

Virtual Christian Magazine

Hope And Encouragement
For The Real World

"Study to show yourself approved to God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—2 Timothy 2:15 (AKJV)

Volume 13 Number 1

January 2011

Intercession: The Power of Praying for Others

By Katherine Rowland

Page 3



What I've learned from the examples of a person who forgot to intercede and a friend who prayed for me without even being asked.

What Manner of Person Ought You to Be?

By John Elliott

Page 5

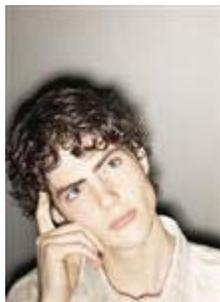


Who we are is not always clear, even to ourselves. Who we want to be is often not clear either, but who we ought to be is another thing altogether.

Faith and Attitude

By Elaine Jamieson

Page 7



A big part of what determines the level of our faith is the kind of attitude we adopt.

The Meek

By Scott Delamater

Page 10



A word we know, but may find difficulty defining: "meek"

Mindsets—A Set Mind

By Robert Berendt

Page 14



We can carry around problems for most of our lives without realizing what kind of mindset we're developing. With God's help, we can overcome these mindsets and change our inner man to prepare for the Kingdom.

Letters to the Editor

Page 17

Virtual Christian Magazine Staff

Lorelei Nettles - Managing Editor
Lorelei Nettles - Issue Editor
Mike Bennett - Editor
Angela Cardoz - Editor
Gayle Hoefker - Editor
Jada Howell - Editor

Patrick Kansa - Editor
David Meidinger - Editor
Suzanne Morgan - Editor
Amy Stephens - Editor
Debbie Werner - Editor
Eric Evans - Reviewer

Don Hooser - Reviewer
William Miller - Reviewer
Gerald Seelig - Reviewer
Jeremy Lallier - Proofreader
Chris Rowland - Web Design

[Copyright 2011 United Church of God, an International Association](#)

Intercession: The Power of Praying for Others

By Katherine Rowland

What I've learned from the examples of a person who forgot to intercede and a friend who prayed for me without even being asked.



IN GENESIS 40, WE READ THE STORY of a wrongfully imprisoned Joseph who, with God's help, interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's butler (cupbearer) and his baker. Joseph told the cupbearer that his dream indicated that he would be freed and restored to his position. After saying this, he told him, "But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon" (Genesis 40:14-15).

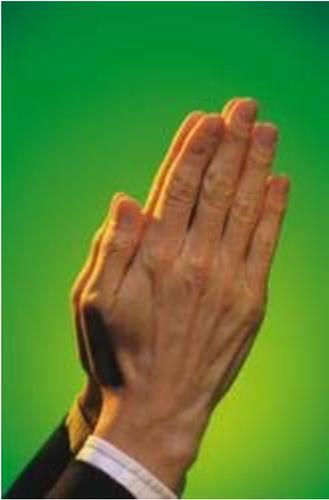
Later on in the chapter, though, we are told that the cupbearer did not remember Joseph; he forgot.

Why did the cupbearer forget? We don't know for sure, but we can surmise a few things. He was restored to his position, after some time in prison. It's easy to imagine that he would be overwhelmed with joy at his sudden freedom. We can also imagine that he would want to make sure that he never had to go back, so he may have thrown himself into his job with renewed vigor. And, perhaps, he was a little afraid to intercede with Pharaoh, and so allowed himself to just move on with his own life.



Will we remember?

Imagine if you were summoned to meet the president of your country. You'd likely be a little nervous, trying not to say or do the wrong thing. You'd want to look your best. You'd want to have something memorable to say, perhaps, or some personal cause that you would like him to espouse. How likely would you be to ask a favor for a friend in trouble? How likely would you be to even remember your friends in the stress and excitement of meeting a powerful person?



And yet we have this opportunity every day of every week of every year. At any moment, we can stop and speak to the most powerful Being in the universe, entrusting Him with our gratitude, our needs and our desires. As often as we are moved to do so, we can come before the throne of the Lord, thanks to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. More, throughout the New Testament we are urged to come before Him in prayer often. Paul writes, “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men” (1 Timothy 2:1).

Astonished by my friend

I can remember the wonder that filled me the first time that a friend mentioned that she would add some concern of mine to the things that she prayed about for me. I was astonished at this revelation that she was already—without my asking it—spending part of her time with God talking about me and making requests on my behalf. She was telling me that I was so important to her that she would regularly mention my name to God and request His mercy and blessing in my life.

Don't be like the cupbearer

What about us? When we go before the Lord in prayer, are we so concerned with the things that are going on in our lives that we forget to intercede for others? Do we wait until there is a crisis situation? Are we, in short, like Pharaoh's cupbearer—who in his master's presence forgot his fellow prisoner? Or are we remembering to pray for not just those in immediate need, but indeed everyone we know? In fact, we ought even to be praying for those that we do not know personally.

Going back to 1 Timothy 2 and continuing on, we read, “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

...are we remembering to pray for not just those in immediate need, but indeed everyone we know?

Let's not be like the cupbearer, who forgot Joseph for two years. When we exercise the freedom we have to “come boldly to the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16), let us remember to intercede for others as well as making the requests and supplications for ourselves.

Further reading

For more enlightening examples, read [“The Blessing and Responsibility of Intercessory Prayer.”](#)

What Manner of Person Ought You to Be?

By John Elliott

Who we are is not always clear, even to ourselves. Who we want to be is often not clear either, but who we ought to be is another thing altogether.



A CENTRAL QUESTION THAT PETER ASKS each of us who seek entry into God's Kingdom is, "what manner of person ought you to be?" (2 Peter 3:11). He concludes his passage with these words, "Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation" (verses 14–15).

Let's stop to focus on one blameless attribute that our Lord seeks in us right now: submission to Him (James 4:7). It is an attribute that the world thinks we should grow out of, wiser up from and leave behind. It is associated with the unenlightened, the simple-minded, the ignorant and the unaware. You would have to be pretty dumb to retain it these days. Surely, we have grown more sophisticated than the ones who fall for this idea. I have matured away from it, haven't you?

*Let's stop to focus
on one blameless
attribute that our
Lord seeks in us
right now:
submission to Him.*

This is going to seem really dated, old-fashioned and un-hip. You'll probably count me among the dinosaurs of rational thought if you read on. But, look at God's timeless teaching on the subject:



“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake” (Romans 13:1-5).

We might respond, “Surely, that was written for a time when leaders were wise, ethical, moral, lawful, and godly, but today? No way! Leaders now have glaring flaws. They do stupid things. They make mistakes and their sins are news everywhere.” Thus, we are right in submitting only to those authorities that we deem to be fit for it. Right?

Question: Using a modern, “enlightened” and insightful skill-set, when would we advocate any of the following?

- “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:22). Who have the clearest view of husbands’ weaknesses? Aren’t women equal today?
- “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right” (Ephesians 6:1). Who are the most critical discerners of fairness? Isn’t discipline archaic today?
- “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account” (Hebrews 13:17). Who are the most visible and fallible humans in the Church? Submit to an imperfect man, or to Christ?



The apostle Paul also admonishes us all to submit ourselves to each other “in the fear of the Lord” (Ephesians 5:21).

It is commonly said that the concepts of the Bible are “archaic” today. The term “archaic” is defined in Encarta Dictionary as describing something that is “no longer in general use but is still encountered in *older literature*.”

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). So, who changed? We did. Society changed and has been dragging us along into its carnal mindset. Yet, this “present evil world” is far from where God has always been and will forever be.

Where have we come to? Is your mindset “enlightened” or “archaic?” Paul wrote Romans 13 in AD 57 to the church in Rome. At that time, the Caesar of the Roman Empire was Nero, who was associated with tyranny and extravagance and who executed his own mother. Peter and the other apostles emphasize that “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29) and

Where have we come to? Is your mindset “enlightened” or “archaic?”

Paul instructs us to “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul did not blindly follow Nero—he was in fact imprisoned on several occasions as a result of his disobedience to the authorities over him—but he also did not ignore all of the laws Nero established. As long as they did not oppose God’s law, he obeyed. In comparison to Paul’s submission under Nero’s leadership, what excuse do you have for not submitting to the authority over you?

Peter asks us, “What manner of person OUGHT you to be?” That is the real question for us as the Sabbath beckons us each week to become more like our Savior, the Lord of the Sabbath. Consider where Christ’s mind is. Meditate on where you may have drifted. Determine to step further away from society and its mindset and become more “peculiar” to it as we live each day.

As Peter said, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (1 Peter 2:9-10, King James Version).

Further reading

Request or download your free copy of [Making Life Work](#).

Faith and Attitude

By Elaine Jamieson

A big part of what determines the level of our faith is the kind of attitude we adopt.



WHEN I TOOK ON A PAPER ROUTE, I delivered a free community newspaper once a week. Every week when I pulled into this one driveway to throw a paper to the front door, I would read the same bumper sticker: “YOU CAN’T ALWAYS BELIEVE WHAT YOU ARE THINKING.” I would think, “What does *that* mean?”

I’m the kind of a person who keeps thinking about things and then wonders, “Why am I thinking this way?” There were quite a few times when I thought I had analyzed a situation correctly only

to later find out my thoughts were a misperception. As time went by, the bumper sticker began making more sense to me.

The relationship between thought patterns and attitude

I realized my attitude depends on my thoughts. Sometimes my attitude is negative and in the wrong place because my thoughts are wrong. We all have this problem at times to one degree or another. After all, we're still human and far from perfect.

I remember Mr. Herbert Armstrong saying Satan easily influences our attitudes when he "broadcasts" his own (Ephesians 2:2). I'm sure Satan would like to keep us in a bitter state of mind. We have to fight against that attitude. I know that if we draw near to God, He will draw near to us and protect us from Satan's influence (James 4:7-8).

Even God has an attitude, but His is a *positive* attitude! His influence leads us to have more positive attitudes of our own.



The relationship between attitude and faith

When I get into a negative attitude, I notice that it diminishes my faith. I end up complaining and thinking of things in the wrong spirit.

You can read in Numbers 13 about God sending Israelites to spy out the land of Canaan. Most of the spies had a pessimistic outlook. They lacked faith because their attitudes were wrong. They weren't close to God at all.

In Numbers 14, we see that the fear and pessimism were contagious, infecting most of the Israelites. The Israelites whined and complained and the Lord was very unhappy with them.

Only two of the spies had positive attitudes—Joshua and Caleb:

I'm the kind of a person who keeps thinking about things and then wonders, "Why am I thinking this way?"

"But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them"" (Numbers 14:6-9).

We see that wrong thoughts led to wrong attitudes, which led to a lack of faith. As a result, none of the adults over age 20 were allowed to go into the Promised Land. The only exceptions were Joshua and Caleb.

A remedy for lack of faith

Jesus asked, “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

In that context, Jesus told a parable about a persistent widow which explains that persistence in prayer shows faith plus a good attitude, which further strengthens our faith. Jesus said, “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily” (Luke 18:7-8). When we pray and expect answers, we get answers!

We need to keep looking forward to the promises that await us

Here is the definition of faith: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). Hope is certainly a positive attitude that leads to faith!

We should have an attitude while praying that God is for us, standing firm in our faith and being willing to do what God wants us to do without complaining. We need to keep looking forward to the promises that await us, keeping that big picture in mind. God never lies and will never let us down.

Standing firm

But when things aren't going as well as we think they should be, it's so easy to allow negative attitudes to start creeping in. Then our faith that God will provide us with “the way of escape” begins to dwindle (1 Corinthians 10:13).

If you begin to think that all hope is lost, you had better check your attitude. If the attitude level is down, the faith level will be down.

If you find yourself getting into a negative attitude, follow Paul's admonition: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

We should have an attitude while praying that God is for us

When you have God's Spirit and you align your attitude with these things, you can believe what you are thinking.

Further reading

To learn more about how to develop good thought habits, a positive attitude and dynamic faith, request our free booklet [You Can Have Living Faith](#).

The Meek

By Scott Delamater

A word we know, but may find difficulty defining: “meek”



IN HIS COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW 5:5, Matthew Henry said, “The meek are those who quietly submit themselves to God, to His word and to His rod, who follow his directions, and comply with his designs and are gentle towards all men. Who can bear provocation without being inflamed by it; are either silent, or return a soft answer; and who can show their displeasure when there is occasion for it, without being transported into any indecencies; who can be cool when others are hot; and in their patience keep possession of their own souls, when they can scarcely keep possession of anything else? They are the meek, who are rarely and hardly provoked, but quickly and easily pacified; and who would rather forgive twenty injuries than revenge one, having the rule of their own spirits” (*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*).

The definition of meek

Matthew 5:5 says, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” This statement is not speaking of being spiritless. Jesus Christ described himself as meek—and He was not spiritless or tame! With the nuances of language, we often have words, or groups of words, that express shades of thought or emotion. Not surprisingly, there are many variations on the word meek. Here are some:

From *Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary*:

1. Mild of temper; not easily provoked or irritated; patient under injuries; not vain, or haughty, or resentful; forbearing; submissive.
2. Evincing mildness of temper, or patience; characterized by mildness or patience.

From *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*:

1. Showing patience and humility; gentle.
2. Easily imposed on; submissive.

From *Dictionary.com Unabridged* (note the “obsolete” usage):

1. Humbly patient or docile, as under provocation from others.
2. Overly submissive or compliant; spiritless; tame.
3. Obsolete, gentle; kind.

Biblical usages of all of these variations are found throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament, we see meek three times, humble 13 times, poor three times and lowly and oppressed one time each. In the New Testament, we see meek/meekness three times, gentle/gentleness seven times, humble/humility two times and lowly one time (New King James Version).

In its commentary on Matthew 5:5, *Robertson’s Word Pictures (NT)* observes, “The ancients used the word meek for outward conduct and towards men... The English word ‘meek’ has largely lost the fine blend of spiritual poise and strength meant by the Master. He calls himself ‘meek and lowly in heart’ (Matthew 11:29) and Moses is also called meek.”

In a sermon entitled “Eight Steps to the Kingdom,” Mr. Bob Dick states, “It’s always been fascinating to me as a shorter man to watch and study really big men and how disproportionate the number of really gentle big men is to little men. Little men are so busy trying to prove that they’re not as little as they are. Big men are so big they don’t have anything to prove. But if you notice the number of really big men that are very gentle people... Well, on the physical level, this is the best physical equivalency I can give you of the gentleness of strength. When you’re big enough and strong enough, you don’t have anything to prove. And you can then just simply be a kind and gentle person.”



This may be called the short person, or “Napoleon,” complex. An example of this can be seen in a very large dog. A large dog is usually not intimidated; because of its size, it is usually quite docile. The Great Pyrenees and English Mastiff breeds are known to be quite docile creatures. On the other hand, a very small to medium sized dog like a Chow, Miniature Bull Terrier or even a Chihuahua can be very fierce. They act aggressively to appear larger and more intimidating.

Does this mean all large dogs are docile? Not necessarily, as they can be trained to be quite aggressive. Are all small dogs that aggressive? Again, the answer is no. If they feel comfortable, they can be quite docile. In general, however, the above statements are true. This can also apply to people. Not all big men are meek, and not all short men aggressive!

The distinction between humility and meekness

Humility relates to how you think of yourself and others, meekness relates to how you treat and react to others. Meekness can also be seen as an expression of humility. Like many attributes, meekness (or lack thereof) is especially evident during times of conflict. We see this in the following examples.

A family dispute

“And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married... So they said, ‘Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also? And the LORD heard it’ (Numbers 12:1-2).



Miriam and Aaron’s contention with Moses was supposedly over his wife. What they said was true; they had both prophesied at times (see Exodus 15:20 and Leviticus 10:8; 11:1). In this case, Miriam led the rebellion and Aaron followed. Even though there are many theories on why they attacked Moses, the root cause was jealousy.

How did Moses react? In the very next verse, the King James Version notes, “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were on the face of the earth.” Notice we don’t see a reaction from Moses! He didn’t revile or even pose a defense. In fact, when God punished Miriam, he felt horrible. “So Moses cried to the LORD, saying, ‘Please heal her, O God, I pray!’” (Numbers 12:13).

His family betrayed Moses; an attack or criticism is especially hurtful coming from those you love. Moses’ reaction rose above the personal attack. He didn’t say things like, “Well, you get what you deserve,” or, “An eye for an eye.” He sought mercy, not justice, in this personal conflict.

A congregational (or “workplace”) dispute

Let us now examine Numbers 16:3: “You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them...” We may hear this type of argument today among various groups of people. In this scripture, they are opposed to the supremacy of Moses in civil power.

“So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face” (Numbers 16:4). Moses’ first reaction wasn’t to put up a defense or reproof, but humility. He probably recognized the serious nature of their offense, and perhaps interceded for them here.

In the following verses, we see that “Moses spoke to Korah and all his company.” He told them God would show who was in charge. Moses is not defending himself or his status; there is no “I” here. He asks probing questions.

Numbers 16:15 says that, “Moses was very angry.” Where did Moses take his anger? He took it to God, not to the offenders. In verses 20-22, we read that God became angered against them. God was ready to wipe out the rebellion AND those who took part in some way, but again, how does Moses react? He intercedes on behalf of those who oppose him. He doesn’t condemn; he wants mercy for them. Moses sought a balance between mercy and justice. He knew God had put him where he was and was justified in being angry, but he dealt gently with them. This is Moses’ meekness.

Where did Moses take his anger? He took it to God, not to the offenders.

A formal dispute

In John 18:19, we see Jesus being examined by the high priest—but was it done legally? The Talmud states:

“Criminal processes can neither commence [nor] terminate, but during the course of the day. If the person be acquitted, the sentence may be pronounced during that day; but, if he be condemned, the sentence cannot be pronounced till the next day. But no kind of judgment is to be executed, either on the eve of the Sabbath, or the eve of any festival” (Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible).

This was an improper format for a trial. The prosecution was to witness against Him, and He was to be able to have witnesses in His defense. The High Priest was attempting to extort a confession. This whole scenario was contrary to the law. In John 18:20-23 we read Christ’s answer to the high priest in which He puts forward an honest defense. He alludes to the impropriety of the proceedings, inferring that witnesses are required. “Why do you ask Me?” is a question of formal procedure, not sarcasm—but because of His supposed insolence, He is struck. John 18:23 reads, “Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?”

“While an accused person is on trial he is under the protection of the court, and has a right to demand that all legal measures shall be taken to secure his rights. On this right Jesus insisted, and thus showed that, though he had no disposition to take revenge, yet he claimed that, when arraigned, strict justice should be done” (Barnes’ Notes on the Bible).

His dialog with authorities in John 18 shows His “gentleness of strength.” He was strong spiritually, and spoke with strength, but also respected and submitted to the authorities. Jesus seeks justice but with meekness.

The ultimate example

While Christ was on the cross, He endured horrible taunting (see Luke 23 and Mark 15). How did he respond to that? “And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do’” (Luke 23:34).

Here is true gentleness of strength. Like Moses, Jesus intercedes for the people. It is not a trivial intercession! Jesus asks God to be willing to remove the charge from those that put Him to death (all of us). At Jesus’ request, God would have interceded and wiped out an entire people (humanity) for the sake of His Son.

*Meekness requires
a complete removal
of self from a
situation.*

Meekness requires a complete removal of self from a situation.

“Meekness is patience in the reception of injuries. It is neither meanness, nor a surrender of our rights, nor cowardice; but it is the opposite of sudden anger, of malice, of long-harbored vengeance... Christ was the very model of meekness. It was one of his characteristics” (Barnes’ Notes on the Bible).

And what is the reward for this attitude? Inheriting the earth. When Jesus Christ returns, the meek will sit with Him, ruling the nations, and so inherit the earth. We must exhibit gentleness of strength and must show meekness. We will be given great strength, and must possess a great gentleness to properly use it.

Further reading

For more interesting reading please request or download the free booklet [*Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*](#).

Mindsets—A Set Mind

By Robert Berendt

We can carry around problems for most of our lives without realizing what kind of mindset we're developing. With God's help, we can overcome these mindsets and change our inner man to prepare for the Kingdom.



I AM SURE ALL OF US HAVE EXPERIENCED meeting people with something so deeply etched in their minds that they find it virtually impossible to erase that impression. I know a woman who was caught under a wooden raft on a pond for a few minutes before being rescued. She developed paranoia of water. People have phobias about heights, snakes or spiders, the dark, a closed-in space, crowds of people and a whole list of other very real and debilitating fears. **Paranoia** is defined in *Chamber's Concise Dictionary* as: "a form of mental disorder characterized by fixed delusions, esp. of grandeur, pride, persecution, intense fear or suspicion."

Phobia is: "a fear, aversion or hatred, esp. morbid and irrational." It is somewhat bewildering to see the tremendous grip such a fear has on the mind. We seem to develop a mindset towards things happening which frighten us and we do the same towards ideas and concepts impacting us in culture, education, etc.

The really frightening aspect of a fear so deep and so often not understood at all is that trying to correct the mind in this matter takes so much effort that people usually just learn to live with it. Worse yet, it seems if we do not tackle our fears and phobias, they only get worse. Often one fear induces another and another.

A person can be afraid of spiders and soon, it seems, he'll avoid places where spiders might be, and even a spider's web invokes the same terrified response. Years ago, a scientist named Pavlov wrote about his experiments with dogs. He would set up a series of lights or other effects and at the end of the series, a bit of food would drop out for a dog. The dog salivated as soon as he saw the food. It did not take long, however, before the dog began salivating as soon as one of the lights came on.

...if we do not tackle our fears and phobias, they only get worse. Often one fear induces another and another.

I was taken by surprise when I visited the home of a brother-in-law. The moment he stood up from his special comfortable chair, all the fish in his aquarium swam over against the glass. They were already anticipating food the moment he arose. My son's family has a dog that gets fed once a day. On the odd occasion I have been in the home, I have broken off just a half of a dog's milk biscuit from the box in the pantry. I do not go over terribly often, but now just as soon as the dog sees me coming, he greets me at the door and makes a bee-line for the pantry door, stands there with one paw in the air and looks only at the door. He has developed a mindset about me—and his mind is really set!

Almighty God is able to erase and remove every painful fear that has been etched into our minds. He is able to heal us completely.

I have observed the pain many people carry with them from abuse they may have received as a child. An abusive teacher, for example, can turn a student off of education. An overly critical coach can hinder an athlete's performance. Parents who constantly tell their children, "You are dumb," or, "You will never amount to anything," often instill an attitude that hampers a child for the rest of their lives. From those areas, we can only imagine the deep wounds that are left in children who are born with fetal-alcohol syndrome, drug addiction or other similar problems.

Abusive, alcoholic, violent or even absent parents all impact a child. Many people reach adult lives with thought patterns that are deeply ingrained and certainly not asked for. Some have no idea why they think and feel as they do. There are always reasons, but we cannot always find them—and even knowing the reasons does not always help in making things better.

Putting the past behind us

I am greatly encouraged when I read the statement Paul was inspired to write in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." The word "were" is vital in this sentence. Almighty God is able to erase and remove every painful fear that has been etched into our minds. He is able to heal us completely. He does not turn from those who are suffering,

but His love leads us to have faith and trust in His forgiveness—and to leave the past behind us. We may not lose every painful memory or developed phobia, but He eases our load.

We all know through experience those fighting alcoholism must abstain from drinking any alcoholic beverages. They fight this battle on a day by day basis. It is a battle of the mind and certainly is not easy. I have come to realize how difficult it is for people who smoke to drop the habit. There are still far, far more difficult habits, emotions and actions that we may have to fight with. All of the categories Paul listed as not being allowed into the kingdom of God are present in our society. The word “were” indicates that a person is no longer in the grip of that “category.” It does not mean the battle against the mind and or the emotions is over—it only means that the person no longer fornicates, worships idols, commits adultery, etc. He or she has this under control.



In some extreme cases a person may have to live alone and avoid any situation compromising his struggle. Jesus made a strong point as to the value of our struggles when he said, “if your eye makes you sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into [Gehenna] fire” (Mark 9:47). C.S. Lewis wrote, “You cannot take all luggage with you on all journeys; on one journey even your right hand and your right eye may be among the things you have to leave behind.” Naturally, we know it is not the eye that makes us offend—it is our mind and our mindset.

It is that which may be deep within our minds and provides the thrust in certain directions. Mark does not mean to remove an eye—his words basically tell us to take whatever steps needed in order not to sin. We are not to remain in the categories to which the kingdom of God is barred. We cannot stay in them. We may have to fight the good fight every day—but it is worth it a thousand times over.

Changing the inner man

The battle or struggle is not going to be easy—but then the goal is worth far more than any effort we may need to expend. Added to our effort, God offers strength and help through His Holy Spirit. He does not do the work for us, but He is there to give us rest, direction and encouragement. What is being changed is the “inner man”—that which makes you the person you are. All of us—every human being who plans to enter into the kingdom of God one day needs to change anything and everything contrary to God. We need to “walk in newness of life” as we accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That path is not easy for anyone, but you will have plenty of company.



After many trying times for David, at one point, he is overcome by the realization that things will turn out all right. Why? Because of God’s love for him. Psalm 103 expresses his deep feelings at understanding the depth of God’s forgiveness, patience and mercy.

God gives us choices and He gives us help, but we need to want to change and we need to determine (with His help) to do whatever is needed.

There is one important point that we need to know. We need to want to change the habits or mindset that hurts us so and which confronts God. God gives us choices and He gives us help, but we need to want to change and we need to determine (with His help) to do whatever is needed. We need to learn about ourselves and seek the steps leading to freedom. Every one of us needs God in our lives and every one of us needs to conform our minds into the mind of Christ. We need a new mindset on which to set our minds. That focus ought to be on the kingdom of God. Make that real in your life.

Further reading

For more interesting articles, ask to receive [The Good News magazine](#).

Letters to the Editor

[Preparing for Pregnancy](#)

You have great resources and I wanted to take the time to say thanks for the helpful information.

This page, <http://www.onlinenursingschools.com/resources/midwifery-resources-information/> which has some great resources and information on pregnancy that would make a great addition to your page if you are interested. Again, thanks for the information.

— R. Carter

[How to Make Peace With Your Mother-in-Law](#)

I just wanted to say I thought your article was wonderful. Having studied MIL-DIL relationships along with my work with women on this specific issue, I found your responses accurate and helpful. Thank you for getting the msg out to women that they can make this relationship better.

— D. Brann, Ph.D.

What an incredibly offensive article on the daughter/mother-in-law relationship! I could have read the same nonsense in Cosmo or Redbook Magazine, certainly not from a magazine that is supposed to promote mature, Christian values. This whole article speaks from the wounded daughter-in-law's point of view against the dottering, intrusive, selfish, dimwitted mother-in-law! How dare you feed into this wordly, carnal point of view. You are supposed to be teaching young women to be graceful, appreciative, giving, understanding and loving daughters, wives and mothers. Where was the Biblical example of Ruth's love and respect for her husband's mother? Where are the Proverbs 31 examples of the virtuous woman? In the entire article, ONE Biblical reference is made. ONE! And here is how it is used:

“Romans 12:18 tells us we should live peaceably with everyone, and in-laws are no exception. What follows are five of the most common complaints about mothers-in-law and suggestions for making peace.”

Rather than using Biblical examples of love and patience and holding others with higher esteem than ourselves; of utilizing the fruit of God's Spirit, we now cite doctors and family counselors and psychologists. Is this how we teach young women to be Godly now?

I had a wonderful relationship with my mother-in-law. I honored her as the mother of my husband, the grandmother to my children. She was the source of wisdom and strength and patience that I aspired to as a wife and mother! Now I am a mother-in-law and I see my beautiful daughter-in-law struggling through some of the same things I did at her age. Do we agree all the time? No! But we certainly never needed any of this mamby pambly, carnal nonsense you're dishing out in this article. Go back to teaching young wives to be good Christian women! Mature Christian women know, if we concentrate on THAT ... getting along with a mother-in-law doesn't need to be addressed in its own article!

— J.B.

Dear J.B.

I am so sorry you were offended by this article. You are correct that the article is from the daughter-in-law's point of view, but it addresses situations that affect many young wives. The article certainly does not speak to all relationships with mother-in-laws in the world, but is relevant for many. It is so wonderful that you had such a great relationship with your mother-in-law, but that is not true for many others I know.

The article addresses releasing anger, forgiving and seeing things from the mother-in-laws point of view. It also talks about making peace. These are all Christian values. The comments of professionals are in no way turning away from our Christian walk with God and Christ, but taking sound advice from those who deal with such things on a daily basis. There is often wisdom that comes from their experience. As Christians we should seek out wisdom from whomever we can glean it. If we can get that wisdom from those around us it is wonderful, but that is not always possible for everyone.

*Also mentioned in this article is the booklet [Marriage & Family: The Missing Dimension](#). **This magazine gives additional scriptural advice for relationships.** Thank you for writing. I will share your thoughts with the author.*



My best wishes for your magazine. I hope it all goes well for you.

— O.K. from Peru

Some feedback messages are edited for space and/or clarity.