Him to truly have a place in our heart, a place of love and honor.

Sin. Having a consistent prayer life is not going to make you a sinless person as Ecclesiastes 7:20 states, **“Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.”** The point here is that when you are diligent about prayer and studying the Word, you are less likely to walk into sinful situations. A devoted life allows the

Holy Spirit to speak to you, to teach you, and to warn you of unsafe circumstances that would lead you into sinful situations.

Prayerlessness. A casual attitude about prayer will not only cause a hard heart and sin, but will also produce seasons of prayerlessness in your life. Unless you determine to make prayer a priority and make changes to guard your prayer time, you will live with years of an up-and-down prayer life and will have a difficult time reaching a deeper level of intimacy with the Lord. These seasons of prayerlessness will keep you from growing into a new level of intercession and spiritual maturity.

Just as most of us have some form of security device for our homes, we need to understand that prayer will also provide security to many of the issues we meet in life. Determine today that you will “install” security measures into your life to keep the enemy from bringing distractions as you build your house of prayer.

Lord, protect me from prayerlessness.





The Art Room

The Place of Treasure

In this room of your home, you will find hidden treasures in prayer. There is a beautiful promise in Jeremiah 33:3, **“Call to me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”** I believe this scripture tells us there is a special place in prayer where the Lord desires to reveal the secret things of His heart.

These things “which we do not know” could be issues the Father wants to share with you so that you pray and intercede. Or it might be special thoughts regarding your life that the Lord wants to encourage and give you direction for your future. Jesus said **“The Kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field”** (Matthew 13:44). Prayer will help you to find the hidden treasures of His kingdom.

One morning as I was praying for a difficult situation I was facing, I was led to a scripture passage in Joel 2. As I was reading I had a strong sense from the Lord that He was giving me a promise from the Word that He would take care of me. It was a very precious feeling that the Father was telling me not to worry but to trust Him. I felt as if I had just been given a gift, a heavenly treasure.

You need to build a room in your house of prayer, a room of treasure. Let this be a place in prayer where God can share the secret things of His heart with you, precious thoughts that will be only between you and your Lord.

Lord, teach me how to find the hidden treasures of your Kingdom.





The Music Room

Praise & Thanksgiving

Praise means to express approval or admiration and should be a regular aspect of your prayer time with the Lord. **“For great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise”** (I Chronicles 16:25). We serve a God who has given us so very much, and we in turn need to express our love and gratitude through a life of praise.

Take time to think back to what happened to you the day before and thank the Father for His provision for your life. There are mornings that I spend time thanking Him for the simple things in my life like, running water to bathe in or a warm bed to sleep in. I have seen enough in life to realize what a blessing it is for the simple things we sometimes take for granted.

You can use music or song to offer up praise. I do not sing very well and there are times when my son asks me to please stop singing out loud. I am thankful that even though no one else might enjoy my singing, I know it gives pleasure to the heart of the Father, **“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord”** Psalms 100:1.

Everyone has a different way to praise. Some people are lively and others are more reserved. Many people have beautiful voices and others use musical instruments to praise. It really does not matter how much musical talent you might or might not have, but only that you learn to develop an attitude of praise.

I also enjoy using scripture passages from Psalms to teach me how to praise the Lord. One scripture that I have used as a prayer is from Psalms 65:8, "Father, I praise you for this beautiful morning because You have caused the dawn and the sunset to shout for joy". Use the beautiful words from scripture to pray them back to the Lord.

Learning to praise and to be thankful when I am hurting has been a challenge for me. There are times in life when the load is so heavy and situations seem almost unbearable. Those are the times when I go before the Father with a heavy heart. But, as I began to learn about praise and to understand the meaning of Hebrews 13:15, "**Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name**" this scripture helped me to realize what a sacrifice of praise might be. I believe it is learning to praise when you don't feel like it, when you cannot understand what is happening, or when the Lord is allowing a problem or situation into your life. When you reach a point that you can go before the Father, even with tears and a heavy heart and praise Him, you are being obedient to offer that sacrifice of praise. There is also something wonderful that begins to happen - praise lifts burdens.

There are also times when I have such an overwhelming sense of gratitude and thankfulness for what Jesus has done for me that I all I can do is cry and thank Him for saving me. I believe our tears of gratefulness are just as precious to the Father as our words of gratitude.

Giving praise and thanksgiving is taking time to stop and think about the many blessings you have, even when life is a challenge. What better way to create intimacy with the Father!

Lord, teach me to have a heart full of praise.





Den

Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual warfare is something you struggle with in every room of your house of prayer. This room will encourage you to stand guard in prayer over your life, those you are praying for, and the things God has entrusted to you. Sometimes there are things in the kingdom of God and in your daily walk you will have to fight for.

We are told in Ephesians 6:12, **“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”** We learn from this scripture that many of the struggles we face as a child of God are spiritual battles with Satan and his evil forces. A spiritual battle is a situation that can take place around us physically, in our minds, in our bodies or in our emotions. A simple definition of warfare is the battle between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light.

Who is Satan? The Bible classifies him in I Peter 5:8 as the devil, our adversary. An adversary is one who opposes especially with animosity. He is a fallen angel according to Isaiah 14:12, **“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn!”** Remember that Satan is a created being. He is not omniscient which means that he cannot be everywhere as God can. If we look at the passage in I Peter 5:8 it states **“Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”** I think the Word makes it pretty clear that we have an enemy

who hates us and is looking for every opportunity to oppress and destroy us.

This was a hard concept for my son to understand. As a child he lives in a loving environment and has been taught all of his life that he also has a Lord who loves him even more. When we began to teach him about warfare, he had a hard time understanding there is an enemy who hates him. After several discussions he came to the conclusion that "I guess it is Satan's job not to like us." In a child's definition I think that is a pretty good assessment.

Where is Satan's kingdom? II Corinthians 4:4 tells us he is the god of this world. Adam and Eve lost their dominion to rule upon the earth and Satan then took control. Jesus referred to him as the ruler of this world in John 12:31. The earth is his dominion and the territory where he seeks to exert his power.

Who does he rule? He is the ruler of demons according to Matthew 12:24. He does not fight alone, one-third of the Host of Heaven was thrown out with him according to Revelation 12:4. When you look at Ephesians 6:12 there appears to be some kind of ranking of dark spiritual forces just as there are angels in God's kingdom who serve in different capacities.

How does Satan work? If we look at the names given to him they reveal the nature of his character and will help us to understand the tactics he will try and use in our lives. In Genesis 3:13, he is called a deceiver. To deceive someone is to mislead, fool, or cheat them. How does this apply to us as Christians? I believe it means Satan will do all he can to mislead us about the nature of God and to try and cheat us out of fellowship with our Lord.

In Revelation 12:10, he is also called the accuser of the brethren who stands before God day and night to incriminate us. Have you ever had thoughts like: "You will never be forgiven; a real Christian would not do that, or God will get you

for this"? Realize where these kinds of accusations are coming from. They come from the accuser of the brethren.

In John 8:44 Jesus calls Satan a liar and the father of lies. It should be very evident to us that the enemy will try to lie to us every opportunity he can in order to mislead and discourage. Remember the Bible warns us in John 10:10 **"The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy."** The Word of God tells us that Jesus came so that we might have life and have it abundantly. 1 John 4:4 says, **"Because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."**

There was a time when I did not understand why I was under attack and why the Lord allowed certain things to happen. I believed the misconception that if I was walking in obedience to the Lord and doing all I could to have a right heart then I would not suffer or come under attack. There is a certain amount of truth in this statement because of the blessing, protection, and healing in obeying the Word of the Lord, but it does not mean that we will never encounter hardship or spiritual warfare.

An example of this can be found in the first chapter of Job. He was a godly man who was walking in obedience to the Lord. Look what the scriptures say about him in Job verse 1, **"Job... was blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil."** That is an amazing statement to make about a man. He appears to be living his life in the right way, yet, in Job 1:12 Satan is given permission to test him, **"Then the Lord said to Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him."** This scripture has helped me to understand that some of the trials I have faced were allowed by the Father to grow my faith.

Satan is also called the tempter in Matthew 4:3. His nature as a tempter is one who will persuade, entice or try to seduce us to follow after his ways. Each situation you find yourself in ask

the question, "Is this according to God's principles or is it some form of temptation to lure me away?"

There are some common patterns of attack we can be aware of and learn how to deal with them. Here are just a few points to consider.

First identify if the problem is the enemy or sin. The enemy will use past or present sin to condemn or keep you in bondage. Romans 6:12 tells us, "**Do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts.**" The areas that you are now struggling with, the things that are the weaknesses in your life are the very areas God can use to help become your strengths. Why? Because I Corinthians 1:27 says, "**and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.**" This verse is such an encouragement because it tells me that the Lord can use the areas of my life that are weak, the very things that I dislike about myself can be used for His glory and His kingdom work.

Until you come to the point of learning how to stand your ground and battle in prayer over your weaknesses, until they become your strengths, these are the fiery darts that will be aimed at your life. It is the weak link in the chain that is easiest to break. Charles Spurgeon made a good point when he said, "Satan seldom attacks a man in a place of strength but looks for the weak point". That may be one reason the battle is raging, to keep you from the inheritance and the blessings the Lord has for you.

Let me give you an example of how I determine the difference between sin and an attack. If someone came to me and shared that they were struggling with a great deal of fear and felt they were under spiritual attack, my first question would be, "What are the things you are putting into your mind? What kind of materials are you reading and what programs and movies are you watching?" There are times when we give the

enemy an open door into our lives by how we entertain ourselves.

Secondly, I would take this person to the Word and share a scripture that applies to the situation. As the Word tells us in Philippians 4:8, we are to focus our minds on whatever is pure and honorable. Learn to use scripture to overcome.

Thirdly, if sin has been a problem and the individual truly wants to make a change, I would advise a time of prayer and repenting before the Lord for a clean heart and mind. Focus your prayers on overcoming the sin that has opened the door to fear.

Will this repentance automatically make the problem go away? Sometimes. But, even after a change of heart, a spiritual battle will probably arise. A door was opened for a certain amount of time that entertained fear, and Satan will not easily relinquish the ground he has held in your life. Some battles will be more intense than others and require more prayer.

There are also times, for example, when an unclean thought (that you do not normally have a problem with) seems to come from out of nowhere. A simple command from the Word of God will cause the enemy to flee.

Satan will use people. Look at the example of Mark 8:33 as Jesus has just shared the suffering and death that He will soon endure. Peter, not understanding, takes Jesus aside and begins to correct him. The response that Jesus has toward Peter is very interesting. Jesus, **“rebuked Peter, and said get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”** Notice that Jesus addressed the spiritual problem not the person. He knew Peter loved him and did not want to see him suffer, but he did not yet have understanding of the purpose of the cross.

Whether Peter's problem was lack of understanding or his motives were selfish and self seeking, it appears this was an opportunity that the enemy came and planted the wrong thoughts in Peter's mind. This is an important principle for us to remember when we are dealing with conflict and the people in our lives. We need to ask for wisdom to understand if there is a spiritual problem in the person's life and if they are being manipulated by a power of wickedness. I am not stating that a spiritual force controls every person or situation we face, but it should be something you consider and seek the Lord about when dealing with conflicts.

Satan will use the mind. Stop and think about those deceiving thoughts when you struggle with your feelings about God. "Does he really love me?" "If He is truly in control why is this happening to me?" Those are deceiving thoughts that the enemy will try and plant in your mind to cause doubt. Have you ever questioned where some of those thoughts came from? Scripture speaks of our thoughts in II Corinthians 10:5 when we are instructed to, "**take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**" We should question our thoughts and where they are coming from and realize the battleground we face with Satan is not only with other people, but sometimes in our mind.

Weapons of Our Warfare

You have been given special tools to stand against the spiritual battles you will face as a Christian. Let's look at some of these tools.

Jesus' Name. Philippians 2:9-10 says, "**Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.**" We have authority to deal with the powers and forces of darkness, not with our own

strength but with the name of Jesus. When you pray, use the name of Jesus to stand against the evil one.

The Word. In Matthew 4:1 we find Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. While Jesus was fasting, Satan appeared to him and tempted Jesus by saying, **“If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread”** (Matthew 4:3). After Satan made his insolent remark, Jesus’ reply in Matthew 4:4 was, **“It is written, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”** What did Jesus do? Not arguing, not discussing, not shouting He spoke the Word of God to Satan. Jesus once again fights this battle with the Word of God and replies in verse 7, **“On the other hand, it is written, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”** Do you see the importance of making the Word of God your daily meat?

Battle Clothes. We are told in Ephesians 6:11 **“Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.”** How do you go about wearing the armor? Ephesians 6:14-17 gives us the details of what to wear. This can be a simple prayer like “Father, would you please put your complete armor on me now, I ask and thank you for it in the name of Jesus.”

During times when I feel the battle is more intense, I like to pray for each individual piece. An easy way for me to remember is to start at my head and work downward. The helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, my loins girded with truth, the preparation of the gospel of peace on my feet and I take up the shield of faith.

Praise. Did you know that praise is actually a weapon? In II Chronicles 20:21-22 King Jehoshaphat overcame his enemy in battle when he appointed people of worship to be placed in front of the army and they began to praise and worship the Lord, **“And when they began singing and praising, the**

Lord set ambushes against the sons of Ammon.” When you praise, you are declaring God’s glory.

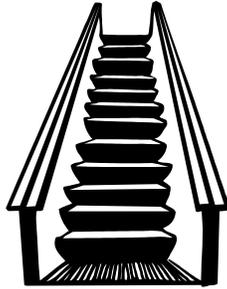
Your authority. We have authority over the enemy as we see in Luke 10:19, **“Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy”**. We are not always conscious of the fact that we are in a war so become more aware of the enemy’s tactics and learn how to stand strong because II Corinthians 2:11 warns us, **“In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.”** What have you been given authority over? There are different areas that each one of us has authority over. It might be a family, job or ministry. The point here is that whatever you have been entrusted with, you need to pray over that area and stand in authority against the plans of the enemy.

In some ways I see Satan as a boundary pusher. He is crossing over the line with no respect to the laws of the land, and he is no respecter of persons. Your prayers are like setting boundary lines that will make it difficult for the enemy to continue to operate. You will not know victory if you believe you are at the mercy of Satan and give up without a fight. What will you do to stand your ground?

So, if you are facing a tough situation right now ask the Father to show you the battle plan for this situation. If sin is the cause, then repent. If it is a trial, then ask for endurance. But, if it is an attack, then pray, “Lord, show me how to use the spiritual weapons you have given me.”

Lord, teach me how to fight spiritual battles.





The Stairs

Worship

Now that we have finished the rooms on the bottom floor of our home, we will begin to walk up the stairs to explore the second floor of our house. The stairs in our house of prayer is a reminder that there is a deeper level of prayer and intimacy to enter into as we seek to fellowship with the Lord.

We have spent time cleansing, praising, listening, fellowshiping, sharing our requests, praying for others and now we are ready for the next phase. **“Since therefore brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus”** (Hebrews 10:19) you can have confidence to know that you may enter into the presence of your Heavenly Father because of the blood of Jesus. I have found a wonderful scripture that I hold close to my heart as I desire to go into the presence of the Father, **“He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness”** (Isaiah 61:10).

You have been washed clean and clothed in a robe of righteousness, so come to the feet of the Father knowing that Jesus has given you a magnificent robe to allow you into the presence of a Holy God. This robe of righteousness has made you beautiful in the sight of your Heavenly Father. When you accept and wear this robe, you have the assurance of knowing you are forgiven and made clean.

As you climb those stairs you are worshipping God. Leave other things downstairs where they belong. Now is not the time to go back down and step into one of the previous rooms again. This is not the time to pray for someone or even to ask the Lord anything. We are here to seek the Lord and not what He can give to us. This is the time to share heart to heart and spirit to spirit. John 4:24 tells us that God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit.

Worship is to express your words of love to God for who He is, for His nature and His character. Worship can bring a new intimacy. We reach a much different level when we worship the Lord for who He is rather than what He has to give us. Let your worship be from the heart and not just words of praise or thanks for what He has done.

Read Psalms 96 and 98 and you will see an example of worship. These passages do not have any prayer requests in them, but are only words of worship for who God is. Begin to sit in the presence of the Lord and use your words of love to minister to Him. You might also feel the need to sit quietly with a sense of anticipation as you wait to hear the voice of the Lord and feel His presence, **"My soul waits in silence for God only."** (Psalm 62:1).

Lord, give me a heart of worship.





The Second Floor

Intimacy

This room is very special because it represents the place of intimacy and closeness with the Lord. It will cover the whole second floor of your house of prayer because there is so much to learn and experience here. It will be a room that never ends and will change as you grow into a deeper relationship with the Father, with Jesus, and with the Holy Spirit.

Being in the presence of the Lord is so very awesome but difficult to share. I can describe some of the feelings I have in this place of prayer, but this room might be different for each one of us. We are all unique in how we express our love to the Father, therefore, our experiences in His presence will also be unique.

There are moments when I have such a feeling of love and peace flowing over me. I know it is the Holy Spirit ministering to my heart and loving me, and I feel the need to humble myself and get on my face before the Lord. It is a holy place of sharing, and all I can say to the Father in these moments is, "I love you." There are other moments that the presence of the Lord is a quiet tug on my heart that brings a smile and feeling of contentment. There are other times of tears or laughter because His presence is so amazing. This is a room of prayer you never want to leave. You feel the Father close by and all around you, His love fills your heart and mind and you want to cry and rejoice at the same time because of the joy and peace you feel.

A couple of weeks ago as I was thinking about how to finish this material and struggling with how to write about this room. I woke up one morning and realized I had an unusual dream. I

dreamed about a family that was living in a home, but they only lived on the bottom floor no one ever went up the stairs to the second floor.

Something had happened in this home and neighborhood because there was not very much food in the house, and as you looked out the window, people were walking around in old clothing that was torn and ragged. Even the furnishings inside this home were starting to wear out and the family was living in such poverty. There were two children in this dream and they finally asked their dad if they could go upstairs and see what was up there. He and the mom gladly took them up the stairs to the second floor. The dream had been in black and white, but now it turned to color because as they opened the door and started up the stairs, it was a completely different world. Everything was new and lovely.

There was food and beautiful furniture and toys for the children to enjoy. Whatever had happened downstairs had not touched the rooms upstairs; they were well preserved. The children turned to their parents and asked them why they had never seen these rooms. All the years they had lived in the house, they only remember spending time downstairs. The dad told them that he had not brought them upstairs because they never seemed interested and he had been saving this part of the home for them; they had only needed to ask him.

When I woke up from this dream, I thought to myself, "That sure was an unusual one." As I continued to think about this strange dream, it took me a while to realize what an amazing connection it had to what I wanted to write about in this last chapter! How true it is that we spend our lives, our walk with the Lord, our life of prayer just living downstairs "trying to get by." There is another whole level of prayer and fellowship and intimacy that the Father has been saving for us, and we only need to ask.

Just as the children in this dream had new provision for their lives as they went up the stairs, I believe the Father has wonderful ways of refreshing us as we come into His presence. You know the many challenges you face as you “live downstairs” and try to have a life of prayer, sometimes feeling so weary as if you are living in poverty like the family in this dream. Maybe it’s time to walk up those stairs and see what the Father has been saving for you. There is a precious place of intimacy that you need to experience for yourself. It is my prayer and hope to encourage you to make the time today, to learn about this level of relationship that your Heavenly Father desires to have with you.

In the Epistle of Jude, verse 21, scripture instructs us to, **“Keep yourselves in the love of God.”** In verse 24 and 25 the Bible goes on to state that we are able to stand in God’s presence because of our Lord Jesus Christ. You will experience the love of God as you spend time in His presence.

Sometimes I have gone through the whole process of prayer that I have shared with you before reaching that place of feeling the Lord’s presence; and yet, there have been other moments as I began my time of prayer and only said “Father” and felt I had stepped into His presence. Again, it is important to understand there is not a formula that will take you into the presence of God. It happens as you live in a daily and committed relationship with Him. I cannot tell you a lot about this room because I have only discovered it in the last few years. It has helped me to realize there is so much more to prayer than just praying for people and my own needs. There is a relationship of closeness with my Lord that I want to know and learn about more.

Moses realized the importance of the presence of the Lord. In Exodus 33:13-16 you find something very interesting in the life of Moses. He has been given a word from the Lord to go to the land that had been promised to his descendants. Moses has been prepared to lead the Israelites, but he asks the Lord for

one thing, His Presence, **“If Your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.”** Moses realized the importance of having the presence of the Lord in his life. Not only would he need those times before the Lord to receive directions as a leader, but he needed those intimate moments of being in a close relationship with his Lord.

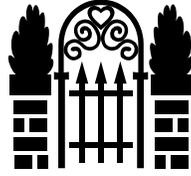
When you read verse 16 of Chapter 33 in Exodus, you see that Moses recognized the children of Israel would be no different from any other nation if they did not have the presence of the Lord with them. The same could be said of our lives; we will have no influence and will be no different to those around us if we do not spend time in the presence of the Lord.

Let your life of prayer grow to the place where you can say, “Yes, I feel close to my Lord. I have those moments in His presence that are so special and holy, they are too wonderful to try and describe.” Let your prayer be, “Father, how I long to be in your presence.”

My prayer so many years ago was, “Father, I am your child who loves you, and I want to sit at your feet, to be in your presence and to love you.” The Lord will never disregard that kind of request because He also wants to spend time with you, loving you and sharing His heart with you. It is what you have been created for, to know His love. Make time to enjoy this room of your house of prayer and to discover what it means to live in the presence of the Lord and to know Him intimately.

Lord, I desire to be in your presence.





Conclusion

Dear Friend,

As I sit here praying about the conclusion, I think of how many years ago I began writing this material as a teaching tool. I taught it twice and then stuck it in a file cabinet for over 5 years thinking I would never teach it again. I even considered throwing it away several times but in the Spring of 2002 I sensed the Lord directing me to take it and put it in a book format. I am surprised how much there was to write! Thank you for allowing me to open up my prayer closet with you and share the challenges I have faced in learning about prayer.

There has been a great deal of information presented in this book and it is my prayer that as we conclude our time together you will not feel overwhelmed. My hope in sharing *Building My House of Prayer* with you is that this material will be an encouragement and will help you to have a balanced prayer life. As you maintain some of these areas on a regular basis they will not always need as much focus as some of the other rooms. I hope this book will help you to understand the different aspects of prayer and will strengthen you in a life of prayer. This is not a formula you use to get to the end result, but is a process that will help you to reach a new depth of prayer.

You might be wondering if I cover each of these areas in my own prayer time on a daily basis. I want to honestly tell you that I do not. I try to visit every room in my house of prayer because each one is important but there are many days when I

do not spend enough time in each room or in all of the rooms. I do have a goal of trying to grow into spending sufficient time in each room and in having a consistent prayer life, but I still have much to learn.

Please remember that your life of prayer is not a duty to the Lord, it is a relationship. There will be days when you feel the need to spend more time in one room than you do some of the others. I have realized that I am going to spend the rest of my life learning about each one of these rooms.

Know that I too am with you in this growing and learning process in building my own house of prayer. Together, let the cry of our heart be based on Deuteronomy 6:5, "**Lord, we want to love you with all of our heart, soul and strength.**" May the Lord bless you as you build your house of prayer.

Terry

Lord, help me build my house of prayer.



HOW CAN I KNOW JESUS AS MY SAVIOR?

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16

It is the Lord's desire for you to be saved. **"Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"** I Timothy 2:4.

But your sin has caused a separation between you and God. **"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"** Romans 3:23.

Jesus is the answer for your sin problem. **"But God demonstrates how own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us"** Romans 5:8

What do you need to do? **"That if you confess with you mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."** Romans 10:9.

Pray a simple prayer like, "Father, I know that I am a sinner and that You sent Your son Jesus to die for my sins. I ask You to forgive me of my sins and wash me clean. Please come into my life and be my Lord and Savior."

Know that you have a new life in Christ. **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"** II Corinthians 5:17.

Be Baptized, **"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"** Acts 2:38.

Find a church that believes the Bible is the Holy Word of God and believes in God as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another"** Hebrews 10:25.

Grow your relationship with the Lord by spending time reading your Bible and praying.