

# *“Calling Upon Jesus in Our Urgent Need!”*

## **Week 5 - 100 Days of Prayer**

**April 24 - 30, 2020**

### **“Always Open”**

By Randy Maxwell

A few Sundays back, Suzette and I were tired of being cooped up in the house so we decided to drive down to *The Landing*—an outdoor shopping plaza in Renton, Washington, where we live, with stores, restaurants, services, and a multi-screen movie theater.

The eyeglass store I intended to visit had a sign on the door saying that, due to COVID-19, they were closed until further notice. But that wasn't the only one. I drove around to the Ross store—closed. Dick's Sporting Goods—closed. Marshall's—closed. World Market—closed. The parking lot was a ghost town. The invisible virus was demonstrating its power to make cars and shoppers disappear.

Just a few days earlier, Governor Jay Inslee had issued a stay-at-home order that essentially closed down the entire state of Washington. So it is under this order that I'm writing this devotional. That's why I appreciate an encounter Jesus had with a doubting truth-seeker named Nathanael.

Jesus was heading to Galilee. On the way, he asked Philip to follow him. Philip then went to find his friend, Nathanael, and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” John 1:45

The mention of Nazareth invoked the same reaction in Nathanael that people have today at the mention of coronavirus—it closed things down. “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. We might ask, can anything good come from this coronavirus? From the inconvenience and disruption of social distancing? From the inability of congregations to assemble in their houses of worship? But sometimes good things come from bad places or experiences.

To Nathanael's credit, he responded to Philip's invitation to “come and see” and went with him. Jesus saw Nathanael approaching and said, “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.”

“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.” John 1:48 Instantly, faith opened Nathanael's closed mind and he confessed: “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.” (vs. 49)

“Jesus said, ‘You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.’ He then added, ‘I tell you the truth you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.’” (vs. 50-51)

At Jesus’ baptism, “heaven was opened,” and God anointed and verbally blessed His Son. (See Matt. 3:16-17.) “Here Christ virtually says, ‘On the bank of the Jordan the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended like a dove upon Me. That scene was but a token that I am the Son of God. If you believe on Me as such, your faith shall be quickened. You shall see that the heavens are opened and are never to be closed. I have opened them to you. The angels of God are ascending, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and descending, bring blessing and hope, courage, help, and life, to the children of men.’” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 142, 143)

Hallelujah! Heaven is open! Heaven is always open, and nothing—not prejudice, or doubt, or COVID-19, or stay-at-home orders, or demons, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation can shut its doors. (See Rom. 8:39.) And what does it mean for heaven to be open? It means, you and I have full and complete access to everything that’s there, and the “shelves” are always stocked with everything we need.

What is in stock in heaven?

Everything we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).

The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23).

The full armor of God (Eph. 6:14-17).

Exceeding great and precious promises (2 Pet. 1:4).

New birth into a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

The mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).

Every spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

Heaven is open and Jesus has given us the keys to the kingdom (Matt. 16:19). That key is prayer. The angels are heaven’s “Amazon” delivery agents, bearing our prayers up to the Father and descending, bringing the blessings we need most—hope, courage, help, and life to us.

*The Landing* may be closed, basketball may be closed, hockey may be closed, restaurants may be closed, even our churches may be temporarily closed, but Heaven is always open. So don’t be afraid. Jesus says, “You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it” John 14:14. Therefore, “Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.” Ps. 81:10

This Coronavirus can’t stop God. Pray as never before, because Heaven is always open.

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**HEART QUESTIONS:** Have your spiritual shelves gotten a little bare in some areas due to the busyness and hurry of life the last few years? Perhaps there are some heavenly supplies and graces that you need to stock up on? Furthermore, if you could ask for any spiritual gift, for victory in any specific area, or for some other spiritual blessing, what would you ask for? Think about these questions for a few minutes.

**ACTIVE HEART CHALLENGE:** Why don't you take time to write down the things you feel in need of this week—then look up specific Bible promises where God tells us that He will supply that specific need. Whether it's money to pay the bills, or strength in an area where you've been spiritually weak, start actively claiming the promises of God when you pray.

"You need not go to the ends of the earth for wisdom, for God is near. It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him."

*(Christ Object Lessons, p. 146)*

**Going Deeper: Additional reading suggestions for this week**

- Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, chapter 11, "The Privilege of Prayer" - Attached
- Randy Maxwell, *Boot Camp for the Last Days*



**Day 29 – Prayer Focus – Friday, April 24, 2020**

**PRAISE REPORT! The Youth Department of the Euro-Asia Division in Moscow, Russia, organized a division-wide prayer marathon for young people via Zoom recently. Participants connected from across the division, focusing on the power of God, His watchcare, and prayer. God blessed!**

- Pray that our youth around the world will continue finding ways to press together in prayer, and Bible study. Pray that the experience they are gaining now with Jesus because of this crisis will be lasting.
- Pray for parents who are struggling to teach or help monitor the online education of their children during this pandemic. Pray for wisdom and courage for parents!
- Pray for the graduating high school and college students who are now going to be missing their normal graduation. Pray for courage for them, and direction as to what plans they should make for the future.
- Pray for health, strength, and inspiration for youth ministry leaders, educators, teachers, and others working to inspire and encourage our youth during this crisis.
- Pray for the *It Is Written* online evangelistic campaign "Hope Awakens" that has just started. There's been a lot of obstacles and we know that the enemy is working overtime to keep this program from going forward. Keep the prayers covering this very important series. (To learn more visit: <https://www.discoverhopeawakens.com>).



**Day 30 – Prayer Focus - Sabbath, April 25, 2020**

**Pray According to God's Will**

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” 1 John 5:14

“In the prayer of faith there is a divine science; it is a science that everyone who would make his lifework a success must understand. Christ says, ‘What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.’ Mark 11:24. He makes it plain that our asking must be according to God’s will; we must ask for things that He has promised, and whatever we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal... We need look for no outward evidence of the blessing. The gift is in the promise, and we may go about our work assured that what God has promised He is able to perform, and that the gift, which we already possess, will be realized when we need it most.” *Education*, p. 258

## Heart Questions:

Have you ever prayed for something that you knew was not God’s will, but you wanted it so badly, you kept praying anyway? Often hindsight is better than foresight. Why don’t you take a few moments today to look back and thank God for those specific prayers that you prayed that He did not answer, for now you see they were not in your best interest.

**PRAISE REPORT: While we have lost loved ones to COVID-19, there are others that we’ve earnestly prayed for whose lives God has spared. Let’s praise Him for those instances where He has delivered. And let’s seek to hold on to our “Blessed Hope” as we trust Him with the losses we can’t understand,**

- Pray for those in the Chattanooga Tennessee area here in the United States who just recently experienced a number of horrific tornadoes. Many lost homes and some lost life, and now in the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic, they are struggling to pick up the pieces.
- Pray for those in impoverished countries who have not been able to work. Pray for provision for food and needed supplies for church members in these regions.
- Keep praying for the health professionals on the front lines who are continuing to battle this epidemic. Pray for their health safety from COVID-19, and their emotional safety as they deal with the stress and strain of this pandemic.
- Keep praying for the many organizations, and small businesses who are suffering financially as a result of this lockdown. Pray for provision and wisdom how to move forward.
- Pray for wisdom for government leaders that they will know how and when to start opening up things again for the economy.



**Day 31 – Prayer Focus - Sunday, April 26, 2020**

**Pray and Watch Heaven Move**

“As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me: for there were many with me.” Ps. 55:16-18

“Prayer is a heaven-ordained means of success. Appeals, petitions, entreaties, between man and man, move men and act a part in controlling the affairs of nations. But prayer moves heaven... Prayer, faith, confidence in God, bring a divine power that sets human calculations at their real worth—nothingness... He who places himself where God can enlighten him, advances, as it were, from the partial obscurity of dawn to the full radiance of noonday.” *In Heavenly Places*, p. 75

## Heart Questions:

What is the most impossible thing that you are praying God will do? Is it to bring reconciliation between you and someone you love? Is it to restore a broken marriage, or bring a child back to the faith? Write down several impossible prayers on your heart today, and then beside those prayers, write down specific promises from God’s Word.

Start by claiming the following promises: Mark 10:27, Luke 18:27, 1 John 5:14

**PRAISE REPORT: We praise the Lord that God has already used this COVID-19 pandemic to bring reconciliation between many, and we know God is longing to work the same miracle of healing for many more.**

- Pray for our church members across the different countries of Africa, the islands of the Caribbean, and the countries of central and south America as they are fighting the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Pray for those in your own church and community who are being impacted by the financial crisis. Pray that their needs would be met.
- Pray for a generous heart to share if you happen to be someone with extra resource. Pray that we as a church family would stand together with our brothers and sisters in need.
- Pray that God would take us deeper in our devotional time with Him, not just to gain help and blessings, but that our greatest desire would be to truly know Him.
- Pray that church members worldwide will take advantage of this time to eagerly share spiritual resources, the *It Is Written* “Hope Awakens” series, or other spiritual food with neighbors and friends in need.



## Day 32 – Prayer Focus - Monday, April 27, 2020

### Pray the Promises

“As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who has called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to

us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

2 Pet. 1:3-4

“Every promise in the Word of God is for us. In your prayers, present the pledge word of Jehovah and by faith claim His promises. His Word is the assurance that if you ask in faith, you will receive all spiritual blessings. Continue to ask, and you will receive exceedingly abundantly above all that you ask or think. Educate yourself to have unlimited confidence in God. Cast all your care upon Him. Wait patiently for Him, and He will bring it to pass.”

*In Heavenly Places*, p. 71

## Heart Questions:

What does it mean to have unlimited confidence in God and His Word? If every promise in the Word is indeed for us, as we are told, why are we still so often very reluctant to take God at His Word? What are some ways we could change our prayers of faltering doubt to prayers of confident faith? (Hint: Look up John 6:37, Heb. 11:6, and Rom. 10:17)

**PRAISE REPORT: We praise the Lord for working out the technical issues with the HOPE AWAKENS series with *It Is Written*. We continue to pray for God’s provision and protection over this series.**

- Pray for those who are currently listening and watching the “Hope Awakens” series with *It is Written*. Pray that many hearts and lives will be forever changed.
- Pray for those who are fighting COVID-19. Pray that God would give them the breath of healing physically and spiritually.
- Pray for all the frontline and essential workers, from medical staff to grocery store employees, and delivery services. Pray that God’s protecting hand would be over them as they serve others and keep our essential businesses open.
- Pray for the elderly who are stuck in nursing homes where family cannot visit. Some cannot understand why this is the case. Pray that God’s sustaining grace would be with them
- Pray for those who are struggling with anxiety, fear, and especially for those who live alone. If you know someone who fits the above criteria, pray for a way to reach out to them and show care—in a socially safe and appropriate way.



## **Day 33 – Prayer Focus - Tuesday, April 28, 2020**

### **Pray for Deliverance**

“I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” Ps. 34:4-7

“We have too little faith. We limit the Holy One of Israel. We should be grateful God condescends to use any of us as His instruments. For every earnest prayer put up in faith for anything, answers will be returned. They may not come just as we expected; but they will come—not perhaps as we have devised, but at the very time when we need them most.” *Gospel Workers*, p. 92

## Heart Questions:

Perhaps as you look around your social circle you see some that are really struggling in their faith. Why don't you think about some practical ways to share faith with a brother or sister in need. Perhaps share a good book (or recommend a good book) that builds faith like “A Thousand Shall Fall” or “One Miracle after Another.” When we see how God has worked miracles in the lives of others, we can have confidence for our own life today. Or perhaps write a card with some Bible promises and give it to someone in need. If you aren't sure who to reach out to, ask God and He will show you!

**PRAISE REPORT: In the Philippines, as a result of this pandemic, hundreds of young people are praying together each day over Zoom, and many hearts are being broken and drawn closer to Jesus. We just praise the Lord for the spirit of prayer growing everywhere. Many are earnestly seeking a deeper understanding of God's Word as well.**

- Pray for your local pastor. Pray that God would sustain Him, protect Him, and most importantly, fill Him with an even more abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit
- Pray for our General Conference church leadership, administrators, departmental directors and staff. Pray for God to give them wisdom as they seek to lead and promote the mission of the church throughout this crisis.
- Pray specifically for Ted Wilson, General Conference president, GT. Ng, secretary, and Juan Prestol, treasurer. Pray for special wisdom for them, protection for their families, and Holy Spirit blessing as they lead us through this crisis.
- Pray for God's leading for the future of our church. Pray that we would not waste this opportunity to share the love of Jesus and the beautiful truths of Revelation 14 and 18, with the world in need.
- Pray earnestly that the Latter Rain would come as God has promised, so the work could be finished and we could go home. It's not longer time for business as usual. It's time to finish the work and get ready to meet Jesus.



**Day 34 – Prayer Focus - Wednesday, April 29, 2020**

**Pray always in Humility!**

“The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee. Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion. Declare among the people his doings. When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.” Ps. 9:9-12

“An earnest prayer offered from a contrite heart by one who desires to do the Master’s will is of more value in God’s sight than is eloquence of speech. The human agent may have no voice in legislative councils, he may not be permitted to deliberate in senates or vote in parliaments, yet he has access to God. The King of kings bends low to listen to the prayer coming from a humble, contrite heart. God hears every prayer that is offered with the incense of faith. The weakest child of God may exert an influence in harmony with the councils of heaven.” *That I May Know Him*, p. 270

## Heart Questions:

As one author likes to say, “Pride doesn’t listen. It already knows.” Are there ways that perhaps you’ve allowed pride to influence your listening skills? Are there ways perhaps that you’ve allowed pride to rule your tongue, or even dictate your prayers? If so, pray that God would show you how to ask forgiveness from those whom your prideful ways of speaking and living may have wounded. This is tough, but if God is to hear our prayers, we must put away pride, both between ourselves and especially against Him.

(Look up James 4:10, Isa. 57:15)

**PRAISE REPORT: We praise God that He is in control of this world and He still sits on the throne. Although life seems out of control right now for many of us, we can rest in the security of the everlasting arms who promises He will never leave us or forsake us. Remember, He saw all this COVID19 pandemic before it came upon our world, and nothing touches us unless He allows it. So if we are struggling with sickness, with financial loss, or other trials and pain—let’s praise God that He’s still on the throne and what the enemy means for evil He can turn to good.**

- Pray for those especially who have no voice to fight for themselves or get the help they need during this crisis.
- Pray for the children, the elderly, the vulnerable, and the single mothers struggling to survive.
- Pray for the refugee populations camped throughout Europe, Greece, and other countries around the world. Pray for provision for their needs, for healthcare, and for their rights as human beings to be upheld.
- Continue to pray for the many missionaries that are huddling down at their posts of duty in various places around the world. Pray for provision for their physical needs and safety.
- Pray for continued strength and rehabilitation for those who have recovered from the Coronavirus. Pray for healing for lungs, and strength to return to normal life.





## Day 35 – Prayer Focus - Thursday, April 30, 2020

### Pray for His Grace

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” 2 Cor. 12:9-10

“God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 493

### Heart Questions:

As you reflect on Hebrews 4:12, how do you see the Word of God piercing your own heart? Have you been convicted by something you’ve read in God’s Word recently? Have you acted on your conviction, or have you pushed the promptings of the Holy Spirit aside? Share your thoughts with someone. Then pray that we as a people would not only hear the Word and love the Word, but that we would also seek to live according to the Word.

**PRAISE REPORT: We praise the Lord for the many videos, sermons, health seminars, and other resources that have been shared by God’s people in these last few weeks. These beautiful and Holy Spirit inspired resources are blessings literally thousands. In the midst of the crisis God’s people are shining for His glory.**

- Pray that God would honor the promise of Psalms 91:7, that “a thousand may fall at our side but it will not come near us.”
- Pray for our Adventist Chaplaincy department as they work to comfort and uplift those struggling and in need.
- Pray for those across the Middle East and Asia who are persecuted for their faith. Pray that they would remain strong, and show the love of Jesus to their persecutors.
- Continue to pray for the new plans being organized for the rescheduled General Conference Session which will now take place May 20-25, 2021, in Indianapolis. Pray that the session will be filled with spiritual, mission-focused plans and that the Holy Spirit will be in full control.
- Pray earnestly for the Latter Rain outpouring on the church, that the message of salvation can go to the far corners of the earth, and Jesus can return.

## Additional Reading

From the book *Steps to Christ* by Ellen White, chapter 11, "The Privilege of Prayer"

Through nature and revelation, through His providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us. But these are not enough; we need also to pour out our hearts to Him. In order to have spiritual life and energy, we must have actual relationship with our heavenly Father. Our minds may be drawn out toward Him; we may meditate upon His works, His mercies, His blessings; but this is not, in the fullest sense, communing with Him. In order to commune with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life. {SC 93.1}

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him. {SC 93.2}

When Jesus was upon the earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He directed them to present their daily needs before God, and to cast all their care upon Him. And the assurance He gave them that their petitions should be heard, is assurance also to us. {SC 93.3}

Jesus Himself, while He dwelt among men, was often in prayer. Our Saviour identified Himself with our needs and weakness, in that He became a suppliant, a petitioner, seeking from His Father fresh supplies of strength, that He might come forth braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, "in all points tempted like as we are;" but as the sinless one His nature recoiled from evil; He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and a privilege. He found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. And if the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer. {SC 93.4}

Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God's heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith? The angels love to bow before God; they love to be near Him. They regard communion with God as their highest joy; and yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence. {SC 94.1}

The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to

obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation. {SC 94.2}

There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers. One of the first of these is that we feel our need of help from Him. He has promised, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." Isaiah 44:3. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who long after God, may be sure that they will be filled. The heart must be open to the Spirit's influence, or God's blessing cannot be received. {SC 95.1}

Our great need is itself an argument and pleads most eloquently in our behalf. But the Lord is to be sought unto to do these things for us. He says, "Ask, and it shall be given you." And "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Matthew 7:7; Romans 8:32. {SC 95.2}

If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions. Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance. {SC 95.3}

Another element of prevailing prayer is faith. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11:6. Jesus said to His disciples, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11:24. Do we take Him at His word? {SC 96.1}

The assurance is broad and unlimited, and He is faithful who has promised. When we do not receive the very things we asked for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears and that He will answer our prayers. We are so erring and short-sighted that we sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing to us, and our heavenly Father in love answers our prayers by giving us that which will be for our highest good—that which we ourselves would desire if with vision divinely enlightened we could see all things as they really are. When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon His sure promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you." {SC 96.2}

If we take counsel with our doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that we cannot see clearly, before we have faith, perplexities will only increase and deepen. But if we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, and in humble, trusting faith make known our wants to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts. Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We

may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness. {SC 96.3}

When we come to ask mercy and blessing from God we should have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our own hearts. How can we pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," and yet indulge an unforgiving spirit? Matthew 6:12. If we expect our own prayers to be heard we must forgive others in the same manner and to the same extent as we hope to be forgiven. {SC 97.1}

Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving. We must pray always if we would grow in faith and experience. We are to be "instant in prayer," to "continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2. Peter exhorts believers to be "sober, and watch unto prayer." 1 Peter 4:7. Paul directs, "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Philippians 4:6. "But ye, beloved," says Jude, "praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God." Jude 20, 21. Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God. {SC 97.2}

There is necessity for diligence in prayer; let nothing hinder you. Make every effort to keep open the communion between Jesus and your own soul. Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven. {SC 98.1}

We should pray in the family circle, and above all we must not neglect secret prayer, for this is the life of the soul. It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected. Family or public prayer alone is not sufficient. In solitude let the soul be laid open to the inspecting eye of God. Secret prayer is to be heard only by the prayer-hearing God. No curious ear is to receive the burden of such petitions. In secret prayer the soul is free from surrounding influences, free from excitement. Calmly, yet fervently, will it reach out after God. Sweet and abiding will be the influence emanating from Him who seeth in secret, whose ear is open to hear the prayer arising from the heart. By calm, simple faith the soul holds communion with God and gathers to itself rays of divine light to strengthen and sustain it in the conflict with Satan. God is our tower of strength. {SC 98.2}

Pray in your closet, and as you go about your daily labor let your heart be often uplifted to God. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. These silent prayers rise like precious incense before the throne of grace. Satan cannot overcome him whose heart is thus stayed upon God. {SC 98.3}

There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes. A closet of communion may be found wherever we are. We should have the door of the heart open continually and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul. {SC 99.1}

Although there may be a tainted, corrupted atmosphere around us, we need not breathe its miasma, but may live in the pure air of heaven. We may close every door to impure imaginings and unholy thoughts by lifting the soul into the presence of God through sincere prayer. Those whose hearts are open to receive the support and blessing of God will walk in a holier atmosphere than that of earth and will have constant communion with heaven. {SC 99.2}

We need to have more distinct views of Jesus and a fuller comprehension of the value of eternal realities. The beauty of holiness is to fill the hearts of God's children; and that this may be accomplished, we should seek for divine disclosures of heavenly things. {SC 99.3}

Let the soul be drawn out and upward, that God may grant us a breath of the heavenly atmosphere. We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him as naturally as the flower turns to the sun. {SC 99.4}

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. {SC 100.1}

Jesus said, "Ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you." "I have chosen you: ... that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you." John 16:26, 27; 15:16. But to pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works. {SC 100.2}

God does not mean that any of us should become hermits or monks and retire from the world in order to devote ourselves to acts of worship. The life must be like Christ's life—between the mountain and the multitude. He who does nothing but pray will soon cease to pray, or his prayers will become a formal routine. When men take themselves out of social life, away from the sphere of Christian duty and cross bearing; when they cease to work earnestly for the Master, who worked earnestly for them, they lose the subject matter of prayer and have no incentive to devotion. Their prayers become personal and selfish. They cannot pray in regard to the wants of humanity or the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom, pleading for strength wherewith to work. {SC 101.1}

We sustain a loss when we neglect the privilege of associating together to strengthen and encourage one another in the service of God. The truths of His word lose their vividness and importance in our minds. Our hearts cease to be enlightened and aroused by their

sanctifying influence, and we decline in spirituality. In our association as Christians we lose much by lack of sympathy with one another. He who shuts himself up to himself is not filling the position that God designed he should. The proper cultivation of the social elements in our nature brings us into sympathy with others and is a means of development and strength to us in the service of God. {SC 101.2}

If Christians would associate together, speaking to each other of the love of God and of the precious truths of redemption, their own hearts would be refreshed and they would refresh one another. We may be daily learning more of our heavenly Father, gaining a fresh experience of His grace; then we shall desire to speak of His love; and as we do this, our own hearts will be warmed and encouraged. If we thought and talked more of Jesus, and less of self, we should have far more of His presence. {SC 101.3}

If we would but think of God as often as we have evidence of His care for us we should keep Him ever in our thoughts and should delight to talk of Him and to praise Him. We talk of temporal things because we have an interest in them. We talk of our friends because we love them; our joys and our sorrows are bound up with them. Yet we have infinitely greater reason to love God than to love our earthly friends; it should be the most natural thing in the world to make Him first in all our thoughts, to talk of His goodness and tell of His power. The rich gifts He has bestowed upon us were not intended to absorb our thoughts and love so much that we should have nothing to give to God; they are constantly to remind us of Him and to bind us in bonds of love and gratitude to our heavenly Benefactor. We dwell too near the lowlands of earth. Let us raise our eyes to the open door of the sanctuary above, where the light of the glory of God shines in the face of Christ, who "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." Hebrews 7:25. {SC 102.1}

We need to praise God more "for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men." Psalm 107:8. Our devotional exercises should not consist wholly in asking and receiving. Let us not be always thinking of our wants and never of the benefits we receive. We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. We are the constant recipients of God's mercies, and yet how little gratitude we express, how little we praise Him for what He has done for us. {SC 102.2}

Anciently the Lord bade Israel, when they met together for His service, "Ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee." Deuteronomy 12:7. That which is done for the glory of God should be done with cheerfulness, with songs of praise and thanksgiving, not with sadness and gloom. {SC 103.1}

Our God is a tender, merciful Father. His service should not be looked upon as a heart-saddening, distressing exercise. It should be a pleasure to worship the Lord and to take part in His work. God would not have His children, for whom so great salvation has been provided, act as if He were a hard, exacting taskmaster. He is their best friend; and when they worship Him, He expects to be with them, to bless and comfort them, filling their hearts with joy and love. The Lord desires His children to take comfort in His service and to find more pleasure than hardship in His work. He desires that those who come to worship Him shall carry away with them precious thoughts of His care and love, that they may be cheered in all the employments of daily life, that they may have grace to deal honestly and faithfully in all things. {SC 103.2}

We must gather about the cross. Christ and Him crucified should be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion. We should keep in our thoughts every blessing we receive from God, and when we realize His great love we should be willing to trust everything to the hand that was nailed to the cross for us. {SC 103.3}

The soul may ascend nearer heaven on the wings of praise. God is worshiped with song and music in the courts above, and as we express our gratitude we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth" God. Psalm 50:23. Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator, with "thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." Isaiah 51:3. {SC 104.1}