

Behold HIM on the Mount

By Lois E Callaway



**A Pilgrim Ponders Prayer
Book #4 (of 7)**

A Pilgrim Ponders Prayer

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

Book # 4

Behold HIM 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.
Lois is shown on the train from Switzerland to Austria
deeply pondering the marvels of God and His creation

All Poems not attributed to others
were written by Lois Callaway

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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

candid."

C W Callaway, March 18, 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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Table of Contents

Book 4 Behold Him on the Mount

This book speaks more specifically of encounters with God.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 The Sacrifice of Praise --
Presence. | We enter with awe and praise into His |
| 2 Spread It Before the Lord -- | Just tell Him all about it. |
| 3 "...And Leave it There" --
up to Him. | Yes tell Him and then leave the solution |
| 4 Prayer With a Target | Be specific in your prayers |
| 5 Prayer Without Ceasing --
communication, a way of life. | Making a way of life with constant instant |
| 6 Two for a Penny --
talk to God about. | There's nothing too big or too small to |

Book 4 BEHOLD HIM ON THE MOUNTAIN

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; in the city of our God, on the mountain of his holiness; beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion on the sides of the north, the city of the great king. Psalms 48:1-2 KJV

You, who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" Isaiah 40:9 NIV

Send me your light and your faithful care, let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. Psalms 43:3 NIV

"... I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called The Faithful City and the mountain of the Lord Almighty will be called The Holy Mountain." Zechariah 8:3 NIV

On the mountain -- or in the closet, He's waiting for you!

"Well, I've come into the closet. I've shut the door. Help! What do I do now? I've never prayed before, except in emergencies. I don't know God very well. How do I begin?"

Try praise! Just think of all God has done for you. The world around you--flowers--trees--grass--blue sky (or grey!) --air--water--food--your family--your various loves. Thank Him that you know Him (many don't!), for heaven and your hope of it.

Then spread your life before the Lord--your problems--yes, and your joys--and leave them there.

Now think! What do you really want? Be specific--Peace--in your heart--in your home--in your town--in your land--in your world? Tell God about it. Don't be general and fuzzy--think what you really long for and be specific.

Keep praying. Don't stop. You'll soon have to leave "the closet" for you live on earth and there's work to do. But make a "closet" in your heart--a tiny quiet place where you can begin to experience the constant presence of the Holy Spirit.

You'll find as you move through the days and nights with Him that there is nothing either too large or too small for His attention. If it concerns you, it concerns Him.

That's all there is to it--just shut yourself in with Him--and communicate!

1 The Sacrifice of Praise

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. Hebrews 13:15 NIV

I will praise God with a song; I will proclaim his greatness by giving him thanks. This will please the Lord more than offering him cattle, more than sacrificing a full-grown bull. Psalms 69:30-31 GNT

The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice. Psalms 97:1 NIV

"Praise the Lord anyhow!"

"When I cannot understand anything it seems to me as though God has set a chair there for me to kneel down and worship. The mysteries are intended to be altars of devotion."¹
C. H. Spurgeon

What does it matter whether we praise God or not? Surely our God is not a God who thrives on flattery--or as the heathen think of their spirits one who will grant us our requests only if we have buttered Him up sufficiently. Surely our God is above all this!

Most certainly He is above all this, but God enjoys the sacrifice of the praise of our lips because He well knows that which is in our hearts is expressed through our lips. "For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of." (Matthew 12: 34 GNT) He knows that if we are enjoying Him in our hearts--not merely enduring Him, our hearts will be so full of love and praise that our bodies will not be able to contain it. Praise is for our benefit--not God's. He enjoys it because we enjoy it, because it is the vocalization of our love for Him--the expression of that which makes us and keeps us His.

God longs to hear our sacrifice of praise. It may be praise, written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit and God, chanted from a prayer book or a hymn book that is a deep expression of a person's feelings of love and faith in God. It may well be a good old fashioned hearty "Praise the Lord", or a more modern, "Wow, Lord! You're beautiful:" It becomes a sacrifice of praise when it explodes from a heart so full it cannot be contained. It irradiates the life with joy and peace and love and brings us into oneness with God--and with each other.

Praise, which is the expression of faith in God's power and victory becomes our most powerful weapon against our enemies. Men know how to counter attack bows and arrows, spears, guns, even atomic weapons, but praise takes it right out of their sphere.

¹ C. H. Spurgeon as quoted by Williams 1895, p 198

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

Jehoshaphat, a godly king, once faced an overwhelming enemy. Rather than calling the military strategists and the keepers of his ammunition depots for consultation, he called the people together to ask advice from God. Read the prayer in 2 Chronicles 20. It was not so much a prayer begging God to save them as it was a sacrifice of praise for all God had done in the past--the King reminding himself and his people of how able God really was.

God spoke: "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow march down against them. ...You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your position; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you... Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the Lord." (2 Chronicles 20:15-18 NIV)

While king and people were prostrate before the Lord, the priests rose up and praised God in resounding tones. As they went out to the battle the next day, Jehoshaphat again reminded them to put their full trust only in the Lord. Then he appointed, not swordsmen, but singers to lead the thrust against the enemy, not fixed bayonets and cries of hatred but songs of praise to the beauty of holiness. Strange battle that!

"As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated."
(2 Chronicles 20:22 NIV)

".... They entered Jerusalem and went to the temple of the Lord with harps and lutes and trumpets. The fear of God came on all the surrounding kingdoms...."
(2 Chronicles 20: 28-29 NIV)

How different the history of Israel might have been had they always gone to battle with the choir of praise leading the attack. How much sooner the enemies of Israel would have learned to fear God.

When we are "up against it" as Judah surely was, it is not always easy to "praise the Lord anyhow." It would be easier to wait and see if we get what we ask—and then praise with a thankful heart. "Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart." (Phil 4:6 GNT)

That day Judah could have sung, and we might well join the Medical Mission Sisters as they sing:

"God loves a cheerful giver
Give it all you've got.
He loves to hear you laughing
When you're in an awkward spot
When the odds add up against you
It's time to stop and sing.
Praise God,

To praise Him is a joyous thing."

"Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds. May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double edged sword in their hands... This is the glory of all his saints."

Psalm 149:5-6,9 NIV

"He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the Lord
And put their trust in him."
(Psalms 40:3 NIV)

2 Spread it Before the Lord

"...and Hezekiah went into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord."

2 Kings 19:14 KJV

"Then one day I went into God's sanctuary to meditate, and thought about the future of these evil men."

Psalms 73:17 TLB

"We must learn to trust Him implicitly anywhere; learn that when our knees shake we should kneel on them..." --Unknown

"We need to remember that God not only leads us into valleys, but through them."²
--David Pawson

"God tells us to burden Him with what burdens us." --Unknown

Sennacherib had failed to stir up trouble in Judah when Rabshakeh had shouted threatenings to the men on the wall. Frustrating to the Assyrian king--utterly frustrating! If only those stubborn men of Judah had begun shouting threatening retorts, then they might have begun to stir up a little trouble that could really have got something going.

Hezekiah had commanded his people to "answer not a word," but to put their faith in God. So there they sat silent and unmovable. Talk about cold war! He had done everything he could to stir up a hot war, but Hezekiah wouldn't even play the cold war game with him. A letter was sent directly to Hezekiah himself with the imposing seal of the king of Assyria, conqueror of all the nations round about, destroyer of all the gods. That should shake the confidence of even this proud silent king.

² Pawson n.d.

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

The letter was a masterpiece in the art of verbal fist shaking. The defiance was not directed toward Hezekiah alone, but toward the Lord God of Hezekiah as well. That ought to get a response! Surely Hezekiah would defend the honor of his God.

Hezekiah read the letter and went up to his advisors? No! To his arsenal to take stock of his stores and strategy? No! He went up into the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord. He took time first to praise God. (Isaiah 37: 16-17)

He thought out the whole situation in the presence of God. Then he trusted it in to God's hands for one purpose: that the Lord should make himself known to the enemy as the one true and living God. In 37:14-20, His prayer was answered. The angel of the Lord struck down 185,000 soldiers in answer to that one prayer. (Isaiah 37:36)

Hezekiah had the prerequisites for answered prayer. He had holy hands—hands that had destroyed the brazen serpent of idolatry and restored the worship of Jehovah. (2 Kings 18:3-7; Is 38:3; 2 Chronicles 29:30)

He had faith to "know that you are God, and you alone." (Isaiah 37:20 TLB) and that this all-powerful God would bow down His ear, open His eyes and save out of the hand of the enemy. His prayer was not to satisfy his own lusts, nor even to save his own skin, but to give honor to God. His prayer was answered, probably beyond even his greatest expectation. He had not to shoot an arrow—no not even to speak a word except in prayer. The angel of the Lord did a magnificent job of decimating the enemy.

At first report Hezekiah had said: Isaiah, pray for us! When he received the letter, "he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. (Isaiah 37:14 NIV)

Hezekiah found his God equally sufficient in time of personal tragedy. He was very ill, so ill that Isaiah had told him to set his affairs in order as he was about to die.

Hezekiah, as sick he was; "turned his face to the wall" and spread this life and death matter before the Lord. (Isaiah 38:1-8 NIV)

God answered and gave him fifteen more years to live. "Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" (Matthew 6:27 NIV)

Hezekiah had taken the only sensible action. He had learned that in problems great or small he could just spread them before the Lord. He could have said with the Psalmist, "How I plead with God, how I implore his mercy, pouring out my troubles before Him. For I am overwhelmed and desperate, and You alone know which way I ought to turn to miss the traps my enemies have set for me." (Psalms 142:1-3 TLB).

The philosophy of Hezekiah's life was undoubtedly summarized when he was ill and said, "Your discipline is good and leads to life and health." (Isaiah 38:16 TLB) Again when he was

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

told that eventually all his wealth would be carried away to Babylon, he said, "Whatever the Lord says is good." (Isaiah 39:8 TLB)

Praise the Lord anyhow!

At another time, much later in history, some other men of God had occasion to spread another matter before the Lord. (Acts 3-5) Peter and John had healed a man and were still preaching to the people. The officers in charge of the temple guards and the Sadducees were annoyed because they taught that Jesus had been raised from death, so they arrested them.

When Peter and John came to trial the High Priest asked, "By what power or what name did you do this?" (Acts 4:7 NIV) Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, answered them, "...know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed " (Acts 4:10 NIV)

The members of the Council: "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13 NIV) The Council couldn't say much because the man had been healed, but they were very upset. They discussed the problem and then, calling Peter and John back in, told them that under no circumstance were they to speak or to teach in the name of Jesus. (Acts 4:14-17) Bravely the disciples answered, ""Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19-20 NIV)

As soon as Peter and John had been set free, where did they go? Into the catacomb? Not yet! To plan a strategy of attack, or re-trial? No! They went to their brethren and together they spread it before the Lord. They took time to praise. Then they talked it all over with their Heavenly Father. (Acts 4:23-30)

What was their request of the Lord in the face of all that had happened, and that would without doubt happen again if they defied the order not to teach in the name of Jesus? Did they pray for protection? Not a bit of it! They prayed for boldness—holy boldness. (Acts 4:29) Now then was this prayer answered? "The place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly." (Acts 4:31 NIV) They were so bold in fact that the Jewish leaders were alarmed. They were turning the whole world upside down, these men who dared to spread it before the Lord and then to go out to do His will regardless of the consequences.

The consequences were not long in coming—and more surprises for the Council! Their first surprise was to find that the men they had put in prison were out again teaching and performing miracles. They again arrested the apostles and this time put them in the public jail. But that night an angel of the Lord opened the prison gates and led the apostles out. What a surprise that was for the Council! The men they had put in prison were standing in the Temple teaching!

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

The Council quickly brought the apostles to trial once again, and found them just as bold as ever. If it had not been for Gamaliel, they would have killed them then and there. As it was they were beaten and set free once again. They were bold because that is what they had prayed for. They had the victory because they dared to spread it before the Lord.

How easy it is for us to begin to listen to the enemy—to those who would thwart God’s purposes, whether they be open enemies or only men of weak faith. Perhaps we need to do as Isaiah advised, “Go home...and lock the doors! Hide for a little while until the Lord’s wrath against your enemies has passed.” (Isaiah 26:20 TLB) Hide in the upper room –in the closet—until we have spread it before the Lord.

The psalmist had experienced it. He said, “But as for me, I came so close to the edge of the cliff! My feet were slipping and I was almost gone. For I was envious of the prosperity of the proud and wicked...Then one day I went into God’s sanctuary to meditate, and thought about the future of these evil men. What a slippery path they are on—suddenly God will send them sliding over the edge of the cliff and down to their destruction: an instant end to all their happiness, an eternity of terror...When I saw this, what a turmoil filled my heart! I saw myself so stupid and so ignorant; I must seem like an animal to You, O God. But even so, You love me! You are holding my right hand! You will keep on guiding me all my life with your wisdom and counsel...But as for me I get as close to Him as I can! I have chosen Him and will tell everyone about the wonderful ways He rescues me.” (Psalms 73:2-3, 17-19, 21-24,28)

What a good place to think about evil men—or anything evil for that matter—in the sanctuary, where the Light of the Living God can shine upon it and put it all in its right perspective. It’s downright dangerous to think about evil men or matters other than in the Presence of God.

Yes, He alone knows! No need to worry. Just spread it before Him. The way ahead may be dark—so dark—but He and only He can light a beacon on the hill beyond.

The way was dark; the path obscure
Yet walk I must, I knew.
“Please take my hand and point the way!”
My heart then quiet grew.

God lit a beacon on a hill
Out yonder—far away.
I could not see the turning road
But clear the beacon’s ray.

The path was rough, and friends called out,
“Turn back! You cannot see!”
But yonder beacon shown so bright!
No doubt! `Twas lit for me.

3 “...and Leave It There”

Give your burdens to the Lord. He will carry them. He will not permit the godly to slip or fall.
Psalms 55:22 TLB

Leave all your worries with him, because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7 GNT

For anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest ... Hebrews 4:10-11 NIV

My times are in Your hands. Psalms 31:15 NIV

Leave it to Me, child, leave it to Me
Dearer thy garden to Me than to thee.
Lift up thy heart, child, lift up thine eyes.
Naught can defeat Me, naught can surprise.

Leave it to Me, child, leave it to Me.
Trust in the wall of fire, look up and see.
Stars in their courses shine through the night
Both are alike to Me—darkness and light.

Leave it to Me, child, leave it to Me,
Let slip the burden too heavy for thee.
That which I will My hand shall perform
Fair are the lilies that weather the storm.

Amy Carmichael³

Sometimes even simple words have caused serious problems as we try to translate God’s Word into the Mien language. Take the simple word “to receive”.

It is important for the Mien, rejected as the last and least as they have been through the years, to understand that Christ will not reject them. He loves them and will receive them to Himself.

We had found what we considered a very satisfactory word, “tzip” was the word they used for receiving guests. It was a joyful word. When the Mien “tzip” someone they go out a half mile along the trail, calling hearty greetings (that can be heard the full half mile!) Welcome the guests with much joy and laughter, and help them carry their loads the rest of the way to the home of the host. What could be better—for Christ receives us so joyfully.

³ Amy Carmichael (quoted by Houghton 1953)

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

Then one day Granny Mae said, "Yes, yes it is a very good thought, this idea that Jesus will 'tzip' us Mien. He takes half the load and we carry the rest of it. That's what we do when we 'tzip' our guests."

"No, Granny, no," I explained, "Jesus wants to take all our burden. He loves us so much."

Granny was thoughtful, "Jesus 'tzip's' even better than we Mien do then, doesn't He? We never take more than half the load."

The trouble with most of us is that we're never willing to give Him all the load. Do we think He isn't able to carry all our burden?

It isn't so hard to spread our burden before the Lord. We can slip into His presence and spread it out. The trouble is that we then gather up nibbling bits and worry pieces to take back with us. Sometimes we even slip back later to snatch back a bit more.

When we go on evangelistic treks where the only means of transportation is one's own two feet, I am always most happy to give all my load to a porter –Bible, visual aids, phonograph and records, -- or, later tape recorder & cassettes—the whole bit! And believe me I don't start taking anything out of his load to add to my own wee bag. I'm just grateful that he wants a day's wages badly enough to be willing to carry all my load. I well know the load is more than I can carry.

But how different it often is in the Christian walk. We know the load is more than we can carry, but we can never be quite content to trust Him fully with the whole burden, even though He longs for us to do just that.

He invites us to enter into His rest and we misunderstand and think that that rest begins on the day we die. We even have a euphemism "gone to rest" which means "to die".

In a sense there is truth in this. When we die to self and become alive in Christ, we enter into our rest—or can if we learn the simple truth of simply trusting the burden to Him.

God has given us the promise that we may go in and rest with Him. Let us fear that no one will be found to have failed to go in to that rest... "for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his" (Hebrews 4:1, 10 NIV)

Hudson Taylor confessed that his effective work for the Lord began when he learned the truth of the hymn:

"Jesus I am resting, resting,
In the joy of what Thou art.
I am finding out the greatness
Of Thy loving heart."⁴

⁴ Jean Sophia Pigott n.d.

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

That did not mean that Hudson Taylor laid down on the job—far from it! He was a busy man, but from then on he was only letting the Lord work through him.⁵

“...and how very great is his power at work in us who believe.” (Ephesians 1:19 GNT)

“To get this (his teaching ministry) done, I toil and struggle using the mighty strength which Christ supplies, which is at work in me.” Col 1:29 TEV

“On the contrary, I have worked harder than any of the other apostles, although it was not really my own doing, but God’s grace working with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:10b GNT)

This is not a lazy man’s doctrine—it is a wise man’s doctrine.

“Let us rid ourselves of everything that gets in the way...and let us run with determination the race that lies before us.” (Hebrews 12:1b GNT)

My letting the porter carry the load was not sheer laziness. I knew that when I arrived in the village, my real work began. When the people—and my porter—had finished their day’s work, mine began—teaching until well after midnight. How foolish it would have been of me to wear myself out carrying a load I did not need to carry.

This is what God is trying to say to us. “Take your burden to the Lord...and leave it there!” Go to Him in prayer. Spread out the burden—and leave it in His capable hands.

A classic example of a man who did just that is a man who remains nameless. He was Abraham’s eldest servant. (Genesis 24) Abraham charged him with an overwhelming task, but the master had surely imparted to this servant some of his own faith and trust in God.

“Go,” Abraham said, “to my old home country and there among my relatives find a wife for my son Isaac.”

Just like that! What an order!

“Let me take Isaac along. That ought to make the job easier if I can show them a handsome young prospective bridegroom.”

“No, you go alone.”

“Suppose I find her and she won’t come with me?”

“Then,” replied Abraham, sure that God would take care of that, “you will be freed from your promise to find a wife there.”

⁵ Geraldine Taylor 1944

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

The servant went and when he arrived outside the city of Nahor, he knew that this was the place. But where was the girl? Stopping by a well outside the city he laid his burden before the Lord.

“Lord,” he said, “soon the girls will be coming out to draw water. You know which one you have selected for Isaac. I couldn’t possibly know, so please let the right one be the one whom I’ll ask for a drink and she’ll offer to water the camels, too.”

What a request! Drink for an old man—anyone would do that. But water ten camels? Ten horses or donkeys—perhaps. But ten camels? How many buckets of water do you think a camel thirsty for ten days would drink? That would be quite a woman!

The servant had scarcely finished speaking when Rebekah arrived. Maybe it all happened so fast he didn’t have time to worry a little over the brashness of his request. To say, “Well, Lord, maybe if she just offered to draw a little water for some of my camels...”

Rebekah gave him a drink and at her own suggestion watered all ten of his thirsty camels. Then she invited him to her father’s house for the night. The servant bowed his head and worshipped the Lord with a full heart for leading him to just the right girl.

When Bethuel, her father, and Laban, her brother, heard the servant’s story they said, “We have no choice. This is the Lord’s doing. We have no choice. Of course, she may go.”

Young people today might do well to learn a lesson from the old servant. God knows just who and where the right mate is for each of His children. How gladly He would lead them together if they but asked him. Parents who wish they might have a word in this modern day selection of mates for their children may have a word—in prayer. And it will do infinitely more good than many words to a lovelorn youngster!

There is here, too, a lesson for all of us. The lesson of simple prayer—and then leaving it with the Lord.

How often we ask—and then plunge in our own bungling way to try to work out the answer. Often our praying is like going to the doctor. We go full of aches, pains, ills and complaints. We tell the doctor all about it—even help him make a diagnosis! Then we leave without his prescription—or having had the prescription filled, we set it on a shelf unused and continue to suffer our aches and pains, complaining all the while.

The place of prayer should be a worry deposit. Often we could better call it a garbage disposal. How many Christians fret away their lives worrying about things that may never happen, or that God could easily take care of if they do happen? This doesn’t mean we don’t think about these things. There are dangers to be faced, problems to be met on behalf of our children, our converts, ourselves, but there is quite a difference in fretting and worrying, spending sleepless nights over such things or just committing, and re-committing them to Him.

I have one daughter who once had a serious allergic reaction to a wasp sting. The doctor advised that she always carry with her a few antihistamine tablets for quick emergency use, but I knew it was possible that even this might not be fast enough. She was away at boarding school and I knew that on picnics and outings, or even on the campus, there might be bees and wasps. Then one day as I prayed about her, very much worried, the Lord whispered, "Can't you even trust me with a little bee?" That didn't mean that I never thought of the problem again, but when I did I could say, "Lord, I'm trusting You with all those little bees." Sometimes the "little bees" in my life grew up to be motorcycles, or a son set in to help ferret out communists in the jungle, or the problems that parents face when a child is trying to find his teenage way amidst the temptations of drugs, sex and the old immorality dressed up in an attempt to make it respectable. God knows about these things, too, and they are just as committable as bees. They need to be completely committed—and often.

There have been a lot of "little bees" in my life. What about yours? Can we trust Him with the "little bees"?

"The trouble with borrowing trouble," as J.W. Chapman⁶ says, "is that God gives grace as He did manna, day by day." We cannot store grace for trial any more than the Israelites could store manna. We have to be ready with each new crisis to slip into His presence and "spread it before the Lord."

I will not borrow trouble
For I cannot borrow grace
For grace He gives as manna
As we daily seek His face.

I will not borrow trouble
But daily seek His face
And know that each day's trouble
Is exceeded by His grace.

Like the Apostles who said, "Lord, you've heard what they said. You take care of it." (Acts 4:29 paraphrased) We need to learn to daily, moment by moment, trust it with Him.

"I'm so busy, Lord, I haven't time to worry whether ends will meet. You take care of that while I get on with the job You have sent me to do."

"The terrorists are pressing in, but there are souls out there so near the Kingdom. The Wall of Fire, Lord. Extra duty for my guardian angel! You take care of it, Lord!"

⁶ J W Chapman 1930.

"Said the Robin to the Sparrow:
I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so.'

Said the Sparrow to the Robin:
'Friend, I think that it must be
That they have no heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me.'"

Take your burden to the Lord—and leave it there!

4 Prayer with a Target

"Expect God to act!"

Psalms 42:11 TLB

"When you pray and ask for something, believe that you have received it, and you will be given whatever you ask for."

Mark 11:24 GNT

We pin our faith on a prayer
It is answered and we say
This is the answer to the
Prayer I prayed.

Unknown

"You'll never know the blessing and the power of prayer until you learn to pray for specific things and that in public," David Wilkerson's grandfather told him.

One day not long after that David went home to find his father hemorrhaging, and overheard the doctor say that the patient could have no more than two hours to live.

David knew that prayer was the only answer and he wanted desperately to follow his grandfather's advice and go right into the living room where relatives and friend were gathered to make the prayer both specific and public, but he found he did not have the courage, so he dashed to the cellar where he poured out his prayers for his father.

Unknown to him the hot air vents from the furnace acted as a loud speaking system, and not only the gathered relatives and friends, but his father also heard. His father weakly called for him and then asked his mother to read Matthew. 21:22, "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing ye shall receive." (KJV)

David, now with the encouragement of his father and mother and this word from the Lord was able to pray a real prayer of faith and to make it known to the doctor. The doctor smiled at him compassionately and patronizingly—and turning to his patient found that healing was indeed taking place.

God had more purpose in this answer to David Wilkerson's prayers than the immediate restoration of his father. Here was planted a seed of faith in the power of God available through prayer. This was the power that was to carry him through many an impossible situation in his ministry among the "switchblade gangs" of New York City.

This ministry, in fact, began one night when the Lord made him ask his own heart what would happen if he sold his television set and spent the two hours he usually spent watching the late show in prayer. Being reluctant to sell the set to find out, he put an almost impossible proposition to the Lord. He prayed, "Oh, Lord, if you want me to sell this set, then I will advertise, and please make someone come to inquire about it within thirty minutes after the paper hits the streets."

His wife laughed at him for making it so certain that he wouldn't have to sell his television set. The papers came out and they waited fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, twenty-nine minutes. He was just remarking that he guessed he wouldn't have to sell the set when the phone rang. A man inquired about the set, the price, and then said, "Keep it for me, I'll be right over to pick it up."

Again, there was more behind the answer to this prayer than the selling of a television set. As David Wilkerson used those two hours each night for prayer, the Lord spoke to him about teenagers in New York City who are lonely, afraid and mixed up with no one to straighten them out.

To read the story is to be amazed at the many specific, impossible prayers that David Wilkerson prayed—and found answers to. The thrilling tale of how hundreds of gang members were saved from drugs (an almost impossible salvation) killing, sordid sex, and sins of every kind, is only a testimony to what God can do with a man who will spend two hours a day in seeking the Lord about specific problems and asking quite definitely, "Lord, what do you want me to do about it?"⁷

On furlough from the mission field during the Korean War, I was distressed to hear the young people mimicking their elders in their sentence prayers. Nearly every teenager was praying, "Oh, Lord, bless the boys on the battlefield and the missionaries on the mission field."

Then came the truce and the boys were no longer on the battle field, but the prayers went on just the same, "Lord, bless the boys on the battle field and the missionaries on the mission field." One boy, a bit more alert than the rest, nudged me and whispered, "They don't even know that the war is over."

⁷ David Wilkerson 1963

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

“Yes,” I thought, “and worse than that they do not know that the battle has begun on the mission field. If they knew the heartbreak, the need of souls in constant fear of demons, yet not daring to turn from them to Christ, surely they would pray for definite people, and for a definite working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of both missionaries and those to whom they minister. What a tremendous difference this would make in the way the battle—right now terribly discouraging—is going.”

The story is told of crack European troops meeting the Transvaal Boers in a battle at Majuba. Few had any doubt but that the European troops would win—and that very soon. The Boers, however, had learned a different kind of warfare in the safari bush. Each bullet had a target and if one was careless one might well be the target of lashing claws and ripping teeth before a second shot could be fired.

That was how they fought the battle—each bullet with a target—while the Europeans fired broadside, tremendous and multitudinous bursts of fire. Yet the Boers picked off their targets so swiftly and accurately that they soon had the victory.⁸

So with prayer: Burst after burst of splattering, well meaning prayer, conveys to God no faith in what one is asking, for one indeed is asking so generally as to be asking nothing. One should always pray specifically for those whom the Lord has chosen to burden our hearts. (Surely every Christian should have at least one person he longs to see come to the Lord!) If one knows of the burdens of the pastor of his church then these should be dealt with in the concrete—not brick bats, but concrete blocks of prayer.

If one has (we hope) kept in touch with the missionaries that he supports through his church or personally, then likely he will know of specific prayers that need to be prayed if victory is to come for the Lord on that field. However, if one does not have information on some specific problem or person, it is still possible to single out a person whom God lays upon the heart for prayer and pray quite specifically.

A missionary in South America once wrote that she often felt burdened for some friend, but as she took that one before the Lord in prayer she felt quite baffled as to what she should ask for that friend that day. Then the thought came to her that Colossians 1:9-13 would be the perfect outline for a prayer for anyone. The prayer could be quite specific in a sense, for the Father who knows all about each of His children could fill in the details and answer prayer.

The prayer might run something like this:

“We ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will, with all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives.”

“Oh, Lord, if Tom is facing a decision today help him to know Your will. Help him to be aware that Your Spirit is leading Him into Your wisdom and understanding.”

⁸ Payne, *The Greatest Force on Earth* 1923

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

"...then you will be able to live as the Lord wants, and always do what pleased him."

"Lord, perhaps today Tom is having trouble yielding to you. Help him today to live as You want him to—to please You."

"...your lives will produce in all kinds of good deeds"

"I don't know what kind of work Tom has planned for today, but grant that he may be fruitful for You today."

"...and you will grow in your knowledge of God."

"Yes, Lord, help Tom to grow in his knowledge of You. Be very real to him today--make him fully aware of Your presence."

"May you be made strong with all the strength which comes from his glorious power."

"Lord, I don't know what Tom's weakness is today. He may be ill—physically weak. If so grant healing and strength. He may be feeling spiritually depleted. If so meet him in Your own special way and give strength for today."

"...so that you may be able to endure everything with patience."

"You know, Lord, what special need he has for patience today. Fill him with Your own love that he might be patient."

"...and with joy give thanks to the Father who has made you fit to have your share of what God has reserved for his people..."

"Yes, Lord, fill Tom's heart with thanksgiving for your saving power. Fill his day with joy—and keep him fit to share Your blessings."

How much more specific could one be in prayer?

J.O. Fraser once said, "It is good and right to pray vaguely, for all people, all lands, all things, at all times. But definite prayer is a very different matter. It is in a special sense "the prayer of faith," a definite request is made in definite faith for a definite answer."⁹

Definite prayer makes us scrutinize what we really want. It trains us in faith. It makes it possible for us to say in wonder, "God answer my prayer."

One more point: Someone said that a sin that is not confessed is a sin not repented of. We need to be more specific in our prayers for forgiveness—not that old bit about "forgive us all our sins", but "Lord, forgive the unkind word I said today. It was mean and little of me to say

⁹ Astrakhoff, N.I. Salof 1960

it. Take that kind of thought out of my mind.” This kind of prayer lays the axe to the root of the sin.

An old elder used to pray weekly: “Lord, get rid of the cobwebs in our lives.” A dear Christian lady had listened patiently week by week, but finally she followed the brother’s prayer with one of her own.

“Lord, don’t bother with the cobwebs—get rid of the spiders.”

Too many of our prayers are cobwebby, fuzzy and without enduring strength. Let’s get rid of the cobwebs by going right to the point when we come to the Lord in prayer.

5 Pray Without Ceasing

Pray without ceasing.

1Thessalonians 5:17 KJV

Be persistent in prayer.

Colossians 4:2 GNT

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to teach them that they should always pray and never become discouraged.

Luke 18:1 GNT

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

Ephesians 6:18 NIV

“It will never be altogether well with us until we convert the universe into a prayer room and continue in the Spirit as we go from place to place...the prayer hour is left standing before God till the other hours come and stand beside it; then if they are found to be a harmonious sisterhood, the prayer is granted.” George Bowen¹⁰

“Our ability to stay with God in our closet measures our ability to stay with God out of the closet.” E. M. Bounds¹¹

Pray without ceasing! Does that seem an impossible burden? Something to be achieved only by an ascetic hermit in a faraway cave so remote from life that prayer would scarcely be necessary?

Or does it conjure to our minds something like the Tibetan monk with his Buddhist prayers written on bits of paper and concealed in a prayer wheel (something vaguely resembling a baby’s rattle)? As he sits idly or walks about he can twirl the wheel, chanting, “O man! Padme Hum” while each turn of the wheel constitutes prayer without ceasing.

¹⁰ source unknown

¹¹ E. M. Bounds 1985

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

Unfortunately, too much that passes for Christian prayer is not much more than the prayer wheel variety, the mouthing of stock phrases with the words going to the ceiling and back without ever having touched the heart of the man who prays—or the heart of the Father.

This is the secret—“continuing instant in prayer.” (Romans 12:12 KJV) No matter what happens—who happens—to us our first thought should be to put that person, that circumstance in relation with and into a proper perspective with God.

“You cannot do the work of heaven unless daily you eat the bread of heaven. You cannot speak for Jesus out of your lips unless first you are enjoying him in your heart.”¹²

That’s it! Enjoy Him in your heart. Just as young lovers—and older ones—go about the mundane things of life sweetly, sometimes almost sub-consciously aware of the beloved, so should we strive to become in our relationship with Him. He should be at all times just beneath the surface of our consciousness.

“I am always thinking of the Lord; and because He is so near, I never need to stumble or fall.”
(Psalms 16:8 TLB)

Prayer that goes on unceasingly should begin at bedtime as we commit the night to Him, a quite serious “Now I lay me...” asking that as we awaken our first thought would be of Him.

Should we awaken in the night our thoughts, as David’s of old, should turn to Him?

“When you are on your beds search your hearts and be silent.” Psalms 4:4 NIV

David also wrote, “Yet day by day the Lord also pours out His steadfast love upon me, and through the night I sing His songs and pray to God who gives me life.” (Psalms 42: 8 TLB)

“For Jehovah enjoys His people; He will save the humble. Let His people rejoice in this honor. Let them sing for joy as they lie upon their beds.” (Psalms 149:4-5 TLB)

Prayer was not for David, as Tozer says,
“like a fire escape used only in times of critical emergency, never enjoyable,
but used as a terrified escape from disaster.”¹³

David had learned the joy of the wakeful hours. It is not so much how long we lie awake, but how we occupy ourselves in these night hours. Sleepless nights can be a real blessing if they give us time with Him.

Once a friend confided in me that she was suffering from sleeplessness. I, myself had just had a long illness that had broken my sleep pattern, so I suggested that whenever we were

¹² (A W Tozer 1955)

¹³ (A W Tozer 1955)

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

sleepless we pray for one another. She may have gotten “cheated” for after only a few nights of remembering her problems instead of mine I was sleeping through the night.

When morning comes if we have bedded down with precious thoughts of our Master it is almost inevitable that our waking thoughts should be of Him. We should plan it so. The late, late show is not nearly so apt to put us in a prayerful mood to start the day as a few minutes of prayer and Bible reading at bedtime.

Even if it means arising half an hour earlier—or even an hour or two earlier—we should set aside, as an act of the will early morning time when we will spend time in the Word and in prayer. Lest I seem dogmatic let me say that though I believe this to be the ideal plan, it may not always be practical. As a mother I know that baby may demand early morning attention. Toddlers may want a chit-chat with Mommy. When my youngest son was small the Lord made me to understand that five a.m. chats with my small son were important to him and I rescheduled my quiet time around this also-important event

I have read articles suggesting ways for a busy housewife to find time for prayer. One said that she had a “Gallery” of missionary pictures above her sink so could pray for them while washing dishes. Wonderful! Two—or five—minutes of prayer each time the chime clock strikes. Very good! Prayer time at the ironing board—or with the dust mop in hand. Marvelous. This is an excellent way of finding time for additional prayer, but may I suggest that it should not be allowed to take the place of a time when we shut out everything else and give time exclusively to God.

“Our short prayers owe their point and efficiency to the long ones that have preceded them.

The short prevailing prayer cannot be prayed by one who has not prevailed with God in a mightier struggle of long continuance.

Jacob’s victory of faith could not have been gained without that all night wrestling.

God’s acquaintance is not made hurriedly.”¹⁴

Having had our time with Him, then what? Do we turn Him off as we do the radio switch to be turned on again for a moment at bedtime? Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can we forget our Lord who is as close to us as life and breath? This is where the real joy of the Christian life begins. Prayer should be as constant as breathing.

Someone has said of the Holy Spirit that He is breath (pneuma) and being filled with the Spirit is much like breathing. He then goes on to say, “Have you ever tried breathing out three times without breathing in once?” This is perhaps what is wrong with our Christian lives. We are breathless! Winded! We take a few good deep breaths in the morning and expect it to last until we inhale again at bedtime. Shortness of breath brings fatigue—even collapse. At one time I considered shortness of breath a nuisance until I experienced a near fatal heart attack and realized that shortness of breath, lack of oxygen to the heart, can be very suddenly fatal. Spiritual breathlessness causes spiritual heart failure! We must breathe Him all day. Then we may run and not be weary.

¹⁴ (E. M. Bounds 1985)

This may not—probably does not—mean stopping and going physically into the closet.

“If no better place presents itself, the soul which turns to God may clothe itself in quietness, even in the crowded concourse or in the hurrying streets. With God, to whom a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day, a moment of remembrance before Him is all he needs to know we still care for this soul and unless He lays a burden for much prayer for such a soul, the moment spent may be all that is needed to pour out blessing on such a friend.”¹⁵

Whatever the tasks, the problems, the friends, the strangers that cross and re-cross our paths, we can always turn the light of prayer upon them. Have you ever been in a situation where you were thrown into association with one, maybe even a stranger who was utterly miserable? Somehow you sensed that the misery was basically because of the fact that that person did not know Christ. So you just prayed, “Lord, let a little of your light shine on that person. He needs You so much.” You may not always know what happened in that heart, that life, but the results can be electrifying. I once prayed that very prayer for a tribal woman I scarcely knew. She was instantly healed and the Doctor later told me she should not have lived even under the best medical care in the hospital.

The daily news should alert us to various prayers for peace in the world and for those who suffer because there is no peace.

“Prayer ought to arise from the heart like the fragrance from burning incense on an altar day and night all the time. The soul of a Christian can be so possessed of God, so hungry for His presence that both the conscious and the sub-conscious mind carry on the pleading, the searching for God’s face and His will and way and work.”¹⁶

“The fire on the altar must be kept burning and never allowed to go out. Every morning the priest shall put firewood on it, arrange the burnt offering on it, and burn the fat of the fellowship offering. .” (Leviticus 6:12-13 GNT)

Each believer is a priest before God. We should daily place the wood in a time set apart for prayer—then gently fan the flame throughout the day that our fire should not go out.

6 Two for a Penny

For only a penny you can buy two sparrows, yet not one sparrow falls to the ground without your Father’s consent....So do not be afraid; you are worth much more than many sparrows!
Matthew 10:29, 31 GNT

¹⁵ (McIntyre 1978)

¹⁶ (Payne, The Greatest Force on Earth 1923)Quote from Guy Mark Pearce

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son—will he not also freely give us all things? Romans 8:32 GNT

“Prayer can do anything God can do.” E. M. Bounds¹⁷

“Our God is not only the God of the infinite. He is the God of the infinitesimal.” Unknown

What is more awesome than the twin realization that God is the King of the earth and of the entire universe—yet He, who is so powerful, so wise, is also, by His own choice, my own personal Heavenly Father! He is the God of the big things—like salvation, life and death; but the fact remains He is also the God of the little things—the sparrow, the hairs of the head, the lilies of the field. Nothing is too big—or too little for God! Nothing is beyond Him nor is anything so small as to be beneath His concern.

Have you ever thought of the preciseness of the listing of the exact numbers of the people, as for example in the book of Ezra? (Ezra 2) The Word could have said, “The children of Pahath-moab were about two thousand eight hundred.” That is probably how we would have said it, but individuals matter to God. His word records that there were “two thousand, eight hundred and twelve at Pahath-moab.” The list goes on: “three hundred seventy and one...” “...two hundred forty and seven ...” Not a round number in the lot. Each individual accounted for!

A study of the prayers of the Bible amazes one with the variety of the requests and the magnitude of some as compared with the simplicity of others. Gideon asked for just a little water on his fleece. (Judges 6:37) Joshua asked for the sun to stand still. (Joshua 10:12-14) Both prayers were granted. Moses prayed for the forgiveness of a nation. (Exodus 32:11-14) The publican prayed for the forgiveness of one man—himself. (Luke 18:13) God heard and answered both men. Manoah asked for guidance in training his son who was as yet unborn. (Judges 13:8-9) Solomon prayed for wisdom to rule a whole nation. (1 Kings 3:5-9) God was pleased with the desires of both men.

Jacob prayed for a personal blessing and wrestled with the Lord until he had been blessed. (Genesis 32:24-29) Nehemiah prayed for a curse on the enemies of both God and His people. (Nehemiah 4:4-5) Both prayers were within the will of God and for His glory. Samson asked for strength to destroy, though he knew it would mean destruction for himself as well as the temple of Dagon. (Judges 16:28) Peter cried, “Lord, save me!” and he walked again on the water. (Matthew 14:30) Again, both prayers were answered.

Elijah at one time prayed for a drought and at another time for rain (James 5:17-18) and both were at God’s right time. Elisha prayed for sight for his servant (2 Kings 6:15-18) and for blindness for his enemies. (2 Kings 6:18) There was a purpose of God to be fulfilled by each request, so Elisha had the answer to both prayers in a wonderful way with wonderful results.

¹⁷ (E. M. Bounds, Purpose in Prayer 1920)

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

Hannah and Abraham, each asked for a son, and to each a son was given for the glory of God. Abraham's servant asked for a wife for his master's son and was amazed to see the precision of God's working. Jesus prayed over five loaves and two fishes that they become much—enough to feed five thousand men besides women and children. At another time He prayed, "Father, forgive them," and the tremendous sin of killing the Son of God was forgiven in the sight of God.

Sometimes we sin in asking too little. When we first went to work among the Mien we felt the desperate need of language help for more than a few days at a time. When days went by without any help, and we would cry, "Please, Lord, just send us someone, anyone." That's what we usually got— "just anyone". An old granny with her teeth missing so we couldn't tell if the sound was really a lisp or just Granny's lisping. Confusing! Sometimes it was a child so young he really didn't know his own language very thoroughly. At other times it was women married out of the tribe who had more or less forgotten their native tongue. They gave us interesting combinations to say the least.

Then, at the very point when we were broken hearted at having to leave the tribal village and move back to the Thai market village where (at that time) Mien were few and far between, God introduced us to a new idea. Why ask Him for "just anyone"? He could give the best possible language informant as well as "just anyone", and so we prayed, "Lord, You know we need language help. We want to work on translation, and we know that You can give the very best help in the tribe. You know where that person is. Help us to find him, and make him willing to work with us."

It wasn't long before we made the acquaintance of Brother Four. Brother Four, as a child, had begged his father to let him study books. His father had said, "If you want to be a spirit priest, then I will send you to the school for spirit priests to learn to read Chinese. To read Thai? No!"

Now Brother Four had moved to the plains to give his eleven children a chance to have the education he had missed, and he needed a decent salary to keep his children in school. We weren't prepared to pay him the amount that he as a clever farmer and business man could make. Also he had heard many frightening rumors about strange white people and what they had come to do to the Mien, and he wasn't sure he wanted that close a relationship with us.

Finally, after much prayer on our part, he agreed to come to work with us to make books for his own people. We discovered the wisdom of God's choice. Not only did he never tire of books, he often stayed on working overtime until we were so weary we wish he would call it a day. His precise feeling for the meanings of words sent chills up and down our spines—he was a real artist with words. What we never could have done on our own, God did in a marvelous way.

At other times very simple prayers have been answered—almost to our surprise! Most of them cannot be told for they involve interpersonal relationships that might be embarrassing for someone. Perhaps my husband will forgive if I share this one: At one time the car badly

Book 4 Behold HIM on the Mountain

needed a grease job, but the travel schedule was so tight that there just didn't seem to be any way to make the 55-mile trip to the provincial capital to have the job done. My husband, intent on keeping his schedule, felt the grease job could wait. I, having grown up in a family where a grease job waited for nothing, had nagged a bit, and then had decided that wasn't a very nice thing to do and had prayed that somehow the time might be found for the grease-job-trip. It seemed a sort of silly thing to pray about I will admit.

Then the evening before the long-planned evangelistic trip a friend who worked on a road construction gang dropped by and said, "Our grease truck should be about ten miles north tomorrow morning about 8 a.m. and if you'll drive up there, we'll do you up in no time."

"Thank you, Lord!" I breathed. But hubby didn't know this was the answer to my prayer and he knew that road construction gangs are often not where they plan or promise to be, and he knew that this could mean a more time consuming wait than the drive to the provincial capital. So he didn't go.

Just as my husband and a group of Mien were leaving for the evangelistic trip, another Mien man came by to tell them of a man in the hospital in serious condition. All agreed that this should take priority, so off they went in the car to visit the patient before setting out on their longer trip.

They had no sooner left than a boy came running in saying, "Where's the car? The grease truck is on the road out front waiting to grease it!"

"It will be back in just a few minutes." (I prayed it really would!)

Within the hour my husband came in looking like the cat that swallowed the canary. "I got the car greased as you asked," He grinned.

"How nice!" I replied, later I explained to him why it was so very nice!

Since then I've prayed for a lot of "silly" things. It makes it a lot easier for me not to nag. I must say the idea wasn't entirely original. Isobel Kuhn in her book, "Ascent to the Tribes" tells how she used to "manage" her husband that way—and he didn't seem to mind too much!

Lest I get smug, I have a prayer pasted in the back of my Bible:

"Lord, when I'm wrong, make me willing to change;
When I'm right, make me easy to live with."

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