

Body, Mind & Spirit

Journal: 2006

It is my intent that this year's study will be instrumental in helping me become all that Christ wants me to be. He desires so much more out of my life than I have given Him thus far. I pray that as I study His Word and the Spirit of Prophecy that I will be transformed to the man He has planned for me to be in my body (the physical), mind (the mental) and spirit (the spiritual).

There is no limit to the usefulness of one who by putting self aside makes room for the workings of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.

—Desire of Ages, p. 250

*Not I; but Christ be honored, loved exalted
Not I; but Christ be seen, be known, be heard.
Not I; but Christ in every look and action,
Not I; but Christ in every deed and word.*

*If we ever attain unto holiness,
It will be through the renunciation of self
And the reception of the mind of Christ
-Mount of Blessings, p. 143*

The Body:

1. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou may prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. -3 John 2

The prerequisite to “prosper and be in health,” is for my soul to prosper. The closer my relationship to Christ, the more I will submit and allow Him to do His work in me (cleanse me from all unrighteousness). God has his “plan A” for my life that includes my: eating, drinking, exercise, entertainment, work, etc. The sooner I surrender to His “plan A”, the better and more useful my life will be. Unfortunately, much of the time I decide to follow my plan for my life when it comes to eating, drinking, exercise, entertainment, work, etc. When I do that, I always come back to asking Him to take over my life in all areas again and again. He is very anxious to do that because He knows what will make me happiest in the long run. But when He takes over, He is forced to implement plan “B” or “C” or “D” or In other words, He picks me up from the level of destruction I have done to myself, and makes me the best I can be given the damage I have already done. This will always lead to a marked improvement in my life; but I will never rise to the level of His original plan “A” which He intended for me. Cause and effect still factor into the equation. No matter how far or how often I fall into serving self, my best option is always to return to God, ask forgiveness and allow Christ to cleanse me (clean me up).

Prayer: Father, today I submit to You and Your plan for my life. Through Christ's strength in me, please give me the victory over all the things that separate me from You. (name them) Give me visible evidence of Your power working in me and through me to others. I pray this in Jesus name, amen.

2. *If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. –John 14:14*

Philip has just asked Jesus to show them the Father. Jesus responds by telling the disciples that if they have seen Him, they have seen the Father. Christ goes on to explain that it is the Father working in Him doing the good works they are seeing. Jesus then tells the disciples that they are going to go on and do even greater works than He has done as they give themselves entirely to Him. He then gives them the promise above. Translation: “If (while your life is totally submitted to Me so that I am guiding your thoughts and motives) you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

“In Christ's name His followers are to stand before God. Through the value of the sacrifice made for them, they are of value in the Lord's sight. Because of the imputed righteousness of Christ they are accounted precious. For Christ's sake the Lord pardons those that fear Him. He does not see in them the vileness of the sinner. He recognizes in them the likeness of His Son in whom they believe.” –DA p. 667

When I go to my Father and tell Him that I am coming in the name of His Son, He sees me through the merit of His Son rather than seeing me in my sin. I need to put on Christ's robe of righteousness and not my own filthy garment of self (sin) when I go to see my Father.

Prayer: Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus. I know that You desire my body to be the dwelling place for Your Spirit and that I am not capable of cleaning it up. When I choose to remain in control of what I eat and drink and watch and listen to my life is marked by failure. I am a slave to Gluttony and indulgence. Lord, please take control of my life this day. I give You my will and ask that Your Holy Spirit take control over what I eat, what I drink, what I watch and what I listen to this day. Let me find JOY in the victory only You can bring to my life in these areas. And Father, I pray that You will glorify me that I may glorify Thee this day. Amen.

3. *I can do ALL things through Christ who places His strength in me. –Phil. 4:13*

Paul had just sited all the kinds of situations he had been through – the good times and the very bad times. He said that he had learned to be content in every situation because he had discovered that he could do all the things Christ wanted him to do through Christ's strength in him. His life was not about himself, it was about Christ dwelling in him and working through him. Paul's contentment came from knowing what his Father wanted him to do and doing it with all his might. That would be God's definition of success.

Not only does Christ place His strength in me; but He also is willing to give me His mind to control my thoughts and motives and desires and affections. Mount of Blessings, p. 143, *“We cannot retain self and yet enter the kingdom of God. If we ever attain unto holiness, it will be through the renunciation of self and the reception of the MIND OF CHRIST.”*

Prayer: Father, this day I know that you want me to live above my feelings in regard to what I eat and how much I eat. I also know that Satan is going to attempt to distract me from focusing on Christ and His authority over my feelings. I pray that you will “deliver me from evil” this day and through Christ’s strength in me, give me victory over intemperance.

4. “If I may but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be made whole”...And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of the plague. –Mark 5:29

The woman reached out in faith (and in desperation which led to deep sincerity) and trusted Christ to do for her what she couldn’t do herself. Jesus recognized her desperate faith and healed her. I must reach out to Him in faith the same way. Each day, I must seek to touch the hem of His garment with the unwavering faith (in deep sincerity) she had. If I do, His promise is sure. He WILL take over the habits that have held me captive for so many years.

For this lady, who did not know Christ, her only concern was for her physical being. Christ healed her physically with the desire that this would lead her into an abiding relationship with Him spiritually. Hers was a “baby faith.” For those with a mature faith, they have learned that there is a reason for all that God allows to affect their lives. Their primary focus is not for physical healing; but rather healing of the heart. That is where God resides. These people have seen so many miracles of God in their behalf that they continue to cling to Him even when He does not answer their prayers for physical healing when and how they desire. They have learned that their life is not about them; but rather it is about God’s intended use for them.

Prayer: Father, I come to You in the name of Jesus. See me through Him I pray. And this day, I claim the victory you have promised. I will live in victory over gluttony and self-indulgence because it is You at work in me. I ask now that you will make gluttony and eating unhealthful foods distasteful to me and that I will find satisfaction in eating the right amount of good food this day. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. Amen

**5. Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse.
–Deut. 11:26**

The next verse goes on to say that if you obey the commandments of God, you will receive His blessing; but if you do not obey the commandments of God, you will receive the curse. The bottom line is that God gives you freedom to choose His way, which results in blessings, or your way, which leads to a curse. If you are by your Father’s side and living under His will for you, everything that happens to you is a blessing. (See Romans 8:28). If you are not

by your Father's side and remaining in control of your life, everything will prove to be a curse. The summary: The blessing comes when your life is submitted to God. The curse comes when your life is controlled by self.

Prayer: "Father, this day I choose your blessing of a life lived according to your plan for my diet. I call upon Your strength to be in me so that I will eat what is best for this body, which is Your temple, and at the right time and in the right amount. I know I cannot experience this blessing unless You change my feelings and habits, so today, I take my will from Satan and I give it You. Please give me "the mind of Christ," that I may be a delight to You today. I pray in Jesus name. Amen

6. To You, O Lord, I lift up my life. –Psalm 25:1

Each morning, when I lift up my life to God I must realize that I am not just lifting up my needs and prayers and asking for His answers. When I lift up my life to Him, I am giving Him my whole being. This includes the things that bring me joy and happiness as well as those things that bring me pain and heart-ache and sorrow. I'm sure that it must warm His heart when I present all parts of my life to Him each day and ask Him to take full control. My life, each day, is my offering to the King of the universe (who happens to be my Abba). I will give Him the best offering I can and not something that has cost me nothing.

"If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised."
–DA p. 668

When I wake up in the morning after have lived a life of victory over gluttony the day and night before, I am like a little child bringing a hand made gift I have worked hard to create to my Abba. When I say, "Father, here is my life, it's my gift to you this day," I know I am giving Him my best gift. That brings me & therefore Him, great joy.

Prayer: Father, one of the worst feelings I can experience is to feel distant from you. This loneliness is the direct result of things like gluttony, indulgence, etc. which cloud my mind and make me feel like I have failed once again. Today, I give myself to you and ask that You forgive me of my sins and cleanse me (clean me up) from all unrighteousness. Work in me so that when I lift up my life to You, I will be giving you my best. I ask this in the name of my Elder Brother. Amen

7. *Do you not know that you are the temple of God
and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
If anyone defiles the temple of God,
God will destroy him.
For the temple of God is holy, which
temple you are. -1 Cor. 3:16,17*

The people whom God is leading will be peculiar. They will not be like the world. But if they follow the leadings of God they will accomplish His purposes, and will yield their will to His will. Christ will dwell in the heart. The temple of God will be holy. Your body, says the apostle, is the temple of the Holy Ghost. God does not require His children to deny themselves to the injury of physical strength. He requires them to obey natural law, to preserve physical health. Nature's path is the road He marks out, and it is broad enough for any Christian. God has, with a lavish hand, provided us with rich and varied bounties for our sustenance and enjoyment. But in order for us to enjoy the natural appetite, which will preserve health and prolong life, He restricts the appetite. He says: Beware; restrain, deny, unnatural appetite. If we create a perverted appetite, we violate the laws of our being and assume the responsibility of abusing our bodies and of bringing disease upon ourselves. -3T p. 63

Life is a holy trust, which God alone can enable us to keep and to use to His glory. But He who formed the wonderful structure of the body will take special care to keep it in order if men do not work at cross-purposes with Him. Every talent entrusted to us He will help us to improve and use in accordance with the will of the Giver. Days, months, and years are added to our existence that we may improve our opportunities and advantages for working out our individual salvation, and by our unselfish life promoting the well-being of others. Thus may we build up the kingdom of Christ and make manifest the glory of God. {6T 379.1}

Our bodies belong to God. He paid the price of redemption for the body as well as the soul. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. "The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." Verse 13. The Creator watches over the human machinery, keeping it in motion. Were it not for His constant care, the pulse would not beat, the action of the heart would cease, the brain would no longer act its part. {CH 586.2}

The brain is the organ and instrument of the mind and controls the whole body. In order for the other parts of the system to be healthy, the brain must be healthy. And in order for the brain to be healthy, the blood must be pure. If by correct habits of eating and drinking the blood is kept pure, the brain will be properly nourished. {CH 586.3}

Whether they acknowledge it or not, God lays upon all human beings the duty of taking care of the soul temple. The body is to be kept clean and pure. The soul is to be sanctified and ennobled. Then, God says, I will come unto him and take up My abode with him. We are responsible for our own salvation, and God holds us accountable for the influence we exert on those connected with us. We should stand in such a position, physically and spiritually,

that we can recommend the religion of Christ. **We are to dedicate our bodies to God.**
{MM 295.3}

God desires His ministers to stand in a high and holy position. Those who open the word of God to others should ask themselves, before they enter the pulpit, whether they have been self-denying, whether their food has been simple, such as the stomach can digest, without beclouding the brain. {MM 295}

Gluttony is the prevailing sin of this age. Lustful appetite makes slaves of men and women, and beclouds their intellects and stupefies their moral sensibilities to such a degree that the sacred, elevated truths of God’s word are not appreciated. The lower propensities have ruled men and women.

In order to be fitted for translation, the people of God must know themselves. They must understand in regard to their own physical frames, that they may be able with the psalmist to exclaim, “I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” They should ever have the appetite in subjection to the moral and intellectual organs. The body should be servant to the mind, and not the mind to the body. {CD 33.1}

Prayer: Father, I want desperately to honor You in my diet and exercise. I want this temple you have given me to be a clean place for your Spirit to reside. I want my mind to be clear and discerning to hear Your “still small voice.” And I know that by myself, I am a slave to Satan’s influences that cause destruction within me. So I take my will from Satan this day and I give it to You, Jesus. Please protect it and protect me from the evil one. I know this prayer is in accordance with Your will, Father. Grant it to me, I pray, in Jesus name. Amen

**8. And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying,
“O, that You would bless me abundantly,
and enlarge my territory,
that Your hand would be with me,
and that You would keep me from evil,
that I may not cause pain!”**

So God granted him what he requested. -1 Chronicles 4:10

In relationship to my body, my prayer is that God would bless me abundantly in my desire to lose weight, in my desire to eat the right food and in the right quantity. As I see God answering this prayer, my territory will be expanded in terms of the fact that I will feel much better, I will enjoy time for exercise, and I will look better. In the daily victories I experience I will know that God’s hand is with me and I will sense His closeness to me. And, as Christ’s strength works in me, I will be kept from the evil that comes when gluttony and self-indulgence controls my life.

“That I may not cause pain:” From a physical standpoint, when I give in to Satan’s temptations regarding eating and drinking, the end result, over time, will be that my body begins to break down in various ways and I am not able to live a vibrant, enthusiastic Christ focused life. I long for the day that Jabez arrived at when it said, “So God granted him what

he requested!” He is gradually growing me to the point that by complete submission to His will, He is able to grant my request.

Prayer: Father I claim all areas of the prayer of Jabez for my life. Please bless me abundantly, broaden my territory physically, hold my hand, and protect me from the evil one. On a one day at a time basis, let me praise You for You granted my request and gave me Your victory. I pray this in Jesus name. Amen

**9. So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify
The desires of the sinful nature.
For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit,
And the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature.
-Galatians 5:16**

It says that I am to “live.” That is what the Spirit intends to do in me. To make me alive and full of life as God intended it. To characterize my life with “peace & joy.” The opposite of to “live” is to “die.” To die is Satan’s plan for me on a daily basis. While I’m alive, Satan try’s to discourage and depress me. To pull me down so that life is not worth living. Physically, mentally, emotionally he intends that my life will be filled with pain and sorrow and hurt and anger etc. and that I will become so absorbed with this condition of a “living death” that I will also give up spiritually and learn to enjoy wallowing in misery. I will choose a “living death” over a “life in Christ.” But the text says that I have a choice each day (and every minute of the day). I can choose to live “by the Spirit”. The Spirit anxiously waits to see if I will invite Him in and give Him the control over my thoughts, motives, affections, and desires. If I do, I will have chosen to live, and allow the Spirit to take care of my destructive habits. He will close the door on them so that there is no place for Satan to enter in and dwell in me.

Prayer: Father, I come to you in the name of your Son. I am asking that you would send Your Spirit to dwell in me this day that I might experience the joy that comes with living for You. Bind up Satan and his influences today, and give me a discerning spirit that I might clearly see each attack Satan will attempt to make on my life and thus gain access to my inner control station – my mind. Amen

**10. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, faithfulness,
gentleness and self-control.
-Galatians 5:22,23**

The various fruits of the Spirit were never meant to be fulfilled in us by the efforts of the flesh. It is not about me trying, it’s about me submitting. Christ has promised to give me the fruits as I surrender my life to Him. If I don’t experience much fruit, it is not because He has been unfaithful, it’s because I have not submitted and remained faithful. When I take my car to the mechanic, I let him do it all. I don’t stick my hands in and take over. The same principal applies to Christ’s work in my life. When I sub-consciously take back the controls,

or even when I consciously do so, He quietly slips away and let's me do my thing. It's not until I ask forgiveness and ask Him to take control that He accommodates my request and I begin to experience victory again.

Prayer: Father, I know You are at work in me. Very gradually, I am becoming like my Elder Brother. I'm not where I need to be; but by your grace, I'm not where I use to be. Please take full control of my thoughts, motives, and affections this day and reveal each time I forget You and try to assume control of my life again. This I pray in the name of Your perfect Son. Amen.

11. "When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the Lord. "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great King," says the Lord Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations."

-Malachi 1:13

"Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great King." The only gift God wants from me is my heart, a place for His Spirit to reside. He is the King of the universe. To bring Him anything other than my very best, as small and insignificant as it is, will not be acceptable to Him and should make me feel very much ashamed. For that reason, I want the "mind of Christ" (MB p. 143) to be in me all the time. When the mind of Christ control's me, I think His thoughts and am controlled by His motives, and affections. When this is the state of my being, the gift I bring my Abba is viewed by Him as perfect.

Prayer: Thank you, Father, for leading me to understand that my diet and weight loss does not come under the category of goodness for me to attain; but rather it comes under my trusting you implicitly to do for me that which I cannot do for myself. Please give me the mind of Christ this day, that I may proceed with His thoughts regarding what to eat, when to eat, the amount to eat etc. When I am controlled with the mind of Christ, my need in the area of my body is met; but a by-product is that the needs of my mind (understanding, wisdom, knowledge and workmanship) and the needs of my spirit (a deeper passion to know Christ and to hear God's "still small voice" in my life) are also met. What a joy!! I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

12. Then David said, "No I must pay for it (oxen Araunah tried to give David for a sacrifice). I will not bring to the Lord and offering that doesn't cost me anything." -2 Samuel 24:24

To David, the thought of bringing the Lord a sacrifice that was cheap and inexpensive was offensive. When He thought of the great love of His Father for him, he wanted to bring his Father an expensive gift that was a sacrifice for him to give. When I bring God my sacrifice to God – my soul temple, do I bring Him a dirty, broken down gift or do I allow Him to work in me that my gift to Him is clean and attractive.

Prayer: Father, give me the desire to bring only the very best sacrifice that I am able to bring to You. Give me the “Mind of Christ,” so that my thoughts and motives in bringing You this sacrifice will be pure and honorable. Create in me a clean heart and then take up residence in it so that “I will not sin (separation from God) against You this day. I ask this in Jesus name. Amen

13. Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercies, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. –Romans 12:1

“In view of God’s mercies” –in view of the victories God has won over my eating and drinking and exercise in the past, -in view of the fact that God has given His Son to die for me, -In view of God’s willingness to forgive any and every sin I turn over to Him, I am motivated to love God and desire to give Him my mind and body which, considering how weak and feeble I am in comparison to other heavenly beings, is what I will sacrifice to Him. It is interesting that while God requires this sacrifice, the bottom line is because it is for my good. He desires the very best for me. I am worshiping my Father when I present my mind and body to Him as my offering.

Prayer: Father, I come to You in the name of my Brother, my Lord, and my Savior. Please see me through His merits and not my sinfulness. I bring to You my mind and body this day. Please take control of them today so that my sacrifice to you will be pure and clean and acceptable in Your sight. Amen

14. “Everyone here will see that the Lord does not need a sword or a spear to win.

The battle is the Lord’s and He will give you into my hands.”

-1 Samuel 17:47

(David’s response to Goliath)

David knew that it was God who had prompted him to fight Goliath. This battle had absolutely nothing to do with him. God’s reputation to protect His children was on trial. When Goliath saw this little boy, not yet old enough to shave, coming to fight him, a 9 ft killing machine, he became furious. He screamed at the boy in a fit of rage. David’s response, was to say 4 times to Goliath, “the battle is the Lord’s,” “the Lord will protect me,” “The Lord will hand you into my hands.” “The battle is the Lords.” David lived so close to his Father that he knew in his heart that nothing could touch him unless permitted by God.

That is where I need to be living each day. I am not to respond to negative comments or negative people or negative circumstances with anything other than, “The battle is the Lord’s.” If I truly believe that everything that comes into my life each day has first passed through the hands of God, then my only reaction can be, “Father, You are in charge. How would You have me respond to this.” When I truly live out Romans 8:28: “All things work together in a pattern for good,” I will be able to discern what He wants me to do as well as what He does not want me to do. That second part, knowing when He does not want me to respond, is every bit as important as knowing when He does want me to respond.

Example: At a December board meeting, God used me to halt a movement to make an employee's life miserable. At the January meeting, the first thing stated was that I was not a voting member of this board according to the constitution. When they went into executive session, I asked if I should go. She asked me to stay. When I reflect back on the situation, I know that the small group that are working to remove Allan wanted me off the board; but for that to happen, God needs to permit it. If He permits it, I can rest assured that it is part of "All things working together for good." There is a reason why He does not want me on the board and I can assume that this person is simply a tool for helping Him work that out. My response to the situation is that either this person is simply abiding by God's promptings, or, his actions are prompted by Satan. Should it be the latter, my response is equivalent to Joseph's response to his brothers who had gotten rid of him as a boy and caused him so much pain and heartache. Joseph's response, "You intended it for evil; but God intended it for good." All things did work together for good.

15. A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. –Proverbs 17:22

There are many ways for Satan to crush my spirit. His starting point in this process is distract me from spending time with Christ. He may use overwork, physical exhaustion, circumstances that cause me to be fearful, annoyances, or, life's cares, perplexities and sorrows. All of these things in excess bring me to discouragement and then depression. He is the one who crushes my spirit. But, on the other hand, I may have a cheerful heart, which has been proven to be a good medicine to my body. The key to this is being absolutely sure to spend time with Christ each day, to be come convinced that no matter what I face, He is in charge of all things that touch my life, and choose to focus on His blessings and not Satan's curses. Each day, in every situation, I am to hold the hand of my Father, turn the matter over to Him, and abide in the peace and joy that only He can give me.

Prayer: Today, Father, I choose to submit my life completely to You. Please protect me from the evil one and do not allow him to take away the "joy of my salvation." I give myself and everything I will face this day to You. Please open my mind to hear the promptings of Your quiet whispers this day. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

16. I wait patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit (of gluttony and indulgence), out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. –Psalm 40:1-3

"I wait patiently for the Lord:" To often in my battle with self I do not wait patiently for the Lord; but rather give in to Satan's temptations to gluttony and indulgence. For a few minutes of "feel good" indulgence, I give up my closeness to Christ and the feeling of victory in Jesus. When I find myself back in the slimy pit, and turn to Him, He RESTORES MY SOUL! He lifts me back up, prompts me to renounce self and to receive the mind a power of Christ. After allowing Christ to control my battle with gluttony for an entire day and night, I wake up in the morning more alert and with a spirit of praise and thankfulness to Him for

what He has done in me. That is when He puts “a new song in my mouth”, My hymn of praise to God will be: *Look what the Lord has Done.*

Since beginning the journey in January 06, God is teaching me that He has a very special mission for my life. He intends to use me as a tool to educate pastors regarding their role in K-8 education, and He plans to use me to educate teachers in regard to His list of essential learnings for every student. My effectiveness in doing this mission is directly related to how open my mind is to receive His promptings. For that reason, Satan has waged war against my life style. He is using every occasion to cause me to fall back into gluttony and indulgence. My only hope to live above my selfish inclinations will be to get very close to Christ and hold His hand on a moment-by-moment basis. If I do this, He will not only guide me in the mission He has set for my life; but He will grow me to a higher level of relationship with Himself in the process. I must come to the place where I don't just think occasionally that my life is all about Him; but that this becomes the reality of my life all of the time. The more I trust Him to give victory to my life, the more I will be able to receive the MIND OF CHRIST. (MB, 143)

Prayer: Today Father, my choice is to be saturated with Your Holy Spirit. Give me, more and more, of Jesus in my life and a deeper passion to know Him as my Lord and Savior. Lift me up above my selfish nature and let me live for Thee this day. I desire to be nothing more than a tool in Your hands to accomplish Your will today, Father. Please give me those little indicators and promptings that I am Your child, that You love me, and that You are using me as Your tool this day. And I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

17. Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than cloths? ...For the pagans run after these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. –Matthew 6:25, 32-33

Worry declines as trust increases. The more my life is centered by faith in Christ, the less I will find myself worrying. At the level of self, everything I do, or say, or think is governed by how it will affect me. When I am living close to God, He will lift me above my circumstances (which Satan tries to use to bring me down) and help me realize, “the glory of the purpose we are fulfilling as co-laborers with Him.”

Prayer: Father, today I choose to live by faith trusting Christ. I pray that you will place in me the mind of Christ so that I will not react to my circumstances this day; but rather allow You to guide me and use me as a tool in Your hands. Today, I choose Your way for my life. Please fill me with Your Spirit so that I may represent You and bring joy to Your heart. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

18a. You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore HONOR God with your body. –I Corinthians 6:20

It is very hard for me to continually see myself as steward over my body and mind; but that is what I am. I have been paid for by Christ and belong to Him. I must continually remind myself with every decision regarding what I eat, when I eat, how much I eat, what I see, what I do, etc. that I am not doing it to please self; but to honor God. This mind and body belong to Him. I am only the caretaker of His property. He has a plan regarding how this body will be used to His glory, my part is to make sure it is in excellent working order so that I am able to hear His promptings and follow through on them in a way that will bring Him glory.

Father, I've been on the road for four days and it is good to get back to this little sanctuary. I come to You now and ask for Your forgiveness for the things that have separated me from You these past couple of days, Please cleanse me of all unrighteousness and restore unto me the joy of my salvation. Thank You, for reminding me that I am not my own. You have purchased my freedom from slavery to self and now, through the indwelling of Your Holy Spirit, please lead me to live in freedom over my eating, and drinking and all parts of my choices this day. Remind me that I have been called, by You, to a holy assignment and that I am to honor You with my thoughts, words and actions. I Love You Father, I Love You Jesus, and I Love You Holy Spirit. And pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

**18b. But He said to me (Paul), “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.”
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness,
so that Christ’s power may rest on me. -2 Corinthians 12: 9**

Translation: For He says to me (Garry), “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in your areas of weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

One of the keys to receiving Christ’s power is the acknowledgement that I am weak and that I can’t do whatever on my own. I need to be honest with Christ and tell Him that I am weak in these areas then plead with Him to give me His strength. The pleading is not to impress Him, it is to reveal in me the earnestness of my request to Him for help. These are my moment by moment battles in life – to trust Him for strength or to take charge and fight the battle on my own. When I stop trying to cover up my weaknesses and just admit them to Him, I experience freedom. The more I submit to Christ, the more He is able to set me free from the bondage of my weaknesses.

Prayer: Father, I come before you this day as a weak and erring child. I pray that You will forgive me for not bringing those things that separate me from You to You all of the time. Please give me freedom today over gluttony, over a life of selfishness, over wrong habits, and place Your strength in me this day. Let me find reason to glory in You and Your strength revealed in my life. Set me free to live “In Christ” this day. And I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

19. For when I am weak, then I am strong. -2 Corinthians 12:10

*I am weak but Thou art strong;
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I'll be satisfied as long
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee
Just a closer walk with me,
Grant it Jesus is my plea,
Daily walking close to Thee,
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

The things that I continue to struggle with are not bad so long as I continue to seek Christ and His power in me for daily victory over them.

As we receive life from Christ the natural result is that the fruit of the Spirit are produced in our lives. One of these fruit is self-control (or self-discipline). In our zeal to produce fruit (results) for our Lord, we sometimes become so intent on fruit production that we neglect abiding in Christ. Our primary focus is not on Him, and trusting Him to provide the fruit in our lives, but on the results we are seeking. Example: In my battle over gluttony, I begin to set goals for weight loss and focus on reaching these goals rather than on focusing on Christ. His desire is that I reach these goals as well; but His plan is that I do it through Him (and continue to grow closer and closer to Him) rather than through self where I will continue to experience one failure after another. I need to be comfortable in abiding in Him and not be impatient to engage in the activity of weight loss. The reward will be a great harvest of all the fruit of the Spirit that come as a by-product of me remaining steadfast in my fellowship with Christ. (thought from Experiencing God, p. 116)

**20. I urge you, brothers, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – which is your spiritual worship.
–Romans 12:**

Sacrifice: the offering of a life. Our bodies are to be offered to God each day. The only way our bodies can be “holy and pleasing to God” is if our thoughts, motives, impulses are all under the control of the Holy Spirit and not left to self-governance. The process of doing this each day and living under the authority of Christ dwelling in me is my daily worship.

21. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. –Romans 12:2

The pattern of this world represents all my earthly habits and desires. As long as I try to change my desires and impulses and habits, I will continually fall back to my old ways and once again conform to the pattern of the world. But when I submit my life to Christ’s authority over me, He is able to transform my desires and impulses and habits so that the things I use to enjoy become distasteful and even repulsive to me. That is the only way I can

have real victory over my carnal nature. It's not about me trying to conform to a better way; but rather it's about me recognizing that I can't change, I can only turn to Christ and ask Him to change my mind from desiring the things of my carnal nature to desiring what He wants me to be.

Prayer: Father, each day my great need is not for me to try and be better, it's for me to submit my life completely to Your will for me. I am asking that You will give me a greater passion to know Christ and for Him to transform me into His image. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

***22. Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw
a ram caught by its horns;
He went over and took the ram
and sacrificed it as a burn offering instead of his son.
So Abraham called that place THE LORD WILL PROVIDE.
–Genesis 22:13,14***

Before you can testify of God's goodness there has to be a test. The test comes before the testimony. Abraham went through a severe test before He was able to proclaim that "The Lord will provide." The same is true in my life. God continually brings me to test in an attempt to grow me to a deeper level of trusting Him and not myself. The closer I get to Him, the more I will see Him providing victory over my physical temptations and the more I will be able to declare that "the Lord will provide." I can recall example after example of God providing for my needs and the needs of others I am praying for. Now I need to turn to Him and trust Him with my diet and physical being. I need to come to the place with my eating and exercise and recreation that I can proclaim, "see what the Lord has done!" It's not about me, it's about Him.

Prayer: Father, the greatest temptation I battle each day is over appetite and healthful living. I give myself to You this day and pray that you will not only prompt me so I will know good from bad, but then fill me with Your strength to follow through and choose good over bad in my diet and health.

23. Our Father ... Give us this day our daily bread. –Matthew 6:11

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, He gave them the Lord's Prayer as the model they should pattern their individual prayers after. For that little group of evangelists, trusting God to supply their daily needs was a reality. They were sustained each day by trusting God to provide for their needs through the donations of other people. Imagine being the leader of a group of 12 and being responsible for every meal they would have each day. There is no place where it says that any of them were asked to go out and "moon light" because funds were so scarce. Jesus trusted that His Father in heaven would take care of all their personal needs including enough food for each day. Later, George Muller would pattern his life after the model of Christ in this area. He determined never to ask anyone for money; but only to ask God each day to supply his needs. The disciples (and George Muller) learned

total dependence on God for every personal need. Today, we all have jobs which generate funds for our needs. We don't often stop and realized that God supplies our daily needs because we think we can take care of ourselves. Even the blessing over our food becomes a ritual habit that we do without realizing that God is sustaining our every need each day. Even the next breath I take or the next beat of my heart are gifts to me from His sustaining power. I need to be much more aware of how He provides for my daily needs and thank Him for His watch care over me. And, since He has given me so much freedom to choose my daily bread from a huge variety, I need to seek His will in selecting foods that best strengthen my body and allow my mind to function at its highest capacity. It is through my mind that I communicate with Him. Food should not be primarily a matter of what tastes good; but rather what will best sustain my body and mind.

Prayer: Father, today I thank You for all the provisions You have made for my life to be sustained. While You have provided me with a job which generates funds for my daily sustenance, please give me other areas whereby I must walk through faith (total trust in You) just as the disciples did for their every need. Help me to overcome self-confidence and to grow in my level of God-confidence each day. Please oversee what I eat, how much I eat and when I eat this day. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen

24. I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief! –Mark 9:24

In this story, Jesus is about to heal the demon possessed son of a man in the crowd. Jesus told the man that his son would be healed if he had faith to believe it. The text above is the father's response to Christ's statement. The Bible says that this father "cried out with tears," when he answered Jesus. His depth of sincerity was obvious. When I come to Jesus and am in need of healing over any harmful habit, His response will be the same to me if, like this father, I cry out to Him in genuine sincerity and not just in a casual manner.

Prayer: Lord, You know my heart. You know when I come to you in genuine sincerity for healing from wrong habits and you know when my request is from an apathetic heart. Please forgive me for all the times when I have not been genuine in my requests. And please place in me a deeper and deeper passion to know Christ. For when I am serious about my passion for Jesus, that is when I am sincere about those habits that hinder my connection to Him. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

25. Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. –James 2:17 (Trusting God + a God inspired plan = success)

It is not enough for me to read something and believe it is true. If I don't take the information and apply it to my life, it is soon lost. The same is true of genuine faith. If I am trusting God completely and He prompts me to act, I must follow through on the matter while continuing to believe that He will provide. The only way I can experience His blessing is by stepping out in faith and do what He is prompting me to do.

Prayer: Father, I pray that You will place in me a passion for Jesus and a passion to follow Your will for my life. Give me discernment to know the things You want me to do and then the courage and motivation to do them in a way that will bring You ALL the glory. I pray this for my personal life, family life and work life, in the name of Jesus. Amen

***26. Like a city whose walls are broken down
is a man who lacks self-control. –Proverbs 25:28***

In the time this was written, a city's main protection from invading armies was the wall surrounding it. In the US today, those walls have been replaced by a very complex radar detection system to alert the military leaders of any possible attack by air or sea as well as the missiles, missile detection system, navy, etc. They represent our "wall" today. Just as cities and nations need defensive systems, so does each person need a defensive system against Satan and his evil enemies. Our personal defense system begins with self-control over our emotions and desires. These represent the beginning of our "wall" but only the beginning. The remainder of our wall comes from Christ working in us and the Holy Spirit dwelling in us to change our emotions and desires from earthly to heavenly – from carnal to Godly. This is the key to having victory over the enticement to evil from without and the angry, self-centered words and deed within.

In the sport's world, it is not enough to have an excellent offense. A great offense, with a porous defense usually results in a losing season. The same is true of Christians. It is not enough to be doing the things Christ wants you to do. That would indicate a strong offense. But you also need to have God's control over your desires, impulses and affections. When this defense is in place, God can do even greater things through you. If it is not in place, it weakens your ability to hear and follow His "still small voice."

Prayer: Father, You know how weak my self-control defense system is. You know how easily I am overcome in the area of diet – the wrong food in the wrong amount at the wrong time. Please take the little bit of self-control I have and You make up the difference so my defensive system will withstand Satan's attacks. Let me live for You with a clear mind to hear Your voice and a willing spirit to follow Your promptings. And I pray this in the name of Your Son, who trusted You implicitly in this and all other areas. Amen

***27. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;
I have come that they may have life
and have it more abundantly. –John 10:10***

Satan is the great thief in this world. He is the one who orchestrates pain and misery and strife and chaos by manipulating the external things in my life. Christ, on the other hand, pleads with me to allow Him to come in and control and take control of the internal part of my being. If I have submitted to Christ and allowed Him full control of my internal being, Satan's attempts to control my external environment are overruled by Christ's internal control of my mind. I can live the abundant life in spite of Satan's efforts to steal, kill and destroy. The "good life" is not lived externally; but rather internally. And the "good life" can

only be realized by a continual focus on the “good news” that God loves me, Jesus died for me and the Holy Spirit is available to live in me until God sends Christ to come and take me home.

Prayer: Father, I come to you in the name and merit of Jesus. Please cleanse me from all unrighteousness and fill me with Your Spirit. With Christ in control of my life and all that is permitted to affect it this day, let me live the abundant life You have intended for me this day. Amen

28. “And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from the evil one.” –Matthew 6:13

The three sections of the “Lord’s Prayer” include: Give me, Forgive me and now Deliver me. We are told that Satan is like a “roaring lion” seeking who he may devour. The only way I can experience victory over temptation is by living in such close relationship to God that He is in charge of even those things that are permitted to influence my life. Only the presence of God in me can deliver me from Satan’s attempts to separate me from God by causing me to fall to sin in my life. The only way I can experience deliverance from the evil one is through the presence of God’s Spirit in me. This gives me the “Mind of Christ” – His thoughts, motives, affections etc rather than my own carnal mind. Only Christ can protect me from myself. My habit is to eat late at night. I am drawn to the kitchen whenever I watch T.V. Only the overpowering presence of Christ in me can change such habits that separate me from Christ.

Prayer: Father, as I begin another day, I am begging You to fill me with Christ and to intensify my love for Christ. I realize the only way I can overcome the sins in my life is by drawing closer and closer to You. Please bring my heart so close to You that Satan’s attempts to keep me in the bondage of my sinfulness will be distasteful and offensive to me. Give me the blessing of Your fullness in my life this day. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

29. Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak. –Matthew 26:41

This is what Jesus said to Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane when He had asked Peter, James and John to be with Him the night before His death. Jesus had asked the three to remain where they were and pray for Him while He went a little further to pray by Himself. When He came back, they were all sleeping. “The spirit is willing, but the body is weak” happens each morning when I am trying to get up to spend an hour with the Lord in my devotional time. Every day, I am faced with a decision to get up or to get more sleep. I need to be aware of the temptations each night before I go to sleep. Satan will tempt me to stay up late and to enjoy some food each night. Then I am tired and sluggish in the morning and the temptation to sleep overcomes me. I need to be watching and praying in the early evening each night and to ask Christ to strengthen me during this time as well as to wake me up each morning.

Prayer: Lord, I know the battles of life begin with little decisions. I pray that You will continue to make me aware of the impact these little choices will have on my walk with You. Help me each evening to be aware of Satan's temptations and his desire to keep me from spending time with You each morning. Then take over my devotional time and lead me to what it is You want me to do and to study. Increase my intensity to know You more. Increase my intensity to Your call for my life. Fill my desires with more of You and not the little temptations of life like eating late at night and staying up late. Fill me with the great joy of knowing You and doing Your will, I pray in Jesus name. Amen

**30. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk
in His paths. –Isaiah 2:3 (NIV)**

Verse 3 begins by saying that if Israel fulfills God's plan, people from everywhere would come to see their amazing God. And they would say, "He will teach us His ways, ..." God first teaches me His ways, then when others see my life they want the same they see in me. My life is to become a witness for God. Others are to be drawn to Him because I am following what He wants me to do and by so doing, I am walking in "His paths." It is not my job to force anyone, especially my children, to keep the values and standards I believe in. My job is to so model these values and standards that others, especially my children, will want what they see in my life. Now, this does not mean I will have a pain-free life of easy. Grover's life is an example of how others are drawn to God through his faithful witness even though the body is devastated. In His case, the more the physical body dies, the greater the soul temple comes alive. And that is where God resides. While the physical body is subject to disease, injury and age, the soul temple (heart) cannot be touched by any of these. In Grover's case, the weaker he becomes, the stronger his heart, his connection with God, becomes. And the heart is what God uses to estimate importance. This world places value on people by such things as position, title, fame or wealth. These things are meaningless in the heavenly culture. In heaven there will be no important people; but there will be special people. These are the ones who on planet earth understood who they were – children of God, and what they were there for – to be tools in His hands to accomplish His will. Note: tools do not seek or accept credit for what they do because they did nothing. God did everything, and only He is worthy of praise.

Prayer: Father, this day I come to You asking that You will teach me Your way for my life. May I be open and receptive to what You would have me learn this day. Then, as I follow in Your path, I ask that You will make my life a witness to others who do not know You. Let me find joy in pointing all who come in my path this day to You through Your presence in me. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

31. As for God, His way is perfect. –Psalm 18:30 (NIV)

I must become totally convinced that God's way for my life is also perfect. He has a perfect plan to restore me to the image of Jesus and a perfect plan to use my life as a witness to His glory. My responsibility is to get so close to Him that I am able to understand His perfect will for me and follow His "still, small voice." As I submit my life completely to His perfect way for me the day will come when He will prompt me to reflect back on what He has done in me

and through me and say as Jesus said, “I have finished the work You have given me to do...I have revealed You.”

Prayer: Father, burn into my mind that You do have a perfect will for my life. That as I remain close to You, nothing happens to me by chance. You have custom made the experiences You desire for my life and through them I will grow closer and closer to You. In addition, I will be impressed that I am a tool in Your hands to bless others – a co-worker with You and the angels. Please remind me continually through this day of who I am – Your child, and what I am here for – to be used by You to play a part in Your agenda. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

32. *There is a way that seems right to man but in the end it leads to destruction. – Proverbs 16:25 (NIV)*

The heart of man is deceitfully wicked and cannot be trusted. Anytime I make decisions for my life or give advice for the life of another and do not ask God to reveal to me His will, I am putting myself and others at risk. Unless I chose to have God at the center of my being, as good as I think things are headed, the direction of my life is headed for destruction and ultimate death. Yet, my carnal nature so badly wants to remain in charge. Often, I don't even think to ask God for direction, I simply act or react to temptations Satan places before me. That is why it is so important that I spend quality time with God each morning and plead with Him dwell in the control room of my mind. Lord, I like me best when I'm with You.

Prayer: Father, I come to You today in the name of Your Son. I plead with You to send Your Spirit to dwell in me this day. I don't want to be in charge of my life; but rather am asking You to give me the mind of Christ. Let my motives, thoughts, words and actions be Yours this day. Amen

33. *The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving (converting) the soul. –Psalm 19:7(NIV)*

When I obey the law of the Lord with the intent of staying close to Christ, who is at work in me, I experience His joy. When I'm not obeying the law of the Lord I'm not satisfied with myself or my life until I ask His forgiveness and return to obeying His laws for my life. This same principle applies to keeping the 27 doctrines of the church. If I keep them, but do not have Christ at the center of my life as the reason why I'm keeping them, I will become a haughty, vegetarian cannibal and go around destroying others. But if I look at each doctrine as part of His plan for me to know Him better, they will become a source of joy to me and a blessing to others. The primary reason for the 27 doctrines is to point me to Christ and lead me in a closer walk with Him. When I apply them to my life with this motivation, I am revived and ready to fulfill my purpose as a “tool in His hands.”

Prayer: Father, when I keep your law with the intent to know You better, “It is well with my soul.” When I keep Your law because it is part of my Christian culture, I gradually remove myself from Your presence and begin hurting myself and others. I pray that today, Your

Spirit will fill me with a deep passion to know Christ and to keep His law as well as the 27 beliefs of the church. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen

***34. I will praise Thee. For I am fearfully
and wonderfully made. –Psalm 139:14***

The human body is an incredibly complex mechanism. Each organ is, in itself, a marvel. But then, to consider how all of these organs contribute to the whole human being and are interdependent on each other takes the marvel of the human body to an even higher level. The crowning point is to realize that God has placed in the mind of man the abilities to reason, remember, recall and feel. This is what separates man from all other living beings. And God has given us dominion over all other forms of life on planet earth. He has given us that authority; but with it comes the commission to treat all the things He has created for us the same way He would treat them. The fact that we are fearfully and wonderfully made does not enable us to selfishly mistreat and abuse any other part of His creation. The gift of the human body and mind He has given me comes with the stipulation that I respect and protect all other things He has created. If I do, my life will be a blessing to me, to Him and to His creation.

Develop this list: I will praise Thee for: 1) This mind You have given me because: a) it is through this mind I know You and commune with You, b) I can remember the lessons You have taught me, c) I can reason and think, d) I can experience emotions, e) 2) These eyes You have given me because through these eyes I am able to: a) enjoy the beauty of nature You have created for me to enjoy, b) see the people You have placed in my life as Your blessings, c) be aware of possible danger as it comes toward me, d) read , e) 3) These hands, ...feet,... arms,...(go through each part of my being and praise God for it.

Prayer: Father, open my eyes that I may truly appreciate these marvelous gifts You have given me – my body and my mind. Give me a deeper appreciation of the price You willingly paid that I might enjoy these gifts in freedom from Satan’s bondage. I give my body and mind into Your safe keeping this day. Fill me with Your thoughts of appreciation for who I am and impress me with the things You would have me do or say to Your glory this day. And I pray this in the name of Your Son, Jesus. Amen

Author: Garry Sudds