



GREATER
things

7 | 30



JESUS➤

tells his disciples in John 14:12 they will do "Greater Things" as he completes his mission and returns to the Father.

These "Greater Things" can only take place as the Holy Spirit indwells and empowers His followers as they surrender to His will and walk in a life of obedience. The church in America is in desperate need of experiencing greater things through Christ. We are not impacting lostness, but are losing this culture to paganism. We desperately need the Lord and His powerful presence through revival and spiritual awakening.

These devotions with prayer points are intended to assist believers and churches as they seek the Lord for revival and spiritual awakening personally, congregationally and as a part of the greater body of Christ. 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 provides the biblical basis and focus for the six sections or groups of devotions. Each section of five devotions is centered on one spiritual awakening prayer principle found in 2 Chronicles 7:13-14. May these devotions and prayer points challenge and encourage you and your church to cry out and seek the face of God through prayer in these desperate days.



...whoever believes in me will do
the works I have been doing,
and they will do even greater
things than these... John 14:12

SECTION 1 ▶

"Greater Things" through God's Judgment

"If I shut up the heavens and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people" (2 Chron. 7:13). God is judging His people and our land. Out of His heart of sacrificial love, our Father desires that we recognize our sin, repent and return to Him. His sacrificial love abounds and He is patient—yet He is holy and just and throughout Scripture uses His remedial judgment and discipline to press His people toward repentance and a restored relationship. Will we recognize the reality of His judgment and return to Him? God can do "Greater Things" when His people return to Him through repentance because of His judgment and chastisement.

DAY 1 ➤ From the Mountain to the Valley

2 Chronicles 7:13, "If I shut up the heavens and there is no rain..."

God's people were on a mountaintop! They had obeyed the Lord and the temple was constructed. They worshipped, repented, sacrificed and rejoiced in the Lord's pleasure and presence with them (2 Chron. 7:1-11). The Lord even revealed Himself personally to Solomon in the night and assured him that He was attentive to the prayers made in the temple and pleased with His people's work, sacrifice and worship (2 Chron. 7:12). Then the bombshell, "If I shut up the heavens...", or rather, "If I have to send judgment because you have departed from me in your sin." I can imagine Solomon's surprise—from a mountaintop of worship to a valley of judgment. How could this happen? Solomon must have thought, "Surely, that will never happen to us." However, God alone knows the heart of man (John 2:24-26, Luke 19:41ff).

It is obvious that the church in America and our nation is experiencing God's judgment. How could we deny this fact? There are many indicators, but six are obvious: an apathetic,

complacent and sin-stained church; a lack of wisdom among leaders; a waning of the manifest presence of God among His people; ever-increasing darkness and manifestations of evil; the intensifying and increased occurrence of natural disasters; and a slow, almost non-existent moving forward of the Kingdom through the evangelistic mission. In a 2003 article, one denominational leader summed up the condition of the church in America with these words—"Western Christianity has retreated from the battle for the souls of men to hollow pursuits of self-comfort" (James T. Draper, "Sobering Accusation" in *Facts and Trends*, October 7, 2003). Judgment begins with the people of God, (1 Pet. 4:17) and Scripture reminds us that the Lord chastens those He loves (Heb. 12:6). Our impact on lostness is minimal despite all our prayer meetings, strategies, marketing plans, resources and missional efforts. Spiritual famine has come and there is little rain. Does that reality not grieve your heart? The pressing question is—how will I respond?

- Pray that the Lord will open your eyes to see the reality of God's judgment
- Pray for the Lord to have mercy on you, your church and our nation

DAY 2 ➤ **Blinded by the Routine**

Luke 19:44, "Because you did not know the time of your visitation."

As humans we are all creatures of habit and we like it when things are somewhat predictable, normal and controllable.

There is nothing wrong with that desire except when we become so dependent on the normal routine that any variation or unplanned event upsets us and disrupts our ability to cope with life itself. This mindset can be especially dangerous as it relates to our faith, worship and relationship with Christ. An unhealthy focus on religious ritual and routine can produce spiritual dullness and apathy. When that happens, we substitute our relationship with Christ for ritualistic or legalistic religion. The outcome can be disastrous for God's people.

In Luke 19:44 Jesus explains why judgment was coming upon His people in Jerusalem. It was because they did not "know" the "time" of God's visitation among them. Jesus, the long awaited Messiah, had come. The greatest revelation of God in history was taking

place and the religious leaders in that day missed it. In fact, they did not just miss it, they rejected Jesus and His call to take up their cross and follow Him (John 1:4-13). Why? Because they were spiritually blind and could not see. They were consumed with the ritual of their religious activity. In that day, the activity of worship in the temple was a finely oiled machine. Three shifts of priests ensured that the process of sacrifices and prayers were not interrupted. It became all about the practice of religion—offering sacrifices, burning incense and offering prayers. The result, they missed God and 37 years later, in AD 70, at the hands of General Titus, God's judgment came, just as Jesus had promised (19:42-44). Today, the worship environment in the church in America is not much different. Services are often dull, dry and all about the worship experience or religious activity. Is it really all about the process, the routine and the religious activities—just getting it done? God's people in Jerusalem thought so and look what happened!

- **Ask the Lord to forgive your focus on religious ritual rather than Christ**
- **Pray for the church in America to wake up to the reality of its spiritual dullness and repent of its focus on religious activity rather than its relationship with God**

DAY 3 ➤ Are you satisfied with a trickling?

John 15:16, "I chose you...that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain..."

When God visits with His people in revival, the end result is always a rapid moving forward of the gospel through the obedience and witness of His people. The Congregationalist church in Northampton, Mass., is an excellent example of this principle. In 1729 Jonathan Edwards became pastor following the death of his maternal grandfather, Samuel Stoddard, who was pastor. As pastor, God gave Edwards a deep burden to see the spiritual life of the church increase. After preaching a series of sermons on the theme of "Justification by Faith" in 1734, Edwards began to see spiritual transformation in many peoples' lives. Transformation was authentic and far reaching. As the numbers multiplied, the Northampton church and community became a catalyst and magnet for people seeking Christ. As people visited the church and community and encountered God's presence, they subsequently returned to their communities, sharing Christ through a genuinely converted life. Bars and taverns were soon emptied and lostness was impacted all along the Connecticut River Valley.

It is sad that this is not happening in America today. In fact, the opposite is taking place. People are leaving the church and apathy and complacency among current members is rampant. There is only a trickling, not a rapid running of the gospel and baptisms are at a low point in most denominations. It should be evident that a lack of fruit is not God's fault—He is the one who produces fruit for His Kingdom. However, it is obvious that God is not giving fruit for our labors. Could it be that God is judging His people for their apathy, complacency, sin and wickedness? Could it be that the church in America has departed from God and He cannot give fruit to wayward congregations? But I'm not convinced the lack of fruit really matters to us today. We talk about the problem, sometimes pray about it and even at times meet and spend hours strategizing on how it can change. Yet, we never really get to the root of the problem—our sin and God's judgment. Will we always be satisfied with a trickling of the gospel?

- Ask the Lord to burden your heart for the absence of lasting fruit for God's Kingdom
- Pray for your church to become burdened and broken over a lack of Kingdom fruit

DAY 4 ➤ When the Darkness Rises

John 3:19, "Men loved darkness rather than the Light..."

In the decades prior to 1700, the church in New England was in decline. The institution and promotion of the Half-way Covenant by many churches ensured that churches were full of people without a genuine conversion experience. This resulted in a cultural Christian environment where biblical standards were ignored as congregants began to embrace the ways of the world. Because of the obvious lack of influence by the church and the simultaneous occurrence of natural disasters, plagues and war (which church leaders attested to God's judgment), Christian leaders met in New England to pray and discuss the dire situation. The outcome was an urgent call to prayer, a call to a genuine conversion experience and the practice of a godly life in obedience to God's Word. By the early 1700s there was a stirring of God's Spirit that culminated in the First Great Awakening (1732-1745).

It should be evident to believers in America that God is not pleased with the declining spiritual condition of the church and culture. Manifestations

of evil and hedonistic/humanistic ideologies are rapidly increasing. The biblical definition of marriage, which has always been accepted as the cultural norm in America, is under attack. The impact of the gospel is waning, darkness is increasing and the light is growing dim. How can this be? As the text for today so clearly states—men loved darkness rather than the light. We love darkness and it is evident that God has His back to us. James says that when the church is a friend of the world, it becomes God's enemy (James 4:4). If evil is prevailing, and the Bible is clear that the gates of Hell cannot prevail against Christ and His church (Matt. 16:18), don't you suppose that God is not on our side right now? That should be a scary thought. Have we forgotten that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Prov. 1:7)? I believe it's time to get together and pray—don't you?

- Pray that your life will demonstrate a genuine conversion experience to others
- Pray for church leaders everywhere to come together in repentance, prayer and holy living

DAY 5 When There is No Wisdom

Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge..."

When God is judging His people, one of the first indicators is the fleeting away of wisdom among leaders and followers. In today's text, Hosea uses the term, "knowledge," which refers to an "intimate knowledge" grounded upon a vital, active relationship. This intimate knowledge is a revealed knowledge and followers of Christ experience it as they walk with God in fellowship and obedience. When this is not the case and unconfessed sin and disobedience are present, there is a lack of God-given wisdom present in their lives.

This lack of wisdom among American believers and Christian leaders is especially evident today. I was greatly disturbed when I read about a prominent Christian writer, speaker and leader who has publically stated that he is now actively involved in tournament poker. In another instance, a prominent Christian leader and businessman has stated that his company will, in the future, remain silent on the gay marriage issue, and will focus on the business, although he adheres personally to the biblical

stance on homosexuality. The list of unwise or even immoral practices among Christian leaders within the last year continues: a prominent man and boy's ministry leader whose confession of an inappropriate relationship with a woman led to the closing of the ministry; accusations of plagiarism toward a prominent pastor, inappropriate spending of personal and ministry monies, and inaccurate reporting of baptisms and ministry growth. These unwise decisions not only point to a lack of wisdom regarding the placing of processes and structures that will diminish or curtail opportunities for temptation, but they also point to a failure to make ethically or morally sound decisions because of personal preferences, sin or a bending to cultural pressures. In a day when the church in America is rapidly losing its credibility with the lost world because of inconsistencies and hypocrisy and in a day when a genuine Christ-centered faith is desperately needed to impact lostness, the church seems to be plagued with many unwise decisions. Do you think God is trying to get our attention?

- Pray that you will guard your heart from unwise decisions through a close intimate walk with Christ
- Ask God to have mercy upon His church in America and restore wisdom as we repent and return to Him

SECTION 2 ▶

"Greater Things" through a Renewed Relationship

"If My people who are called by My name" (2 Chronicles 7:14). God's desire is for His people to heed His rebuke through His chastening hand and return to Him in a restored relationship. We have left our first love (Rev. 2:4). We have made our focus our selfish desires and not the God who saves. We have set our eyes on the earthly not the eternal. Yet, the Lord pursues and is jealous for His Spirit which lives in us. His desire is for us to walk in His renewed presence, that we might once again be instruments of His grace to a lost and dying world. Revival begins with God and His renewing work among His people, the people who are really His. God is looking for His people to be His people.

DAY 6 ➤ "If" My People

2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My People..."

Solomon, having just been warned that the people of God would likely turn away in sin and experience the judging hand of God (2 Chronicles 7:13), is now faced with God's call to revival in verse 14. The Lord points to His desire for restoration and relationship when He singles out those who are called by His name in the first few words of verse 14. Just as God's reference to His judgment in verse 13 is not really about the world, neither is God's call to restoration in verse 14. It is first about His people and their walk with Him. Scripture is replete with the Father's love and desire for intimacy with His children (Jeremiah 31:3; John 15:1-16). This is at the heart of God's plan for the renewal of His people and their usefulness as His instruments of salvation, healing and light in a dark world (Acts 3:19; Joel 12:12-32; 1 Peter 2:9-10).

It is evident from 2 Chronicles 7:14 that restoration is conditional. The

little word "if" helps us realize the conditional nature of God's invitation. God is a gentleman and although He squeezes His people with judgment and discipline—He will never force us to answer His call to repent and return to Him in relationship. That truth is a humbling thought. Think about it, God, the creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is within them, is calling us to recognize that we have strayed from Him and is inviting us to come back to Him and experience His forgiveness and renewed blessings. And furthermore, once that happens, He promises that He will once again use us as His instruments to proclaim His gracious love and healing to a broken land. "If My people" is an invitation to those who are His through Jesus. God is concerned about the church in America and our broken relationship with Him. I think an appropriate question for us is—Are we concerned enough to answer His invitation?

- Ask God to grip your heart concerning your responsibility to be sure your relationship with Christ is intimate and holy
- Pray that the church in America will accept God's invitation to return to Him in repentance

DAY 7 ➤ God's Love is Different

Jeremiah 31:3, "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love..."

Dwight L. Moody was called the evangelist of the people. His sermons, while Bible-based, were chocked full of personal and real life stories and illustrations. Moody aimed for the heart as he preached and called for a decision to follow Jesus. He would start with the truth of God's judgment on fallen man, but he would quickly move toward the need that sinners have to experience God's redeeming love through faith in Christ. This emphasis on God's love had its roots in Moody's conversion experience. Moody was converted while working in his uncle's shoe shop. Edward Kimball cornered him and quickly told Moody of God's love for him. Moody would later testify that the love of Christ had broken his heart. That love became the compelling factor behind his burning desire to tell others of Christ.

In today's text, the Lord reminds His people of His patient, outwardly flowing and loyal love for them. The two major terms for God's love in the

Old Testament are used in this verse. First Jeremiah uses the term for God's outwardly flowing love (ahab). It is sacrificial love and has the recipient's best interest in mind. Paul reminds us of this kind of love when he says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). The second term refers to God's loyal love for His people (hesed). It demonstrates His patient and covenant love that is centered in His relational loyalty and desire to show mercy toward His people. This "longsuffering" love is extended toward his people who deserve judgment and who are guilty in their sin—yet He stays His hand of wrath and renders mercy. The Psalmist would say of this love that it "endures forever" (Psalm 136). Revival is only possible because of God's love. His love is sacrificial, patient, loyal and full of mercy. God's love should compel us to seek Him for revival with hopeful, broken and desperate hearts. Have you started?

- Pray for a broken heart in response to God's loyal and patient love
- Ask the Lord to pour out His merciful love on His church in America, impacting lostness

DAY 8 ➤ When God Knocks

Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock..."

Richard Baxter believed in knocking on doors. Baxter, a Puritan pastor in Kidderminster, England, from 1641-1660, upon his arrival found the congregation in spiritual disarray and decline. To remedy this condition, Baxter began preaching hour-long sermons that were full of passion and the power of God. Baxter would be the first to agree that preaching was not the only way things were going to change. Baxter believed in heartfelt prayer and diligence in the making of disciples. Baxter set out to meet with each family in his parish, one on one. He would go to their homes, knock on their doors and spend an hour with 15-16 families per week until he had visited with all his families each year (some 800 families a year). Baxter repeated the process yearly. It is recorded that almost the entire adult populace of Kidderminster was converted. Baxter built relationships as he intentionally visited with his parishioners. He loved them dearly, prayed for and with them and labored for a vital faith and life in Christ for everyone under his care. His model of pastoral disciple-making is exceptional.

In Revelation 3:20 Jesus stands at the door of His church knocking. His appeal is for them to have ears to hear and for them to open their hearts to His presence. It is an invitation to His people to experience a renewed faith, centered in a vibrant relationship and in meaningful fellowship, resulting in oneness with Jesus. In the previous passages (Rev. 2-3), Jesus has just spoken candidly concerning the condition of His people in the churches in Asia Minor. His verdict—they have left their first love, were persecuted yet faithful, involved in idolatry, worldly, persevering through opportunities, dead but appearing alive and lukewarm in the faith. Sound familiar? Today, Jesus is seeking out his followers. He desires intimacy, fellowship and relationship. He wants disciple-makers who will walk with him, impacting lostness. Jesus is standing before us knocking, waiting, knocking, waiting, knocking, waiting. Do you hear the knock? Will you open the door?

- Pray for sensitive ears to hear Jesus' invitation to draw near in fellowship and a vital faith walk
- Pray that the church in America will hear Jesus knocking, and will open the door through repentance and faith, experiencing His renewed presence and power

DAY 9 ➤ Character Change

Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed..."

During the 1857-58 Layman's Prayer Revival, God moved mightily on college campuses. In Massachusetts 150 towns experienced a significant move of the Spirit. Some 5,000 people were converted in the first month as the revival fires burned. Amherst College president William Stearns reported that the college was penetrated greatly by the reviving work of God. He said that nearly all the students had experienced a change of heart. Stearns shared that there was no sudden, sweeping rush toward conversion and godliness, but rather an individual, honest dealing with sin before God. Stearns would later say that the most recognizable result of the movement was the "reformation of character" that took place in students' lives. Students who had been living worldly lives were changed. Students who had been living self-absorbed lives were changed. Christians who had been living unfruitful lives were changed.

is character-oriented. Why? Because character drives behavior. Paul challenges believers not to conform to the ways of the world, but to be transformed by the renewing work of Christ. The term "transformed" refers to one being "metamorphosized" or "changed from within." Just as a caterpillar is changed into a beautiful butterfly through the process of metamorphosis, so revival brings a necessary yet painful transformation and reshaping of a believer's character. Adjustments in character require a continuous surrender and renewing of one's mind through the power of God's regenerating Spirit. Why is this necessary? Because this "character change" produces believers who once again demonstrate God's will through a God-centered life, impacting lostness. Revival always requires "character adjustments" in believers' lives. Are you ready and willing for God to make character adjustments in your life?

In Romans 12:2 believers are reminded of the constant change that is necessary in their lives. This change

- Pray toward continuous transformation by God's Spirit in your life
- Pray for The Lord to begin a "character change" in your church

DAY 10 ➤ Recipients of Much

1 Corinthians 4:7, "And what do you have that you did not receive?"

In 1895, when itinerate evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman felt God's call to return to the pastorate, his advance man, Billy Sunday, found himself without a job. When Sunday's position ended with Chapman, Sunday was at a crossroads in life. He had no income, a family to support and nothing to do. In his despair, Sunday prayed and laid it all before God. Soon, a telegram came inviting him to come and speak at a series of meetings in Garner, Iowa, and the rest is history. Billy Sunday's evangelistic ministry exploded and for the next 39 years Sunday preached Christ to over 100 million people with approximately 1 million converts being recorded. Despite his animated and sometimes sensational speaking style, Sunday never lost sight of the fact that the opportunities and accomplishments he had were indeed because of Jesus. He knew he had received much from God and with that came much responsibility and gratitude. He lived his life accordingly.

When Paul spoke the words in 1 Corinthians 4:7, "and what do you have that you did not receive?" he was helping believers realize that boasting in their spiritual accomplishments was nothing but pride, arrogance and a lack of dependence upon God. Paul reminded the Corinthians that no matter how great they thought they and their accomplishments were, boasting in man and not in the God of grace who gives every good and perfect gift is sin. Historically, the church in America has been the recipient of much missional and ministry successes and blessings. Yet, it seems that our gratitude and sense of responsibility has waned. We are often prideful about our churches, our ministries, our church plants, our spiritual growth, our focus on missions and our denominations. It is time for us to accept God's invitation to once again be His people, people who are focused on who He is, what He can do and not on self. Think about what could happen, "If my people who are called by my name . . .?"

- Pray that your heart will overflow with gratitude to God for all that you have in Christ
- Pray toward the conviction of self-centered and prideful ways that are rampant in the American church

SECTION 3 ▶

"Greater Things" through Humility before God

"If My people . . . humble themselves" (2 Chron. 7:14). At the heart of our sinful nature is pride. We tend to think that we are capable of accomplishing great things for God, or even for ourselves and others. We want to do things our way and in our power. We are wrong! Pride puts us in direct opposition with God. We must allow the Spirit of Christ to destroy our pride. The remedy for our pride is unconditional surrender before a holy God. Revival God's way comes as God's people humble themselves before Him. Only then can "Greater Things" be accomplished.

DAY 11 ➤ Dying to Self

2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people...will humble themselves..."

The path of a disciple requires death to self. The problem, nobody likes to die. I do not like to die to self and neither do you. Yet Jesus requires this death if we are to follow Him (Matt. 16:24-25). This call to humility before God is both personal and corporate. It begins individually within the realm of a believer's personal walk with Christ. When that happens, it can happen collectively as believers walk in humility together in community. Both walks are difficult because all believers and congregations are on a continuum of faith. Both require surrender of all our desires and all our rights.

The term "humble" refers to the concept of lying prostrate before God in unconditional surrender. The one who has knelt in humility is dependent on the other's response. At the heart of humility before God is death to any self-centered desires, self-worth and self-accomplishment. When we humble ourselves before God, we have decided that we can do no more, and we have nothing else to offer. We become like a soldier and an army that

has decided to lay down their arms. It's risky and certainly not a pleasant part of the journey—yet it is necessary if change is to come. We have reached the end of ourselves, and He is now our only hope. Absolute dependence in Him begins at this point. It will eventually lead us to victory and greater things—but not yet. We are only at the beginning stages of being available for His Spirit to change us and our hopeless situation. We have begun our journey toward revival. We have recognized His judgment and heard His invitation to return to Him. We have died to self, and humbled ourselves before Him. At this very moment our fixation is on Him. It is not on self, our situation and not even on our inability to change our circumstances. Our heart is finally fixed on Him and He alone holds our future in His hands. Are you there?

- Ask the Father to show you areas of self that need to die
- Pray that the church in America will lay aside its pride and humble itself before God

DAY 12 ▶ Letting Go

John 12:27-28, "Now my soul is troubled...Father, glorify your name."

A few years ago one of my daughters was on a mission trip in Africa when we received an email from her where she related to us her activities that day. It went something like this: "Mom and Dad, about the time you are reading this email I will be bungee-jumping off the second highest bungee jump in the world (Victoria Falls)." She ended the message with a statement that was obviously made in fun (not sure her mom took it that way)—"I will call you later if the rope does not break, ha, ha." Thankfully, the rope did not break. Later, when we discussed the event with our daughter, I asked her what she thought was the hardest or scariest part about the jump. She immediately answered, "Letting go of the bridge platform." After she let go of the railing, the rest was easy. That was the moment of decision, the moment of trust. Letting go is always difficult.

In today's text, Jesus is praying about His surrender through obedience to the cross. He has just spoken about

fruit coming when a grain of wheat dies in the dirt (John 12:24). He related it to serving and following Him, the key point being dying and letting go of self. He then says in verse 27, "My soul is troubled." "Troubled" refers to an "agitation" of the heart and mind that grips the soul. Jesus, in His humanity, is struggling with letting go and totally surrendering to the Father's purposes through the cross, resurrection and ascension. Yet, in verse 28 Jesus victoriously exclaims, "Father, glorify Your Name." In other words, Jesus is saying, "Father, let's do this, I am letting go of the pain, suffering, humiliation and death that is before me. I trust you and your purposes. It is all for you Father, that you may be exalted and lifted up among the nations." If the Father is to be glorified through revival, we must let go! Have you let go and died to self?

- ▶ Pray for the courage to let go of self in total abandonment to Christ
- ▶ Ask the Lord to bring your church to the point of death to its will, ways and wants, glorifying and trusting Jesus for genuine revival

DAY 13 ➤ From Dirt to Dependence

James 4:10, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."

In 1505 Martin Luther committed his life to becoming a very pious monk, taking very seriously the renunciation of self, the prayers, fasts and service to the poor. Yet, despite his zeal, Luther became more dissatisfied with his sin, his lack of peace and his guilt. After a trip to Rome in 1511, which allowed Luther to see first-hand the corruption of the church and its leaders, Luther was invited to join the faculty at Wittenberg. In 1514, while involved in a very intense time of study, Luther was gripped by Psalm 22 as it related to the teachings of Paul on justification by faith, the sinful nature of man and the righteousness of God. He now understood—through Jesus' death and identification with sinful man on the cross, it was the righteousness of God in Christ that allowed the just to live by faith. Luther finally found peace as he depended on Christ through faith for His salvation. Once this was settled, the Lord lifted Luther up as an apostle of faith and key instrument in the Protestant Reformation.

In today's text James reminds believers that the only way to revival is through humility and dependence. The phrase "humble yourselves" refers to absolute surrender and recognition of one's spiritual frailty and unworthiness. As a believer, you deplore your present spiritual condition so much that you bow humbly before a holy God. At that point you move into a state of utter dependence. You are wasted and finished with your efforts toward change, looking now to God for everything. Only then is the servant of Christ in a position to be "lifted up" by God. "Lifted up" refers to one's restoration to spiritual worth and dignity. Before this point, you were a hindrance and of no use to Christ, but now you have become a vessel through whom the power of Christ can flow. Revival never comes without this kind of humility. The only way to be lifted up is to bow down before God. Are you bowing yet?

- Ask God to give you a spirit of humility in service to Christ
- Pray that the church in America will recognize and deplore its present spiritual condition humbling itself before God

DAY 14 ➤ I Can Do it Myself

Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."

I will never forget my daughter's words to me as I tried to help her learn the art of tying a shoe. She said, "Daddy, I will do it myself!" Well, being the stubborn dad that I was, I demanded that she submit and let me teach her how to tie a shoe correctly. She pushed back and kept saying, "Do it myself, do it myself." So, I let her do it herself. Ten minutes later, after many failed attempts and even more tears, my little independent angel surrendered and let me begin the process of teaching her how to tie her shoes. And, to no surprise, it was not long before she was able to "do it herself." Her puffed-up, independent attitude resulted in failure, frustration and a broken spirit. But she was then ready to admit that she needed her father's help.

The lesson my daughter learned is one of the major lessons that the American church needs to learn. What is that lesson? A prideful, arrogant heart that is not teachable will fail miserably! It is a fact, we are failing to impact lostness

and reach the American culture with the good news of Jesus. Do you ever wonder why? Today's scripture text speaks directly to the heart of the problem. When pride and arrogance are present, destruction and failure are soon to follow. The word pride describes a boastful confidence in one's own accomplishments and ability. The phrase "haughty spirit" refers to a continuous attitude that is puffed-up and self-absorbed. Both are a picture of someone who is spiritually blind and believes that they have greater wisdom, ability and honor than God. They may never admit that this attitude is present, but their actions point to a life that does not pray, is self-absorbed and self-centered. Pride and a haughty spirit produce a false sense of self-confidence which ultimately leads to complete failure and destruction. Do you think it is time for us to humble ourselves before God?

- Ask the Lord to forgive any prideful attitudes in your heart
- Pray for believers and churches to confess prideful and arrogant ways seeking the Lord in genuine humility and repentance

DAY 15 ➤ Where is your Gaze?

Numbers 21:8, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole, and...everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."

The people of God were in trouble because of their sin. Although the Lord sent fiery serpents to judge their sin, Moses fixed his heart on the Lord and humbled himself in prayer on their behalf. God answered, not by taking the people out of their dangerous circumstance, but by providing a way for the people to be saved if they were bitten. God commanded Moses to place a bronze serpent on a standard in the camp. When bitten, the people had only to set their gaze upon the bronze serpent to live. Otherwise, they would die. God did not take the serpents away, but He did provide a way to live. This foreshadowing of Jesus and the cross reminds believers of a simple truth—look to Christ and live, look elsewhere and perish.

In the late 1700s, just before the 2nd Great Awakening (1787-1843), the spiritual and moral life on most college campuses was in decline. Most students believed that if there was a God, His ultimate plan was for man to

be happy and enjoy the creative order. Alcohol flowed freely, even on most so-called "Christian-based" colleges. Profanity was embraced by most students and during the last decade of the 1700s, the typical Harvard student was an atheist. However, not all students had their gaze on the world and its man-centered philosophies. In 1806, a group of believers at Williams College in western Massachusetts had their hearts set on the Lord. As they met to pray in a maple grove near the campus, a sudden thunderstorm forced the students to seek cover under a haystack that was on a small platform. Though the storm was short lived, the prayer meeting produced lasting results. What scholars call the Haystack Prayer Meeting turned into a campus revival at Williams College and eventually resulted in the birth of the American foreign missions movement. This is an example of what can take place when God's people humbly set their eyes on Him and not themselves or the world. Where is your gaze?

- Pray that your heart and mind will be fixed on Jesus
- Ask the Father to set your church's gaze on God and His kingdom purposes

SECTION 4 ➤

"Greater Things" through Passionate Prayer

"If my people . . . will . . . pray" (2 Chronicles 7:14). At the heart of our relationship with Christ is prayer. Prayer is centered in relationship and dialogue with the triune God of the Bible. It involves communion, fellowship, talking, listening and confession. Prayer allows us to know and do the Father's will. Prayer also is the avenue for the unleashing of God's power through His Spirit. It produces an atmosphere for growth and the free work of God's Spirit, impacting lostness. When the church is revived, God's Spirit is unleashed in awakening. Every great revival and awakening, both biblically and historically, have been preceded and permeated with passionate prayer. Greater things can take place as God's people pray.

DAY 16 ➤ God, Have Mercy!

2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people...will...pray..."

Solomon believed in prayer. He had covered the construction of the temple in prayer, and the Lord was pleased with His prayers (2 Chronicles 7:1, 12). Yet, he is told by the Father that passionate prayer was needed, especially when God has to judge His people because of disobedience and sin (7:13). The term used for prayer in 2 Chronicles 7:14 is the most common term used for prayer in the Old Testament. It has at its root the concept of laying prostrate before God in prayer. It is prayer that arises from a humble and dependent position. The force of its use in this context also points toward prayer from a desperate state or condition. The one praying is hopeless and cries out in his hopelessness to the Father. The one praying understands that it is the Father who has brought calamity upon him and likewise the Father is the only one who can change his situation. It is a cry for mercy that originates out of brokenness and humility.

King David understood this kind of desperate prayer in Psalm 51:1, when he prayed, "Have mercy upon me, O God." Joel understood this kind of prayer when he challenged the priests to pray, "Spare Your people, O Lord, and do not give Your heritage to reproach" (Joel 2:17). Nehemiah understood this kind of prayer when he prayed for the Lord to grant him mercy in the sight of the king (Neh. 1:11). In Luke 18:13, the tax collector also understood this passionate, humble kind of prayer when he cried out, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" As God judges His people because of their sin and disobedience, He urges them toward prayer that is desperate, dependent and centered on Him. Mercy in the midst of judgment can only be obtained and granted from God. Maybe the reason revival has not come is because this kind of prayer is neither a reality personally nor in our churches. Shall we pray?

- Desperately pray toward God's mercy through a broken and contrite heart
- Ask God to convict His people of the need to gather in desperate prayer for revival and awakening

DAY 17 ➤ Where are the Weapons?

Isaiah 64:7, "And there is no one who calls on Your name..."

On D-Day, June 6, 1944, U.S. army rangers had a difficult assignment. They were to assault Point du Hoc, a formidable German artillery battery and strongpoint fortified with large 155mm guns. If the rangers did not accomplish their mission, the American forces landing on Omaha and Utah beaches could easily be destroyed. The mission was difficult, as the rangers had to scale a 100-foot cliff to get to the guns. When they reached the top of the cliffs they found wooden gun mounts instead of the 155mm weapons. To their surprise, the Germans had moved them inland to protect them while they were refortifying the gun positions. The massive German 155mm guns, although powerful weapons, were of no use to the defending German forces.

In his book, *The Weapon of Prayer*, E. M. Bounds describes prayer as a mighty weapon that every believer has in his or her arsenal to impact lostness. He also points to the reality that often, the weapon of prayer is

neglected by leaders and by churches. In today's text, Isaiah speaks to this prayerlessness among God's people. He says that, in the days of spiritual wickedness and famine, God's people do not even call upon His name. "Call" represents a passionate, desperate cry from the heart for one's presence and help. Isaiah also says that no one stirs themselves up to "take hold" of God in prayer. In other words, there is no real concern over the matter. In the illustration above, the German weapons were not in a position for use against the allied forces and were therefore not a factor in the battle for Normandy. Today the church in America is limiting its effectiveness because of its prayerlessness. Prayer gatherings are often non-existent or scarcely attended and we seem more dependent on methods, marketing techniques and our own plans and abilities to impact lostness rather than on God. I believe it is time to bend the knee and use the weapon of prayer, don't you?

- Pray that you will be in a right position to impact lostness by first bending the knee in prayer
- Pray for churches to realize the desperate need to use the mighty weapon of prayer

DAY 18 ➤ Costly Access

Hebrews 10:19, "Therefore, having boldness to enter...by the blood of Jesus."

When revival began to sweep the Punjab region in India around 1904, few realized the sacrificial prayer effort that lay behind the awakening. Since 1892, John "Praying" Hyde, a Presbyterian missionary, had been laboring daily for a revived missionary force and awakening in India. In fact, around 1896, Hyde had begun spending many nights each month in unceasing and non-stop prayer. In 1904, Hyde and several other missionaries began the Punjab Prayer Union. It had as its purpose an outpouring of God's Spirit in revival among the missionaries and a harvest of souls. Later that year, a missionary gathering at Sialkot became the target of much prayer as missionaries John Hyde, M'Cheyne Paterson and George Turner spent 30 days prior to the gathering in continuous prayer. When the convention started, John Hyde and others spent days and nights fasting and praying in the prayer room. Shortly after, missionaries began to be empowered and the number of conversions grew exponentially. This awakening did not come without a price. Revival cost John

Hyde his health and eventually his life as his body was weakened and frail due to exhaustion. Hyde's heart was also disjointed within his chest cavity, due to his strenuous and heartfelt intercession.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us of the price Jesus paid to provide His followers access into God's presence through prayer. The cost was Jesus' blood, which covers a believer's sin and allows Christ's righteousness to be seen by the Father, therefore allowing entrance into the "holy place." Because of this, believers can "boldly" pray with complete freedom, in an unhindered way, and with great confidence toward the mission and God's Kingdom coming in and through people's lives. It is this kind of bold praying that is costly, but also makes an eternal difference. If revival and awakening are going to sweep America we must be willing to pay the price through intense, bold intercession. How are we doing?

- Thank Jesus for His sacrifice which allows you access into God's presence
- Pray for believers and churches to be willing to pay the price through fasting, bold intercession and persevering prayer for revival and awakening

DAY 19 ➤ Where are You?

Genesis 3:9, "Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are You?'"

During the battle of Ia Drang, the first major battle between American and North Vietnamese forces during the Vietnam War, Lieutenant Colonel Hal Moore landed and dispersed his 7th Calvary troops accordingly. Moore, who later wrote a book about the battle (which became the basis for the movie *We Were Soldiers*), became concerned when he received word during the early stages of the battle that one of his platoons was cut off and surrounded. As the battle raged the first day, the cut-off platoon continued to fight, suffering many casualties, including its lieutenant, Henry Herrick. Later that afternoon, sergeant Ernie Savage assumed command of the platoon. After an attempt to reach the cut-off platoon failed in late afternoon, nightfall settled upon the battlefield. In anticipation of being rescued, Savage radioed his superior officer back at the American lines asking, where they were. Painfully, Savage received the words that the rescue team was not coming that night. The lost platoon was eventually rescued the next day.

Some of the saddest words spoken in Scripture are the words spoken by God to Adam in the garden when He said, "Where are you?" Adam responded that he was afraid because he was naked so he hid from God. God's heart was broken as he confronted Adam regarding his disobedience and sin. The relationship between God and man was splintered, and sin entered the world. God's judgment came, resulting in the banishment of man and woman from the garden. Their relationship was eternally changed with God. Access into His presence would only be possible through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Thankfully, through Jesus, that relationship can be restored and the believer can come before God as a priest and intercessor. I cannot help but wonder, because of the prayerlessness, disobedience to the Great Commission and the unholy lifestyle of Christians and churches in America, if God is once again saying to his people—"Where are you?"

- Ask the Lord to show you areas of your relationship in which you have strayed away from Him
- Pray that the American church will answer God's call to repent and return to Him in a vital relationship through prayer

DAY 20 ➤ Praying Ground

Psalm 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear."

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963), Christian missionary alliance pastor, writer and leader, advocated a deeper life through prayer. Tozer's sermons and writings both reflected his deep spiritual life and his conviction that the church was in danger of compromising and embracing the ways of the world. This would, according to Tozer, render the church impotent in its prayers and in its quest to be salt and light. Tozer believed that effective prayer consisted of two major elements in a Christian's life. Prayer was to be offered in the will of God and the believer had to be on "praying ground." Praying ground came when a Christian was praying out of a life that was surrendered to and pleasing to God. Tozer often reminded believers that God was not obligated to answer the prayers of believers and churches who were living immoral, disobedient and compromised lives.

The Psalmist points to this same truth in Psalm 66:18. To "regard" sin in one's life is to "see, observe, perceive or even to discern" that there

is disobedience, rebellion or actions present that displease God. The word "iniquity" relates not only to evil but also to wickedness. The emphasis is on the action of sin and evil or the planning, labor or working out of sin in one's life. Thus, as the words "regard" and "iniquity" are brought together, the emphasis is upon the observation, intention and action of evil. It is a passage that seeks to expose one's character and the motive behind prayer. When a believer's heart attitudes and outward actions do not line up, the Lord will not hear or respond to prayer. God will intentionally and willingly refuse to hear or respond to prayers that are prayed from a sinful heart. The American church has been in a prayer movement for 40 plus years. Yet, revival tarries and the darkness increases. It seems as if the Lord is not answering or responding. Do you ever wonder why? Are you on praying ground?

- Pray toward clean hands and a pure heart before God
- Ask the Lord to expose hypocrisy and sin in your church so that your church can be on "praying ground"

SECTION 5➤

"Greater Things" through Seeking His face in Repentance

"If My people will . . . seek My face and turn from their wicked ways" (2 Chron. 7:14). At the heart of revival is an honest and genuine seeking of God's face or favor. This "seeking" is intense and should be with the whole heart. It is a seeking of His favor, His manifest presence, His attentiveness to prayer and His forgiveness through repentance. It is an earnest seeking of God, motivated by a sincere brokenness over sin and a lack of God's manifest presence. Greater things can occur when His people are once again broken-hearted over His absence, desperately seeking Him through repentance, with their whole hearts.

DAY 21 ➤ Seeking God's Face

2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people...will...seek My face and turn from their wicked ways..."

In this text, God says that His people must seek His face if they are to be restored and experience His blessings in their lives. The term "seek" refers to a desperate seeking that is motivated by the inability of His people to experience the manifest presence of God in their midst. His favor, protection, blessings and anointing are no longer present among His people. Why? Because of their sin! Solomon is told that when God judges His people, when He chastises them because of their willful disobedience, He withdraws His nearness and favor. This is a vivid picture of God, with His back to His people. Instead of being pleased with them, He is angry. Instead of His hand of blessing and favor, He renders His judgment. Instead of hearing their prayers, He turns a dull ear. This is tragic, yet it is a present reality in the church across America.

This part of 2 Chronicles 7:14 speaks to a profound truth. When God's people recognize His absence, they should

begin to seek His presence and His favor in their lives. God's absence should scare us to death! The absence of God's manifest presence should create a panic, a desperate state of despair and restlessness among us. So much so, that it should drive us to our knees to seek Him in desperation and love. Be mindful of this fact, this is not a casual seeking. It is an intense, desperate seeking with one's whole heart. Jeremiah says it well, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for me with all your heart (Jer. 29:13). This seeking is also centered in a genuine understanding of our need to repent of our sin. God has not moved, we have. We have departed in sin and must return through repentance. This is revival God's way. Most churches and believers are content with the way things are. We could care less that God's face is not upon us. What about you and your church—do you care?

- Pray for a broken heart over the lack of God's manifest presence in your life
- Repent and confess your sins before God personally and as a congregation, seeking His favor, forgiveness and renewed presence

DAY 22 ➤ Are You Reflecting Jesus?

Ephesians 5:1, "Be imitators of God as dear children."

A church growth expert recently posed this question—Does your church reflect your community? Practically speaking, this excellent question needs to be asked by most churches. However, I believe that today Christians need to ask a more pressing question. Do we as believers and as a church reflect Jesus to our community? If Jesus is not being reflected in our world, then our priorities are certainly out of place. The vital spiritual life of Christ is what communities need to see and experience. That is where we have gotten in trouble. We often are more concerned about how we appear to others rather than simply allowing Jesus to live through us. We also are often consumed with the activities and actions related to our ministry plans, programs, fellowships and efforts. We work and we strive and are satisfied with what we can accomplish through our own efforts and expertise.

An "imitator" of God is someone who actually "mimics" the life and character of God. The force of this text is that this imitator is to "become," or "spring into being." It does not just happen, but takes place through the saving and sanctifying work of Christ's Spirit. It is therefore not just an outward expression of God, but an outward expression driven by genuine and true character and is the product of God's Holy Spirit. In order for this "mimicking" of God to take place, His Spirit must not only be present in and with us, but flowing freely through our lives and ministries. When believers and churches focus all their energy and efforts on the doing and telling of the gospel, communities see a false image of Christ—one that is limited by what man can accomplish. I believe it's time for believers and churches to give due attention to the being of the gospel, so our world can see the real Jesus. Who are you mimicking?

Ephesians 5:1 is a wake-up call to become more concerned about who we reflect rather than what we reflect.

- Pray for a Christ-like character to be reflected through your life
- Pray for the church to be more concerned about "who" they mimic rather than what they mimic

DAY 23 ➤ Partial Obedience

Jeremiah 7:23, "Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people."

The North China Revival took place during the early part of the 20th century and swept most of Manchuria and northeastern China with a fresh outpouring of the Spirit of Christ. A great harvest of souls followed as a Canadian Presbyterian missionary by the name of Jonathan Goforth surrendered to God's purposes. As he studied the Scriptures and read Charles Finney's works on revival, Goforth became convinced that the Lord wanted to send a great awakening among the Chinese people. He began to labor diligently toward that end and God soon blessed his initial zeal. However, as he sought to reach out to other mission areas, God spoke into his heart regarding an area of partial obedience in his life. Goforth had a relationship that was broken with a fellow missionary. Goforth felt he was justified in the matter because the missionary had earlier approached him in tears, confessing and asking forgiveness. While preaching one day, Goforth knew in his heart that the matter was not settled. As he obeyed the Lord and reconciled with the fellow

missionary, revival followed in each of the areas Goforth visited.

Jeremiah 7:23 reminds us to obey God's voice completely. "Obey" means to hear and respond completely and without hesitation. As Christians, we often rationalize and think that our obedience is based on our understanding of the situation. We are sorely mistaken in that assumption. Biblical obedience is always based upon God's understanding of our heart. If revival is to come, believers and churches must get serious about genuine repentance and confession of sins. There must also be complete obedience to God's voice concerning His desires and will. Some believers wonder why they are not seeing much fruit for their labors. They attend church regularly, have a quiet time, serve on committees and try to live for Christ daily. Yet, something still keeps them from being an instrument of God's Spirit, thus hindering the fruit of their labors. Could an element of partial obedience be present? Will you repent of any partial obedience?

- Ask the Lord to convict you of any areas of partial obedience
- Pray asking Christ to reveal areas of partial obedience to the leaders in your church

DAY 24 ➤ Nothing Else Matters

Joel 2:12, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning."

A number of years ago I was traveling and received a phone call from my wife. When I answered, she immediately went straight to the issue at hand and began to cry. Her voice was shaky as she told me that our youngest of four daughters, who was four-years-old, was missing. At that moment, nothing else took precedence over finding our daughter. I quickly asked if she had searched the entire house, she said yes. I asked if she had checked around the outside of the house, she said yes. She said she was going to look in one more spot, up the street at a neighbor's house, and then call the police. We hung up, and I hit my knees, crying out in desperation, asking God to intervene. As she ran up the street, my wife turned back toward the house and guess who she saw hiding behind the van?—our youngest daughter. My wife said she felt two great emotions sweep her body: "Thank you Jesus!" and, "I'm going to kill her." Of course she did not kill her, but let's just say, our youngest daughter never did that again.

In Joel 2:12, the Lord calls His people to a genuine, desperate and whole-hearted seeking of His face through repentance. His favor and manifest presence had been removed and judgment and famine were quickly approaching through a plague of locusts. Because of this, God's people needed to give immediate attention to the matter of returning to Him in repentance. Repentance was not to be half-hearted but focused and thorough as the Lord instructed them to seek Him through a season of fasting. God also called His people to mourn over their sin. God's call was to a sincere and honest dealing of sin, which would result in true sorrow, brokenness and longing for His mercy through His healing presence. When we get to the point that nothing else but this matters we will be in a place where God can revive His work among us. Are you there?

- Ask the Father to bring you to the point of brokenness over your sin
- Pray toward a "nothing else matters" heart for revival in your life and in your church

DAY 25 ➤ Are You Blessable?

Joel 12:14, "Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him..."

In 1666, when Philip Spener was appointed senior pastor of the Lutheran church in Frankfort, Germany, he discovered a church that was spiritually lifeless. Knowing that a spiritually dead church limited the congregation's ability to be an instrument of God's blessings, Spener immediately began working toward seeing the spiritual life rise among his parishioners. He started intensive biblical training among members while also beginning "private meetings for mutual edification" so that he could challenge them toward a deeper life in Christ. In 1675, Spener wrote *Pia Desideria* (Heart Longings). This work addressed the spiritual needs in the existing church and also provided propositions, criteria and a suggested course of action for spiritual improvement. God used Spener as a proponent of a Christian experience that was based upon a vital life in Christ and His Spirit, producing a holy character that leads to a sanctified holy lifestyle. Spener's desire for believers was a life that could be blessed by Christ and a life that is a blessing to others.

Joel 12:14 speaks to the issue of whether God will proceed with judgment or relent and bless His people. Whether God continues in His anger or relents, one thing is for certain according to Joel. If God's people do not repent and return to God, they will not be in a position to be blessed by Him. They are to return to Him with all their hearts (vs. 12), sound the alarm, consecrate a fast and call a solemn assembly (vs. 15), sanctify all the people (vs. 16) and seek the Lord through desperate prayer (vs. 17). Joel's message is simple—through repentance and brokenness, put yourself in a position to be "blessable" or "capable of being blessed!" Why? So you too can become a blessing! In 1666 Spener recognized that his church was not capable of being blessed and he set out to pray and work toward that end. Are you blessable? Is your church blessable? If not, what are you going to do about it?

- Pray for the Lord to search your heart and reveal things in your life that keep you from His blessings
- Ask God to expose lifeless religious activity in your church so that your church can become blessable

SECTION 6➤

"Greater Things" through God's Hearing, Forgiving and Healing

"If My people . . . then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land (2 Chron. 7:14). God's way to revival and awakening has been set forth. He is the only one who can stay the hand of His judgment. He is the only one who can call off natural disasters. He is the only one who can turn the battle in His favor. He is the only one who can forgive sin. He is the only one who can answer desperate prayers. He is the only one who can restore His favor and presence among His people. Greater things can happen as God sovereignly and mercifully brings healing through His manifest presence among His people. Only He can heal the land. A sudden awakening of the lost multitudes will only come through the power of Christ being unleashed through His people. He alone is our hope for "Greater Things!"

DAY 26 ➤ A Healing of the Land

2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people... then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land."

This passage vividly shows God's heart to hear the prayers of his people, forgive their sin, restore their relationship and ultimately place His hand of healing on them and their land. "Heal" refers to a thorough and complete restoration that comes only from God. Healing is possible because God extends His mercy toward His people. This same term is used in Isaiah 53:5, "by His stripes we are healed." God's healing cost Him greatly, brings His righteousness and in turn allows for His favor, restoration and spiritual blessing to be experienced.

I think the big question facing believers today is whether or not we have a desire for or are willing and ready for His healing. Does it bother us that His presence among us has waned and continues to fade because of our lack of humility, our prayerlessness, our selfish hearts, our sin and our apparent lack of concern for the spiritual famine that is in America? Do we really care that God is missing in most of our plans, strategies, efforts and gatherings? Are we looking

for God to "bless us" (or America), when He cannot because we are not in a position to experience His blessings? This passage clearly shows that God wants to come near and bless His people through His hearing, forgiving and healing. God is not the problem is He? I believe the hearing, forgiving and healing must start with me and I must ask, "When will I humble myself before Him? When will I pray with a desperate longing in my heart for Him? When will I seek His face with an intensity and urgency that cannot be quenched? When will I turn from my wicked ways and get totally transparent before a holy God who sees my hypocrisy through and through? When will I return to Him?" It starts with me! Revival, spiritual awakening and healing are from God, through God and for God and His Glory. "Lord, please heal our land and begin with me!"

- Pray for a honest, transparent heart before God
- Ask the Father to heal you, your church, your community, your nation and your world through revival and awakening

DAY 27 ➤ Ebenezer

1 Samuel 7:12, "Thus far the Lord has helped us."

The people of Israel had witnessed the Lord's help before when they had faced the Philistine armies. Now, the people of God desperately needed God to come to their rescue. Samuel urged the people to consecrate themselves, cast off their foreign gods, repent of their idolatry and return to the Lord in a genuine relationship. Samuel also offered a sacrifice and prayed fervently for the Lord's help (1 Sam. 7:9). What did the Lord do? As the Philistines approached, the Lord sent a loud thunder, which in turn caused such confusion among the Philistine soldiers that the Israelite armies were able to drive them away (vs. 10-11). This was such a demonstration of God's intervention that Samuel placed a stone in memory of such a powerful work and called it "Ebenezer," which means, "thus far the Lord has helped."

The American church can certainly identify with Israel in this Old Testament story of revival and restoration. When morality and spiritual

atrophy was at a dreadful point before and during the early 1700s, God sent revival as His people prayed, repented and sought Him in the 1st Great Awakening. Following the Revolutionary War in 1785, the moral and spiritual state of the church and the society was once again at a low point. But in His mercy, God called His people to their knees in repentance and He answered with the 2nd Great Awakening that swept America from 1787-1842. The church was again growing cold as the nation was on the verge of civil war. God called His people to pray and return to Him in the Layman's Prayer Revival of 1857-58. The fourth such time took place as God drew the American church to prayer and sent a decade of awakening from 1900-1910. Believers in America like Samuel are able to say, "Thus far the Lord has helped." But, it sure has been a long time since a revival and spiritual awakening changed the spiritual landscape of America. I believe we are overdue for God's help, don't you?

- Ask God to break your heart over the need for His help once again
- Pray that the church in America will see its role in revival and seek the Lord's help in these desperate days

DAY 28 ➤ Is He Near?

Psalm 73:28, "But as for me, the nearness of God is my good..." (NASB)

One of the characteristics always present when God sends sweeping revival and awakening is the manifestation of God's presence. During the Laymen's Prayer Revival of 1857-58, reports of an overwhelming sense of God's presence as ships approached the United States coast and various harbors was common. The continuing effects of the 1857-58 Layman's Prayer Revival and the manifestation of God's presence were also experienced during the American Civil War. Chaplain E. J. Meynardie noticed a special sensitivity to God's Spirit among the Confederate troops and arranged a series of meetings on Sullivan's Island near Charleston, S.C. By the Thursday night service, 93 soldiers had responded to invitations with most being converted to Christ. The Union armies also experienced God in revival. One Union officer bore witness that he had never seen so great a change in the morals of the lives of his fellow officers as he had in the last four months since revival swept the group. As the war progressed, the revival fires deepened and burned brighter

with some 300,000 conversions being recorded in the armies. God through His Spirit drew near in revival, bringing hope and healing, even in the midst of the devastation and desolation of war.

In Psalm 73, the Psalmist bears witness to the goodness of God's nearness. This takes place as he confesses his wayward, doubting and ignorant actions and attitudes (vs. 21-27). "Nearness" refers to one "being in close union with God." Despite despair over his sin and the prosperity of the wicked, the Psalmist experienced God's renewed presence in a personal way. The nearness of God gave him the confidence to "trust" in the Lord and once again declare all God's works to others (vs. 28). We need God! We need His renewed nearness which only comes through a reviving work of His Spirit. When He hears from heaven and forgives our sin, we will experience His renewed intimacy and nearness and confidently proclaim His works to others. That's when the healing of the land will begin and that is good!

- Pray toward God's nearness in your life
- Ask the Father to pour out revival in His church bringing healing to our land

DAY 29 ➤ Pursuing Holiness

Hebrews 12:14, "Pursue...holiness, without which no one will see God."

One of the true indicators that an inward change has occurred in a person is the pursuit of holiness. This phenomenon is traceable in all genuine revivals and awakenings. It is especially notable as one of the major results of the decade of worldwide awakening (1900-1910). In locations all over the world, as God's Spirit moved in revival and awakening, the result was a renewed pursuit of a holy and godly lifestyle among Christians. An example of this is the moral impact of the college awakenings in America that occurred in 1905. One lasting influence was in the area of personal honesty and genuine truthfulness. The change was so evident in students that many universities reinstated the honor system in college examinations. Character change was also very evident in Wales during and following the 1905-1906 Welsh Revival. Crime was so curtailed that many taverns that were once full had to file for bankruptcy because of a lack of patronage. Magistrates in some areas were given white gloves, signifying that they did not have any upcoming cases to try.

Holy hearts produce holy lifestyles, which in turn, infuse communities with the life of Christ. The writer of Hebrews challenges believers toward a pursuit of holiness. "Pursue" refers to seeking something with great earnestness. Why is this pursuit of holiness needed? Without it, no one will ever "see the Lord." If believers are to see the Lord, they must be regenerated through the holiness and righteousness of Christ. If the world is to see the Lord, believers must pursue and practice Christ's holiness. With the moral decay being so prevalent within the church and in the culture at large in America, no casual pursuit of holiness will suffice. Only an earnest pursuit that is laced with tenacity, passion, desire and is motivated by Christ's Spirit will make a difference. Revival can change the focus of our pursuits. It has before, and it can today. When the church in America begins to pursue holiness, our nation will once again see the Lord.

- Ask the Lord to give you a passionate heart toward holiness
- Pray for your church to be an instrument of holiness allowing others to see the Lord

DAY 30 ➤ A Hopeful Life

1 Timothy 1:1, "The Lord Jesus Christ, our hope."

I once asked Richard Owen Roberts, president and founder of International Awakening Ministries, this simple question, "Mr. Roberts, do you ever get discouraged about the deepening need for revival?" He said, "Oh no, quite rarely! If you are asking me if I see things in the church or culture that point to revival taking place, quite the contrary. The moral and spiritual decline is getting worse. But I live my life everyday by the biblical principle of suddenly." I said, "Please explain." He said, "Suddenly the dead dry bones in Ezekiel 37 came to life and became a mighty army! Suddenly the angels appeared to the shepherds in Luke 2 and their lives were forever changed by the announcement of the Christ. And suddenly in Acts 2, the Spirit filled and sent the disciples on mission while they were praying in the upper room. I get up each day looking and praying toward God's next suddenly!"

Paul had this same undying conviction when he wrote 1 Timothy 1:1. Notice that his focus was on Jesus. Likewise,

our hope needs to be on Jesus, who is able to do far beyond what we could ever expect, ask or think. Biblical hope is not achieved through wishful thinking, analytical expertise or by great outbursts of emotion and passion. Biblical hope is only experienced through the power of the resurrected Christ. Has the presence of apathy and complacency in the church got you down? Is the ever-increasing darkness and manifestations of evil in America, or the moral and spiritual decline bringing a sense of gloom and doom over you? If so, do not succumb to discouragement or despair. Remember, Jesus is our hope! Jesus can move suddenly in sweeping revival and awakening across our land. It has happened before, and it can happen again! Please do not stop asking, seeking or knocking. Can you see greater things on the horizon? Are your eyes on Jesus—our hope? Only Jesus can heal our land!

- Ask the Lord to give you an unwavering hope in Jesus for revival and spiritual awakening
- Pray for the church in America to fix its eyes on Jesus our only hope



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