

The King Waits on the Mount

By Lois E Callaway



**A Pilgrim Ponders Prayer
Book #2 (of 7)**

A Pilgrim Ponders Prayer

A Missionary's Reflections - in a 7-book series

Book # 2

The King Waits on the Mount

By

Lois E. Callaway

Dedicated to

My Mother:

Lura Groves Elkerton

who first taught me to pray the prayer of faith.

And to

My Grandparents:

Elmer and Netta Groves.

who taught her.

Cover composition by Joyce Callaway Nicholson.

All Poems not attributed to others
were written by Lois Callaway

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This is the second book in the series of 7 books

Acknowledgement

It has now been well over 20 years since my wife, Lois, wrote these seven studies on the subject of PRAYER. I want to express my appreciation to our children and their spouses for all they have done in the editing, checking of quotations, etc. Four who have done most are: Joyce Callaway Nicholson (covers, pictures, formatting), David Callaway (researching book and Bible references), Mark Callaway (art work on book 3 cover), and Cinda Lott Callaway (proofreading).

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C W Callaway, March 20, 2017

About the Author

Lois Nadine Elkerton Callaway served with her husband, C W Callaway, in Thailand among the Mien mountain tribespeople from 1949 to 1985. From then on they served Mien refugees from Laos in U.S.A. In 1996 at age of 75 she died in an automobile accident near Napa, California. She had a deep reverent love for God and for His Word. And she loved those whom she served so faithfully. She was an avid reader, a gifted poet, and a skilled writer in Mien as well as English. She was a woman of prayer as revealed in this series.

For more information about her see:

<http://www.mothersite.org/>



Lois E. Callaway
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2 Listen! God Speaks reminds us to listen while we pray.

3 The Citadel compares the prayer time to the munitions depot that is Satan's top priority for search and destroy operations.

4 Waiting in the Locks reminds us that prayer isn't a quickie thing. We wait for God to buoy us up.

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"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways so that we may walk in His paths." Isaiah 2:3 NIV

"These will I bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer...for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." Isaiah 56:7 NIV

"On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples." Isaiah 25:6a NIV

".... The Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!"
Isaiah 30:18 NIV

1 Spiritual non-conductors

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
2 Thessalonians 1:11b-12 NIV

We pray this: "so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord... being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father..."
Colossians 1:10-12a NIV

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of the fullness of God.
Ephesians 3:16-19 NIV

"Somehow self and not God rules in the holy of holies. Somewhere, all unconscious to himself, some spiritual non-conductor has touched his inner being and the divine current has been arrested." -- E.M. Bounds¹

There we sat, a policeman frantically waving for us to move on and clear the bottleneck we were causing in traffic on the already crowded Bangkok street. Each turn of the key in the starter produced a frustrating nothing! The car was a nice, new comfortable one. The battery was charged. So? What is a woman supposed to know about the "why's" when a car won't start?

¹ E. M. Bounds 1907

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A mechanic with his bag of tools appeared from between the shops. He tested the battery cables. They were tight – “too tight”, he said. The poles were coated with corrosion forming a non-conductor layer between the pole and the cable. That even a woman could understand!

How often this sort of thing happens in the Christian life. We know we ought to get moving. We are causing a bottleneck in the church, but somehow there’s a power failure. We simply aren’t making contact with the Power. Truly “some non-conductor has touched our inner being and the driving current has been arrested”.

In seminary days we used to watch the street cars clang and rumble up Price Hill in Cincinnati. Ordinarily one was comfortably unaware of the tremendous power that surged through the overhead cable, bringing sufficient energy to the cars for that steep climb. But on cold winter days when ice formed on the cables there were frequent bright flashes of fire from the cable, reminding us of the tremendous force which normally coursed only through the cable and down the arm to the car.

Another sort of reminder of this power came when on rare occasions for some reason there was a power break and the cars sat idly on the track, refusing to budge.

“Electricity must have a pathway of susceptible matter over which to travel. Even if that pathway be one of infinitely minute particles of ether only. So with the spiritual forces of the universe. If the power of the Mediatorial Presence has no conducting lines along which to travel, it must sleep forever and the world be left to swing in its old grooves of evil and death. The manifestation of all the energies of that Presence can only come through the believing request of the disciples. Prayer, bound only by the human instincts of the faith that inspires it, and the rights of the name in which it is presented, is a thing of illimitable power... Scientists tell us that in every single drop of water in the ocean there is energy enough to Generate thunderstorms. The power is there, silent and hidden, ready at any moment to leap forth and do terrible execution.”²

What is it that we have let hinder the flow of this illimitable power? Is it a corrosion of sin that has formed a spiritual non-conductor around our souls? Is it spiritual ice that allows only occasional sudden bright flashes, but not much transmission of power? Is it that the spiritual insulation that guards us from contamination from the world we live in has given way and we’re shorting out in worldliness? Or could it be that we are just simply not plugged in?

The Bible “is wired up from heaven and when we make proper contact we get a shock. But if we stay in contact we get a charge. Too many poor souls make only enough contact to get a shock.”³ Is this not just as true of our prayer life as of our Bible study? It is shocking (really shocking!) We’re not making close enough and regular enough contact to get the real charge. We’re operating on dead batteries, long due for recharge. We get going only by applying a revival meeting jumper cable from time to time.

² Payne, *The Greatest Force on Earth* 1923

³ Havner 1964

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"We say that we depend on the Spirit, but actually we are so wired with our own devices that if fire does not fall down from heaven, we can turn on a switch and produce fire of our own, and if there is no sound of a mighty rushing wind, the furnace is set to blow hot air instead. God save us from a synthetic Pentecost."⁴

Let us call in the Divine Technician to check for shorts and leaks in the insulation. In this day of power shortages there is only one source of power that is not in short supply. It is there and it is as free as the much touted solar energy. To avail ourselves of this spiritual energy we need only to get wired for high charges and then plug in!

2 Listen! God Speaks!

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."
James 1:5 NIV

"O God, do not remain silent; do not turn a deaf ear, do not stand aloof, O God."
Psalms 83:1 NIV

"I will bless the Lord who counsels me; He gives me wisdom in the night; He tells me what to do."
Psalms 16:7 TLB

To Elijah

"What doest thou here, discouraged heart?
What makes thee pine away?
What makes thee quail in victory's wake?
God waits upon the mount
To speak with thee."

From out the eave he doubtful crept
To see upon the mount
A wind that broke the mountain cliffs
And crumbled them to dust
Beneath His hand.

Behold! Scarce did the wind abate
When all the mount did quake
And from the quake-hewn crevices
Burst forth consuming fire,
Fanned by His breath.

The Lord had passed and in His path
Left evidence of power.

⁴ Havner 1964

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The prophet's heart was moved to awe
And yet he sought in vain
To see His face,
For God had passed, yet passed unseen.

In wind and quake and fire,
Thus heart of man does ever seek
In great phenomena
A god to serve.

The trembling prophet bowed,
And in the pregnant hush
He heard a still small voice,
And hid his face,
For here was God!

Lack of communication, we are told, is the chief cause of the Generation gap. Marriage counselors tell us that the break down of many marriages begins when husband and wife cease to communicate.

For many Christians a serious communication gap has developed between them and their God.

"The time is coming,' says the Lord God, 'when I will send a famine on the land – not a famine of bread and water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. Men will wander everywhere from sea to sea, seeking the Word of the Lord, searching, running here and there, but will not find it. Beautiful girls and fine young men alike will grow faint and weary, thirsting for the Word of God!" (Amos 8:11-13 TLB)

Then have people ever been so hungry – many of them not even knowing that the Word of the Lord could fill that deep, deep longing of their hearts? Even Christians have become so busy, so involved with the world that they have not taken time to communicate with God.

There are so many ways He wants to communicate if we would let Him.

The heavens declare the Glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.(Ps. 19:1 KJV)

God lures us to listen to the poetry of His word. Have you taken time to look at the stars lately? God speaks in such eloquent simplicity – but men do not take time to listen or to understand. Listen to a bird song! Smell the roses! Listen for His voice in the eloquent world He created!

Ah what a glorious God is this,
Whose love and power are such
That, lost, we hear His whispered love,
And, saved, behold His thundered power. (Job 26:14 & Psalms 29:3)

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In my museum of memories there is the recollection of a velvet black night in an eastern land when I was awakened by the lilting, (keening) melody sung by pilgrims keeping feast in the night. Similar to our caroling parties, but hauntingly lonely, this song so foreign to my ear, yet so lovely that it caught me up in worship of my Heavenly Father. I hear it again every time I read Isaiah 30:29-31.

“You shall have a song as in the night
when a holy feast is kept;
And gladness of heart as when one sets out to the sound of
the flute to go to the mountain of the Lord,
to the Rock of Israel.
And the Lord
will cause his majestic voice to be heard,
and the descending blow of his arm to be seen,
in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire...
The Assyrians will be terror-stricken
at the voice of the Lord,
when he smites with his rod.” (Isaiah 30:29-31 RSV)

He speaks, but what a difference His word has on the one who trusts Him and the one who defies Him. A song in the night for the child of God. Terror for the Assyrian – the enemy of God.

“In the past God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us through His Son.” (Hebrews 1:1-2 GNT) The things God has spoken through the prophets and through His Son are recorded for us in the Bible. No prayer time is complete without a time for enjoying the Word. This Word, given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is also illumined to our understanding by the indwelling presence of our teacher the Holy Spirit, (1 John 2:27), in our hearts.

“So then, we do not speak in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, as we explain spiritual truths to those who have the Spirit. Whoever does not have the Spirit cannot receive the gifts that come from God’s Spirit ... they seem to be nonsense to Him, because their value can be judged only on a spiritual basis.” (1 Corinthians 2:13-14 GNT)

Who of us in one short lifetime can ever fully understand all the precious truths there are for us in God’s Word? But we can begin as we are taught by our special tutor – God’s Holy Spirit.

Beyond this there come times when we are puzzled – not about the Christian walk in general. That is adequately told us in His word, and will never be contradicted by any guidance given by God. But at times there are choices to be made – not a choice between the good and the bad, but between the better and the best. Sometimes the choice is only a matter of timing – not “if” but “when”. It is at this point that the unbeliever turns to astrology and the fortuneteller. The Christian must turn to God and claim the promise: “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask of God, who gives Generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” (James 1:5 NIV) Is God perhaps longing for us to listen while He says to us as He had Gabriel say to Daniel, “I am here to help you understand God’s plans”?

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At times when we are willing to get out on a limb for God, we may not know whether we should stay there, jump to the ground, or cautiously creep back and go down the trunk. We at times get into situations where we really do not know what God's perfect plan for the months ahead may be, yet some decision must be made in a very down-to-earth world.

Missionaries seem to have a great propensity for getting themselves into such dilemmas. We had been in China one year. Many were leaving, but the American consul had assured us that the tribal area "would be open for several years." In the light of this human wisdom we had been buying and packing supplies for the trip to the China-Burma border area, where we would minister as long as we could.

Then word came that missionaries had met with trouble in the very area where we planned to go. Was this just a phase that would pass as the communists came out in the open, or was the area really closed?

We did not want to run just because there would be danger. We had come to do a job for the Lord, and we knew it could be dangerous. Neither my husband nor myself felt at peace either about staying or leaving. Then one night as the missionaries in Kunming met for our weekly prayer meeting, my husband knelt on one side of the room and I on the other. Quietly peace came to my heart about leaving. At home that night I found that in the same way and at the same time my husband had received that same quiet assurance. A month later we left – not without tears – but assured that we were following Him, not running away. As we look back we can now see God's perfect plan in it all. God had taken us to China to learn some valuable lessons. Now He had a new field waiting for us that we wouldn't even have considered if we had not had to leave China.

Not always has the leading been just a quiet inner assurance. We had been on the field in north Thailand seven years our second term. Friends told us furlough was long overdue, and it seemed that, having had to evacuate from our mountain home, it was a logical break for furlough. Plans were made – but furlough funds did not come.

Then my husband made a trip back into the area where we had lived. To that point only two women had believed in that area, and one of them had gone to be with the Lord. Now another family said they wanted to accept the Lord -- later in the summer after certain family commitments to the spirits were fulfilled. If we left, there would be no one to help them destroy their demon worship stuff and guide them in the first hard months of their new life in Christ.

We thought of our furlough plans, knowing that the Mien are great procrastinators, and this could be one of many intentions on the part of the family before they finally made a decisive step. We prayed, asking that if the Lord intended us to go for furlough that spring, non-existent travel funds would arrive by the deadline for making our reservations on the plane.

That day came – the mail came – but no notice of funds. We had just tucked the twinge of disappointment away with our empty suitcases when the postman made a second call with a registered letter. The amount needed was on hand!

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The suitcases came out for filling. As we later found the family was just “testing, testing” to see if we would “pay” them to become Christians. They were desperately poor opium addicts. A little welfare would have made it worth their while to “become Christians.” Had we stayed on, we would have missed God’s time for our furlough, the perfect time. That year the Mien were in a state of turmoil and flux, many of them moving to the plains quite near to where God was planning our next home. A year later many of them needed us and were open to teaching.

God is eager to guide our steps. “Your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way. Walk in it.” (Isaiah 30:21 NIV) He speaks, but we must walk. Don’t pray for guidance unless you are prepared to act upon it.

Sometimes God has startled me with His guidance in answer to my request for wisdom. This manuscript had been in a nondescript unfinished state for several years. Friends urged that I must take time to complete it. I honestly could not sort out the priorities. Could it be that another book in a world where there is no end of the making of (English) books should take precedence over translation and the preparation of Christian materials in the Mien language?

The writing of an English book would be a refreshing interlude, but honestly how could I know. “One month would be needed” I confided to friends, “in a place away from my work to pull the loose ends together to the point where I could polish off the manuscript in odd moments.”

Friends wrote, “We are praying for the time and the place, and that God will help you to know both.” That was September 1st. In early October I saw my Bangkok dentist for an estimate of how long I would have to plan on (later!) to have some routine dental work done. He ordered X-rays and then said, “You have a deep abscess. It will take one month. You must stay here for weekly treatments – no putting it off. Now!”

How much more specific could the Lord have been? Here – now – one month. Exactly what I had asked for.

God wants to communicate with us. He wants to tell us about Himself and His love and the wonderful plans he has for us. He wants to guide us day by day in paths of assurance and peace. He wants to show us the shoddiness of our Christian lives and hold up for us the mirror of God’s word. (James 1:22-23) He says, “... if some of you have a different attitude (i.e. an attitude that is un-Christlike) God will make this clear to you.” (Philippians 3:15 GNT)

He wants to sanctify our sense of humor – our imaginations. He wants to reveal the secrets of His universe to us. George Washington Carver said that as he went daily to his tiny laboratory where he unlocked so many amazing secrets of the lowly peanut, he prayed, “Lord, You know all the secrets of your world. Reveal some of them to me today.” And God did! Carver listened. God spoke. Together they accomplished things! Ah! Peanut butter!

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God set the bush on fire for Moses, but He didn't speak until Moses turned aside to see the awesome sight. (Ex 3:4) The bush is on fire for us. What is our attitude?

"I must be seeing things!"?

"I'll close my eyes – maybe it will go away."?

"I'd better run after those sheep first. Later maybe."?

"I don't go much for showmanship."?

The bush is on fire. God waits to speak, but it's really up to us!

3 The Citadel

Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me.
Psalms 31:2 NIV

Nineveh, you are finished! You are already surrounded by enemy armies! Sound the alarm! Man the ramparts! Muster your defenses, full force, and keep a sharp watch for the enemy attack to begin!
Nahum 2:1 TLB

In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; morning by morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.
Psalms 5:3 NIV

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.
Ephesians 6:12-13,18 NIV

"We are the battalion that fights on its knees." -- Selected

"When a General chooses the place from which he intends to strike the enemy, he pays attention to the point more important in the fight. Thus there was on the battlefield of Waterloo a farmhouse, which Wellington immediately saw was the key to the situation. He did not spare his troops in his endeavor to hold that point; the victory depended upon it!"⁵ And so it was that because of the strategic farmhouse of Waterloo, held by Wellington at all costs, Napoleon "met his Waterloo".

Prayer is the citadel of our battle in the Christian life. It is in the citadel of prayer that we fasten on securely the armor of the Christian life. Here we face the One who is Truth, and the inconsistencies of our lives stand out in such bold relief that we, through the strength of His mighty right arm, are able to tighten the belt of truth.

⁵ Murray, The Prayer Life 1899

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A glimpse of His righteousness as we feast on His word and tarry in His Presence enables us to maintain our own breastplate of righteousness. The sandals of the Gospel of Peace are fastened on our feet and we learn to use effectively the shining shield of faith to ward off those fiery darts of the Evil One.

Here in the citadel of prayer we are constantly reassured of the efficacy of the helmet of our salvation. And here, as He opens His Word to us, we whet the Spirit-given sword with which we are to do battle.

Paul reminds us, "Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help." (Ephesians 6:18a GNT) Truly we cannot don this armor in our own strength – even the armor itself comes from the divine arsenal. Only the Lord can provide it and help us put it on.

James Fraser, missionary to the Lisu in West China, once wrote, "In every battle there are crucial spots. Get near and stay near to your Divine Chief until he turns and points them out. And at those points face and force the fight."⁶

The citadel is a hiding place – a place to wait until our Divine Commander points to the strategic point of battle. How often the battle is lost because we sally forth, even clad in His armor perhaps, but not waiting for Him to direct the point and strategy of attack.

Once out in the battle, should we feel our armor loosening, we are to slip momentarily back to the citadel of prayer to re-secure it. "Pray on every occasion as the Spirit leads. For this reason, keep alert and never give up," continues Paul. (Ephesians 6:18b GNT)

If we have regularly frequented the citadel, it is so easy to find again, so easy to slip back in for reinforcement. If we have neglected it, let the hinges become rusty and creaky, and let the citadel itself become hidden in the vines of busyness, then it may not be so easy to slip in for a moment in a time of emergency.

If we spare no effort to hold this strategic point, this citadel of prayer, the enemy will not gain one single battle. To be sure the evil one will storm the gate. He will try with every device of a wily enemy to wrest it from us. He may even coyly suggest that he come in and share it with us. We must not let him have any part in it. "In the covert of thy presence thou hidest them from the plots of men; thou holdest them safe under thy shelter from the strife of tongues." (Psalms 31.20 RSV)

The story is told of a Christian girl who, enjoying the pleasures of youth, had neglected to walk daily with the Lord. When her father became ill, she turned to God, asking for healing. When he died, she turned from God in disgust, saying, "God does not answer prayer".

"A wise friend asked her, 'What would you think of a person who was trying to cash a check which was written out to someone else?'

"She replied that it would of course be fraud.

⁶ G. Taylor 1944

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"The friend replied, 'Did you not try to 'cash' the check of God's promise which is given to some one else? For when you read the whole verse, of which you quoted just a part, you will find out that you are not the person the check was made out to, for it reads there, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7 KJV) How quick we are to claim, "ask what you will" while ignoring the part about abiding.⁷

Most of God's promises are conditional. (His love is the exception, for He loves us eternally and with no condition.) God says, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Psalms 91:1 KJV) How often we would claim the right to abide in time of trouble without having learned to dwell in time of peace. We abide under His shadow, protected from the storm, only because we have been dwelling daily in His secret place.

Moses found strength in that citadel where he spoke with God on the mount. "It must have been an unspeakable blessing to Moses that the tidings of their (Israel's) transgression came to him when he was upon the mount in divine communion; otherwise it is possible that he would have been completely crushed and incapacitated."⁸

Likewise, we who have the responsibility of babes in Christ, not to mention "teenage" Christians, need to dwell constantly on the Mount lest the frustrations of their weaknesses and stumbling crush us. We need to see these babes in Christ through the loving eyes of god; to be able to love them as He does in spite of their sin, backsliding, and busy living. It is only in His Presence that we gain this sufficiency for the battle every shepherd must wage against the enemy's attack on the flock. Here it is that we learn how to "pray always for all God's people." (Ephesians 6:18 GNT)

In spite of the faith of the early leaders of Israel, there came a time when the citadel had been all but abandoned – or perhaps only hidden away in the cave where Obadiah hid a hundred prophets. (1 Kings 18) In the cave these men of God secured a citadel of prayer, and arsenal of righteousness until the time was ripe for Elijah's bold encounter with the priests on Baal on the mountain.

When Baal had obviously failed, then Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord. (1 Kings 18:30-31) using twelve stones according to the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob, representing all the people of Israel. Here God gave a great victory, as He always does when the altar is repaired – and used! The fire fell after the ruined altar had been repaired.

Each of us has an altar – a citadel. It is the daily quiet time. It is not so much a place as it is a time – an appointment – though a place can become so much the place of encounter with God that it becomes holy ground and makes each new encounter easier.

Never will the place of prayer, the time of prayer, be easily secured. Satan sees nit as the real threat to his advance. He spares no pains to destroy it – to tear down the altar.

⁷ Astrakoff, N.I. Salof

⁸ Payne, The Greatest Force on Earth 1923

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While we lived in the Mien tribal village we noticed that whenever we attempted to set aside a day for prayer, we would no sooner go to prayer than a visitor would come with urgency you could scarcely ignore. The village children would inevitably choose to play that day beneath the room where we prayed. It happened too often to be coincidence. The devil was trying to destroy the citadel.

Undoubtedly the greatest of our battles as Christian soldiers is the battle of the prayer time. It is a new skirmish day after day. We must wrest it from Satan each day, and then keep it in good repair and in constant use.

One effective method I have found to fight this battle is to make the last thoughts of the day a prayer that I will awaken conscious of God and with a longing for fellowship with Him. This may mean at times I will be awakened in the middle of the night. There is no frustration in this kind of insomnia. Nighttime is a quiet, uninterrupted time – ideal for prayer and praise. Isobel Kuhn wrote that she asked God to awaken her in the middle of the night when she lived and worked in a tribal village, as that was the only time she could be assured of time with the Lord. When we tarry at night in the citadel of prayer we have a safe place to rest and abide – an assured point from which to advance the battle of our Lord.

How well I remember the nights when terror stalked our tribal village after the murder of a Chinese brigand in our village. One night both the Chinese and the Mien were trigger happy, planning attack. The women and children were fleeing to the jungles to sleep there in the cold, wet rain forest.

“Are you not going with us?” they asked. “Will you really sleep here in the village?”

We well knew that the level area in front of our home would be the site of battle should threats explode into real gunfire. But then I did not want to sleep on cold wet grass with my little ones. I chose rather my frame house in the line of potential attack – with the hand of my God upon me.

We stacked heavy cushions about the heads of our sleeping children and watched the Mien guardsmen hiding stealthily behind trees above our home. We knew that the Chinese had their ammunition stored at the foot of the mountain below our house, yet we experienced the reality of Psalm 91.

“He will not let your foot slip – he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.” (Psalms 121:3-4 NIV) Remembering God’s promise, we could say, “You watch, Lord. We will rest for the tasks of the morrow. There will be many sick from the night in the wet jungle and there may be wounded to treat and we will need all our strength.” We had peaceful sleep in His citadel.

4 Waiting in the Locks

Wait for the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.
Psalms 27:14 KJV

For since the world began no one has seen or heard of such a God as ours, who works for those who wait for Him!
Isaiah 64:4 TLB

“Faith is that which, knowing the Lord’s will, goes and does it; or, not knowing it, stands and waits.”
George MacDonald

To talk with God
No breath is lost –
Talk on!

To walk with God
No strength is lost --
Walk on!

To wait on God
No time is lost –
Wait on!

-- Traditional Hindi Hymn⁹

Many years ago we took a fascinating trip up the Thames River from London to Hampton court. A large part of the fascination of the trip for me was waiting in the locks. It was as new an experience for me as wandering through the palace halls at Hampton court – and just as interesting.

The boat speeds along so long as the stream runs smoothly, but when the climb begins, she must enter the locks and wait quietly while the lock keeper closes the lower gate and opens the upper gate, letting the higher waters flow in to buoy up the boat to the higher level. Buoyed up, she sails easily ahead until she comes to a still higher lock, where the process is repeated once again.

Instead of waiting patiently, the skipper could, of course, command full steam ahead and the motor could churn up a mighty foam. Bystanders on the sides of the lock might exclaim, “My how that boat is working! See the froth of white foam she’s stirring up!”

Of what value is frothy white foam? A boat is for sailing and if full speed ahead doesn’t bring an advance, it is wasted engine power.

⁹ (Unknown 1969)

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Hear then the parable: The stream of the Christian life is a constant uphill climb. Locks are many and often. The Christian can come quietly into the lock, realizing his own inability to steam upriver, and he can patiently wait for the water of God's Spirit to buoy him up until he is on a level with the climb ahead. Paul knew. He said, "For there is nothing in us that allows us to claim that we are capable of doing this work. The capacity we have comes from God." (2 Corinthians 3:5 GNT) When God opens the upper gate and says, "Go ahead now," the Christian can shove out and make progress in the course God has assigned.

He could say, "But I can't wait. I don't have time. I've got work to do – God's work. Full steam ahead. Here I go!" But frothy foam doesn't last long, nor is it much good. Speed, as well as power, is gained by waiting.

The apostles had seen their Lord ascend into the heavens to sit on the right hand of God. They had been commanded to go preach the Gospel to every creature. Can't you just imagine our impulsive friend, Peter, eager to get on with the job, saying, "This is the greatest news the world has ever heard. Jesus is risen! He ascended right here before our eyes! Come! Let's go preach it now."

Yet as he walked back to Jerusalem, he could hear in his heart the soft re-echoing of the Master's voice, "Tarry ... tarry ... tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49 KJV)

Peter tarried with the rest in a prayer meeting – and then came the Day of Pentecost. Peter preached with power such as he had never dreamed of before. Whenever we tarry in His presence we will be clothed with power from on high. When we tarry in the locks, His Spirit comes in and buoys us up to a level capable of spiritual achievement.

"Fold the arms of thy faith and wait in the quietness until light goes up in thy darkness"¹⁰

A survey was being made of how a certain group of churches went about calling a new pastor. One man, evaluating his church's methods, filled in the questionnaire thus:

"Strong points of the method: They waited on the Lord.
Weakness of the method: Took too long!"

Perhaps this is an apt commentary on our modern day impatience and unwillingness to submit ourselves to God's timetable."¹¹

There is music in a rest! In this atomic age – the age of hyperactivity – the age of all but perpetual motion – we have quite forgotten that there is music in a rest. Rather we throw in an extra down beat or two where the rest should have been. Roll the drums! Anything but quiet! We pride ourselves on having an arrangement that has improved on the Master's composition.

¹⁰ MacDonald 1867

¹¹ Southern Baptist Bulletin

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We are jet propelled and nothing less than the speed that produces a sonic boom will satisfy us. How can the sound of the still small voice of God catch up with us as we crash, reeling through the barrier of sound?

Yes, there is music in a rest. There is promise in waiting on God. Truly God “has made everything beautiful in its time.” (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NIV) We don’t see that beauty because we can’t wait for the time of beauty. “... they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31 KJV) “Wait first”, God says, “then mount up. Wait first – then run and not be weary.”

The eagle is renewed by gliding. Sometimes the Christian needs to glide. The renewing is not achieved by self effort. All self does is to relax. If it were not for the air current, the eagle could not glide and renew his strength. If it were not for the “wind (that) blows wherever it pleases ...” (John 3:8 NIV) the Holy Spirit which bears up the tired wings of the soul, neither could the soul of man glide and be refreshed.

Floating on one’s back is a simple, restful procedure. All one has to learn is to relax upon the water, trusting the water to hold one up. Just one doubt, one struggle to hold self up, and down one goes. Relaxed, one can float for hours. Renewed once again, one can swim for shore. In quietness and confidence his strength has been renewed – yet some people seemingly find it impossible to master the art of floating.

Ian Thomas has said, “Spiritual relaxation is simply enjoying the Christian life instead of enduring it.”¹²

“The Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, says: Only in returning to Me and waiting for Me will you be saved; in quietness and confidence is your strength; but you’ll have none of this. ‘No,’ you say. ‘We will get our help from Egypt; they will give us swift horses for riding to battle.’ But the only swiftness you are going to see is the swiftness of your enemies chasing you! One of them will chase a thousand of you! Five of them will scatter you until not two of you are left together. You will be like lonely trees on the distant mountaintops. Yet the Lord still waits for you to come to Him, so He can show you His love; He will conquer you to bless you, just as He said. For the Lord is faithful to His promises. Blessed are all those who wait for Him to help them.” (Isaiah 30:15-18 LB)

God is in no hurry to deal with us. He prefers to wait for a quiet receptive heart. “How long, My child, how long?”

There is a vast difference between waiting patiently on the Lord and spiritual lethargy. The first cares deeply – but waits expectantly. The latter cares not at all and waits pessimistically. He makes no preparation and is unaware that God waits to speak to him – to work through him.

¹² (Thomas 1961)

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The one who waits prepares his heart in joyful anticipation. "Go down now and see that the people are ready for My visit. Sanctify them today and tomorrow, and have them wash their clothes. Then, the day after tomorrow I will come down upon Mt. Sinai as all the people watch." (Exodus 19:10-11 TLB)

Moses went up the holy mount and a cloud covered the mount – still God did not speak. Moses waited six days in silence – then on the seventh day the Lord spoke. (Exodus 24:16)

God waits for us to wait! He will conquer us to bless us!

"The equipment for the inner life of prayer is simple if not always secured. It consists particularly of a quiet place, and a quiet hour, and a quiet heart."¹³

¹³ McIntyre 1978



Curious tourists look down upon boats in the locks of the **the ??? river (or channel???) at Puget Sound ??? or Seattle, WA???** Passengers and crew on the boats are “*waiting in the locks*” for the water level to rise so they can proceed on their journeys.

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