

"And Enoch walked with God . . ." (Gen.5:22).

"And Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Gen.6:9).

"I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen.17:1).

# What Do You Mean, “Walk with God”?

If you desire to WALK WITH GOD in your life, then how should you go about it? What is the Key to walking with God? What do you mean, “Walk with God?”

**William F. Dankenbring**

It has been said that in the hands of men, "Power corrupts; and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Sadly, this ancient axiom is all too true. Why is this so? The prophet Jeremiah gave us a clear insight into the answer: “The heart is deceitful above all things,” he wrote, “and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer.17:9).

The apostle Paul also showed a prime reason why there is so little spiritual, godly POWER on earth today. He wrote, “Because the carnal mind is ENMITY AGAINST GOD: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom.8:7).

Mankind's wicked heart and carnal mind -- these two things separate us from contact with God, and therefore also separate mankind from the ability to USE the awesome power of God for healing, for miracles, for incredible answers to fervent prayer!

Yet, despite this fundamental reality, Jesus Christ prophesied, when instructing His disciples, “Verily, verily (or, most assuredly), I say unto you, He that BELIEVETH ON ME, the works that I do (including performing miracles, and great healings!) SHALL HE DO ALSO; and GREATER WORKS THAN THESE shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask IN MY NAME (there is awesome POWER in the name of Jesus Christ, when used rightly), that will I DO, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:12-13).

## *The Faith of the Early Church*

Jesus said, “If ye shall ask ANYTHING in my name, I will DO IT!” (verse 14).

In the tumultuous days of the early Church, the power of God was evident in the lives of the apostles. “And by the hands of the apostles were many SIGNS AND WONDERS WROUGHT among the people . . . Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the SHADOW OF PETER passing by might overshadow some of them.

“There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: AND THEY WERE HEALED EVERY ONE” (Acts 5:12-16).

There was awesome spiritual POWER present in the early Church of God! But why has the Church lost that power? What happened to it after the days of the apostles? Why is it missing today?

There is a CAUSE for every EFFECT!

Of the early apostles, we read, “And with GREAT POWER gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and GREAT GRACE was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).

But today the Church of God is powerless – insipid, lacking in spiritual POWER! Why is this? What is the CAUSE?

### ***Lack of Faith in the End-Time Remnant Church***

Yeshua the Messiah said to the disciples, after giving them a lesson in importuning, persistent and un-ending prayer (Luke 18:1-7), “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). Seemingly, there will be very little! Why is that?

One reason the end-time churches of God are lacking in FAITH and the POWER of God is revealed in Revelation, chapter 3, where God describes the “end-time” Church of God, the Church which would exist just prior to the Second Coming of Christ, and which would include the VAST, OVERWHELMING MAJORITY of Christians in the “last days.”

Notice what Jesus said:

“And unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I KNOW THY WORKS, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then BECAUSE THOU ART LUKEWARM, and neither cold nor hot, I WILL SPUE THEE OUT OF MY MOUTH” (Rev.3:14-16).

Notice! How can a Church which is predominantly LUKEWARM expect to exert

or manifest any spiritual POWER? How can a Church which is in dire danger of being EJECTED like spit from the mouth of Christ possess any spiritual POWER WITH GOD? Impossible!

How can a Church which rejects new truth, and compromises and waters down old truth, and begins to consort and fornicate spiritually with the WORLD, by embracing the world's "solutions" to problems, including "life insurance" instead of FAITH IN GOD, and all the procedures of medical science, so-called, instead of the HEALING POWER OF ALMIGHTY GOD – HOW CAN SUCH A WEAK, INSIPID, LUKEWARM, TEPID, TASTELESS CHURCH PERFORM MIRACLES, AND RECEIVE THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD?

Rather, such a Church, and its membership, are polluted and besmirched with sin, lawlessness, and perversion of truth and blighted with spiritual and physical disease. Rather than drawing near to God in all humility and fear, and receiving of His all-powerful Holy Spirit, they are CONTAMINATED WITH SIN. Instead of being FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT (Eph.5:18), they are GRIEVING the Spirit of God (Eph.4:30). Rather than putting "on" Jesus Christ, as a garment, they are putting Him off, shoving Him away from their lives (Rom.13:14). Instead of the Spirit of God bubbling up in their hearts, like a fountain of fresh water, they are drying up spiritually, like a parched, seared, scorched desert. Rather than STIRRING UP the flame of God's Spirit (II Tim.1:6-7), they are in the process of QUENCHING the Spirit of God (I Thess.5:19).

Instead of burning brightly with the oil of God's Spirit, they are sputtering and flickering and in danger of their light going OUT (Matt.25:8).

Jesus says of such compromise artists, who are NOT filled with the ZEAL of the Lord of Hosts (Psa.69:9), like Jesus Christ Himself, "Because THOU SAYEST (they have a big mouth, and are proud spiritually), 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of NOTHING' (they are spiritually self-sufficient in their own eyes); and KNOWEST NOT that thou art WRETCHED, and MISERABLE, and POOR, and BLIND, and NAKED" (Rev.3:17).

Jesus says to the end-time remnants of His church, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: BE ZEALOUS THEREFORE, and REPENT!" (Rev.3:19).

Could He be talking to YOU? Will YOU draw near to God, and forsake every false way, every false doctrine, and every evil path?

Will YOU turn to God with renewed ZEAL, literally "on fire" for God and His Truth, unwilling to compromise with it in even the slightest iota of a degree?

The prayers of thousands in the Church of God, today, do not have that spiritual power and impact that they should. They have become weak, insipid, watered down, casual, lukewarm, self-righteous, and are not heard by God the Father.

### *Walking with God*

What does Jesus Christ say, first, to these end-time Christians who have lost their first love, their earnest zeal, and much spiritual truth?

He tells them to BE ZEALOUS, and to REPENT! These two prerequisites are the key elements that we all need in order to recapture the POWER of God's Holy Spirit which was poured out upon the New Testament Church of God, and the apostles of olden times!

To have our prayers answered, WITH POWER, with dynamic and direct intervention of Almighty God, we must *rekindle* the Spirit of God and become renewed in WHITE-HOT SIZZLING ZEAL AND SPIRITUAL ENERGY of God!

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith, “Therefore I remind you to STIR UP THE GIFT OF GOD which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of POWER and of LOVE and of a SOUND MIND” (II Timothy 1:6-7, NKJV).

The prophet Joel wrote, “Now, therefore, says the LORD, Turn to Me with *all your heart*, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. So REND YOUR HEART, and not your garments; RETURN TO THE LORD YOUR GOD, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness” (Joel 2:12-13).

### *Earnest Prayer*

Notice! The apostle James wrote, “The effectual FERVENT prayer of a righteous man availeth MUCH” (Jas.5:16). It has a “POWERFUL EFFECT,” according to the Good News Bible. The Living Bible says, “The EARNEST prayer of a righteous man has GREAT POWER AND WONDERFUL RESULTS.”

The Phillips Translation says, “TREMENDOUS POWER IS MADE AVAILABLE through a good man’s earnest prayer.”

James Moffatt translated, “The prayers of the righteous have a POWERFUL EFFECT.” Says the Amplified Bible, “The earnest (heart-felt, continued) prayer of a righteous man MAKES TREMENDOUS POWER AVAILABLE – DYNAMIC IN ITS WORKING.”

One reason there is such a lack of powerfully answered prayers, today, is the tremendous lack of real spiritual ZEAL! That is why God commands us, through the apostle Paul, “That is why I would remind you to STIR UP – REKINDLE THE EMBERS, FAN THE FLAME AND KEEP BURNING – the (gracious) gift of God, (the inner fire) that is in you” (II Tim.1:6, Amplified Bible).

Notice the example of fervent zeal of Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron. When Phinehas saw an Israelite leader take a Moabitish woman into his tent, a woman who worshipped Baal-peor, thus sinning against the Lord, he went into the tent after them and thrust them both through with the sword. When he did that, God stopped the plague which had been smiting Israel (Numbers 25:6-9).

When Phinehas did this, God spoke to Moses, saying, “Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was ZEALOUS FOR MY SAKE among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace; and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; BECAUSE HE WAS ZEALOUS FOR HIS GOD, and made an atonement for the children of Israel” (verses 11-13).

In the original Hebrew, the phrase in verse 11 literally says that Phinehas was “ZEALOUS WITH MY ZEAL.” That is, he had the very zeal of God!

If we desire to be pleasing in God’s sight, and to serve Him, and to have our prayers answered mightily, and POWERFULLY, then we, too, must put on – as a cloak or garment – the very ZEAL OF ALMIGHTY GOD! We need to BURN with white-hot fervor for God and sizzle with fervor for His divine Truth!

Do you have this kind of ZEAL? Are you zealous for the TRUTH of God?

To have our prayers answered, with powerful divine intervention, and amazing results, we must be righteous in God's sight that is, we must be walking in His commandments and laws and we must also be filled with divine ZEAL. This dynamic zeal is a product of the Spirit of God within us, energizing us, and giving us POWER! To have more of God’s Spirit within us, we must spend much time with Him in prayer, and Bible study.

Jesus Himself sometimes spent all night in prayer to God (Luke 6:12). His prayers were fervent, and full of energy and zeal (Luke 22:44). How earnest are your prayers?

The simple answer is – they are not close to God. And why aren’t they close to God? Because they do not OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS!

### ***The KEY of Obedience***

Many people are not ZEALOUS to obey God’s commandments. Many are disobeying God's commands, and don’t even realize it. Isaiah the prophet thundered: “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But YOUR INIQUITIES have *separated you from your God*; and your SINS have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Is there unrepented of “SIN” in your life? Sin creates a blockage in the pipeline

that connects us to God. It stops the flow of God's Spirit to us. It jams us up spiritually, so that we are useless and powerless.

God declares, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his PRAYER shall be ABOMINATION" (Prov.28:9). Those who forsake the laws of God, and turn away from faith in God, and pervert the truth of God, even their prayers are utter abomination and filth in the sight of God.

Jesus Christ declared in powerful words, "Christ Himself declared on this matter, to a young nobleman, "If you want to enter into life, *keep the commandments*" (Matt.19:17). He went on to show which "Law" of commandments He was talking about – the Ten Commandments and the Torah – the Law of God (verses 18-21).

Christ also declared, plainly, in the Sermon on the Mount, "Do not think that I have come to do away with or undo the Law or the Prophets . . . . For truly I tell you, until the sky and earth pass away and perish, not one smallest letter nor one little hook [identifying certain Hebrew letters] will pass from the Law until all things . . . are accomplished" (Matt.5:17-18).

One cannot truly have faith God will answer prayers if he is living in disobedience to the laws of God! The apostle John wrote plainly: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, **BECAUSE WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS**, and do those things that are *pleasing* in his sight" (I John 3:22).

"Sin," by definition, is disobedience to God's Law. The apostle John wrote also, "Whoever commits sin commits lawlessness, and **SIN IS LAWLESSNESS**" (I John 3:4).

It is time we took a new look at what God said in Isaiah. Read it again: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear deaf, that it cannot hear: But YOUR INIQUITIES have separated between you and your God, and YOUR SINS have hid his face from you, that he WILL NOT hear" (Isa.59:1-2, KJV).

If we desire to pray with power, and to have our prayers answered, then regardless of our station in life, we must **ROOT OUT SIN**, uproot it, and cast it out of our lives! Isaiah wrote, again, "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; BE YE **CLEAN**, THAT BEAR THE VESSELS OF THE LORD" (Isa. 52: 11).

Unless one is "clean," spiritually, and not hiding sin in his life; unless one is truly striving to obey God, and not compromising with sin; unless one is keeping God's commandments, and **NOT LIVING IN ADULTERY** – his prayers are useless, futile, and vain – an outright unclean thing in themselves – an *abomination!*

But even if we obey God, and if we pray fervently, and perseveringly, continuously, that is still not enough to have power with God, and to have prayers answered. Even if we wrestle with God, tenaciously, in prayer, as Jacob wrestled with

the One who became Christ all night (Gen.32:26-28), there is still one thing needed before God will hear us.

### ***What Is Real FAITH?***

The apostle Paul put it this way: “But without FAITH it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must BELIEVE that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb.11:6).

When a man brought his son to the disciples for healing, frothing at the mouth with a demon possessing him, they could not cast the demon out. Then the man implored Jesus Himself, “IF thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us” (Mark 9:22).

Jesus rebuked the man’s woeful lack of faith, answering, “(You say to Me), If You can do anything? (Why,) all things can be – are possible – to him who believes!” (verse 23, *Amplified Bible*). Moffatt translates this, “Jesus said to him, ‘If you can’! Anything can be done for one who believes.” The Phillips translation has it, “‘If you can do anything!’ retorted Jesus. ‘Everything is possible to the man who believes.’”

Let’s continue with the Phillips version.

“‘I do believe,’ the boy’s father burst out. ‘Help me to believe MORE!’”

Jesus then proceeded to heal the boy. “The spirit gave a loud scream and after a dreadful convulsion left him. The boy lay there like a corpse, so that most of the bystanders said, ‘He is dead.’

“But Jesus grasped his hands and lifted him up, and then he stood on his own feet” (Mark 9:22-27).

In another place, Jesus asked two blind men, who cried out to Him to have mercy on them, “*Believe* ye that I am able to do this?” When they answered, “Yea, Lord,” He responded by touching their eyes, and said, “*According to your faith be it unto you*” (Matt.9:29).

And their eyes were opened!

How much faith do YOU have?

When a centurion came to Jesus to heal his servant, Jesus replied, “I will come and heal him.” But the centurion said that wasn’t necessary, and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed” (Matt.8:5-9).

Jesus replied, speaking to all the audience which had gathered, “Verily I say unto

you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (v.10). He then told the soldier, “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee” (v.13). The man’s servant was healed that very hour.

Again, I ask – how much *faith* do YOU have?

The fact is, it does not require very much. Great miracles can be accomplished with just a “smidgen” of faith – just an “ounce” of faith will go a long way. Or, as the old Brylcreem hair lotion commercial said when I was a young man, “A little dab will do ya.”

In fact the power of faith is far greater than Einstein's famous formula where  $E=mc^2$ . There is far more POWER in an ounce of “faith” than in the most powerful nuclear hydrogen bomb!

Jesus later said to His disciples, who asked Him why they could not cast out the demon from the man's son, “Because of your UNBELIEF: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed (a very tiny seed, almost microscopic), ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO YOU” (Matt.17:20).

Faith to move mountains! How much faith is required to do that?

Jesus answered, just faith the size of a tiny seed of mustard!

That doesn’t seem like very much, does it?

In another place, where Jesus cursed a barren, unfruitful fig tree, and a day later the disciples saw it all withered up from the roots, they marveled. Jesus told them, “Verily I say unto you, *If ye have faith, and doubt not*, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, **BELIEVING, YE SHALL RECEIVE**” (Matt.21:21-22).

Mark records this incident also, and quotes the words of Jesus as follows: “*Have faith in God*. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall *not doubt in his heart, BUT SHALL BELIEVE that those things which he saith shall come to pass; HE SHALL HAVE WHATSOEVER HE SAITH*,

“Therefore I say unto you, *What things soever Ye desire, when ye pray, BELIEVE THAT YE RECEIVE THEM, and ye shall have them!*” (Mark 11:22-24).

When Peter had tried to walk on the water, imitating Christ, and began to sink, Jesus grabbed him by the hand to rescue him, saying, “O thou of *little faith*, wherefore didst thou doubt?” (Matt.14:31).

Often we begin to doubt because, like Peter, we are too close to the problem and too far away from God. Unless we are walking with God, and talking with God often, and studying His Word deeply and prayerfully, unless we are filled with the Word of God, we honestly don't know how to exercise faith in a given situation, and often become desperate, like the man with the demon-possessed son. So we pray the prayer of desperation – crying out to God for mercy, and He hears us, because God is a merciful, compassionate God. He does not want us to suffer, or die, and does not try us beyond our means (I Cor.10:13).

I have heard of many prayers of “desperation” which were prayed in utter sincerity and were heart-felt, and even if faith were lacking, God remembers that we are weak and are made of dust, and he often overlooks our weakness and lack of faith, because of the urgency of the situation. He still rescues us, and heals us, and delivers us from death, even as He did Peter.

In another example of the power of a little faith, the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him, “Lord, Increase our faith.” They, like many of us, desired more faith than they had. Many times, remember, Jesus had rebuked them for their “little faith” (Matt.6:30; 14:31).

Jesus replied to them, “If ye had faith as a *grain of mustard seed*, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you” (Luke 17:6).

Now a grain of mustard seed isn't very big. I have planted mustard plants, and the seed is very small. But you must remember one thing – IT IS *ALIVE!* It possesses LIFE!

In other words, to do the works of God, and of Christ, and to do HIS Work, we must have *LIVING FAITH!*

### ***The Power of Importuning -- Chuzpah***

The power of God in our lives is up to us. Are we willing to pay the price? Are we willing to seek God with all our hearts? Are we willing to WALK with God?

The size of our faith is up to us. We ourselves, by our actions, determine the amount of our faith, and the answers to our prayers. Unless we begin to *exercise faith*, by using it often, it will remain weak and impotent, and grow even weaker and more powerless.

But if we ask God for greater faith, and seek His will in our lives, and OBEY His commandments, statutes, and laws, then He will answer us -- and He will give us greater faith and more spiritual POWER in our lives, to resist the devil and overcome our sins and weaknesses, and grow in spiritual energy, faith, humility, and zeal – more and more

like Jesus Christ every day! (Gal.4:19; II Pet.3:18).

Jesus gave a parable to His disciples, saying: “Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine, in his journey, is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

“I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet BECAUSE OF HIS *IMPORTUNITY* he will rise and give him as many as he needeth” (Luke 11:5-8).

The Greek word for “importunity” here is *anaideia*, #335 in *Strong's Concordance*, and means: “impudence.” Says *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, this word denotes “shamelessness, importunity” – the negative *a* followed by the word *aidos* meaning, “shame, modesty.” In other words, the man has no shame, no modesty – he begs for the bread regardless of the impropriety of the situation – shamelessly, with what the Jewish people would call *sheer chuzpah* or brazen impudence! The word *chuzpah* literally means “shameless audacity, presumption, or gall”!

Yeshua went on to add: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Luke 11:9).

You begin by *asking with chuzpah and bold shamelessness*.

*Are you ASKING GOD with sheer, unbridled effrontery, unrestrained boldness, impudent shamelessness, and chuzpah? Are you asking God with sheer moxie – that is, sheer energy, courage, bravery, and “nerve”? Another way to put it, is, are you asking with “heart”?*

The apostle Paul put it this way: “For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted [tested] like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come *BOLDLY* unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:15-16).

You continue by *seeking*.

David wrote in the Psalms, “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I SEEK after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle [*sukkah*] shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock” (Psalm 27:4-5).

Jesus Christ also told us: “*Seek ye first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” Matt.6:33).

Are you *diligently seeking God*, and His truth, and HIS WAYS, as if seeking for precious treasure, gold, or tremendously valuable precious gems -- like emeralds, rubies, or diamonds?

You follow up by “*knocking*” *at the door!* And *KEEP ON KNOCKING* until you *receive the answer!*

Christ declared, in another parable, about the value of persistence. Luke records, “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that *men ought ALWAYS TO PRAY, AND NOT TO FAINT.*” The whole purpose of this parable-lesson was to teach us the value of persisting in our prayers, and never giving up!

Yeshua the Messiah said: “There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; *yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her CONTINUAL COMING she weary me.*

“And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And *shall not God avenge his own elect, which CRY DAY AND NIGHT unto him, though he bear long with them?*” (Luke 18:1-7).

Are you following through on your petitions and prayers by consistently and perseveringly *KNOCKING PERSISTENTLY on the door?* Are you being persistent?

Isaiah tells us: “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, *which shall never hold their peace day nor night: Ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence. And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth*” (Isaiah 62:6-7).

The apostle Paul declares, we should be “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and *watching thereunto with ALL PERSEVERANCE and supplication for all saints, and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel*” (Ephesians 6:18-19).

The prophet Joel tells us, “Yet even now, the Eternal promises, turn to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning; *come heart-broken*, not with garments torn, and turn to the Eternal One your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in love, and ready to relent” (Joel 2:12-13, Moffatt).

### *Examples of Success*

The Word of God is full of examples of men of faith-examples for us to live and learn by. Researchers have discovered that one of the key methods to become a success in life is to study the lives of successful people. Men who read biographies and autobiographies of successful leaders and great men of accomplishment tend to become

inspired and thrilled by what they read. It motivates them, challenges them, and inspires them to go out and sometimes even accomplish *more* than those whose lives they studied. This is true of the life stories of captains of industry such as Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, or such scientists as Thomas A. Edison, the Wright brothers, inventors such as Henry Ford, or famous presidents such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Teddy Roosevelt.

It is also true of the study of the Word of God. The Bible is full of the stories of successful, famous, inspired men of God – men who were human, just like you and I. But they overcame obstacles, they were used mightily by God, His Spirit came upon them *MIGHTILY* and they proclaimed His message with *BOLDNESS*, *without fear or favor*, without being muzzled by men or pressure groups of men!

The examples of faith in the Bible, and faith-filled men and women, are written there for our admonition, instruction and learning, so that we might profit from them, and so that we also might *mightily grow in faith* and be used by God in a great manner in this day and age and in the midst of this perverted, corrupt generation upon whom the ends of the world are fast coming!

How much, and how often, do you stick your nose into the very Word of God, the Bible? How much do you read it, study it, pray over it and drink in and absorb of its priceless, wonderful message?

*How much?*

Do you study it, with your family, out loud, *every day*? "The whole Bible was given to us by INSPIRATION FROM GOD and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone" (II Tim. 3:16-17, *Living Bible*).

### ***New Truth***

The real way to true freedom, and increasing freedom and liberty, which we all prize very much, is through the portals of knowledge. Ignorance of truth is slavery. The greater our ignorance, the greater our thralldom and servitude. Do *YOU* like the idea of being bound in chains and irons, shackled to error and falsehood, wrong concepts and ignorance, because of a lack of true knowledge?

Ignorance is slavery! Refusal to grow in truth and knowledge and understanding is tantamount to mental bondage and spiritual thralldom and dooms you to future disaster. Only those *growing* in truth and knowledge will live and enter God's Kingdom. Those who *stop growing* have DIED spiritually! Life is a growth process. Once you stop growing you begin dying. A tree or a plant which is not growing and sending out new shoots, or branches, or leaves, has *died*, and is merely cluttering up the ground. It is only worthy to be chopped down with an ax and thrown into the fire!

Are you still growing spiritually? Are you still researching, and studying, and applying yourself to attain greater knowledge and truth? Or are you smug and self-satisfied, content with things as they are?

Do you thrill to the exploration of new worlds, new horizons to conquer, new thresholds to explore? Do you love the search for knowledge? Do new discoveries excite you, thrill you and amaze you, and send chills tingling up and down your spine? Do you love truth? Then you must not close your mind to it! Then you must open your mind and maintain an inquisitive, childlike curiosity about things, nature and the fathomless Word of God! This is the way to *grow*, mentally, emotionally, intellectually and also spiritually!

You must exercise the character and self discipline to keep an open mind, and rejoice in every nugget of truth which you discover. You must pray to God for His guidance, and then in faith and without fear of man, continue the quest, the search, the discovery process, the adventure, the journey, the exploration of new frontiers of knowledge!

### *Study, Grow, and PROVE All Things*

Don't give up! Don't allow yourself to be intimidated! Don't quit because of the opinions of ne'er-do-wells and bigoted men and malcontents. Keep at it! Have faith in God, keep on studying and learning and never give up. God's Word challenges skeptic and layman and minister alike: "*PROVE ALL THINGS, hold fast that which is good*" (I Thess.5:21).

The *Living Bible* in modern English says: "Do not smother the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at those who prophesy, *but test everything that is said to be sure it is true*, and if it is, then accept it."

Paul commands: "*STUDY* to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). Study God's Word -- study the Bible itself, the inspired Scriptures. Don't neglect it. Paul admonished and exhorted Timothy, and us as well: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be [or, become] perfect [fully mature in Christ, fully *grown*], thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (I Tim. 3:16-17).

Once we begin the Christian life, we must continue to GROW. Beginning with faith is not enough. Peter admonishes us further: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue [power]; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance [self-control]; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren,

give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall NEVER FALL: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet.1:5-11).

The *Living Bible* has this passage: "But to obtain these gifts, you need more than faith; you must also work hard to be good, and even that is not enough. For then you must *learn to know* God better and discover what He wants you to do. Next, learn to put aside your own desires so that you will become patient and godly, gladly letting God have his way with you. This will make possible the next step, which is for you to enjoy other people and to like them, and finally you will *grow* to love them deeply. The more you go on in this way, the more you will *grow spiritually* and become fruitful and useful to our Lord Jesus Christ. But anyone who fails to go after these additions to faith is blind indeed, or at least very shortsighted, and has forgotten that God delivered him from the old life of sin so that now he can live a strong, good life for the Lord.

"So dear brothers, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen, and then you will never stumble or fall away" (11 Pet. 1:5-10).

### ***The Key to Power with God***

Lack of Bible study is a major reason so many people – even true converted Christians – lack real power, wisdom, and understanding of God. One of the true keys to spiritual power and prevailing with God is simply studying the Word of God, the Bible, daily – *and to do so on our knees!*

How many of God's people, even ministers, faithfully do this?

God says each one of us should tremble before His Word. We read in Isaiah the prophet, "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and TREMBLETH AT MY WORD" (Isa.66:2).

Isaiah writes: "but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa.40:8). Jesus says we are to live by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4, Luke 4:4). The apostle Paul declared: "All scriptures is given by inspiration of God [literally, God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect [that is, become perfect, wholly mature spiritually], throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim.3:16-17).

Do we regard the Word of God with such reverence that we study it and pray over it upon our knees? As you spend time praying to God daily, do you open the Word of God and allow it to wash over you, cleansing you from evil thoughts, vanity, pride and the cares of this life?

David wrote: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to *thy Word*" (Psa. 119:9). He added, in verse 11: "*Thy Word* have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee!"

Have you memorized many portions of God's Word, literally writing it and hiding it deep within your heart? Do you pray over it daily, as you study it, and drink deeply of its message? Do you let God speak to you often, through His Word, while you humbly read it and study it, as you are in His Presence? Do you even study it before Him while you are literally on your knees?

Failure to do this is one of the primary reasons so many are far from God and seemingly out of focus spiritually -- and are on a wasted mission in life, going about trying to work out their own righteousness and not submitting to the will and word of God. Failure to commune daily with God by studying His Word is a major reason hundreds, even thousands, fall away from God's truth and succumb to the wiles of the Devil and the siren songs of Satan. Reading articles written by men or ministers is not enough. Reading books written by men is not enough. Nothing can replace careful, considerate, cautious BIBLE STUDY in the privacy of your own home!

Jesus Christ is the "Word of God" (John 1:1-3, 14). The words of the Bible are "His flesh" which we are to eat for our spiritual nourishment (John 6:48-58). Jesus said to His disciples: It is the spirit that quickeneth [gives life]; the flesh profiteth nothing: *the words* that I speak unto you, **THEY ARE SPIRIT**, *and they are life*" (John 6:63).

Every strong man of God down through history has spent much time studying the Bible for long periods of time. Every truly strong woman, strong in faith, has also spent much time *habitually* reading, studying and praying over God's Word!

Have you formed this very important habit in your personal life? Or is regular Bible study still a haphazard thing in your daily routine? And is Bible study *on your knees* something you seldom, if ever, do? Examine yourself – your heart and attitude. *What better* way is there to study the Word of God than *humbly*, asking Him to guide and correct us by His Word?

### ***A Powerful Example***

George Mueller, a powerful servant of God during the nineteenth century and widely known as "the apostle of faith," wrote in his *Autobiography* about his own beginnings in the Word of God: "That the Word of God alone is our standard of judgment in spiritual things, that it can be explained only by the Holy Spirit; and that in our day, as well as in former times, He is the teacher of His people. The result of this was, that the first evening that I shut myself into my room, to give myself to prayer and meditation over the Scriptures, *I learned more in a few hours than I had done during a period of several months previously*. But the particular difference was, that I received real strength for my soul in doing so. I now began to try by the test of the Scriptures the things which I had learned and seen, and found that only those principles which stood the test were really of value" (*George Mueller's Autobiography*, p. 33).

Does reading the Bible sometimes seem tedious, boring, tiresome, to you? Would

you rather partake of the world, television, movies, or various forms of entertainment? But they cannot give you eternal life! Nothing can compare with precious time spent with the Word of God!

George Mueller, a man used mightily of God to preach the gospel to many nations in the nineteenth century, bears witness to the power of faithful Bible study. God used him to raise up five magnificent orphanages to care for the daily needs of over 2,000 orphans, solely depending on God to send the money necessary to take care of them. Here was a man who *never* asked another human being for money to carry on this great work, but who simply fell upon his knees and asked God daily for all the tremendous financial necessities needed. Here was a man who really learned to walk with God, and to whom God sent, in terms of today's dollar value, something in the neighborhood of \$300,000,000 during his ministry of 64 years, from 1834 to 1898.

George Mueller was truly a mighty man of God whose whole life was a testimony of the power of faith and believing, expecting prayer. The truly astonishing thing about his ministry is that *never once* did he ask others for money to support God's Work in his time. Rather, he went to God alone for the needs of the work and the orphans. And without fail God answered his earnest, believing prayers for *sixty four years*, and blessed the work under his hands.

Regarding Bible study, George Mueller wrote: "If the reader understands very little of the Word of God, *he ought to read it very much*, for the Spirit explains the Word by the Word. And if he enjoys the reading of the Word little, *that is just the reason why he should read it much*; for the *frequent reading of the Scriptures creates a delight in them*, so that the more we read them, the more we desire to do so" (p. 21).

Mueller understood much about the value of Bible study. His life of service to God, and the powerful way in which God used him to carry on His Work, proves it. Therefore, let me give you the basic principles of Bible study which George Mueller shares in his *Autobiography*. Mueller writes:

"It is of immense importance for the understanding of the Word of God, to read it in course, so that we may read every day a portion of the Old and a portion of the New Testament, going on where we previously left off. This is important -- (1) Because it throws light upon the connection; and a different course, according to which one *habitually* selects particular chapters, will make it utterly impossible ever to understand much of the Scriptures. (2) Whilst we are in the body, we need a change even in spiritual things; and this change the Lord has graciously provided in the great variety which is to be found in His Word. (3) It tends to the glory of God; for the leaving out some chapters here and there, is practically saying, that certain portions are better than others; or, that there are certain parts of revealed truth unprofitable, or unnecessary. (4) It may keep us, by the blessing of God, from erroneous views, as in reading thus regularly through the Scriptures we are led to see the meaning of the whole, and also kept from laying too much stress upon certain favorite views. (5) The Scriptures contain the whole revealed will of God, and therefore we ought to seek to read from time to time through the whole of that revealed will. There are many believers, I fear, in our day, who have not read even once through the

whole of the Scriptures; and yet in a few months, by reading only a few chapters every day, they might accomplish it."

Have *you* ever read the Bible all the way through? What about your children? How much progress are they making?

### ***Family Bible Study***

In our home, when our children were younger, we used to have a family Bible study every day, usually in the morning at breakfast time. We would try to read at least one chapter in the Bible every day, sometimes two or three. On the Sabbath we usually read even more. Often I would read, and expound the Scriptures as we went along, bringing in lessons and making comments. At other times, I would have the children each read a portion and explain what they have read.

We enjoyed this family custom, and it helped bring us all together for the priceless privilege of sharing the Word of God. We didn't bother with "tracts," or so-called "daily Bible verses" put together by men, with some "thought for the day." Instead we would drink in of the Fountain of Life, the holy Scriptures themselves. I believe our children benefited much from this precious time, although they were grievously hurt by the scandals in the Church that exploded around us, and the problems and trials we endured because of the sins in the ministry and in the headquarters church during those years.

Abraham was the father of the faithful and God mightily blessed him. What was one of the reasons, one of the *good* things God found in Abraham? We read in the book of Genesis, that God said to Abraham: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do [God was about to bring punishment upon the wicked worldly cities of Sodom and Gomorrah -- which stand as *types* of our wicked nations, today!]. . . . For I know him, that *he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment*" (Gen. 18:17-19).

Children who are left to themselves, even ministers' children, far too often grow up haughty, proud, arrogant, filled with self-will, vanity, lust, and perverseness. Children of high level ministers in God's Church whom I have known, were womanizers, fornicators, drug-abusers, and guilty of every foul vice one could imagine! And these were the children of the *top* ministers! Why? Because their parents *totally neglected true Bible study*, and spent precious little time with their own children going over the Word of God in a humble, godly manner!

### ***The Key of Meditation***

Another vital area of Bible study is daily meditation -- pondering, musing, thinking deeply -- about what we read in the Word of God. George Mueller wrote, "It is also of the greatest importance to meditate on what we read, so that perhaps a small portion of that which we have read, or if we have time, the whole may be meditated upon, in the course of the day."

Isaac, the son of Abraham, set us an excellent example of meditation. We read in Genesis, "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide . . ." (Gen.24:63).

David meditated on God's Word all the time. He wrote in the Psalms, "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97). He said: "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation" (v. 99). David also wrote: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly [margin, "wicked"], nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But *his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he MEDITATE DAY AND NIGHT*" (Psalm 1:1-2).

How important is meditation upon the word of God -- spending time reflecting upon it, musing upon it, considering its meaning and lessons, and applying them to ourselves?

David went on, explaining his approach toward God's Word: "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word" (Psa.119:15-16). "Princes [even so-called "leaders" amongst God's people] did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did *meditate in thy statutes*. Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors" (vs.23-24). "My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will *meditate* in thy statutes" (v.48). "Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will *meditate in thy precepts*" (v.78). "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might MEDITATE IN THY WORD" (v.148).

*Meditation upon the Word of God is a powerful KEY to spiritual SUCCESS!*

God commanded Joshua, "This book of the law [the law of God, encompassed in the first five books of the Bible in Joshua's day] shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt MEDITATE therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have *good success*" (Josh. 1:8).

Paul told Timothy, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (I Tim. 4:15).

When you spend time in the study of God's Word, do you also spend time meditating upon the lessons contained therein? Do you give thoughtful consideration and contemplation upon what you are reading? Do you compare Scripture with Scripture, in order to come to a fuller and more complete understanding?

### ***Bible Study Aids***

Sometimes you may want to use various Bible study *aids* in study of God's Word. Very helpful to thousands, in helping to look up passages where you only remember one

word, or in studying all the passages where a particular word, such as "love," "faith," "mercy," etc., may be found in the Bible, is a Bible Concordance. The two best are *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, and *Young's Analytical Concordance*. Both of these also have a Hebrew and Greek dictionary in the back, where you can look up the original Hebrew and Greek words for each of the words listed in the main concordance section. This, also, is a very valuable study in itself.

What about Bible commentaries? These also may help out at times, but should not be trusted too much, as they are often the opinions of *men* about various passages and sometimes are in error. Often, however, they add insight and can be useful. *Adam Clarke's Commentary*, and the *Jamieson Faucett and Brown Critical-Experimental Commentary* are two of the most useful whole Bible commentaries on the market.

Nevertheless, nothing can replace the pure study of God's Word itself! I have found George Mueller's comments strike right on target. He said: "Learned commentaries I have found to store the *head* with many notions, and often also with the truth of God; but when the Spirit teaches, through the instrumentality of prayer and meditation, the *heart* is affected. The former kind of knowledge generally puffs up, and is often renounced when another commentary gives a different opinion, and often also is found good for nothing, when it is carried out into practice. The latter kind of knowledge generally humbles, gives joy, leads us nearer to God, and is not easily reasoned away; and having been obtained from God, and thus having entered into the heart, and become our own, is also generally carried out. If the inquirer after truth does not understand the Hebrew and Greek languages, so as to be able to compare the common translation with the original, he may, concerning several passages, get light by an improved rendering, provided he can be sure that the translator was a truly spiritual person" (pp. 22-23).

What Bible translation is the best? Generally, for family and personal Bible study, I use the King James Version. Although translated into English during the reign of King James of England in 1611, it is still overall the best and most accurate English translation. The New King James Version is also an excellent modern translation.

Other useful translations one might consider are the *Moffatt*, *Revised Standard Version*, *New Revised Standard Version*, *Amplified Bible*, *New International Version*, and a host of others. However, for accuracy none compare with the King James Version, as it is based on the best original texts and was not subjected to the false reasoning of modern criticism which assumes that the more "ancient" a text the better it is -- despite enormous evidence to the contrary! The King James Version (also the NKJV) employs the Greek texts of the New Testament faithfully copied and reproduced through the centuries by the Greek Church. Modern translations, on the other hand, tend to give too much credence to old manuscripts which are known to be shot through with error -- such as the Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, and Siniaticus.

A useful modern paraphrase of the Bible is the *Living Bible*. Its author and translator, Henry Taylor, has a tremendous gift with words and phrases, and many of the renditions in the *Living Bible* are powerful modern statements that strike to the heart.

However, in some areas he is far too free and loose in his assumptions, and certain technical matters should not be trusted to him.

Have you formed the *habit* of reading the Bible? George Mueller wrote, regarding himself in his early years:

"I never had been at any time in my life in the habit of reading the Holy Scriptures. When under fifteen years of age, I occasionally read a little of them at school; afterwards God's precious book was entirely laid aside, so that I never read one single chapter of it, as far as I remember, till it pleased God to begin a work of grace in my heart. Now the Scriptural way of reasoning would have been: God Himself has condescended to become an author, and I am ignorant about that precious book, with His Holy Spirit has caused to be written through the instrumentality of His servants, and it contains that which I ought to know, and the knowledge of which will lead me to true happiness; therefore I ought to read again and again this most precious book, this book of books, most earnestly, most prayerfully, and with much meditation; and in this practice I ought to continue all the days of my life. For I was aware, though I read it but little, that I knew scarce, anything of it. But instead of acting thus, and being led by my ignorance of the Word of God to study it more, my difficulty in understanding it, and the little enjoyment I had in it, made me careless of reading it (for much prayerful reading of the Word, gives not merely more knowledge, but increases the delight we have in reading it); and thus, like many believers, I practically preferred, for the first four years of my divine life, the works of uninspired men to the Oracles of the living God. The consequence was that I remained a babe, both in knowledge and grace. In knowledge I say; for all *true* knowledge must be derived, by the Spirit, from the Word. And as I neglected the Word, I was for nearly four years so ignorant, that I did not *clearly* know even the *fundamental* points of our holy faith. And this lack of knowledge most sadly kept me back from walking steadily in the ways of God. For it is the truth that makes us free (John 8:31, 32), by delivering us from the slavery of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The Word proves it; the experience of the saints proves it; and also my own experience most decidedly proves it. For when it pleased the Lord in August, 1829, to bring me really to the Scriptures, my life and walk became very different. And though even since then I have fallen very short of what I might, and ought to have been, yet, by the grace of God, I have been enabled to live much nearer to Him than before" (pp. 20-21).

Often it seems once we begin to study the Bible, Satan comes along to distract us and to tempt us to do something else. He doesn't want us to feast on the living Word of God! He doesn't want us to be spiritually well nourished. George Mueller found this out. He wrote:

"I am aware that it is a common temptation of Satan to make us give up the reading of the Word and prayer when our enjoyment is gone; as if it were of no use to read the Scriptures when we do not enjoy them, and as if it were of no use to pray when we have no spirit of prayer; whilst the truth is, in order to enjoy the Word, we ought to continue to read it, and the way to obtain a spirit of prayer, is, to continue praying; for the less we read the Word of God, the less we desire to read it, and the less we pray, the less we desire to pray" (p. 38).

George Mueller was a man of faith and prayer. His life showed what can be accomplished when a man trusts *God alone* for everything he needs in life, including clothing, food, shelter, healing, direction, guidance in work and inspiration. He often read the Bible on his knees.

But Mueller knew that merely reading the Word of God was not enough. We must also *obey* it! He wrote: "We have to carry out that which we receive from the Holy Scriptures; we must practice the truth we know. Erring and failing we may be; but we must be honest, upright in not living in sin, in not going on in a course we know to be contrary to the mind of God. Should the latter be the case, we cannot enjoy fellowship with God, nor shall we be able practically to trust Him as our friend, and this will be the greatest hindrance to having our prayers answered, according to that word: *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"* (see Psa. 66:18; quoted from page 357 of Mueller's *Autobiography*).

As we read God's Word, we must begin to obey it. As it points out errors and wrong-doing in our life, we must be willing to admit our errors and to correct them. We must be willing to change, to alter what is wrong, and to walk uprightly, living by every word of God. We must be willing to repent, when proven that we are wrong! If you ever stop doing this, and become UNWILLING TO REPENT, and change, when you are proved WRONG, then you will cease to walk with God from that point onward. Or, to turn it around, when you stop growing in truth and admitting error, then God will cease to walk with *you!*

### ***When to Study***

What is the best time to study the Scriptures?

Many people have the habit of putting Bible study off to last and consequently never seem to get around to it. Or, when evening comes, they feel too tired and need to relax, so they skip the study of God's Word. This is a great evil.

We should give to God the *best* part of our time. We should put Him *FIRST*, before all else! We should especially seek His guidance *in the beginning of our day -- that is, BEFORE* everything else! This way we will have His presence with us much more completely and fully during the course of the day, and we will be stronger and more enabled to call upon Him when cast down, or tempted, or in making decisions regarding our work.

The best part of our time, when we are fresh, is in the beginning of the day. This means, since God begins each day at sunset (Lev.23:32), the early evening is a good time for Bible study. Also, early in the morning, after one awakens, and freshens up, would be a good time to devote to the study of God's Word.

As George Mueller wrote: "Any one need but make the experiment of spending one, two, or three hours in prayer and meditation *before breakfast*, either in his room, or

with his Bible in his hand in the fields, and he will soon find out the beneficial effect which early rising has upon the outward and inward man. I beseech all my brethren and sisters into whose hands this may fall, and who are not in the habit of rising early, to make the trial, and they will praise the Lord for having done so" (p. 126).

George Mueller learned the importance of *both* Bible study and prayer before breakfast. He said, in his *Autobiography*,

"Before this time my practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as an habitual thing, to give myself to prayer, after having dressed in the morning. Now I saw, that the *most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditation on it*, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprov'd, instructed; and that thus, whilst meditating, my heart might be brought into experimental communion with the Lord. . . . The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that though I did not, as it were, give myself to *prayer*, but to *meditation*, yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer" (p. 153).

### ***Bible Study Strengthens Faith***

Many of God's people wish they had more faith in life. They complain about their lack of faith. They seem to think faith is some supernatural gift only given to a few, and that they cannot expect to have very much.

What was George Mueller's secret of faith? The *foundation* key, he tells us himself, is "*the careful reading of the Word of God, combined with meditation on it.*"

Mueller added:

"Through reading of the Word of God, and especially through meditation on the Word of God, the believer becomes more and more acquainted with the nature and character of God, and thus sees more and more, besides His holiness and justice, what a kind, loving, gracious, merciful, mighty, wise, and faithful Being He is, and, therefore, in poverty, affliction of body, bereavement in his family, difficulty in his service, want of a situation or employment, he will repose upon the *ability* of God to help him, because he has not only learned from His Word that He is of almighty power and infinite wisdom, but he has also seen instance upon instance in the Holy Scriptures in which His almighty power and infinite wisdom have been actually exercised in helping and delivering His people; and he will repose upon the willingness of God to help him, because he has not only learned from the Scriptures what a kind, good, merciful, gracious, and faithful Being God is, but because he has also seen in the Word of God, how in a great variety of instances He has proved Himself to be so. And the consideration of this, *if God has become known to us through prayer and meditation on His own Word*, will lead us, in general at least, with a measure of confidence to rely upon Him; and thus meditation on the Word of God, will be one special means to strengthen our faith" (p. 175).

Truly, as the apostle Paul wrote: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the

Word of God" (Rom. 10: 17).

Whether you personally are new to the Bible and its study, or whether you have been a devoted disciple of Jesus and a habitual reader of the Word of God, let us all commit ourselves to putting the Word of God *first* in our lives, and study it *daily* and be sure to guide our family and children in the study and love of the Word of God!

The Word of God is spirit, and it is Life!

Do you want to be a man of faith, a man of prayer -- a real "man of God"?

### ***Walking With GOD***

Do you want to walk with God? Then you must begin studying the Word of God and praying to God as never before in your life. We draw close to God in this way. As we study His Word and let Him speak to us, we must do what He says. We must daily put sin and sinful thoughts, out of our lives and never compromise.

The apostle James put it so clearly: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.* Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up*" (Jas. 4:7-10).

Millions of people have the wrong idea about God. They don't know where to find Him, where to look for Him. They think He is so far off, and so high above us, that He would never condescend to speak with us. But God is not proud and lofty. It is humans themselves who become proud, lifted up and lofty. God is humble. To walk with God, therefore, we must also humble ourselves and walk where He walks.

I have found, personally, that a big help to me, in walking with God, is to spend time in a garden -- to plant, maintain, and do all the work connected with a garden. People forget that God Himself is the original Gardener. He planted a garden in Eden (Genesis 2:8). He personally planted the trees, shrubs, flowers and vegetables. One of the first commands He gave man was to "dress" the garden and to "keep" or maintain it (verse 15).

When I humble myself to get my hands dirty and my fingernails caked with dirt by planting seeds in a garden, and when I get down on my knees to pull the weeds and cultivate the soil around the individual plants, to encourage their growth, my attitude becomes more loving, more childlike, more appreciative, more like that of God Himself.

An old proverb among gardeners is: "The best fertilizer of all is the footprints of the gardener." Any garden left to itself will soon become overpowered with weeds, grass and choked with obnoxious plants. Maintaining a garden teaches us a great deal about the principles of God's Word. Jesus used the parable of the sower which teaches lessons

from the gardening experience. In this parable, each of us is like a delicate plant in the sight of God; and in order to grow spiritually, we must keep ourselves away from the weeds of the world, the thorns and choking, entangling thistles. We must be "watered" deeply of the Word and the Spirit of God. We must spend much time in communion with God.

King David, a man after God's own heart, wrote: "*One thing* have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to *inquire* in his temple" (Psa. 27:4). He said: "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek" (v. 8). With humble faith and boldness David went so far as to say: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up" (v. 10).

What about you? Do you desire to walk with God? To inquire of Him and receive His counsel? Would you like to converse with God in wonderful conversation and hear His Words spoken to you?

Well, then, let me say it again -- God's words to you are written down in the pages of Holy Scripture. He is willing to talk with you every time you open the pages of His Book. The Bible is God's message to you written down. You have access to it all the time. But most of us ignore it far too much. If you really want to get to know God, and converse with God, then read the Bible thoughtfully, carefully, and prayerfully.

I have often found that when I begin reading the Bible, I may spend a whole hour or more just in reading and praying about the contents of just *one* of the shorter Psalms of David. The thoughts recorded in the Bible are *God's* thoughts. They are profoundly deep, like a deep and quiet river. They flow deeply, not like the shallow waters of human thoughts. I can literally spend hours in communing with God over the words of just a few passages of Scripture. Such meditation over the Word of God is sweet, pleasant and very humbling. It also imparts tremendous faith, confidence in God and inner joy and peace of mind -- literally the "peace of God which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7).

The Word of God strengthens you "with might, by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the *love of Christ*, which passeth knowledge, that ye might *be filled with all the fullness of God*" (Eph. 3:16-19).

The only way to literally become "filled" with God's Spirit is to spend long, fruitful, pleasant, humble hours with Him, communing with God in continual prayer and the careful study and reading of His Word. There are not any substitutes. Nothing else will do.

How much time daily do you spend "inquiring of God"? How much time do you spend praising Him and thanking Him for all His wonderful works and blessings that He has given to you? How much time do you spend daily contemplating and meditating on

the various works of His hands -- His Creation itself -- the marvels of plant life, animal life, minerals, flowers, fruit trees and their precious fruit, or the mountains, the oceans, the lush valleys or primeval forests, or the stars in the sky? How much do you study the works of God's hands?

*Think* of the magnificent creation of God! Spend much time meditating on His Word and the works of His hands. This is the way you will get to *know* God intimately, as a son gets to know his loving Father, *by spending time* with Him.