

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION GOD'S INVITATION

In working on this issue of *Activated*, I came across this great quote: "Relationship with God isn't about what you do, how you do it, or where you do it—it's about knowing who God really is."

Even Jesus' disciples struggled with really knowing God. One day when they were observing Jesus while He prayed, they noticed how He spoke to God intimately. They wanted to have that same connection, so they asked Jesus to tell them His secret.

Jesus replied by teaching them the Lord's Prayer and followed up on that with some further insight: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."¹

Of course, this doesn't mean you can ask for anything you want and it will be granted to you. The Bible explains how prayer is answered: "We are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him."² God listens to all our concerns and requests, but we don't always know what's best or see the full picture. But *He* does, and He answers in the ways that will further His plans for His children.

Jesus' message for all of us is that God earnestly desires to communicate with us and spend time with us. Prayer is our connection to God and His connection with us, and it's important to keep those lines of communication open. If you want God to be your friend in times of trouble, be His friend the rest of the time as well by just having good old-fashioned conversations with Him. That's the topic of this issue of *Activated*.

"I, the Lord, invite you to come and talk it over."³

Samuel Keating
Executive Editor

1. Luke 11:9–10
2. 1 John 5:14 NLT
3. Isaiah 1:18 CEV

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THE DAY THE BOUNCER BROKE

BY JEWEL ROQUE

I WAS THRILLED to be a new mother again. Allen was one of those happy, mellow little guys. I would put him in his bouncer, and he would be happy to sit there, awake or asleep, while I rocked the bouncer with one foot and sat in my chair and worked on my laptop. I had a desk job and worked part-time at home, so I was happy for the opportunity to continue my work. I took pride in being able to multitask so well, and others commended me. Even when Allen grew older and was awake for longer spells, he still loved to be in his bouncer.

Then one day it seemed to rest closer to the ground. I thought Allen's older sister, Jessica, who was a toddler at the time, might have sat in it and

bent it. I tried to return the heavy wire frame to its original shape, but it wouldn't comply. I asked my husband to look at it, and his conclusion was that it would need to be re-welded. It would be easier to get a new one.

Then came Allen's naptime. I was used to bouncing him to sleep as I continued my work, but now I had to rock him in my arms until he fell asleep. I first tried rocking him while I walked back and forth across the room, and then while I sat in a rocking chair. When he finally went to sleep, I didn't want to put him in his crib for fear that he would wake up. So there I sat, feeling useless. I thought about everything I needed to get done and got even more frustrated.

Then a different thought came to mind. Pray. I remembered reading a book once titled *Don't Just Stand There, Pray Something*.¹ So I did. I

prayed for my baby, for my husband's work, for my daughter, for my responsibilities, for friends and family members. By the time the baby woke up, I felt surprisingly refreshed and upbeat. I actually felt as though I had accomplished more than if I had been sitting at my computer typing away. And I probably had.

Jesus said that we "always ought to pray."² Okay, so I'm not even close to that level of prayerfulness, but maybe if I spend my son's naptimes upholding others in prayer, I might come closer to that ideal. Through this interruption in my accomplishment-driven routine, God was able to get through to me about something of much more lasting value.

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1. Ronald Dunn (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001)
2. Luke 18:1

THE PRAYER PRINCIPLE

BY PETER AMSTERDAM, ADAPTED

“JESUS WAS PRAYING IN A CERTAIN PLACE, and when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’”¹

Prayer was an integral part of Jesus’ life and ministry. There are numerous references throughout the Gospels of Jesus praying. He taught His disciples to pray, they saw Him pray, they heard Him pray for them, and He gave counsel about praying. Before many of the major events, miracles, and decisions in Jesus’ life, and right up until the time of His death, Jesus spent time in prayer. The fact that Jesus made a point to pray and to teach His disciples about prayer indicates that it is an important part of discipleship.

Taking time *alone* in prayer was a regular occurrence in Jesus’ life. He took time away from the crowds, and sometimes from His closest followers, to pray.² He also prayed in His disciples’ presence.

Seeing Jesus’ example of prayer had a definite impact on the disciples, as evidenced throughout the book of Acts, which often speaks of them praying. Jesus also gave His disciples instructions on *how* to pray. He said, “In this manner, therefore, pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’”³

He also taught His disciples how *not* to pray: “When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room,

close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”⁴

Jesus taught about being persistent in prayer, as the Gospel of Luke recounts: “Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up.”⁵

He also taught the power of prayer, that prayer gets answered, and that prayers should be prayed in faith and confidence—knowing that God is all-powerful and that nothing is beyond His capability to answer and do. In the book of Matthew, He said, “If you have faith and don’t doubt, you can do things like this and much more. You can even say to this mountain, ‘May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and it will happen. You

1. Luke 11:1 ESV

2. See Luke 5:15–16; Mark 1:35–37.

3. Matthew 6:9–13

4. Matthew 6:5–8 NIV

5. Luke 18:1 NLT

6. Matthew 21:21–22 NLT

7. Mark 14:38

8. Matthew 19:13–15 NLT

9. Luke 22:41–42,44 CEB



can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it.”⁶

He exhorted His disciples to watch and to pray against falling into temptation and sin. “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.”⁷

Jesus also prayed for *others*, as Matthew recounts in his Gospel: “One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could lay his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. But Jesus said, ‘Let the children come to me.

Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children.’ And he placed his hands on their heads and blessed them before he left.”⁸

As shown by the accounts of His praying before His arrest, Jesus prayed desperately. The Gospel of Luke tells us: “He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed. He said, ‘Father, if it’s your will, take this cup of suffering away from me. However,

not my will but your will must be done.’ He was in anguish and prayed even more earnestly. His sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground.”⁹

Prayer is important in our lives; it’s part of our communication with God. Prayer is a means of communicating with God, of abiding in Him. It’s a means of connecting to His power. It’s a means of loving and helping others as we pray for them. It’s a means of guarding our spiritual life and health. It makes a difference in the lives of others as we pray for them. It gives us the opportunity to humble ourselves before God, as we implore His help and when we ask Him for forgiveness.

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THE LONG DARK NIGHT

BY JOYCE SUTTIN

I HAD WALKED TO THE HEALTH STORE, ten blocks from home, to pick up some vitamins. Though I loved walking and made this trip often, something felt different that day. I had fumbled with my change and forgotten my list.


On my walk home I stopped at a crosswalk, waiting for the light to change. After some minutes, I noticed people looking at me strangely. I realized I had been waiting at the crosswalk through several light changes. Then it seemed like a very long walk home.

Walking into the kitchen, I began preparing dinner. The kids had returned from school and I knew I had to hurry. Then the oddest thing happened. I looked at the pool of water on the floor and it dawned on me. At barely seven months pregnant, something was really wrong and I was going into labor.

We had been seeing a midwife who had come to the house several times to check on me. She quickly came over and confirmed that my water had broken, and due to the timing, I needed to go to the hospital

right away. I soon found myself in a hospital on total bed rest, waiting for this baby who wanted to make his debut eight weeks too early.

It was a long week. I hated being in the hospital, but was assured that I had no choice about staying, because my uterus was compromised. If I didn't deliver soon, I would develop an infection and have to have an emergency delivery. I argued that I'd had three perfect, natural deliveries, three perfect babies, that this couldn't be happening; but I was told that if I left the



YOU WILL SEEK ME AND FIND ME, when you search for Me with all your heart.

—*Jeremiah 29:13*

THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

—*Psalms 23:4*

He was fully convinced that GOD WAS ABLE TO DO WHAT HE PROMISED.

—*Romans 4:21 CEB*



hospital, the baby would die, and I myself could die as well.

They were right. After one long week of praying that the baby would stay put as long as possible, I began to feel really sick. Suddenly my temperature spiked to 105 (40°C) and I was rushed into the delivery room. After sporadic contractions, difficult interventions, and a near cesarean, I gave birth to my second son.

It was different from my other deliveries, and I had a hard time rejoicing. It meant desperate prayer, intense medication, and having my baby whisked away to intensive care. That night was the most difficult of my life—alone, battling an intense infection moving through my body, and having been told that it was “touch and go” and that my baby boy had a 50/50 chance of making it through the night.

There are degrees of desperate prayer. I had regularly prayed for others and for protection for my

family and all the usual things. But nothing had ever come close to the desperation I felt that night. I was sick and helpless, and there was nothing I could do except pray. I did nothing else. I couldn't sleep. I awaited injections of medication and prayed. It was the darkest night of my life and a test of all I believed and had staked my life on.

How often I had told others about the power of prayer. How often I had quoted verses from the Bible on believing to receive. But this night, both this newborn child and my faith were on the altar, and all I could do was claim God's promises for healing that I had memorized and fight to believe that God would spare my baby.

The day dawned, and a nurse arrived to tell me he was stable. My own fever broke and I rested calmly, sleeping for the first time since the delivery. When I woke up, I was told I could go to intensive care and see my son.

I held the tiniest baby in my arms and wept. God had kept him and me through the night. He had strengthened his weak heart and lungs and kept him alive through a rough delivery. He had almost died, but he had fought for life and the Lord had fought for us through the long, dark night. I held this gift in my arms and knew that as surely as God had kept us, He had kept His Word and it would not fail.

Things may not always go according to plan. Emergencies happen. So many things we hope for in our lives can go wrong. But one thing is certain. God is on the throne and prayer changes things. His promises stand strong when we need them most. His Word is a sure foundation on which to stand during the long, dark nights of our lives.

JOYCE SUTTIN IS A RETIRED TEACHER AND WRITER AND LIVES IN SAN ANTONIO, USA. ■

A PIECE OF PEACE

BY MICHELE ROYS

HAVE YOU EVER HAD ONE OF THOSE DAYS where it seemed like the world was against you, and where it looked like everything that *could* go wrong, *went* wrong? It was February 29, a day that only comes every four years. Looking at a list of things that had fallen on my schedule for that day, it seemed as though the day had been scheming for the past four years to ensure that it would fit four days' worth of tasks into 24 hours!

First, an exam was unexpectedly rescheduled for the afternoon, when I had the kids to myself, and I had to arrange for someone to care for them so that I could make it downtown to take the exam. I had also been having sinus problems that week and a severe headache that day, which made moving around hard, let alone *thinking!* I needed to review ten separate modules, as we weren't told what the exam was going to cover.

In the middle of it all, my mother

was arriving from Brazil on a visit, landing about the time I would be sitting for my two-hour exam. She'd left her cell phone at home and hadn't replied to my increasingly frantic emails over the past five days. The airport where she would be landing was three hours away from our house. I needed her to contact us, so that we could figure out how we could pick her up.

That same evening—if I survived the rest of the day—I was scheduled to attend a choir rehearsal at a church downtown, as our choir was going to be performing in just two days to open the International Choral Festival—a big event in Ireland! I needed to finish learning two Polish songs, as well as verses in Latin, English, and Italian, all before that evening!

I was on the verge of tears and escaped to my room for a moment to gather my thoughts. My husband came in and saw my state. He offered to pray for me, and I, of course, didn't

1. See Romans 8:28.

2. John 14:27 NLT





turn him down. As I listened to his prayer, he said something that caught my attention: “Help her to find peace and know that You will work it all out for good.”¹

How can I find peace? I wondered.

I knew that I couldn't find that

peace myself and that I needed to pray to give all that was on my heart and mind to God. I began my prayer by stating how frustrated I felt, how the aches and pains were getting to me, how scared I was of the day's unknowns. I spelled out every possible aspect of that day in that prayer, expressing in detail to God how I needed peace and surcease from the day's stress. I asked Him to give

me some sign that He would help me, as at that moment I didn't know how I was even going to be able to drive all the way downtown in the state I was in.

A Bible passage suddenly popped into my head: “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.”²

I wondered how *that* was going to help me work out my day, but I decided to ask Jesus to give me that “peace” that He promised, even though at the moment I still felt frustrated and uncertain.

As I started to think more about that, an amazing thing happened. All of a sudden, I was no longer frustrated about all that was previously going on in my mind. I don't know how to explain it, except to say that I just felt “lighter.” The peace that I was contemplating just took over my mind and spirit, and the feeling was alleviating, almost like walking on air. The pressure that had been



causing so much strain diminished and I felt calm. My mind was clear. All I had done was pray and take a few minutes to think about the verse that popped into my mind, and that simple act took me to a whole new thought process.

I was amazed at the power of God, as I started getting ready to head out the door. Once in the car, I prayed that God would help that feeling to stay with me, because it felt so good! I remember thinking, *I'm not panicking anymore. I'm not on the verge of tears anymore. This is so great!*

And here is how the rest of the day played out, which once again reminded me that God doesn't let us down:

I got downtown and was able to find a parking space easily. Even though it was a gloomy day, it wasn't raining, which is great for Ireland! I made it to the building where I was to take my exam about 20 minutes early, and had the opportunity to talk

with my teacher. I explained about my headache and that I was hoping I would pass my exam. She told me she was very sure I'd do well, which was encouraging.

Sure enough, as I worked my way through the exam, I was happy to realize that I knew most of the answers. I was one of the first to finish, and on my way home, my mom called to say she had arrived safely and had caught a bus from the airport to our town, where a mutual friend picked her up and dropped her off at our house.

A text came in from another friend who said I could hitch a ride with her to our rehearsal downtown. Another piece of good news! The rehearsal went well, and for those three hours my head was only hurting rather than throbbing, which made it easier to contend with.

It was nearly midnight by the time I got back home and headed for bed. My husband had waited up for me, and I thanked him for praying for me. I also thanked God for helping me to find His peace, which amazingly made my chaotic day turn out all right.

The next day, I read up on the biblical meaning of the word "peace." I found that the Old Testament meaning of peace was "completeness, soundness, and the well-being of the total person." In the New Testament, peace often refers to "inner tranquility, a combination of hope, trust, and quiet in the mind and soul."³

I was amazed when I realized that was exactly how I had felt the previous day! Peace is really just faith, trusting that God will work everything out—somehow.

If you find yourself having "one of those days"—and hopefully it won't come more often than every leap year or so—just pray and ask God to give you His peace, and then let Him take control. You will be amazed at the solutions He will bring and the peace He will give you. "Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."⁴

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3. Bob Edwards, *Living Up in a Down World: Living Life Grace "Fully,"* pg 21

4. Philippians 4:7 NLT




COMMUNICATION WITH GOD

BY KEITH PHILLIPS

“GOD FINDS WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH THOSE WHO TRULY SEEK HIM,” Christian author Philip Yancey wrote, “especially when we lower the volume of the surrounding static.” Nearly 300 years earlier, Isaac Newton made the same discovery, which he explained this way: “I can take my telescope and look millions of miles into space; but I can lay my telescope aside, go into my room and shut the door, and while in earnest prayer I see more of heaven and get closer to God than I can when assisted by all the telescopes ... on earth.”

A quote from Virginia Brandt Berg takes that thought a step further: “When you come aside from temporal things which distract and harass you, and there in the presence of God you put your mind on the things of God, His majesty and glory, then the transforming power of God begins to work.”

That explains the who, when, why, and how of the transformation process,



We ... believe in a God who freely creates the world and sets it in order and adorns it with beauty, so that human minds may see the signs of his power and grace and loveliness in what he has made. [We] believe in a God who wishes to be known, since he has made human beings to find peace and joy in knowing him. [We] believe in a God who not only shows signs of his power in creation but also tells us what his will and purpose is for us: he shows us what kind of life we must lead in order to be at peace with him—a life of justice and truthfulness, mercy and self-control.

—Rowan Williams
(b. 1950)



but transformed to *what?* That’s the best part! Paul tells us, “All of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.”¹

If that kind of quiet reflection can get that kind of results, then why don’t we do it more often? Most of the time, it’s due to the “surrounding static.” We’re distracted by our responsibilities and routines, the bustle of others around us, a constant barrage of information and entertainment, and our own thoughts. It’s also plain hard work to enter into God’s presence through prayer, especially when we haven’t made it a habit.

How can we make it a habit? Through sufficient motivation and consistent practice. What better time to start practicing than today?

KEITH PHILLIPS WAS ACTIVATED’S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF FOR 14 YEARS FROM 1999 TO 2013. HE AND HIS WIFE CARYN NOW WORK WITH THE HOMELESS IN THE U.S.A. ■

1. 2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT



Six Steps of Meditative Prayer

STEP 1: Choose an appropriate location. Most people find that meditation is best in quiet, uncluttered surroundings, ideally away from where they work or spend most of their waking hours. A secluded spot outside can be especially conducive. Fresh air not only renews us physically, but it also helps to illustrate how God's Spirit can clear our minds and spirits.

STEP 2: Take time to wind down. It's nearly impossible to immediately go from the affairs of a busy day into a state of deep meditative prayer. Sometimes it helps to spend a few minutes on a transitional activity to phase out the material world, such as listening to soothing music, taking a short walk, or breathing deeply. As you try different things, you'll find what works best for you.

STEP 3: Leave your cares at His feet. If problems are distracting you and weighing you down, they'll hinder the peace you could receive through meditation. Take a minute or two (or as long as you like) to give your present cares to Jesus in prayer. Be specific. Describe to Him what is troubling you, and ask Him to lift and bear it. Focus on God's ability to bring solutions, rather than on the problems themselves. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."¹

STEP 4: Get relaxed. Several minutes of gentle stretches and deep breathing, followed by a relaxation exercise (concentrate on relaxing your face and neck, then your entire body, part by part), can help. If you're feeling especially tense, a shower or a bath or a short walk in nature might help you relax. Or if you're very tired, a nap may be just the thing, because if you're exhausted, you may not benefit as much from your time of meditation.

1. Philippians 4:6

2. <https://activated.org/en/columns/spiritual-exercises>

Peace on the outside comes from knowing Jesus on the inside. You can do that by simply inviting Him into your heart:

Dear Jesus, I want to know You and enjoy Your peace. Please come into my life, give me Your peace, and help me get to know You better and grow in the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of Your Word. Amen.

STEP 5: Select a comfortable position. In meditation, the position of your spirit matters much more than the position of your body. You don't have to sit a certain way—or even sit, for that matter—except of course you should be comfortable, so you can more easily focus your thoughts and mind.

STEP 6: Meditate. You've found an appropriate spot and wound down physically. You've put your problems and cares into Jesus' very capable hands. You've disconnected from the affairs of the day and are relaxed and comfortable.

Now you're ready to begin a time of meditation.

You might choose to focus on Jesus Himself, thinking about one of His attributes, or on some special blessing He has brought into your life. A specific thought from God's Word can also be a subject for meditation. Reading a passage from the Bible, one of the "From Jesus with Love" messages that are on the back page of each issue of *Activated*, or some other short devotional material may help get you started. For more meditation ideas, see the "Spiritual Exercise" columns available on the *Activated* website.² ■

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!
—*Isaiah 26:3 NLT*

If God be our God, He will give us peace in trouble. When there is a storm without, He will make peace within. The world can create trouble in peace, but God can create peace in trouble.—*Thomas Watson (c. 1620–1686)*

Meditation is simply talking to God about His Word with a desire that your life and those you pray for come into agreement with it.
—*William Thrasher*

When we find our souls at all declining, it is best to raise them up presently by some awakening meditations, such as of the presence of God, of the strict reckoning we are to make, of the infinite love of God in Christ and the fruits of it, of the excellency of a Christian's calling, of the short and uncertain time of this life, of how little good all those things that steal away our hearts will do us before long, and of how it shall be forever with us hereafter, as we spend this short time well or ill. The more we make way for such considerations to sink into our hearts, the more we shall rise nearer to that state of soul which we shall enjoy in heaven.
—*Richard Sibbes (1577–1635)*

In place of our exhaustion and spiritual fatigue, God will give us rest. All He asks is that we come to Him, that we spend a while thinking about Him, meditating on Him, talking to Him, listening in silence, occupying ourselves with Him—totally and thoroughly lost in the hiding place of His presence.—*Chuck Swindoll (b. 1934)*



God's To-Do List

BY PHILLIP MARTIN

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN AN ACCOMPLISHMENT-ORIENTED PERSON. I prided myself in knowing what to do, having my to-do list all prioritized, with the most important tasks highlighted, circled, or written in large print. I'd zip around town, stopping here and there, knocking off the “minors” while on my way to accomplish another “major.”

Some years back, I even designed my own Daily Planner Card—a small card printed on card stock that fits in my shirt pocket. I carry it with me and start a new one every day. In the past few years I've used these cards as part of a time-management seminar I've taught.

I used to spend much of my quiet time with God with pencil and daily planner in hand, writing down the multitude of things I needed to do. I

usually came out of my “quiet time” with my prioritized plan of action, champing anxiously at the bit, ready to tackle the day. Getting my plan for the day constituted a big part of my personal time with God.

But some time back, something short-circuited my entire modus operandi. I found myself in a prolonged situation where it wasn't really humanly possible for me to accomplish all that there was to do. My daily to-do lists were far too long with too many variables; there were too many priorities and way too many other stresses. To top things off, I was physically exhausted.

My situation was so overwhelming, in fact, that I really couldn't think about a to-do list. All I wanted was to be close to God. I knew that only He could satisfy my soul and still the raging storm. It was at this point that I experienced what Jesus described in John 15: “I am the vine; you are the branches. Those

who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For *apart from me you can do nothing.*”¹

I realized for the first time that Jesus doesn't want my to-do list, nor does He even want me to let Him be the author of my to-do list. He wants me to abide in Him, being nourished by His Word.

I still have and make to-do lists, but not with the same intensity. It's no longer top priority. Touching Jesus is my top priority. Often that's when I hear the faintest of whispers to my soul, usually about matters that are important to God. If my head and spirit are too crammed with my own thoughts, I might not hear those whispers and might miss something that's a must-do on God's to-do list.

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1. John 15:5 NLT, *emphasis added*



THE THINGS WE NEED TO KNOW, God tells us, and sometimes the things we want to know, He tells us; but often He throws a veil over the future so that it is known only to Him. In any case, regardless of what we know or don't know, He's promised to never leave nor forsake us. "I am with you always," He says, "even to the end of the age."¹ And He's given us the torch of His Word to show us where our path is going. We can always throw the light of God's Word on the path ahead.²

The Bible says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."³ So whenever a situation is uncertain and I'm not exactly sure if something is God's will and whether He's going to work it out or not, I always pray, "Lord, You're still the boss and You're still God, and if things don't work out just the way I expect

or the way I hope or the way I'm pushing for, if that's not what You want me to do, if You have some other idea and You're going to accomplish something maybe even better, or maybe teach me a lesson I need to learn, or whatever Your purpose is, help me to just do what You want me to do."

It's better to leave your mind open to whatever God wants you to do. Ordinarily, it's something that's reasonable and logical and just common sense. But sometimes God does things that aren't according to our natural expectation. In those cases, we need to be willing to trust Him, even if He seems to change His mind or things don't turn out how we thought they would.

We may not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future!

DAVID BRANDT BERG (1919–1994) WAS THE FOUNDER AND LEADER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■

THE BLANK SHEET

Many people are more concerned about having God hear what they have to say than they are about hearing what God has to say. They're trying to put their program across on God and get Him to sign His name to their program. I heard someone say one time, "Are you willing, not to present your program to God for His signature, not even to be presented with God's program for your signature, but are you willing to sign a blank sheet of paper and let God fill it in without your even knowing what His program is going to be?"

—David Brandt Berg ■

1. Matthew 28:20
2. See Psalm 119:130.
3. Psalm 119:105



FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

Rest in Me

I love it when you take time to commune with Me. There don't even have to be words, prayers, or praises involved. We can commune in the spirit if you turn your thoughts toward Me and let your mind and spirit dwell there.

We can be like two lovers who are happy at the thought of just being in each other's presence, no words passing between them. They hold each other and gaze into each other's eyes, and that is communication enough. Their hearts get on the same wavelength. They don't need to communicate verbally because their closeness lets them know what the other is thinking. It can be the same with you and Me.

It takes peace and contentment of spirit to create this link with Me. As you start by praising Me or thinking about Me, turning your heart toward Me and meditating on My goodness to you, our spirits will connect.

I want you to learn how to enter that state of full relaxation of mind and body, your thoughts filled entirely with Me. I am always available to minister to your spirit, guide you in important matters, and give you solutions to your problems.