WHITE WING
JANUARY 2025

MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

Prayer

The Foundation of Mission

FIELDS OF THE WOOD

FIRE

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WHITE WING
MESSENGER

January 2025 • Volume 102, Number 5

WE BELIEVE in the Holy Trinity—one God, eternally existing in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe in one God, the Father, creator of heaven and earth, of all things seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. All things were made through Him and for Him. He is true God and true man. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin, Mary. He suffered, died, was buried, and on the third day He rose from the dead. He ascended to the right hand of the Father, and He will return to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who eternally proceeds from the Father. He is Teacher, Comforter, Helper, and Giver of spiritual gifts. Through Him the saving and sanctifying works of Jesus Christ are applied to the life of believers. He is the empowering presence of God in the life of the Christian and the church. The Father has sent His Son to baptize with the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues and bearing the fruit of the Spirit are New Testament signs of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

We believe that salvation is by grace through faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross and that He died in our place. The believer's sins are forgiven by the shedding of His blood. We believe that healing of mind, body, soul, and spirit is available to the believer through the blood of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. We believe in one baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the grace of God brings forgiveness and reconciliation to those who repent, as well as transformation in holiness, enabling them to live a Christ-like life. Sanctification is both a definite work of grace and a lifelong process of change in the believer brought by the blood of Jesus, the Word of God, and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

We believe in one holy, universal church, composed of all true believers in Jesus Christ, offering fellowship and calling for service to men and women of all races, nations, cultures, and languages. We believe in the spiritual and ultimate visible unity of the church.

We believe that the Bible—both Old and New Testaments—is the inspired Word of God. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself and His will to humankind, sufficient for instruction in salvation and daily Christian living. The Bible is the Christian's rule of faith and practice.

We believe that God will ultimately reconcile all things in heaven and earth in Christ. Therefore, we look forward to new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Executive Editor/Publisher: Tim Coalter
Managing Editor: Marsha Robinson
Copy Editor: Katherine Osborn, DMin
Graphic Designer: Charlie Scruggs

About the Church of God of Prophecy
The Church of God of Prophecy is a vibrant, worldwide body of believers, united in worship, working hand-in-hand to share God's love and a message of hope to the brokenhearted. The organization has more than a million members and more than 10,000 ministers, worshiping in more than 10,000 churches or missions in 135 nations of the world.

Church of God of Prophecy Core Values
- Prayer
- The Harvest
- Leadership Development
- Biblical Stewardship
- Service

Vision Statement
Reconciling the world to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit

Mission Statement
The Church of God of Prophecy is a Christ-exalting, holiness, Spirit-filled, all-nations, disciple-making, church-planting movement with passion for Christian union.

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Benjamin Feliz: Mexico/Central America/Spanish-Speaking Caribbean
Clayton Martin: Caribbean/Atlantic Ocean Islands
James Kolawole: Africa
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Prayer

While pondering the church's core value of prayer, my thoughts went to a song that was written by Cleavant Derricks, pastor of a small African American church during the Great Depression of the 1930s:

> Now let us have a little talk with Jesus,
> Let us tell him all about our troubles,
> He will hear our faintest cry,
> And he will answer by and by,
> Now when you feel a little prayer wheel turning,
> And you know a little fire is burning,
> You will find a little talk with Jesus makes it right.

When you have a little talk with Jesus, where does your emphasis lie? Is it on ***what*** you are praying or to ***whom*** you are praying? So often the *what* seems to demand attention. The needs, whether for healing, provision, deliverance, etc., carry such a sense of urgency.

What if we could step back from the *what* and give thought to the *whom*? In the first line of the lyrics—before the *what*, before venting our troubles and voicing our faintest cry—the songwriter draws us to the *whom*: Now let us have a little talk **with Jesus.** God said, "**Call to Me** and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3 NKJV, emphasis mine). The psalmist echoed these words, saying, "**Call upon Me** in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me" (Psalm 50:15, emphasis mine). Jesus himself placed the *whom* before the *what* in the model prayer, saying, "Our Father which art in heaven, . . ." (Matthew 6:9 KJV).

How do you see the Father? In his book, *Prayer, the Great Adventure*, David Jeremiah notes that when the scribes who copied the Old Testament Scriptures wrote the word for God, *Yahweh*, they would throw away their pen, never to use it again. They reasoned that once it had written the name for God, the pen was disqualified to write anything else. The men and women of the Old Testament had a great sense of reverence and fear for God; however, there was a lack of personal intimacy with him. In the entire Old Testament, the word "father" is used to describe God only fourteen times, and in every instance, it refers to him as the Father of the Israelite nation. The relationship was national, never personal.

The New Testament marked a significant shift in relationship. The word "Father" occurs seventeen times in the Sermon on the Mount alone. In the four Gospels, Jesus spoke of the Father more than seventy times. No longer was it just a national relationship; it was personal.

Paul explained this relational shift, saying, "But when the fulness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Galatians 4:4–7). We are the children of God. He is our Father.

When John F Kennedy was president of the United States, *Life Magazine* published photos of his children playing with their toys on the floor of the Oval Office. Kennedy was the president, but he was also a father. He held the most powerful office in the world, but playing at his feet were two kids who called him Daddy. It is doubtful that your kids or mine have been given this opportunity. But his kids were. Why? Because he was their father.

As we enter this new year with 21 Days of Prayer, don't overlook this intimate relationship we have with God. It is true that he is the King of kings and Lord of lords, but through his Son, we can have a personal, deep, intimate conversation with our Father.

Brennon Manning tells the story of a minister who received a phone call one day from someone he had never met, asking if he would go to the hospital to visit a dying man. He went and found the man lying in his bed with a chair pulled up next to him. "I'm going to die," he said. "I know that, but before I do, I've got to ask you a question. Some years ago, I was struggling with my prayer life, and someone told me that it would help me a lot if I could remember that prayer is a conversation, an intimate conversation, with God. They suggested I set a chair out where I pray and imagine that I was having a conversation with the Lord Jesus, and the Lord Jesus was in that chair. I've been doing that. Sometimes I pray for over an hour, remembering that Jesus is there. Is that alright?"

The minister told him, "It's not only alright, but I think it delights the heart of God that your prayer is an intimate conversation with him."

A few days later the minister got a call from the daughter of the man, saying her father had died, and they had found his body in a strange position. "When we walked into his hospital room, his head was leaning on a chair by his bed."

That man had come to understand that the essence of prayer was more than the *what*. His heart was drawn to the *whom.* During these 21 Days of Prayer, rest in the Father and lean into him. Just a little talk with Jesus makes it right.

BISHOP TIM COALTER | PRESIDING BISHOP

PRAYING ON MISSION TOGETHER:
The 21 Days of Prayer Initiative 2025

Acts 4:23–31 NIV:

On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.' Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

I am so thankful and excited to pray together as the global Church of God of Prophecy family begins our annual 21 Days of Prayer initiative, January 6–26, 2025. This year's emphasis is titled "On Mission" and will continue our theme from last summer's International Assembly.

We have been praying together as a body for many years. Every January, we set aside 21 days to consecrate ourselves in prayer, longing to draw closer to the Lord and surrender ourselves to his missional work. It is amazing to even consider praying "together" when we are stretched out in over 10,000 ministry points across every area of the world.

When we read about the church in the book of Acts and how they were committed to praying together, we are encouraged to also seek God together through prayer. In the Acts 4 passage listed above, the church prayed together (Acts 4:24) in response to the words they had received from Peter and John about their persecution. The church asked God to use them in his mission, despite and through any persecution they might experience. Our prayer today is the same—to be used by God in his work of reconciling the world to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Praying TOGETHER in 2025

The January 2025 prayer emphasis will allow us to be more "TOGETHER" in prayer than ever before. Because of the blessing of technology, you are reading this now in your language at the same time other Church of God of Prophecy believers are reading it in places around the world in their language. Throughout this prayer emphasis, believers will pray together by Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram Live, phone calls, texts, FaceTime, Google Meet, and on and on.

This year, our prayer initiative will focus on the greatest needs pressing our world along with other needs specific to our movement that were prompted to be included by the Holy Spirit. Together, we will focus on five specific prayer needs each week, splitting our 21-day prayer emphasis into three one-week increments. In this month's edition of the *White Wing Messenger,* you have access to the prayer needs over which we will be praying together along with the accompanying videos for each week. I believe this will give us tremendous unity as we intercede together.

I want to encourage you to participate in what God is going to do through our concentrated "together" prayer. God's Word is clear that he hears us when we call on him; he even leans into our voice as we intercede. We have the biblical witness of the power of "together" prayer throughout the Old and New Testaments, and especially in the book of Acts. However, that is not the only witness we have of the power of "together" prayer. We have glorious testimony of God's answer to prayer even in our day.

Looking Back on God's Goodness as We Have Prayed Together

You may remember that in the January 2023 global prayer emphasis, each of our seven global regions and general presbyters led their own specific prayer times in their own areas. God blessed and moved mightily in that prayer emphasis. He certainly moved in North America as we prayed.

On the final day of that January season of prayer—Sunday, January 22, 2023—we supplied a list of five specific prayer needs for North America and asked the Church of God of Prophecy congregations and missions throughout area to pray specifically for those five needs during their Sunday worship services. On that day, and in the days that followed, I viewed many of our services on Facebook and YouTube to observe how our congregations were praying for those needs and

to witness the creative ways that were utilized to emphasize prayer and praying "together" as a unified body. I was so blessed to see church after church read the list of five needs and call out to God for his direction, deliverance, grace, and power for these needs. I watched as many people—pastors and leaders; the young and the old; English, Spanish, and French; mature and new believers—stood in our pulpits and our churches and prayed for this specific list of needs together with Church of God of Prophecy congregations throughout North America. I was greatly encouraged! But this was just the beginning.

Praying Together for an Outbreak of Divine Healing

One of the specific things we prayed for on January 22, 2023, was "an outbreak of divine healing to be experienced in our churches in North America." I felt the Holy Spirit had certainly pressed us into prayer in this specific direction. How many people do you personally know who, at this very moment, need healing from the Lord? You probably have friends, family, and acquaintances that need a touch from Jesus, the Healer. We felt the great need to intercede, asking for an outbreak of healing in our churches.

I was very blessed to see church after church throughout North America pray for that outbreak on that Sunday in January 2023. My blessing was only beginning, for the work of God is never ending.

As the months passed after January 2023, I heard of several miraculous healings that had taken place. However, as we began the 2023 regional/state convention season (North America is broken down into 26 regions and states), we sensed something happening. God was moving, and we were experiencing divine healing in various locations. Divine healing is defined here as that healing which takes place as a result of a touch of Jesus, experienced by the sick person. It can be experienced completely apart from and without any medical treatment, or it can be experienced in conjunction with medical treatment. The determining factor is that the participant has experienced the touch of Jesus, the Healer.

At one of our first conventions in June 2023, Renee and I were at the Ohio/West Virginia regional convention with Bishop Clint and Elizabeth Knowles and our church family there. During the convention, at the close of an evening service altar time, the Holy Spirit moved among us in a significant and identifiable way. The congregation began praying for each other, praying specifically for those who had raised their hands indicating they had a physical need that evening. WOW! We felt the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of the Healer fill that room. People experienced divine healing!

At the conclusion of the service, Bishop Knowles opened the entire convention to a time of testimony. He invited anyone who felt they had experienced a touch of Jesus to come to the platform and give testimony of what God had done. Another WOW! People came to the podium and shared testimonies of receiving instantaneous touches from the Healer. One pastor, having previously lost hearing in one of his ears, shared a moving testimony of having received the opening of that ear during that prayer time while someone from the congregation laid hands on him and asked God to heal him. This is amazing! Another testimony in that service was from a young person who had been suffering from severe back pain and felt the touch of God and was healed instantly. This was what could only be described as an outbreak of healing.

As the 2023 convention season continued through the summer, reports began to come in about times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. We had reports of cancer being healed and regional/state conventions experiencing an outbreak of divine healing during their conventions. We believe this was God! While all of this was happening, and we were rejoicing, I felt that I heard the voice of God speak to me one day affirming that this divine healing was the result of the prayer that had been prayed by God's people back in January 2023. I rejoiced! To me, this was a real scenario of God's presence experienced in the present-day church just as it was experienced by the early church in the book of Acts. God still hears his people when we pray!

Praying TOGETHER in 2025

I feel confident that when the global church prays and intercedes for specific needs, God will hear us. Imagine the power of over 10,000 prayer points (locations) with over 1,000,000 voices praying the same prayers on the same day! WOW again!

During this year's prayer emphasis, we will pray specifically for some needs in our world that are severe. Regardless of how dark or how dire the situation may be, we will remember that, with God, all things are possible

I invite you to prepare your hearts and join together with over 1,000,000 believers of many languages, in many cultures, in many families, in many nations, as we pray to our mighty God and believe for his presence, power, peace, provision, and purpose to be experienced among his people. Join us praying **On Mission together** from January 6–26, 2025!

BRIAN T. SUTTON, DMIN
NORTH AMERICA GENERAL PRESBYTER

Brian Sutton serves as the general presbyter of North America Ministries for the Church of God of Prophecy. He previously served as state bishop of Alabama and executive director of Leadership Development and Discipleship at the COGOP International Offices. He ministered as a senior pastor for 25 years. His heart is to facilitate the spiritual and professional growth of those at all levels of ministry in the Church. He is a member of the Administrative Committee and Corporate Board of Directors for the International Church of God of Prophecy, a position he has held since 2010. His book, *Conversation with God: The Power of Prevailing Prayer,* is available at ConversationWithGodBook.com.

Prayer

The Foundation of Mission

In the Christian context, prayer cannot be limited to just asking God for help. Prayer is also a place of fellowship with God that helps us to grow spiritually and to integrate into his will, and it equips us with the ability to reflect and translate his purpose to the world. With this kind of mindset about prayer, one can clearly see that our mission, which is God working through us to the world, cannot achieve God's desired goal without prayer. This makes prayer the foundation of mission.

To understand why prayer is the foundation of **mission**, we first need to know what our mission is. Mission is one word the church today has limited greatly. Mission is not only when one goes overseas or to a new city or town to plant a church; mission is taking the gospel to everyone everywhere. In our homes, we should be on mission if there is anyone who has not been saved. At our workplaces, in our neighborhoods, in our schools, at the shopping mall, on the bus, on the train, on the plane, and wherever we find ourselves, we need to know that we are on mission to give someone the gospel. Jesus said to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). He made them to understand that all the world includes their city, Jerusalem, when he said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Samaria, and in all Judaea, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). So, we see that mission is not just limited to overseas or another city or environment other than ours. In fact, as Christians, we are all missionaries because we are all **on mission**.

Now, having laid this premise, we need to know the place of prayer for our mission. There is a popular song we sing in Liberia with the lyrics, "Jesus started with prayer and ended with prayer." In construction, the foundation, which is the unseen part of a building, holds and carries the weight of all the parts of the building that we can see. **Prayer** is the foundation of our mission that will carry all the activities of mission. Jesus, knowing fully well that prayer is a foundation of mission, instructed his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they would be "endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Even though the disciples were excited that Jesus had been resurrected, and they were zealous to go and spread the gospel, despite the urgency, Jesus told them to go and tarry. The foundation needed to be laid. *To tarry* or *wait,* in some contexts in the Scriptures, is to pray to God. *To wait on the Lord* is another way of describing prayer. The disciples understood this, and that is why when they gathered in the upper room to wait until they were endued with power, they "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14). They had a mission to announce the gospel, but it was required that this mission be done on the foundation of prayer.

Jesus was on mission, and his disciples saw that prayer was the foundation that powered his mission. Prayer was the foundation that held and carried the weight of his mission. Prayer was the ground upon which the beauty, the splendor, and glory of his mission was resting; just as people see the beautiful building but do not see the foundation, so it was with the prayers of Jesus. Now we see why Jesus said when we pray, we should enter our closet and shut the door and pray to the Father who is in secret (Matthew 6:6). The disciples asked him, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). We need to carefully note that they did not ask for how to do miracles, how to heal the sick, how to raise the dead, or even how to win the lost or how to become wealthy. They saw prayer as the foundation, and we need to see it that way as well if we are to have in our time the results they had in their time—results that allow us to become products and partakers of their labor in mission.

In Jesus' response to the disciples' request to teach them to pray, he intentionally outlined by priority how they should pray. He made mission number one on the list. The priority was not their

needs but the kingdom of God: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth” (Luke 11:2). The will of God is that no one should perish, but all should repent and be saved (2 Peter 3:9). One can hardly imagine the change we will see in this world to the glory of God if **mission** becomes the priority of our prayers. Sadly, today, when we pray, we prioritize financial prosperity, our businesses, our marriages, our education, our professions, our bread, elections of our political favorites, our sporting teams, owning new homes, cars, having a better job, etc. Winning lost souls, which is our mission, is at the bottom, and many times it is never mentioned at all. Brother James says that we ask amiss, that we may consume it upon our own lusts (James 4:3). In other words, we ask only for our personal pleasure.

We do well to recall the words of our Lord, Jesus, when he asked us to pray to the Lord of the harvest for more laborers to enter into the harvest (Matthew 9:38). To paraphrase this, I say, “Pray to the **Lord of the mission** so that he can send more **missionaries on mission**.” Jesus tied the mission to prayer. Weak prayers will lead to weak mission. Less prayers will lead to less mission. No prayer will lead to no mission. In the same way, strong prayers will lead to strong mission. More prayers will lead to more mission. Persistent prayers with mission as priority will birth missionaries and missions. I am a witness to this.

I am not telling you what I have not experienced. In 1997, while serving as a pastor at the COGOP in the Battery Factory community in Liberia, I was among those who went to the Ivory Coast to attend a conference on church planting. In that conference, the list of countries in Africa where our church was not operating was projected on the screen, and Guinea appeared so big in my vision. From that day, I began to pray for Guinea. My wife joined me when I returned to Liberia, and we began to pray for God to save the lost in Guinea. We prayed for the salvation of the young people, the old people, the military, the police, the politicians, the teachers, professors, doctors, etc. We mentioned them in our prayers for seven years before the Lord finally helped us to move in. And guess what? We saw the Lord save people from all the above professions through our mission, to the extent that we had a member who became prime minister of the country at one point in time. After much prayer, we moved in—not understanding French, not knowing anyone in Guinea—and I went with only a one-way transportation fare given to me by my wife’s brother-in-law. There was no money for lodging or food, but the Lord of the mission to whom we prayed for the salvation of the lost souls of Guinea provided in such an incredible way even what we did not ask for. Today, the Church is alive in Guinea.

I pray that the Lord will help us to be **mission** minded by making **mission** the priority of our prayer life and by **doing mission** wherever we find ourselves.

BISHOP PETER W. KOYEA
GUINEA CONAKRY AND GUINEA BISSAU NATIONAL BISHOP

Peter Koyea was saved in 1992 and ordained as a COGOP bishop on October 25, 2021. He graduated from Christian Theological Seminary in Liberia and Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary in the United States. He has been married to Lucinda for 29 years. Bishop Koyea has planted 12 churches and is national bishop for 14 more in Liberia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Senegal, and Cape Verde Islands. He testifies, "My greatest accomplishment in ministry is the planting of a COGOP in French-speaking Guinea. Even though I went there not knowing how to speak or read and write French, today, we have a strong church in Guinea, and I preach in French."

Intercessory Prayer:
The Foundation for Missions

Intercessory prayer is necessary for advancing the kingdom of God, especially for unreached people groups and regions where the gospel has yet to take root (Matthew 9:38). Throughout history, prayer movements have resulted in mission breakthroughs, demonstrating that prayer is essential for spiritual transformation and the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16–20, Acts 4:23–31).

Biblical Foundation for Intercession

The Bible reveals God's heart for the nations and the role of prayer in advancing his kingdom. Scriptures such as 1 Timothy 2:1–4 emphasize praying for all people, including leaders and nations, so that the gospel might spread. In Ezekiel 22:30, God seeks intercessors to stand in the gap for others, highlighting the role of prayer in his divine plan.

The Role of Prayer in Mission Breakthroughs

History is filled with examples of how intercession has caused significant mission breakthroughs. One of the most remarkable is the **Moravian Prayer Movement**, which began in 1727 in Herrnhut, Germany, when a small Christian community launched an around-the-clock (24/7) prayer vigil that continued unbroken for over 100 years. This dedication to prayer led the Moravians to send out more than 300 missionaries in the next 65 years—and more than 3,000 missionaries by 1930—to some of the most challenging parts of the world, including Greenland, the West Indies, and Africa.

The **Haystack Prayer Meeting** of 1806 offers another inspiring story. A group of five college students gathered under a haystack during a thunderstorm to pray for global missions. Their prayers sparked the American missionary movement, resulting in the formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. This organization sent missionaries to Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, greatly expanding the reach of the gospel.

The **Korean Revival of 1907**, often referred to as the "Great Revival," demonstrates the power of prayer in igniting national transformation. This movement began with intense prayer and repentance in Pyongyang and spread across the nation, leading to over a million conversions and establishing South Korea as a hub for global missions.

In these examples, prayer acted as the foundation for breaking spiritual barriers, empowering missionaries, and opening doors that were previously closed to the gospel.

The Need for Intercessory Prayer Today

The need for intercession remains urgent. According to the **Joshua Project,** 42% of the world's population, approximately 3.4 billion people, belong to unreached people groups with little to no access to the gospel. Over 7,000 distinct groups remain unreached, primarily within the 10/40 Window, which spans North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. This region is home to over 5 billion people, including the world's largest populations of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists.

Targeted intercession has proven transformative in these regions. Programs like **Operation World** and **Prayercast**, a global prayer movement, have equipped believers to pray strategically for specific nations, people groups, and spiritual strongholds. These efforts have led to measurable breakthroughs, such as church planting in resistant areas, the conversion of influential leaders, and the empowerment of local believers to spread the gospel.

Prayer: A Call to Action

The work of intercessory prayer is not limited to a select few; it is a call to every believer. By interceding for unreached people groups and specific geographical locations, Christians can partner with God in his mission to bring every nation, tribe, and tongue into his kingdom (Revelation 7:9). Prayer transforms not only individuals but entire regions, breaking spiritual strongholds and preparing hearts to receive the gospel.

History shows that great mission work is birthed in prayer. Today, as billions remain unreached, the Church has an opportunity to unite in intercession and witness a new wave of mission breakthroughs. Will you be among those who stand in the gap?

PASTOR JOSHUA GILLILAND
LANGEN, GERMANY

Joshua Gilliland moved to Langen, Germany, 16 years ago from Olathe, Kansas, after feeling called by the Lord to go and minster there. He and his wife, Rebecca, have been pastoring the IJG Langen church for 16 years. They serve with passion and dedication along with their four beautiful daughters. To learn more, visit @ijglangen (Instagram and Facebook). The services are bilingual and can be streamed on YouTube. https://youtube.com/@ijglangen?si=xoakynK3Gu2f6Y6w.

RECONCILING THE WORLD TO CHRIST
ON MISSION
21 Days
of Prayer
JANUARY 6–26, 2025

RECONCILING THE WORLD TO CHRIST
ON MISSION
CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

JANUARY 6–12, 2025

Week One Prayer Emphasis

Spiritual Empowerment, Growth, and Transformation

Join with our global family this week in praying for the following needs.

Pray for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's gifts in the church, and for signs and miracles to follow believers, glorifying Christ and expanding his kingdom.

- 1 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV): "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."
- Mark 16:17: "And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues."

Pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to empower the church for loving, compassionate service that reflects Christ's teachings.

- Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
- Galatians 5:22–23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

Pray for strength and protection for Christian pastors, missionaries, and leaders suffering persecution for the name of Christ, that they may endure with hope.

- Matthew 5:10: "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
- Hebrews 12:3: "Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

Pray for those who are lost and seeking purpose, that they may experience the saving power of Jesus Christ and the transformative power of the gospel.

- Luke 19:10: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."
- Acts 16:31: "They replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.'"

Pray that God's kingdom would come and for his will be done on earth as it is in heaven, bringing healing and righteousness to all nations.

- Matthew 6:10: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."
- Matthew 6:33: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

The Church of God of Prophecy extends ministry to more than 130 nations of the world, carrying the light of Jesus to dark places. Join in prayer this week for our ministry in the following nations:

AFRICA
Angola
Benin
Botswana
Burundi
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Central Africa Republic
Chad
Congo (Brazzaville)
Cote d'Ivoire
Democratic Republic of Congo
Equatorial Guinea
Eswatini
Ethiopia
Gabon
The Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Malawi
Mali
Mozambique
Namibia
Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
Senegal
Sierra Leone
South Africa (East)
South Africa (West)
South Sudan
Tanzania
Togo
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

ASIA, AUSTRALIA, AND OCEANIA
Australia
Fiji Islands
Hawaii
India
Indonesia
Kiribati
Korea
Malaysia
Myanmar
Nauru
Nepal
New Zealand
Pakistan
Philippines
Rabi Island
Samoan Islands
Singapore
Sri Lanka
Tuvalu

WIDER EUROPE AND MIDDLE EAST
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Belgium
Bulgaria
Czech Republic
Cyprus
Egypt
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Israel
Italy
The Netherlands
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russia
Slovak Republic
Spain
Ukraine
United Kingdom

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Global Prayer Initiative
HousesOfPrayer.global

RECONCILING THE WORLD TO CHRIST
ON MISSION
CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

JANUARY 13–19, 2025

Week Two Prayer Emphasis

Peace, Healing, and Provision

Join with our global family this week in praying for the following needs.

Pray for peace in places where there is war and conflict, that peace, justice, and reconciliation to Jesus Christ will replace violence and suffering.

- Matthew 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."
- Psalm 46:9: "He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire."

Pray for divine healing and comfort for those who are suffering physically, emotionally, and spiritually, that they may find peace and restoration in Jesus.

- Psalm 41:3: "The Lord sustains them on their sickbed and restores them from their bed of illness."
- Psalm 147:3: "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."

Pray for an end to human trafficking, for freedom for those enslaved, and for justice and healing for survivors.

- Luke 4:18: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free."
- Psalm 82:4: "Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

Pray for provision for those in need—especially for food, shelter, and essential resources—that communities may thrive and experience the love and care found through Christ.

- Philippians 4:19: "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."
- Luke 1:53: "He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty."

Pray for world leaders and those in government, that they may act with wisdom, integrity, and compassion.

- 1 Timothy 2:2: "Pray for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."
- Proverbs 21:1: "In the Lord's hand the king's heart is a stream of water that he channels toward all who please him."

The Church of God of Prophecy extends ministry to more than 130 nations of the world, carrying the light of Jesus to dark places. Join in prayer this week for our ministry in the following nations:

CARIBBEAN AND ATLANTIC OCEAN ISLANDS
Anguilla
Antigua
Aruba
Bahamas
Barbados
Barbuda
Bermuda
Bonaire
British Virgin Islands
Cayman Islands
Curaçao
Dominica
French Guiana
Grenada
The Grenadines
Guadeloupe
Guyana
Haiti
Jamaica
Leeward Islands
Montserrat
Nevis
Paragon Region
St. Kitts
St. Lucia
St. Maarten
St. Martin
St. Vincent
Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago
Turks and Caicos Islands
U.S. Virgin Islands
Windward Islands

NORTH AMERICA
Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Canada (East)
Canada (West)
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Florida
Georgia
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Navajo Nation
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
Washington, D.C.
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

WEEK TWO VIDEO
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HOUSES of PRAYER
Global Prayer Initiative
HousesOfPrayer.global

JANUARY 20–26, 2025

Week Three Prayer Emphasis

Ministry, Service, and Evangelism

Join with our global family this week in praying for the following needs.

Pray for more laborers—those who will serve locally and globally—to bring hope and light to communities everywhere, fulfilling Jesus' call to love and serve all people.

- Matthew 9:37–38: "Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"
- Matthew 28:19: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Pray for open doors for ministry in every city, community, and around the world, so that all who seek hope and purpose can find it in Jesus Christ.

- Colossians 4:3: "And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains."
- Matthew 7:7: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

Pray for church planting and evangelism efforts, asking God to guide new ministries that can reach those who may not otherwise hear about the love of Jesus.

- Mark 16:15: "He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'"
- Romans 10:15: "And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"

Pray for innovative new models for sending and ministry that will help reach those without Christ who are distant from traditional ministry settings.

- Isaiah 43:19: "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."
- Romans 10:14: "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

Pray for unity across all lines of Christian ministry so that churches and ministries may work together to fulfill the Great Commission.

- John 17:23: "I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."
- 1 Corinthians 1:10: "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought."

The Church of God of Prophecy extends ministry to more than 130 nations of the world, carrying the light of Jesus to dark places. Join in prayer this week for our ministry in the following nations:

CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO, AND SPANISH SPEAKING CARIBBEAN
Belize
Costa Rica
Cuba
Dominican Republic
El Salvador
Guatemala
Honduras
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
Puerto Rico

SOUTH AMERICA
Argentina
Bolivia
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Ecuador
Paraguay
Peru
Uruguay
Venezuela

WEEK THREE VIDEO
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The Life-Altering Choice *of Prayer*

"So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak" (Genesis 32:24 NIV).

This entire narrative of Jacob, found in Genesis 32, exposes the struggles of a younger man coming to terms with a regretful past as he prepares to move into an ordained and purposeful present and future.

Moving through this narrative, it becomes easy to place blame on Jacob for where he finds himself. In reflecting on his past, one recognizes that he literally came out of the womb fighting—wrestling with his brother for first position and the advancement it carried. He spent his early life "wrestling with order" and "deceiving to get what he believed he deserved." He cheated his brother, deceived his father, and warred with his father-in-law. His story is filled with overwhelming challenges, most of which are seeded in his own spirit.

In this specific lead passage, we find Jacob wrestling, perhaps mostly with himself. Seemingly, God deals with him to recognize the trauma of his past, moving him to his present and future in healing, enabling him to move into God's divine will and purpose.

God would never intend for Jacob, the seed of Abraham and Isaac, to be lost in bitterness, disappointment, and anger as a shepherd on the back hills. We know through history that God had separated Abraham's line for greatness. So, when in prayer God speaks in Genesis 31:3, his directive is for Jacob to return home with the promise that "I will be with you."

Prayer opens us to recognize the design God has for our lives. He does not design a future of fear, bitterness, unforgiveness, and contention for us. He has designed each of us for purpose and greatness.

As Jacob returns home, he prepares to face his brother whom he had cheated and deceived. He separates himself from his family. He sends messengers ahead—an attempt to appease the anger of his brother, who he believes is coming to kill him—and he seeks the Lord.

His prayer is sincerely honest:

> Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, Lord, you who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,' I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two camps. Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'" (Genesis 32:9–12)

Jacob reminds God of his own dependance upon God himself and his promises. It is almost like Jacob is saying, "You promised prosperity and a magnitude of descendants, but it doesn't even seem I will survive the day."

Verse 24 produces the response to his prayer; he is confronted with *another*. This *another*, it has been suggested, was possibly a pre-incarnate visitation of Christ, a visitation that provided an opportunity for Jacob to make right what had been wrong so he could move forward into his purposed destiny.

In this encounter of prayer, we note at least three significant effects:

- Jacob held on; he prevailed for his blessing. Scripture records his previous response to trouble was to run away. This time, he did not run. This time, he did not blame anyone else for his misfortune. This time, he determined to prevail in prayer until he received the blessing of God that had been promised to him.

- He received a new name and, with it, a new definition of his new nature. His name had been Jacob, defined in the part as supplanter, scrapper, wrestler, underminer, usurper, manipulator, etc. Now, he was to be named Israel, specified as a prince of God. Now, he was to take his place as part of the promise of God in the line of the coming Messiah. No longer would he attempt to manipulate the opportunities for himself; his course and nature were redefined.

- Thirdly, Jacob was touched to never again be the same. For the rest of his life, he would be identified as one who had been so specifically

> touched by God that he walked with a limp—a mark, if you will—that proclaimed something dramatic and life-altering had taken place.

We know the conclusion of the narrative. As he confronts Esau, there was healing with his brother. As he sees Isaac, there is healing with his father. As he moves forward, there is healing within Jacob to become Israel. God prepared the way for restoration and reconciliation. From that day forward, Jacob would never be the same man he had been before.

One more observation: Over the rest of Jacob's life, people might see in a distance someone approaching. Attempting to discern the identity of the approaching person, they would recognize that mark of God on Jacob—the limp that identified him and the lasting touch of God in response to prayer.

Perhaps people who did not understand the touch would have wondered why God would *wound* the one who had been destined for greatness. Some might determine this wounding to be a curse. Those who might focus on the wrong perspective might look for bitterness or anger. However, the limp became the manifestation of the touch of God. Perhaps Jacob's limp provides a different perspective and sensitivity for those who have been forever changed by prayer and the hand of God.

In my own life, there have been times of deep wounding from my heavenly Father. These *woundings* opened and provided new and wonderous ministries that perhaps would never have been entrusted to me without the experience of being touched by God in prayer.

Paul also experienced a life-altering encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus. He breaks down this understanding of life-altering prayer encounters that reconcile us from our past to purpose in our present and future in this way:

> Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward [or focused on] what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12–14)

The prophet Jeremiah declared God's promise clearly: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jeremiah 29:11).

May our God so separate us for life-altering prayer encounters with him. May he help us to understand that his purpose is greater. May he enable us to hold on until we receive the promised blessing, to receive a new name and nature from him, and to be touched in a fresh and new experience to never again be the same. And may our God use us all with such purpose!

CATHY PAYNE, DMIN
GLOBAL MISSIONS COORDINATOR

Dr. Cathy Payne coordinates Global Missions Ministries for the Church of God of Prophecy internationally and has ministered in more than 100 nations over the years. Cathy obtained a Master of Divinity from Pentecostal Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. She is currently working toward a Doctor of Philosophy degree with Bangor University in South Wales, UK. Cathy has one son and five grandchildren.

Prayer: Essential for Spiritual Transformation

Prayer is the forerunner for spiritual transformation. E. M. Bounds said, “Throughout history those that have been instruments for God’s will on earth have been people of prayer.” The early church’s opposers assigned a label to the early Christians that was, in reality, a brilliant endorsement. It is recorded in Acts 17:6, “These who have turned the world upside down. . . .” We reference in Acts 6:4 the forerunner of these results: “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” The early church discerned the sense of urgency. They were in a period of significant change, and they adapted their priorities to seize the moment of opportunity.

As the year 2024 comes to completion, we must recognize and adapt to the opportunities created by this moment just as the early church did. The German noun *zeitgeist* is defined by Merriam-Webster as “the general intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of an era.” We are observing major shifts in global events, governments, demographics, social issues, and in the technological landscape. We must wake up and seize this moment. But our effectiveness depends on how disciplined we are in living our highest priorities: prevailing prayer and the Word of God.

In the Old Testament, God’s movement to bring Israel from Egyptian bondage had its inception in prayer. Exodus 2:23–25 records that God heard the cry of his people. He heard their groaning and remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In 1 Samuel 1:11, barren Hannah prayed greatly for a son. Because of her travail, God gave to Israel a person of the stature of Samuel. When we get disturbed enough over barrenness, and we prevail in prayer to God, he will bring deliverance.

John Wesley said, “God’s purposes and plans are conditioned on prayer. ‘If my people.’ His will and His glory are wrapped up in prayer. The days of God’s splendor have always been great days of prayer. God’s great movements in this world have

been conditioned on, continued by, and fashioned by prayer." Paraphrasing a statement by E. M. Bounds, he reminds us that God works through the prayers of his people, and when we fail in prayer, decline and deadness follow. Unless the Spirit of God is directing each step, we will miss the mark every time. Oswald Chambers wrote, "The man who refuses to pray nourishes a blind life within his own brain and he will find no way out that road."

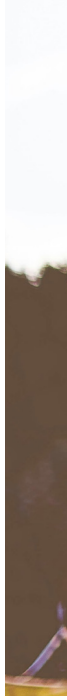
Prayer was one of the 20 topics Jesus taught in his Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew, chapters five through seven. One day the disciples were listening to him pray. When Jesus finished, one of them came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). As they listened to him, it stirred up something in them. They realized they did not know how to pray. Jesus responded by pointing to the prayer he taught in his Sermon on the Mount. He gave us very specific instructions concerning this topic to emphasize the weight of the matter. As we take a closer look at his prayer, we see six distinct sections:

- **Praise and honor to God** – This prayer recognizes God's rightful place as the Father and praises him for who he is and for all he has done. Matthew 6:9.
- **Setting our priorities** – His kingdom has priority. We are asking for his will to be performed in us as we live here on the earth. Our highest priority is to seek his kingdom and his righteousness. Everything else will fall into place. Matthew 6:10; Matthew 6:33.
- **Provision** – Jesus expounds on this in Matthew 6:25–34 (NKJV):

  "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

  "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?

  "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble."
- **Forgiveness**
  - We are to confess our sins, repent, and ask God for forgiveness.
  - Then we are to extend forgiveness to others, replacing resentment with forgiveness. Mark 11:25–26.
- **Temptation and the deliverance from evil** – These words deal with two levels of sin:
  - The evil that resulted from pride entering Lucifer's heart; this caused him to rise up and try to usurp God's authority.
  - The temptations that come as Satan paints illusions to satisfy; James said that every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed (James 1:14). Jesus taught us to pray to be free from lust so that we are not drawn away and tempted by the schemes of Satan.



- 1 John 2:15–16 describes the categories of sin:
  - Lust of the flesh is the temptation to feel physical pleasure from a sinful activity.
  - Lust of the eyes refers to things that appeal to the ego for self-gratification and self-promotion.
  - Pride of life is anything that exalts us above our station and offers illusions of qualities where we boast in arrogance and worldly wisdom.

- **Acknowledging God's kingdom –** We are acknowledging that it is God's kingdom, not a human kingdom. When we pray this prayer, we are committing to God that we want his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven—without resistance. How do we treat each other when the kingdom of God is in our midst without resistance? With love, compassion, generosity, and mercy. When Christ comes to rule on the earth for the millennial reign, the kingdom of God will be the culture, the rule of law, and the decision for all things. The whole structure will be under his rule and reign. Followers of Christ—believers who have entered the kingdom of God through Jesus Christ—are called to live the values of God's kingdom daily. This is only possible by obeying Romans 12:2: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. . . ."

A common definition for *transformation* is "a dramatic change." The most powerful transformation we can experience is to align our hearts with God's heart. He rules the world. All power and honor belong to him. If we keep a fervent prayer life, we will keep a fervent love for him. Our desire is to give him our best because we love him. Author Scotty Smith said, "Today, we'll either fix our eyes adoringly on Jesus, selfishly on ourselves, or critically on others. Let's choose wisely."

JANICE MILLER
GALLATIN, TENNESSEE

Janice Miller, MBA, loves studying and teaching the Word of God. She has published two books, *While Men Sleep* (2016) and *Critical Thinkers* (2018), and has recently begun screenwriting. Married since 1975, she and her husband, Roy, live in Gallatin, Tennessee, where both are active in ministry at the Gallatin COGOP.

HERITAGE MINISTRIES ASSOCIATION

HMA assists in maintaining and improving the historical properties of the Church of God of Prophecy. These properties include Fields of the Wood, First Assembly House, Shearer Schoolhouse Site, and the Holy Ghost Marker Site.

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS FOR 2025 HAVE CHANGED.

Please note the levels below and corresponding amounts for 2025. Due to rising costs, we have needed to make these necessary adjustments to the memberships. Each member will receive a membership card and 20% discount on purchases at FOW Gift Shop & White Wing Bookstore in Cleveland, TN.

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Bishop Todd D. Bagley
Heritage Ministries Coordinator and
Finance & Admin. Executive Assistant

Laura George
Heritage Ministries
Administrative Assistant

Individuals can also give additional donations at any time at **fowrenew.org**.

PRAYER AT THE BOTTOM OF THE MOUNTAIN

So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word. . . .

And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!" And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there. . . .

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" (I Kings 18:20–21, 36–40; 19:1–4 NKJV)

A few years ago, Chuck Swindoll wrote a devotional entitled "Low Tides." In that devotional, he makes a powerful observation about a man or woman of God. He writes, "Low tide . . . how painful yet how essential. Without it, we cannot have high tide. Without it, there would be no need for Elishas to minister to victoryless Elijahs . . . no need for visionaries to fall in dependence on their faces before God . . . no need for the valiant to be reminded of their Source of strength."[1]

Living in Oregon near the coast, people are cautioned about the deceptive movements and the allure of dangerous tides. Therefore, we are taught by oceanographers that a person must never turn their back on the changing tides. So it is with prayer; regardless of how the tide is moving in your life, the daily discipline of alertness to prayer is essential.

The story of Elijah on top of Mount Carmel reminds me of the deception and danger of victorious events and successful seasons in our lives. One day the great prophet is celebrating the calling of fire and then rain out of heaven, triumphing, and leading in the killing of the false prophets of Baal. But the next day, Elijah is running alone into the wilderness and into a cave to hide from one woman who has threatened to kill him. It is an emotional and spiritual contrast that cannot be ignored by those serving and ministering for the Lord. Every great Christian, especially missionaries and pastors, can identify with this prophet of Israel. We have experienced victories and mighty accomplishments, only to end up the next day, or perhaps the next week or month, running into a wilderness, a cave, or a depression that makes us feel like we just want to die (and hopefully just go to heaven). And the sad reality must be confessed—no servant of God is immune from these powerful feelings of isolation and disappointment. To paraphrase Chuck Swindoll, *"The tide is changing with its highs and its lows."* Therefore, the constancy of prayer is a biblical reality; it is naturally consistent with reality, and it is a life-fact that I have experienced several times in my own life and ministry.

Prayer by God's Servant on the Mountain and in the Valley

> "Listen to my prayer, O God. Do not ignore my cry for help! Please listen and answer me, for I am overwhelmed by my troubles. My enemies shout at me, making loud and wicked threats. They bring trouble on me and angrily hunt me down. My heart pounds in my chest. The terror of death assaults me. Fear and trembling overwhelm me, and I can't stop shaking. Oh, that I had wings like a dove; then I would fly away and rest! . . .
>
> It is not an enemy who taunts me—I could bear that. It is not my foes who so arrogantly insult me—I could have hidden from them. Instead, it is you—my equal, my companion and close friend. What good fellowship we once enjoyed as we walked together to the house of God. . . .
>
> But I will call on God, and the LORD will rescue me. Morning, noon, and night I cry out in my distress, and the LORD hears my voice. He ransoms me and keeps me safe from the battle waged against me, though many still oppose me." (Psalm 55:1–6, 12–14, 16–18, NLT)

Psalm 55 was written by David during the rebellion of his son Absalom. Ahithophel, David's best friend after Jonathan's tragic death, turned against him and gave counsel to Absalom to help him chase the shepherd-king off his throne. This betrayal forced David to flee

from Jerusalem. It was a horrible time for God's servant, and "betrayal" is the theme of Psalm 55.[2] It concludes with David prayerfully holding on strong to his reliance on God. This intimate passage reminds us how often men and women of God have had to face those deceptive times of being *on the top of the mountain*, only to find themselves the next day, week, or month running in fear and struggling *at the bottom of the mountain*. This results in us feeling like we are fleeing in a wilderness, hiding in a cave, or living a demoralized existence due to the betrayal or unsupportive actions of so-called friends. Like so many who have gone before us, our mission for the Lord is preserved as we learn to pray and trust in the Lord's hand.

Here is a list of biblical servants who struggled with their mission. They too faced similar "changing tides" in their ministry for God:

- Abraham was victorious on top of Mt. Moriah in his obedience to God concerning Isaac. But this event was soon followed by the sudden death of his wife Sarah, the mother of Isaac.
- Moses was victorious on top of Mt. Sinai when God gave him the Ten Commandments; then he came down to the valley to find God's people in idolatry, rebellion, and depravity.
- Joshua was victorious in defeating all the northern cities even to Mt. Hebron, but he later witnessed his armies disobeying and failing to drive out the Philistines and the Canaanites.
- David conquered the mountain called Zion in Hebron, but soon afterwards, he was tempted and committed adultery and murder, and he neglected to discipline his children.
- Jesus was transfigured on Mt. Tabor as the victorious Messiah, with Moses and Elijah appearing with him, only to descend to the bottom of the mountain to face rejection by unbelieving disciples and other religious leaders who would not accept that he was sent by God.

Prayer Helps us find Courage and Strength at the Bottom of the Mountain

> "What joy for those whose strength comes from the LORD, who have set their minds on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. When they walk through the Valley of Weeping; it will become a place of refreshing springs. The autumn rains will clothe it with blessings. They will continue to grow stronger, and each of them will appear before God in Jerusalem. O LORD, God of Heaven's Armies, hear my prayer. Listen, O God of Jacob." (Psalm 84:5–8)

Tom Allred shares the following story from an unknown author:

> A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared; he sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it

had gotten as far as it could, and it could go no farther. Then the man decided to help the butterfly, so he took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its shortened life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It was never able to fly.

What the man in his kindness and haste did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If God allowed us to go through our life without any obstacles it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. And we could never fly.[3]

Yes, the struggle to pray is difficult at times, but it is exactly what gives us strength to emerge from situations—our cocoons—that seems like death.

There are five points to learn from this story and from the psalmist's song in chapter 84, which was written for the people of God to sing in the temple:

1. the **principle of prayer**, which was the psalmist's primary solution in times of struggle
2. the **principle of patience** when things happen unexpectantly or slower than we want
3. the **principle of trust** in God's ways even when they seem wrong or unjust to us
4. the **principle of obstacles**, which have a function in our lives and in the lives of those we love
5. the **principle of focus** on eternal purposes and God's eventual goal for our lives

My family and I live in Oregon and have grown to love this place very much. From the coastal cliffs and beaches to the lush fertile fields in the valleys, to the majestic green of pine-covered mountains, and even to the wide-open high plains and deserts of the eastern side of the state—we love it all! Now, many writers have mentioned over the years a road sign coming north out of California into our state. It simply reads, "You are now leaving California, please resume normal behavior." I was amused when I first read that statement because both my daughters were born in California. Having lived there several years, I confess there are many strange and different challenges to living in such a large and diverse state. Even so, I thought of that sign and found it more applicable for our journey to heaven. We cannot always live at the top of a mountain; therefore, we need to prepare ourselves to live in the realm of challenges, troubles, stress, disappointments, heartbreaks, unexpected enemies, betrayals, and even failures. But I think it is time to erect a new sign as we leave our houses: **"You are now leaving normal; prepare for the challenges of reaching heaven."** God is hearing your prayers in every season of your life. Ups and downs, mountains and valleys—these are all part of our journey until we reach our final home!

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1 Chuck Swindoll, "Low Tides," Insight for Living, December 11, 2018, from Day by Day with Charles Swindoll (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 2000), https://www.insight.org/resources/daily-devotional/individual/low-tides.

2 Joseph Hall, *2000 Hours with the Psalms*, vol. 1, (London, England: Oxford Press, 1662), 198.

3 Tom Allred, "Strength from Adversity," Motivating Moments LLC (1997–2024), accessed August 15, 2020, https://motivateus.com/stories/adverse.htm#:~:text=Strength%20from%20Adversity.%20A%20man%20found%20a%20cocoon,it%20could%20and%20it%20could%20go%20no%20farther.

BISHOP WALLACE PRATT, DMIN
IDAHO, OREGON, UTAH, AND NAVAJO NATION REGIONAL BISHOP

Dr. Wallace Pratt is the regional overseer for the Church of God of Prophecy in the COGOP IOU and Navajo Nation region. He was born into a Church of God of Prophecy family and has been a Christian and a member of the Church from an early age. He serves the Lord and the Church as an administrator, teacher, evangelist, and a pastor to the pastors in his region. He is married to Judy Pratt and has two daughters and five grandchildren.

A Lesson on Prayer from *Jehoshaphat*

Several years ago, early in my seminary studies, I attended a wonderfully rich class at our Texas campground. Like all my seminary classes, it was a spiritual smorgasbord, and I was going home feeling well fed. A friend was traveling with me, and we had not gotten far down the road when I received a call that "rocked my world." My heart was broken by the news I received, and I did not know what to do. My friend immediately opened her Bible to 2 Chronicles 20 and began to read about the time Jehoshaphat was surrounded by a vast enemy army. Although he was alarmed, Jehoshaphat did not panic. He "set himself" to seek the Lord, and he called all Judah for a fast (v. 3). When the people had come together, Jehoshaphat stood up and prayed,

> O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? Are You not our

> God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, "If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and **You will hear and save**." And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them—here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but **our eyes are upon You**." (2 Chronicles 20:6–12 NKJV, emphasis added)

This passage spoke to the very depth of my heart, and I read it many times over the next several months as my family walked through this difficult period. As I meditated and prayed these words for my family, I learned some important lessons from Jehoshaphat:

1. When crisis comes, regardless of the fear or pain, our first and best response should be to run to God as Jehoshaphat did.
2. There is power when we pray as a community. Jehoshaphat called for a national fast, and the people of Judah gathered to pray with him. While sometimes we may feel like we walk alone, God is ALWAYS with us. And while we may not be able to share all our needs with our faith community, we can ask them to join with us in prayer. Some may even fast with us.
3. God is sovereign, and he is relational. In Jehoshaphat's prayer, he began by acknowledging the sovereignty and power of God. This is our starting point. But it is also important to remember relationship. Jehoshaphat made that relational connection, and his story reminds us that this God is the "God of **our** fathers."
4. His prayer was shaped by some rhetorical questions: "Are you not the God who. . . ?" Without a doubt, God knows who he is! However, sometimes we have to remind ourselves of who God is. Jehoshaphat may have used his questions to let God know that he (Jehoshaphat) knew who God was, and he was relying on the character and faithfulness of God to act justly on behalf of his (God's) people. When we are going through hard times, we need to remind ourselves of who our God is and what he has done. He is the same God—the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jehoshaphat,

and everyone in between! He is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

5. Along with the above, Jehoshaphat reminded God of his promises. His prayer echoed the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple (2 Chronicles 6). When we remember God's promises, we can use them to help shape our prayers and to bolster our faith in him as we await his response.

6. Jehoshaphat was humble but bold and to-the-point in his request. He recognized that he was powerless against this enemy, so he asked God to intervene—to "execute judgment" (ESV)—since there was nothing he and the people could do. He followed this with the touching and powerful declaration, "**But our eyes are upon You**" (v. 12). When we seek God in prayer and humbly declare our dependance upon him, then we need to fix our focus on him as we wait on his response. If you focus on your problem, you will soon be overwhelmed, but if you fix your eyes on God and remember WHO he IS, your faith will flourish as you wait in expectation.

The lessons from Jehoshaphat do not end with his prayer. If you read on, the Spirit came upon a prophet (Jahaziel), who stood and said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for **the battle is not yours, but God's**'" (v. 14). I don't know about you, but I need this reminder often. The battle belongs to God! We need to come to him, declare our dependence upon him, and then trust him to do what he says he will do.

Jahaziel, speaking on God's behalf, also declared, "You will **not** need to fight in this battle. **Position yourselves, stand still** and **see** the salvation of the Lord who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!" (v. 17). Judah was to face the enemy. They were to GO into the battle (v. 16), take their position, stand (not run), and then SEE. The Lord was with them—and he is with us; there is no need to fear.

We must not overlook Jehoshaphat's response. He (and all the people) bowed before God and worshipped him (vv. 18–19). The enemy was still "out there," but God had given them "a word." Without "seeing the evidence," the people sang and praised God, and God was true to his word. He took down the enemy. He did it for Jehoshaphat, and he did it for me. During my time of trial, over and over again, I could hear the Spirit say to me, "Take your position, stand still, and see. I will fight for you." And he did.

KATHERINE OSBORN, DMIN
COPY EDITOR

Katherine currently serves as copy editor for Communications at the International Offices. Born in South Dakota, Katherine graduated from Tomlinson College in Tennessee and obtained a bachelor's degree in secondary education from Western Oregon State College. She later earned a Master of Arts in Religion from Gordon-Conwell, and in 2022, she completed the doctoral program with Western Theological Seminary. Katherine and her husband, Glen, have two sons, a beautiful daughter-in-love, and two precious granddaughters, Xoi and Alytheia.

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