

May-June 2022 — Volume 26 Issue 3

May is Pastor Moses L. & First Lady Eledia Harvill Appreciation Month

See page 30 for more information



From The Pastor's Desk

Greetings in Christ!

I trust you are doing well and staying healthy in these challenging times.

Our church has faced tremendous challenges over the past two years as we have done our best to navigate the pandemic. Doubtless, all the decisions we've made have not been perfect, but we have tried to seek the mind of God and seek His wisdom.

We have returned to worship in the Sanctuary, and we've wanted to do so with a sense of care while striving to gain some "normalcy." We often hear that people can't wait to "get back to normal." I recommend we prepare for God's next normal.

Many churches have seen drops in both attendances (online or in-person) and financial drops. We believe God will help us through any of the challenges we have faced along the way.

My goal as Pastor of Cross Street Church is to do my best to provide an atmosphere where people are welcomed and feel safe. We continue to follow the protocols of wearing masks and social distancing. We will moderate the protocols as the virus become less contagious.

Perhaps you think that you have adequate immunity due to having the virus or from getting the vaccine, then, by all means, you are encouraged to attend church!

Yet, please know if you are still in a place where you don't feel ready to return; we understand. If you would like to discuss your situation personally, please don't hesitate to reach out to me!

I don't believe God's long-term answer for anyone is to spend their church time at home watching online. The Word of God is still valid when it shares the following: Hebrews 10:25 (NKJV) not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

We give thanks that the church has advanced to have alternatives for Worship for when we cannot attend in person. We are prayerful as we all venture out shopping and attending other events; we will prayerfully consider joining others for Worship in the Sanctuary.

We want to see our church family! We are stronger and better together.

First Lady Eledia sends her Love. Hope to see you in Worship soon!

Much Love,

Pastor Moses L. Harvill



Visit our
Facebook page

Visit Our Website:
WWW.crossstreetamezion.org

Memo from GOD

Effective immediately, please be aware that there are changes YOU need to make in YOUR life. These changes need to be completed in order that I may fulfill My promises to you to grant you peace, joy and happiness in this life. I apologize for any inconvenience, but after all that I am doing, this seems very little to ask of you. I know, I already gave you the 10 Commandments. Keep them. But follow these guidelines, also.

1. QUIT WORRYING

Life has dealt you a blow and all you do is sit and worry. Have you forgotten that I am here to take all your burdens and carry them for you? Or do you just enjoy fretting over every little thing that comes your way?

2. PUT IT ON THE LIST

Something needs done or taken care of. Put it on the list. No, not YOUR list. Put it on MY to-do-list. Let ME be the one to take care of the problem. I can't help you until you turn it over to Me. And although My to-do-list is long, I am after all ... God. I can take care of anything you put into My hands. In fact, if the truth were ever really known, I take care of a lot of things for you that you never even realize.

3. TRUST ME

Once you've given your burdens to Me, quit trying to take them back. Trust in Me. Have the faith that I will take care of all your needs, your problems and your trials. Problems with the kids? Put them on My list. Problem with finances? Put it in My list. Problems with your emotional roller coaster?

For My sake, put it on My list. I want to help you. All you have to do is ask.

4. LEAVE IT ALONE

Don't wake up one morning and say, "Well, I'm feeling much stronger now, I think I can handle it from here." Why do you think you are feeling stronger now? It's simple. You gave Me your burdens and I'm taking care of them. I also renew your strength and cover you in my peace. Don't you know that if I give you these problems back, you will be right back where you started? Leave them with Me and forget about them. Just let Me do my job.

5. TALK TO ME

I want you to forget a lot of things. Forget what was making you crazy. Forget the worry and the fretting because you know I'm in control. But there's one thing I pray you never forget. Please, don't forget to talk to Me - OFTEN! I love YOU! I want to hear your voice. I want you to include Me in on the things going on in your life. I want to hear you talk about your friends and family. Prayer is simply you having a conversation with Me. I want to be your dearest friend.

6. HAVE FAITH

I see a lot of things from up here that you can't see from where you are. Have faith in Me that I know what I'm doing. Trust Me; you wouldn't want the view from My eyes. I will continue to care for you, watch over you, and meet your needs. You only have to trust Me. Although I have a much bigger task than you, it seems as if you have so much trouble just doing your simple part. How hard can trust be?

7. SHARE

You were taught to share when you were only two years old. When did you forget? That rule still applies. Share with those who are less fortunate than you. Share your joy with those who need encouragement. Share your laughter with those who haven't heard any in such a long time. Share your tears with those who have forgotten how to cry. Share your faith with those who have none.

8. BE PATIENT

I managed to fix it so in just one lifetime you could have so many diverse experiences. You grow from a child to an adult, have children, change jobs many times, learn many trades, travel to so many places, meet thousands of people, and experience so much. How can you be so impatient then when it takes Me a little longer than you expect to handle something on My to-do-list? Trust in My timing, for My timing is perfect. Just because I created the entire universe in only six days, everyone thinks I should always rush, rush, rush.

9. BE KIND

Be kind to others, for I love them just as much as I love you. They may not dress like you, or talk like you, or live the same way you do, but I still love you all. Please try to get along, for My sake. I created each of you different in some way. It would be too boring if you were all identical. Please, know I love each of your differences.

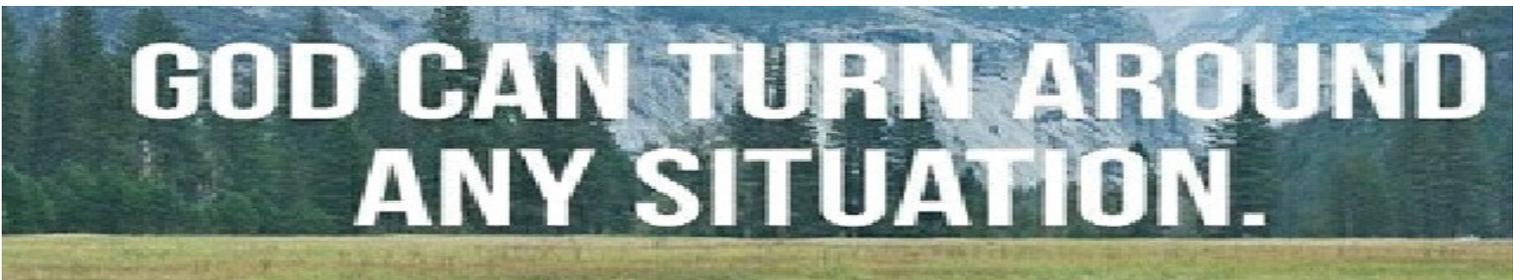
10. LOVE YOURSELF

As much as I love me for one reason of Love. Love Me. Heartache when I are very precious you, how can you not love yourself? You were only ... to be loved, and to love in return. Love your neighbors. But also love yourself. See you so angry with yourself when things go to me. Don't ever forget that!

Created by **I AM**, a God. It makes My wrong, **You**.

With all My heart I love **YOU** ...

God



**GOD CAN TURN AROUND
ANY SITUATION.**



SELF-CONTROL

VICTORY OVER THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH

What does the Bible teach about self-discipline?

The idea of self-discipline may be foreign to many, though the idea of self-control is not; the two are essentially the same. We teach children to sit quietly at the dinner table, we expect students to refrain from outbursts in the classroom, we hope young men and women will be aware of their passions and choose to not act on them in a way that is harmful, and we expect our leaders and pastors to be above reproach. Self-control is highly esteemed by God as it is part of the fruit of the Spirit along with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness (Galatians 5:22-23). It is this fruit that God is producing in His children.

When approaching the Bible, it can be helpful to ask two questions: "What does God reveal about Himself through the Bible?" And, "Is there something for me to obey?" God has much to say about who He is and what He

(Self-Discipline on page 15)

Staying Healthy and Self Discipline

In this age of Covid, it takes much more than the 'usual' and the 'normal' to stay healthy and avoid being sick. One needs to be extra vigilant about exposure to bacteria. Make sure to take all the available vaccines, including the first and even the second booster shots. Be vigilant about other people who have not completely vaccinated. Meaning, you keep on an appropriate face covering or a mask in public and other places. These are merely the basic, fundamental actions that may help us all avoid issues with Covid.

With Covid precautions almost under control, one needs to maintain a healthy level of immunity and physiological protection against the usual ravages of living and aging. This is an article I have unashamedly and brazenly copied from the web, edited and modified to fit our usual requirements for the benefit of every senior, male and female who will have the opportunity to read this essay for the church bi-monthly digital magazine. Quit a mouthful, but there is a reason for it. I am unusually excited about making this uniquely, valuable information,

(Healthy on page 17)

Carl's Garden

Carl was a quiet man. He didn't talk much. He would always greet you with a big smile and a firm handshake. Even after living in our neighborhood for over 50 years, no one could really say they knew him very well.

Before his retirement, he took the bus to work each morning. The lone sight of him walking down the street often worried us. He had a slight limp from a bullet wound received in W.W.II. Watching him, we worried that although he had survived W.W.II, he may not make it through our changing uptown neighborhood with its ever-increasing random violence, gangs, and drug activity.

When he saw the flyer at our local church asking for volunteers for caring for the gardens behind the minister's residence, he responded in his characteristically unassuming manner. Without fanfare, he just signed up.

(Garden on page 16)

In what way is self-control a fruit of the Holy Spirit?

Galatians 5:22-23 is one of the most popular passages in the Bible. It lists the "fruit of the Spirit." Two things should be mentioned. "Fruit" here does not mean apples, bananas, or mangos. In fact, despite the long list of attributes, "fruit" doesn't refer to individual items. It refers to a general outcome or result. The *result* of the Holy Spirit working in a person's life is love, joy, and all the rest. The second thing to note is that these are the results of the *Holy Spirit*. They are not the product of hard work or self-improvement. We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit, but it is still the Holy Spirit doing the work in us.

Self-control as a fruit of the Spirit is a bit of a paradox. How can the ability to control *oneself* be the result of being controlled by someone *else*?

The Bible teaches that, in a certain sense, the unbeliever has no free will. There are influences beyond his control. Unbelievers are "slaves to sin" (Romans 6:16-20). Our sinful nature "predetermines" us to choose selfish, harmful behaviors, and our fallen world aids the process. Without Christ, we are not free to completely

(Self-Control on page 18)

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RETOOLING FOR CHURCH GROWTH 2021

- Renewing
- Reconnecting
- Reopening

*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added to you. ~Matthew 6:33*

Growing the Church via Zoom & Virtual Church

Starting Stronger:

RENEWING

*Bible Study— Growing in Christ: Lessons on Assurance—Lessons on Christian Living
‘Living for Christ isn’t easy, but it is possible!’ Learn how with GROWING with CHRIST
Lessons will be emailed & available for you to pick up at the church.*

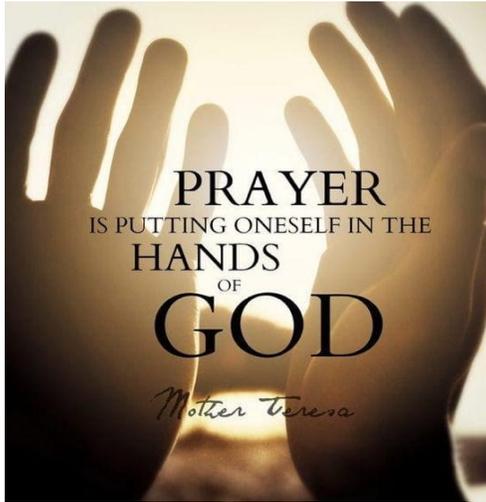
*We begin the year with Spiritual Renewal
-Prayer & Bible Study*

RECONNECTING

Growing the church by coming back together in love & fellowship

REOPENING

Returning with zeal for Christ and His Kingdom mission



Walking in Self-Control

Key Scripture: "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls" (Proverbs 25:28)

Key Thought: Self-Control

(Temperance) is a fruit of the Spirit, See Galatians 5:23)

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for your power which has given me all things that pertain to life and godliness. ¹ You teach me that godliness is profitable and valuable in every way, for it holds promise for my present life and the life which is to come. ² I want to obey you, Father, by being a godly person who exercises self-control at all times.

I confess that too many times I've failed to practice self-control, and I recognize my need to have the fruit of self-control manifested in my life thought the power of your Holy Spirit. ³ Father, I repent for the many times when I have acted inappropriately by failing to exercise self-control, and I thank you for forgiving me and cleansing me of all unrighteousness. ⁴

I take delight, dear God, in your exceedingly great and precious

promises whereby you have made me a partaker of your divine nature, through which you enable me to escape the corruption of the world. ⁵

In all diligence, Father, I will exercise faith in your promises so that I may grow in virtue, knowledge, and self-control. In this way, I know you will help me to develop greater patience, kindness, and to exercise godliness in all areas of my life. ⁶

Dear Lord, I thank you for the fruit of self-control which is growing in my life.

References: (1) 2 Peter 1:3; (2) 1 Timothy 4:8; (3) Galatians 5:23; (4) 1 John 1:9; (5) 2 Peter 1:4; (6) 2 Peter 1:5-7.

Bible Prayers for all your needs
Victory House Publishers

PRAYERS BY BARBARA PERRY

"Prayer of Gratitude Even When Life is Hard"
Psalm 107:8-9 says, "Let them give thanks to the Lord for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things," Amen.

Let us pray, Dear Lord, Thank You for Your unfailing love for us. It is always constant, and it always remains unchanging. It overwhelms us when we think of how much You truly love us. Thank You for the wonderful deeds that

You are doing for us. You created us and gave us an amazing world to live in. You have provided a way for us to eternal life through Jesus. You satisfy our thirst and You fill us with good things. We trust our lives in Your hands. We trust our every moment and our every circumstance to be provided for through Your love and provision. In overwhelming thanksgiving for You, we pray, Amen, Amen, Amen.

"Prayer to Have Faith in Difficult Moments"
Hebrews 11:8 says, "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went," even though he did not know where he was going, Amen.

Dear Lord, we thank You that You never leave us or forsake us. We ask that You always remind us of our ability to

protect, comfort, and lead us. Thank You for going before us in every scenario. Lord we ask that You help us to trust You in difficult situations. Teach us to have faith when we feel out of control. We also ask that You give us the courage and help us to keep our eyes on You. You are our safe place and our refuge. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen, Amen, Amen.

"Prayer to Stop Drifting from God"
"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandment hang all the law and the prophets." Matthew 22:37-40.

Dear God, Forgive us for drifting away from you, for allowing other things to become more important in our

lives. Help us to live aware, to choose wisely, to stay close to You and anchored in Your Truth. See apart from You, we have no hope. Thank You that You wait for us, that You call us to ourselves, and You strengthen us in our weakness. Thank You that You alone are our Refuse and Safety, and You fil us with hope. We come to You today, choosing to walk in Your presence and Light, its In Jesus' Name we ask and pray. Amen, Amen, Amen.

"Prayer for When You're Downhearted"
Psalm 43:5 says, "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my savior and my God." Amen.

Dear Heavenly Father, Lately, discouragement has come against us like a fierce enemy. We've prayed and prayed but haven't seen our prayer answered. Today we need You, Lord. Help us turn our discouragement around and find hope once again. We know You are working on

our behalf, even when we don't see it because You know what's best for us, and Your timing is perfect. So let the words of Psalm 43:5 be our prayer today. "Put Your hope in God, for we will yet praise Him, our Savior and God." we will praise You, Lord! Whatever the outcome, our hope is not in the answer to our prayer. My hope is in You. Thank You for filling the void in our heart. You are good and faithful Father, it's In Jesus name we pray. Amen, Amen, Amen.

Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy. Psalm 99:9



The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

"But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22, 23)

The fruit of the Spirit abides in us and it is up to us to cultivate it so that we may experience the blessing and the fullness of the Spirit. God is the husbandman..."He prunes, nurtures, waters and protects His own. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will energize and control every faculty of our nature when our will joins the will of God. Then the "beauty of the Lord will be upon us" (Psalm 90:17) and "we shall bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4)."

The fruit of LOVE when properly motivated "is pure, far reaching, forgiving. There is no limit to the good that LOVE does. God is LOVE. (1 John 4:7)

JOY never fades, it is never destroyed by circumstances, it is unaffected by wealth or poverty, sickness or health. It is found in the presence of God (Psalm 16:11)

PEACE "is a tranquility of mind as a result of a right relationship with God". The PEACE of God in our hearts challenges sin at every turn and deals with it immediately in order to maintain that right relationship. (Ephesians 2:14)

LONG-SUFFERING means steadfastness of the soul under provocation. It means forbearance and patient endurance of ill-treatment, without anger or thought of revenge. (Colossians 3:12, 13)

GENTLENESS is sweet reasonableness, calmness and graciousness. It calms troubled waters, settles turmoil and heals strife. (James 3:17)

GOODNESS does good to others. It is kindness of heart and good deeds. It may not always be a gentle word, but a stern rebuke done for the good of someone else. (Psalm 33:5)

MEEKNESS disarms the stormy, tempestuous person. The qualities of mildness and gentleness in dealing with others. It is not weak. It is a high quality of spiritual strength. (1 Timothy 6:11)

FAITH means faithfulness to Christ and His cause. It manifests itself in being a trustworthy steward of God. It is trust and obedience, belief in God's word and promises. (Hebrews 11:1)

TEMPERANCE is power, it is strength, having self-control. It means discipline. It provides balance to the Christian's life. It enables him to praise Him whether in discipline or testing. (Proverbs 11:1) (Information taken in part from World-Wide Keswick publication and Holy Scriptures)

Satan tries to imitate the real thing with an artificial fruit. As you can see, the artificial fruit is very much like the real thing and if we are not careful, we can fall into the trap of expressing limited love, temporary joy, numbness, insensitivity, manipulation, hypocrisy, half-heartedness, false modesty and choosing lesser goals.

THE FRUIT, *The Artificial Fruit,* **The Weed**

LOVE, *limited love*, **hatred**; JOY, *temporary JOY*, **sorrow**; PEACE, *numbness, carelessness*, **anxiety strife**;
PATIENCE, *laziness, insensitivity*, **impatience**; KINDNESS, *manipulation by kindness*, **pride**;
GOODNESS, *hypocrisy*, **evil**; FAITHFULNESS, *half-heartedness*, **infidelity**;
MEEKNESS, *false modesty*, **self-seeking**; SELF-CONTROL, *choosing lesser goals*, **lack of control**
(The Fruit of the Spirit, John W. Sanderson)

READ THE BIBLE IN ONE YEAR

MAY

- 01) 2 Chronicles 26-29
- 02) 2 Chronicles 30-32
- 03) 2 Chronicles 33-36
- 04) Ezra 1-4
- 05) Ezra 5-7
- 06) Ezra 8-10
- 07) Nehemiah 1-3

- 08) Nehemiah 4-6
- 09) Nehemiah 7-9
- 10) Nehemiah 10-13
- 11) Esther 1-3
- 12) Esther 4-7
- 13) Esther 8-10
- 14) Job 1-4
- 15) Job 5-7

- 16) Job 8-10
- 17) Job 11-13
- 18) Job 14-17
- 19) Job 18-20
- 20) Job 21-24
- 21) Job 25-27
- 22) Job 28-31
- 23) Job 32-34

- 24) Job 35-37
- 25) Job 38-42
- 26) Psalms 1-4
- 27) Psalms 5-8
- 28) Psalms 9-12
- 29) Psalms 13-15
- 30) Psalms 16-18
- 31) Psalms 19-21

JUNE

- 1. Psalms 22-24
- 2. Psalms 25-27
- 3. Psalms 28-30
- 4. Psalms 31-33
- 5. Psalms 34-36
- 6. Psalms 37-39

- 7. Psalms 40-42
- 8. Psalms 43-45
- 9. Psalms 46-48
- 10. Psalms 49-51
- 11. Psalms 52-54
- 12. Psalms 55-57
- 13. Psalms 58-60
- 14. Psalms 61-63

- 15. Psalms 64-66
- 16. Psalms 67-69
- 17. Psalms 70-72
- 18. Psalms 73-75
- 19. Psalms 76-78
- 20. Psalms 79-81
- 21. Psalms 82-84
- 22. Psalms 85-87

- 23. Psalms 88-90
- 24. Psalms 91-93
- 25. Psalms 94-96
- 26. Psalms 97-99
- 27. Psalms 100-102
- 28. Psalms 103-105
- 29. Psalms 106-108
- 30. Psalms 109-111

July

- 1. Psalms 112-114
- 2. Psalms 115-118
- 3. Psalms 119
- 4. Psalms 120-123
- 5. Psalms 124-128
- 6. Psalms 129-132
- 7. Psalms 133-136

- 8. Psalms 137-139
- 9. Psalms 140-144
- 10. Psalms 145-147
- 11. Psalms 148-150
- 12. Proverbs 1-3
- 13. Proverbs 4-7
- 14. Proverbs 8-11
- 15. Proverbs 12-14

- 16. Proverbs 15-18
- 17. Proverbs 19-21
- 18. Proverbs 22-24
- 19. Proverbs 25-28
- 20. Proverbs 29-31
- 21. Ecclesiastes 1-3
- 22. Ecclesiastes 4-6
- 23. Ecclesiastes 7-9

- 24. Ecclesiastes 10-12
- 25. Song 1-4
- 26. Song 5-8
- 27. Isaiah 1-3
- 28. Isaiah 4-6
- 29. Isaiah 7-9
- 30. Isaiah 10-12
- 31. Isaiah 13-15

Name of God	Meaning	Application
EL ELOHE YISRAEL	God, the God of Israel	The God of Israel is distinct and separate from all false gods of the world.
EL ELYON	The God Most High	He is the Sovereign God in whom we can put our trust. El Elyon has supremacy over all false gods.
ELOHIM	The All-powerful One	God is the all-powerful creator of the universe. God knows all, creates all, and is everywhere at all times. The plural of "EL".
EL OLAM	The Eternal God The Everlasting God	He is the Beginning and the End, the One who works His purposes throughout the ages. He gives strength to the weary.
EL ROI	The God Who See Me	There are no circumstances in our lives that escape His fatherly awareness and care. God knows us and our troubles.
EL SHADDAI	The All Sufficient One, The God of the Mountains, God Almighty	God is the all-sufficient source of all of our blessings. God is all-powerful. Our problems are not too big for God to handle.
IMMANUEL	God With Us "I AM"	Jesus is God in our midst. In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.

There are various names of God, many of which enumerate the various qualities of a Supreme Being. The English word "god" (and its equivalent in other languages) is used by multiple religions as a noun or name to refer to different deities, or specifically to the Supreme Being, as denoted in English by the capitalized and uncapitalized terms "God" and "god". Ancient cognate equivalents for the biblical Hebrew Elohim, one of the most common names of God in the Bible, include proto-Semitic El, biblical Aramaic Elah, and Arabic 'ilah. The personal or proper name for God in many of these languages may either be distinguished from such attributes, or homonymic. For example, in Judaism the tetragrammaton is sometimes related to the ancient Hebrew ehieh ("I will be"). In the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 3:14), Yahweh, the personal name of God, is revealed directly to Moses. Correlation between various theories and interpretation of the name of "the one God", used to signify a monotheistic or ultimate Supreme Being from which all other divine attributes derive, has been a subject of ecumenical discourse between Eastern and Western scholars for over two centuries. In Christian theology the word is considered a personal and a proper name of God. On the other hand, the names of God in a different tradition are sometimes referred to by symbols. The question whether divine names used by different religions are equivalent has been raised and analyzed.

CHRISTIAN SEASONS

Eastertide covers a fifty-day period (six Sundays) that challenges persons to reflect on the resurrection of Jesus. Ascension Day is celebrated the sixth Thursday after Easter and commemorates the last manifestation of Jesus to His followers after the resurrection. (Luke 24:50-51 and Acts 1:2-11.) Ascension Sunday is the Sunday following Ascension Day. The season ends with the Day of Pentecost.

Color: White is the appropriate color for the season, with gold as an accent color. White is symbolic of light, joy, purity, glory, and the bright light of truth.

The Season After Pentecost covers 10-14 Sundays. The liturgical color is red for the Season After Pentecost.

Trinity Sunday is the first Sunday after the day of Pentecost. This Sunday emphasizes the three-fold manifestation of the Godhead (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit/Ghost): three and yet one. White is the appropriate color.

Color: Red is symbolic of loyalty, power, witness, Christian zeal, blood, fire, the work and ministry of the Church, and the Holy Spirit.

LITURGICAL COLORS

Liturgy or liturgical comes from the Greek word “leitourgia” that means public service. Thus, liturgical refers to the rites or forms prescribed for use in public worship. Colors add brightness, variety, and visual appeal for the worshiper and Christian believer. But beyond this is the wealth of meaning and theological interpretation wrapped up in the colors used during the various seasons. Below are the prevalent colors and their liturgical interpretations.

Purple (violet or lilac) is the color used to denote royalty, praying, fasting, and penitence. It represents a symbol of the majesty of Christ, and Jesus’ humanity, suffering, and fasting. Advent and Lent are seasons when this color is used.

Green is symbolic of the freshness of nature, hope, life, and growth. It is used during The Season After Epiphany and Kingdomtide. Some denominations use green during The Season after Pentecost.

White is symbolic of light, joy, purity, glory, and the bright light of truth. It is used during Christmas/Christmastide, Epiphany (January 6), Baptism of the Lord Sunday, Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday, Maundy Thursday (if Holy Communion is celebrated), Easter/Eastertide, Ascension Day/Sunday, Trinity Sunday, and Christ the King Sunday. It is appropriately used for Consecrations, Baptisms, Marriages, and Holy Communion.

Red is symbolic of loyalty, power, witness, Christian zeal, blood, fire, the work and ministry of the Church, and the Holy Spirit. It is used on Pentecost, for some The Season After Pentecost, and Church anniversaries, dedications, and ordinations. The color red is appropriate for year-round use if there is no other color available.

Black represents grief, sorrow, mourning, or death. It is used on Good Friday and sometimes for funerals. (Some prefer to use white for funerals to celebrate the homegoing of a loved one.)

Gold is the color denoting worth, virtue, glory to God, and Christian might. It was one of the gifts given to the Baby Jesus by the Magi (Wise Men). The Kingship of the Christ Child and the price Jesus paid on Calvary is also represented in this color.

Other Colors

Blue is an alternate liturgical color that is symbolic of hope. It is often used as an alternate color to purple during Advent by some denominations.

Kente Cloth is being used by many African-American congregations as a parament. It is also used on clergy and choir robes or liturgical stoles. Most of the kente cloth contains several of the liturgical colors. Kente Cloth is a strong woven fabric from the West African country of Ghana. Its name comes from the word “kenten” referring to that which cannot be torn under any circumstances. It is woven in narrow four inch strips and stitched together to make the desired width of the fabric. Traditionally, this cloth carried symbolic designs that indicated a proverb or special message. In addition to the meaning wrapped up in the colors, it also represents the commitment of believers not to allow anything to separate them from the love of God and a reminder to hold on to one’s heritage.

Fasting for Health, Healing and a Heart for God's Vision for the Church

1. The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God. "Daniel proposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the Kings delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank." (Daniel 1: 8)

2. Faith is foundational to the Daniel Fast. "Then I set my face toward my God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting" (Daniel. 9:30 "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17: 21)

3. Fast and yield yourself to God as a servant. Daniel said, "as you see fit, deal with your servants" (Daniel 1:13)

4. Schedule your prayer / And end with thanksgiving. Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks" (Daniel 6: 10)

5. Begin with confession, (repentance), dedication, and prayer-"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way of everlasting" (Psalm 39: 23-24)

Remember: The Daniel Fast will lead to spiritual insight. "... to these young men God gave knowledge" (Daniel 1: 17)

Guidelines for Daniel Fast

Foods We May Eat

After answering hundreds of questions about the Daniel Fast on the blog, I developed these food guidelines. My hope is that it will serve as a more complete list. The original list used by many people was issued in a book about fasting. I know the author tried to do the best he could, but that isn't the same as getting hundreds of questions seeking clarification.

Please make sure to READ THE LABEL when purchasing packaged, canned or bottled foods. They should be sugar-free and chemical-free. Keep this in mind as you review this list of acceptable foods. Look for the list of ingredients on the label (not the nutritional value) to make sure all the ingredients comply with the Daniel Fast Guidelines.

Foods to include in your eating plan during the Daniel Fast

All fruits. These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Fruits include but are apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelon

All vegetables. These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Vegetables include but are artichokes,

asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, veggie burgers are an option if you are not allergic to soy.

All whole grains, including whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, oats, barley, grits, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes and popcorn.

All nuts and seeds, including sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, sesame. Also nut butters including peanut butter.

All legumes. These can be canned or dried. Legumes include dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, cannellini beans, white beans.

All quality oils including olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.

Beverages: spring water, distilled water or other pure waters.

Other: tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs and spices.

Note: Unsweetened plant-based milks and juices can be used in recipes or on cereal, but the only beverage on the Daniel Fast is water.

Foods to avoid on the Daniel Fast

All meat, animal, fish and seafood products including beef, lamb, pork, poultry, fish and shellfish.

All dairy products including milk, cheese, cream, butter, and eggs.

All sweeteners including sugar, raw sugar, date sugar, honey, syrups, molasses, cane juice, date honey, and stevia.

All leavened bread including Ezekiel Bread (it contains yeast and honey) and baked goods.

All leavening agents including yeast, baking soda and baking powder.

All refined and processed foods products including artificial flavorings, food additives, chemicals, white rice, white flour, and foods that contain artificial preservatives.

All deep-fried foods including potato chips, French fries, corn chips.

All solid fats including shortening, margarine, lard and foods high in fat.

Beverages including coffee, tea, herbal teas, carbonated beverages, energy drinks, and alcohol.

Remember, **READ THE LABELS** so you are aware of the ingredients in the package.!

Be blessed on your fast

Learn more about the Daniel Fast at <http://Daniel-Fast.com>

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5: 17)

10 Practical Guidelines on Fasting By Charles Ng of Singapore

1. Enter into fasting with a positive faith. If you are determined to seek God diligently by fasting, you have a Scriptural right to expect that God will reward you. In Matthew 6:18, Jesus promises to every believer who fasts correctly: “your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”

2. Do not wait for an emergency to drive you to fast. It is better to begin fasting when you are spiritually up than down. The law of progress in God’s Kingdom is from “strength to strength” (Ps. 84:7), “from faith to faith” (Rom. 1:17), and from “glory to glory” (2Cor. 3:18).

3. Do not set for yourself too long a period of fasting. If you are fasting for the first time, begin by omitting one or two meals. Then, move on to longer periods such as a day or two. It is better to begin with a short period and achieving it than to do a long period of fasting and not achieving it.

4. During your period of fasting, feed on God’s Word, the Bible. Where possible, read a portion of Scripture before each period of prayer. The Psalms are especially helpful.

5. Avoid boastfulness—apart from special periods of prayer, your life should be as normal as possible.

6. Check on your motives each time you fast. Take time to read Isaiah 58.

7. If you are on regular medication or suffer from diabetes or TB, it is wise to obtain medical advice before entering into any fast.

8. As you enter fast, you might suffer discomfort, unpleasant physical symptoms such as dizziness or nausea. Do not be deterred. Go through with the fast as planned. After the first day or two, these unpleasant physical reactions usually subside.

9. Remember that hunger is purely a

matter of habit. If you hold out, the sensation of hunger will go away. Sometimes you can fool your stomach by drinking a glass of water instead of snacking.

10. Guard against constipation. Before and after fasting, choose meals that will help you in this respect such as fresh fruits, fruit juices, dried figs, prunes, apricots, or oatmeal.

Total Fast: Abstaining from solid foods for 24 hours. Taking only water.

Partial fast: Abstaining from solid foods for an extended part of the day, e.g. from 7:00 am until 7:00 PM. Taking only water.

1 Meal Fast: Sacrificing one full meal a day, e.g. Abstaining from lunch.

Daniel Fast: Abstaining from meals and other delicacies. Taking only small portions of fresh vegetables, fruit and juices.

+ PRAY

COVID-19 RESPONSE

► **PRAY FOR THE VULNERABLE:** Ask God to protect those most vulnerable to the effects of the virus, especially the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

► **PRAY FOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS:** Ask God to give our local, state, and national leaders wisdom in how to deal with the virus.

► **PRAY FOR MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS:** Ask that God would guide and protect them as they care for the sick.

► **PRAY FOR FAMILIES:** Ask God to comfort and provide for those whose businesses, job stability, and schooling have been affected.

► **PRAY FOR THE CHURCH:** Ask God to help His people have courage, find ways to serve those in need, and continue proclaiming the Gospel.



A Poem of Praise

Father God, I love You so;
You care for me even when I don't know.
I often question Your intent,
Despite those promises You've already kept.
I try to make sense of all around,
yet my eyes focus narrowly on my own.
You forgive my impatience,
and my self-righteous thoughts;
And secured my salvation through Your Son's
death on the cross.
He redeemed all my sins and gave me new life;
an act that cost a most precious price.
With Your help, dear Lord,
I will trust in the perfect plan
that is a gift from Your great hand.
Thank You for each day's new mercies,
and the grace that wipes away all my inequities.
To You, Adonai, is my praise for always;
may my last breath be a whisper
giving You all the glory.

juliesanne.com



Sunday School is a Family Affair

We have classes for all ages – 3 to 103
Virtual Classes (See page 29 for Details)
(For Transportation Needs Please call the Church 860-344-9527)

Come Grow with US!

(Easter Sunday) The Paschal Lamb Lives!/The Eternal Hope

Background Scripture: Matthew 27; 28:1-10

EXALT!

Declaration: Matthew 27; 28:1-10

Affirmation: We embrace the possibilities of liberation found in Jesus' resurrection.

The Resurrection of Jesus

¹ After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." ⁸ So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worship him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

ENGAGE

The world is full of sadness and despair. How can we find hope in the midst of anguish? In His conquest of death itself, Jesus allays our fears and gives hope and courage to face the future.

Break into small groups and let each respond to the following questions within the group: Can you recall a time when you were stunned beyond belief? If so, recount the details of that experience. How does our fear of death affect or shape many of our actions? What thoughts of death occur to us as we mourn the loss of a loved one? Our own death? What comes after death? Changes that must be faced under such circumstances? Talk about events you have experienced or read about that have altered the course of human history. What major adjustments had to be made? Share your findings with the remainder of the group.

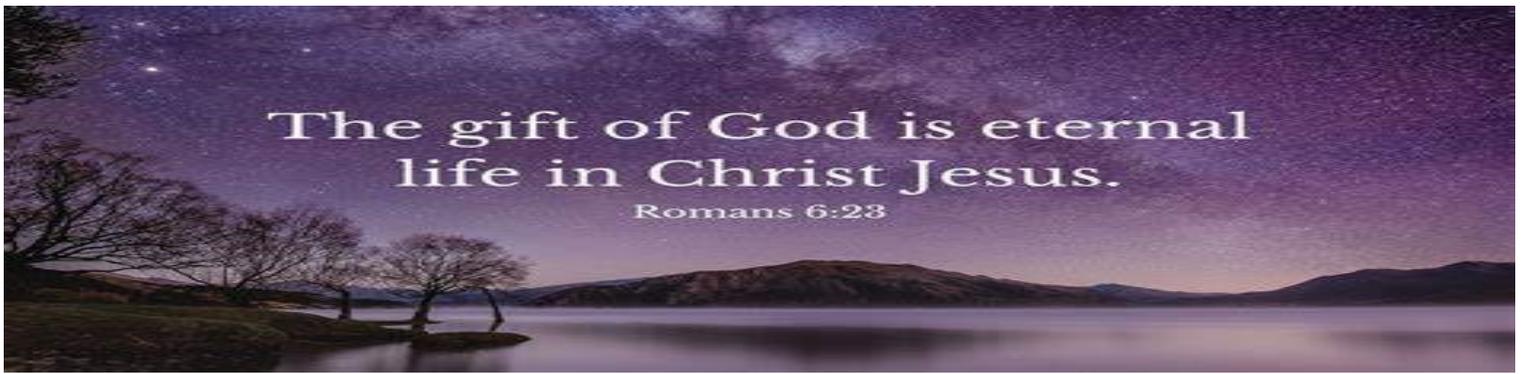
EDUCATE

Matthew 28:1-5: Day seven of Holy week begins with an angel and earthquake, the stone rolled away from the tomb's entrance, and the guards shaking in fear and pale like dead people. The phrase translated "after the Sabbath" could "the first day of the week dawning" clarifies the fact that the Sabbath is over. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary are the first to receive news of the Resurrection and the first to see the resurrected Jesus. They are told, both by the angel and by Jesus, Himself, to go and tell the disciples to go to Galilee where they will see Jesus. They become the first bearers of the good news of Jesus' resurrection. The women went to the tomb expecting a lifeless body. They carried spices to complete the embalming process, interrupted by a mandated-Sabbath rest (Luke 24:56). The "other Mary" is more fully identified earlier as "Mary the mother of James and Joseph" (Matthew 27:55-56). See also Mark 15:40; 16:1; Luke 24:10. they had helped supply Jesus' needs during his Galilean ministry and stood at a distance at his crucifixion. The "angel of the Lord" who greeted the women at Jesus' tomb is referred to as a "young man" in Mark 16:5. Luke refers to "two men" (Luke 24:4). John 20:12 mentions "two angels." although popular culture presents angels as female, the Bible pictures them as male.

Matthew 28:6-10: Even though women were not considered credible witnesses by Jewish society, the angel and Jesus, Himself, put them in that role. Such a countercultural detail is seen by many as a mark of authenticity of the account. The Old Testament insisted that testimony be confirmed by "two or three witnesses" (Deuteronomy 19:15). Not only would the two women telling the disciples meet that standard, but the angel offered the women two "witnesses"—an invitation to view the empty tomb and a reminder of Jesus' previous promise. Jesus often followed a demonstration of His power with a command not to be afraid (Matthew 14:27; 17:7; Luke 5:10). "In obedience, the

(Eternal Hope on page 12)

Pray for all of our children, teens, young adults in this school years that God's hands will be upon them keeping them from all hurt, harm and danger. Also pray for all of our families, friends, and all of God's children.



(Eternal Hope from page 11)

women hurried away in a mixture of emotion. Their fear likely stemmed both from awe of their contact with the angel and the magnitude of what they had heard. But they were also filled with joy that was sweeping away the grief of previous days. This joy propelled them to run their mission to tell Jesus' disciples about Jesus.... Matthew had not hidden the importance of faithful women throughout his Gospel. Jesus genealogy mentioned four [female ancestors] (Matthew 1:3, 5-6). Throughout His ministry, Jesus had significant encounters with women (examples: 15:21-28; 26:6-13; 28:1...)” (Ibid., p. 286).

ELEVATE

Because of Jesus' life and teachings, we can affirm that all things are possible with God. Trusting in Him, we can allay all our fears, even the fear of death itself. Break into small groups and share thoughts on the following: Explain how you feel that death has been overcome through Jesus. How do Christians enjoy a freedom not shared by those who fear death? Do we boldly proclaim Jesus' resurrection as the core tenet of our faith? Do we rejoice in having a fresh start in life because of Jesus' death and resurrection? Explain this as you see it exemplified.

iTHINK

1. On the board, write the words, “game changer.” What does that phrase mean? What are some examples of events that are game changers? How was the resurrection of Jesus history's greatest game changer?

2. Search online for a survey used to measure stress (such as the Holmes-Rahe Stress Inventory). Make copies of the full survey or a shortened form of it. Point out the types of life changes on the inventory and their impact on a person's mental health. Lead into Bible study by noting that Jesus' disciples experienced a few significant factors on that list when Jesus was crucified.

3. Instruct the participants to underline the words fear and afraid each time they appear in the lesson text. Have them draw an arrow from the word fear to the effect that fear had on people in the story. Have them draw an arrow from the word afraid each time it appears to what we are to do instead of being afraid. How does our view of the Resurrection change what we fear?

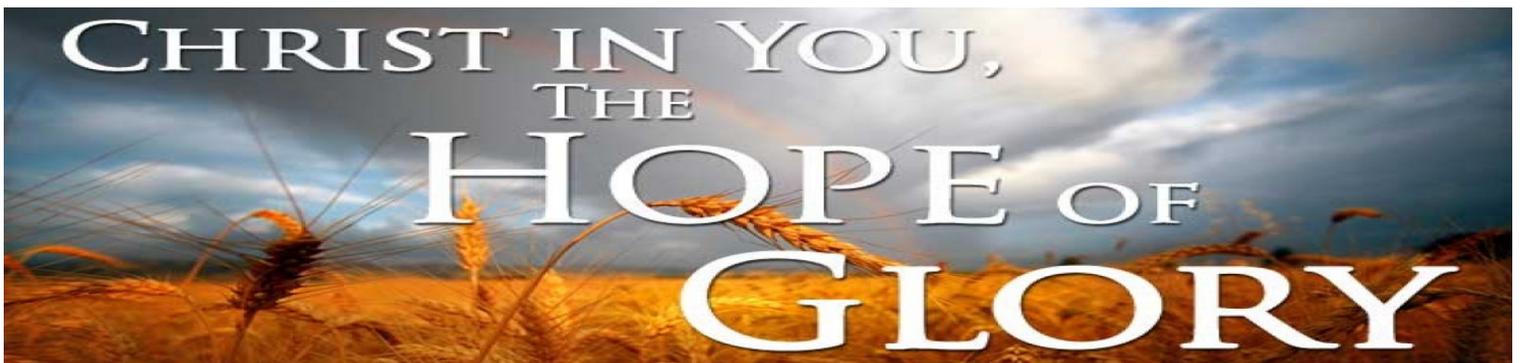
4. Divide the group in half. Have one group read Matthew 27:55a and the other Matthew 28:9b. Each group should try to list emotions the women probably experienced in the situation found in their assigned verse. Allow each group to share their list. Ask: What difference does it make if one believes Jesus is dead or if one believes Jesus is alive?

5. Play or sing the worship song, “Because He Lives.” How should our lives be different “because he lives”?

KEY VERSES:

**Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”
Matthew 28:10**

From The Young People-Adult Quarterly
(Ages 18 and up) International Sunday School Lessons for Christian Teaching



GOD IS GREAT, GOD IS GOOD

Read: Nahum 1:1-8

The Lord is slow to anger but great in power;The Lord is good, a refuse in times of trouble. Nahum 1:3, 7

When we were children, my brother and I recited this prayer every night before supper: "God is great, God is good. Let us thank Him for this food." For years I spoke the words of this prayer without stopping to consider what life would be like if it were not true—if God were not both great and good.

Without His greatness maintaining order in the universe, the galaxies would be a junkyard of banged-up stars and planets. And without His goodness saying "enough" to every evil despot, the earth would be a playground ruled by the biggest bully.

That simple childhood prayer celebrates two profound attributes of God: His transcendence and His immanence. Transcendence means that His greatness is beyond our comprehension. Immanence describes His nearness to us. The greatness of our almighty God sends us to our knees in humility. But the

goodness of God lifts us back to our feet in grateful, jubilant praise. The One who is above everything humbled himself and became one of us (Psalm 135:5; Philippians 2:8).

Thank God that He uses His greatness not to destroy us but to save us and that He uses His goodness not as a reason to reject us but as a way to reach us. Julie Ackerman Link

Prayer Tip: Remind yourself occasionally of Psalm 66:18: "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."

OUR FULL-TIME INTERCESSOR

Read: Psalm Hebrews 7:11-28

He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Hebrews 7:25

It was dawn, and I was painfully aware of being only a few weeks into widowhood. After another restless night, I felt too weary to pray for myself. "Lord," I sighed, "I need someone to pray for me right now." Almost instantly God's Spirit

comforted my distraught mind with the words of Hebrews 7:25, reminding me that Jesus was praying for me that very moment. With a wave of relief, I acknowledged Him as my lifelong intercessor. I will never forget how that bleak morning became gold-tinged with hope. Since then, I have drawn courage and strength countless times from my faithful High Priest.

Scottish minister Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-1843) testified, "If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no

difference. He is praying for me!"

We too can draw courage and strength from Jesus. He is our priestly representative before God the Father.

Are difficult circumstances creating fear in your heart? By all means, ask others to pray for you. But don't forget that you can count on the prayers of Jesus himself. By faith, think of Him as praying around the clock for you, as if He were in the next room. Joanie Yoder

Prayer Tip: create a prayer bulletin board somewhere in the house.

ALWAYS PRAY, AND DON'T GIVE UP

Read: Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. Luke 18:1

Are you going through one of those times when it seems every attempt to is met resolve a problem is met with a new difficulty? You thank the Lord at night that it's taken care of but awake to find that something else has gone wrong and the problem remains.

During an experience like that, I was reading the gospel of Luke and was astounded by the opening words of chapter 18: "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up" (v. 1). I had read the story of the persistence widow many times but never grasped why Jesus told it (vv. 2-8). Now I connected those opening words with the story. The lesson to His followers was very clear: Always pray, and never give up.

Prayer is not a means of coercing God to do what we want. It is a process of recognizing His power and

plan for our lives. In prayer we yield our lives and circumstances to the Lord and trust Him to act in His time and in His way.

As we rely on God's grace not only for the outcome of our request but for the process as well, we can keep coming to the Lord in prayer, trusting His wisdom and care for us.

Our Lord's encouragement to us is clear: Always pray, and don't give up! David McCasland

Prayer Tip: Make a daily appointment with God, and add it to your calendar

CONFIDENT ACCESS

Read: Hebrews 4:14-16

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:16

Mount Saint-Michel is a tidal island located about a half-mile off the coast of Normandy, France. For centuries it has been the site of an abbey and a monastery that have attracted religious pilgrims. Until the construction of a causeway, it was

notorious for its dangerous access that resulted in the death of some pilgrims. At low tide it is encompassed by sand banks, and at high tide it is surround by water. Accessing the island was a cause for fear.

Access to God for Old Testament Jews was also a cause for fear. When God thundered on Mount Sinai, the people feared approaching Him (Exodus 19:10-16). And when access to God was granted through the high priest, specific instruction had to be followed (Leviticus 16:1-34). Accidentally touching the ark of the covenant, which represented the holy presence

of God, would result in death (see 2 Samuel 6:7-8).

But because of Jesus's death and resurrection, we can now approach God without fear. God's penalty for sin has been satisfied, and we are invited into God's presence: "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace" (Hebrews 4:16).

Because of Jesus, we can come to God through prayer anywhere, anytime. Dennis Fisher

Prayer Tip: Don't forget to use prayer as an avenue of confession to God.

THE ARMOR OF GOD

EPHESIANS 6:10-18

“... Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.” v. 10, 11

The Shield of Faith (Eph. 6:16)

Faith is being sure that God will keep His promises. Faith in God protects you when you are tempted to doubt.



Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace (Eph. 6:15)

The Gospel of Peace is being right with God and being contented in troubled times. Jesus said peacemakers were blessed. →

The Helmet of Salvation (Eph. 6:17)

Put on the Helmet of Salvation by believing that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again.

The Breastplate of Righteousness (Eph. 6:14)

Righteousness is being honest, good, humble, and fair to others. It means standing up for weaker people.

The Belt of Truth (Eph. 6:14)

Truth keeps us from giving in to the world's beliefs. Compare your beliefs and actions to the truth of the Word of God.

The Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17)

which is the Word of God. God's Word is our offensive weapon. When we tell others what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit helps people see their bad thoughts and actions, and makes them want to be forgiven.

Ephesians 6:10-20 (New King James Version)

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, ¹³ against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— ¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

(Self-Discipline page 3)

does. He also has much to say about how we should act, as our actions are a primary measure of our obedience. Self-control is the ability to control oneself, particularly as related to emotions and desires and how those are expressed in behaviors, especially in difficult situations.

Do we like self-control? Generally, no. Humans don't like any control placed onto us whether by ourselves, by others, or by God. God knows this; we learn in Hebrews 12:11 that, "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." All discipline seems painful, whether it is correction from a loving dad, or when your boss points out your mistake, or a conviction from the Holy Spirit when we sin, or when we choose to restrain our desires for the wellbeing of others, or when we delay gratification for a better outcome later. We tend to hate self-discipline because we are choosing to not do what we want to do, or just the opposite, choosing to do what we do not want to do. Paul explains the struggle this way in his letter to the church in Rome: "I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it" (Romans 7:15-20, NLT).

The source of a lack of self-

discipline is sin. When we choose something other than God, that is our sin acting within us. Sin believes or acts like "there is no God" (Psalm 14:1; 53:1). Sin creates idols to replace God (Romans 1:21-25). But the Bible tells us that we no longer have to choose to sin. If we are in Jesus Christ, we have been given a way out. "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Self-discipline is a gift: "for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Timothy 1:7). Additionally, we read in the Bible that it is good to be patient and to demonstrate self-discipline (Proverbs 16:32) and that lacking self-control makes us vulnerable to harm (Proverbs 25:28).

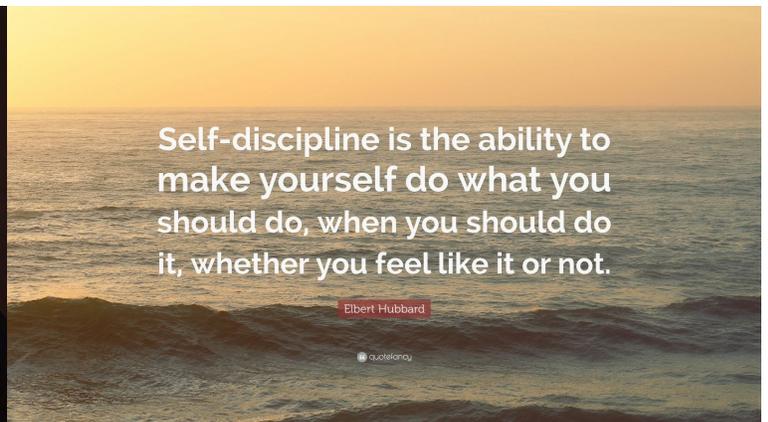
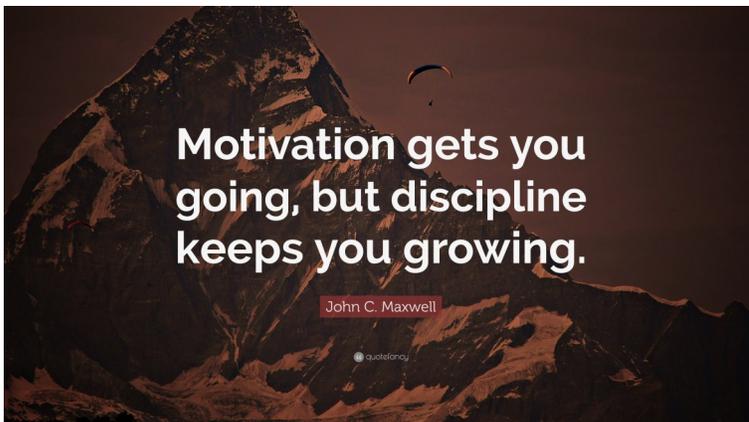
Is self-discipline important to God? Paul would say so; he includes self-control as a qualification to be considered for a position as an elder in the church, "For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it" (Titus 1:7-9).

It is helpful that Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit; he also provides a differing list which describes the behavior of the one who is not living by the Holy Spirit, which he calls the actions of the flesh. Paul writes, "Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity [hatred], strife [conflict], jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy,

drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21). It may be hard to know what self-discipline looks like in a practical sense; it is easy to know what the lack of self-discipline looks like. All we need to do is read the newspaper, watch the evening news or most any television station and we will read and see stories of people living with no self-discipline whatsoever. We read reports and watch stories of violence and adultery and satanic rituals and drunk-driving and theft and drugs and the list goes on... Paul tells us that we should "walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). The world does not walk by the Spirit, but Christians must.

What can we do about sin and self-discipline? True self-control is not about our own power to control ourselves, but the power of Christ to continue His work of sanctifying us, making us more like Him. Jesus lived His entire life "without sin" (Hebrews 4:15); "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22); He persevered in the face of great anxiety (Luke 22:44) and when He was confronted by false accusations (Matthew 27:14). We should seek Jesus when our lives are spinning out of control, when we refuse to do what we should do, and when we can't stop sinning. Commit to prayer and ask Him to change you, then you will be able to say as Paul said, "I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service" (1 Timothy 1:12).

From Got Question Ministries



(Garden from page 3)

He was well into his 87th year when the very thing we had always feared finally happened.

He was just finishing his watering for the day when three gang members approached him. Ignoring their attempt to intimidate him, he simply asked, Would you like a drink from the hose? The tallest and toughest-looking of the three said, Yeah, sure, with a malevolent little smile. As Carl offered the hose to him, the other two grabbed Carl's arm, throwing him down. As the hose snaked crazily over the ground, dousing everything in its way, Carl's assailants stole his retirement watch and his wallet, and then fled.

Carl tried to get himself up, but he had been thrown down on his bad leg. He lay there trying to gather himself as the minister came running to help him. Although the minister had witnessed the attack from his window, he couldn't get there fast enough to stop it. Carl, are you okay? Are you hurt? The minister kept asking as he helped Carl to his feet.

Carl just passed a hand over his brow and sighed, shaking his head. Just some punk kids. I hope they'll wise-up someday. His wet clothes clung to his slight frame as he bent to pick up the hose. He adjusted the nozzle again and started to water. Confused and a little concerned, the minister asked, Carl, what are you doing? I've got to finish my watering. It's been very dry lately, came the calm reply. Satisfying himself that Carl really was all right, the minister could only marvel. Carl was a man from a different time and place.

A few weeks later the three returned. Just as before their threat was unchallenged. Carl again offered them a drink from his hose. This time they didn't rob him. They wrenched the hose from his hand and drenched him head to foot in the icy water. When they had finished their humiliation of him, they sauntered off down the street, throwing catcalls and curses, falling over one another laughing at the hilarity of what they had just done. Carl just watched them. Then he turned toward the warmth giving sun, picked up his hose, and went on with his watering.

The summer was quickly fading into fall. Carl was doing some tilling when he was startled by the sudden approach of someone behind him. He stumbled and fell into some evergreen branches. As he struggled to regain his footing, he turned to see the tall leader of his summer tormentors reaching down for him. He braced himself for the expected attack.

Don't worry old man, I'm not gonna hurt you this time. The young man spoke softly, still offering the tattooed and scarred hand to Carl. As he helped Carl get up, the man pulled a crumpled bag from his pocket and handed it to Carl. What's this? Carl asked. It's your stuff, the man explained. It's your stuff back. Even the money in your wallet. I don't understand, Carl said. Why would you help me now? The man shifted his feet, seeming embarrassed and ill at ease. I learned something from you, he said. I ran with that gang and hurt people like you. We picked you because you were old and we knew we could do it. But every time we came and did something to you, instead of yelling and fighting back, you tried to give us a drink. You didn't hate us for hating you. You kept showing love against our hate. He stopped for a moment. I couldn't sleep after we stole your stuff, so here it is back. He paused for another awkward moment, not knowing what more there was to say. That bag's my way of saying thanks for straightening me out, I guess. And with that, he walked off down the street. Carl looked down at the sack in his hands and gingerly opened it. He took out his retirement watch and put it back on his wrist. Opening his wallet, he checked for his wedding photo. He gazed for a moment at the young bride that still smiled back at him from all those years ago.

He died one cold day after Christmas that winter. Many people attended his funeral in spite of the weather. In particular the minister noticed a tall young man that he didn't know sitting quietly in a distant corner of the church. The minister spoke of Carl's garden as a lesson in life. In a voice made thick with unshed tears, he said, Do your best and make your garden as beautiful as you can. We will never forget Carl and his garden.

The following spring another flyer

went up. It read: Person needed to care for Carl's garden. The flyer went unnoticed by the busy parishioners until one day when a knock was heard at the minister's office door. Opening the door, the minister saw a pair of scarred and tattooed hands holding the flyer. I believe this is my job, if you'll have me, the young man said.

The minister recognized him as the same young man who had returned the stolen watch and wallet to Carl. He knew that Carl's kindness had turned this man's life around. As the minister handed him the keys to the garden shed, he said, Yes, go take care of Carl's garden and honor him. The man went to work and, over the next several years, he tended the flowers and vegetables just as Carl had done. In that time, he went to college, got married, and became a prominent member of the community. But he never forgot his promise to Carl's memory and kept the garden as beautiful as he thought Carl would have kept it. One day he approached the new minister and told him that he couldn't care for the garden any longer. He explained with a shy and happy smile, My wife just had a baby boy last night, and she's bringing him home on Saturday.

Well, congratulations! said the minister, as he was handed the garden shed keys. That's wonderful! What's the baby's name? Carl, he replied.

The Best Mathematical Equation I have ever seen: 1 cross + 3 nails = 4 given.

That's the whole gospel message simply stated. Take 60 seconds give this a shot! Let's just see if Satan stops this one.

All you do is: 1. Simply say a small prayer for the person who sent you this, (Father God bless this person in whatever it is that You know he or she may be needing this day!)

2. Then send it on to five other people. Within hours five people have prayed for you, and you caused a multitude of people to pray to God for other people. Then sit back and watch the power of God work in your life for doing the thing that you know He loves.

(Healthy from page 3)

available for everyone to read.

Have you ever heard of the word 'SARCOPENIA'?

Regardless of your response, I need you to take it serious and act accordingly to every word and phrase coming up. SARCOPENIA is the loss of skeletal muscle mass and strength as a result of ageing.

It is a familiar but still a terrible condition. Let's explore how to fight SARCOPENIA.

1. Develop a habit of being able to stand, don't sit, and don't lie down if you can sit.

2. After the age of 50~60, it is not easy to lose weight, especially if you do not exercise but rely on eating less to lose weight. If all the muscles are lost, it can be very dangerous.

3. Do walking, running, cycling or climbing hurt your knee?

If you have never exercised before, you can only go walking, running, biking, or climbing in your mind as it will hurt your knees. But if you have enough muscle strength and slowly develop the habit of walking, running, cycling, and climbing, it can be a good exercise and not hurt your knees as much. Whether you hurt your knees or not depends on your muscle strength.

4. If an elderly person is sick and hospitalized, don't ask him or her to rest more or lie down and relax and not get out of bed. Lying down for a week loses at least 5% of muscle mass. And the elder can't get lost muscles back.

5. Don't think that you are filial by not letting the elders do any housework, and scold the helper if they do it. Usually, many elderly people who hire helpers lose muscle faster.

6. Don't just do a single activity every day when you go to a public park or the beach. Don't just shake your hands when you can also shake your legs. You must also pull the horizontal bar or take advantage of every sports equipment. That is because as long as a person moves, all the muscles of the whole body will be actively involved and strengthened. Many elderly people even have difficulty swallowing because of insufficient exercise. In the end, they could not even cough up a mouthful of sputum and die because of this.

7. SARCOPENIA may be more terrifying than osteoporosis. With osteoporosis you just need to be careful not to fall, whereas SARCOPENIA not only affects the quality of life but also causes high blood sugar due to insufficient muscle

mass.

8. The fastest loss in SARCOPENIA is in the muscle of the legs. Because when a person sits or lies down, the legs are not moving and the muscle strength of the legs are affected. This is particularly important. Don't become black feet.

So, squat at least 20 to 30 times a day. Squat is not just squatting down; pretend to be sitting on the toilet seat. You can use a chair and stand up as soon as your butt touches the seat.

You MUST pay attention to SARCOPENIA. Go up and down stairs; walking, running, cycling and climbing are all great exercises and can increase muscle mass, for a better quality of life for everyone at any age.

Move, don't waste your muscles. Aging starts from the feet upwards.

KEEP YOUR LEGS ACTIVE & STRONG.

As we put on years & keep getting old on a daily basis our feet must always remain active & strong. As we are constantly ageing we should not be afraid of our hair turning grey (or) skin sagging (or) wrinkles on the face.

Among the signs of "longevity", long fit life as summarized by the popular US Magazine "Prevention", strong leg muscles are listed on the top, as "the most important & essential one." Please walk daily.

If you don't move your legs for just two weeks, your real leg strength will decrease by 10 years. So just walk.

A study from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark found that both old & young, during the two weeks of inactivity, the legs muscle strength can weaken by a third which is equivalent to 20-30 years of ageing. So just walk.

As our leg muscles weaken, it takes a long time to recover, even if we do rehabilitation & exercises, later. So just walk.

Therefore, regular exercises such as walking are very important.

The whole body weight load remains and rest on the legs.

The feet are a kind of pillars, bearing the entire weight of the human body. So walk every day.

Interestingly, 50% of a person's bones & 50% of the muscles, are in the two legs. So just walk.

The largest & strongest joints & bones of the human body are also in the legs. So take 10k steps every day.

Strong bones, strong muscles and flexible joints form the Iron Triangle that carries the most important load of the human body.

70% of human activity and burning of energy in one's life is done by the two feet.

Do you know this? When a person is young, his/ her thighs have enough strength, to lift a small car of 800 kg.

The foot is the center of body locomotion.

Both the legs together have 50% of the nerves of the human body, 50% of the blood vessels and 50% of the blood is flowing through them.

It is the largest circulatory network that connects the body. So walk daily.

Only when the feet are healthy will the convention current of blood flow smoothly. So people who have strong leg muscles will definitely have a strong heart. So just walk.

Ageing starts from the feet upwards.

As a person gets older, the accuracy & speed of transmission of instructions between the brain and the legs decreases, unlike when a person is young. Please walk daily.

In addition, the so-called Bone Fertilizer Calcium will sooner or later be lost with the passage of time, making the elderly more prone to bone fractures. So WALK daily.

Bone fractures in the elderly can easily trigger a series of complications, especially fatal diseases such as brain thrombosis.

Do you know that 15% of elderly patients generally, will die maximum within a year of a thigh-bone fracture? Walk daily without fail.

Exercising the legs is never too late, even after the age of 60 years.

Although our feet/legs will gradually age with time, exercising our feet/ legs is a life-long task. Walk 10,000 steps a day.

Only by regular strengthening the legs, can one prevent or reduce further aging. Walk 365 days – every day of the year. Please walk for at least forty minutes of the day to ensure that your legs receive sufficient exercise and to ensure that your leg muscles remain healthy.

You SHOULD share this important information with all your 40+years friends & family members, as everyone is aging on a daily basis.

DISCLAIMER – most of the text was copied out of a WhatsApp post circulated late 2021. Any questions, please reach out to me at.

Kwame6@att.net

release our thoughts and actions from sinful influences and simply choose what is good.

That's where the Holy Spirit comes in. As He works in a believer's life, the fruit, or result, is that the believer is able to pull away from the determinant of the sinful nature and make a truly independent choice. That is the first step of self-control.

The freed self then has choices to make, and he finds that the range of choices has broadened. Instead of choosing one sin over another, the new man in Christ can make choices based on love for God and rooted in the wisdom of God.

A decision made in the freedom of self-control will do what it can to ensure future freedom. Whenever we follow unhealthy appetites or society's lies, we limit our options in the future. A sinful act is another step down a dead-end road; the more steps we take, the harder it gets to make an independent choice in the future.

We are best served and even freest when we use our self-control to submit to Christ. His Word brings life. Christ allows us to be what we were designed to be, to display the glory we were created with. His Spirit produces self-control in us, the ability to say "no" to fleshly lusts and live in moderation and wise constraint. Indulging in sin enslaves and destroys us. Self-control frees us to live for Christ.

From Got Question Ministries

How do I get control of sinful impulses?

At times we feel compelled to sin. We have impulses toward sin that are seemingly uncontrollable. We may feel an urge to overspend, to overeat, to indulge in pornography, or to gossip, and feel we have no power but to give in. Even the apostle Paul struggled with impulse control: "For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Romans 7:15). So how are we to manage our sinful impulses?

First, we must steep ourselves in the truth. We are no longer bound to the sinful nature (Romans 6:17-18). In Christ we have been made new (2 Corinthians 5:17). We are declared righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21). When we know the truth, we can experience freedom (John 8:32). If we believe that we are who God declares us to be, we can more easily act accordingly. When we recognize a sinful impulse, we can

declare it to be from the sinful nature and therefore no longer a part of us.

Not only do we need to know the truth about our identities in Christ, we need to take practical steps to live out that truth. This will largely occur through the process of sanctification. We cooperate with God's perfecting work in us (Philippians 1:6) by obeying His commands. This means that we focus our minds on things that are pleasing to Him (Philippians 4:8). We cast our anxieties on Him (Psalm 55:22; 1 Peter 5:7). Often, acting on an impulse is an attempt to manage anxiety. When we take our burdens to the Lord, we experience more peace and therefore have less need to manage our anxiety with sinful stopgaps.

We can also use our minds and ask for God's wisdom in determining what may be the cause of our sinful impulses. Controlling impulses may mean modifying our lifestyles to remove ourselves from tempting

situations, discovering an unmet need that an impulse is attempting to fill, or relying on friends to help hold us accountable. In all of this, we should not forget that God has given us the power of the Holy Spirit. We are not alone in our battle against our sinful impulses. "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Timothy 1:7).

Finally, we can remind ourselves of the reason we want to gain control over sinful impulses. Hebrews 12:11 says, "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." At first, controlling sinful impulses may not be pleasant.

However, we know that our self-discipline will eventually produce good fruit. The end reward is worth the momentary pain of delayed gratification.

From Got Question Ministries

How do I control my thoughts?

Christians are called to "take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). We know that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). But often our minds seem to be out of our control. Thoughts come unbidden and unwanted. They entice us into sin or taunt us with doubts. So how do we control these thoughts and truly take them captive?

A common counseling technique for dealing with thoughts is to allow thoughts to be. Rather than attach meaning to our thoughts as if they were an action or a value statement, we simply have a thought and take it at face value. This reduces some of the power a thought may have over us. We receive our thoughts as information and then determine how to respond. Our thoughts do not direct us; we direct our thoughts.

Second Corinthians 5:17 declares, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." One way to take our thoughts captive is to remind ourselves that we are new creations. Yes, we are in the process of sanctification and do not yet feel new, but in the eyes of God we are righteous. When an unbidden thought comes into our minds, we first recognize the thought and then analyze it in light of the truth that we are new creations. Is this a thought that is godly? Is this a thought that comes from the new creation or from my sinful nature? Once we determine that, we are better able to dismiss or act on the thought.

Another helpful method is prayer. When we live in a spirit of prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17), it is easy to give our thoughts to God. What is not of Him will be more recognizable because we are living closely with Him. And He

will be right there to take that thought away.

Romans 12:2 says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." When we steep ourselves in the truth of God's Word, our minds are renewed. When we know truth, we are set free (John 8:32). Perhaps the best way to take control of our thoughts is to fill our minds with the truth and the thoughts of God through His Word.

It should be noted that sometimes intrusive, overwhelming, odd, or otherwise disturbing thoughts can be related to certain medical conditions or other physiological abnormalities. Appropriate medical care should be sought in such cases.

From Got Question Ministries

Question: "Is the ACTS formula for prayer a good way to pray?"

Answer: The ACTS formula for prayer has been taught to children and new believers for many years. *ACTS* is an acronym that gives a basic model on how to pray: with Adoration, with Confession, with Thanksgiving, and with Supplication. While prayer formulas can help us learn to pray, they do not necessarily make our prayers more effective or ensure that our prayers will be answered. This model for prayer is loosely based on the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), except for thanksgiving.

The ACTS model for prayer includes these elements:

Adoration – The *A* in the ACTS model stands for adoration, which means worship—glorying and exalting God. Through adoration, we show our loyalty and admiration of our Father. As we pray, we are called to worship God in adoration. This could be a song of praise to Him, praying a psalm of worship, declaring His attributes, or a myriad of other forms of worship.

Confession – The *C* in the ACTS model stands for confession. The word *confess* means “to agree with.” When we confess our sins, we agree with God that we are wrong and that we have sinned against Him by what we have said, thought, or done. God forgives us and restores our fellowship with Him (1 John 1:9).

Thanksgiving – The *T* represents thanksgiving. Philippians 4:6 says, “With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (ESV). How is thanksgiving different from adoration? The difference is that worship focuses on who God is; thanksgiving focuses on what God has done. We can thank God for many things including His love, salvation, protection, and provision.

Supplication – The *S* stands for supplication, which refers to prayer for our and others’ needs. A supplication is a request or petition. We may pray for mercy (Psalm 4:1), leading (Psalm 5:8), wisdom (James 1:5), and much more. Paul encouraged us to make “supplication for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18, ESV), which means to pray diligently for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Is the ACTS formula for prayer biblical? The acronym itself isn’t found in the Bible, but it can serve as a guide, especially when we are learning how to pray. Remember, prayer isn’t a formula, and each prayer doesn’t have to cover every type of prayer. God wants us to talk from our hearts and express ourselves to Him. As we grow in our love for Jesus Christ, we will naturally desire to talk to Him more.



Question: "What is the five-finger prayer?"

Answer: The five-finger prayer is a method to help people remember categories of people to pray for. It is a memory device used as an aid to prayer.

The little finger, or the pinkie, is the smallest finger, and it represents the individual who is praying. We need to pray for ourselves, but in humility we need to remember that we are the least important.

The ring finger this is usually the weakest of our fingers, and it reminds us to pray for the weak and the sick among us.

The middle finger is the tallest finger, and it reminds us to pray for our leaders.

The pointer finger, or the index finger, reminds us to pray for people who point the way—teachers and church leaders.

The thumb is the thickest and strongest digit, and when the hand is at rest, the thumb is the nearest to the rest of the body, reminding us to pray for family and friends—people who are closest to us.

The five-finger prayer has been popularized by Pope Francis. There is nothing specifically Roman Catholic about the five-finger prayer; it is simply one method to help people remember whom to pray for, similar to a prayer list. Since we all have our hands with us, the reminder of those in need of prayer is constant.

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LOVE LIKE MOM

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

Juanita told her nephew about growing up during the great Depression. Her poor family only had apples to eat, plus whatever wild game her dad might provide. Whenever he bagged a squirrel for dinner, her mom would say, "Give me that squirrel head. That's all I want to eat. It's the best piece of meat." years later Juanita realized there wasn't any meat on a squirrel's head. Her mom didn't eat it. She only pretended it was a delicacy "so us kids could get more to eat and we wouldn't worry about her."

As we celebrate Mother's Day tomorrow, may we also recount stories of our mother's devotion. We thank God for them and strive to love more like them.

Paul served the Thessalonian church "as a nursing mother cares for her children" (1 Thessalonians 2:7). He loved fiercely, fighting through "strong opposition" to tell them about Jesus and to share his own life with them (vv. 2, 8). He "worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while [he] preached the gospel of God to [them]" (v. 9). Just like Mom.

Few can resist a mother's love, and Paul modestly said his efforts were "not without results" (v. 1). We can't control how others respond, but we can choose to show up, day after day, to serve them in a sacrificial way. Mom would be proud, and so will our heavenly Father. Mike Wittmer

Who has loved you sacrificially? Who are you loving as your heavenly Father loves you?

Father, no one could love me more than You.

Today's Scripture: **1 Thessalonians 2:1-9**

¹You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. ²We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our

God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. ³For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. ⁴On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. ⁵You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. ⁶We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. ⁷Instead, we were like young children among you.

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, ⁸so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. ⁹Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

INSIGHT

First Thessalonians was mostly likely the earliest of Paul's letters, written about AD 50 to the church formed in Thessalonica during Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 17). In response to a mob protesting Paul and Silas' claim that Jesus—not Caesar—is the true king (v. 7), Paul and Silas were forced to leave the city to protect the church from being persecuted. Leaving the young faith community was so painful that Paul describes his separation as being "orphaned...for a short time" (1 Thessalonians 2:17). Later, Timothy was sent to minister to the community of new believers there (3:1-5). After hearing Timothy's good report of their faith growing and thriving (v. 6), Paul reconnected with and encouraged the Thessalonian believers through this letter. Monica La Rose

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan
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OUR FATHER

This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father..." Matthew 6:9

Most mornings I recite the Lord's Prayer. I'm not worth much for the new day until I've grounded myself in those words. Recently I'd said only the first two words—"Our Father"—when my phone rang. It startled me as it was 5:43 a.m. Guess who? The phone display read "Dad." before I had a chance to answer, the call quickly ended. I guessed my dad had called by mistake. Sure enough, he had. Random coincidence? Maybe, but I believe we live in a world awash in the mercy of God. That particular day I needed that reassurance of our Father's presence.

Think about that for a minute. Of all the ways Jesus could have taught His disciples to begin their prayer, He chose those two words—"Our Father" (Matthew 6:9) as the starting point. Random? No, Jesus was never less than intentional with His words. We all have different relationships with our earthly fathers—some good, some far less than that. However, praying in the way we should is not addressing "my" father or "your" father, but "our" Father, the One who sees us and hears us, and who knows what we need before we even ask Him (v. 8).

What an amazing reassurance, especially on those days when we might

feel forgotten, alone, abandoned, or simply just not worth much. Remember, regardless of where we are and what time of day or night it might be, our Father in heaven is always near.

How can you make the Lord's Prayer a part of your prayer life? What feelings do those two words—"Our Father"—strive in you?

Father, thank You for Your promise to hear me when I pray, regardless of where I may be.

Today's Scripture: **Matthew 6:5-13**

⁵***"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.***

⁹***"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹***

Give us today our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

INSIGHT

A shorter version of what we call the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) appears in Luke 11:2-4. The Matthew account doesn't include the disciples' request: "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). Yet it's clear in Matthew that Jesus is doing just that: teaching His disciples (then and now) how to pray. Matthew 6 is in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount (Chs. 5-7), the discourse Jesus gave as He sat down on a mountainside and taught His disciples and the vast crowd following Him (4:25) what it meant to be His disciple. Along with Jesus' instruction on prayer are the Beatitudes (5:3-12) and teachings on anger, lust, divorce, oaths, loving one's enemies, giving, fasting, judging others, and not being anxious. When He was finished speaking, "the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority" (7:28-29) Alyson Kieda

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SELF CONTROL IS STRENGTH

How Do You Develop Self-Control

God did not give us a spirit that makes us afraid but a spirit of power and love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:7 (NCV)

Successful people have one obvious trait in common: personal discipline. They are willing to do things that average people are unwilling to do.

It's my observation that successful people express their self-discipline in six ways:

- **Successful people master their moods** – They live by their commitments, not their emotions. They do the right thing, even when they don't feel like it. "A person without self-control is as defenseless as a city with broken-down walls" (Proverbs 25:28 NLT).
- **Successful people watch their words** – They put their minds in gear before opening their mouths: "Those who control their tongue will have a long life... ." (Proverbs 13:3 NLT).
- **Successful people restrain their reactions** – How much can you take before you lose your cool? "People with good sense restrain their anger; they earn esteem by overlooking wrongs" (Proverbs 19:11 NLT).
- **Successful people stick to their schedule** – If you don't determine how you will spend your time, you can be sure that others will decide for you! "So be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days" (Ephesians 5:15-16 NLT).
- **Successful people manage their money** – They learn to live on less than what they make, and they invest the difference. The value of a budget is that it tells your money where you want it to go rather than wondering where it went: "The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get" (Proverbs 21:20 NLT).
- **Successful people maintain their health** – That way they can accomplish more and enjoy their achievements: "... Control your body and live in holiness and honor" (1 Thessalonians 4:4 NLT).

Now, where do you need to develop self-control?

The disciplines you establish today will determine your success tomorrow. But it takes more than just willpower for lasting self-control. It takes a power greater than yourself. Think about this promise from the Bible: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7 NLT).

The more I accept God's control over my life, the more self-control he gives me!

Rick Warren – Purpose Driven Life

**THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND;
THEREFORE BE SELF-CONTROLLED
AND SOBER-MINDED FOR THE SAKE OF
YOUR PRAYERS.**

1 PETER 4:7

Greatest Blessings

How can you obtain the things that make life rich and filled with peace, material necessities and right relationships? Jesus tells us how: **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matthew 6:33**

We are told to have God's righteousness or rightmindedness. Develop a right thought pattern. Right thinking, governed by intelligence, is positive not negative, unselfish not self-centered, creative not destructive, kindly not hateful. Employ these attitudes and everything that you need for the good life will be multiplied for you.

Depression Lifted

Many are sick because they are basically unhappy. For this condition a medicine is offered in these words: **A merry heart does good, like medicine...** Proverbs 17:22

Joy has healing value, but gloom is sickening. This is why Jesus so emphatically tells us to rejoice. Learn to live joyfully. Take a hopeful and optimistic attitude. Think happy thoughts, say happy things and put joy into people's lives. The more you do this, the more surely you will keep your own spirits high.

Clean Mind and High Spirits

You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. John 15:3

This Spirit Lifter tells us that the word of Jesus Christ, when recorded in consciousness and held there, can make you clean of all guilt. How? The answer is by forgiveness from wrong thoughts and actions, by changing thoughts from impure to wholesome thinking, by filling the mind with faith so you experience a truly marvelous brain-and-soul-washing.

The ugliness of hate is washed from the mind; all sin are forgiven. The inner cleanness thus gained is an amazing source of high spirits.

You Are Stronger Than You Think

Scarcely any joy equals this realization: You have it in you to meet all your responsibilities. This consciousness contributes immeasurably to high spirit and happiness. Is difficult to face each day with a sense of inability and weakness. With such an attitude, life seems too much, and discouragement sets in.

Here is the antidote for such a dismal feeling: **Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10**

This is a most important promise God makes to us. No matter how overwhelming your problem, you need have no fear. You are not to let anything dismay you, for God says He will strengthen and help you. In fact, He promises He will hold you up and make you adequate for any situation.

Accept this great fact. Hold this verse strongly in your consciousness until it sends its rugged courage throughout your entire life.

Forever Refreshed

To revitalize the spirit is a necessity, and this need is met by an amazing formula: but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. John 4:14

Every longing of the human spirit finds enduring satisfaction in the life-giving message of Jesus. This message becomes a perpetual well of self-renewing inspiration. From the water of life, our spirit is endowed with continuous refreshment. We never thirst again.

Love Given Returns to You

When we are on the "outs" or in conflict with other people, it tends to depress us. Try this cure: **Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another. Romans 12:10**

Practice kindly affection. Always take a generous, patient attitude. Practice consideration. Put the other person ahead of yourself. Courtesy has amazing power to dissipate ill will.

Free your heart of jealousy and resentment. The love you give will return to you, and your spirit will be lifted to new levels.

Refreshment of Spirit

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. Acts 3:19

When the rain bring the miracle of earth's renewal, it is, indeed, a "time of refreshing." a similar process occurs in human life. By wrong thinking and misdeeds, the freshness of mind and soul fades. If we are spiritually changed, "times of refreshing" come from the presence of the Lord. How clean, fresh and delightful life then becomes!

“

In Christ I am anointed and a powerful person of God.

I am a joint-heir with Jesus and more than a conqueror.

I am a doer of the Word of God and a channel for His blessings.

If God be for me, who can be against me?

I am blessed coming in and I am blessed going out.

My enemies are fleeing before me.

God has commanded His blessing on my storehouses.

He has opened His Good treasures and I shall lend and not borrow.

I am the head and not the tail.

He has given me power to make wealth.

I dwell in the secret place.

I have His protection and provision.

God is my refuge, my fortress.

I am not afraid of the snare of the fowler.

No Evil shall befall me and no plague shall come nigh my dwelling.

God has given his angels charge over me and they are bearing me up in their hands

lest I dash my foot against a stone, as declared in Psalm 91.

1 Peter 2:9 establishes I am a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

I am a peculiar person called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:24 states, I have been healed by the stripes of Jesus.

***Cancer, sugar diabetes, heart disease, sickness, afflictions, infections,
or any other disease cannot enter my body.***

I am without spot or blemish, an intercessor,

the righteousness of God, saved, and washed in the Blood of Jesus.

“No weapon formed against me shall prosper, and every tongue which rise against me in judgment You shall condemn.

This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,

and their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD.

I am saved from wrath by Him and justified by the blood of the Lamb.

***Lord I pray that those may prosper that love Jerusalem and that peace will be within them
and prosperity in their houses according to Psalms 122:6-9.***

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

“Remember God’s Faithfulness”

“But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day” Deuteronomy 4:9

Let us pray, Father God, You have shown Yourself faithful all throughout Scripture. Thank You for being faithful in our lives. Forgive us for all those times we have doubted You in the past and at times, taken things into our own hands, and not trusted You with our situation. You love us and want the best for us. Your love for us is immeasurable and unconditional and

everything that happens in our life You allow, even if it’s painful at times. Please remind us that “You work all things out for good for those who love You.” prompt us in our moments of doubt to never ever forget all the things You have done in our life. To never forget that You sent Your very own son to die a brutal death on the cross at Calvary because You love us to never forget all the answered prayers and comfort You have provided us over the years. To never forget that You are God, and we will one day

spend eternity with You. To never forget that Your “plans for us are good as they are plans to prosper us and not to harm us, they are plans that give us hope and a future.” Lord, we trust You today because You are faithful, and we know Your faithfulness never runs dry. We love You and we remember You, we remember all that You are, and we remember all that You have done today in our lives, we Thank You, Its In Jesus’s mighty name we pray. Amen, Amen, Amen.

“Exclamation Point”

“I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Psalms 27:13

Let us pray, “Father, thank You that it is possible to change the question mark we have into exclamation points. Thank You for the confidence we can have that if we keep moving forward in faith, we will see Your goodness. Today we believe that You will amaze us with Your goodness, its In Jesus’

Name we pray. Amen, Amen, Amen.

We may have a lot of questions about why certain things have happened in our life wondering if we’ll ever be happy again. Think about this: An exclamation point is simply a question mark straightened out. If we want God to turn our question marks, the things we don’t understand, into exclamation points, we have to trust Him. So instead of wondering why something happened and know that

on the other side is our exclamation point. We must stay confident that a fresh anointing is coming with increase, promotion, and a new level. Remember if we keep moving through the dark places, honoring God, we’ll see that question mark turned into an exclamation point and God will amaze us with His goodness. Stay in faith. Amen

“Remember What God Said”

“He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. Luke 24:6-7

Let us pray, “Father, thank You for the strength that rises within us whenever we remember what You have promised us in Your Word. Thank You that we can stay focused on what

You have said and walk by faith and not by sight. Today we will not allow negative thoughts to drown out Your voice and hold us back, its In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen, Amen, Amen.

The three women who went to the tomb they were met by the angel’s question, “Don’t you remember what He told you?” See when we’re under pressure, under stress, overwhelmed by a situation, too often we forget what God has said, and we go by what we see. We let negative thoughts drown

out what God has promised. Recognize that’s a test. The enemy would love for us to get so caught up in our circumstances that we forget what God told us. So are you remembering that He says He’ll supply all our needs according to His riches? Are you remembering that He says greater is He who is in you than what’s trying to stop you? It’s not complicated. Start remembering what He has spoken over you. Amen

“The Final Word”

“Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. John 4:50-51

Let us pray, “Father, thank You that You spoke worlds into existence and that You are faithful to Your word. Thank You that we can take You at

Your bare word and believe that Your promise is enough. We declare that we dare to believe what You have told us and we are believing that it’s on the way. Amen, Thank You Jesus.

When a government official made a desperate plea that Jesus would come to his house and heal his dying son, Jesus simply declared that his son would live and he should go home. All the man was given was Jesus’ word of promise, yet his attitude was to mix in faith with the promise rather than mix

in doubt or worry. See that’s what happens when we mix in our faith with God’s promises—not doubt, not worry, not fear. Dare to believe what God told us. Don’t be moved by what we don’t see, by how long it’s taking, by how bad it looks, or by what we don’t have. Just keep thanking God for what He promised, keep declaring what He said, and keep talking like it’s on the way because God has the final word. Amen.

“Loading Up”

“Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah” Psalm 68:19

Let us pray, “Heavenly Father, today we choose to focus on You. We open our heart and mind to receive Your daily benefits. We ask that You show us ways to be blessing to others and use us for Your glory, its in Jesus’

name. Amen, Amen, Amen.

This morning when you woke up, what was the first thing that went through your mind? Maybe you have some trails and tribulation, worry about relationship, or worries about your Finances. Well today, I want to encourage you, instead of focusing on what your circumstances have to offer, focus on what God has to offer you. The key to “loading up” these daily ben-

efits is setting our focus in the right direction. We can’t wait to see how we feel, what kind of mood our spouse is in, or what the traffic is like. No, we have to set our focus by saying, “This is going to be a great day. I am blessed and cannot be cursed! I know God is directing my steps and something good is going to happen to me today! Amen



THE BEAUTY OF HOLLAND

I AM OFTEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE OF RAISING A CHILD WITH DISABILITY - TO TRY TO HELP PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT SHARED THAT UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO UNDERSTAND IT, TO IMAGINE HOW IT WOULD FEEL. IT'S LIKE THIS...

WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A BABY, IT'S LIKE PLANNING A FABULOUS TRIP TO ITALY. YOU BUY A BUNCH OF GUIDEBOOKS AND MAKE YOUR WONDERFUL PLANS. THE COLISEUM, THE MICHEL-ANGELO DAVID. THE GONDOLAS IN VENICE. YOU LEARN SOME HANDY PHRASES IN ITALIAN. IT'S ALL VERY, VERY EXCITING!

AFTER MONTHS OF EAGER ANTICIPATION, THE DAY FINALLY ARRIVES. YOU PACK YOUR BAGS AND OFF YOU GO. SEVERAL HOURS LATER THE PLANE LANDS. THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT COMES IN AND SAYS, "WELCOME TO HOLLAND."

"HOLLAND!!!" YOU SAY, "WHAT DO YOU MEAN HOLLAND! I SIGNED UP FOR ITALY. I'M SUPPOSED TO BE IN ITALY! ALL MY LIFE I'VE DREAMED OF GOING TO ITALY."

BUT THERE'S A CHANGE IN THE FLIGHT PLAN. THEY LANDED IN HOLLAND AND YOU MUST STAY. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THEY HAVEN'T TAKEN YOU TO A HORRIBLE, DISGUSTING, FILTHY PLACE, FULL OF PESTILENCE, FAMINE AND DISEASE. IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLACE.

SO YOU MUST GO OUT AND BUY NEW GUIDEBOOKS. AND YOU MUST LEARN A WHOLE NEW LANGUAGE. AND YOU WILL MEET A WHOLE NEW GROUP OF PEOPLE YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE MET.

IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT PLACE. IT'S SLOWER-PACED THAN ITALY, LESS FLASHY THAN ITALY. BUT AFTER YOU'RE BEEN THERE AWHILE AND CATCH YOUR BREATH, YOU BEGIN TO LOOK AROUND, AND YOU BEGIN TO NOTICE THAT HOLLAND HAS WINDMILLS, HOLLAND HAS TULIPS. HOLLAND EVEN HAS REMBRANDTS.

BUT EVERYONE YOU KNOW IS BUSY COMING AND GOING FROM ITALY, AND THEY'RE BRAGGING ABOUT WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME THEY HAD THERE. AND FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE YOU WILL SAY, "YES, THAT'S WHERE I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO. THAT'S WHAT I HAD PLANNED."

AND THE PAIN WILL NEVER, EVER GO AWAY, BECAUSE THE LOSS OF THAT DREAM IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT LOSS.

BUT IF YOU SPEND YOUR LIFE MOURNING THE FACT YOU DIDN'T GO TO ITALY, YOU MAY NEVER BE FREE TO ENJOY THE VERY SPECIAL, THE VERY LOVELY THINGS ABOUT HOLLAND.

SOURCE UNKNOWN

“Call God ‘Abba’

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Romans 8:15

Fear can be a powerful influence in our lives. It’s really just the enemy’s perversion of faith. He says to us: ‘Believe what I’m telling you. This is not going to work. Your prayers aren’t any good. You don’t have right

standing with God. You are a failure.’ Fear always tells you what you’re not, what you don’t have, what you can’t do and what you’ll never be. But Romans 8:15 says that you are a child of God who can call Him “Abba Father.” The word Abba was a term little children used in addressing their fathers. It would be similar to our word Daddy. It is less formal than Father and denotes a comfortable closeness between a child and his or her father. Jesus said we could call God ‘Abba’

because He had delivered us from all fear. He will always take care of His beloved children, and we can approach Him without fear of rejection. When we run to Him with any problem or pain, He’s waiting with open arms to comfort and encourage us.

Prayer starter: Abba Father, I know that You will take care of me, Your beloved child. You alone can deliver me from all fear, so I run to Your open arms.

“Forgetting About Ourselves”

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

Paul said that he had been “crucified with Christ.” in other words, he had to stop thinking about himself in order to live for God. And we are encouraged to do the same.

At this point you may be thinking, “What about me? Who is going to take care of me?” this is usually what prevents us from living the way God wants us to live. It always comes back to me. We are so accustomed to seeing our desires satisfied that the very thought of forgetting about ourselves even for one day can be frightening. But if we can muster up the courage to try it, we will be amazed at the freedom and joy we experience. The secret to having joy is giving your life away rather than trying to

keep it. When you get the focus off of you and onto God, God can show you how to live a truly meaningful life. I encourage you to start your days by dedicating yourself to God. When you do, He will faithfully help you live a godly life.

Prayer Starter: Lord, I offer You my eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet, heart, finances, gifts, talents, abilities, time, energy, all of me! It’s not about me. It’s all about You.

“Taking Care of Your Body”

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your spirit, which are God’s 1 Corinthians 6:20

Some of us haven’t learned to love our bodies enough to properly care for them. To change that, we must confront the three biggest obstacles to healthy living. We don’t know how to care for our bodies. Bad diets, misinformation, and fast foods have confused people about what a wholesome diet is and how to eat the right foods improper amounts.

Our view of body image is skewed by media and advertising. We’re bombarded with unattainable ideals of beauty, while obesity is so prevalent that it’s almost considered normal. We need to rediscover what a healthy person looks like. Exercise is nearly obsolete. We’ve invented enough conveniences that we often live completely void of exercise. We don’t even walk anywhere if we don’t have to! But the truth is, a good deal of our well-being is dependent on exercising our bodies. If you struggle with these obstacles, make a decision today that

you will not be defeated. God tells us to treat our bodies well, and He will always help us do the things He tells us to do. So make a decision to rely on God’s strength and live a healthier lifestyle. **Prayer Starter: God, I want to honor You by taking care of my body and living a healthy life. I believe that I can make changes through Your power that is at work in me.**

“Do Your Best”

“that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;” Philipians 1:10

God is excellent. As His representatives, we should be too. So it’s important that we do our best in everything that we put our hands to. We must be motivated to do our very best in whatever we sent out to accomplish. Paul urges us to “learn to....prize what is excellent and of real value.” as we make excellence a way of

life, we will sense God’s joy and be good examples to the world. You must sow excellence in order to reap an excellent harvest. We can’t expect excellent results in life when we don’t live a life of excellence. The Bible teaches us to develop diligence, steadfastness and determination, all of which will help us live lives of excellence. So I encourage you to do your best with any project or activity that God places in your path. Be diligent. Don’t leave things undone, but finish what you start to the best of your ability. Set your mind to be steadfast and

determined. Commit yourself to excellent results. God honors an attitude of excellence. Choose to do your best, and He will always work alongside you. **Prayer Starter: God, I want to live a life of excellence. Strengthen me and help me to do my best in every situation with steadfastness, diligence and determination.**

Old Testament

There are 39 books in the Old Testament library. There are four types of writing in the Old Testament: Law, History, Poetry, Prophecy.

It is helpful to know which kind of literature you are reading before you start: is it poetry, or is it history?

LAW

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

The first five books of the Bible are sometimes called the Law of Moses. They give many of God's laws about how to live.

HISTORY

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

These 12 historical books cover the occupation of the Promised Land, the time of the Judges, Israel's kings, the fall of the two kingdoms and a return to Jerusalem.

POETRY

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.

Nearly one third of the Old Testament is written in poetry. These five poetical books ask profound questions about evil, pain, love, wisdom and God.

PROPHECY

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The 17 prophetic books account for almost a quarter of the Bible. They are divided into "Major Prophets" (the first five books) and, "Minor

New Testament

There are 27 books in the New Testament library. There are three types of writing in the New Testament: History, Letters, Prophecy.

Before you study a New Testament book it helps to consider what kind of literature you are reading: is it a letter or is it history?

HISTORY

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts

The first four books, called gospels, are not like our modern biographies. But they do give four portraits of Jesus. Acts is part two of Luke, about the early church.

LETTERS

PAUL'S LETTERS

Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

We have 13 of Paul's letters. Except for one personal one, Philemon, they were all written to groups of Christians.

OTHER LETTERS

Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude.

We don't know who wrote Hebrews. Tradition states that all the writers of the New Testament, except for John, were martyred.

PHOPHECY

Revelation

Written by the apostle John, this book has seven letters to churches and numerous visions about God.



THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

Today Scripture: **1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-26**

Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
1 Corinthians 15:20

Jaroslav Pelikan, longtime Yale professor considered one of "his generation's preeminent authorities on Christian history," was renowned for his extensive academic career. He published more than thirty books and won the esteemed Kluge Prize as a lifetime award for his voluminous writing. One of his students, however, recounted what he considered his teacher's most important words, spoken from his deathbed: "If Christ is risen, nothing else matters. And if Christ is not—nothing else matters."

Pelikan echoed Paul's conviction: "If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (1 Corinthians 15:14). The apostle made such a bold statement because he knew that the resurrection was not merely a one-off miracle but rather the pinnacle of God's redeeming work in human history. The promise of resurrection wasn't only His assurance that Jesus would rise from the dead but His bold affirmation that other dead and ruined things (lives, neighborhoods, relationships) would also one day be brought back to life through Christ. If there's no resurrection, however, Paul knew that we're in deep trouble. If there's no resurrection, then death and destruction win.

But, of course, "Christ has indeed been raised from the dead" (V. 20). Destroyed by the Victor, death loses. And Jesus is the "firstfruits" of all the life that will follow. He conquered evil and death so that we could live bold and free. This changes everything. Winn Collier

What difference does it make to understand the expansive hope of Jesus' resurrection? Where do you need resurrection in your life?

Dear God, allow me to see how Jesus' resurrection changes everything about my life now and forever.

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

INSIGHT

For Paul, the reality of the resurrection was paramount (1 Corinthians 15), and he seized every opportunity to tell others about it. We see this when he stood in chains before King Agrippa in Acts 26. As Paul made the case for the resurrection, Festus, the governor who'd sent him to Agrippa, interrupted and said, "You are out of your mind, Paul!" (V. 24). The apostle immediately appealed to direct evidence. "The king [Agrippa himself] is familiar with these things," he said. "I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner" (V. 26) Tim Gustafson

Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan,
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Crises/Emergency: Cell phone 860-754-4606

Cross Street Recovery Ministry the "Hope Line" is in operation 24 hours per day.
Please call 860-754-4606

if you, a friend and/or a family member are in need of counseling and/or are in crisis,

PLEASE dial the "Hope Line". All information will be confidential.

CROSS STREET MINISTRY OF RECOVERY

We can't but through God, all things are possible. How might we pull on God's strength to help each other recover?

Let the spirit of God work for you in a Mighty, Mighty Way

For more information contact:
Church office 860-344-9527.or
Rev. Gregory B. Winborne: Days: 860-616-3834

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sunday

8:00 a.m. **Church School** (see Zoom Meeting)

10:00 p.m. **Worship Service**
<https://zoom.us/j/959628798>
Meeting ID: 959 628 798
(929) 205-6099, Code: 959628798#

Tell your family and friends from across the Country.
We can be watched worldwide.

Tuesday

Bible Study

Time: 6:00 P.M.

Join Zoom Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/562367770>
(929)205-6099, Code: 562367770#

Wednesday

Day Of Prayer

Prayer Times: 6:00 A.M. 12:00 P.M. & 6:00 P.M.
Free Conference Call: 1 (727) 731-4561

Sunday School ZOOM Meetings

8:00 a.m.- Contemporary Sunday School: Adults

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
Code: 140827210#
Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/140827210>

8:30 a.m.- Dr. Long's Sunday School Class

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
Code: 734629713#
Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/734629713>

9:30 a.m.- Beginners Sunday School: Ms. Carolyn Smith

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
Code: 233007146#

Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/233007146>

11:00 a.m.- Primary Sunday School: Rev. Earlene Grant

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
Code: 614890401#
Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/614890401>

11:30 a.m.- Juniors Sunday School: Rev. Greg Winborne

Voice Only Call: (929) 205-6099;
Code: 856361645#
Web-link for Video Call: <https://zoom.us/j/856361645>

We thank you for your generous giving. Ways you can give:

- Online: crosstreetamezion.org
1. Realm, (Realm: <https://onrealm.org/TheCross/-/give/TJXKDEVIXE>)
 2. Text 73256 (Thecross)
 3. PayPal,
 4. CASHAPP: \$TheCross440
 5. Mail: P.O. Box 223 Middletown, Ct

- 06457,
6. Drop off on Sunday 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
7. Call the office for someone to pick up
8. Church outside Lockbox

(Note: you can find links on the website: <http://www.crosstreetamezion.org/Give>)

Sanctuary Guidelines

There will be one service at 10:00 A.M. The doors will open at 9:45 A.M. to begin temperature check-in. As you enter the building, we request you to sanitize your hands.

If you choose to worship in the Sanctuary, there will be one entrance open, the main doors in the front of the building. The committee and I ask that you follow the guidelines for seating. The pews and floor will be marked to help you do this.

We also kindly request all persons attending to wear a mask over their mouth and nose to prevent the possible spread of illness to the most vulnerable among us. Masks are not required for those under the age of two or for persons unable to remove their masks.

I understand that there has been considerable discussion about masks. Since the scriptures are, of course, silent on the matter, I do not think we need to agree on the substance of the question. It is a matter of personal conscience. However, since some of our more vulnerable brothers and sisters would experience a great deal

of anxiety worshipping with a group of people who are not wearing masks, I ask that you consent to wear a mask for their sake (see 1 Corinthians 8-9 for the principle).

Worship Outside: If you prefer to worship outdoors, there will be designated parking and an outside speaker, and you can listen on radio frequency 89.3 F.M. and watch on your phone via zoom, Facebook, or YouTube. During Communion, someone will bring the sacrament to you.

Livestream Worship: Finally, we will continue to live-stream the 10:00 A.M. service so that you can watch from your home. If you are experiencing any signs or symptoms of a new illness, including fatigue, fever, chills, difficulty breathing, cough, or nausea, please make use of the live stream and consider contacting your healthcare provider.

Other Precautions: Since studies seem inconclusive on whether singing increases the risk for viral spread, and since we want to

exercise an abundance of caution at this point in re-opening, if you choose to join the worship and praise team in singing, please keep on your mask.

Please refrain from shaking hands and embracing one another at this time.

I understand that some of these precautions may feel burdensome. They are temporary, and, even so, I hope you will join me in giving thanks to God for bringing us back together again and ask him to provide us with patience and kindness for each other.

Much Love to All. Faithfully Yours,
Pastor Harvill

Special Note: For now, we will have service in the Sanctuary every other Sunday (First and 3rd) and 2nd and fourth in the parking lot only, along with Live streaming.

Please let us know by phone call, letter, or email what else we can do to help you become comfortable returning to in-person worship.

The Cross Street Journal is published Bi-monthly. It can be found on our website: crosstreetamezion.org & in the front lobby. If you would like a PDF copy sent to you, Email your request to: ken46@snet.net. If you have an article or information (word count 1000 - 1500 or less) for current and future publications the deadline for this information is the Monday after the 2nd Sunday of each Month. **You may submit your information in the following ways:** place the information on a CD (Window format) and leave it in the Cross Street office, E-mail Ken Simmons (Ken46@snet.net), or give it to him. **Praise God!!!**

for the month of

May

we celebrate

Pastor Moses L. and
First Lady Eledia Harvill
on 29 years of Christian Service at The Cross!!!



Send your
Appreciation Messages.....
to crossstreetchurch@snet.net

Appreciation Gifts.....
CashApp: \$MosesLHarvill
or www.crossstreetamezion.org

For Our Pastor

Sometimes, as we travel through this world,
our lives are touched by someone
who makes a profound impact upon us.
Someone whose kindness
and sense of humanity
serves to make our days
just that much brighter.
Someone who reminds us of Jesus
in his goodness and his capacity
to reach out to others.
A "gentle man" who takes the time
to extend his hand,
and open his heart to all those in need.
Someone, who, like the shepherd,
tends to his flock...
young and old,
with love and devotion.
And the flock, in turn
willingly follows the good shepherd's lead,
knowing in their hearts
that he was sent to guide them,
in his love and his wisdom,
to the greenest of all pastures.
Such a man are you,
And we are grateful and blessed
by your presence in our lives!

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To Our Pastor's Wife

*It takes a special person
To be a pastor's wife
For it is not an easy task
Or a simple way of life*

*The phone often rings at dinner time
Vacations, they are few
With so many needs in our church
There is always lots to do*

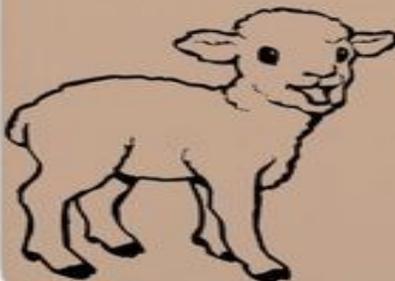
*When people need a helping hand
On you they can depend
For you always try to do your best
To be a faithful friend*

*So keep this in a special place
So you will always know
You are a special gift from God
Who is appreciated so*

J. Morse ©

A SHEPHERD'S CALL

A shepherd's call I've given you.
There is a work that I've called you to.
The lost, the hurt, the bruised, the torn;
Those who feel so forlorn.
These are the sheep I've given you
To care and nurture and see them through
To keep them safe within the fold
And to tell that story old
About the One who loves them so
Whose blood was shed so they could know
The care the Father does bestow
So with the staff and crook you guide
Faithfully serving at My side
My heart is pleased with what I see
A man of God who lives for Me.





CROSS STREET A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

Organized in 1823

440 West Street P.O. Box 223
Middletown, CT 06457

Phone: 860-344-9527 Fax: 860-344-1740

crossstreetchurch@snet.net
www.crossstreetamezion.org

Sunday School — 8:45 a.m.
Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Rev. Moses L. Harvill, M. Div.,
Pastor
Email: mharvill@snet.net

The Rev. Dr. Terry L. Jones
Presiding Elder

Mrs. D. Diane Proctor
Missionary Supervisor

The Right Reverend Dennis Proctor
Presiding Prelate

Ministerial Staff

- Rev. Robyn Anderson
- Rev. William D. Wilson
- Rev. Ella Frances Perry
- Rev. Karen Nesmith
- Rev. James Battle
- Rev. Myrtle Turner
- Rev. Gregory Winborne
- Rev. Joyce Johnson
- Rev. Earlene Grants
- Sister Felicia Freeman



Pursuing New Possibilities in the Pandemic

But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them,

With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Matthew 19:26 KJV

"I am a Christian"

By Maya Angelou

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not shouting "I'm clean livin'."
I'm whispering "I was lost,
Now I'm found and forgiven."

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I don't speak of this with pride.
I'm confessing that I stumble
And need Christ to be my guide.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not trying to be strong.
I'm professing that I'm weak
And need His strength to carry on.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not bragging of success.
I'm admitting I have failed
And need God to clean my mess.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I still feel the sting of pain.
I have my share of heartaches
So I call upon His name.

When I say ... "I am a Christian"
I'm not holier than thou.
I'm just a simple sinner
Who received God's good grace,
somehow!

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom
come, Thy will be done in earth, as it
is in heaven. Give us this day our
daily bread. And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors. And lead
us not into temptation, but deliver us
from evil: For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, for
ever. Amen.



Then the Lord answered me and said:
Write the vision and make it plain on
tablets, that he may run who reads it.
Habakkuk 2:2

The Jabez Prayer

And Jabez called on the God of Israel
saying, "Oh, that You would bless me
indeed, and enlarge my territory,
that Your hand would keep me from
evil, that I may not cause pain!" So
God granted him what he requested.
1 Chronicles 4:10 (NKJV)

"God's Word

*For the word of God is quick, and power-
ful, and sharper than any two-edged
sword, piercing even to the dividing
asunder of soul and spirit, and of the
joints and marrow, and is a discerner of
the thoughts and intents of the heart"*
Hebrews 4:12

Prayer: Forever, O Lord, your Word is
settled in heaven. I bless you because
you have given me rest according to
all that you have promised to me. Not
one word of all your good promises
has ever failed. In light of this truth, I
will walk in your Word at all times.
I love your Word, Father, it is a lamp
unto my feet, and a light unto my
path. All of your words are pure, O
God, and you are a shield to me. Lord

God, your way is perfect, and your
Word is tried. You are a shield and a
mighty buckler to me as I trust in you.
With your Word you made the heav-
ens, O Lord. all of your promises are
yes in Christ, unto your glory, O God.
You have spoken through your Word
since ancient times, in order to give
light to those who sit in darkness, and
you guide my feet in the way of peace.
Your Word is quick, alive, and power-
ful, and sharper than any two-edged
sword. It pierces even to the dividing
asunder of my soul and spirit, and of
my joints and marrow, and is a dis-
cerner of the thoughts and intents of
my heart.
Father, I am thankful for your Word,
and I will endeavor to walk in the light
of your Word all the days of my life.

If you were to die today, do you know where you will spend eternity ???

Doxology

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.
Jude 24-25