

THE LANTERN



II Peter 1:19

OF THE SCATTERED FAITHFUL

“So we regard the words of the prophets as confirmed beyond all doubt. You're doing well by paying attention to their words. Continue to pay attention as you would to a light that shines in a dark place as you wait for day to come and the morning star to rise in your hearts.”

(II Peter 1:19 GWT)

THE
LANTERN
OF THE SCATTERED FAITHFUL



II Peter 1:19

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The Lighted Lantern
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Personal from the editor



The LANTERN of the Scattered Faithful

With this very first issue, I am pleased to announce the publication of our new digital magazine - ***The Lantern of the Scattered Faithful***. Currently, we plan to publish four issues annually, and hope to eventually increase the number of issues as time permits, and as other writers are potentially added.

Perhaps some may ask, "Why are you publishing this magazine? Don't we still have copies of the original Good News magazine to read?" YES, YOU DO! First of all, NO ONE is trying to replace ANY magazine formerly authorized and published by God's Apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong! Our new magazine is intended to show, by our "fruit," what we believe and teach; that we fully support God's Apostle, and we're not just uttering empty words. We fully support what Mr. Armstrong taught, and the doctrines Christ placed in the Church through him! As Jesus said, "**You shall know them by their fruits**" (Matthew 7:16). Just "talking a good talk" doesn't mean a thing!

Over the years (especially since Mr. Armstrong's death), many have found that there are ministers in several Churches of God who claim to support everything Mr. Armstrong taught. Yet in practice, they really don't! They might even say the words, "**Yes, I believe Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was God's end-time apostle, and a type of Elijah.**" However, they generally don't mind changing (sometimes subtly), what Mr. Armstrong taught. Some ministers have taken on titles for themselves such as "prophet," or "apostle," believing that somehow, this gives them the authority to make their own doctrinal decisions and changes. Then there are ministers who like to "modify" established doctrines and judgments, while claiming God has given them "new understanding." God's people must NEVER COMPROMISE even one iota! THAT MEANS ME or anyone ordained, as well as EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US in the Church of God!

Mr. Armstrong wrote the following in a Brethren, Co-Worker Letter - January 7, 1979... "**If there is any reason why the living Christ chose me as His Apostle, it is that I will not compromise a thousandth of an inch on God's true doctrines. ... Brethren, LET US STAND FIRM in the truth of the Eternal GOD! If ever I needed you to stand back of me as Christ's chosen Apostle, IT IS NOW!**" Yes, we do back God's Apostle, not just with words, but with actions as well!

No matter what men do, it is still our responsibility to NEVER let any man take our crown (Revelation 3:11), and to LOVE God's TRUTH forever! (Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 4:15; I Thessalonians 2:13; II Thessalonians 2:13; I John 3:18-19; III John 1:4)

We must NEVER be willing to compromise EVEN THE SLIGHTEST, with the TRUTH of God!

Gary R. Liebold

Pentecost and Firstfruits



Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures (James 1:18).

By Gary Liebold

Soon, we will be observing the Feast of Pentecost as commanded by the Great God. **"These *are* the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times" (Leviticus 23:4).** Pentecost pictures the beginning harvest, the "FIRST-FRUIT" of God's salvation (Leviticus 23:15-17; Acts 2:1; James 1:18).

Most of humanity has no knowledge of God's MASTER PLAN. It remains a mystery to them. As the apostle Paul wrote, "the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints" (Colossians 1:26). We have been called NOW to prepare as rulers and teachers in the soon coming Kingdom of God.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong wrote the following in *Mystery of the Ages* (Page 132)... **"Jesus called disciples OUT OF THIS WORLD to be taught to teach others and in the coming millennium of the restored kingdom of God, to rule and teach under King of kings Jesus, when**

the tree of life will be opened to all flesh.

The Church was called to be trained to become rulers and teachers in the kingdom of God WHEN the tree of life shall be opened. Meanwhile the Holy Spirit has been closed to all but the prophets and the called-out-ones of the *true Church*. The prophet Joel foretold it shall come to pass afterward -- after the 6,000 years of this world of Satan, that God will pour out of his Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28).

Meanwhile it was necessary for God's purpose that the Holy Spirit be given to the prophets and those specially called out for training to become rulers and teachers under Christ, when the government of God is restored to the earth over all nations. In calling out the Church, Jesus said plainly, 'No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him...' (John 6:44). The Church is merely the "first-fruits" of salvation.

(Continued on page 12)

The Lighted Lantern

By Corey M. Smith



Staying on a lit path is the safest and most predictable course. Yet our human nature tends to want to investigate the woods and see what's there. To explore the sights and sounds of the unknown or perhaps re-explore a path once taken.

But what about the spiritual path? Has there been a trail set before us? Has someone already lit the safest path to a final destination? If one has, who was he, and did he have anything to say on the subject? We will explore these questions and try to find the safest route.

We all, at one time or another, were in spiritual darkness. We lacked understanding or

had none at all. We were unaware that we were lost in the woods. In Psalm 119:105 it says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." So here we see that God's Word, the Holy Bible, is the light that leads out of the darkness of error and into the daylight brightness of truth. The oil that produces the light in the lamp or lantern, causing it to light up to our understanding, is the Holy Spirit (Matthew 25:1-13).

Christ's chosen apostle in the end-time wrote... **"So comprehend the illustration. We all were lost in the dark woods of sin. On first realization of it, with repentance and belief, we received the first portion of God's Holy Spirit. The Bible begins to light up. It is as many as are *led by* the Spirit of God that are the begotten sons of God (Romans 8:14). The Spirit of God, by lighting up the Bible leads us *a step at a time*, into more and more truth. And a step at a time out of error and sin. But if and when you reject one point of truth, it is like stepping aside in the dark woods. You are no longer being *led by* the Spirit of God opening the Bible to right understanding. The light - the Spirit of God - leaves you. God's TRUTH marches on! It leaves you behind. You are in darkness again. Lost again in the darkness of sin! You stumble around in the thick dark woods trying to find the lighted lantern. But every step you now take is taking you farther away from the lighted lantern proceeding on the SURE path out of the woods.**

In other words, if you reject one point of truth, or take one step aside into one point of error - unless you repent *immediately* and get back to the light - you will take more and more steps into erroneous beliefs, and one by one give up the points of TRUTH you had seen and accepted."

Is this exclusive to just the members of God's Church? Or can this also affect the "Leaders" the "Ministers" or even "Evangelists"? Again, what does God's Apostle have to say?

"Take the example of some ministers who left God's Church. Some tried to

incorporate new "churches" of their own. But they were not GOD'S churches. These men had all rejected one or more points of truth, or Church doctrine. They almost immediately began to *add* new points of false doctrine of their own - not of God. Soon they began rejecting points of TRUTH." ... "Soon they were rejecting more and more of GOD'S TRUTH and turning to more and more FALSE doctrines and errors. THEY, PROFESSING TO FOLLOW CHRIST in their new way, WERE GOING FARTHER and FARTHER AWAY FROM HIM. They were going closer

and closer to Satan and Satan's WAY."

Many top men, leading ministers, evangelists, and even deacons have tried to start their own churches. They have done exactly what God's Apostle told them NOT TO DO. In almost every case they have rejected the doctrines once restored to God's Church BY AN APOSTLE. They would have no knowledge of the Holy Days, tithing, healing, the true gospel, the law, etc., as NONE OF THESE MEN WERE TRAINED BY THE LIVING CHRIST! Christ trains apostles, not men. Every one of these men gained their understanding through God's Apostle, NOT directly from Jesus Christ. So, what are we to do? Where are we to go? Is there a lantern still burning? Are there loyal ministers and members holding fast to what God's Apostle told us to do? What did Christ through his man tell us?

"But I think God has called me for a job to do. If I have been someone in the power and the spirit of Elijah, remember there is no prophecy that God will have an Elisha following Elijah. There is no one in the Church that has the



qualifications, the experience that could carry on the work that God has given me to do. Who is there among you who can do it? If you will tell me I would like to know. It would be so nice if I could retire, because it's a pretty heavy load I have to carry. But I'm not thinking of myself, I'm thinking of what I've been called to do. And it must be done. And God's will, will be done.

If anything happened to me I would expect the Church to continue right on and the local churches and the local church ministry. But the job God has called me to do is a prophesied job. It has been being done. I don't think it's anywhere near finished yet. I need your prayers. I need them daily to help me." *Worldwide News* - March 6, 1981

There you have it! There is the LANTERN FILLED WITH OIL! It has been left to us as a gift from the great creator God. WHAT A GIFT! This lantern, if followed, leads right into the kingdom of God! Loyal ministers HOLDING FAST are readying the bride of Christ by following EVERY WORD RESTORED to God's Church. That lantern has been filled with FIFTY-FIVE YEARS of restored truth!

But we have a job to do as well. We MUST keep that wick trimmed. We MUST be praying, fasting, and studying every word RESTORED BY THE LIVING CHRIST. And we must challenge, respectfully, anyone that wants our oil (Matthew 25:8-10). Jude 1:3 Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. And Revelation 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which you hast, that no man take thy crown.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong left us this warning and encouragement... **"Brethren, ministers and even chief evangelists in God's Church: EXAMINE YOURSELVES to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test YOURSELVES."**

**"Brethren, ministers and even chief evangelists in God's Church:
EXAMINE YOURSELVES to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test YOURSELVES."**

-Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong

I have covered here in PRINCIPLE, what OTHERS did that caused Christ to take them out of GOD'S CHURCH! Don't think, "Well, all that applied to THEM - not to ME! Be sure YOU do not start, even so little at first, in Satan's direction. Let no jealousy or contention of any kind against another - whether

another member or another of YOUR RANK in the Work, even start to kindle in your mind! For GOD is NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS. For if God spared not even the angels that sinned (II Peter 2:4) He would no more spare YOU! I did not write this article in order to speak AGAINST those who are OUT, but to warn YOU who are still in, from the very TOP in the Church to the least."

We must keep our eyes fixed on the lantern, our feet firmly on the path, and grip our crown so tightly that no man can ever tear it from our grasp.

The oil in the lamp of Sardis had almost run out, until GOD raised up an Apostle to restore the TRUTH, and once again bring full brightness to the lighted lantern that leads us down THE ONLY PATH to the kingdom of God. Let us not be distracted by sights and sounds coming from the dark woods, and focus on the lighted lantern of truth. ♦

* Quotes in this article, unless otherwise noted, are from the *Worldwide News* - December 8, 1980 - Satan deceive and use me? - Never!!

HOLD FAST!! - *To What?*



What are the teachings we should hold fast to? By whose authority should we keep them?

By Charlie Culpepper

There seems to be a never-ending controversy over what exactly we are supposed to hold fast to since the death of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Whether differing organizations all claiming to be the "One True Church" or individual people making bold assertions about what Mr. Armstrong did or didn't say, the debate rages with no end in sight. Amid all the arguing are the recurring calls that all of God's people should unite to end the debate once and for all. But two cannot walk together except they be agreed (Amos 3:3). And no one, it seems, can agree on what we are to hold fast to, let alone

who is holding fast and who isn't.

And yet, Jesus Christ, through the pages of the Bible, gives us a direct command to all speak the same thing and to not let there be divisions among us (I Corinthians 1:10). In a Bible Study given on July 18, 1980, Mr. Armstrong, expounding on I Corinthians 1:10, 12-13, said the following, **"There is only one Church. And that Church must all speak the same thing. That Church can't be divided."**

He continued a little further on by saying, **"The Church of God IS NOT DIVIDED."**

The minute you get into that, you're no longer the Church of God ... How can it be? How did the early Church all speak the same thing? It spoke the same thing because it spoke what Christ gave it. How did the Church get the knowledge from Christ? They got it from Peter and the other apostles. And how did Peter and the other apostles get it? Christ taught them."

Whether we are in the true Church of God is entirely dependent on whether we are all speaking the same thing. And what are we to be speaking? The teachings that Christ gave the Church of God through the apostles! Does this apply to Mr. Armstrong? Was he an apostle of God?

In this same Bible study, Mr. Armstrong recalled how Dr. Herman Hoeh first made the claim that Mr. Armstrong was an apostle at the Feast of Tabernacles in 1951. He immediately corrected Dr. Hoeh by telling him never to say that again. He then said the following, **"It wasn't until some years later that I looked back and saw, by the fruits, what has happened. And now I have to say if Christ has not made me an apostle, there is none."**

The word "apostle" is defined as "one sent forth." Are there fruits proving the apostleship of Mr. Armstrong?

"Jesus came, over 1900 years ago, to announce the **FUTURE** kingdom of God. He's coming this time to **ESTABLISH** that kingdom. That

end-time last warning message is now going out **WORLDWIDE** in amplified power. It's going before kings, emperors, presidents, prime ministers of nations- and to their peoples, on all continents and all nations of the earth (*Mystery of the Ages pg. 10*)!"

An apostle is one sent forth to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God to the world. Only an apostle is given the authority to do so.

And only Jesus Christ can choose and train an apostle (I Corinthians 1:1).

Because of the efforts of Christ through His chosen Apostle, the gospel has been preached in all the world for a witness to all nations (Matthew 24:14).

In *The Worldwide News*, on March 6, 1981, featured a transcript from Mr. Armstrong entitled, "Congress of Leading Ministers Hears Defined and Reemphasized Spiritual Organization of Church." In that message, Mr. Armstrong said the following...

"So now prior to the Second Coming of Christ, there is someone, before the Second Coming of Christ with a voice in the spiritual wilderness of all mixed-up Babylon of religions that we have in the world today. A voice crying out amid religious confusion, spiritual confusion and preparing the way not for a physical Jesus, but a glorified Christ coming in all the supreme power and glory, to rule all nations, and coming to His spiritual temple,

"But I think God has called me for a job to do. If I have been someone in the power and spirit of Elijah, remember there is no prophecy that God will have an Elisha following Elijah."

-Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong

which is going to rise."

He concluded his message with this... **"But I think God has called me for a job to do. If I have been someone in the power and the spirit of Elijah, remember there is no prophecy that God will have an Elisha following Elijah. There is no one in the Church that has the qualifications, the experience that could carry on the work that God has given me to do. ...If anything happened to me I would expect the Church to continue right on and the local churches and the local church ministry. But the job God has called me to do is a prophesied job. It has been being done."**

Jesus Christ raised up Mr. Armstrong, in the spirit and power of Elijah (Malachi 3:1-3; 4:5-6), to restore all the teachings of Christ to the Church of God (Matthew 17:11) and to proclaim the true gospel to the world (Matthew 24:14).

Jesus Christ is the living head of the Church of God. The doctrines, teachings, and traditions of the Church were instituted by Christ through the apostles and then subsequently restored to the Church by Christ through His chosen Apostle, Mr. Armstrong.

Mr. Armstrong, as Christ's chosen Apostle, acted with and under the authority of Jesus Christ.

That authority is binding on the Church today! Therefore, whatever was restored, instituted, or enacted under Mr. Armstrong prior to his death constitutes the sum of what we are to hold fast to. It is the responsibility of the Church of God to "Hold fast that which thou

"There is no one in the Church that has the qualifications, the experience that could carry on the work that God has given me to do..."

-Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong

hast, that no man take thy crown" (Revelation 3:11). The Church of God is under judgment now (I Peter 4:16). And we are being judged by how faithful we are in keeping to the restored teachings of Jesus Christ. Let us make sure that we are all speaking the same thing and hold fast to what we have, which are the doctrines that come from the throne of God. ♦

* Quotes taken from Bible Study entitled, "I Corinthians 1 & 2" by Mr. Armstrong July 18, 1980, and Transcript "Congress of Leading Ministers Hears Defined and Reemphasized Spiritual Organization of Church" in The Worldwide News March 6, 1981.

A Smart Connection

Breaking It Down to the Cellular Level

By Charlie Culpepper



We see it every day and everywhere we go. In fact, it has become so commonplace that we barely notice it anymore. Perhaps we are part of the alarming trend, completely unaware of the danger we are putting ourselves in. This trend has penetrated every level of our culture and is fundamentally altering how people think, behave and interact.

Have you guessed what it is yet?

In just a few short years, cellular devices (and smartphones especially), have emerged as one of the crowning achievements in technological advancements. Today, a person has at their fingertips the means to access the total fund of knowledge of the world. Smartphones have revolutionized the information age and granted ever wider varieties of accessing information, engaging in global communication, and entrancing with entertainment.

The downside is that people are increasingly viewing the world through the tiny screen in the palm of their hand. Their thoughts are being shaped by the propaganda that is thrust at them through their favorite social media apps. Deep and meaningful relationships are now overshadowed by the amount of "friends" one has and how many "likes" they accrue, or how well their "stories" and "tweets" are trending. Self-worth is determined by digital popularity.

At any given time, one can see people gazing transfixed at their smart devices as they walk down the street, barely aware of their surroundings. Like something out of a cheap horror flick, the public seems to move about like mindless drones. In waiting rooms all across the world, people swipe, scroll, and tap their way through moments of boredom. Walking through an amusement park, one has to navigate, not the at-

tractions, shops, and food stands, but the hundreds of people taking a never-ending stream of selfies and walk-through videos. Vloggers are now as recognizable as Hollywood actors.

Smartphones and similar devices are never far from reach and most often never leave the hand. What is this obsession with smartphones? It is not uncommon to hear someone proclaim, "My whole life is on that phone!"

Speaking of modern Israel, God says, "Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their fingers have made (Isaiah 2:8)." It is easy to think of idols as little statues of weird, pagan deities. Such a view thus makes it easy to render the notion of idolatry as inapplicable to ourselves in this age.

But ask yourself, where is your phone right now? Is it in your pocket? In your hand? Are you perhaps reading this on your device? How much of your day is dedicated to interacting with your phone?

In a personal, Mr. Armstrong said the following:

"Whatever occupies your interest more than God and His Word is the idol you are putting before Him. None can be truly converted — actually begotten of God — until whatever is his IDOL has been smashed, and torn root and branch from his affection and mind and heart.

What is it that you just can't give up? You'll have to give it up, you know — or you are committing the most awful sin it is possible to commit! It is the sin that shuts you off from that

personal contact with GOD (What is the Worst Sin? *Plain Truth* - May 1982)!"

Let's be clear; a smartphone or any such device is not evil in and of itself. Possessing a smart device is not wrong. The manner and extent to which it is used are in question. Consider the principle, or spirit, of the issue. Speaking of the corruption of the pre-flood world, Mr. Armstrong wrote the following:

"What was this universal evil and corruption? Jesus described that universal, corrupt evil as "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" (Matthew 24:38). Eating food and drinking is not evil. Marrying is not evil in itself. There had to be wrong use and excess in eating, drinking and marrying — the evil was in the manner, and in the extent of eating, drinking and marrying (*Mystery of the Ages* - pg. 147)."

How are we using our devices? Are we constantly checking our phones when occupied with other tasks? Are we replying to texts and posting on social media during our prayers or

studies, or during Sabbath Services? Are we in control of our devices - or is Satan controlling us through these devices?

Satan is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), and he

desperately wants to

destroy God's people. And like a stalking lion, he is waiting for opportunities to inject his broadcast into our minds (I Peter 5:8). It is vital that we ensure we are not opening the door for him through wrong and excessive use of man-made devices.

"Whatever occupies your interest more than God and His Word is the idol you are putting before Him."

- Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong

It is all too easy to allow our smartphones (or anything for that matter) to become idols in our lives- of becoming the most important thing to us. God expressly forbids idolatry (Leviticus 19:4; I Corinthians 10:7). God does not want anything to come between Him and His people.

"Just WHAT IS RELIGION? Is it merely an incidental interest, secondary to many other things, such as earning a living, your home, your family, your friends, hobbies, sports, entertainments? Possibly secondary to television or movies? Religion is your CONNECTION WITH GOD — your relationship with Him. Religion is realizing the PURPOSE of your life — the reason why God had you to be born — the reason you draw the breath of air and exist — the PURPOSE or end GOAL of your life, and HOW to live that life so as to arrive there (Herbert W. Armstrong, *Just What is Your Idol, Tomorrow's World* - December 1969)."

What connection do you value the most? Is it your connection to your Creator or your cellular connection? Rather than staying connected to this world through our phones, we should strive mightily to stay connected to God.

God has called each and every one of us for a breath-taking purpose! He has given us the unmatched opportunity to be born into the Family of God as a God-being and a part of the Bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7). But to fulfill our God-given destiny, we must come out of this world and its ways (Revelation 18:4).

Connection to this world through our smartphones is intoxicating and hard to walk away from. In fact, many who suddenly find themselves disconnected, either permanently or temporarily (through loss, theft, or destruction of their phone or other means), find themselves go-

ing through withdrawal symptoms. That disconnect can cause one to feel suddenly isolated. But disconnecting from the online world does not isolate us so much as it exposes how isolated we already were. Nature abhors a vacuum and the



sudden void left in the wake of disconnection can only be truly filled in one way: real, meaningful contact with God. "Draw nigh to God, and **He will draw nigh to you** (James 4:8). This is an iron-clad promise! How do we draw near to God? I'm glad you asked! "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and **he will flee from you** (James 4:7).

Submitting ourselves to God and His spiritual law (Romans 7:14), empowers us to resist the devil. That empowerment from God to resist drives the devil away. Make no mistake, the devil will use anything (including a smartphone) to pull

you into idolatry. What else can we do to overcome smartphone addiction (or any idolatrous behavior)?

While there may not be a one-size-fits-all solution for overcoming addiction to smartphones, the very first and most vital step *is* universal: seek God's help. God can and will fill the void. Study God's word to learn how to put Him first in your life and how to have a deep and meaningful relationship with Him and His family. Another helpful tip is to strive to strengthen your relationships with the people in your real (as opposed to online) life; your spouse, children, siblings, parents, your closest friends. Seek to develop stronger relationships with the people of God.

Pentecost and Firstfruits

(Continued from page 2)

We have been given access to God's Holy Spirit now, (following repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands - Acts 2:38) to help us grow in spiritual character! As Christ said, **"...how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13).**

In addition, we read in the book of Romans... "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [**sonship**], whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" Romans 8:14-17. We

God wants His people to live happy, interesting, and fulfilled lives. And God knows that only by living His way of life- the way of give- can a person be truly happy and fulfilled. Idolatry, whether in the form of smartphone addiction or other vices- keeps us from living our best lives and fulfilling our incredible human potential.

Recognize your smartphone for what it is and seek a smarter connection with God. ♦

are literally in training now, as God's spirit-begotten, soon to be born (as Spirit) - "FIRSTFRUITS", in the Kingdom of God. We will teach others under Jesus Christ, in the greatest spiritual harvest that yet lies ahead. That's our awesome, incredible human potential!

Mr. Armstrong wrote in *Mystery of the Ages* (Page 352)... **"The dead IN Christ at the time of Jesus' Second Coming shall be resurrected to immortal God-life if they shall have died, and those still living who are IN Christ at his coming and led by his Holy Spirit shall be changed instantly into immortal God-life. They shall rule and teach with and under Christ during the thousand years. But all others who have died shall not live again until the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:5).**

The Feast of Pentecost has everything to do with those who are the spiritual "firstfruits" of salvation. What a wonderful plan God has for us, and for all of mankind! ♦

BIBLE STUDY

THE POWER OF PRAYER

Prayer is an intimate, personal, communication with God Almighty. Daily communication in fervent prayer is intended to help Spirit-begotten Christians achieve God's glorious purpose for their lives. Meaningful, effective prayer is absolutely essential to being born into God's Family. Only through the power of prayer is God's instant assistance available to help us overcome the temptations of Satan, self, and society.

1. There are many inspiring Biblical examples of the actual power of believing prayer by leading men of ancient times. For example, in Exodus 32:7-13, Moses prayed to intercede with God on the behalf of the people of Israel after they descended into idolatry and sexual immorality while he was on Mt. Sinai, receiving the Ten Commandments from God. God heard Moses' prayer and actually repented, or changed his mind, and spared the nation of Israel from destruction (vs.14). God heard Moses' prayer because he walked with God, talked with God, and obeyed God. He not only had faith in God, but he had the faith of God. Moses' prayer actually spared an entire nation, but also changed the course of history! God inspired Moses' example of answered prayer, as well as many of examples, such as Elijah and King David, to be recorded in the Bible for us today so that we might become mighty in prayer (1 Corinthians 10:11).

2. We are told to approach God's glorious throne with boldness, and a sense of urgency and fervency (Hebrews 4:16; James 5:16). Just as Jesus Christ had absolute confidence that the Father always heard His prayers (John 11:41-44), so should we.

3. To pray boldly, with real faith and confidence, we must first know God's will. His will of course, is revealed in the Bible. We must learn to know God character, how He thinks and acts, and the purpose He is working out here below. We must understand the promises He has made to us

in His Word, then we can pray confidently to God according to His will (1 John 5: 14 -15).

4. God reveals Himself as a living, dynamic God who will intervene on our behalf if we beseech Him in believing prayer. God will often perform over and above what we ask of Him (Ephesians 3:20). In Matthew 6:5-15, Jesus demonstrated the principles of effective prayer. By such prayer, God's converted and Spirit-led Christians can have an ever deepening relationship with our Father in heaven.

5. The apostle Paul especially asked Christians to pray for God's ministers (1 Thessalonians 5:25; Hebrews 13: 18-19). Paul himself was very grateful for the prayers of the people on his behalf (II Corinthians 1:8-10). Today, we, too, should offer up our personal, heartfelt prayers for the leadership of the ministry, so they may hold fast to, speak and write the truth of God plainly and boldly.

We all have the ready access to God's throne room in heaven through earnest, believing prayer. We need to pray to God every day, and maintain an intimate, personal contact with God to receive the power to overcome and ultimately obtain the gift of eternal life. When we do so, our prayers will accomplish much good for others and a miraculous change in our lives through the power of God's Holy Spirit, and we will achieve the very purpose to which we were born. ♦

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COMING ARTICLES



II Peter 1:19

◆ A Single Act of Faith

Some of the greatest accounts in the Bible involve men and women performing daring acts of faith. From David and Goliath to the many miracles of Jesus Christ, these accounts bring inspiration and encouragement while giving Christians today a standard to strive for in the development and exercise of faith.

◆ Let's Face it!

Facebook and social media in general have become a big part of society. How are we in God's Church using it? And are we helping or hurting the Church of God by doing so?

◆ Bible Study - Understand the Enemy

"Know thy enemy" is a famous saying from long ago. When you know your enemy, it is easier to defeat him. Therefore, we need to know how our adversary, Satan the Devil, operates so that we can guard against him.