

The logo for Workers Together With Him (WTWH) features the letters 'WTWH' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter 'T' is stylized with a vertical line extending upwards from its top bar, resembling a cross.

THE VINE & BRANCHES

The Newsletter of Workers Together With Him

SEPTEMBER 2006

The WTWH Mission to Morogoro, Tanzania, July 2006

By Rev. Tim Sullivan

Workers Together With Him was founded in 1999, soon after the birth of my youngest son, Brandon. That makes it very easy for me to remember how long I have been working in this ministry. This September begins our seventh year. I thank God for His grace and mercies that have sustained us throughout the years gone by, and I pray that we will see our mission through to its end.

We recently returned from our fourth trip to Tanzania in East Africa, where we presented the Weapons of Our Warfare Seminar in three Maasai villages located in the southern highland region of Morogoro. My traveling companions on this mission were Evan Pyle and Jay Pearson from the US, David Mantock from Switzerland, and Henry Musana and Joshua Wamala from Uganda. Upon arriving in Tanzania, we were met by Ans Mwambepo, who had spent several months laying the groundwork for this mission. Once again, Ans gave of himself tirelessly throughout our time in his country.

Evan, Jay and I met at the airport in Baton Rouge on the morning of Wednesday, 19 July. We expected to rendezvous with David in Amsterdam the following day, and from there, travel on together to Tanzania, arriving Thursday night. This would give us a night to rest before we began our road trip to the Maasai villages. A series of insignificant problems caused our flights from the US first to be delayed, and then rerouted through London. Thankfully, we were able to notify David that we would not be meeting him in Holland. Instead, we three arrived in Dar es Salaam early Friday morning with just enough time to shower and shave before we all – the three of us, along with David, Henry, Joshua and Ans – boarded the bus for the 3 hour ride to Morogoro.

In Morogoro, we were met by several of our Tanzanian friends from past visits. The girls from the Tukuyu choir “Suenda in Machweo for Christ” were there, immediately

insisting that they relieve us of our luggage and carrying items. In most places, a singing group of such remarkable talent would be insisting on “star treatment.” Yet there they were, having themselves made a long and taxing journey to join us, now so eager to help in any way possible. I don’t think we Westerners will ever grow accustomed to the loving service of these Christian handmaids. We have had to learn to overcome our feelings of awkwardness, and graciously accept their servitude to us. I remember one past trip when I ignorantly hurt them by refusing their offer to launder my clothes. Over the next two weeks, these ladies contributed immeasurably to the success of our mission, both through their wonderful song service to the congregation, and also behind the scenes, cooking and cleaning and generally watching over us. Once again, *asante sana*. Thank you very much.

Other friends were there as well, including Rev. Yohana Ole Ngekee, the man who pioneered Christianity among his Maasai brethren, and our co-workers Paulo Ole Kurupashi and Irene Lobar. Being reunited with them, we felt our fatigue melting away.

After a quick meal, we continued on our journey to the Maasai village of Mabwagele. After all our previous trips to Africa, the frequent vehicle breakdowns were tedious, but not unexpected. We reached Mabwagele as the sun was setting, where the Assistant Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Pastor Jacob Ole Mameo, officially welcomed our mission.

After an hour or so, David, Joshua, Ans, and I, along with some of the girls from Suenda, climbed back into the van for the next leg of our journey, the 3 hour drive to Parakuiyo village. By now, it had been about three days since I’d had a good night’s sleep and I was beyond tired. All I wanted to do was rest. But when we finally arrived in Parakuiyo sometime after midnight, we were greeted by a church full of people who had been patiently waiting for us to arrive so they could begin their own welcome ceremony, a meeting that lasted several hours. Around 3 AM, we were taken to the home of the Parakuiyo Village Government Chairman, Lekileng’o Kibasis. A very gracious man, he va-

cated his house so we could use it during our stay. Needless to say, sleep came very easy that night.

The next morning, Saturday, 22 July, the classes began. In Mabwagele, Evan was the teacher, presenting the entire seminar himself for the first time. Once again, Paulo Kurupashi served as his interpreter. In Parakuiyo and later in Malela, I was assisted by David Mantock, who did a fine job teaching several of the sessions, and Edward George Dodo who was our interpreter.

I will leave it to Evan to tell you about his experiences in Mabwagele. From what I know, it was a glorious time indeed. I could see it in the faces of Evan, Jay, Henry and Paulo when they joined us in Parakuiyo the following Thursday. They sat through the closing ceremonies of the Parakuiyo class, and then after lunch we all climbed into a pick-up truck for the two-hour drive to the next village.

Three people – the driver, David and I – were in the cab of the truck. About twenty others, along with all our luggage and supplies for the next class, were in the back. By the time we arrived in the village of Melela (and remember, I was one of very few people with a seat), I was again very tired. Then I watched with amazement as the girls of Suenda climbed down from the back of that truck and began unloading the vehicle themselves, and then sang a song to begin the welcome meeting!

It was wonderful to be reunited with Saning'o Galahenga, whom Evan and I had met on our first Maasai mission to Madunguru village in 2004. It was providential that we met the first time; this time it was by his invitation. His village is situated not too far from the Morogoro-Iringa highway that travels east and west across Tanzania. Back in 2003, when WTWH first visited Tanzania, I saw villages like Melela from our vehicle, and wondered what it would be like to visit one. Here we were. It was amazing!

After the welcome meeting and meal, Evan and Jay left with Ans for Morogoro, about 37 kilometres away. There they would spend the night before leaving for Dar es Salaam and their flight home the next day. It was strange to see them leaving. But for the rest of us, our mission was only half over.

It is only now that Rev. Pyle is fully participating in the presentation of the Weapons of Our Warfare seminar that I feel free to say that I believe this seminar is very unique and highly beneficial to the Church of Jesus Christ. It is not the messenger; the blessing of God is

upon the message. Through the systematic presentation of the Scriptures, we have been able to help people from extremely different backgrounds and cultures, within and without the ranks of denominational Christianity, from the Swiss Alps to the Australian coastline, from internationally famous cities like London to obscure villages in Africa. People who came to this seminar knowing little to nothing about Jesus made heartfelt commitments to serve Him. Young people and grown-ups, people with highly advanced education and people who could not even read, have all been touched by the Lord during this seminar. Even people who have sat through this seminar repeatedly recognize that no two presentations have been identical, as each sought to minister to the particular students in that class. If your Christianity has been “dead in the water” for too many years and you are seeking to “stir up the gift of God which is in thee” (2 Tim. 1:6), this seminar could be the very thing to put some wind in your sails.

I soon recognized that many of the people who attended the classes in Mabwagele and Parakuiyo had joined the class in Malela as well. The Lord had graciously followed us with signs and wonders, letting His people know that this wasn't just another class. From the fleeing of the witchdoctors to the season-defying (and much needed) rainstorm, they saw the hand of God. They could see that we were truly working together with *Him*.

From the very first session of the class in Malela (which began the next morning) I knew that God was going to work with me like never before. He led me step by step through the class presentation, exchanging Scriptures I'd generally used for different ones, giving me fresh and vivid illustrations on the spot. I have long believed you must *use* the gifts of the Spirit to *teach* the gifts, but this was different. I felt as if God was holding me accountable for everything He'd ever taught me about spiritual warfare. If He said, “Give them this verse,” I knew I was expected to know where to find that verse, remember what was written before and after it, and be able to quickly and simply relate that information to the class. All in all, it was absolutely thrilling, an experience beyond anything I've known in my years of ministry. If that seminar in Melela turns out to be the last class I ever teach, I could retire with contentment.

On Thursday morning, we held a very special healing service. Our healing services begin with a call to repen-

tance, and a request for forgiveness from sin. The Lord was with us that day, of that I am sure. I left that meeting feeling spent, but exhilarated. After lunch, we reconvened for the ministering of a word of prophecy, the Blessing of the Lord over the many pastors who were in attendance.

It was difficult not to be overwhelmed with feelings of unworthiness around these pastors, men and women who had endured great hardships for the sake of Jesus, many of whom “have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 15:26). So many denominations were represented, this itself a sign of the Lord’s presence with us. Truly, we were one in Christ.

I was a little concerned because I had never begun such a service already feeling so tired. (I realize that this confession of tiredness is starting to repeat. What can I say? Mission work is hard work, even on these relatively short trips. Our bodies never quite get regulated to the time change, jet lag takes its toll, and we eat food that is different from what we are accustomed. I don’t mind adding to that list that neither am I as young as I once was. But I would say that most of the fatigue comes from the strain of wanting to do the right thing.)

I called Henry to the front of the church and whispered in his ear, “Do *not* stop praying for me!” My friend was faithful to his assigned duty, and with the help of Ans interpreting, that service concluded almost 3 hours later. From what I have heard, those who were present recognized the Lord’s hand in the prophecies. It was like the testimony of the woman at the well who said, “Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” (Jn. 4:29). Don’t misunderstand me. I certainly am not the Christ. But true prophecy is the word of Christ to that person or congregation.

The next morning, we officially closed our mission. Pastor Mameo returned and blessed us all with a wonderful message. Afterwards, he told me how thankful he was for missionaries like us that go to the villages, and not the cities like everyone else. “It is like they are taking water from the well to the sea,” he said. I loved him for that statement.

I’ve been home a few weeks now, long enough to once again grow complacent about all the niceties that come with living in a prosperous nation. But part of my heart, I now realize, never returns home with me from Africa. It stays there, waiting for me to rejoin it.

I thank God for allowing me to experience Him, to know Him and serve Him. I thank God for giving me a wife whose own commitment to the Lord fortifies her in the times I am away. I thank God for my children – my daughter Jessica and my sons, Michael and Brandon, who are all the apple of my eye. They too have graciously accepted my absences while I am off on missions. To be surrounded by such a loving family is a joy unsurpassed. God willing, they will all join me on an Africa mission one day. On top of that, I thank God for my friends around the world who love me, and who love this ministry. And I thank Him especially for those of you who, through your faithful support, allow this ministry to be a blessing and a service to others.



Report from Mabwagele

by Rev. Evan Pyle

*And many that believed came, and confessed,
and shewed their deeds. (Acts 19:18)*

Life is full of trouble. I guess you could say our travels were evidence of this. Our initial flight was delayed for an unknown reason and as a result we missed the rest of our connecting flights. We were transferred to other airlines altogether. Two of the planes we boarded wouldn’t start and they had to be dragged to a spot where they could be jump-started! Our revised flight plan took us to London’s Gatwick airport, from which we needed to collect our luggage and board a bus to Heathrow airport to continue our journey to Africa. The hitch was that our luggage was not present and accounted for. I thank God two men went above and beyond their job descriptions and sleuthed our bags from different parts of the airport innards. At one point, I was resting on a seat and just praying. I opened my eyes in time to see my suitcase being wheeled past me by an official from another airline. I rescued it before it disappeared behind another “No Admittance” door. Praise God.

Yes, there is happiness in every person’s life, but trouble is always hiding around the next corner, it seems.

So, people have always sought ways to minimize their troubles and a means to ease their suffering. Some seek comfort in drink; others, in acquiring goods and riches. Many seek escape from trouble in religion. This is false religion, the kind that serves a god because of what he might do for you. There are people who profess Christ because of what He might do for them and simply add Him to the stable of deities they already hope to receive something from. This was, in part, the situation that Jay, Henry and I found in the village of Mabwagele, Tanzania. No wonder, since the picture of the Christian faith given to them has been one of cleaning up the externals. Upon water baptism, “converts” are required to take a “Christian” name, forsake their Maasai decorations and, in the case of the men, don pants. These sincere people have been led to clean the outside of the cup without tending to the inside matters of repentance and saving faith in Christ. More than a few villagers expressed happiness that God wasn’t asking them to exchange their culture for Christ.

I like to think of The Weapons of Our Warfare seminar as a teaching in Christian maturity. It is concentrated teaching for those serious about serving Christ. Yet we had entered an area in great need of the gospel message that is the “power of God unto salvation.” The villagers knew almost nothing of Christ and His kingdom. We were amazed to learn that they had not even heard of an afterlife, heaven or future judgment. How was I supposed to teach them the Weapons seminar when more foundational teaching was so needed?

I am reminded of the evangelist Philip when he helped the Ethiopian eunuch. He began at the place where the eunuch was reading and preached Christ unto him. All of God’s Word proclaims Christ and that is what happened in Mabwagele. Regardless of the topic of the particular lesson that day, I used it to preach the gospel of Christ. At the end of several of our regular lessons, our co-worker Henry Musana led a call for salvation which resulted in a great response. It was moving to see people of such a different culture experiencing the same need as lost people everywhere. When they repented and called out to Jesus in faith they received the “like precious gift” given to all who are saved.

Shortly after our arrival we were informed that the Laibon had been in the village. In fact, he left when he heard we were coming. The Laibon is essentially the head of the Maasai traditional religion and acts as a prophet to his people. As such he wields great author-

ity. Among the things he did while in Mabwagele was perform a ceremony in which a goat was killed. Participants were given a strip of the goat skin to wear around their wrists or ankles and were warned not to remove the skins lest some terrible thing happen to them, their family or their cattle. Indeed, we noticed that many, if not most, of the people attending the seminar were wearing these skins. Though these strips were carefully tied, it was not the knots that kept them in place; fear and superstition prevented people from removing the very thing that bound their hearts. Casting out devils, when done under the direction of the Holy Spirit, is an easy work compared to dislodging long-held fears and superstitions from the heart. What faced us was nothing less than the commission given to Paul:

To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

(Acts 26:18)

We found no greater friend in this work than the teaching of the Word. The Holy Spirit uses the teaching and preaching of Bible truth to enlighten the eyes and hearts of people. “The entrance of thy words giveth light,” says Psalm 119:130. The receiving of the Word caused faith to grow and the people began losing their fear of the accursed thing. Soon we saw goat skin strips on the ground, as more and more people cut them off. Those discarded skins bore testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of these people. I tremble both with excitement and godly fear thinking of the deliverance God wrought among the Maasai of Mabwagele.

Travel again became an issue for Ans, Jay, and me as we returned to Dar es Salaam for our flights home. Our transport broke down, stranding us late at night on a remote stretch of highway not far from Mikumi National Park. Amid dangers of animals and highway robbery, we managed to hitch a ride on the back of a large Pepsi truck loaded with empty bottles, an adventure that Jay and I both enjoyed a great deal. Only God’s hand could have guided us safely through such troubles.

Those of you who support WTWH in prayers and finances are doing a valuable service in the Body of Christ. Dangers abound, but the payoff in souls is great. I know that in my times of trial, I felt your prayers holding me up. I also felt Jay holding me up when I became ill on the return flight. Thank you, brother Jay.

The Principal Thing

By Rev. Tim Sullivan

In the opening of the 13th chapter of Matthew is a wonderful truth waiting to be discovered.

The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; (Matthew 13:1-3)

I direct your attention not to *what* Jesus taught, but *where* He taught. Jesus spoke to a great multitude of people as He sat aboard a ship. Why did He do this? Was it simply because there was no room on shore?

Jesus had a mission that day, to teach the multitude gathered around Him. He also had a problem. The waves breaking on the shore, the windy breeze, and the inevitable disruptions made by people when they gather would make it difficult for people to hear His words. The people sitting in front might be fine, but what about those to the side and behind Him?

No doubt, He prayed. "Father, what would You have me to do?" Then, out of the corner of His eye, Jesus saw the ship anchored offshore and smiled. In that instant He recognized that everything He needed had already been provided. Once again, God had manifestly proven that "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him (Mt. 6:8)." And so Jesus, who always did the will of the Father, taught the people as He sat on that ship. The sound of His voice bounced off the surface of the water, turning that shoreline into a natural amphitheater. He didn't have to scream or shout to be heard. All He had to do was speak.

You and I can easily imagine what a modern-day preacher facing the same situation would do. He would go shopping for an electric generator, a microphone, an amplifier, speakers – the list goes on and on. Later, he would wonder why his ministry always faced financial difficulties. Why? Because he was always spending money on things he really didn't need.

In his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul made an extraordinary promise: "My God," he wrote, "shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). Why do we think we must plead with God to convince Him to do something He has *already promised* to do? In the words of St. James,

"My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (Jms. 3:10)!

When it seems that God is not supplying our need, the problem is not with God. It is not even a problem of our faith. Our problem is that we do not realize *what* we need. As James also wrote, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss" (Jms. 4:3).

A man from a west coast city decided to drive cross-country to the east coast. He had never seen the countryside before, and knew nothing of life outside the city limits. He had never tasted water that did not come from a bottle. In fact, he had no idea where the water in the bottle came from. To his horror, his car broke down in what seemed to be the middle of nowhere. Weeks later, they found his body along the shoreline of a crystal-clear lake, right where he fell. He had died of thirst, looking for a bottle of water.

Now, that story is not true. I made it up to illustrate a point. If you don't know what you need, you won't recognize it when you see it. That man didn't need a *bottle* of water. He needed water. That preacher didn't need a sound system. He needed to be heard.

God has promised to supply all our need according to His riches in glory. However, we must realize that God supplies our need, not what we *think* we need.

What is the thing we need most in life, in every situation, under every condition? What is the thing that ministers need most to fulfill their mission? What does a husband or wife need most to be the kind of spouse he or she vowed to be? What do parents need to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? What do young people need to find their way in life? Some tell you that all you need is love. Others say you just need faith. Still others cry out that what the church of Jesus Christ needs is more power! But what does God say? What is your first and most basic need?

Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *therefore* get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. (Prov. 4:7)

Wisdom is the principal thing, our first and most basic need. Getting wisdom is our first priority. That is why, whenever the Bible makes a list that includes wisdom, wisdom comes first.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (1 Corinthians 1:30)

Without wisdom, the gifts of the Spirit are misused. That is why, in the list of the manifestations of the Spirit

in 1 Corinthians 12, the word of wisdom comes first.

If being rich can be defined as having enough to waste, then Workers Together With Him is a relatively poor ministry. I marvel that we are able to accomplish so much with so little. The only way for us to be successful in our mission is through careful stewardship of what we have been given. The less you have, the more you need wisdom.

Don't be fooled. Money *hates* you. It doesn't want to be in your pocket, your purse, or your bank account. Money wants to get far away from you, as quickly as possible. That is why your money is always crying out, "That looks good! Buy it! Spend me!" As the Bible says, "for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Prov. 23:5). But wisdom, like a dear sister, is a true companion.

Say unto wisdom, Thou *art* my sister; and call understanding *thy* kinswoman: (Proverbs 7:4)

That is why wisdom is to be preferred over worldly riches. "How much better is it to get wisdom than gold!" says Proverbs 16:16, "and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!" "For wisdom is better than rubies," says Proverbs 8:11, "and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."

The great value of wisdom is relative to the great cost of foolishness. Without wisdom, we can have everything we need and still starve to death. "Much food is in the tillage of the poor," says Proverbs 13:23, "but there is that [which] is destroyed for want of judgment." The tillage of the poor is ground that was tilled but not planted. The potential was there for much food, and yet, for want of wisdom, there was nothing.

The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom. (Proverbs 10:21)

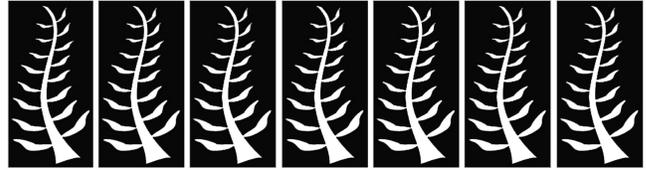
You can also say that "fools die for want of asking," because God has made it so easy to acquire His wisdom. Once more, we consult the book of James.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. (James 1:5-6)

Remember, the first thing you need is the first thing you should ask for. For the next thirty days, before you bombard God with your never-ending list of all the things you think you need, ask Him to give you the thing that He says you need. Ask for wisdom. Don't ask for it

one day and forget about it the next. Make this your constant prayer, without wavering. And then get ready for your life to change.

He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good. (Proverbs 19:8)



One Soldier Speaks

Stand and Do What?

By F. Jay Pearson

Baton Rouge, Louisiana USA

Psalm 144:1 says, "Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." God teaches His soldiers how to war in the spiritual battle and how to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6:10).

In Ephesians 6:13-17, God gives His soldiers six directives to inspire us to action. To stand for God, you must (1) take unto you the whole armour of God, (2) with your loins girt about with truth, (3) having on the breastplate of righteousness, (4) your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, (5) taking the shield of faith, and (6) the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit.

The first directive is to "take unto you the whole armour of God" (6:13). Why? "That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (vs. 11b-12).

Imagine a two-man wrestling contest, when one man enters the ring unaware that he is a contestant. He walks to the center of the ring thinking he is going to sing the National Anthem, and gets knocked off his feet by his opponent. He is defeated before he knows what happened to him. If we are unaware of the spiritual war, we also will be knocked off our feet.

Now that I have on my armour so that I can stand, what do I do next? The first thing we are told is to PRAY and WATCH. Prayer and watching come first.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the

Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6:18)

Have you ever heard someone say, “At least I can pray for you”? Prayer is not the least we can do. It is the most! Prayer and watching are dynamic.

Prayer, in the simplest form, is communication with God and His Son Jesus Christ. You will not be able to accomplish any task if you do not communicate. Can you imagine a soccer team winning a game if the coach did not communicate with them during the game? The opposing team would have an easy victory. Prayer and watching are necessary; and they are commandments.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6:18)

Communication with the Father is absolutely necessary. This is accomplished the way you would communicate with anyone – by talking to him. Communing with God is called prayer. He is the power source. Prayer is not power. Prayer is action toward the power of God. An electrical wall socket has no power until it is connected to a power source. You can plug into it all day and get no results until it is connected to an electrical source of power.

I have an electrical outlet at my home on the countertop at the stove. I have changed the receptacle twice and it still doesn't work. The electrician told me there is a break in the wire. The wire is not connected to a power source, and therefore it is useless. My wife tells me we should have it fixed. I think she's right!

Follow the wire from the socket; if it is not broken, you will find it connected to the power source. The power source to my house is a big box on the side of my house that the electric company has supplied with power. The spiritual connection between the power of God and man is Jesus Christ. Break that connection and there is no power. You will be like the useless wall socket at my house.

Besides being attentive to our prayers, we must also WATCH. We are expected to be vigilant, and for a very good reason.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (1 Peter 5:8)

After we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord, we became members of the Body of Christ. Now it is our responsibility to stand guard for one another, to watch

for danger and warn our brothers and sisters. We are to love one another. The more eyes we have watching the better chance we have to see danger as it approaches.

But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. (Ezekiel 33:6)

The most dynamic thing you can do once you take unto yourself the whole armour of God is PRAY AND WATCH.

Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober. (1 Thessalonians 5:5-6)

Stand and do what? We are to Pray and Watch. God gives wisdom to those who ask. He will give the wisdom and knowledge we need to protect His loved ones and bring glory to His name. I encourage you to stand and to communicate with the Father, and with the Lord Jesus Christ who opens our eyes to the task before us. AMEN.



Yield Not to Temptation

By Jerelyn Pearson

Baton Rouge, Louisiana USA

The struggle to recognize and resist temptation is an ongoing battle for Christians. Even though we know that God has a plan for each of us, we are often tempted to do things our own way, especially when our way seems good. Instead of seeking His will and timing, we take things into our own hands. We want to provide for ourselves, protect ourselves, and determine our own purpose in life. And being very impatient, we want it all immediately. Following God's plan isn't always easy. The Bible gives us many examples of what happens when we follow our own plan and what happens when we follow God's plan. Two such examples occur in the first books of the Old and New Testaments respec-

tively. Genesis 3:1-6 is the familiar account of the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Matthew 4:1-11 tells of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness.

God placed Adam and Eve in a place where their every need was provided for. The scenery was beautiful. The weather was always perfect. There was plenty of healthy delicious food. But Eve was tempted to eat of the one tree which God had forbidden because the serpent made it seem okay, even desirable.

And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat. (Genesis 3:6)

Rather than trust in God's provision, she decided to step outside of His plan. How often do we step outside of God's provision to do things our way?

Jesus was tempted in this same way. After Jesus had fasted for 40 days in the wilderness, He was hungry. Satan tempted Him to make the stones into bread, to step outside of God's provision and provide for Himself.

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

Jesus relied totally on God's provision.

God placed Adam and Eve in His garden, a safe place, where they would be protected by Him. The only requirement for this protection was obedience. They were forbidden to eat of one tree. The serpent convinced Eve that if they ate of the forbidden tree, they would be as gods, knowing good and evil.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (Genesis 3:4-5)

They stepped outside of God's protection, thinking they would be able to protect themselves. How often do we step outside of God's protection in our own efforts to protect ourselves rather than trust Him?

Satan's second temptation of Jesus was to try to convince Him to cast Himself down from a pinnacle of the temple to prove that God would send angels to bear him up.

And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall

bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (Matthew 4:6-7)

Jesus refused to step outside of God's protection.

God had an eternal plan for Adam and Eve to live in close fellowship with Him. The serpent tempted Adam and Eve with what seemed to be an easier, quicker plan.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (Genesis 3:4-5)

In what ways do we look for the easy way, the quick way, to accomplish our plans or even God's plans? How often do we leave God out of the planning?

Satan offered Jesus a quick, easy path to power. He offered to give Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them if Jesus would fall down and worship him.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (Matt. 4:8-10)

Again Jesus refused to deviate from God's plan for Him.

God is our provider and our protector. He has a purpose for each of us according to His plan and His timing. How can we know His plan? How did Jesus know His plan? Jesus studied His Word. His responses to Satan were always, "It is written..." while Adam and Eve's responses relied on their own reasoning and what seemed good to them.

Another way Jesus always knew God's plan for Him was that Jesus prayed often. He even gave instruction and provided an example that we pray specifically regarding temptation.

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak. (Mt. 26:41)

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (Matthew 6:13)

If Jesus needed to do these things, how much more do we need to pray and study God's Word!

We can follow Jesus' examples of obeying God's plan rather than yielding to temptation because we have Him

to help us.

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin (Heb. 4:15)

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: (2 Peter 2:9)

We can follow Jesus' example of obeying God's plan and not yielding to temptation because God is faithful.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. (1 Corinthians 10:13-14)

There is a great reward for yielding not to temptation.

Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. (Jms. 1:12)

The Bible has given us two very clear examples. The events in the Garden of Eden show us how not to respond to temptation. Jesus' temptation in the wilderness gives us an example of the right way to respond. Through studying God's Word and praying we can know God's plan for us, and we can be victorious in the battle against temptation.

Follow Jesus' example. Study God's Word. Pray for guidance. Yield not to temptation.



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The Grace of God

By Joshua Wamala

Kampala, Uganda, East Africa

In his letters to the churches, the Apostle Paul spoke about and emphasized the grace of God. He boldly said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:10). He went on to say that, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6:1). Use the grace for the purpose it has been given to you.

Grace means unmerited favor or undeserved favor. Favor is special consideration given to someone.

The Spirit of God, also called "the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29B), is the one who brings God's grace to us. There is grace for salvation:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: (Ephesians 2:8)

There is grace to sustain you where you are:

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

And there is grace to take you to the next level:

We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (2 Corinthians 6:1)

Every believer in Jesus Christ, irrespective of his spiritual standing and because of the indwelling of Christ's grace within him, has the potential to demonstrate that grace in any gift.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; (Romans 12:6)

The manifestation of God's grace in different ways in and through man is what we call the different spiritual gifts. Don't seek the results of grace, but grace itself, and then grace can exercise itself as the One who gives it discerns the need for the demonstration.

Remember always that with humility comes the grace of God. James 4:6 says, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." The word humility has

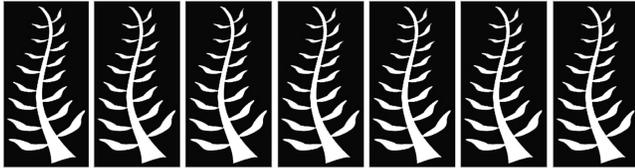
its root in the word *humus*, which is the soil. Humility is being down to earth. In God, to go low is to go high.

The grace of God is given to us in full in Jesus Christ but we increase in it gradually through sacrifice, service and obedience. Through faithfulness, God allows us into different levels of His grace.

God's grace is available every day, but we have to go before His throne of grace to receive it.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

In conclusion, we read from 2 Corinthians 13:14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."



To Know the Lord

By Joella Beard

Eagle River, Alaska, USA

In the last Vine & Branches, this article set forth the lesson explaining that God inspired men to write His Word, now called the Holy Bible, so we could learn of Him. By reading the Scriptures we can learn of His character, of His plans for us, and what He would have us do or not do as we live our lives. We can learn what God's will is for us by reading His Word and spending time with Him in prayer.

God does not want His people to wander aimlessly through life. He gave us His Word to help us make right decisions.

The ultimate goal for making proper decisions in our lives is that we would accept the sacrifice Jesus Christ made for us when He shed His blood and died on the cross for our sins. Through that sacrifice of the righteous for the unrighteous, Our Heavenly Father, the Holy God, redeemed us unto Himself and offers eternal life to all who confess Jesus as Lord and believe God raised Him from the dead.

The more short-term or daily purpose for making

proper and godly decisions is that we learn to love God, trust His guidance, and become examples of His grace and love toward mankind by doing His Will while we live here on earth.

What a glorious opportunity our Heavenly Father has given us. As we study and apply His Word in our lives, we honor Him, we are a joy to Him, and we receive His blessings.

Walking through life without applying God's Word is not a walk of confidence in your eternal destiny. It is more like stumbling through life, tripping over whatever may be on your path.

Have you ever walked in a totally dark room? You naturally put your hands out in front of you to avoid walking into an object or the wall. Or perhaps you were out on a night without moonlight; you likely put your hands out in front of you to avoid walking into a tree or a bush. The Scriptures reveal that without God's Word to guide us, we stumble through life as if we are blind.

Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, *but* we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if *we had* no eyes: we stumble at the noonday as in the night; *we are* in desolate places as dead *men*. (Isaiah 59:9,10)

We need not be persons who stumble through life, desolate, like those who cannot see. It is not God's Will for us to live our lives in this manner. See the following verses:

Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let *her* not go: keep her; for she *is* thy life. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil *men*. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause *some* to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked *is* as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

(Proverbs 4:10-19)

God promises us so much more in life:

THE LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall

I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. (Psalm 27:1)

BLESSED are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed *are* they that keep his testimonies, *and that* seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word. (Psalm 119:1-9)

God wants you to know His Will for your life. He wants to provide you with right instruction so you can make right decisions and have blessings here on earth and eternally in heaven. He has given you His Word to provide you with information about His character, about what He has determined are right and proper beliefs, thoughts, and actions. All His Word is given that you might not stumble but have His Light to shine the way.

Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)

You might recall that Jesus is called the Word of God and the light of the world:

...and his name is called The Word of God. (Rev 19:13)

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:12)

As we read and study God's Word, as we learn of His character, His nature, and learn to follow His Will for our lives, we learn to allow Jesus to be Lord of our lives. We allow Him to guide and direct our steps until that glorious day in heaven when He presents us as the redeemed before God's holy throne.

You see, loved ones of God, it is not only a matter of *not stumbling through this life*, but of walking in confidence that our choices and decisions honor our Heavenly Father by being obedient to His Son Jesus Christ, as our Lord.

The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. (Psalm 37: 23)

Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity

have dominion over me. (Psalm 119:133)

Your Heavenly Father wants you to know all the goodness that He has for you. He wants you to recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ in your life. He wants you to know Him, and in doing so, to love Him.

In our next lesson, we will study how Jesus gave us the example of how to walk in the center of God's Will. By following His example, we learn to follow in His footsteps and become obedient children of the Most High. In the meantime, let us pray that the Lord will light our paths and reveal more of His character to us and *in* us as we study His Word.



You are WELCOME!

Over the last years, many people have expressed interest in hosting a Weapons of Our Warfare seminar in their home state. However, it is difficult (and probably ill-advised) to promote a class that you have not sat through yourself. For that reason, we would like to host a seminar here in Baton Rouge from 25 to 28 January, 2007.

The class will be held over four days, from Thursday to Sunday, with sessions in the morning, afternoon and evening hours.

I am very aware of the time constraints we all operate under, and I have continually reshaped the class to compensate for our demanding times.

Do not try to figure out if you are supposed to be in this class. Instead, ask Jesus, "Lord, what should I do?" As our Chief Shepherd, He is able and willing to guide us in our decision-making.

If you decide to be a part of this event, please send a letter of intent by November 1, 2006 to Jay and Jerelyn Pearson, pearsjj@cox.net, 16440 Philip Hickey Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70810. As they say in Swahili, "*Karibu!*" You are welcome!



Irene Lobara and her mother Dorkasi enjoy the latest V&B at Melela Village in Tanzania. More photos of our mission trips are on our website www.workerstogetherwithhim.org



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