SOUND THE TRUMPET IN PRAYER

**And if you go to war in your land against the enemy that opresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies (Numbers 10:9).**

The Greatest Commandment

A scribe questioned Jesus concerning the greatest commandment. Jesus told him that the first of all is “Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and the second, being like it, is as follows: **“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment”** (Mark 12:30). The scribe’s response to Jesus’ answer was this, **“And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices”** (Mark 12:33). Jesus then told the scribe that he was not far from the kingdom of God. Of course we all would like to obey this commandment. We know it is easy to say “we love”, but is it easy to fulfill this/these in our humanity? Can we carry out this commandment on a daily basis by our own strength?

The honest answer would be no. Of course it must begin with a desire to do so from our heart, but we are going to come up against things in life that will keep us from being able to love at all times. And, can we love God with all our understanding only with/through our human intellect? The word “understanding” as it is used in the New Testament means a mental pulling together or intellect. Our wisdom, worldly wisdom is so much beneath God’s. As it is written, the foolishness of God is greater than man’s wisdom. How can we fully understand God? Or be capable of the Agape love described in I Corinthians 13 in spite of what happens in life, the losses we suffer, the things people do to us, and the mistakes we make combined with our failures? By our own strength and human ability it would not be possible to even approach these things.

Thankfully, God has made a way that is acceptable to Him. The way to accomplish this is prayer. Prayer is the greatest gift God has given man. It allows us access to repentance, forgiveness, the infilling of the Holy Ghost, and so much more. It gives us access to the greatest relationship of all. There is nothing greater than a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, our God, and Creator of all things. Through prayer He can give us wisdom to discern between what is true and false, a hatred for evil, the ability to discern between what is clean and profane. Through prayer we can receive warning to stay off the path of destruction. God alone knows what lies before us. Prayer and a connection with God will reassure us that we are never alone, giving us hope for a better day. He is an ever present help in time of need, and better than the best of friends. He is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

There are three aspects to the word “prayer” as it is most commonly used in scripture in both Old and New Testaments. These help us understand the importance of prayer in fulfilling the greatest commandment. These are Worship, Intercession, and Supplication. These three aspects, when practiced on a daily basis, can help ensure that we will be able to love God, others, and ourselves. The act of prayer itself, when performed according to scripture, will create in us a “God consciousness” that will convict us of the things that are hindering us. The biggest opposition to love is unforgiveness towards God, others, and ourselves. Unforgiveness makes it impossible to fulfill the Greatest Commandment. We might be able to love with our reasoning or say we love, but we cannot love with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength while we hold a grudge we have no right to hold. All our strength will go to holding the grudge. This is why it is safe to say that we will not carry out the Greatest Commandment of our own volition. It is written in both Old and New Testaments that God alone can forgive sin.

Therefore, we need the Spirit of God working in our lives so when thoughts come to mind of the past, we have the power through the Holy Ghost to give them their proper burial on a daily basis in God’s sea of forgetfulness. The thoughts are not really the problem, but the entertaining of them is destructive. When we worship God in prayer by thanking Him for the great things He has done, for our salvation, a roof over our head, food to eat, a sane mind, and too many other things to mention in this short column, we show God that we love Him, and pure worship will cause God to manifest Himself as He inhabits the praises of His people. Through intercession we can pray for those we don’t know, as well as those we do, anywhere in the world for many needs. The greatest need we all have is that we might know Jesus. It is through intercession that we can show love and compassion for others. When we are limited on what we can do, intercession allows us to send God’s word to them through prayer. Finally, supplication is where we can petition God for our own needs. This is the time when we can repent of things that are hindering us, and holding us back from becoming the people that we want to be, or better yet, becoming better than we already are. Daily prayer will empower us to accomplish this. BMLR

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Inmates, family members, and those who are interested can now access the monthly newsletter. Please visit **http://www.inspirationalwordsforinmatesandtheirfamilies.yolasite.com/** .The site is still under construction, and will have all copies of the newsletter since the column **Words from Behind the Wall** was started in 2007.

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ON QUITTING

By Edgar A. Guest

How much grit do you think you’ve got?

Can you quit a thing you like a lot?

You may talk of pluck; it’s an easy word,

And where’er you go it’s often heard;

But can you tell to a jot or guess

Just how much courage you possess?

You may stand to trouble and keep your grin,

But have you tackled self-discipline?

Have you ever issued commands to you?

To quit the things that you like to do?

And then, when tempted and surely swayed,

Those rigid orders have you obeyed?

Don’t boast of your grit till you’ve tried it out,

Nor prate to men of your courage stout,

For it’s easy enough to retain a grin

In the face of fight there’s a chance to win,

But the sort of grit that is good to own

Is the stuff you need when you’re all alone.

How much grit do you think you’ve got?

Can you turn from joys that you like a lot?

Have you tested yourself to know

How far with yourself your will can go?

If you want to know if you have grit,

Just pick out a joy that you like, and quit.

WORDS FROM BEHIND THE WALL

DON’T JUDGE THE SAVED

In Luke 7:36-39, we see a Pharisee looking down on Jesus for associating with a sinner. The Lord uses this opportunity to explain why He accepts this praise from her. A parable in Luke 7:40-50 points out that the bigger sinner would be the most thankful. For a woman who had sinned so much, being saved meant a lot to her. The point is we are not to judge a person by what they once did. Christians are not to cast their brothers and sisters away because of what they once were. Instead, we should be thankful and helpful for their transformation. **William Moctezuma**

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OTHER gods THAN GOD

I Corinthians 8:5-6 tells us that as we may understand that there are other gods and lords who are within the earth or the heavens. God, The Father Almighty tells us to understand that when you come to believe in Him, you must accept that there are no longer other Gods or Lords, but one, and that is Him, Jesus Christ, who we now call the Father of all things. Remember that we do become sons of God once we confess, and become doers of His word. If we look to the book of Ezekiel, chapter 8:9-15, God shows us that His people went astray with idols they called gods and lords; and even honored the kings that they had at that time more than they honored God. Even at that time and now God said that this is an abomination. **Patrick Douglas**

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TWO THEIVES: YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW

There are two thieves that will always steal your peace---yesterday and tomorrow. Jesus said: “Don’t worry about tomorrow” (Matthew 6:34). Why? Because He knew you’d have enough to handle today! God won’t give you grace for tomorrow until tomorrow comes. Do you ever have an attack of the “what ifs”? Well I do! What if I never would have met my ex-boyfriend? What if I would’ve let things be? What if? What if? Look out, you’re about to be dragged off into worry. The other area in which we get into trouble is living in the regrets of yesterday. Everybody makes mistakes---even those we think are so great, and never make mistakes. Listen: “Every man shall bear his own burden” (Galatians 6:5). We each have our own little load of oppressive faults and struggles. We all say and do things we wish we hadn’t said or done. “So what can I do you ask”? Trust God to make it work out alright. He’s able! He can help us clean up our mistakes. When you say something you shouldn’t instead of worrying about whether or not you’ve offended someone, ask the Lord to let them know your heart was right, even though you’ve put your foot in your mouth. Trust God to work on them, and give you favor. That way you don’t have to spend the next several days worrying, or crying when you meet them. God is not The Great I Was, or the Great I Will Be, He is The Great I Am. So live in today and enjoy His goodness. **Brandy Holmes**

GETTING INTO POSITION

**(My inspiration for my friend Nettie)**

Finding your place in God is the key to receiving from God, and transmitting His power. Sometimes you think just because you got born again, everything ought to work right. The new birth is the launching power that gets you into the realm of God; however, there are other changes that must be made in your thinking, and speaking that will enable you to receive, and transmit because you need to make some adjustments. Several years ago NASA launched a communication satellite. The satellite could not receive or transmit because it was in the wrong orbit; it was absolutely useless. Investors were very concerned because they had already spent $150 million on this project. If the satellite were operating properly, it had a potential of $2 billion profit. I don’t understand much about outer space technology, so that didn’t make sense to me. I thought that if you could just get the thing out into the atmosphere, and into space, it ought to work right. Whether it makes sense to me or not doesn’t’ matter; the thing still wouldn’t receive or transmit. Something had to change for this satellite to work. They were able to fire some rockets attached to the sides of the satellite, and move it into its proper orbit. As soon as it was moved into place, it began to receive and transmit, and its potential was realized. **Jamie Alexander**

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**Inmates, please submit your inspirational thoughts for Words from Behind the Wall to Beth Marie Rexford, C/O International Christian Fellowship, 9146 Lincoln Ave, Brookfield IL 60513. Office Phone: 708-387-9009. Thank you.**