

Dwell before the throne

40 Day Prayer Focus

English



The Wordless Book

“A colorful Way to Share the Gospel”

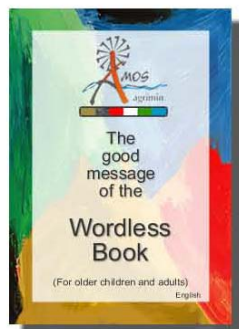
The *Wordless Book* originally comprised of only three pages – **Black**, **Red** and **White**. It was introduced by Charles Spurgeon in 1866 when preaching at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. His sermon was entitled “*The Wordless Book*”. Mr. Spurgeon told of an elderly pastor who had put three pages of these colors together, and often referred to them to remind himself of his own sinfulness (black), of Christ’s blood poured out for him (red), and of the “whiter-than-snow” purification, as granted by the Lord.

It is not known exactly when the **Gold** page was added, but that brought another dimension to the book. It depicted the glory of God and his heavenly home. Nine years later, D.L. Moody used the book of colors at a children’s service. An estimated 12 000 people attended to listen to his message about *A book with four pages: Black, Red, White and Gold*.

When Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) began to print the little book in 1939, they added another page of **Green**, to represent Christian growth.

In 1993, **AMOS** was founded by Hennie and Janetta Viljoen. **AMOS** realized the value of the *Wordless Book* in teaching the gospel to the illiterate. They, however, wanted it to tell the complete message of the Bible, and therefore in 1994 added the final color of **Blue** to the *Wordless Book*, to remind us of the promised return of Christ.

It later came to light that the International Children’s Ministry Institute (ICMI) had the same vision, and had already added a blue page in 1988.



DWELL BEFORE THE THRONE!

40-Day Prayer Focus on Agriculture

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FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR

The key to Godly transformation in agriculture is prayer. God will restore nothing, change nothing and renew nothing unless we ask Him to do it in prayer. What will happen regarding agriculture during the next decade or two depends on our prayers. Therefore, I beg the Lord to turn the agricultural community into a praying community. I also beg you to become a praying agriculturalist.

The purpose of the prayer focus for 2011 may be summarised in the words of the title, *Dwell before the Throne*. This means the agricultural community should live a life of obedience according to 1 Thessalonians 5:17. They should practise prayer. The agricultural community should be characterised by prayer.

I once read the following: *The enemy rejoices when Christians spend more time discussing prayer than practising prayer*. These words touched me deeply.

The real problem is not that we do not know *how* to pray. The problem is that we *do not* pray. You can only learn to swim by swimming. The same is true for prayer. You can only learn to pray by praying. Therefore, I invite you to take hold of this great privilege with both hands and to dwell before the throne. There, in the presence of the Father, your skills in prayer will increase.

The primary purpose of this 40-Day Prayer Focus on Agriculture is to create a prayer revival - in my life, in your life, and in agriculture. I also believe that the outcome of these prayers will glorify God and be a blessing to agriculture. Thank you for your willingness to join us in prayer.

Hennie Viljoen



MAKE THE MOST OF THIS PRAYER FOCUS

The following will help you to make the most of the 40-day Prayer Focus:

1. Plan and organise

Make use of existing prayer occasions. Create new opportunities for praying with others. The possibilities are endless but nothing happens by itself. Take trouble and plan thoroughly. Consider the following:

- Your personal **quiet time**;
- Prayers at **mealtimes** (*This is the one time people can and should pray for agriculture*);
- **Devotions** just before or after work, or during **lunch break**;
- Existing **small group meetings**;
- **Sunday service** – ask a farmer, farmer's wife, child, farm worker or any other member of the congregation to pray for the rural and agricultural community;
- **Special prayer meetings** and **half-night or all-night prayer vigils**;
- Mobilise the **elderly, children, women, prayer groups, etc.** to pray together;
- **Advertisements** of the 40-Day Prayer Focus on Agriculture in local newspapers and on the radio. The guidelines for the Prayer Focus are available in English and Afrikaans on AMOS' web page: www.amosafrica.net and may be duplicated freely.

2. Read the Scriptures

Read the Scriptures for every day. You will lose out on blessings and growth by reading the message and ignoring the scriptures. Remember to allow the Spirit to speak to you through the Word.

3. Confess sin

It is important to attend to the four important issues named in **2 Chronicles 7:14**:

- Allow the Holy Spirit to fill you with remorse;
- Confess all the sin the Holy Spirit convicts you of;
- Ask the Lord to reveal His will to you and then obey it;



- Turn away from your evil ways. Turn your back on everything that God does not approve of.

4. **Prayer guidelines**

The prayer guidelines are not rigid instructions, but only guidelines. Read and meditate on each message every day. Then pray about everything the Holy Spirit lays on your heart.

5. **Cultivate the discipline of fasting and obedience**

There are various good books about prayer and fasting. Please read some. The 40-Day Prayer Focus is an ideal opportunity to work on your self-control and discipline. You could follow Esther's example and abstain from food and drink for three days (Esther 4:16), or you could eat only vegetables and drink water like Daniel and his friends (Daniel 1:12).

Consider fasting from something you like very much during these 40 days, for instance, stop drinking coffee or Coke; stop eating sweets or chocolates; stop eating meat or dairy products; stop taking tonics or other stimulants; refrain from having a second helping of food; spend the time you usually spend watching a particular TV programme praying. The possibilities are endless. Ask the Lord what He would like *you* to do.

You should not only learn to abstain from food or TV sometimes, but you must learn to **always abstain from sin and stop being disobedient**. We must fast from our evil deeds and put an end to our bad habits. Use these 40 days to cultivate and practice the discipline of obedience.



WHERE SHALL OUR HELP COME FROM?

In agriculture, we always need help. Every agriculturalist wants rain, better prices, lower production costs, better theft prevention, prevention against farm attacks as well as against natural disasters such as drought, frost, hail, floods, fire, heat waves, windstorms, climate change, pests and diseases. Making a living in an *open factory*, a factory without a roof or security fences, is not easy.

But we have a greater need. We need relevant knowledge, wisdom and insight. What do we really need to know and what can we ignore? Where do we get the wisdom to solve difficult problems in agriculture? Added to that, in agriculture we work *with* people. We are only human and have many weaknesses and faults, limited insight and understanding. All this adds up to an enormous challenge.

However, there is good news! Personal help is available: plans perfectly suited to *your* circumstances and *your* farm; support backed by unlimited means. Applying for help is easy. You can apply anywhere and at any time. You can kneel, stand, sit, walk, drive and/or work when applying because applications are done orally. You can apply in any language. You can apply individually or as a group. You can apply about the same problem again and again. You can apply for yourself and for others. And, the cherry on top: you have the assurance that your application will be successful, all because of what a good Friend has done for you.

Go and read your Bible again carefully if you think this is nonsense. This is exactly what the Bible teaches us about prayer. Prayer is God's gift to His children. Prayer is the means by which God channels His unlimited help and blessings to His children on earth from heaven. God gave us prayer so that we can ask Him for anything. The purpose of prayer is to get what you ask. God says we must ask **so that** we will receive **so that** He can bless us.

The Bible teaches that God works through people. It is a *God's Way* principle in which *AMOS* believes. God works in answer to the prayers



of His children. **The key to Godly transformation in agriculture is prayer. God will restore nothing, change nothing and renew nothing unless we ask Him to do so in prayer. What will happen to agriculture during the next decade or two depends on our prayers.**

During the next 40 days, we are going to realise the foolishness of not praying. You will rediscover the joy and privilege of prayer. You will conquer the sin of prayerlessness. You will discover that Jesus gives you everything you need to make a Godly and lasting difference in agriculture through prayer. You will see many different miracles happening in answer to your prayers. You will experience God using you to realise His Kingdom and His dominion over agriculture.

You will receive even more than what you had expected or asked for once you start using the privilege for which Jesus paid so much. . He will use you in a mightier way than you could imagine. He will do so because of His grace and His kindness – kindness we do not deserve! To Him be the glory, thanks and honour for answering our prayers.

The **purpose** of this prayer focus is not to provide you with more knowledge about prayer, but to inspire you to keep applying the privilege of prayer. Prayer in the Name of Jesus is the key to transformation in agriculture. It is the key to solving all agricultural problems. You and I must pray without ceasing.

My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth (Psalm 121:2). Let us pray! Let us pray without ceasing.



PART 1

OUR GREAT PRIVILEGE

Day 1

Dwell in God's Presence

Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:17

On October 8, 2010, the Lord commanded me to write about prayer. That is the only reason why I dare to do so. In short, this is what He told me in my spirit: *The key to agricultural transformation is prayer in the Name of Jesus. Clothed in the righteousness of Jesus, filled with His Spirit, you have the privilege of entering into My presence in Jesus' Name. Use this privilege. Pray without ceasing and see what I will do.*

The title of this prayer focus is *Dwell before the Throne*. The word *dwell* means to live in or at a place (*South African Concise Oxford Dictionary*), or to live as a *permanent* resident (*Collins Concise Dictionary*). Thus it means spending your time living at a particular place. It is the place I keep returning to again and again, daily. In God's presence is where I am comfortable, at home - before the throne of God.

The word *dwell* also means *to live in a specified state* (*Collins Concise Dictionary*). Thus, it is how I live; the state I am in at home – prayerfully, before the throne of God.

To *dwell on or upon something* is to think, speak or write *at length* about something (*Collins Concise Dictionary*). In other words, it refers to the state of your mind, your thoughts, expressing those thoughts at length. Prayer is all of these (though there is more to prayer). Prayer is thinking about and speaking to God (but it also includes a great deal of listening). Many people use a pen and notebook while praying. An important aspect here is that it takes place *at length*. In other words, spending a great deal of time *meditating on Dwell before the throne*.



To *dwell before the throne* is to spend a great deal of time in God's presence in prayer, to return to the throne again and again, frequently. This is exactly what 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says: *Pray continually*. (The New International Version). The Message says ... *pray all the time; ...* It means just what it says: we must pray a lot, all the time, unceasingly. We must talk to the Lord often. Sometimes we must make time to pray long, earnest prayers. But, we must also speak to Him often while we are busy farming and working. We must keep asking Him for His advice and keep thanking Him for something special that He has given us or done for us. We must worship Him whenever we see His creativity and power in creation. We could therefore translate 1 Thessalonians 5:17 as *Dwell before the throne*.

During the next 40 days, you are going to learn to *dwell in God's presence, dwell before the throne*. You are going to discover how much harm and suffering you cause when you do not *dwell before the throne*. But you are also going to learn what a privilege it is to enter directly into God's presence. You are going to experience how God will change things in and around you. Your prayer life and your farming business will never be the same again.

Let us use this privilege and ask God for everything our agricultural community and we need. The Bible clearly says that God is ready and that He wants to hear our prayers.

Prayer: *Father, help me to dwell before Your throne expectantly and in faith. Help me to pray not only for myself but also for the entire rural and agricultural community.*

Dwell before the throne and ask for the conversion, spiritual growth and complete obedience for all of us in the agricultural community as a whole.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of South Africa.



Day 2

Dwell before the Throne (2)

Read: Hebrews 9:1-7 and 10:19-20

God is on His throne from where He reigns unto eternity. When we are invited to *dwell before His throne*, we are invited to enter into His personal space and to talk directly to Him.

This invitation is in stark contrast to what we read in the Old Testament when people were not allowed to enter into the Most Holy Place (or Holy of Holies) of the Tabernacle or the Temple. Let me explain: In Exodus 25-31 we read about the Tabernacle also called The Dwelling (*The Message* by Eugene H. Peterson). The Tabernacle was used when Israel was moving to Canaan from Egypt. It was a tent that could be put up and taken down as the people moved. [See the sketch and explanation on the next page.] The Tabernacle was the symbol of **God's presence** – He was *with* His people and the focus of all their religious activities. The Tabernacle was where God and His people met.

Later we read about the temple that Solomon built for God in Jerusalem (1 Kings 6) and later still, of the temple that Herod built for the Jews after the destruction of Solomon's temple (John 2:20). The Tabernacle and the two temples each had a section called the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies. God was present there.

The Ark of the Covenant stood in the Most Holy Place. The Ark was a wooden chest (1.2m x 0.6m x 0.6m) covered with gold, and housed the two stone tablets on which the Lord had written the ten commandments (Exodus 32:15-16 and 34:1-2), the gold jar filled with manna and Aaron's staff. There were two golden angels on top of the Ark. Their wings were spread out over the Ark and symbolised **God's protecting presence** (Hebrews 9:4-5).

The high priest was the only person allowed to enter into the Most Holy Place and then only once a year (Leviticus 16). Before he entered, he had to make sacrifices for his own sin. Then he was allowed to enter into the Most Holy Place, **God's presence**, to make a sacrifice for the sins of the



people. A heavy curtain separated the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

The purpose of the curtain in the temple was to keep sinful people from entering into the **presence** of the holy and sinless **God**. Any sinful person who dared to enter into the Most Holy Place would die immediately.

When the New Testament repeatedly invites you and me to freely enter into the presence of God, to *dwell before His throne*, it clearly indicates that there has been a radical change. Why are we now **welcome in God's presence** when it would have meant certain death before?

The Bible has a clear answer: Jesus was the perfect sacrifice on the cross for us. No more sacrifices are needed. His blood cleanses us from all our sin. This was confirmed when the curtain of the temple was ripped apart at the exact instant when Jesus died on the cross (Matthew 27:51). Sin no longer separates us from God, because Jesus has taken all our sins away.

This does not mean that anyone can rush into God's presence. God is holy and without sin. Therefore, this privilege is reserved for those who believe in Jesus and who have been cleansed from sin by Him (1 John 1:7-9).

Do you believe in Jesus? Do you believe that He has cleansed you of all your sin by giving Himself as a sacrifice on the cross? If not, I would invite you to accept Jesus now. If you do, you are **welcome in the presence of God**. He invites you to *dwell before the throne*.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, thank you for Your perfect sacrifice. Thank you Father that I am always welcome to dwell before Your throne, in Your presence.*

Dwell in God's presence and pray for a prayer revival in the rural and agricultural community.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Lesotho.



Day 3

Who is on the throne?

Read: 2 Peter 1:2-4

Our God is on the throne and He has open hands! Because *AMOS'* vision is ***Living and Farming God's Way***, we should once again remind each other about one of the *God's Way* principles addressed in the booklet, ***Basics***, published by *AMOS* in 2008, namely: Our God is a God who has open hands! **God shares everything He is and everything He has with people.** He gives generously.

According to Genesis 1, God shares His image, His breath, His creativity and His dominion over the earth with people. When we read the Old Testament, we see that God never closes His hands. Everything good and beautiful comes from Him. He gives us His advice and He shares His judgement with judges (2 Chronicles 19:7).

In the New Testament we read that God gave us His Only Son (John 3:16) and sent His Spirit to live in us (Acts 2:4 and Romans 8:9). He gave Himself to us.

Christ gave Himself to us when He hung on the cross with open arms. A flood of gifts and blessings, too many to name, flow to us from His open hands. He grants us His righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). He gave us salvation that cost him His life. We share in His victory. We are more than conquerors through Him who lives in us (Romans 8:37). He grants us a variety of gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4-11 & 27-28 and Romans 12:4-8). He gives us the power to heal the sick and cast out demons (Matthew 10:8; Luke 10:1-3 & 17 and Mark 16:16-18). He shares His peace, joy, love and wisdom with us (John 14:27 & 15:11; Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 1:30 and James 1). He shares His Name with us. We are called Christians (Acts 11:26) and in His Name we can ask anything of the Father (John 14:13-14). He tore the curtain and, by His blood, gave us free access to the Most Holy Place – the throne of God (Hebrews 10:19). He shares His inheritance with us. We have become joint heirs with Him (Romans 8:17). He shares His right to forgive sin (John



20:23) and He shares His glory (Romans 8:29-30) with us. He even shares His home with us. He has gone to prepare a place for us so that we may be where He is (John 14:3). And, when He returns, He will share His right to judge the world and the heavenly beings with us (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

Do we need further proof to convince us that God has open hands? Certainly not! Let us join Paul and shout out, *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness ...* (2 Peter 1:3-4).

I do not know what you think, but to me He sounds like a God who wants to, who can, and who will answer prayer! This is the God you will meet when you approach the throne.

Do you and I need any more motivation to *dwell before the throne*?

Prayer: *Lord God, I am overcome by the discovery of how much I have already received from You! Please never allow me to doubt Your willingness to answer my prayers.*

Dwell before the throne and pray for more gratitude among Christians in spite of difficult circumstances. After all, God expects it of us (1 Thessalonians 5:18) and it is a powerful testimony to the world.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Swaziland.

Day 4

What do we find at the throne?

Read: Hebrews 4:14-16 and Luke 11:9-13

God's love for people is so great, and He so wants to have an intimate relationship with them that the only thing that can stop Him from doing so



is sin. But, since our sin has been taken away by Christ, nothing can prevent Him from showering us with His goodness, love, protection, support, care and compassion. God is like a strong fountain bubbling over with all that is good and beautiful. Blessings perpetually flow to us from His throne. James testifies that all that is good and perfect come from Him (James 1:17).

Never have I been met by insult or accusation when approaching the throne of grace. On the contrary, I have always received understanding and support. I have always been welcomed with open arms. Hebrews encourages us to *dwell before the throne*. See what it says: *This High Priest of ours (Jesus) understands our weaknesses, since He had the same temptations we have, though He never once gave way to them and sinned. So let us come boldly to the very throne of God and stay there to receive His mercy and to find grace to help us in our times of need.* (Hebrews 4:15-16, The Living Bible)

General as well as very specific blessings flow from God's throne. God cannot lie. He remains true to His promises and faithful character. Throughout the Word, He promises to hear our prayers. In the section of Luke we have read together, He gives us three instructions to pray. He also gives us six promises that our prayers will be heard and answered (Luke 11:9-10).

What do agriculturalists who *dwell before the throne* receive? The answer is ***EVERYTHING that is good, wonderful, special and necessary! The assurance that God hears their prayers! Everything they do not deserve, but that Christ has already deserved for them.***

Because this is all true, I would like to invite you: *Dwell before the throne!* You will receive a great deal, because our God has an open heart and open hands!

Prayer: *Father, thank you for the constant stream of goodness that I do not deserve but that flows to me from the throne. Thank you for giving me everything that is good,*



wonderful, special and necessary for the circumstances I find myself in today.

Dwell before the throne in the interest of someone (name) in the rural and/or agricultural community who has a particular need for the Lord's blessing and support today.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Namibia.

Day 5

Why doesn't prayer excite us?

Read: James 1:6-7

The privilege of *dwelling before the throne* of God in prayer should fill us with a sense of excitement. Yet the opposite is true. Many Christians admit to having a superficial, boring, prayer life that is more routine than life. Therefore, they spend only a few minutes a day, or even a week, in prayer. They often do not pray for ages.

What is the problem? Why doesn't prayer excite us? It is because **we doubt** that God really listens to our prayers and do not believe it will make a difference. It becomes a vicious circle.

We doubt →
therefore, we do not receive (James 1:6-7) →
therefore, we neglect prayer and do not ask →
therefore, we do not receive (James 4:2)→
therefore, our doubt and unbelief increases →
therefore, we neglect prayer even more →
and so it continues.

Doubt and unbelief are the root causes of our struggling prayer life. But the question behind it is: **Why do we doubt** when we pray? The answer, I believe, is: **We believe we need to do something to**



deserve answers to our prayers. And, because we are not sure that we have done enough, we doubt that God will answer our prayers.

We believe that we have been saved by grace through our faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). We believe that we did not earn our salvation by good works (Romans 3:22-28 and Galatians 2:16). But now that we have been saved because of the sacrifice Jesus has made and not because we deserve it, we forget the good news about faith and grace and return to the law, good works and the question of earning or deserving (cf. Galatians 5:1). Now we want to do good works to earn or deserve answers to our prayers. Where salvation is concerned, we are under grace, but where our prayer life is concerned, we are under the law. This destroys our prayer life. We feel guilty because the law condemns us as sinners. Because we feel guilty, we lose our confidence to pray and we doubt that God will hear us.

You and I should remember:

- ✓ We have been saved by grace *because of the sacrifice Jesus has made*, and not because of our good deeds or because we deserve it;
- ✓ We enter God's presence by faith *because of the sacrifice Jesus has made*, and not because of our good deeds or because we deserve it;
- ✓ We pray in His Name *because of the sacrifice Jesus has made*, and not because of our good works or because we deserve it;
- ✓ God answers our prayers *because of the sacrifice Jesus has made*, and not because of our good deeds or because we deserve it.

You and I may always *dwell before the throne* in prayer in faith and certainty because He listens because of what Jesus did for us and not because of what we do for Jesus.

Prayer: *Thank you, Jesus. Thank you for the sacrifice you made! Please free me from doubt and help me to believe that the Father will answer my prayers because of what You have done.*



Dwell before the throne in the interest of all our agricultural leaders – at local, provincial and national level. Name those whose names you know and be specific about how you want the Father to bless them.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Botswana.

Day 6

You do not need to earn or deserve answers to your prayers

Read: John 14:13-14 & 15:16

More than one book I have read says that religiosity kills prayer. I have often asked the Lord whether it is really true that most of us who believe that we are saved by grace simultaneously believe that answers to our prayers depend on the good we do. In other words, is it true that most of us live by grace and under the law simultaneously? I wanted to know whether that was the reason for our constant battle with prayer – why our prayer life is so lifeless. I found it difficult to accept that this was so and I asked the Lord to confirm it to me. And, He did – when I least expected it!

One day I did not feel like writing and studying even though there was urgent work to be done. Instead, I joined my workers in the veld and started cutting down South-West thorn trees, alien plants that cause a great deal of damage in our area. I felt rather guilty, but carried on nonetheless. After about an hour I realised that my glasses were missing. They probably fell into the branches already cut down when I put on or took off my safety hat. We all started looking. I was going on tour the following week and I wouldn't be able to drive without my glasses.



I felt miserable. I should have stayed at home and do the work I was supposed to do ... I blamed myself. I needed the Lord to help me but didn't have the guts to pray. War raged within me. In my heart the Spirit encouraged me, *Pray and ask the Lord to help you.* But then I would hear a little voice saying, *You do not have the right to pray. You do not deserve the Lord to help you. It's your own fault that your glasses are missing. You should never have come here. You are irresponsible. And anyway, your glasses aren't important to God*

While the workers and I carried on looking, I half-heartedly and softly said, *Lord, please give me my glasses.* But, at the back of my mind I started making other plans because I knew that there were very good reasons why the Lord shouldn't listen to me. We carried on searching and war kept raging in my mind. It felt like an eternity.

Then, through His Spirit, God said to me, *You are right! You do not deserve an answer to your prayer. But, I do not answer prayer because people deserve it. I answer prayer because of what Jesus did for you by His sacrifice. Test Me. See if it is true. And if it is, go and teach my other children that I want to and will answer their prayers because of what Jesus did on the cross, and not because they deserve it.*

I fell to my knees and prayed loudly, in faith and expectantly, *Father, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus, because of His obedience and perfect relationship with You, filled with His Spirit, I come to You in His Name and ask You to please show one of us where my glasses are. And, please do not let them be broken.* Seconds later one of the workers shouted, *I found it! I found it!*

My brother and sister in Christ, you do not need to earn or deserve answers to your prayers. Doing so means, you are back under the law. It will destroy your prayer life. How will you ever be sure that you have done enough to make God answer your prayers? And when you doubt, you receive nothing (James 1:6-7). But, if we rely on Christ, we can be absolutely certain that He has done enough. We can *dwell before the throne* no matter how weak we feel or how disappointed we are in



ourselves. It is just because we are in such distress that we should dwell before the throne in prayer.

Prayer: *Father, forgive me for so often trying to deserve your answers to my prayers. It only exhausts and discourages me. Thank you that I do not need to do it anymore.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of ministers of agriculture, land affairs and rural development, and the various MEC's.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Zimbabwe.

Day 7

Our neglect of prayer

Read: Matthew 26:36-46

No matter how great and wonderful a privilege it is to *dwell before the throne* in prayer, reality is that more Christians and congregations' lives are marked by a terrible neglect of prayer instead of a dynamic, passionate prayer life.

Many Christians find it difficult or impossible to join discussions on prayer and God's answers to prayer. Many Christians of many years standing easily say, "*I cannot pray aloud.*" That is why prayer meetings are so badly attended. When we do have prayer meetings, they usually turn into *talk* meetings instead of *prayer* meetings. Daily uniting and persevering in prayer like the first congregation in Acts 2:42 is not an outstanding feature of most congregations today. Many people find praying for an hour or spending all night in prayer like Jesus (Luke 5:16 & 6:12), strange. We do not even consider spending several days fasting or praying about a particular issue the way Nehemiah or Daniel did (Nehemiah 1:4 and Daniel 10:2-3 & 12).



God instructs us to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Not doing so is disobedience and disobedience is sin. Thus, prayerlessness is sin. Like all sin, it is also foolish, because we are really harming ourselves when we neglect prayer. Without God's help or blessing, we will struggle in agriculture. Thus, we have to farm without the wisdom and insight He would like to give us; without the wonders and miracles, He is willing to do for us; without the treasures and gifts, He wants to shower over us. If only we could see how foolish it is to neglect prayer!

Christians' negligence to pray is the one sin that probably causes the most suffering, frustration and problems in the agricultural community – more so than the bad things that unbelievers do. Because Christians are so quick to complain but so slow to pray, drinking, idol worship, sexual licentiousness, lies, family violence, laziness, theft, materialism and bad labour relationships flourish and cause great suffering in agriculture. Financial poverty causes physical problems and deficiency. Similarly, poverty in prayer causes all kinds of problems in agriculture and the agricultural community. It is by faith and prayer that the victory which Christ has already achieved over evil and all the powers of chaos (Colossians 2:15 and 1 John 3:8b) becomes a reality in our lives.

Realising that neglecting prayer is a sin is the first step towards real, complete Godly salvation from our prayerlessness. Revivals are always accompanied by a deeper realisation of our sin. It is only when we realise how great our sin and suffering is that we yearn for salvation.

God never speaks to *His children* about sin except with the express purpose of saving them from it. When you and I are battling with sin, including the sin of prayerlessness, God does not stand before us pointing an accusing finger at us. He stands next to us, extending a helping hand. He wants us to conquer sin even more than we want it.

Start asking the Lord for a revival in your prayer life today!

Prayer: *Father, I am ashamed of my prayer life. I confess that my prayerlessness is one of the reasons for the many problems in agriculture. Please make my prayer life anew.*



Dwell before the throne in the interest of all Christian agriculturalists.
Pray that they will live in obedience to God 24/7 and that they will accept responsibility for praying for agriculture.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Mozambique.



PART 2

THE SIN OF PRAYERLESSNESS

Day 8

Prayerlessness is sin

It must be confessed and conquered

Read: 1 Samuel 12:23

In the following daily portions, I will often be using the term *prayerlessness*. Prayerlessness does not mean never praying. I am referring to our neglect of prayer; the fact that we rarely pray; that we pray hurried and very short prayers and that our prayer life does not reflect Jesus' prayer life.

Victory over sin begins when a particular sin is confessed. As long as we keep believing that there is not really anything wrong in our prayer life we will not be saved from our prayerlessness. As long as we remain unconvinced of the incalculable damage (Ezekiel 22:30-31) the agricultural community and we suffer because of our superficial prayers, we will not want to change it. It is only when we are convinced that prayerlessness is a sin that we really want to be saved from it. And salvation is possible! Jesus did not only die to forgive our sin, but also to free us from the power of sin (Colossians 2:14-15).

Why is prayerlessness a sin (cf. 1 Samuel 12:23)? There are many reasons!

Prayerlessness is a sin because we are not using the privilege Jesus paid for so dearly. He died on the cross to grant us free access to God. ***Prayerlessness is a sin*** because it means that you and I are disobeying God's express wishes. ***Prayerlessness is a sin*** because it shows that you and I are ignoring the example Jesus has set for us. We



do not take time to pray the way Jesus did. We believe we do not need to spend as much time in prayer as He did. ***Prayerlessness is a sin*** because it is the result of pride and idol worship. We are gods to ourselves and believe we can get by without God's help. ***Prayerlessness is a sin*** because not praying for others reflects our lack of love for our fellow human beings. ***Prayerlessness is a sin*** because it is the fruit of our unbelief. We do not believe what God says about Himself or about prayer in the Bible.

Prayerlessness is a sin for which Jesus has paid dearly. He had to become a curse for us on the cross (Galatians 3:13), also because you and I neglect prayer.

We are going to look at each of the above statements over the next few days. Gradually the Spirit will make us realise that prayerlessness is much more than a bad habit. As the Spirit convinces us that it really is a sin with destructive consequences, the desire for victory will increase. Victory over prayerlessness is possible. Jesus Christ has already achieved it and He wants to share His victory with you and me.

Measure to know: How much time do you spend in prayer? Complete the following sentence: I spend an average of minutes a day and minutes / hours a week in prayer.

Prayer: *Father, forgive me for never even considering the possibility that prayerlessness is a sin. Forgive me for trying to justify my prayerlessness instead of confessing it.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of everyone responsible for maintaining roads and the effectiveness of communication systems (telephones, cell phones and internet) in rural areas.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Zambia.



Day 9
Prayerlessness is a sin
because you are not using the privilege for which
Jesus has paid for so dearly

Read: John 19:30, Matthew 27:50-51 and Hebrews 10:10-22

People go to a lot of trouble to get the signature of one of their heroes. Most of us would do anything to have dinner with a music star. We would consider it a privilege to be invited to the home of a world champion. We will display a photo of the occasion for all to see. But each and every Christian has a much greater privilege than being in the presence of a special person.

To enter into God's presence is a privilege that exceeds all other privileges by far. To freely enter into God's holy place and to appear before His throne of grace (Hebrews 4:15) is an indescribable privilege. It is a special privilege to speak to the living God. But Jesus Christ paid a very high price to make it possible for us to do so.

He sacrificed Himself to be nailed to the cross to grant us the privilege of entering into God's presence. He took all our sins upon Himself and offered us His obedience and His righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30 & 2 Corinthians 5:21). He took away the law according to which we were guilty. He destroyed the record of all our sins and cancelled our debt (Colossians 2:14). His last words on the cross (John 19:30) were, ***Tetelesthai!*** This means, *It is finished!* These words were written on a receipt or used as an oral receipt in Biblical times. With this cry, Jesus gave us a receipt – the assurance that our debt has been paid in full.

At the same instant, the curtain of the temple was ripped apart, from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). The curtain separated the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place in the Temple. No-one except the High Priest was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place and he was only allowed to do so once a year, after having made the prescribed sacrifices (Leviticus 16 and Hebrews 9:1-9). Thus, Christ gave His life to remove the curtain that



separated God and people. He removed this obstacle and He became the Living Way to God (Hebrews 10:19-20).

Prayerlessness is a sin because those who do not pray are not using the privilege Jesus paid for so dearly. It is foolish not to use this privilege. God's throne is where we receive mercy, compassion and help (Hebrews 4:16). This is where we are encouraged and strengthened. This is where we are healed – physically and emotionally. In God's presence, there is victory over each and every problem. Let us approach the throne of grace so that we may be helped.

It is not my intention to make you feel guilty when calling **prayerlessness a sin**. Our sin of prayerlessness has already been completely forgiven, but the Spirit makes us aware of the sinfulness of prayerlessness **so that** we can conquer it by faith in Christ.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, my prayer life is an insult to the price You paid in order to grant me the privilege of dwelling before the throne. Forgive me, and please grant me victory over this sin.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of all who abuse alcohol and/or are addicted to drugs. Pray for specific people. Ask the Lord to show you how to help them. Pray against the consequences of alcohol abuse, namely relationship problems, destruction of families, crime, violence and poverty.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Malawi.



Day 10
Prayerlessness is a sin
because it means you are disobeying
God's instruction

Read: Luke 11:9-13 & 18:1, and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Children are wrong when they do not do their homework. Employers are wrong when they do not carry out their employer's instructions. Drivers are guilty when they do not obey traffic rules. Similarly, we are wrong when we disobey the Lord's instructions. All His instructions and commands are for our benefit but disobedience harms us. Disobeying God is also a sign of disrespect and an absence of love for Him (1 John 5:3). Sin, therefore, is not only the bad, unloving things we do. It is also the good and loving things we neglect to do.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Paul summarises God's expectations of Christians: rejoicing always, unceasing prayer and gratitude. Praying and more praying is God's will and desire for His children. That is why Jesus told the story in Luke 18. Luke says that Jesus told the story to make it clear that people should always keep praying without getting discouraged.

When Jesus teaches about prayer in Luke 11, He says in verse 9, *Ask, seek and knock*. In all three instances, He promises us that we will not be disappointed if we obey Him. In verse 10, He repeats this promise. He gives us the instruction to pray three times, but promises that our prayers will be answered six times. It is clear that Jesus does not want God's children to be doubtful. We *must* pray, and God *will* answer!

Praying unceasingly is to *dwell before the throne of God*. It means talking to God every now and then during the day. Tell Him when you are afraid or worried. Ask Him to help you when you are struggling to get something right. Ask Him for advice when you do not know how to treat someone who is always making you cross. Pray for people you see who are addicted to alcohol to be released from their addiction. Ask



the Lord to protect you when you feel like swearing or wanting to watch pornography. Ask Him for wisdom and insight when you need to make a decision.

Prayer should characterise our lives. We should *dwell before the throne*. It is not a question of whether you and I think prayer is important or not. The Lord tells us to pray continually. He knows why it is important. He wants us to pray so that He can give! He loves giving His children good things.

Disobedience is a sin. Disobedience shows that we do not love God. Thus, prayerlessness is much more than a bad habit. It is a sin. It is not my intention to make you feel guilty by calling **prayerlessness a sin**. Our sin of prayerlessness has already been completely forgiven, but the Spirit makes us aware of the sinfulness of prayerlessness **so that** we can conquer it by faith in Christ.

Prayer: *Father, let me and my household always be joyful, faithful in prayer and grateful in all circumstances.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of women and children in the rural and farming community. They are often in great distress.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Tanzania.

Day 11

Prayerlessness is a sin

because you are ignoring the example set by Jesus

Read: Mark 1:32-36 and 1 John 2:6

Relationships are all based on communication. Without communication, there is no relationship. Prayer is communicating with God. A good



relationship with God is reflected by continual communication with God that is continual prayer. Just think about what Jesus did.

Jesus did not only come and tell us how to live. He came to show us the best way of living. He did not only often tell us to pray, but He also kept going off alone to pray (Luke 5:16). Jesus spent a lot of time in prayer. We need to follow the example He set for us.

Jesus made time to pray no matter how busy His schedule was. In Mark 1:32-36 we read that He worked until late at night. We may accept that the healings and casting out of devils sapped His strength and energy (cf. Mark 5:30). People came looking for Him again early the following morning. He had a busy schedule. Yet He made time to pray. He got up long before dawn and went to a quiet place to pray.

We are also busy, usually with too much to do. So many things demand our time and attention: people, work, children and television, to name but a few. We do not really have time to pray – not even when we are on holiday! Our programmes remain blocked. Only the things on our programme changes when we are on holiday. Meanwhile God is waiting for us to give Him the time of day. He really wants us to enter into conversation with Him. He wants to shower us with His blessings and power from heaven, but we are just too busy. Like Jesus, we must make time to pray no matter how busy we are. Those who do not, are ignoring the example Jesus has set for us (1 John 2:6) and are sinning against the Lord and causing harm to themselves.

Jesus always took time to pray no matter the circumstances. Like Jesus, you and I must also make time to pray ...

- ✓ in the midst of a busy schedule (Mark 1:32-36);
- ✓ when everyone wants your advice and help (Luke 5:15-16);
- ✓ before making important decisions (Luke 6:12-13);
- ✓ when you need to talk to people about issues they are struggling to understand (Luke 8:18-22);
- ✓ when you are tired after a hard day's work (Mark 6:31-49);



- ✓ when time is little and precious. [When it was time for Jesus to die on the cross He spent the little time He had left in prayer for His disciples and for us (John 17)];
- ✓ when the battle with evil is at its peak (Luke 22:39-46).

Jesus' whole life demonstrates how important it is to pray without ceasing. It is wrong to ignore the example He set for us. ***Neglecting prayer is a sin, but you can conquer it.*** Jesus lives in you and He has already broken the power and stronghold sin has over you. He conquered the temptation to neglect prayer every day of His life. He can and will help you do it too.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I desire Your prayer life. Please come and live Your prayer life in and through me.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of Christian churches in rural and agricultural areas. Ask that they will become praying congregations who will reach out effectively to the unsaved.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Angola.

Day 12

Prayerlessness is sin

because it is arrogant to believe you can get by without God and His help

Read: Matthew 5:1 and James 4:1-6

What we believe is reflected by our actions. The little or lot of time we spend in prayer reflects the conviction of our heart. When we pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17), it reflects our complete dependence on God. Our unceasing communication with God also demonstrates that we have a healthy, open relationship with Him. If we rarely pray, and that only from habit for a few seconds, we clearly



believe that we can get by without God and His help. No matter how we deny it, we are prideful and arrogant if we do not constantly pray to God.

According to the Bible, those who are humble and poor in spirit are blessed (Matthew 5:3). But God opposes those who are prideful, who think too much of themselves (James 4:6). His advice is not important to them, so they do not ask Him for it. They do not want His help, so they do not seek it. People who know how dependent they are on God, pray continually. They *dwell before the throne of God*. People who believe they can get by without God and His help, seldom pray.

Prayerlessness is the symptom of a serious spiritual disease – pride and arrogance. We believe we can get by rather well without God, and so without prayer too. We trust in ourselves. We trust in our wealth, our strength, our health, our science, our technology, our predictions, our plans and our teams, our policies and medical aids. Although these things are not necessarily wrong in themselves, they often mislead us into trusting in them instead of in God. We use God like a spare tyre: we only call out to Him when all else fails and we are really in trouble.

Neglecting prayer is a sin, but so is the consequence of the sin of pride and arrogance. It is not my intention to make you feel guilty by calling **prayerlessness a sin**. Our sin of prayerlessness has already been completely forgiven, but the Spirit makes us aware of the sinfulness of prayerlessness **so that** we can conquer it by faith in Christ. He wants to give us so much more, if we would only ask.

Prayer: *Father, forgive me for so often trying to get by without You and Your help. I often do not even realize it. I confess my dependence on You, always and in everything.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of agriculturalists' financial position. Talk to the Lord about financial decisions and management; agriculture's large debt; the poverty of a large part of the rural community and the deteriorating economy of most rural towns.



Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of the DRC.

Day 13

Prayerlessness is a sin **because it is the fruit of unbelief**

Read: Luke 18:1-8 and Hebrews 11:6, and James 1:6-7

The whole Bible is an invitation from God to people to have a relationship with Him. It is full of invitations to pray, call on the Lord, ask Him for help in times of need, ask Him for everything you need every day, to bring all your worries to Him in prayer, etcetera. But, why do people spend so little or no time in prayer? The answer is simple: *They do not believe in prayer because they do not believe in God.* They may believe in a god, in an impersonal higher being, a supernatural spirit or something similar. But they do not believe in the Lord, God, the Almighty. They do not believe in the God of the Bible who wants to have a personal relationship with His children. *They do not believe that God is who He says He is.* They have their own ideas about God. They conjure up their own god. They decide who he is and what he can do. They do not accept what God says about Himself in the Bible, because they do not read or study the Bible.

Why would you pray if you do not have a personal relationship with God? If you do not know Him as your Father? If you do not believe He is whom He says He is? If you do not believe that He loves you and that He is almighty? If you do not believe that He wants to shower His children with loving kindness in answer of their prayers? If not then prayer is merely talking to yourself and it doesn't make sense. You are in trouble exactly because you cannot help yourself. If you are convinced that God bestows His blessings and goodness on people even if they do not ask for it, why take the trouble to pray? Even more, why would you pray unceasingly?

In Luke 18 Jesus tells a story to teach us to always keep praying and not to be discouraged. Through the story, Jesus teaches us that prayer does not always result in instant answers. He knows the temptation of



quitting prayer when you feel as though God is ignoring you and does not give you what you are asking Him for. Jesus says you should keep on praying when you feel that way. You must keep *pestering* Him (Luke 18) and pleading your case. You must call to Him night and day. You must *dwell before the throne of God*. You will only do so if you really believe. That is why Jesus asks the following question at the end of the story: *"However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"* It is not a general question. It is a specific question regarding continuous prayer. If you and I *dwell before the throne*, our actions will demonstrate that we really believe in God.

Those who do not really believe that God is who He says He is, who do not really believe in the Bible, will never succeed in persevering in prayer, night and day.

Thus, prayerlessness is the result of a deeper problem, namely unbelief! Unbelief is sin. Therefore, ***prayerlessness is sin***. If you want to conquer unbelief, keep repeating the following prayer:

Prayer: *Lord, help me to believe that You are who You say You are. Help me to believe that You still can do what You did in the past. Help me to believe that You can, want to and will do everything You promised to do.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of the marriages and family lives of the agricultural community. Pray for single parent families, and for values and norms, authority and discipline, sexual purity and faithfulness in marriage.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of the Congo.



Day 14
Prayerlessness is sin
because it demonstrates an absence of love for
those in distress

Read: Colossians 1:9a and 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

I once prayed with a farmer and his wife. Afterwards the farmer said to me, *Wow, What a privilege to have my name mentioned before the Lord.* I again realised that I am what I am today (especially) because of the prayers of my parents and other believers who continually mention my name to God in prayer – not because my name appears on a prayer list, but because they love me. But, what about the many people in your community or on your farm who do not have praying parents or friends? Who is praying for them? Who calls their names before the throne and asks that they be saved and helped?

In one of his books, Dr. Andrew Murray gave the example of two businessmen. The one businessman's profits were just enough to take care of his family and to keep his business going. He was satisfied and wanted nothing more. The other businessman did not think of himself. *Love made him* take note of the suffering of the unemployed around him. He used the ability and opportunities the Lord granted him to the full and worked much harder than the other businessman. In an honest way, he made enough profit to extend his business, to create more jobs and to help more people.

Similarly, Murray said, there are Christians who pray just enough to remain standing. Their prayers are only about themselves. They do not love others enough to beg the Lord to shower them with His blessings too. They use the wonderful privilege the Lord Jesus gave to them to speak to the Father directly, day and night, and to ask of Him anything in His Name, for themselves and maybe for their families too. But, they never consider using this privilege to ask for something to benefit all of the farming and agricultural community.



May I ask you a direct question? Do you love others enough to mention their names to the Father regularly? Do you love them enough to dwell before the throne for them? Do you so identify with their suffering that you cannot stop yourself from continually praying for them?

If you want to use your hands and money for the community, you will soon discover how little you are able to do. But if you *dwell before the throne* in the interest of your community, there is no limit to what God can do in answer to your prayers.

Neglecting to pray for others is unloving. Therefore, it is a sin. Again, I emphasise: It is not my intention to make you feel guilty by calling **prayerlessness a sin**. Our sin of prayerlessness has already been completely forgiven, but the Spirit makes us aware of the sinfulness of prayerlessness **so that** we can conquer it by faith in Christ.

Prayer: *Father, give me a heart for people in distress. Let me dwell before the throne in their interest too. Stop me from only praying for my own needs.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of every community and family in distress. Especially pray for effective congregations who proclaim and live the truth. Pray for job creation and housing, sanitation and clean water, and accessible and effective medical care.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Rwanda.

Day 15

Prayerlessness is sin

because it is unloving to people in distress (2)

Read: Luke 11:5-8 and Acts 3:4-8



In Luke 11:5-8 Jesus tells a short story to illustrate what we should do if we **have nothing** to relieve the need of a friend. He says that when we have nothing we should knock on the door of our rich Friend. Then we should *dwell before the throne of grace* until God opens the door to us and does something to help our friend. We should not send our friend away empty handed because we have nothing to give him.

The question is: Do you love your personnel and your community? Are they your friends? Do you love everyone around you who is in need? Do you feel overwhelmed when you think about the following?

- More than 3000 people in your community need to be weaned from drugs and alcohol;
- More than 5000 children need to be protected against family violence;
- Job opportunities need to be created for more than 40% of the community;
- Hundreds of marriages need to be healed and restored;
- Skills and leadership need to be developed on a large scale;
- More and more children are getting involved in crime;
- 60% of Grade 12 pupils need special help in order to pass;
- And so it continues.

If you feel overwhelmed by all the suffering, you are at the same point as Peter in Acts 3 and as the man in Luke 11. The latter confessed, ***I have nothing ...*** But he did not use his empty hands as an excuse because he dearly loved his friend in need. Then he realised that he had another friend; One to whom he could turn to for help. And so he rose, and even though it was the middle of the night, he knocked on his friend's door.

If you and I love the people in our community, we won't dish up all kinds of excuses for not doing anything to relieve their suffering. We will also get up and go and *dwell before the throne*, even at night. We will keep praying until God changes the lot of the community.

If you love people, you pray for them. Prayerlessness is the result of a deeper problem: lack of love! And being unloving is a sin. Therefore,



prayerlessness is also a sin. But you can conquer it. Ask the Lord to keep showering you with love for His people, especially for sinners.

Prayer: *Father, although I can do little with my money and my hands, I thank you that there is no limit to what I can do to ease the distress of others through prayer. Do not let me help without praying. And, do not let me pray without helping.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of the towns- and agricultural community in which you live and farm. Talk to the Father about people's physical and spiritual need. Ask the Lord to show you where and what you should do to address their need.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Burundi.



PART 3

CONQUERING PRAYERLESSNESS!

Day 16

We need to change our thoughts!

Read: Romans 12:1-2 and Proverbs 4:23

The way you live is determined by what you believe in your heart. People are greedy for money because they are *convinced* that money is the most important thing in life. People are racist because they *believe* their race is superior. Someone's *views* on marriage determine whether they will get married, and if so, how they will behave in marriage. The *convictions* of your heart are demonstrated by your way of life. The same is true of prayer. Your and my prayer life looks the way it does because of what we believe concerning prayer. If we have problems in our prayer life, it means that we have certain wrong views on prayer.

Here is an easy example: By nature, we as agriculturalists are busy people – we are doers and planners, people of action. Therefore, it often *feels* like a waste of time to spend a lot of time in prayer. As long as this is the *conviction* of our heart, we will not succeed in conquering prayerlessness.

Our *understanding* needs to change and then our prayer life will change. If we think about prayer the way Jesus did, we will start praying the way Jesus did. God must change and renew the way we think about prayer and bring it in line with what the Bible teaches on prayer. Then we will know the LORD is good and perfect will regarding prayer. This *truth* will free us from a prayerless life.

Prayer: *Father, forgive me for all my misconceptions regarding prayer. Change and renew my thoughts on prayer until I think about it the way Jesus does.*



Dwell before the throne in the interest of the land reform process and all related issues. Pray for wisdom, positive attitudes, win-win solutions, effective training and good co-operation between all the role-players.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Uganda.

Day 17

Gain a new understanding about the sin of prayerlessness: The truth is it has already been forgiven!

Read: Proverbs 28:13, Hebrews 10:11-14 and 1 John 1:7-9

John Newton, the man who wrote the well-known hymn, **Amazing Grace**, was a slave trader and captain of a slave ship that transported slaves from Africa to America. Later he was converted and became a minister of religion. Towards the end of his life he told a friend that he could hardly remember anything except two things: *That I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Saviour*. John Newton knew what a wonderful, perfect Saviour Jesus was, and so he had the courage to face up to his sin and confess it. He knew that his Saviour was greater than his greatest sin.

We often forget how great and strong Jesus, our Saviour, is. And so we believe it is easier to conquer sin by denying it, giving it nice names, or watering it down and pretending it isn't so bad. What a lie! It is impossible to get rid of sin that way. This approach will not help us pray more freely. So do not try and defend or justify your neglect of prayer. You won't gain victory by doing so.

Let God change your thoughts. The only sin you and I can successfully conquer is sin that has been completely forgiven. It is impossible to be



freed from the hold sin has over us if we haven't even been freed from the guilt of our sin.

There is no other solution for sin. It must be forgiven or it will always be a barrier between God and us. Only the sacrifice Jesus made makes forgiveness *possible*. Only faith in Jesus makes forgiveness a *reality*. Let us be honest and admit how great our sin and suffering is. Let us confess our prayerlessness because we have a mighty Saviour!

The Word teaches us: *Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.* ... (Romans 4:7-8). But God does not forgive our sin because it isn't all that bad. By now we know that prayerlessness is not a minor sin. God forgives us only because Jesus has already borne the punishment for our sin. *But He was wounded and bruised for our sins. He was chastised that we might have peace; He was lashed - and we were healed! We are the ones who strayed away like sheep! We, who left God's paths to follow our own. Yet God laid on Him the guilt and sins of every one of us!* (Isaiah 53:5-6. Living Bible)

You and I can conquer prayerlessness ...

- If we admit to it and confess it instead of justifying it;
- Because we are absolutely sure that God has forgiven this sin;
- Because we are absolutely sure that God is for us (Romans 8:31). He is not against us because of our sin. He does not wag an accusing finger at us but reaches out a helping hand to us because He really wants us to *dwell before the throne*.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, my prayer life is a shame. I admit it, but I thank You that You have already forgiven me completely. This helps and motivates me to conquer my prayerlessness.*



Dwell before the throne in the interest of all who are embittered and unforgiving, no matter why. Pray that Christians will be the first to forgive because God has forgiven them in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:32).

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Kenya.

Day 18

Think anew about the power and stronghold sin has over us: It has already been broken!

Read: Hebrews 2:18 & 4:15, and 1 John 3:8b

The devil fears people who *dwell before the throne*. He knows the power of prayer and the destructive consequences it has for him and his work. Therefore, he does everything in his power to stop Christians from praying. He tempts us daily in every kind of way to make us put prayer on hold and to focus only on our work. We usually give in to this temptation very easily. We soon find a reason to *do* something urgent just when we should be praying. How can we who are so used to neglecting prayer manage to conquer our attitude to pray? Is victory possible? Yes, Jesus has already conquered this temptation and broken the hold that prayerlessness has over us. In Hebrews 4:15 we read that He too experienced the power of all the temptations we battle with. We can be 100% sure that the devil tried his very best to stop Jesus from entering often and continuously into conversation with His Father.

If ever there was someone who could be satisfied with spending each day in the spirit of prayer, it was Jesus. But that was not enough for Him. He was convinced that it was necessary to spend long periods in prayer. Luke testifies that Jesus often withdrew to lonely places to pray (Luke 5:16). He *dwelt before the throne!* He realised the importance of ongoing communication with His Father. He could not carry out the Father's instructions without it.



Jesus conquered the temptation of giving prayer a back seat and only focussing on work. He never became so busy with the things of His Father that He neglected His relationship with His Father. During His life on earth, Jesus obeyed each and every command concerning prayer that we read about in the New Testament. Jesus has already done what we are expected to do now.

Do you want to conquer prayerlessness? Ask Jesus to help you. Trust in Him. Expect everything from Him. Because He conquered the temptation to neglect prayer, He can, wants to and will help you do it too. He died on the cross to bear the punishment for the sin of our prayerlessness. He also obeyed God unto death to destroy the power of the devil and the hold of sin over us.

Because Jesus, prayer par excellence, lives in us, we are more than conquerors of the sin of prayerlessness. Believe it! You and I do not have to win a battle that has already been won. Prayerlessness has been overcome. Prayerlessness has already lost its hold over us. In and through Christ we are more than conquerors and so we can reign over the sin of prayerlessness (cf. Romans 5:17). We have already won, so let us pray as winners do. Let us *dwell before the throne*.

You and I can overcome prayerlessness because ...

- Jesus has already conquered the temptation to neglect prayer;
- The Conqueror of prayerlessness lives in us and so we are more than conquerors in Him.

Prayer: *Thank you so much Lord Jesus. Your victory over prayerlessness gives me courage. Because You live in me, I will also overcome prayerlessness and many other sins.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of victims of farm attacks and for all who have been traumatised by such attacks.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Somalia.



Day 19

Think anew on the cross: Christ died for us, but we also died with Him!

Read: Romans 6:1-14 & 7:4-6, and Galatians 2:19-20

The cross has a double message. One we often hear about, but we hardly hear about the other one. The first message is this: Christ **died for you and me, He died in our stead**. He took our guilt upon Himself and bore the punishment for our sin. This is the basis on which our sins are forgiven. It is a wonderful message, but it is only half of the truth. The other half is that **we died with Christ**. Therefore, we are also dead to sin. By including us in His death, Jesus destroyed the power and stronghold sin had over us.

The power by which Pharaoh held the Israelites captive in Egypt was broken when they crossed the sea. Similarly, the hold and power of sin over our lives was broken when we were baptised in Christ. We were baptised in His death. We died with Him. Paul describes it as follows: *Your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with Him; that part of you that loves sin was crushed and fatally wounded, so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sins' control, no longer needs to be a slave to sin; for when you are deadened to sin you are freed from all its allure and its power over you. And since your old sin-loving nature "died" with Christ, we know that you will share His new life.* (Romans 6:6-8. Living Bible)

Because of our unity with Christ, we are now dead to sin and are living for God. Because it is true, you and I can and must make it a reality in our daily lives. Because we are one with Christ, you and I are dead to the sin of prayerlessness. Because we are one with Christ, we are free to pray continually, the way He did. We are free to *dwell before the throne!*



We would never be able to overcome the sin of prayerlessness if God did not make us one with Christ Jesus, if He did not include us in the death and resurrection of Christ. But, He did include us in the death and resurrection of Jesus and therefore we can be victorious. Praise and worship the Lord! What was impossible for us, He has made possible.

Prayer: *Father, thank You so much for making us one with Jesus Christ. Thank You that because of our unity with Him, victory is possible for us.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of good labour relationships, not only between white farmers and black farm workers, but also between black farmers and their workers.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Ethiopia.

Day 20

**Think anew on the many instructions to pray:
It shows us what is possible!**

Read: Philippians 2:12-13

God has many wonderful attributes. But, there is one attribute in particular that always makes me kneel before Him in grateful adoration. It is this: **God always makes it possible for us to carry out His instructions!** He gives us what He asks for! *And now that I am away you must be even more careful to do the good things that result from being saved, obeying God with deep reverence, shrinking back from all that might displease Him. For God is at work within you, helping you want to obey Him, and then helping you do what He wants.* (Philippians 2:12b-13. Living Bible) It is not only Philippians that says so, the Bible is full of it. In Genesis 1:26-28 God instructs Adam and Eve. But, more than this, He equips them with His image, His Spirit and



His blessing so that they are able to carry out His instructions. As I look back on my own life I can clearly see it there too. Every time I took the first step in faith and started doing what God told me to, He made it possible for me to carry out His instruction. To Him be the glory!

Looking at this from a different angle, it actually means that every instruction in the Bible is in fact a promise of what God wants to and can do in your life and in mine. He creates the **desire** in us and then gives us the **ability**. All the instructions and promises on prayer in the Bible are like tiny pieces of a giant puzzle. Together they create a picture of what is possible – of the kind of prayer life God wants for you and me, and that He therefore makes possible for us. God's instructions are meant to help us lead the best and happiest life possible.

Instead of seeing the repeated instruction to pray as a burden, I now see how much God wants me to communicate with Him regularly. I hear Him pleading with me to ask Him for everything because He really wants to give me everything in answer to my prayers. God wants to grant me everything that is available to me through Christ in answer to my prayers – more than what I could think to ask him for in prayer.

My friend, prayer is a privilege and not a burden. It does not limit us and it doesn't waste our precious time. It opens up new possibilities and keeps us from time-consuming struggles. It makes life easier, not more difficult. It brings heavenly blessings to where we live, work and farm.

Be excited by the unlimited possibilities of prayer instead of being discouraged by the many instructions to pray. Prayer is a conversation with God and nothing is impossible for Him (Jeremiah 32:17). When it seems as though there is no way out, no solution, prayer is still the answer (Psalm 50:15). You can always pray, even when you have lost all your strength and money. You do not need to buy miracles. Just ask for them in prayer (Mark 11:22-24). You need not be burdened by worries because on your knees you can exchange them for a peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:6).

You need not feel there is no way out, because wisdom and good advice are available in answer to prayer (James 1:5, Jeremiah 33:3 & Psalm 32:8).



When you and I *dwell before the throne*, God comes and works with us on the farm. Then He performs miracles and all kinds of mighty deeds!

Prayer: *Lord, fill my heart with an even greater desire to pray more each day, and teach me to do so. I want to overcome my reluctance to pray.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of greater unity and co-operation in agriculture. Pray for good co-operation between organised agriculture and government, as well as farmers and local municipal councils.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Sudan.

Day 21

Think anew on the law: Free of the law but not without it!

Read: Ezekiel 36:25-28, Romans 7:4-6 & 8:1-2, Galatians 2:19-20

The Holy Spirit **does not accuse us** of being reluctant to pray, on the grounds of the law. After all, Christ has already forgiven us our sin, and because we have died and risen with Him, we have been released from the law (Romans 7:4-6). Christ has fulfilled the law and the list of accusations against us has been destroyed (Colossians 2:14). *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ...* (Romans 8:1).

The Spirit however makes us aware of the sin of prayerlessness because He knows what a blessing prayer is for us and our relationship with the Father. He does not want us to miss out on anything the Father wants to give us. Therefore, the Spirit creates a burning desire within me to overcome prayerlessness. He makes me yearn to *dwell before the throne*. Thus, I am not forced to pray by the law. I am motivated



from within by the desire to spend as much time as possible in God's wonderful presence.

When I am in a hurry and want to drive too fast, the 100 km road signs are an irritation. They keep confronting me with the law. I hate them, because they make me feel more and more guilty. They awaken my sense of guilt, but certainly do not help me to slow down. However, I do not even notice the signs when I want to drive slowly and enjoy nature and the company of my fellow-travellers. I drive slower than the limit set by the law. What is the difference? The desire within me does what the law outside me cannot do.

The same applies to the instruction to pray. You can write verses down on cards and put them up all over your house but they won't help you to *dwell before the throne*. They will only make you feel guilty for not praying. Do not try to conquer prayerlessness by more rules and stricter laws. You are set free from the law. Good intentions do not last, no matter how hard you try. Do not try to imitate Jesus' prayer life. You will not get it right. Stop trying to pray in your own strength. Let the Spirit fill your life with gratitude. Let Him open your eyes to see all the answers to your prayers. That will make you want to pray more.

Prayer is a privilege, not an obligation. The first prayer of one of the criminals who was crucified with Jesus was also his last prayer. He was saved and received eternal life even though he only prayed a few words once. He did nothing to deserve eternal life or to have his prayer answered. There is no obligation to pray often or for hours. But, something is wrong if you never have a desire to pray often and for hours.

Let us live by God's grace. Grace differs from the law. It motivates and inspires. It creates desire. It points us towards Christ and makes us expect everything from Him. By grace our hope and expectation are focused on the Spirit who keeps changing us to become more like Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18) – also concerning His prayer life. The Spirit makes us call out, "*Abba, Father.*" (Romans 8:15)



Prayer: *Spirit of God, come and fill me with the desire to approach your throne more often so that I will want to do it spontaneously, to the glory of God and to the benefit of agriculture.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of district municipalities and local SAPD offices. Pray that they will fulfil their calling and be effective in their fight against lawlessness, crime and corruption. Pray for the conversion of offenders.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of the Central African Republic.

Day 22

**Think anew about conquering sin:
By faith and not by more or stricter rules!**

Read: 1 John 5:3-5, Romans 6:14, and 2 Corinthians 13:5

Do not try to overcome prayerlessness with more rules and stricter laws. Trying harder will probably not work. Not many have managed to do it that way. I have repeatedly said to myself (and to others), *Like Jesus, I must make time to pray*. But I have also repeatedly failed. It made me miserable.

How can we overcome our reluctance to pray? The answer is: *By faith in Christ Jesus, the Conqueror*. We gain victory over the world and sin by faith (cf. 1 John 5:3-5). Jesus gives us the victory He gained over prayerlessness even though we do not deserve it and have done nothing to earn it.

You need to trust Jesus to save you because you cannot save yourself. Similarly, you need to trust Him to save you from the sin of



prayerlessness because you cannot save yourself from it. Do not make the mistake of thinking that you believe by faith but gain victory by good works. When Paul describes his battle against sin, he testifies to the fact that only Christ gives us victory (Romans 7:24-25).

Focus on Jesus instead of on the sin of prayerlessness. Think about the fact that you have died and risen with Him. Make yourself available to Him so that He can live in and through you (Romans 6:10-14). He will come and live His prayer life in and through you.

You will never achieve victory over prayerlessness if you do not believe that it is possible.

Prayer: *Father, in faith I thank You that I will overcome my reluctance to pray. Thank you, Jesus, for helping me.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of migrant and seasonal labourers. Pray for their marriages and disrupted family lives. Pray against the temptations that are part of this way of life. Pray for wisdom and Godly solutions to this difficult question.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Gabon.

Day 23

Think anew on the way God sees you (1): Not as a sinner but without sin!

Read: 1 John 1:7-9; Hebrews 10:10-14, and Hebrews 9:22

Sin soils and contaminates our lives. Nothing, not soap, soap powder, bleach or anything else, can wash it away (Jeremiah 2:22). Sin clings to us – closer than our skin. Like a leopard cannot change its spots and people cannot change the colour of their skin, so we cannot overcome sin (cf. Jeremiah 13:23). Our best attempts are like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).



The harder you try to clean your face with it, the dirtier your face gets. The only reward you ever get from sin is death (Romans 6:23).

Sin is this - *the* matter that separates us from God (cf. Romans 3:23). God is holy. He does not tolerate sin. In fact, God hates sin. Something needs to be done with our sin because we cannot enter God's presence while covered with it. Praise the Lord! He made a plan!

In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed by blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (Hebrews 9:22. New International Version) That was the reason for the many different sacrifices made throughout the Old Testament. But, people felt guilty in spite of all the sacrifices. The law and the sacrifices kept reminding them of their guilt. Fortunately, the system of sacrifice according to the law of Moses was nothing more than a shadow of the wonderful outcome that God had planned (Read Hebrews 10:1-2).

God sent His Son to us as soon as the time was right. Even as a man, His Son was not sinful and never sinned (Hebrews 4:15). Thus, He did not need to sacrifice animals for His own sin. He sacrificed Himself for our sin instead. God was never satisfied by all the animal sacrifices. That is why sacrifices had to be offered again and again. But God was completely satisfied with the sacrifice Jesus made, offering Himself. God wanted nothing more. Because of the one sacrifice that Jesus made, God is willing to forgive the sin of everyone who believes in Jesus: sins of the past, present and future (Romans 1:17). No more sacrifices are needed. *Now, when sins have once been forever forgiven and forgotten, there is no need to offer more sacrifices to get rid of them.* (Hebrews 10:18 - The Living Bible). God no longer thinks about our sin! Hallelujah! (Read Hebrews 10:17.)

I once read a story about a woman who went to her minister and said, "The Lord gave me a message for you." "How will I know the message is really from the Lord?" the minister asked. Then he thought of a test and said, "I confessed a specific sin to the Lord this morning. Ask Him what it was and then come back and tell me what He says. If you are



right, I will know your message really is from the Lord.” The woman left to ask the Lord about the minister’s sin. The next day she was back. *“And what did the Lord say?”* the minister asked, knowing that the woman would not have the right answer. Then she answered, *“The Lord says He can’t remember what sin you confessed. He has already forgotten it.”* This is exactly what God said about Himself through Isaiah (43:25), Jeremiah (31:34), and the author of the letter to the Hebrews (8:12 &10:17). He never even thinks about our sins again.

If you are a child of God, if you believe in Jesus, there is one thing you can be 100% sure of: Sin no longer separates you from God. When you pray to God, you can be certain that He will never think about your sin again. You are squeaky clean to Him because Jesus has cleansed you with His blood. Therefore, He welcomes you into His presence. *Now you can dwell before the throne.*

If you believe in Jesus, God sees you the way He sees Jesus: without sin!

Prayer: *Lord, God, please help me to see myself the way You see me, because when I condemn myself, I do not have the confidence to pray.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of churches and spiritual leaders in rural areas. Pray that they will fearlessly proclaim the Gospel and the whole truth. Pray that they will not give in to the pressure of members who attach more importance to unbiblical traditions than to the Truth of the Word.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Equatorial Guinea.



Day 24

Think anew on the way God sees you (2): Pardoned, not convicted!

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 and 2 Corinthians 5:21, and Romans 4:25 to 5:1 and 8:1 & 33

I do not know about you, but I steer clear of people I owe something. I am afraid of being confronted with difficult questions. I will need to explain why I have not paid my debt yet or done what I said I would do. Guilt can keep me away from people. Similarly, guilt is the reason why Christians often sub-consciously try to steer clear of God. They feel guilty and so they are afraid to enter into His presence the same way an accused is afraid of appearing before the magistrate in court. They fear judgement. They are afraid of being accused of many things. Guilt and fear of condemnation undermine our prayer life. They separate us from God.

But the Bible has good news. Jesus obeyed God unto death (Philippians 2:8b). He was never guilty of sin (John 8:45 and Hebrews 2:15). Even during His trial, the judge (Pilate) found Jesus innocent (John 18:38 & 19:6b). Yet He was crucified. In His Word God says that Jesus was without sin but He was condemned and found guilty in our stead.

Therefore, the good news is this: Jesus was condemned for us and we were pardoned in His stead. He should have been pardoned, but He was willing to give up His freedom and bear the death penalty for us.

The Word clearly says, *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ...* (Romans 8:1). And also, *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ...* (Romans 5:1).

Wonderful! There is no more tension in our relationship with God. God no longer accuses me of the things I have done wrong. He does not



criticise me for all the prayers I did not pray. God is for me, not against me (Romans 8:31).

Everyone who believes in Jesus is free to enter into God's presence. God will not accuse or condemn you. He has already pardoned and justified you. Thus there is no reason to stay away from God, no reason not to approach Him in prayer with faith. The relationship between you and God has been restored. Through Christ, your relationship is what it should be, good and perfect.

Jesus gives *you His justification* (the justification He deserves) so that you may enter into God's presence. Use this privilege. Use it often. Pray without ceasing. *Dwell before the throne!* God really wants you to enter into His presence through prayer. He wants you close to Him. He wants to listen to you and to give you everything you ask from Him.

Prayer: *Hallelujah! I no longer need to live with feelings of guilt. I no longer need to hide from You the way Adam did. Thank you Lord Jesus for Your justification which is now mine!*

Dwell before the throne and ask the Lord to protect you against evil, farm attacks and theft.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Cameroon.

Day 25

Think anew on the way God sees you (3): Not guilty but justified!

Read: Isaiah 53:11 and 1 Corinthians 1:30-31, and 2 Corinthians 5:21



Visiting someone with whom you have a good relationship is enjoyable. You are at ease and you do not feel self-conscious or inferior. You know that your friend accepts you the way you are and enjoys your company. This is the kind of relationship that we have with the Father through Christ.

The righteousness of Jesus refers to the perfect relationship He has with His Father. This means there is no sin and are no problems in their relationship. They have a close, intimate, beautiful relationship marked by love and peace in complete unity and harmony. The Father and the Son find joy in each other's company.

All the above scriptures teach us that Jesus shares His justification, in other words His perfect relationship with the Father, with everyone who believes in Him. The Word *justification* indicates the status that believers in Christ have in God's eyes. Jesus gives His perfect relationship with the Father to us as a gift. Now everyone who believes in Jesus also has a perfect relationship with God.

So even if your conscience accuses you of not getting it right, not obeying God in everything, and even if you notice that you are always inclined to do what is wrong, you can still be certain of this: God, by His grace, gives you the perfect justification and holiness of Jesus even though you do not deserve it. The Father gives you the perfect relationship that Jesus has with Him. He also makes you without sin as Jesus is. Therefore, God does not see your sin when He looks at you. You are no longer a sinner to Him and He cannot remember anything bad you have ever done. To Him it is as though you are just as obedient as Jesus is. It is as though you, like Jesus, have no sin.

Nobody can enter God's presence because of something good that he / she has done. But, all who believe in Jesus can enter God's presence with the justification of Jesus.

In other words: When you enter God's presence you need not be worried about what other people think of you, about your status or level of education or what you have done wrong in the past. Rely on the fact that your relationship with the Father is just as good and beautiful as



Jesus' relationship with Him, because Jesus has given you His justification as a free gift. Therefore, you can and must *dwell before the throne!* God will hear your prayers because of your intimate relationship with Him.

Let us summarise: If you believe in Jesus He gives you everything you need to enter into God's presence. He gives you:

- His righteousness;
- His obedience;
- His holiness;
- His virtue;
- His achievement.

He will give you everything!!! You need only grab hold of the opportunity and privilege to *dwell before the throne*. **Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, I want to praise and worship You. I want to tell everyone how good You are and what You have done for me. I want to take hold of the privilege of dwelling before the throne because I now have a perfect relationship with the Father, just like You.*

Dwell before the throne with the prayer that *Living and Farming God's Way* will characterise your farm and also the rural and farming communities of all of Africa. Pray for *AMOS AGRIMIN*.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of *Nigeria*.



Day 26

Think anew on how God sees you (4): Like your older brother, Jesus!

Read: Genesis 27:1-40 & 28:3-4 (Please read the whole section.)
Galatians 3:26-27

In Genesis 12:1-3 we read about the Lord calling Abram (later Abraham) to pack up and move to a new land that He would still point out to him. He blessed Abraham and said that all the people of the earth would be blessed through Abraham, promising him many descendants. Eventually, after many years, a son was born to Abraham and Sarah. His name was Isaac. Later Isaac married Rebecca. She was barren, but the Lord heard Isaac's pleading prayers and, after twenty years, she gave birth to the twins, Esau and Jacob. Esau, as the eldest, and his progeny were supposed to inherit all the promises. But that did not happen. Genesis 27 tells us that Jacob tricked His brother Esau and inherited the blessing instead (Genesis 28:3-4).

The crux of the story is that Jacob was a cheat. He did not hesitate to deceive his father and to lie (Genesis 27:19). He lied about his identity twice. He lied when he said he had cooked venison for his father. And he wasn't even ashamed of dragging God into his lies. He claimed that God had made the deer cross his path. Furthermore, he accepted the blessing that should have been Esau's with unclean hands. The skin of a recently slaughtered animal was considered unclean but that didn't stop Jacob from pulling it over his arms to make them feel hairy like Esau's arms. The kiss he gave his father was nothing less than treachery against his brother.

Jacob the deceiver, liar and thief, received the blessing that, by right, should have been his brother's. Jacob received it even though he did not deserve it. He became the heir to all God's promises to his grandfather Abraham, and he did so by putting on Esau's clothes. Esau, in turn, got the bad part that Jacob was supposed to get. What he received was more of a curse than a blessing.



In the New Testament, we again read about younger brothers (and sisters) who are blessed because they are wearing the *clothes* of their eldest brother. You and I are the deceivers. We are the sinners. Jesus is called our elder brother (Romans 8:29 and Hebrews 2:11). He deserves God's blessing because He obeyed God completely. We deserve God's punishment because we were and are disobedient. But because Jesus loves us, He gave us His righteousness to wear and He took on our unrighteousness. He became the cursed One who died for us on the cross (Galatians 3:14). Clothed in Jesus' righteousness we now get what He deserves – the full blessing of the Father.

Jesus' righteousness and holiness, His perfect relationship with the Father, are the wedding clothes everyone needs to be clothed with, to enter into God's presence and share in the wedding banquet (feast) (Matthew 22). All who believe in Jesus and become one with Him through baptism **have clothed themselves with Christ** (Galatians 3:26-27).

Because we are clothed with Jesus, clothed in His righteousness and holiness, we can:

- Dwell before the throne in God's presence;
- Receive the full blessing that Jesus deserves through His righteousness. We become joint-heirs of all that is His even though we do not deserve it (Romans 8:17)!

Prayer: *Jesus, I do not have enough words to thank You that You were willing to change places with me. Thank you that I can enjoy the blessing you deserve, now and into eternity.*

Dwell before the throne clothed in the righteousness and holiness of Jesus. Dwell there with the certainty that you may ask Him for the blessings He has earned, for yourself and the agricultural community. Ask for everything the Spirit lays on your heart.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Ghana.



Day 27

Think anew on how God sees you (5): His first impression is lasting!

Read: Isaiah 53:11 and 1 Corinthians 1:30

Years ago I walked into an army general's office. The following words were written on the wall behind him in bold letters: *You will never have a second chance to make a first impression.* Even today, when I have an appointment with someone important, I think of the words in the general's office. Then I spend days wondering, *what am I going to say when I meet him? How will I plead my case? What will make him respond positively to me?*

Fortunately, it does not work that way with God. He is more important than anyone else. He is the King of kings. But He did not leave it to you and me to spend days wondering about the best way to approach Him. In His Word He says there is only one way: through Jesus Christ!

When you and I, clothed with the righteousness of Jesus, appear before God on His throne, His first and lasting impression of us is always positive. This is possible because He sees us the way He sees Jesus. We are perfect in His eyes because Jesus is holy, without sin. Jesus loves the Father perfectly and therefore He obeys the Father completely. There is nothing wrong with the relationship between the Father and the Son. It is a perfect relationship. There is perfect unity and harmony. When we, clothed in His righteousness, holiness and obedience approach God, the lasting impression the Father has of us is this: **Perfect like Jesus!** The Father's impression of Jesus is also His lasting impression of you and me.

This certainty motivates me to *dwell before the throne*. It helps me to conquer prayerlessness and my reluctance to pray. What about you?



Prayer: *Jesus, the more I understand what you did for me, the more I love You. I do not have words to express my love. I boast only in You. I worship You.*

Dwell before the throne clothed in the righteousness and holiness of Jesus. In His Name ask that you will daily bear the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:19-22). Ask the Spirit to teach you and give you the power to make people Jesus' disciples.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of the Ivory Coast.

Day 28

Think anew on the meaning of prayer in Jesus' Name

Read: John 14:13-14 & 15:16, and 16:23-27

The words, *in Jesus' Name* are used in almost every prayer. Unfortunately, the real meaning of these words has been lost. To most people it is just a meaningless phrase used to end their prayers, something you need to say before saying **Amen**. It is almost like an aeroplane that needs to let down its wheels before it can land. However, there is a much deeper meaning to asking for something in the Name of Jesus.

Names are used to distinguish between people. For instance: It wasn't Gary on the horse, it was Peter. But in the Bible people's names were often linked to their identity. A name said who and what someone was. Jesus' Name refers to Jesus as a person. To say that someone was healed in the Name of Jesus is the same as saying that someone was healed by Jesus Himself (cf. Acts 3:16).

When Jesus gives us His Name in which to pray, He gives us Himself. He gives us all He is and all He has done. That is why no-one could



pray in His Name before He died and rose and before the Holy Spirit came (John 16:24 & 26). We only really know who Jesus is, since He revealed Himself to us completely, since He completed His reconciliation and gained victory over evil. It is only since then that we can call on His Name when we pray. When we mention Jesus' Name, the Father recalls everything He is and everything He did. It makes Him glad and thankful. Then He gladly gives us, and the issue we bring before Him, His undivided attention. He hears the voice and heart of Jesus in our prayers. Therefore, Jesus is able to give us the assurance that the Father will hear us when we pray in His Name.

Jesus is actually saying, *Take My Name, take My obedience, take My righteousness, take My justification, take My victory, take My perfect relationship with the Father, take My all and then pray to the Father in My Name. Ask what I want, and I promise you that the Father will give it to you.*

The assurance that your prayer will be answered does not apply to all prayers. It only applies to prayers in Jesus' Name. He must be speaking in our prayers. The contents of our prayers must be important to Him. Therefore, we should primarily pray to bear a lot of lasting fruit so that the Father will be glorified. That is what is important to Jesus (John 14:13-14 & 15:5-8 & verse 16).

When you *dwell before the throne*, do so in Jesus' Name and dwell there to bear fruit, much lasting fruit. The more fruit you see, the more fruit you will desire. Thus, your desire to *dwell before the throne* conquers your reluctance to pray.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, help me to use the privilege You have given me to ask for anything in Your Name, to ask for what You want. Help me to bear more fruit and not to only pray for my earthly (temporary) needs.*

Dwell before the throne clothed in the righteousness and holiness of Jesus. In His Name ask that all Christians in the agricultural



community will bear fruit suited to conversion - a lot of lasting fruit that will glorify the Father.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Liberia.

Day 29

Think anew on the help of the Spirit

Read: Romans 8:9 & 16, and 26-27

Sometimes I come before the throne speechless. I do not know how or what to pray for someone or about a particular issue. Yet I have the desire to *dwell before the throne* in the interest of that person or issue. Follow this advice if it happens to you too: Persevere in prayer; *dwell before the throne* (Romans 12:12). Do not stay away from the throne because you are not sure of what or how to pray.

Be still. Thank the Father that the Spirit of Christ lives in you because you believe (Romans 8:9 and Galatians 3:14b). Thank Him that you have an intimate relationship with Him as your Father through the Spirit and that you may call Him Father (Romans 8:15).

Confess that you do not really know how or what to pray for that particular person or issue.

Purposefully decide not to address a lot of requests to the Lord. Ask for only one thing. Ask the Spirit to pray to the Father on your behalf. He knows your deepest needs and desires, even if you cannot express them. He knows how to pray for it according to the will of God because He also knows God's deepest secrets and mysteries (1 Corinthians 2:10).

Believe that the Spirit will do it for you. Rejoice, knowing that the Father will answer the prayer the Spirit prays on your behalf. It is a prayer according to His will. Be glad, because you will receive more and better answers than you could ever imagine.



Take your time. Do not hurry. The Spirit will intercede on your behalf. Give Him the time and opportunity to do so. If you have the gift of tongues, use it. The Spirit may even give you the gift of tongues to pray in for the first time (1 Corinthians 12:8-11 & 14:2 & 5). If He does, thank Him for it. It is a gift, not something you have earned by being religious. Do not doubt that you are a child of God if you do not have such a gift and do not receive it. Not everyone receives the same gifts (1 Corinthians 12:8-11). Not having the gift does not mean that the Spirit will not intercede on your behalf. You accepted Christ in faith (John 1:12-13). You received the Spirit by faith (Galatians 3:14b). Similarly, you must believe that the Spirit will pray on your behalf. We live by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Now thank the Spirit for interceding on your behalf. It is a great privilege. Thank the Father for listening to the pleading of the Spirit. Live in faith and the expectation that you will see the answer to the pleadings of the Spirit – sooner or later. Let what the Spirit does motivate you to *dwell before the throne*, even if you do not know how or what to pray.

Prayer: *Thank You, Spirit of God, for living in me. Thank You for assuring me that I am Your child. Thank You for helping me when I do not know what or how to pray.*

Dwell before the throne even when you do not know what or how to pray. Ask the Spirit to intercede with the Father for a particular person or issue in your heart.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Sierra Leone.



Day 30

Everyone who dwells before the throne will change

Read: Colossians 3:1-17

Many things will happen when you *dwell before the throne*. The most important thing is that the Lord will change your prayer life. You are going to be victorious! God's presence always brings victory and success. Think of all the stories in the Old Testament. It was the presence of God and not the skill and strength of the soldiers that gave Israel victory (Exodus 14:13-14, Joshua 6:15-21, Psalm 33:15-19 and Proverbs 21:31).

Think about what we read about Jesus in the New Testament. Two of the most important things that enabled Him to keep doing the will of the Father and to conquer the devil and his temptations were ...

- the presence of the Spirit of God in Him (Luke 3:21-22 and John 3:34) and
- His continual prayerful communion with the Father (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16 & 6:12 and John 5:19-20).

Sin and prayer never go together. You cannot live in sin and *dwell before the throne* at the same time. It is either one or the other. He who chooses sin must know that prayer will slowly and surely disappear from his life. He who chooses to *dwell before the throne* can know that sin will disappear. God's presence makes the presence of sin impossible, because God is holy. People who live in sin therefore do not like praying. And, people who love praying, do not like sin because prayer takes us directly into the presence of God.

When you *dwell before the throne*, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus; when you keep thinking of Christ and His position of power at the right hand of God (Colossians 3:1-4); when you are certain that, in principle, you are seated there with Him (cf. Ephesians 2:6), then many awful things in your life die and the image and character of Jesus increasingly comes to the fore (Colossians 3:5-17).



Victory over prayerlessness always results in victory over many other sins! That is what the Lord's presence does. Therefore, you must *dwell before the throne!*

Prayer: *Father, fill the whole agricultural community with the desire to dwell before Your throne so that we will all conquer prayerlessness and many other sins.*

Dwell before the throne in the interest of everyone who wants to conquer sin. Pray for victory over prayerlessness, addiction, magic, bitterness, pornography, division, unfaithfulness, racism and materialism.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Togo and Benin.



PART 4

FOUR PRAYERS WITH WHICH TO DWELL BEFORE THE THRONE

Day 31

Dwell before the throne

Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Our translation for 1 Thessalonians 5:17 is, *Dwell before the throne!* There are four short prayers I pray continually when I *dwell before the throne*. I pray the first three virtually daily, and often a couple of times a day. Why? So that God will eventually hear me? Certainly not! He already knows what I am going to say before I start speaking (Psalm 139:1-4). I keep praying so that *I* will eventually hear *Him*. You see, God is always talking to His children but we are so busy that we do not always hear Him properly. We live in an era of rapid electronic communication and rapid transport. With all the radios, CD's, TV's, DVD's, iPod's and cell phones, silence has disappeared from many people's lives. These things are everywhere: in our bedrooms, vehicles and pockets. We have become like radios that are not properly tuned to the station. The broadcast occurs and the quality is excellent, but we do not receive the signals. We are not tuned in to God and so we miss what He wants to show and teach us. We do not know what He wants us to do or be.

The first three prayers have really helped me to be sensitive to what the Lord wants to do in my life. This is the prayer:

*Lord, show me what I must see today;
Teach me what I must know;
Tell me what I must do, and
Make me what I must be - your Image!*



This is a *dangerous* prayer. It gets you out of your comfort zone. It gives God an opportunity to set the agenda between you and Him. With this prayer, you are giving Him an opportunity to talk to you about issues you never even thought of yourself. I challenge you today to *dwell before the throne* with this short prayer. It will make you sensitive to God's voice. It will change your life! It will give your life new meaning. It will bring the sparkle and excitement back into your relationship with God.

You have only one life. Make the best of it! You must invest in your life (not only in the bank). You must make sure that your life bears fruit and has meaning. The life you have received from the hand of God is too precious to waste on issues that have no value. *Dwell before the throne* - with these few words, live God's agenda daily for your life (cf. Ephesians 2:10 & 5:15-17)!

Prayer: *Father, help me not to pray only about my needs and desires but to give You an opportunity to talk to me about what is in Your heart.*

Dwell before the throne with this *morning prayer*. Pray it sincerely, for yourself, your family and friends, and for your personnel and community.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Burkino Faso.

Day 32

Show me what I must see today

Read: Ephesians 1:18-20

Pray: *Lord, show me what I must see today;
Teach me what I must learn;
Tell me what I must do, and*



Make me what I must be - your Image!

Beg the Lord not to allow you to stumble blindly through life! You will miss out on a great deal. Ask the Lord to open your eyes to see the wonderful things in His Word (cf. Psalm 119:18 in The Living Bible). Pray that you will, like Steven, see God's glory in your darkest hour (Acts 7:54-60). Pray that He will open your spiritual eyes so that you will live with the hope, expectation and power of the resurrected Jesus (cf. Ephesians 1:18 et seq.). Ask the Lord to open your eyes so that you will see His answers to your prayers.

Your eyes will open wider and you will see more and more if you *dwell before the throne* with the request that the Lord will show you what you need to see today. You will start looking about **expecting** to see something. Like Jesus in Matthew 9 from verse 35, you will see more than a throng of people crowded together to receive a state pension. You will look closer and see their spiritual need and hopelessness. You will see what a great need there is for farm workers to be trained. They want to learn more about marriage, raising children, finance, solving problems, handling conflict and farming. They also have dreams and ideals for their children, even if they battle to express their dreams.

If you want the Lord to show you new things, you need to go where you haven't gone before. I do not mean you need to go on expensive holidays or overseas trips. Cross the road, railway line or ditch separating town and township. Go to the rubbish dump and ask the Lord to speak to you there. Visit an orphanage or an old age home. Go to your worker's homes or go on an outreach.

Perhaps the Lord also wants to show you that not everyone who belongs to a particular race, church or group is the same. We are far too eager to generalise. Perhaps He wants to show you how foolish you are to base your hope and certainty on the uncertainty of material wealth (cf. 1 Timothy 6:17). There are many examples all around us, but we do not see them. Perhaps He wants to show you how many people are afraid, unhappy and lonely in spite of their wealth.



I recently had the privilege of befriending a very special lady from a different culture and race group in the Northern Cape. She is from one of the little towns in which there is a great deal of spiritual and physical poverty. During one of our conversations, she made the following statement: *When the Lord raises my income, it isn't so that I can raise my lifestyle. It is to raise my contribution towards relieving other people's suffering.* Through her, the Lord again showed me how selfish we often are. We are always busy raising our **style of life** and not our **quality of life** and we never even consider asking Him why He has given us so much.

The problems in agriculture are clear. But, if you pray this prayer regularly, the Lord will also show you His solution to these complicated problems. He will show you what you can do to help solve them (cf. 1 Chronicles 12:32 and Jeremiah 33:3).

Prayer: *Lord, thank you for my eyes. May they never lead me into sin. Open my eyes to see everything You show me. I do not want to miss a thing, Lord.*

Dwell before the throne with this *morning prayer* in the interest of your marriage partner, children, employees or employer. Dwell there, clothed in the righteousness and holiness of Jesus. Pray in His Name with the certainty that the Father will hear you. Thank Him for it in advance.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Guinea-Bissau and Guinea, and Gambia and Senegal in West Africa.



Day 33

Teach me what I must know

Read: Matthew 5:1 & 7:28-29

Pray: *Lord, show me what I must see today;
Teach me what I must know;
Tell me what I must do, and
Make me what I must be, Your Image.*

The Lord showed me something. I sat outside a school and noticed that every child carried a suitcase with textbooks, pens and pencils and notebooks. Clearly, they were all **learners**. I saw the same at a university. **Students** attend class with books, paper and computers. But then I went to church. Most **churchgoers** arrived empty handed. They were not prepared for learning. Every time I see this at a church I think about what Isaiah 54:13 says, namely, *All your sons will be taught by the Lord, ...* Then I pray that it will also become true of Groblershoop, of every little town and every farm – that we will all be learners of the Lord.

Are you still a learner? Do you sit in the Lord's class each day? Do you learn from Him who knows everything (Psalm 94:10 and Romans 11:33-36)? There are many incomprehensible things He wants to teach you (Jeremiah 33:3). He wants to teach you to do the right thing at the right time and in the right way on the farm (Isaiah 28:23-29). Make time and allow the Holy Spirit to teach you (John 14:26 and 1 John 2:26-27).

Do not be surprised if the Lord teaches you things you have never thought of. It has happened to me. Though small, our farming business is divided into two branches. In the Northern Cape we farm with sheep and a couple of cattle, and in the Free State, our son farms with vegetables. We initially rented land for farming vegetables. Then, about two years ago, the Lord led us to sell our home in Mimosa Park and to buy a small piece of land near Bloemfontein. It was a difficult instruction



we had to obey in faith. And then two things went wrong. The purchase of the new place went through, but the sale of our property did not. The second setback was hail. One Monday morning, Jaco picked the first 45 crates of peppers of what seemed to be a very promising harvest. That afternoon Bain's Vlei was struck by a devastating hailstorm. There was nothing left. We found ourselves in a severe crisis - a test to our faith.

With a heavy heart I left Bloemfontein one afternoon. Suddenly I heard a voice in my mind. It said, *Hennie, why not go drinking?* The idea sounded very attractive and I immediately thought of a couple of other things I could do on the way to the bottle store. I wanted to give in to every possible temptation, from murder to Let's rather leave it at that.

I got a terrible fright and leapt straight back into the arms of my strong Saviour. Many intense discussions with God followed. ***He taught me how much I need Jesus every day.*** I wrote everything down to make quite sure that I would never forget it. You see, we Christians think only bad people need Jesus. We are quick to forget that if God were to remove His hand of grace from us for just an instant, we would be finished. I could have destroyed my life, my family, our farming business and my testimony in five minutes flat.

I thank my Lord Jesus! It was a painful experience, but He taught me a great deal and it turned into a good experience of growth for our family. That day He helped and protected me. More than that, He also provided for us in a wonderful way during this difficult period. He is the Lord who provides (cf. Genesis 22:13-14).

I want to encourage you to *dwell before the throne* and to continually pray: *Teach me what I must know!* Let Him decide what syllabus is the one for you because we do not know. There is so much more that He wants to teach us. What a privilege to be taught by the Lord Himself.

Prayer: *Lord, I want to be your pupil. Set Your syllabus. Help me to grab hold of every opportunity I have to learn from You.*



Dwell before the throne with this *morning prayer*. Pray it for all leaders - agricultural, political, community, traditional and church leaders. Pray with the conviction that the Father is listening to you because your relationship with Him is as perfect as His relationship with Jesus.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Mauritania, Western Sahara and Morocco, all in West Africa.

Day 34

Tell me what I should do

Read: 1 Samuel 23: 2, 4 & 10-11; Luke 6:46; Ephesians 5:10-17

Bid: *Lord, show me what I must see today;*
Teach me what I must know;
Tell me what I must do, and
Make me what I must be - Your Image!

Jesus is Lord and we must obey Him. Many people want to accept Jesus as Saviour to get away from the guilt and punishment but they do not want Him as Lord and do not want to give Him authority over all of their life. That Jesus is Lord and King is clear from the fact that the New Testament calls Him Lord 747 times but Saviour only 24 times. Doing what God says is not just one of a couple of options. It is the only option Christians have. Our Saviour is also our Lord!

The Bible teaches us that the Lord's children, people He made anew, should live lives of gratitude (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 12:1 et seq., and Ephesians 4:17 et seq.). But, like David in 1 Samuel 23, you and I often need to make practical decisions. Ask the Lord to guide you in your everyday decisions.



I always wanted to farm and I had an opportunity to do so early on in life. But the Lord had other plans for me. He called me to ministry. In November 1984, at the exact hour that I was admitted as a reverend, our Friesian cow died. The Lord spoke to me clearly by her death: *Do not give in to the temptation to go and farm. Your farming business is dead.* In time, but specifically in 1993, the Lord called Janetta and me to start the *AMOS MINISTRY*. The name comes from the farmer-prophet Amos in the Old Testament. The Lord started talking to us about farming again in 2002. He guided us step-by-step and made it clear that a new season was dawning in our ministry. It may be summarised by the words, *“the demonstration of your proclamation”*. By 2005 we were certain that the Lord did not want us to leave *AMOS* to farm, but that we had to do both. I was scared. I often thought back to the cow that had died in 1984. I was scared that every time we experienced hardship, the devil would denounce and accuse me of disobedience; that he would remind me about the dead cow and tell me that I should not be farming. I did not feel up to his accusations. I had to make 100% sure that I was doing what God wanted and not just something I felt like doing. On 21 March 2005 I made an entry in my quiet time journal. I asked the Lord to replace the cow that had died in 1984 by giving us twin calves - something that seldom happens with cattle. The Lord answered, and by the end of that year the twin calves were born. The Lord had spoken clearly and we were sure of what we had to do.

I want to encourage you to make yourself available to the Lord. *Dwell before His throne* with the request: *Tell me what I must do.* Allow Him to put new things on your agenda. Give Him an opportunity to talk to you about what He would like to do through you. Ask Him for guidance regarding practical issues. God still talks to His children today. He does it in various ways. If you do not know how to hear the Lord's voice, enquire from *AMOS* and/or Christian friends. Get help and advice because God wants to talk to you.

You have a calling (Ephesians 2:10). Find out what it is and follow it (Ephesians 5:10-17)!



Prayer: *Lord God, help me to hear Your voice more clearly and to always obey You immediately.*

Dwell before the throne with this *morning prayer* in the interest of everyone seeking advice and guidance about important decisions they need to make. Pray that Christians in particular will be prepared to do what God says. Christ is the Lord!

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Niger and Chad.

Day 35

Make me what I must be

Read: 2 Corinthians 3:18 and 1 John 2:6

Pray: *Lord, show me what I must see today;
Teach me what I must know;
Tell me what I must do, and
Make me what I must be, Your Image!*

This is a life changing and character building prayer. I always want other people to change while I remain the same. But every time I pray this prayer, the Spirit reminds me that change should start with me. I am often reminded that *being* is more important than *doing*.

When I *dwell before the throne* with this prayer, I remember that I am not supposed to be like any other Christian. I must reflect the image of God and the character of Jesus Christ. This protects me against the sin of self-righteousness (Luke 18:11-12 and Galatians 6:1-5).

By praying this prayer, you are giving the master Agriculturalist permission to prune you so that you can bear more fruit. You are giving Him the right to decide what stays and what must burn (John 15:1-8). You



are giving God the right to change your thoughts so that you will stop thinking and arguing like the world and will know His will (Romans 12:1-2).

By *dwelling before the throne* with this prayer, you are again giving God an opportunity to decide what must change in your life. One day, the daughter of a friend of ours told me about a very good book she had read. I read slowly and so I cannot read every good book I hear about. But, over the years, I have developed a sensitivity for knowing when the Lord wants me to read a particular book. Then I would take trouble to not only read the book, but to study it. This was one of those opportunities. The Spirit created the desire in me to read the book, ***Respectable Sins (Confronting the sins we tolerate)*** by **Jerry Bridges**. Through this book, the Spirit addressed me severely regarding *acceptable sins* such as fear, frustration, dissatisfaction, discontentment, ungratefulness, pride, selfishness and other things that are diametrically opposed to the image and character of Christ.

Let us *dwell before the throne* with this short prayer. Not so that God will eventually hear us, but so that we will eventually hear Him. I dream about an agricultural community that sees what God is showing them, that knows what God is teaching them, that does what God is telling them to do and that reflects Christ in all they do. This is the transformation that must occur in agriculture. It must begin with you and me, then spread to our farms and communities and eventually to all of Africa.

Prayer: *Father, I desire more fruit in my life. Therefore I come, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus, with His obedience, filled with His Spirit, in His Name, and I pray,*

*Show me what I must see today;
Teach me what I must know;
Tell me what I must do, and
Make me what I must be, Your Image!*



Dwell before the throne with this *morning prayer*. Remember that transformation in agriculture starts with you. Pray that you will become increasingly sensitive to what God wants to do in and through you. Ask Him to prepare you and make you willing to be available to Him.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Mali and Algeria.

Day 36

Prayer for faith

Read: Exodus 3:14 and Numbers 23:19, and Mark 11:22-24

Pray: *Lord, help me to believe that you are who you say you are. Help me to believe that You still can do what You did in the past. Help me to believe that You can, want to, and will do everything You promised to do.*

We are saved by grace, through **faith** in Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8). We are justified because we **believe** (Romans 1:17 & 3:28; Galatians 2:16). By **faith** we receive the Holy Spirit (Galatians 3:14) and we conquer the sinful world by **faith** (1 John 5:4). When we pray in **faith**, we receive all we ask (Mark 11:24; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:6). This all means that we live by **faith** and not by what we see (2 Corinthians 5:7). Therefore the devil's attack was aimed at destroying Peter's **faith**, and that was why Jesus prayed that Peter's **faith** would not fail (Luke 22:32). The importance of **faith** is clear. Can you and I afford not to pray about our **faith** (cf. Mark 9:24)?

I said something about faith and prayer on Day 14. Let us be still and answer the following questions honestly:

1. How will it change your life if you **believe** that God really is who He says He is?
2. How will it change your life if you **believe** that God is able to do everything the Bible says He has done?



3. How will it change your life if you are **100% convinced** that God can, wants to and will do everything He promised to do in His Word?

I must confess: My life shows that I am struggling to believe these things. I have my own human ideas about God. I often proclaim more about God than I really believe.

I battle most with my own unbelief and the destructive consequences of that unbelief. Most problems in my life are caused by my unbelief. Therefore I *dwell before the throne* with this prayer. I simply must believe with a child-like faith, that these three things are true of God, because what remains if I do not? It is all or nothing. If I open the door to unbelief just a crack, it will rush through the door and blow away everything I do believe. Lord, help me to believe!

Can you afford not to *dwell before the throne* with this prayer?

Prayer: *Lord, that I believe is all thanks to You. Keep me from unbelief and help me to believe in You like a child. You are reliable and You cannot lie. Thank You for this assurance and that I can rely on You in everything.*

Dwell before the throne with this *prayer for faith* in the interest of the Church of Jesus Christ in Africa. Unbelief, superstition and heathen traditions undermine the power, effectiveness and testimony of the Church.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Djibouti and Eritrea.



Day 37

Lord, position me to realise my calling

Read: John 17:4, and Acts 20:24 and 2 Timothy 4:7

Pray: *Lord, (re)position me (or us) to realise my calling, intimacy with God and financial freedom.*

Jesus and Paul were both able to look back on their lives and gratefully say that they had realised their calling. But what about you and me?

First of all we must remember that all Christians have been called for **full-time** service to the Lord, no matter their job or circumstances. Nobody is called for part-time service. You are in full-time service to the King (Colossians 3:17 & 3:23-24) even if you are a farmer or a labourer and not only if you are a minister or pastor. By His Spirit God enables people to preach and to be skilful with their hands (Exodus 35:30 to 36:1, and 36:8). God also teaches His farmers to farm successfully (Proverbs 27:23-27 and Isaiah 28:23-29).

There are many challenges in agriculture. There are so much distress and suffering in rural areas. The Lord wants to reveal so many new things to us. So many aspects of His Kingdom must be reflected in agriculture. So many relationships need to be restored and built. All this is the Lord's work and He calls ordinary people, agriculturalists like you and me, to do it for Him. But then we need to get out of our comfort zone, because our comfort zone keeps us from answering our calling. Therefore God needs to (re)position us to realise our calling.

You need to fulfil your calling each day. If not, you won't be able to look back on your life when it is over and say that you have completed the task the Lord has set for you. Therefore, you must *dwell before the throne* with this prayer because your calling will not be fulfilled until the day you die.

When God puts you in a position to realise your calling, He usually does two things: He shifts your **mind** and He shifts your **body**. Ask Him to do



so. Ask Him to change your thoughts and to give you spiritual eyes to see things differently. Perhaps He will make you think of something radically new, or perhaps He will give you a new perspective on something small. Perhaps He will show you something you have always missed. Ask Him to shift your body to where He wants to use you now. You may be in the wrong place and/or the wrong job, and/or among the wrong people, and/or caught up in the wrong circumstances. (I do not mean that the place, job, people or circumstances are sinful; merely that you are not where the Lord wants to use you now.) He might move you very far or maybe only a few metres. It does not matter. Just obey Him and move.

The Lord has repositioned me and my family a few times and each time it has helped us to realise our calling better. I learned one thing in the process: *I am safer in the will of the Lord than in my own comfort zone.*

Prayer: *Father, I want to live my calling and bear much fruit every day. Keep moving me to the place you want me to be and daily determine the circumstances in which I am best able to do it. Take away my fear of change.*

Dwell before the throne with the prayer that the LORD will position you and your family to realise your calling. Pray that He will remove you from your comfort zone so that you will be of more service to His Kingdom and will bear much fruit.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Tunisia and Libya.



Day 38

Lord, position me for intimacy

Read: Mark 1:32-39, and Luke 5:16 & 6:12

Pray: *Lord, (re)position me (or us) to realise our calling, intimacy with God and financial freedom.*

When you quickly want something from the Father you can pray about it on the run. There are many examples of this in the Bible (Nehemiah 2:4, 4:4, 5:19, 9:9b & 14, Luke 18:13 & 23:42, and John 11:41-42). But intimacy with God is something else. Intimate relationships demand quality time for communication so that you will really get to know and trust each other. You cannot build an intimate relationship with someone when you are always on the run. Similarly, you cannot build an intimate relationship with God by praying on the run. You need an intimate relationship with God first and then you can also pray on the run whenever you need to do so.

Jesus regularly spent long intervals in prayer with the Father. His prayers definitely weren't long lists of His immediate needs or an endless repetition of words. The fact that He was always in communication with His Father reveals His need for intimacy with His Father.

You and I must *dwell before the throne* not only because we want much, but for the sake of an intimate relationship with our Father. Intimacy is about the *joy and excitement* of being in God's *presence*. It is about a *personal relationship* with Him. Intimacy presupposes you and the Father *alone in conversation, talking and listening* to each other, discussing your *character* and your *calling*, getting to *know* Him as He really is – His nature and character. The more time we spend in His presence and company, the more we will start to behave and think the way He does; the more we will reflect the image and character of God.

Dwell before the throne requesting the Lord to position you for intimacy with Him. Ask Him to move your mind and your body. Ask Him to make you think anew on intimacy with Him and the necessity to often spend long periods of time in prayer. Ask Him to change everything that



needs to be changed so that you can spend a few hours alone with Him from time to time, or even spend a day or so praying and fasting. You and I really need it.

Prayer: *Lord God, remove me from the hustle and bustle of life, and remove the hustle and bustle of life from me. Position me for more intimacy with You so that I will get to know You better, will reflect more of You, bear more fruit and find more joy in dwelling before the throne.*

Dwell before the throne with the prayer that the LORD will transform the agricultural community of Africa into a praying community. Pray for greater unity with Him so that His image and character will be reflected in us all more and more.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of the Seychelles and Madagascar.

Day 39

Lord, position me for financial freedom

Read: Proverbs 22:7 and 1 John 2:15-17

Pray: *Lord (re)position me (or us) to realise our calling, intimacy with God and **financial independence**.*

Being without debt is a special blessing from the Lord (Deuteronomy 15:6 & 28:12). But the Bible accepts that even people who serve the Lord can end up in debt (cf. Leviticus 25 and 2 Kings 4:1). Because of high start-up and production costs in agriculture, one bad harvest can result in a great deal of debt. The Bible does not forbid debt, but certainly encourages us to avoid it.

Financial independence means you are money's boss and that money is not your boss. It means not making debt to satisfy your own selfish and



greedy desires. It means that the debt you do have is good debt that will help you get out of debt again. It means having the freedom to use your money to do what the Lord expects you to do and that your financial position does not tempt you to be dishonest (cf. Proverbs 30:7-9). Financial independence is to do God's will with God's money, **all ten tithes** of it.

Two giants rob us of financial independence: debt and that which usually causes debt, namely greed. Greed is idol worship and should therefore be rooted out of our lives (Ephesians 5:5). Our battle against debt is half-won when we succeed in doing so.

A lot of debt is a terrible thing. It causes sleeplessness and mountains of temptation – the temptation to be dishonest, to pay labourers too little, to play the Lotto, to stop tithing, to start drinking, etcetera. Uncontrollable debt makes you feel like a loser and stops you from living your calling. You need all your time and energy to stay out of trouble. There is nothing left with which to realise your calling. Debt takes over your mind, making it difficult for you to concentrate when you pray. Debt bedevils our intimacy with God.

If you are not free financially, you must *dwell before the throne* with this prayer: *Lord, position me for financial freedom.* Be sensitive to His answer. He wants to help you become financially independent in the right way. He will show you what to see, teach you what you need to know and show you what you need to do. This does not necessarily mean getting out of debt overnight. But, do what the Lord tells you to do and you will be filled with a new hope and a new expectation. Allow Him to move your mind and your body, your assets and your liabilities, your vision and your plans. You cannot expect financial freedom if everything remains the same.

If you and I are earnest about paying our debt, we will discover how earnest God is to do miracles and bless us with financial freedom.



Prayer: *Father, you are The Agriculturalist. Prune out all my greed because it stops me from bearing fruit and fulfilling my calling. Position me for financial freedom so that I will do Your will with Your money.*

Dwell before the throne and ask the LORD to position the agricultural community for financial freedom. Pray that agriculturalists will create wealth and be a blessing to Africa. Pray against everything that undermines the profitability of agriculture.

Pray for Africa: Focus on the agricultural community of Egypt. Pray that ***Living and Farming God's Way*** will characterise the rural and agricultural community from the Cape to Cairo.

Day 40

Lord Jesus, I need You

Lord, I couldn't save myself. **I need You to do it.** And you saved me from death and eternal punishment. You gave me that which you received from the Father by your obedience. I stand before the Father with your perfect obedience, your righteousness and your holiness, and in your Name. Your blood has cleansed me! You made me your child. Thank you so very much. But I am battling to live for You in gratitude. I cannot do it on my own. **I need You for that too.** Therefore, I beg you, Lord Jesus:

Give me Your gentle, loving eyes,

Give me Your serving hands,

Give me Your willingness to listen;

Give me patience for the weak;

Give me Your self-control and self-discipline;

Give me Your victory over sin and the devil's temptations;



Give me Your sensitivity to the will of the Father;
Give me Your perfect obedience to the Father;
Give me Your prayer life and Your intimacy with the Father;
Give me Your love for the Word and Your ability to use the Word properly;
Give me Your humility and willingness to serve;
Give me Your willingness to forgive;
Give me Your power and authority over evil, disease and the powers of chaos;
Give me Your ability to say and do the right thing at the right time;
Give me Your ability to manage my time properly;
Give me Your ability to handle peer pressure, the pressure of religious leaders who wanted to capture You in their traditions, and the pressure of political groups who wanted to use You to achieve their political dreams;
Give me Your ability to overcome disappointment in people;
Give me Your love for those who are lost;
Give me Your tears for people who do not listen when You implore them to come to You;
Give me Your commitment to the truth;
Give me the power of Your resurrection and Your energy;
Give me Your life to bear much lasting fruit;
Give me Your hunger for what is right, Your thirst for justice;
Give me Your inner peace, Your rest and Your joy;
Give me Your freedom from a devotion to earthly possessions;
Give me Your fearlessness to obey the Father to the end and to pay the full price;
Give me Your ability to always keep the joy the Father promised, in sight, even in the midst of suffering;



Give me Your complete trust in the Father to keep praying even in grave danger, on the eve of death: *Not my will, but Thy will be done!*

Lord, my Lord, I need You! I need everything from You! I am nothing without You! Daily fill me with Your Holy Spirit! Please remain in me and live Your life through me so that I can live the way You lived (Galatians 2:19-20)! My hope and expectation is in You – now and always.

AMEN





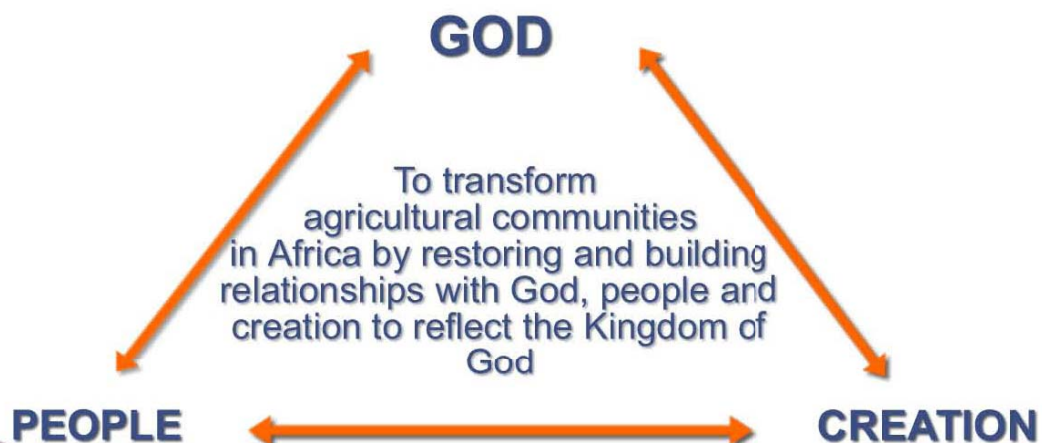
The name **AMOS** is derived from the Bible. Amos was a prophet and farmer of the Old Testament. As prophet, he warned against formalistic religiosity, and all kinds of exploitation and injustice of the day. Accordingly, God's children are encouraged not to be merely religious, but to live according to His will 24 hours of every day (24/7). The word **Agrimin** is an abbreviation for *Agricultural Ministries*.

AMOS' logo is rich in symbolism. The name is prominently printed. The windmill symbolizes agriculture. The windmill provides water and brings life and prosperity to the farm. We at **Amos** acknowledge Christ (red cross) as the source of Living Water (blue water issuing from the cross). He is the One without whom an abundant life is impossible. With this logo, we also acknowledge our dependence on the mighty working of the Holy Spirit, just like the windmill depends on the wind.

The core business of Amos Agrimin

We want to see the **Kingdom of God** manifested in the **agricultural community**.

Therefore Amos Agrimin's core business is:



Amos Agrimin



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