

Revival & REFORMATION

The Official *United in Prayer* Weekly Blog and World Church Prayer Requests
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Learning to Live by the Word

By Don MacLafferty

It was 3:00 a.m., November 22, 2016, when God called me to wake up. It was not an audible voice, but rather the still, small voice of God to my mind and heart. I knew it was Him. Every morning, He fulfills Isaiah 50:4 by awakening me to meet with Him.

I jumped out of bed, threw on warm clothes, grabbed my Bible and a flashlight, and headed out into the starlit night into the woods and rocks near the mountain. I placed my Bible on a stump before me, knelt, and prayed. Nothing happened.

I knew God had called me out to pray. For months, my wife April and I had been asking God to guide us about how we best should serve Him. At the time, I was fully employed in ministry in Clovis, California, and at the same time, directed a global nonprofit to equip parents to mentor their children as disciples of Jesus.

Both our local and global ministries were growing, and we did not know what to do to continue to grow with both.

So, I asked God under the very stars He created, “Why did you wake me up and call me out to pray? What is on Your heart?”

There was no answer. The air was still and cool, the stars bright, the night dark. I waited in confusion. *Maybe I should just go back to bed. I am hearing nothing.* I thought to myself.

But I could not give up. When you know God is calling, you must press on until you know you have heard what He wants to tell you. I thanked God for His blessings and praised Him for who He is. I confessed my sins and asked God to cut out anything out of my heart, my life, that was displeasing to Him. I asked for faith to hear whatever He wanted to tell me.

I had peace as I waited on God. “Anchor what You tell me in prayer with what You first tell me in Your written Word!” I pleaded with God. “Give me a passage of Scripture that I can stand on later when I am tempted to back down from what You call me to do.”

Silence. Waiting. Then the still, small voice of God led me to go to Ecclesiastes 3. I reached for my Bible in the darkness, unzipped it from its cover, and opened it so that I could search for that chapter with the help of my flashlight. When I shone my flashlight on my Bible to begin searching, I was shocked! My Bible was open to a place that it never opens to — Ecclesiastes 3!

Ecclesiastes 3 is about God’s perfect timing. God has perfect timing in all things. Everything is beautiful in His time.

“Why did you lead me to this chapter?” I asked God. “Because it’s time,” He spoke to my heart. “Time for what?” I asked, a bit confused. “Time for you and April to put your feet in the Jordan all the way.” (Please read Joshua 3:10-17 for the story of Israel crossing the Jordan.)

In the next few minutes, God told me it was time to resign from paid ministry. God said it was time we served Him as full-time volunteers, so that we could be free to go anywhere, anytime, at any cost, at His call!

“How will I provide for our family?” I asked God incredulously. I asked God if I should first find sponsors around the world who would promise to provide a workable annual salary, so we could care for our family expenses.

God said, “No. If you do that, you may take the glory for raising your own salary, and they also may take glory for funding you.”

Now my heart was pounding. God was telling me to walk away from my security and salary but also telling me not to secure my financial needs. How was this going to work? I wondered.

“Take this step by faith in Me. Only when you step out in faith and cut yourself off from all your security will you see how I will provide for you.” God challenged me. “I have urgency on My heart for you to do this!”

I wish I could tell you that I immediately said, “Yes, Lord! It’s a deal!” But I didn’t. I asked God again if I heard Him right. He affirmed that I did. I asked Him again if He really wanted me to do such an unbelievable thing. He said, “Yes.”

Believe and act or doubt and disobey? A rugged choice. God gave me strength to believe and act.

I trudged home in the pale dawn of a new day, scrambling in my mind for a way to tell my dear wife about what had just taken place. Doubts assailed me. The fear of criticism by family, friends, and colleagues wrestled with my faith in God and His Word.

I walked in the door of our home and cautiously into our bedroom. My wife was just getting up from sleep. Yawning and giving me a smile, she asked, “Did God give us an answer?”

“Yes!” I replied. “But we had better pray first.”

I tenderly told her, “You are under no pressure to agree with what I am about to tell you. God spoke. God is able to speak to you just as much as He can speak to me. Let’s pray for God to guide us together.”

We knelt down and joined hands in prayer. We surrendered what we wanted to God. We thanked Him for His care for us over all the years. We asked for Him to lead us together in unity.

As we stood up, April said, “So what did God say to you?”

I told her the story of God waking me up at 3:00 a.m., praying under the stars, being led by God to Ecclesiastes 3, and about my Bible falling open to that chapter in the darkness. I told her God was calling us to leave paid ministry, so that we could serve Him as full-time volunteers and be free to go wherever He called us and share the messages He had given us through His written Word.

With tears in her eyes and the peace of God shining on her face, April looked up at me. “This is what God has spoken. This is what we will do!”

I was in shock. I was ready for anything but this. God had gone before me and prepared my wife's heart.

I knew if we just talked about God's call that morning, doubts would crowd our minds. If we talked with others, we would endanger the speed of our obedience.

We knelt again and simply thanked God for being the God who still speaks. We asked for strength to obey swiftly.

We ate a quick breakfast and walked out the door. That morning, I turned in my resignation at the office headquarters to take effect in thirty-nine days. For thirty-nine days, we finished the work God had given us locally and prepared for the adventure awaiting us in 2017.

How would God provide? We didn't know. But we knew He would!

Don MacLafferty is a disciple of Jesus, a husband to April for more than 30 years, a dad to Jason, Julie and Jessica and Founder/President of In Discipleship. Today this ministry is discipling young and old to have a daily revival with Jesus in His Word and teaching parents to disciple the new generations through a partnership of the home, school, and church. This powerful testimony was originally shared at Time to Get Ready Ministries.

World Church Prayer Requests

February 12 - 18, 2021

- Please pray for the "Wellness on the Go" van in New York City, which is offering free massages, blood pressure checks and health coaching. Please ask God to impress those who have the greatest need and who are the most receptive to visit the van ministry for assistance.
- Please pray for the Bronx Food Pantry in New York City, which serves 7,000 people. Please ask God to expand the center's influence and that even more people may be helped and reached.
- Please pray for Adventist Life Hope Centers around the world. Centers include Zionland in São Paulo, Brazil; the Banquet Table in Ruse, Bulgaria; the All Generations Center in Taipei, Taiwan; and the Happy Hand in Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Please pray that God will help us know how to effectively reach our loved ones, neighbors, and community with the good news of Jesus' soon coming.