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DIGGING FOR RAIN

BY ARCH A O. DART

Even in the days of the cannibals, not everyone who landed on a cannibal island was devoured. Dr. John Paton wasn't. His first assignment was to the South Sea island of Tanna. Although the bloodthirsty natives tried to make his life miserable, they feared Queen Victoria's warships too much to actually eat him.

After four years on Tanna, Paton moved to the island of Aniwa. Aniwa was much smaller than Tanna, but its natives were every bit as bloodthirsty. However, they were also afraid of the queen's ships. And so, when Dr. and Mrs. Paton arrived, the savages pretended to welcome the missionaries with open arms. They even gave them some land for a house.

Dr. Paton set to work with pick and shovel to level the ground. But the more he dug, the more human bones he uncovered. "How came these bones here?" he asked an islander slouching nearby.

The man shrugged his shoulders. "Ah, Tanna men no good," he told Dr. Paton. "We no eat the bones!"

Soon Dr. Paton discovered that his building site had been the cannibals' dumping grounds. For generations, they had thrown the bones of their human

victims—the people they had eaten—on this very spot. The natives believed that the spirits would kill Dr. Paton, his wife, and the native teachers if they built on that hill. Then, who could blame them if they ate the missionaries for dinner?

But the Patons didn't die. Soon the islanders began telling one another, "Jehovah, the God of Missi Paton, is stronger than our gods." To test their theory, they laid elaborate plots to harm the missionaries. To their amazement, God always protected His servants.

Before long a few of the islanders, with Chief



Namekei leading the way, began to listen to Paton's stories of Jesus. When the missionary cured some of their sick, they became even more interested. And when Dr. and Mrs. Paton took in the poor motherless daughters of the chief and his brother, the two men grew even more friendly. But one great event, more than any other, broke the back of heathenism on the island of Aniwa, and caused the people to turn to Jehovah.

It all began when Dr. Paton decided he needed fresh water.

THIRSTY MISSI

Aniwa had no mountains or high hills, and no springs or other fresh water. During the rainy season, the natives saved all the rainwater they could, but it didn't last long. Since they drank the liquid from coconuts, they did not mind the lack of fresh water as much as the Patons did.

The Patons, however, longed for clear, fresh water for drinking and bathing. Dr. Paton finally decided to dig a well, hoping and praying that God would guide his spade to a place where fresh water might be found. But when he told Namekei what he had in mind, the chief looked at him in astonishment.

"Oh, Missi!" he cried. "Wait till the rain comes down, and we will save all we can for you!"

"We must have fresh water," the missionary told him. "If we cannot find it, we may have to leave you."

"But Missi," the chief argued, "you must not leave us for that. Rain comes only from above. How could you expect our island to send up showers of rain from below?"

"It comes up from the earth in my homeland," the missionary insisted. "I hope to find it here, too."

The old chief looked upon the mis-

sionary with sorrow. "Oh, Missi, your head is going wrong. You are losing your mind, or you would not talk like that. Don't let our people hear you talking about going down into the earth for rain, or they will never listen to your word or believe you again."

HOLE IN THE EARTH

In spite of the chief's warning, Dr. Paton started digging a hole in the earth. As he dug, the old chief gathered his men together. "Poor Missi has had a touch of the sun," he told them. "He is growing mad, and we cannot drive this foolish notion out of his head. We must watch him closely so that he shall not kill himself." Together they arranged for someone to always watch the missionary as he dug his well.

But digging was hard work. One day Dr. Paton brought a bucket of fishhooks to the digging site. "I will give a fishhook to every man who brings three buckets of earth out of this hole." He watched their faces, knowing how much they coveted the steel fishhooks.

Soon Dr. Paton had all the help he could use. "Missi may be going mad," the natives told each other, "but fishhooks are fishhooks. If we can get them by digging this hole in the earth, why not do it?"

One night, after they had dug down 12 feet, the side caved in. The next morning, the chief stood at Dr. Paton's door. "Now, Missi," he told the missionary, "if you had been down in that hole last night you would have been buried. Next thing you know, a warship from Queen Victoria would come, and the captain would ask where you were. We would say, 'He is down in that hole.' And he would ask, 'How did he get there?' We should have to say, 'He went down there himself.' And the captain

would answer, 'Nonsense! Whoever heard of a white man going down into the earth to bury himself? You killed him, and you buried him there. Don't hide your bad conduct with lies.' Then he would bring out his big guns and shoot us."

The old chief shook his head. "You are making your own grave, Missi, and you are making ours, too. Give up your mad idea, for no rain will ever come up through the ground. Neither will any more fishhooks tempt my men to go down there again; they do not want to be buried with you."

Instead of giving up, Dr. Paton rigged up a pulley and a bucket. With a native teacher on guard at the top, he went down in the well and dug, sending the dirt up to the man at the top. As he dug ever deeper, he prayed that God would fill the well with water so that the natives would know that He could do the impossible.

When Dr. Paton reached 30 feet, the earth began to feel damp. That night he told the chief, "I think Jehovah will give us water tomorrow from that hole!"

"No, Missi," the chief said, "you will never see rain coming up from the earth on this island. We wonder what will be the end of this mad work. If you do reach the water, you will surely drop through into the sea, and the sharks will eat you! That will be the end of it: death to you and danger to us all."

John Paton smiled. "Come tomorrow. I believe that Jehovah will send us rain water up through the earth."

BROKEN BACK

The next morning, Dr. Paton rose at daybreak. While a group of men waited at the top, Paton climbed down into the well, taking a jug with him. With a prayer on his lips, he dug down another

two feet. Suddenly, water gushed into the hole. He dipped some up in his hand, and brought it to his mouth. It was fresh and sweet!

Praising the Lord, Paton filled the jug, then took it up to the waiting men. The chief took the jug, shook it to see if the water would spill, touched the fluid to see if it felt like water, and finally tasted it. He rolled the water in his mouth for a moment, swallowed it, and then shouted, "Rain, rain, yes, it is rain! Oh, how did you get it?"

"Jehovah, my God, gave it out of His earth," Paton told him. "He answered our prayers and labors. Look and see for yourselves."

Holding onto a chain of natives for safety, the chief crept toward the hole. "Wonderful!" he cried as he gazed into the well. "Wonderful is the work of your Jehovah! None of the spirits ever helped us in this way. The world is turned upside down since Jehovah came to Aniwa!"

That day the back of heathenism was broken by the rain that came up from the ground. 



WHY ARE YOU

BY R. A. TORREY



PRAYING?

Are you praying that someone you love will be converted? Perhaps your father or your mother?

Now, that is certainly a good thing to pray for. In fact, I can't imagine how any young disciple could rest, or give God rest day or night, until all his family members are truly converted.

But, as good as this prayer is, it fails sometimes because it has *selfish motives*. Let's take the case of a young girl praying for her father. She thinks to herself, "Our home would be so much happier if my father were a Christian! Then Father would take me to church, and we would enjoy doing church activities together. We would be a real family."

Of course this is all true. When a family member is unconverted, the whole family suffers. They can never experience the joy of a family where all are united in serving the Lord. But to pray for the conversion of your father for that reason only is really just a refined form of selfishness: *You are looking at your own happiness.*

Or maybe a young man will pray for his mother because he cannot bear the idea that *his* mother should be lost, and that he will have to spend the ceaseless ages of eternity without her. Even that is selfishness.

What *should* be our motive in praying for our loved ones? First of all, and above everything else, so that God might be glorified in their conversion. Our hearts should break as we behold their Christless, godless, God-disobey-

ing lives. We should pray that they might give up their rebellion so that God will be glorified. When we pray along these lines, we can expect to see great things!

Let's look at another example. Today we hear all around us that we should pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. This is certainly something God has told us to pray for. But often even our prayers for this important gift are selfish. Maybe we ask for the Holy Spirit because we think it will make us happier. Maybe we want it because we are afraid other people will receive the latter rain, and we will be humiliated by being left out. Maybe we want to have more spiritual power so that others will admire us. All this is pure selfishness. With motives like these, we can pray for the latter rain day and night, and yet never receive it.

Why, then, should we want to receive the latter rain? *So that God might be glorified.* Because we can no longer stand to dishonor God by our feeble service. Because we want God to be glorified in all we say and do.

Oh, if we could only see this as we should! If we could only understand how much our lives dishonor God! If only we longed for the latter rain so that God might be glorified through us! If only we wanted the Holy Spirit enough to allow God to cleanse us from all sin! *Then* we would see wonderful things in our lives and in our church! *If only!*





STUMBLING BLOCKS

“Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given” (*Steps to Christ*, page 91).

MEMORY TEXT:

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:3).

PROJECT: MEMORY – Ephesians 3:14–4:7

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:5, 6).

Bible study hint: The Topical Study & Bible Marking

A topical study is similar to a word study. But instead of choosing a particular *word*, you explore what God has to say on a certain *subject*. For example, the topic of *happiness* might include all the forms of the words *joy*, *rejoicing*, *gladness*, *contentment*, and *delight*. Topics could also include doctrinal themes such as the state of the dead, the Sabbath, and overcoming.

Bible concordances, marginal references, and Bible study guides can all help in a topical study. A topical dictionary is also extremely useful. Some Bibles, such as the *Thompson Chain Reference Bible*, include a topical index, which is an extremely valuable feature.

When you have completed studying a topic, you may wish to mark it in your Bible. Here’s how:

Choose a title and abbreviation for your study—for example, *Sabbath*—*SAB*.

Turn to a blank page in the front or back of your Bible, and note the title, abbreviation, and first text of your study; then underline them with a colored pencil. (HINT: Divide up the blank pages among the letters of the alphabet. Leave extra room for C, P, and S.)

Underline the first text, using the same color. With a fine-tip pen, write the abbreviation for the study, plus the second text, in the margin next to the text. (Example: *SAB—Genesis 2:2, 3.*) Underline this notation with the colored pencil.

Continue throughout the study. Next to the last text, write the abbreviation for the study and the word *end* (*SAB—end*).

This method is often called *chain-referencing*. As your Bible becomes filled with these studies, it will become your most prized possession.

Bible Lesson Key

Core Concept: For everyone.

Study for Yourself: More challenging.

Dig Deeper: Most challenging.

Bible Memory: For everyone.

Puzzles/Activities: Enjoy! For the answer key, use a mirror.

CORE CONCEPT

People go to many extremes to try to get what they earnestly want and even desperately need. They **L**_____, **K**_____, covet, and **F**_____, and wonder why they still **H**_____. **N**_____. Why? They didn't **A**_____.

(See James 4:2.)
The reason most Christians have so little power is because they *neglect to pray!* But we may pray and still not get what

we need. This happens when we “ask **A**_____” (verse 3).

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon helps us understand exactly what this means. It shows us that the Greek word for “amiss” could also be translated *improperly, wrongly, or with bad intent*. In other words, when we “ask amiss,” there is something that prevents God from answering our prayers.



STUDY FOR YOURSELF!

Numbers 22 tells the story of a man who asked amiss. What was his name?



DIG DEEPER

The spiritual problem of many is described in Matt. 15:8 and Mark 7:6. How could this problem lead us either to not ask or to ask amiss? Find the verse Jesus was quoting from and read the context. Then do a word-by-word study of the original verse and Jesus' quotation. How can you avoid being like this?

YUZW61 K6A: M6 Q0n, f 92K

NO PUZZLE!

We may wonder why our prayers are not answered, but it's really not a puzzle. Fit the letters in “TAKEDOWNS” in the squares so that each letter in the word appears in each column, each row, and each 9-square box. If you do it correctly, the answer will appear in one of the rows. Highlight this row. (HINT: To get started, look for a row, column, or box where only two letters are missing. Figure out where these go, write them in, and continue the puzzle in the same way.)

	K	W			N			S
	N		W	A		E	K	D
		E		T				
	A			K	D		E	
K		T	A	E	W	D		O
	E		O				S	
	W	K		S		O	T	N
O		N		W	K			
S	T		N	O		K	D	

TAKEDOWNS

Memory Text

Use the letters to learn James 4:3. YA, ARN, BYAA, TYMCIUYL.

James 4:3 describes one important reason why our prayers are sometimes not answered: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, _____

_____."

In other words, so that we can use it for our own pleasure.

One thing that keeps God from answering our prayers is a selfish motive.

We may ask for something we really

need. It may be something that God wants to give us. Still, if we want it for our own enjoyment, God cannot give it to us.

1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whether therefore ye _____, or _____, or _____ ye do, do all to the _____ of _____."

Everything we do, even eating and drinking, should be to honor God. Shouldn't this be much more important when it comes to our prayers?

GLORIFY GOD!

To discover what it means to glorify God, lift the letters up into the boxes directly above them. The letters are not necessarily in the correct order. Two letters have been placed for you.



STUDY FOR YOURSELF!

According to John 14:13, why does Jesus say He answers our prayers? _____

Answer key: When we glorify God, we lift Him up in the world.

									G								
		D															
U	P	H	,	N	W	W	H	E	I	W	T	R	L	D	M		
G	O	D	I	N		E	E	L	G	F	O	R	I	I	Y		
	W		E			T				L	O		H	F	.		

Memory Text

You already learned the last part of James 4:2. Now say it together with verse 3.



DIG DEEPER

Do a word-by-word study of 1 Cor. 10:31. What does it mean to glorify God? How can you do this in your prayers?

CORE CONCEPT

Isaiah 59:1, 2 gives another reason our prayers are sometimes not answered: "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your _____ have _____ between you and your God, and your _____ have hid His face from you, that He will not hear."

The people in Isaiah's time were complaining, "God doesn't answer prayer anymore. He may have listened to Moses and Elijah, but He doesn't pay any atten-

tion to us."

"The trouble isn't with God," Isaiah told them. "It's with *you*." The people were stubbornly holding onto their sins, yet they were unhappy with God for not answering their prayers.

When we cherish sin in our hearts, God cannot answer our prayers as He would like.

This is what David meant when he said, "If I regard [cherish] iniquity in my _____, the LORD will not _____ me" (Psalm 66:18).



STUDY FOR YOURSELF!

Whose prayers did the Jews say would be answered? See John 9:31.

Were they correct? _____



DIG DEEPER

Compare Ps. 66:18; Prov. 15:8; and Mic. 3:4 with Isa. 59:1, 2. Now do a word-by-word study of at least one of them.

MAKE IT RIGHT!

If you have not surrendered an area of your life to God, you can be sure that your prayer life is not what it should be. Find a place where you can be alone with God. Ask Him to search your heart and show you what you need to confess and surrender. Make things right with your Lord. When you do, you will find an open Heaven and a God who is quick to answer your prayers!

"Sin, selfishness, and disobedience can keep our prayers from being answered."

—Keoshia Collins



Project: Memory

Use the letters to learn Ephesians 4:5, 6.
OL, OF, OB, OGAFOA,
WIAA, ATA, AIYA.

You'd think it would have been a day of great triumph for Ezekiel. After all, the important men of Israel—the elders—came to him and asked him to pray for them. But before Ezekiel could pray, the Spirit of God stopped him. He told the prophet, “These men have set up their _____ in their _____, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be _____ of at all by them?”

(See Ezekiel 14:3.)

Idols in the heart stop God from hearing our prayers.

What is an idol? Anything we put before God.

- ✱ It might be our *friends*, if we do things to please them that do not please

God.

- ✱ It might be our *clothes*, if we dress in a way that God cannot approve.
- ✱ It might be our *reputation*, if we care more about what others think than what God thinks of us.
- ✱ It can be anything—even a good thing—if it is more important to us than God.

If you want power in prayer, go off alone somewhere with God. Say, “_____ me, O God, and know my heart: _____ me, and know my _____.” (Psalm 139:23). Ask Him to show you any idols that are there. Then, when He shows them to you, ask Him to take them from you!



UGLY IDOLS!

On a blank sheet of paper, draw some ugly idols.



Give each one the name of an idol that might come between you and God.

Memory Text & Project: Memory

How many times does Ephesians 4:5, 6 repeat the words *one* and *all*? Review Ephesians 4:5, 6 and James 4:3 this many times.



STUDY FOR YOURSELF!

What happens between us and God when we have idols in our heart? See Ezekiel 14:5. _____



DIG DEEPER

What other prophet was told not to pray for certain people? Why? Do a verse-by-verse study of Jeremiah 11:1–14. What was God's solution? What could be expected if they didn't carry it out? Compare with Ezekiel 14:1–11.



“Our prayers can't be answered if we're holding onto an idol and still asking God to bless us.”

—Joelle Griswold

CORE CONCEPT

Jesus wants our prayers to get through! This is why He said, "When ye stand praying, _____, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25).

Do you have bitterness in your heart toward someone who has wronged you? This is one of the most common reasons our prayers cannot be answered. Perhaps you are praying that someone you love will be saved. Do you want them to be saved so much that you are willing to forgive a person who has wronged you very much?

God cannot answer the prayers of those with an unforgiving spirit toward others.

It's that simple: When we don't forgive others, God cannot forgive us. And we must have our iniquities removed if we want to have power in our prayers.

Young disciples, ask God to search your heart today! Ask Him to bring to light any hatred or bitterness that you may be holding onto. No matter how much another person may have wronged you, God can help you give up your bitterness and make room for His Spirit. Then you will see what power you can have in prayer!



STUDY FOR YOURSELF!

What verse in Matthew 6 has the same message as Mark 11:25? _____

What is the message of the Bible?

FROM HATE TO LOVE!

When we allow God to take away our bitter, angry feelings toward someone else, He gives us love for that person instead of hate.

See how quickly you can form a chain of associated words by filling in the empty boxes with the letters on the right. Each word should be connected in some way with the words above and below it.



DIG DEEPER

What reason does God give us for loving and forgiving those who hurt us? Read Matt. 5:44, 45; 18:21–35; Eph. 4:31–5:2; Col. 3:12, 13. Get deeper by doing a word-by-word study of Col. 3:12, 13.

Project: Memory

Filling our hearts with God's word is even more important than eating nutritious food! Review Ephesians 3:14–19 before breakfast.

Word chain puzzle grid:

H	A	T	E					G	R		R	T			
		A								T	H	E	S		
		O													
		U								M		L	O		
		O									L	E	S	S	
		A									W	H		H	E
		L	O	V	E										

Proverbs 21:13 gives a very solemn warning: “Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the _____, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be _____.”

If we are stingy with those who need our help, we cannot expect to have power in our prayers.

On the other hand, when we share with others, we open the way for blessings for ourselves. Luke 6:38 says, “_____ and it shall be _____ unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.”



Think About It! God gives out His blessings to us in the same _____ measure that we give to others.

If we use tiny quarter-teaspoon measures when we give to others, we can expect only a tiny quarter-teaspoon of God’s blessings, ourselves!

Young disciples, do you think you have nothing to give to help others? If so, then think again. Ask God to show you what you spend money on that you could do without. Ask Him how you can give of your talents and time. And when He shows you, ask Him for grace to give and give again.

WHY GOD QUILTS GIVING!

There’s a simple reason why God begins to give us less. To find out why, fill in the blank boxes. The boxes on the right give three texts that all contain the word.

We

John 14:14; James 1:6;
1 John 5:14

and we

Ezekiel 22:27; Zephaniah 3:19;
James 4:13

and we !

Zechariah 13:5; Mark 7:9;
Acts 5:3

STUDY FOR YOURSELF!

Which verse in 2 Corinthians 9 has the same message as Luke 6:38? _____



DIG DEEPER

Do a verse-by-verse study of Isa. 1:15–18. When does God not hear our prayers? What does He ask us to do so that He can hear and answer us? Compare this with Isa. 58:6–10.



“We can keep our prayers from being answered by focusing on ourselves. God can’t answer selfish prayers.”

—Noeliz Vega

Project: Memory

Review Ephesians 3:20–4:6, noting the thought that begins and ends the passage. Review the words till they are really in you.

SUMMARY

Quiz! Circle the letter of the correct answer(s).

- Why don't we always get the things we earnestly want and even desperately need?
 - We ask wrongly or with a selfish motive;
 - We don't share our prayer requests enough;
 - We don't fast; d. We neglect to pray.
- When we pray, what should always be our motive?
 - Anything, as long as we're praying to God;
 - To get what is best for us; c. To get something good for someone else; d. God's glory.
- What does sin cherished in our hearts do to our prayers?
 - Makes God angry with us; b. Makes it impossible for God to answer our prayers the way He would
- like; c. Nothing; d. Makes it so we cannot think of what we want to pray for.
- Why didn't God want Ezekiel to pray for the elders of Israel?
 - They needed a bath; b. God wanted them to pray for themselves; c. They had idols in their hearts; d. They were teaching error.
- When we don't forgive others:
 - God can't forgive them, either; b. God can't forgive us; c. God can't answer our prayers; d. no one will like us.
- God gives His blessings:
 - mostly to poor people; b. to anyone who asks; c. in the same measure that we give to others; d. mostly to people with many talents.

יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי: י' ג' א' ט' ז' ב' ד' ו' ח' ע' פ' צ' ק' ר' ש' ת' ע'



DIG DEEPER

Do a verse-by-verse study of Proverbs 1:24–33. How does it summarize what hinders our prayers? How can we be sure of God's help in our need?

Memory Challenge!

Prayerfully review Ephesians 3:14–4:6, asking God if there is anything in your heart that could stop Him from answering this prayer.

Of All The Week
THE BEST

Hindrances and Obstacles!

It's very important to know why God may not be able to answer our prayers. This activity helps make it real.

Preparation: Write each of the reasons for unanswered prayers on cards—one per card.

Action: After prayer, divide into five groups. Explain that each group will illustrate one of the reasons that God cannot always answer our prayers. They may make

a drawing, a diorama, or a charade. When the groups are ready, have each group share, while the others guess what they are depicting.

Application: Could any of these things be obstructing our own prayer life? What might be the consequences to us? Our families? Our church? Our nation? Close by singing, "Search Me, O God."



Why
today's
teens
can't
do
without
prayer!

Part 11

SECRET OF REAL POWER

We need to pray! In fact, Ephesians 6:18 tells us to pray at all seasons, in all perseverance, for all saints. There's an urgency about this verse—pleading with us to make persistent, wakeful, overcoming prayer part of our lives. Why is prayer an absolute necessity for every child of God? My studies have led me to 13 important reasons.

REASON #11: Prayer brings power into our work.

What work has God called you to do? Is it studying? teaching? speaking? helping? writing? singing? working?

Whatever God has called you to do, you can get the power to do it by earnest prayer.

A woman I knew had one of the **NAUGHTIEST LITTLE BOYS** I had ever seen. In desperation, she asked me, "What shall I do with him?"

I asked, "Have you ever tried prayer?"

She said she thought she had prayed for him. I asked her if she had prayed in particular for his conversion. She didn't think she had been so specific.

That very day she began to pray in a very definite, specific way for her son.

It wasn't **LONG** before the child began to change, and he grew up to be a fine Christian man.

Many Sabbath School leaders teach for months and years without seeing any real fruit from their labors. Yet, when they learn the secret of intercession, something wonderful happens: As they earnestly plead with God, they see their students brought one by one to Christ!

Even the weakest, most ineffective teacher can become a mighty worker for God. He need only **CAST** away his confidence in his own ability and gifts—and **GIVE** himself up to the Lord. In turn, God will give him the power that comes from on high!

Have you tried to convert your friends and family and neighbors—and been discouraged at the lack of results?



Learn the **SECRET** of intercessory prayer. Plead earnestly for their salvation—and watch as they come, one by one, to Christ.

HAVE YOU TRIED to use your talents for the Lord, and wondered why they did so little good?

Cast away your confidence in your own abilities and gifts, and give yourself up to God. Wait upon Him for the power that comes only from on high.

Do you long for real power? Then learn this:

PRAYER AND POWER CANNOT BE SEPARATED.

(To be continued.)

WHY is PRAYER an ABSOLUTE NECESSITY?

1. There is a devil.
2. Lack of prayer is the greatest reason we do not receive what we need.
3. Every mighty man of God has been a man of prayer.
4. Jesus, our example, spent much time in prayer.
5. Christ lives to make intercession for us.
6. Prayer is the key to God's mercy and grace.
7. Praying in Jesus' name brings fullness of joy.
8. Prayer brings peace which passes understanding.
9. Prayer keeps our hearts from being overwhelmed by the appetites, passions, and cares of this life.
10. Prayer keeps us spiritually strong.
11. Prayer brings power into our work.
12. Prayer brings souls to the Kingdom.
13. Prayer brings blessings to the church.

WITNESS

Mission to the Muslims, Part 1

by George Bishop and Rose Heinrich Rogers

Mary Fisher, a young Englishwoman, knelt at her bed in agony of soul. “Lord, why me? Who am I against an empire that threatens all of Europe? How could I possibly share the gospel with the Grand Vizier¹ of the Ottoman Empire?² Why would he listen to a strange woman when he treats his own wives like dirt? He might force me to become part of his harem or behead me for defying his Muslim religion!”

Mary looked again at the text opened before her: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.”³ As she did so, a calm assurance swept through her soul: *You are an ambassador of the King of kings. Don't be afraid.*

Mary immediately began preparing for the long journey ahead. She would have to cross the Mediterranean Sea by ship—and that was at best a precarious means of travel in the 1650s.

While sailing, Mary pushed anxious thoughts aside. Still, she couldn't help but wonder how she could possibly gain an audience with the Grand Vizier, Mohammed Koprulu Pasha. The great kings of Europe were afraid of this ruthless leader; how would she fare? Muslims were known for their “holy wars” to destroy everyone who would

not embrace their religion. She shuddered at thoughts of what could happen to one defenseless girl. Many, many times she repeated Psalms 91 and 46 to remind herself of God's ever present help.

When the boat docked in the city of Smyrna,⁴ Mary paid a visit to the English ambassador. She explained her mission and asked for his support.

The man shook his finger at the trembling girl. “I cannot allow you to proceed further in this country,” he admonished. “It is far too dangerous.” The man personally escorted Mary onto a ship bound for Venice, Italy.

Most young ladies would have given up, but not Mary. “If I cannot enter Turkey by ship, I will go by land,” she determined. Soon she was on her way once more.

Five hundred weary miles later, Mary rounded a little hill near Adrianople, Turkey. There, she saw an army camp spread out before her. Overwhelmed with the fearful responsibility ahead of her, Mary knelt beside the road. “Please help me find a companion so I will not be alone,” she begged. “And please soften the heart of the Grand Vizier and his men. Send your Holy Spirit to prepare the way before me.” Mary



continued in prayer until her heart was filled with such love that she could not wait to share Jesus no matter how difficult the situation.

Mary made her way into the city. To each person she met, she had one question: “I am a Christian. Will you accompany me to visit the Grand Vizier?” The answer was always the same. “Are you out of your mind? The Grand Vizier hates Christians. You

won’t last five minutes even if you get to see him. I’m not risking my life. You’d better think again!”

Well Lord, it seems it is just You and me. Mary turned toward the camp with a firm step.

(To be continued.)

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1. The greatest minister of the sultan.
 2. Today Turkey.
 3. Matthew 28:19.
 4. Today Izmir, Turkey.

CANNIBAL ISLAND

What's happening: As the director of the Vailala Mission Station in Papua New Guinea, Elwyn Martin experiences many miracles. When he and a group of teachers conduct evangelistic meetings in the villages, over 300 are baptized. Next, he decides to make contact with the Kukukukus, a remote tribe feared for their headhunting raids. The Kukukukus are receptive to the gospel. Next he decides to travel up the Turama River, an area known for its cannibals. There, too, the people are open to hear the story of Jesus. However, after losing time at the beginning of the trip, Elwyn and his team must turn around after just one day of preaching.

The soft river current sang like a mournful flute as Elwyn knelt by his berth. "I know You brought us here, but I don't understand why we had only one day to share the gospel. Oh Lord, the need is so great. How can we do more to reach these benighted people?"

As Elwyn continued to pray, a thought came to him. *What if he could buy a canoe?* Then he could leave some of the teachers behind to slowly work their way down the river, stopping at each village along the way. "Thank You, Father," he prayed. "I will trust this idea to be Your will if You make all the details work out." At last he slept.

The next morning, Elwyn spoke with Haru Hariva. "I would be thrilled to take the challenge," Haru told Elwyn. "It will be the most difficult job you have given me. I am humbled and honored."

But none of the villagers had a 5-man canoe to sell. They begged Haru to stay—and they offered 1- and 2-man canoes—but Elwyn felt it wouldn't be safe for the team to risk separation on the river. With a heavy heart, he asked the crew to pull in the anchor. Retreating to the cabin, he again poured out his heart in prayer.

PART 11: LIGHT ON THE RIVER

BY CHEYENNE FRANCIS

UNWELCOME DETOUR

Just as Elwyn started up the engine, a man paddled up to the boat. “Master, I have a canoe to sell.”

“How big?”

The man stretched his arms to indicate a big canoe. “About a 5-man. Come and see it. It is just up the river.” The man climbed aboard and hauled up his canoe.

Elwyn steered the boat upstream. “How far?”

“Not too far.”

Elwyn looked at his watch. He didn’t have much time to spare, but if this were God’s answer, he didn’t want his schedule to get in the way. But as time passed and still the man urged him onward, Elwyn grew more anxious. Finally, he shook his head. “I don’t have any more time to waste. I’m afraid we’ll have to turn around.”

“No, no master! We are almost there now.” A few hundred yards later, the man motioned Elwyn to pull up to the bank.

Elwyn looked around. Nothing here but a dense forest! “Do you have a canoe or not?”

“Follow me!” The man led the way into the jungle.

After pushing through the thick undergrowth for several hundred yards, Elwyn stopped. “I don’t believe you would keep a canoe up this far. We’re going to have to go back.”

“No, master, please! We are here!” The man pointed to a long felled tree, lying on the ground. The top hadn’t even been trimmed off yet!

“That’s the canoe? It will take you six months to get it hewed out.”

“No, master, we will all work on it! We will hew it day and night until it is finished, and your men can preach to us while we work. It will only take us a week! I promise.”

Elwyn turned to Haru. “What do you think?”

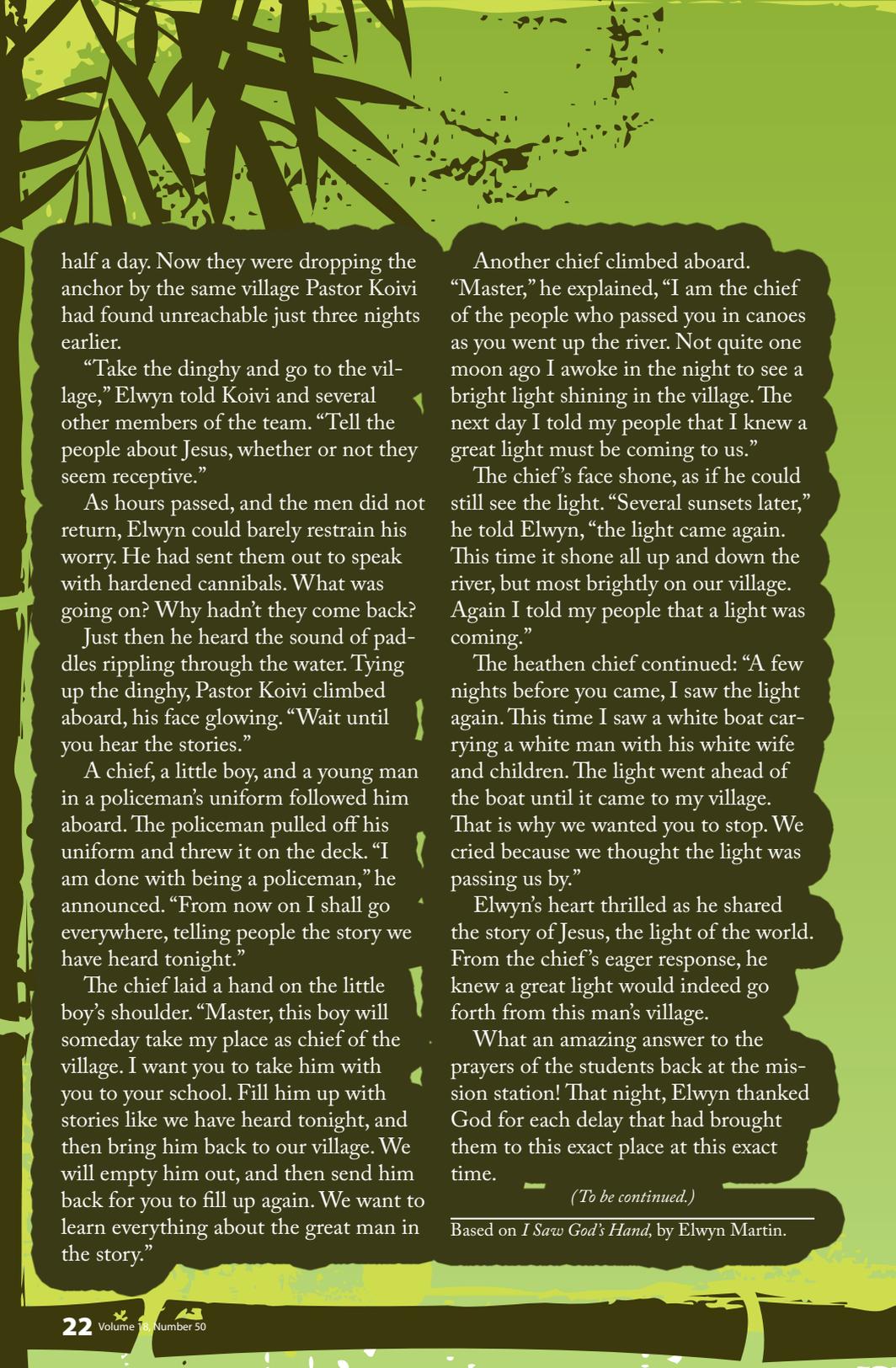
Haru smiled. “It’s a fair plan. Leave me here with my four men and supplies, and we will wait for the canoe.”

Elwyn hesitated. How could he leave the crew among cannibals without even a finished canoe? Then he remembered his prayer in the night. The details had not worked out exactly as he had expected; but who was he to question the Lord? “God bless you,” he told Haru. “I know He has great blessings in store for you.”

As the launch sailed down the river without Haru and the others, Elwyn turned to the faithful men standing on the shore. Would he ever see them again? Only time would tell.

DREAM OF LIGHT

Elwyn sighed as he shut off the engine. He had hoped to be at the mouth of the river by sunset, but the detour for the canoe had set them back



half a day. Now they were dropping the anchor by the same village Pastor Koivi had found unreachable just three nights earlier.

“Take the dinghy and go to the village,” Elwyn told Koivi and several other members of the team. “Tell the people about Jesus, whether or not they seem receptive.”

As hours passed, and the men did not return, Elwyn could barely restrain his worry. He had sent them out to speak with hardened cannibals. What was going on? Why hadn’t they come back?

Just then he heard the sound of paddles rippling through the water. Tying up the dinghy, Pastor Koivi climbed aboard, his face glowing. “Wait until you hear the stories.”

A chief, a little boy, and a young man in a policeman’s uniform followed him aboard. The policeman pulled off his uniform and threw it on the deck. “I am done with being a policeman,” he announced. “From now on I shall go everywhere, telling people the story we have heard tonight.”

The chief laid a hand on the little boy’s shoulder. “Master, this boy will someday take my place as chief of the village. I want you to take him with you to your school. Fill him up with stories like we have heard tonight, and then bring him back to our village. We will empty him out, and then send him back for you to fill up again. We want to learn everything about the great man in the story.”

Another chief climbed aboard. “Master,” he explained, “I am the chief of the people who passed you in canoes as you went up the river. Not quite one moon ago I awoke in the night to see a bright light shining in the village. The next day I told my people that I knew a great light must be coming to us.”

The chief’s face shone, as if he could still see the light. “Several sunsets later,” he told Elwyn, “the light came again. This time it shone all up and down the river, but most brightly on our village. Again I told my people that a light was coming.”

The heathen chief continued: “A few nights before you came, I saw the light again. This time I saw a white boat carrying a white man with his white wife and children. The light went ahead of the boat until it came to my village. That is why we wanted you to stop. We cried because we thought the light was passing us by.”

Elwyn’s heart thrilled as he shared the story of Jesus, the light of the world. From the chief’s eager response, he knew a great light would indeed go forth from this man’s village.

What an amazing answer to the prayers of the students back at the mission station! That night, Elwyn thanked God for each delay that had brought them to this exact place at this exact time.

(To be continued.)

Based on *I Saw God’s Hand*, by Elwyn Martin.

in touch

Dear Young Disciples,

Tony and Ted's wives, Sylvia and Christina, had paid a quick visit to the YD office with their kids, and the three older cousins were upstairs exploring. As I worked, I listened to their chatter.

"I know, let's hide!" Hannah, the oldest, giggled. "Christian, you hide under that desk over there. Caleb, you come hide with me."

"OK!" The boys stationed themselves where she indicated.

"Now, close your eyes and don't peek!" Hannah directed. "If you peek, Mommy will see you!"

I suppressed a chuckle as I glanced at them, hiding in plain sight with their eyes tightly closed. The kids may have thought they were being clever, but actually they were mainly just being cute.

I reached for my notebook to jot down the scene. It reminded me too much of how we can behave. We sometimes seem to think that if we close our own eyes to our faults, God won't see them, either. We act and pray as though all were well with our souls—when we're simply trying to ignore our problems.

This week's Bible lesson brings to light several prayer-blockades we can harbor. If you have one, your prayers won't make it very far. Instead of pretending things are fine, why not kneel down and let God help you clear the blockage? Nothing is worth holding onto if it hinders us from experiencing the real power of prayer.

Your friend,

Cheyenne Francis

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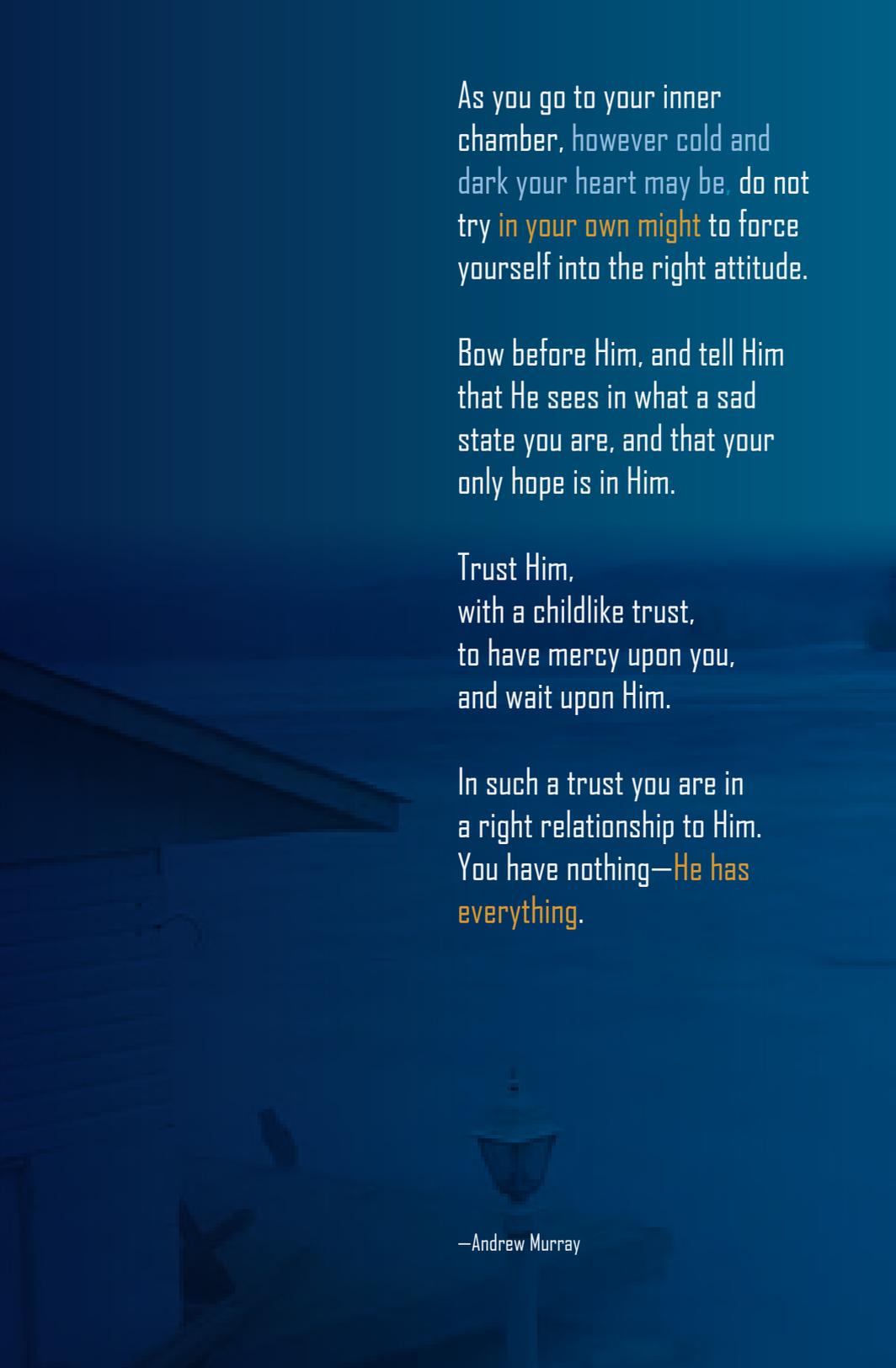
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We sometimes seem to think that if we close our own eyes to our faults, God won't see them, either.



As you go to your inner chamber, however cold and dark your heart may be, do not try **in your own might** to force yourself into the right attitude.

Bow before Him, and tell Him that He sees in what a sad state you are, and that your only hope is in Him.

Trust Him,
with a childlike trust,
to have mercy upon you,
and wait upon Him.

In such a trust you are in a right relationship to Him. You have nothing—**He has everything.**

—Andrew Murray