



# COMPASS CHECK

Helping you turn your spiritual compass toward God

Pray . . . for Parents?

How to Revere God's  
Holy Convocations

Invisible

Notes on The Way

*Ray Clore: Retired Foreign Service Officer and Pastor*

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## COMPASS CORNER

*Dear Compass Checkers,*

If you are anything like me, you like a good challenge. Not necessarily something spectacular on a grand scale like you seen in a movie where someone is trying to save the planet, but something that challenges you to think or work a little harder. Liking and embracing challenges is a good thing, because let's face it, life is full of them. This issue of *Compass Check* is all about dealing with challenges.

When facing a challenge, it's always good to know what you're up against. One challenge faced by all mankind, whether they know it or not, is resisting the devil (James 4:7). In this issue of *Compass Check*, we take a closer look at our enemy, and what exactly made him who he is in "The Fall of Lucifer."

In that fight, one of our key weapons is prayer, and while we do need to use that to defend ourselves, we can use it to help others as well. Your parents are your guardians in a very literal way. That's not an easy job, and they could use our prayers, as discussed in the article, "Pray . . . for Parents?"

One place we pray is at church. But besides prayer, what else should we be doing at church? In *How to Revere God's Holy Convocations*, we'll take a look at not just our mindset in coming to services, but what we can do to get the most meaning out of the messages we hear.

Do you ever feel invisible? In our article, the author takes a look at why we feel this way at times, and the appropriate way to deal with it.

Finally, this issue includes our semi-regular feature, "Notes on the Way." This one looks at the career of Ray Clore, Sr., who is currently a pastor for United Church of God, but served many years in the US State Department.



*Dan Preston*

*Editor of Compass Check magazine*

## COMPASS CHECK

*Compass Check* is a biblically based magazine for young people of the United Church of God, an International Association (UCGIA). Our name, *Compass Check*, refers to pointing your spiritual compass toward God. Our goal is to inspire readers to respond to the gospel message.

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*Publisher:* UCGIA | *Council of Elders:* Scott Ashley, Aaron Dean, Jorge de Campos, Dan Dowd, John Elliott, Len Martin (chairman), Darris McNeely, John Miller, Mario Seiglie, Rex Sexton, Brian Shaw, Paul Wasilkoff

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Phone: (513) 576-9796. Fax: (513) 576-9795. Website: [ucg.org/members/compass-check](http://ucg.org/members/compass-check). Email: [compasscheck@ucg.org](mailto:compasscheck@ucg.org). | *Unsolicited materials:* Due to staffing limitations, unsolicited materials sent to *Compass Check* will not be critiqued or returned. By their submission authors agree that submitted materials become the property of the United Church of God, an International Association, to use as it sees fit. This agreement is controlled by California law.

# HOW TO REVERE GOD'S HOLY CONVOICATIONS



Salomon de Bray (1657).  
*The Queen of Sheba Before the  
Temple of Solomon* [oil on canvas].  
Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.

Imagine you have an important job interview at a big company. You accidentally stayed up late the night before, so you wake up feeling exhausted. Realizing you have 30 minutes until the interview, you throw on some wrinkly clothes and rush out the door, forgetting your bag with your resume and notebook. You arrive a few minutes late, but the boss overlooks this infraction and graciously lets you into his office to begin the interview. The boss seems motivated to hire, but you can't keep your eyes open long enough to participate in the conversation. Suddenly you remember that you didn't confirm plans with your friends tonight, so you get out your phone and start texting.

This isn't how you would approach a job interview, is it? How about God's holy convocation? The Sabbath is a set-apart day that gives us an opportunity to grow closer to God and learn more about His way of life. If we show respect for an invitation to a job interview, how much more should we respect God's command to approach Him at His holy convocations? As Christians, we should be actively

*by Emma Cortelyou*



“finding out what is acceptable to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:10), which includes finding out what God expects from us on His Sabbath.

In the giving of the Ten Commandments, God says, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8). To properly observe the Sabbath, we must remember it. Let’s begin with our attitude. Solomon highlights the importance of this when approaching God: “Walk prudently when you go to the house of God...” (Ecclesiastes 5:1). The King James Version says, “Keep thy foot.” This phrase alludes to Moses and the burning bush, in which he was commanded to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground (Exodus 3:5). The Sabbath is a holy, set-apart day. If we “keep our shoes on”—that is, we carry our usual weekly tasks and attitudes into the Sabbath with us—we are not approaching God in the way that He intended. Approaching God means to walk carefully, considerately and reverently.

An important way that we can demonstrate “taking off our shoes” on the Sabbath is by attending services, God’s holy convocation. It is not enough to simply sit at home, rest and read our Bibles. That is an important part of the Sabbath, but greater still is the assembling of God’s people together on His Sabbath

day. Hebrews 10:24-25 highlights this: “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Assembling on the Sabbath gives the people of God an opportunity to edify, encourage and strengthen one another, as well as worship God in His presence. When we go to church, we are approaching God and standing in His presence. That should make us think twice before doing anything during services that is anything less than reverent. We must remember that we are standing on holy ground to which God calls us every week. Everything we do is showing God where our heart is. The way we act during services is a huge component of that. “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Below are three things that can specifically help orient your mind toward God during the messages, whether it is a sermonette, split sermon, sermon or a Bible study. Building off of one another, these three items should help foster a reverent attitude toward God during His holy convocation and show Him where your heart is.



## 1. TURN TO THE VERSES

When the speaker reads a scripture during his sermon, turn in the Bible with him. This will help with several things: It will ensure that you are paying attention, it will make you more familiar with the books of the Bible and their order and, if he is a fast speaker, it will train you in the art of flipping quickly through your Bible. Most importantly though, turning to the scriptures will help you to retain God’s words better than if you just listen to them. It is crucial for you as a Christian to go to God’s Word and read it for yourself. The Bible is the book we should live by and we need to learn what it says *now*. Understand the significance and power that God’s words hold: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).



## 2. TAKE NOTES

During the sermon, the speaker will provide many verses and points. As much as you may like to tell yourself otherwise, you won't remember any of these points a week from now. Take notes. When he gives a scripture, write it down and then turn to it. When he says he has three points, label each of them and write the supporting scriptures underneath. If he says something interesting that you want to remember later, write it down. Put a star next to the scriptures and quotes you like; this will remind you to look deeper into that topic later. When you take notes, you set your future self up for success.

## 3: TAKE IT HOME

You're turning to the verses; you're taking notes. Now what? Take it home. God doesn't give us a whole day of rest just for Sabbath services. He expects us to take home what we have learned and apply it in our daily lives. During the week, take the time to go back over your sermon notes and revisit those stars that you put next to the scriptures. Maybe there's a topic that the speaker touched on that you want to explore in more depth. Spend time in the Bible and meditate on how you can apply God's Word in your life. I have 2 Timothy 2:15 framed and sitting on my windowsill. It reminds me of why I am here: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." We can't rightly divide (or "rightly handle") God's Word if we don't know His Word. Studying is a crucial step toward becoming approved to God; it shows Him where our heart is, and it equips us for life.

Let's consider the example of the job interview again, but this time in the context of God's holy convocation on the Sabbath. On Friday, you make sure your clothes are ready and you go to bed early, ensuring you will have the necessary energy to be attentive during services. On Sabbath morning, you leave early and arrive at the hall before services, leaving time to fellowship with the brethren. Before services start, you put your phone on silent and stick it in your bag to ensure that you won't be distracted. As the sermonette and sermon progress, you take notes and turn to scriptures in your Bible. The rest of the week, you take the time to study some of the points that you found interesting in the



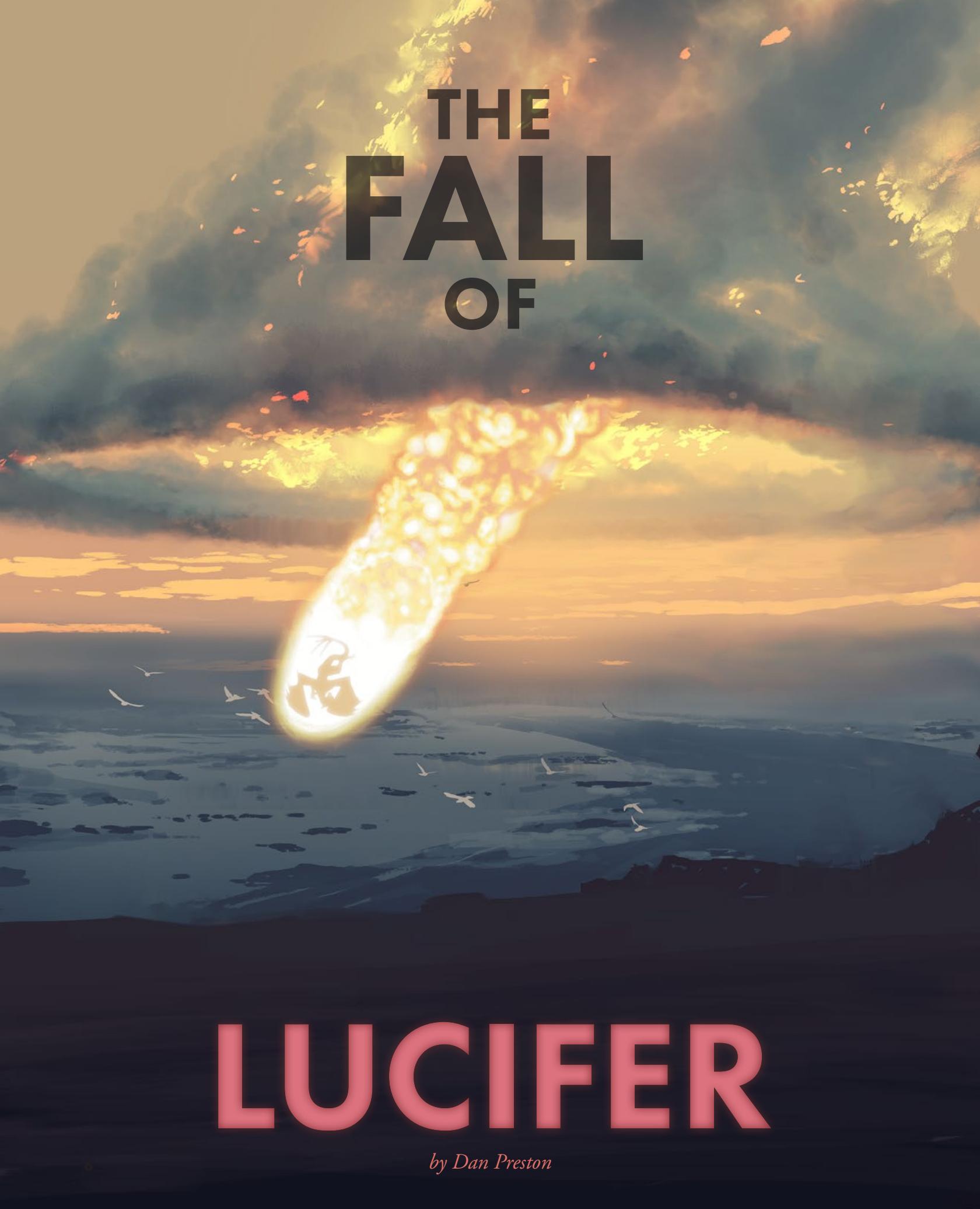
sermon, and you branch out into other study topics, broadening your understanding of God's Word.

Observing God's Sabbath is an important tool as we strive to become approved workers of God properly revering His holy convocations. **CC**



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*Emma Cortelyou spends her time making niche Spotify playlists and daydreaming about the next time she gets to be a counselor at camp.*



**THE  
FALL  
OF**

**LUCIFER**

*by Dan Preston*

# HAVE

you ever heard the expression, “Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer”? It means that if you have enemies, you shouldn’t necessarily try to avoid them, but instead, get to know more about them. That way, you can better understand how and when they might attack you.

Hopefully, you don’t have anyone in your life you consider an enemy. Sure, we all have people we don’t see eye to eye with but, generally speaking, most of us don’t have someone like the Joker or the Riddler trying to track us down in our secret lair and destroy us.

Or do we?

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Satan the devil is very much our enemy.

Now, to be clear, I’m not saying you should become friends with Satan. Far from it. However, in as much as he is indeed our enemy, it would be wise for us to know a little bit about him, so we can be more aware of his attacks.

## FROM LUCIFER TO SATAN

Satan the devil was not always Satan the devil. Before he became Satan, he was Lucifer. Think Darth Vader/Anakin Skywalker. Before he became Vader, Anakin was a good man, until something inside him changed. In speaking of the change that occurred in Lucifer, Ezekiel 28:14-15 says: “You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.” Iniquity, or sin, was found in Lucifer.

A further study shows that it was specifically pride that was Satan’s downfall: “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High’” (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Lucifer’s desire was to literally and figuratively be above God and be the one to call all the shots, including what is right and what is wrong. Once the motives of Lucifer’s heart became a clearly established pattern of behavior, then he was cast to earth as Jesus described in the book of Luke, and became Satan the devil.

So, if we have a secret sin inside us, does it mean we are going to fall as Lucifer did? Will God curse us and change our name so that we are despised and become the enemy of all mankind as He did with Satan? Not at all. God allows us to seek forgiveness and repent (1 John 1:9).

## SATAN’S GOAL

We read earlier in 1 Peter 5:8 that destroying humankind is Satan’s general MO (modus operandi or mode of operation), and there are many specific examples in the Bible that bear that out. In Job 1, we read that God was talking to Satan, and Satan was looking to pick a fight of sorts. He wanted to prove that humans only obeyed God out of raw fear in order to earn health and wealth from God. In Job 1:9-11 (New Living Translation), we read: “Satan replied to the LORD, ‘Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God. You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and

his property. You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is! But reach out and take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!’” Satan’s desire was to break Job’s will to obey God, and thus sever their relationship.

Fortunately, Job passed the test. Unfortunately, not everyone has. Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus’ closest companions, fell to the temptation of material wealth: “Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money” (Luke 22:3-5). It says that Satan entered Judas Iscariot. This doesn’t mean that Judas was possessed and had no control over his actions. Rather, it means he succumbed to the temptation that Satan put there: 30 pieces of silver (compare Matthew 26:14-16).



*Satan could not elevate himself above God as we read in Isaiah 14. Since that time, he has made it his goal that no man achieve what he could not—become a part of the God family.*



Gustave Dore (c. 1870). *The First Approach of the Serpent* [wood engraving].

Satan could not elevate himself above God as we read in Isaiah 14. Since that time, he has made it his goal that no man achieve what he could not: become a part of the God family.

### **SATAN'S TOOLS**

To accomplish his goal of destroying man, Satan has many tools. Using pop-culture references for comparison, think of the Death Star from Star Wars or one of the Joker's traps for Batman. While there are a lot of "gadgets" Satan uses, it could perhaps be boiled down to three basic ones: temptation, doubt and fear.

Going back to the beginning of the Book, we see that in serpent form, Satan put a rather tantalizing bit of information in front of Eve: "Now the serpent

was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die"' (Genesis 3:1-3). In just a few words, the one thing that God had said to stay away from was thrown into Eve's face as a temptation. Satan eagerly served up the quite literal forbidden fruit before Eve in a manner she was unable to resist.

Once the temptation was there, Satan planted seeds of doubt in Eve's head: "Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You

will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil'" (Genesis 3:4-5). There are actually two doubts being planted here: The first is about whether she would live or die. The second is about how God was allegedly "holding back" from Adam and Eve, and not sharing with them the whole story.

From here, things progressed quickly. Fear came over Adam and Eve as they made clothes for the first time and hid from God. Adam began to play the "blame game," claiming it was Eve's fault for giving him the forbidden fruit, or possibly even God's for giving him Eve. Finally, the separation that Satan desired to see came to pass when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden.

In his effort to try and make us fail, Satan plants temptations and encourages us to have doubts and fears. And while our powerful adversary may seem to have the upper hand in terms of strength, we have a secret weapon of our own!

### **OUR BATTLE**

So, what is this secret weapon? We actually read about it right where we began today: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9). The key word here is resist; James, the brother of Christ, put it this way: "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

Consider what might have happened if Eve had resisted the initial temptation Satan put before her. If, when tempted,

*Perhaps the most curious detail about Satan the devil is his fate.  
No matter how many people he may end up deceiving,  
the end result for him will be the same.*

she would have responded by telling the serpent, “I don’t need to eat of that fruit. If I did, God would have told me to.” The sequence of events that followed—doubt, fear and separation from God—would have been broken. Similarly, had Judas resisted the temptation of material wealth, perhaps his fate would have been far different.

That’s not to say that resisting is easy, but it points to a key principle. Satan didn’t try to physically overpower them, or intimidate them with some demonstration of supernatural force. We could never defeat a powerful spirit being like Satan in any sort of physical contest, but with help from God Almighty, we can resist him on this most critical battlefield, our mind.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). The war is not carnal, or physical, but spiritual. It’s for our thoughts. We don’t need to bring Satan into captivity. God will do that in His own time (Revelation 20:1-3). The battle we need to fight is the one to bring our thoughts into captivity. We must make sure they align with God’s Word, and not some other thing that attempts to put itself above God, just as Lucifer tried to do.

## **VICTORY!**

Perhaps the most curious detail about Satan the devil is his fate. No matter how many people he may end up deceiving, the end result for him will be the same. After a 1,000-year jail sentence, Satan will be released upon the earth for a short time. After that, he will receive his final



Thomas Cole (c. 1847). Study for series, *The Cross and the World. The Pilgrim of the World at the End of His Journey* [oil on canvas].  
Smithsonian American Art Museum.

punishment: “Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet were. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Revelation 20:7-10). While we cannot say definitively what this lake of fire is, we are told it is a place of torment, and that Satan will be banished there forever.

Lucifer’s fate is a very sad one. He started off with such promise, an angel created by God and given many talents. Unfortunately, he fell into temptation, sinned and became Satan the devil. Let’s be fully aware of our enemy and his tactics, and learn from his mistakes. Resist him and the temptations in life that lead to sin, and we can witness this enemy being soundly defeated once and for all! **CC**



— ✕ —  
Dan Preston pastors the Charlotte and Hickory, North Carolina, and Columbia, South Carolina, congregations of the United Church of God and fights the battle to resist the devil every day.



# INVISIBLE

BY HEIDI BRAUN

**H**ave you ever felt invisible? Perhaps you're tired of being the one who isn't invited, doesn't have one or more "best friends," or maybe you just feel unheard in conversations. Is there some secret ingredient to friendship that you're missing, or are people just that unreasonable?

As a teenager, I often felt this way. Sometimes I would learn after the fact that one of my friends had been to a sleepover or event—and I wasn't on the guest list. Even having a "best friend" didn't always guarantee inclusion, because the phrase "best friends forever" is more of a nice idea than an actual depiction of the seasons we go through as friends. If you have ever struggled with feeling ignored in a conversation—drowned out by people who had more interesting things to say—you're not alone.

Scripture contains some key friendship principles that offer hope to anyone who

feels invisible.

Believe it or not, the key to combating the feeling of invisibility is not seeking ways to become more visible. Being seen is not—in and of itself—a good thing. Many people draw negative attention to themselves through behaviors such as breaking the rules, talking down to others or stealing the spotlight. While there are certainly some positive behaviors that can incidentally result in attention from others, the act of constantly seeking to draw attention to oneself is off-putting. So, how can you avoid being overlooked? It turns out that friendship is not so much about what friends can offer us, as much as it is about what we can offer them.

## REJOICE WITH THOSE WHO REJOICE

If you're feeling invisible, chances are that others are too. You've heard of the Golden Rule—treating others the way

you'd like to be treated (Matthew 7:12)—but how does that look in action? And does it really solve the problem, or is it just extra work on your side? While doing good is not something we should pursue simply for the rewards we will reap, it turns out that looking out for others' needs actually builds a sense of community between people. Scripture instructs us to "rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15) because it creates a bond and develops a relationship.

John the Baptist illustrated this by rejoicing for his cousin, friend, and Savior, who was stepping into an exciting time of life as His ministry began: "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled" (John 3:29). When something great happens for your friend, don't let that milestone go unseen! Congratulate him or her for

winning an award, or ask to hear the success story behind an achievement. Similarly, don't neglect opportunities to be there for someone going through a hard time. It's difficult to know what to say when a friend faces loss or disappointment, but these are the times when people most often feel empty and ignored.

Whether or not a friend is ready to talk about their struggles, just being present and continuing to acknowledge them can mean a lot. So, if someone you play games with has skipped the last few sessions, or your classmate has been absent from track meets, it might be a good idea to reach out and not let their absence go unseen. To these people, you may become more than visible—you might be a beacon of hope!

### **A FRIEND IN NEED . . .**

This leads to another great way we can strengthen friendships and avoid feeling invisible. The old proverb “a friend in need is a friend indeed” means that a true friend comes to one's aid. This goes beyond the instruction to “weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15), as we're also instructed to “bear one another's burdens” (Galatians 6:2). In fact, Christ says: “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38). If you look for the needs that others have that often go unseen, God will see to it that yours are met in a similar way.

In a similar vein, we're admonished that “The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself” (Proverbs 11:25). This principle gives us freedom to turn the things we worry about over to God and turn our attention towards others, knowing that our struggles are in God's caring hands (1 Peter 5:7).

So, what are some practical ways we can help others? Start by asking questions. What has this person been doing lately? What keeps him or her busy during the week? Perhaps a need will come up in conversation, and as you learn of needs, this may present you with an opportunity to offer help. Find ways to share—it doesn't always have to cost money (though if you have the means, a tasteful gift that fills a need can sometimes be a good idea). Many people feel most loved when you spend time talking to them, helping them with a project or doing an activity together. Instead of worrying about whether or not you will be invited, invite and welcome others to your events.

A few years ago, I moved to a different state. Initially, many of the people in the local church area invited me to their houses for meals and to play games. But as friends

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moved away and life got busier, these invites began to dwindle. I used to ask myself “am I that boring? Why don't I get invitations as much anymore?” In time, I learned to change the question. “Why aren't I inviting others?” With this perspective change, I began to invite people over to play games or to join me when I went hiking. I asked others to sit with me during church. Sure, it took a lot of effort, but as I look back, the previous void is filled with happy memories.



*If you're worried about being left behind—become part of the welcoming committee! Look for needs to fill, and find ways to be a part of the new person's success.*

## **A FRIEND . . . TO YOUR FRIENDS' FRIENDS**

One of the best ways to include others is to invite new friends into your group. There are many stories from the life of King David that are well-known and loved, but perhaps one of the most touching is his friendship with a man named Mephibosheth. David and Jonathan were what one would describe today as “best friends,” so it must have been very difficult for David when the two were forced to go separate ways to spare David from the wrath of King Saul, and even more so when Jonathan was later killed in battle. Yet, David remembered his best friend with a beautiful gesture of friendship that honored Jonathan beyond his death.

Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, was disabled (2 Samuel 9:3). Ordinarily speaking, his family's fall from rulership—combined with his disability—would have thrown him into a life of poverty and hardship. But King David was a friend to him, giving him what had belonged to King Saul, providing servants to work the land on his behalf and inviting Mephibosheth to eat at his table (verses 9-10). King David's example highlights another important friendship principle—be a friend to your friends' friends.

It's difficult to accept when the dynamic changes in your friend group and a new friend suddenly becomes more exciting to talk to. I've watched some of my friends suffer rejection when a new person moves into the area, and I've experienced this too. If you're worried about being left behind—become part of the welcoming committee! Look for needs to fill, and find ways to be a part of the new person's success. If you have a new classmate, perhaps he would benefit from reading a copy of your notes so he can catch up to the rest of the class.

Perhaps you're at summer camp, and there's a girl who knows several of your friends, but you've never had a chance to meet her—view this as an opportunity, not a challenge. I remember going to camp one year with high anticipation of spending time with two of my close friends, only to learn that our age difference was, although seemingly insignificant, enough to land us in separate dorms. I had to make a whole new group of friends, but as it turned out, the experiences and conversations we shared that year were wonderful! And while I didn't get to spend much time with my two friends, spending the week in different dorms didn't create a rift in our friendship—it just gave us more experiences to talk about after camp.

As you navigate your friendships, there will be times you feel invisible, but don't let these times prevent you from moving forward. One of the best ways to ensure you are not invisible is to be a shining light. “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).

Be this light. Rejoice with those who rejoice, be a friend in time of need and look for others you can add to your friend group. Even if others don't recognize your attempts at friendship yet, God does (Matthew 6:3-4). So, here's a reminder to keep being a friend to others. You don't have to feel invisible. **CC**



Heidi Braun is the Associate Editor of Internal Publications for United Church of God. Heidi is a self-published author and enjoys reading, writing, performing music, traveling and spending time outdoors.

# Notes On The Way

## RAY CLORE

*Retired Foreign Service Officer for the U.S. State Department*

*Pastor for Columbia, Maryland, and Northern Virginia*



*With a lifelong love of travel and a desire to serve God's people around the world, Ray Clore had a fulfilling career doing both with the U.S. State Department. He now serves as pastor for congregations in Maryland and Virginia. Read on to learn how he fulfilled his life's biggest goals, and what advice he has for someone with a similar love for history, travel and international relations.*

### **Compass Check: What is your Church background?**

**Ray Clore:** I started reading Church literature at about age 12 with a baseball friend, and about age 17 I was baptized, during my senior year in high school.

### **What did your career look like, and what drew you into it?**

My father worked for TransWorld Airlines (TWA) his whole career. Because I got a free airline pass, I was able to travel to many parts of the world, which I enjoyed doing. God led me to attend Ambassador College, where an excellent teacher suggested that I might be a good candidate for U.S. State Department employment, which I hadn't even considered. I got the information from the State Department, took the tests and was hired in 1977 within six months of graduation.

During my senior year at college, I had given serious thought to the goals I wanted to have for my life. I came up with three basic goals: I wanted to serve God and His people in areas where ministers couldn't

go for visa or financial reasons. I wanted to serve my country without serving in the military (which at the time was a big concern with the Vietnam War ongoing). I wanted to continue to see the world. My career in the U.S. State Department has allowed me to accomplish all three of those goals on a continuing long-term basis.

### **Amazing. What did you start out doing there and then what was your career path?**

There are a wide variety of job possibilities at the State Department. There are foreign service officers and there are also civil service positions in the State Department. If you go in as a foreign service officer, there are four broad streams of work. There's consular work (administering U.S. law, taking care of U.S. citizens abroad, etc.); there's political work (people think of it as going to parties and negotiating agreements—there's more to it than that); there's economic work (working to help the U.S. export products and develop markets); and there's administrative work (personnel, performing

general services, arranging housing, moving people, etc.). A newly hired foreign service officer typically goes into consular work for a couple of years before moving on.

For instance, I was Director for Children's Issues for two years. In that office we worked on international child adoption issues as well as international parental child custody issues. I also worked 11 years in the Office of Space and Advanced Technology, which I think was the most fun that I had. Among other things, that office negotiated the agreement that covers cooperation on the International Space Station.

I personally worked on GPS issues. Our goal was to encourage compatibility and interoperability among the various space-based navigation systems of each nation.

### **Fascinating. How long was your career?**

It was 39 years. Every place we went I also served in the local congregation in whatever way they needed. My wife served as well by playing piano and helping out a great deal in other ways too. In 1977 my

wife and I went to our first post in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. I was a consular officer there, which meant I did visa work primarily, and I also did some international development work trying to help people have potable water, things like that.

After two years in Haiti we went to Cameroon for two years where I served as a Consular Officer at both Yaoundé, the capital, and Douala, the major port city. After Cameroon, we went to Vancouver, British Columbia, which is beautiful. And then from Vancouver, we went to Jerusalem, where we stayed for 4 1/2 years (from 1984 to 1988).

Then we came back to the U.S. where I worked in the Office of Nuclear Nonproliferation for two years, and then in the Office of the U.N. Environmental Program.

After that I took a year of Arabic and was sent to Amman, Jordan, from 1993 to 1996. Then we came back to Washington, D.C. and I was the Director of Children's Issues from 1996 to 1998. Then I was the Deputy Director for Latin American programs in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement from 1998 to 2000. From 2000 to 2004, I was the Science Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Paris.

After Paris we came back to Washington, D.C., again, and I switched over to the Office of Space and Advanced Technology, after which I retired.

***It sounds like you were moving every two to four years. Is that a pretty typical career path?***

Yes, especially at the beginning, you



typically move every two to three years. When you get further on in your career the length of an assignment depends on the post. But as long as you're in the foreign service, two to three years is a typical tour of duty. Basically, it's because a fair number of posts are what we call hardship posts, and either you're isolated or you have a lot of problems with health and medical issues. So they try to keep those tours of duty at two years and make it so that everyone does their fair share of hardship posts so that someone doesn't do their whole career going from France to Spain to Italy to England.

***You mentioned that you took Arabic for a year, which makes me wonder: Did you have to learn languages fairly proficiently at each of these places?***

If you're a foreign service officer, yes, you have to develop proficiency in at least one foreign language. Normally, they like you to have two. I had taken French starting in grade 4 in elementary school, so when I joined the foreign service, I was proficient in French.

But going to Jordan, I had to learn enough Arabic so that I could conduct interviews in Arabic. And it's a very difficult language.

***Wow, that's impressive. When you take the test for the State Department do they want you to know a second language already, or is that something you can learn on the job?***

That's something they will teach you. You don't have to have a language to pass the entry tests and be part of the foreign service.

***We ask everybody we interview whether at any point they decided to switch careers, but it sounds like you enjoyed yours.***

Overall, yes! Obviously, any job, any career has difficult moments, but I enjoyed meeting interesting people and participating in efforts to protect and promote U.S. interests. But more than the interesting stories, I know I made a difference in people's lives. For instance, in several countries I personally helped abused women and their children escape dangerous situations.

***What were some of the difficult situations or ethical concerns that you had to handle?***

In Vancouver, Canada, there was a time when management wanted me to issue a visa to an applicant who had a criminal rap sheet about as long as my forearm. In good conscience I could not legally be part of issuing his visa. So I said no, and kicked it up to my supervisor. In the end it was resolved because my boss issued the visa, so I didn't have my hands on it.

You do have moments where you have to stand for what you believe is right. One time in Kenya at a UN Environmental Program meeting, the



Sabbath was coming. They were still negotiating and these meetings always go overtime, so I had to get up and leave. The other members of the U.S. delegation all kind of looked at me, but I left because it wasn't an "ox in the ditch" type situation.

However, there were many times when I was called upon to do emergency work on the Sabbath, like when people got into accidents, or there was a death and I had to notify family. For me there was no issue in taking care of people and alleviating problems such as those on the Sabbath.

**A lot of people might write off government employment like in the State Department as a career option entirely because they reason that we're not citizens of this world, but citizens of heaven. What's your viewpoint on that question?**

That's an excellent question, and one I received a lot of counsel on from many ministers, and which I prayed a lot about. This is how I understand things: We are not supposed to love the world system. We are supposed to be ambassadors for a different government. When it comes to jobs, however, there are a range of government jobs: A postal worker, teacher or fire fighter are each part of the government system, but they're also providing a needed service.

By my working in the State Department, I could provide a needed service, especially to U.S. citizens. I would take care of U.S. citizens abroad if they fell into some threat or needed

help. I did have to decide, however: Do I want to be at the ambassador level, where U.S. policy is made, and you make decisions that affect other people's lives? That's where I drew the line. I felt that if I were in a position where I was actually directing the system, or making rules for the system, I could not honestly say I didn't love the system.

**Besides the visa situation and the sabbath situation in Kenya, were there any other conscience issues you ran into?**

The only thing I would like to add is that Proverbs teaches that the prudent man foresees evil and hides himself (Proverbs 27:12). I applied that principle by planning the places where we were assigned for the most part, and the kinds of jobs I would do so they were ones where I would not have Sabbath or ethical conflicts.

**What kind of advice would you have for a young person thinking about their future and who is possibly interested in working for the U.S. State Department?**

If a person is interested in a U.S. State Department career, I would say at the basic level you have to have a genuine interest in world and U.S. history and in political events going on in the world today. If you do, then you really should plan to also pursue an advanced

degree—a Masters is the norm.

If you're going to be a representative of this country, you should understand the culture and the values of our country, and be

prepared to present them in the most positive light. That means having a broad understanding of music and of art and of industry, as well as of politics and how we do things in the U.S.

For instance, in France they were always asking me, "How is it that you Americans are able to invent so much stuff?" The French have this proverb from former French President Charles de Gaulle, I think, who said "We have a lot of searchers. But we don't have a lot of finders." I would explain how in the U.S. we have a system of innovation where universities have cross-fertilization between academic research and applied research in bringing products to market and so forth. They found it fascinating.

I should also say there are other ways of having a State Department career besides going the foreign service officer testing route. For instance if you're an IT person, the State Department hires IT professionals and they are also sent abroad. The State Department website is really very good at providing basic information for potential job seekers.

**Thank you Mr. Clore for taking the time and sharing your career story!**

Thank you for the opportunity! Take care.



# PRAY

## FOR PARENTS (?)

*by Dan Preston*

I remember vividly the day I had to sit down with my children and tell them that their young cousin had died. The circumstances were particularly painful and I had no idea what to say. I broke the news to them the best I could and we talked about the things that had led to her death, and the hope we had in the resurrection. But let me tell you, there was nothing on earth that could have prepared me for that moment. It was only strength from God that got me through. Much of that strength came from prayer, and not solely my own. I never asked, but in that moment, I suspect my children were praying for their dad.

You were probably taught to pray as a small child, perhaps by mom and dad or maybe by your grandmother or older

brother. They probably knelt down by your bedside with you and said things like, “Thank You God for all You give us. Please help me to be nice to my sister. Please help Uncle Joe feel better. Thank you for Mommy, Daddy and all You do for us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.” That’s a really special and beautiful thing. I remember doing that with my children, and it brings tears to my eyes. It is truly a precious memory.

As you got older, prayer time was something you began to do on your own. At first, perhaps you recited a similar sort of prayer as you did when someone was first teaching you to pray. Maybe something happened, and mom and dad reminded you that Uncle Joe was better now, but encouraged you to pray for Mr. Jones at church

who was sick. Then there were other things that came up, making their way into your conversation with God—maybe a bad storm, some natural disaster or something else to be thankful for, like a new sibling or a better job for your parents.

Eventually, your prayers became more organic, less rote and repetitive with an occasional update on current events in your life, and more about things that were affecting you on a spiritual and emotional level. You recognized the need to repent of sin, or you asked God for help in dealing with a challenging school assignment. Maybe a personal relationship was creating a lot of stress, or perhaps it was going well, and you expressed gratitude to God for it.

All these things are very appropriate to



*Whether you realize it or not, being a parent is one of the most important and challenging jobs on the planet. They do it out of love of course, but in addition to that, it is also a command from God that they do certain things.*

spend time talking to God about. But I'd like to submit to you an area that is worthy of adding to your prayer life if it's not there already. Your parents taught you to pray, and there's no doubt they pray for you. But have you ever thought about praying *for* your parents?

## **THEY NEED HELP**

Whether you realize it or not, being a parent is one of the most important and challenging jobs on the planet. Rather than give you a long list of all the things your parents do for you (I'm sure they've recited it to you a few times!), suffice it to say they do a lot. They do all of it out of love of course, but in addition to that, it is also a command from God that they do certain things.

After being freed from slavery in Egypt and as they were ready to head into the Promised Land, the Lord took time to review some important things with Israel, such as the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2). He later distilled these down into one great commandment. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Jesus Christ reiterated the importance of this commandment in Mark 12:29-30.

But notice what the Lord added after giving this great command to Israel. "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall

talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). Your parents are specifically commanded to teach you about God.

Helping you memorize the books of the Bible or the Ten Commandments is relatively simple and a great place to start. But the command in Deuteronomy goes far beyond that. Parents face difficult and challenging situations, and figuring out how to help their children understand and cope with them in a godly way is a part of the overall command to instruct their children. Doing that in a situation where there is no clear cut and simple explanation is a *next level* sort of skill that no one is born with. In your prayers, ask that God help your parents to do what He has commanded them.

## **A BENEFIT TO YOU**

As parents we are quick to point out, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on

the earth” (Ephesians 6:1-3). Listen to your mom and dad, and your life will be better. Having been a child myself (although it’s been a few years since I was your age), I can attest that this is true.

But notice what Paul goes on to say in verse 4, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). It’s easy to bark orders and pull out the old “because I said so” card when you’re a parent. Bringing children up in the training and admonition of the Lord often conflicts directly with our human desires. It’s not that as a kid you want to be bad, but sometimes the things you want—playing football on Friday nights or dating someone outside your faith—lead in a path away from where your parents need to lead you.

This can easily flare into conflict and parents saying or doing things that upset you. Keep in mind that their goal isn’t to make you mad. Their goal is to fulfill the commands God gave them as a parent. It’s okay to pray that God give them the wisdom to do so in a loving and effective way.

## BE RECEPTIVE

Once you begin to think about praying for God to help your parents, there is a part you must play as well. We just read in Ephesians 6 a reminder of the commandment in Exodus 20:12, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” Just as your parents are given a command to raise you in the admonition



of the Lord, as a child, you must honor the work they are doing. We, as adult children, must still honor our parents as well.

For example, we know we are to honor the Sabbath day. But next Saturday there’s a really big charity drive going on to help raise money for a class trip. Participation is mandatory in order to go on the trip, and you *really* want to go on the trip. After asking your parents if you can help at the charity drive, they say no, citing Isaiah 58:13 (not seeking your own pleasure on the Sabbath day) as the reason. As hard as it might be, you need to honor their decision. Of course, that’s not to say you couldn’t ask your parents to talk to your school and see if some sort of alternate charity work could be done on another day, but it must be done in a respectful way that honors your parents.

## AGING, LOST OR SURROGATE PARENTS

Some of you may have parents that are a little older than your friends’ parents. I remember when I was in elementary school, several of my friends had grandparents who were younger than my dad. An older parent can’t always do the things a younger parent can, but there are still many things you can pray about for them. Pray for their physical health. Pray that the wisdom they gathered over the years be passed on to you. “Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days” (Proverbs 19:20).

No, parents don’t always have all the answers, and yes, they occasionally make mistakes. But they have wisdom, nuggets of knowledge that can be helpful for you as you live your life. Maybe you’re tired of hearing their boring old stories or admonition to stay away from bad company, but they tell you these things for a



reason. Pray this wisdom will be passed on to you and your siblings. This could apply to praying for grandparents as well.

Unfortunately, some of you might not have both your parents anymore. They may have passed away, or otherwise be out of the picture. Still, you can give thanks to God for them. Thank Him for the good memories you have and the love you felt from them. And if your family dynamic is such that there may not be many good memories, you can still give thanks to God for the parents that gave you life. If you have a step parent, they need prayers as well. Blending a family is hard, and it's something they likely never thought they would be doing. It's as new an experience for them as it is for you.

If those you live with now are not your biological parents, there are some special things to consider. Children are a gift from God (Psalm 127:3-5). But because they are not your biological parents, they may feel unqualified to be a parent. Let them know how much you love them and how thankful you are that God brought you together.

### **PRAY FOR YOUR PARENTS**

Hopefully, your prayers have matured quite a bit since you first learned to pray. There will always be worries and troubles to pray about, and although harder to see at times, there are always things to give thanks for. When you pray, don't forget to pray for your parents. They have a tough job and will surely welcome all the help they can get. You can help by not only honoring them, but praying God will give them the wisdom to fulfill the command to bring you up in the admonition of the Lord. **CC**



*Just as your parents are given a command to raise you in the admonition of the Lord, as a child, you must honor the work they are doing.*

#### ***In considering this topic, here are a few questions to discuss with your parents:***

- What is an instance where you wish you would have listened more closely to what your parents told you?
- Ask, what do you see me doing in my life that makes you happy? Is there anything that makes you concerned? Why?
- If there is one guiding principle you could give me to live the rest of my life by, what would it be?

We'd love to hear your feedback about your discussions! Please feel free to share with us at [compasscheck@ucg.org](mailto:compasscheck@ucg.org).



*Dan Preston is working to be a better parent and needs the prayers of his children. In addition, he is grateful his mother is still around, and prays for her every day.*

# COMPASS CHECK

United Youth Magazine

*United Church of God  
P.O. Box 541027  
Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027*

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