



GOD ONLINE

David Brandt Berg

GOD ONLINE

David Brandt Berg

A Mountain Streams book

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editor would like to thank Phillip Sherwood, Michael Roy, and Reuben Rushevsky for their assistance in the compiling and editing of this book.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible quotations in this booklet are from the New King James Version ©1982 Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Scriptures marked KJV are from the King James Version (Authorized Version).

Scriptures marked NIV are from the New International Version, ©1973 International Bible Society.

ISBN 3-905332-50-7

Edited by Keith Phillips

© 2001 Aurora Production AG, Switzerland

All Rights Reserved

Printed in Thailand

Visit our Web site at www.auroraproduction.com

CONTENTS

Introduction	v
Stop! ... Look! ... Listen!	1
Diamonds of Dust	19
Faith	23
Prayer Power	29
Feet of Faith	37
The Operator	43
Desperate Prayer	49
Seven Ways to Find God's Will	51
Choice	61
Temple Time	67
Afterword	71
About the author	73

INTRODUCTION

God isn't far away in some cosmic somewhere—and He's never too busy for you. He's right there with you, He's watching, and He's just waiting to help solve your every problem and meet your every need. He's a loving, personable God who wants to have a loving, personal relationship with you. And like any happy, successful, and mutually satisfying relationship, He wants it to be built on loving two-way communication. He's just waiting for you to connect with Him.

How to establish and maintain that connection are the central themes of *God Online*, ten articles by David Brandt Berg that are sure to inform, inspire, and point the way to God's never-ending, all-encompassing, and unconditional love—the only thing that can truly satisfy your deepest longing, transform your life, and provide a rock-solid foundation for your faith.

God Online will appeal to readers of all ages and backgrounds—those who are looking for a way to connect with God, as well as those who want to strengthen their connection and learn more about God's love and ways.

Why struggle through life on your own when you can have God's help? He says, "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3).

Stop! ... Look! ... Listen!

For a Christian, one of the main principles involved in reaching a decision is this: Don't start trying to reason it out, or talking it over with others—pray! God likes for us to give Him a little honor. Prayer is not just getting down on your knees and speaking your piece, but more importantly, letting God speak His. If you'll do that, He'll tell you what you're supposed to do.

I don't see how anyone can hear from the Lord unless they get quiet and really *listen*. I told some folks one time, "You remind me of the child prophet Samuel in reverse. When Samuel heard the Lord in the quiet of the night, he said, 'Speak, for Your servant hears.' But the way *you* pray is 'Hear, Lord, for Your servant speaks!'"¹

Many Christians today seem to be more concerned in having God hear what they have to say than they are in hearing what God has to say.

¹ | Samuel 3:2–10

They're trying to put *their* program across on God and get Him to sign His name to it. The question they should be asking themselves is not, "Can I present my program to God for His signature?" or even, "Am I willing to be presented with God's program for my signature?" but, "Am I willing to sign a blank sheet of paper and let God fill it in without my even knowing what His program is going to be?"

It doesn't matter how well you know the Bible or how many spiritual gifts you have, if you don't know how to pray or don't keep in touch with the Lord all the time, you're in trouble.

Christians who don't take time to listen to the Lord remind me of the story of the little girl who had a kitten. One day she heard it purring in its sleep and exclaimed, "Oh, Mama, the kitty's gone to sleep and left its engine running!" You may run around and appear to be busy, but still be asleep spiritually and not be getting anywhere, "as one who beats the air."¹ Unless you get quiet and try to seek the Lord, how are you ever going to hear what the Lord has to say?

I love to be alone with the Lord because then I can hear Him so clearly. I'm convinced that I have heard more from Him when alone, quiet, and in a position to listen, than any other way. He can talk to us when we're alone and we can give Him our full attention and the reverence due Him. The Lord

¹ | Corinthians 9:26

speaks in a still, small, but very definite, very firm, very loving voice. But if we're too noisy, we're not going to hear it.

You can be your own worst distraction. Anybody can make a racket, but it takes real *effort* to be quiet. If you're praying so loud and making so much noise that you can't even hear God, if you're not getting quiet and listening, then there's really not much point in praying. God's not deaf. You have to wait awhile and see if He's going to speak to you in some way. Stop and be quiet, and wait for the answer.

The only way you can hear the Lord clearly is to get quiet yourself. If you really want to hear the Lord, He'll talk to you, but He doesn't usually scream. By the time God has to yell over your racket in order to be heard, you're probably headed for trouble. That's why God sometimes allows people to have an accident or suffer illness or bereavement: He wants them to stop long enough to listen to Him. A funeral is about the only time a lot of people ever stop their feverish daily activities long enough to think about and listen to the Lord.

Lord help us to get quiet before Him and listen! We all need quiet times with the Lord, to receive inspiration and instruction from Him. Personally, I find that I hear from the Lord most clearly alone in the quiet of the night, when everything is still and there are no distractions. If I wake up in the middle of the night and can't go

back to sleep, I assume that it's because the Lord wants me to pray. As soon as I get prayed up, I go right back to sleep.

If you really want to hear the Lord, He will talk to you. But in order to hear, you're going to have to get quiet by yourself, somewhere, somehow, sometime. He says, "Be still, and know that I am God."¹ How much have you learned about being quiet before the Lord? How many "quiet times" do you have? "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."² Do you know what "confidence" means? Confidence is faith! The very fact that you keep quiet shows you have faith. It shows you're expecting God to do something and not trying to do it yourself.

If you don't know what to do, stop everything! Get quiet and wait for *God* to do something. The worst thing in the world you can do is to keep on going when you don't know what to do. That was King Saul's mistake. He kept right on going, even after he didn't know what to do; he figured he had to keep busy and keep going no matter what—and it lost him the kingdom.³

Getting quiet before the Lord shows you have faith that God is going to handle the situation, that He's going to take care of things. It shows you trust the Lord. "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he

¹Psalms 46:10

³1 Samuel 13:7-14

²Isaiah 30:15

trusts in You.”¹ If you’re not trusting, you’re going to be in confusion all the time. As this little poem aptly puts it:

When we’re trusting,
We’re not heard to fret.
When we’re fretting,
We’re not trusting yet!

If you’re confused, worrying, fretting, and fuming, then you’re not trusting. You don’t have the faith you ought to have. Trusting is a picture of complete rest and peace of mind, heart, and spirit. You may have to continue working, but your attitude and spirit are calm.

You don’t *always* have to be down on your hands and knees praying frantically to be heard by God. Prayer should be something you’re doing all the time, no matter what else you’re doing. You can’t always wait until you’re through doing this or that, and then pray. Sometimes you *can’t* get quiet. —You’ve got to pray as you go. It’s like thinking on your feet.

But any soldier preparing for a battle is going to have some quiet time beforehand. He is going to pray before *and* during the battle. We who help fight the Lord’s battles are going to get most of our instructions ahead of time.

¹Isaiah 26:3

When you truly trust the Lord, you can have peace in the midst of storm and calm in the eye of the hurricane. It reminds me of an art contest that was held in which the artists were asked to illustrate peace. Most of the contestants handed in paintings of quiet, calm scenes of the countryside—absolute tranquillity. Well, that’s a form of peace. But the hardest kind of peace to have was illustrated in the picture that won the award. It depicted the roaring, raging, foaming rapids of a storm-swollen waterfall, and on a little tree branch overhanging the torrent was a nest where a tiny bird sat peacefully singing in spite of the raging river. That’s when your faith gets tested, in the midst of turmoil. Quietness is a sign of faith.

Moses had several million people sitting out in the middle of the desert, waiting for him and tearing their hair, wondering, “What are we going to eat? What are we going to drink? Where are we going? What are we going to do?” And what did Moses do? He climbed to the top of a mountain and stayed there alone with the Lord for 40 days!

What if he had been fretting all the time, “What if something happens? I have to get back. What if Aaron makes a golden calf?”—Which he *did!* And when Moses *did* get upset and broke the stone tablets on which God had written the Ten Commandments, he had to go back up the mountain and get quiet for *another* 40 days! What good did it do for him to get upset? He might as well have come down

and taken it quietly and calmly. It would have saved him another 40 days on the mountain!¹

Jesus, on the eve of His ministry, went out and spent 40 days and nights in the wilderness, and it seemed like He spent much of the time with the Devil. He had to defeat the Devil first.² If you don't get alone with the Lord and beat the Devil first, you never get far.

It took Noah 120 years to build the Ark. I wonder how much of that was spent in prayer? He must have taken some time with the Lord, or he never could have gotten all the precise instructions on how to build the vessel. God probably gave him the *exact* specifications for every part of that boat. And Noah just went calmly about his business, building the Ark. He could have panicked and hastily slapped it together, thinking rain was coming any minute, but he didn't. He took 120 years to build the Ark. Many of us would probably think we were spending a lot of time preparing for something if we just spent 120 days on it. It sure showed that Noah had faith!³

They say that farmers often make the best missionaries because they don't expect everything in one day. They live next to God's creation and are dependent on the Lord. Farmers have a lot of patience and faith in the long process of waiting for the plants to grow or the animals to produce. They

¹Exodus 24:12–18, and chapters 32 and 34

³Genesis 6:11–22 and chapter 7; Hebrews 11:7

²Matthew 4:1–11

just have to trust the Lord and not worry about it. God does the biggest part of the job: He sends the sun and rain and makes the crops grow, and He's the one who causes the animals to produce.

If there's any picture of a quiet type of personality, it's the farmer. City folks often make fun of farmers, but if the farmers didn't take it slow, they'd go crazy like many of the city people! The farmer's motto is "Go slow." The farmer is a perfect example of faith and patience. We should take a lesson from the farmer.

Why is it that so few people want to live on a farm these days?—Because it takes too much dependence on God. They have to leave so much up to the Lord. In many countries, people are moving off the farms in droves. God's too much in control. It's too quiet—"too dead, no action," they say. But if they took time to really look around and listen—to watch the animals, the trees and the storms, and to listen to the thunder—they'd see and hear a lot.

Some people have to be in motion all the time; they've got to be *doing* something! I think one reason for this is that they don't want to *think*! That's why they have so many "amusements." Do you know what that word means?—"Away from thinking!" People are terrified of the quiet and stillness because they know the voice of God might come through. So the Devil keeps their minds, eyes and ears filled with noise and violent sights and sounds.

That's one reason why large cities are such a curse—so much noise and confusion! They're

largely man-made environments, with hardly a tree or a blade of grass. Many people live and work where they can't even see the sky, the sun, the moon, or the stars. The noise is continual: traffic, sirens, and screeching trains and subways. Children raised in large cities often develop hearing problems because they live in an atmosphere of constant noise, whereas children who live in the country usually have very keen hearing.

Just so, if you live in an atmosphere of spiritual and physical confusion, you'll eventually develop a hardness against the voice of God, because to hear Him you have to learn to block out all the noises around you. But if you live in a quiet, peaceful environment, your ears become more sensitive to the few sounds around you—very keen and sharp—and it's also easier to hear the Lord when He speaks to your heart or mind.

Think of the years Abraham, “the father of faith,”¹ spent out in the fields watching flocks. No wonder he heard from the Lord. He had time to listen.

Lord forgive us, we get so busy! If you're too busy to pray, you're *too* busy! If you're too busy to get alone with God and pray, you're too busy! It's as if a servant told his king, “I'm sorry, I can't come and listen to your orders today, I'm too busy *servicing* you!” The most important job you have is listening to the King—to stop, look, and listen. You need to learn to *listen* to the Lord most of all.

¹Romans 4:11,16

It's not up to the king to go chasing after his subjects, screaming and hollering at them to try to get them to follow his instructions. Rather, his subjects should come to the king with quietness and respect, present their petitions, and then wait silently for the king's answer. You need to respect and reverence the Lord, and treat Him like the King He is. Sometimes Christians can get so familiar with the Lord and His Spirit that this familiarity breeds contempt. The Lord is so sweet and close to them that they don't respect Him like they should.

A lot of Christians start playing with the gifts of God or the gifts of the Spirit, and neglect God Himself. It's like parents coming home with gifts for their children, and the kids grab the presents, forget to greet and thank their parents, and start playing with the toys.

It also reminds me of the story of the little girl who wanted to make her father a present for his birthday. Each evening, instead of spending her usual time with her father, she worked on making him new bedroom slippers—and she nearly broke his heart! God may appreciate the bedroom slippers you're making for Him, but He'd rather have *you!* And the truth is, you'll probably make an awful mess out of those slippers if you neglect your time with Him!

My mother used to tell about how she had gotten so busy with the Lord's work that she wasn't listening enough to Him, so He had to let her get so sick she *had* to give Him her full attention! When she was

flat on her back, sick in bed, that was the only direction that she could look—straight up! She summed up that lesson in the following poem:

FIRST PLACE

I was longing to serve the Master,
But alas, I was laid aside
From the busy field of workers
In the harvest field so wide.
They were few, yes, few in number,
And I could not understand
Why I should be left inactive;
It was not as I had planned.

I was longing to *serve* the Master,
And the need indeed was great.
For me it was easy to labor,
But oh, it was hard to wait,
To lie quite still and be silent,
While the song was borne to my ear,
From the busy field of workers,
In the harvest field so dear!

I was longing to *serve*, just to serve the Master,
But He led to a desert place,
And there as we stopped and rested,
His eyes looked down in my face.
So full of tender reproaching,
They filled me with sad surprise!
Did He think I had begrudged my service,
Or counted it sacrifice?

“Oh, Master, I long to serve, just to serve Thee,
There are so few at the best!
Let me off to the fields,” I pleaded.
“I care not to stay and rest!”
I knelt at His feet imploring,
I gazed in His face above.
“My child,” He said, “don’t you know
Your service is nothing without your love?”

I was longing to serve, to serve my Master,
Oh, this was my one fond thought.
For this I was ever pleading,
As His footstool in prayer I sought.
But there in that lonely desert,
Apart from the busy scene,
It dawned on me slowly and clearly
Where my great mistake had been.

My mind was so full of service, just service,
I had drifted from *Him* apart.
And He longed for that sweet communion,
The union of heart with heart!
Well, I sought and I found forgiveness,
While my eyes with pain were dim.
And now, though His work is still precious,
The *first* place is kept for *Him*!

—Virginia Brandt Berg

God will not take second place, even to His service! He says, “You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not bow down to them nor serve them.

For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.”¹ That is probably the greatest mistake of sincere Christians: to make a god of God’s service!

One day when Martin Luther and his co-worker Melanchthon had a particularly strenuous and busy day ahead, Melanchthon suggested that they cut their prayer time together at the beginning of the day in half. Luther refused vehemently, and insisted that instead of their regular two hours in prayer, they would have to spend four hours in the presence of the Lord that morning because they had so much to do!

Here’s another of my favorite poems:

I DIDN’T HAVE TIME

I got up early one morning
And rushed right into the day!
I had so much to accomplish
That I didn’t have time to pray.

Problems just tumbled about me,
And heavier came each task.
“Why doesn’t God help me?” I wondered.
He answered, “You didn’t ask!”

I tried to come into God’s presence;
I used all my keys at the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided,
“Why, child, you didn’t knock!”

¹Exodus 20:3,5

I wanted to see joy and beauty,
But the day toiled on, gray and bleak.
I wondered why God didn't show me.
He said, "But you didn't seek."

I woke up early this morning,
And paused before entering the day.
I had so much to accomplish
That I *had* to take time to pray!

—Grace L. Naessens

When Moses was a smart young man, 40 years of age, he really thought he knew how to do the job—but he made a terrible mess out of it and had to run for his life! It took God 40 years to straighten Moses out and show him that he had to depend on Him.¹

Hurry is often a sign that you're afraid you're going to be late—which means you have fear, which means you haven't got enough *faith*. If you're late, take it easy! Trust the Lord! One reason we hurry when we're late is because it's probably our own fault and we don't want to suffer the consequences.

Another reason we hurry is that we're not trusting the Lord. We're afraid that if we don't get to our destination, we're going to miss something. We can't trust God that He's able to hold up the whole world or stop the sun, like Joshua had Him do.²

One time when I was rushing to catch a train, the Lord warned me that the strain I was putting myself

¹Exodus chapters 2 and 3

²Joshua 10:12–14

under could kill me. So I put the matter in the Lord's hands, asked Him to delay the train, and relaxed and took my time. I made it to the station, boarded the train, and sat there for 40 minutes, wondering why the always punctual train had not yet left the station. I finally asked the Lord and He told me, "You asked Me to *stop* the train, but you didn't tell Me you wanted to *leave* yet!"

"The hurrier I go, the behinder I get!" Just relax, slow down, don't rush, don't be hasty, and the Lord will slow everything else down for you if necessary.

Look at all the examples in the Bible of patience: Job, Moses, and David, to name a few. David spent 24 years working under that old blunderbuss, King Saul, and the Lord really taught him a lot from Saul's bad example. Saul often became impatient and tried to do things in his own strength, and he found he wasn't strong enough. David learned that he had to let *God* do everything, and wait for Him.

Some people remind me of King Saul. They ask the Lord something and if they don't get an answer right away, they just go ahead and do the best they can. Look what happened when Saul didn't wait for the Lord's blessing through the prophet Samuel. Saul went ahead with the dedication ceremony himself, instead of waiting for the Lord or His prophet, and Saul lost the whole kingdom as a result.¹

So slow down! Stop! ... Look! ... Listen! Wait for the Lord—especially if you don't know what to do

¹ | Samuel 13:7–14

and haven't heard from the Lord yet. Where did John the Baptist show up from—the big city of Jerusalem? Is that where he got his education, his anointing, his great power? No! He came out of the desert, out of the woods, out of the wilderness, where he had time to get away from the crowd and hear from the Lord. And when he finally came, he sure had something to say!¹

Jesus spent 30 years of His life in preparation and only a little over three years in His public ministry. We're in such a hurry!

The apostle John wrote the Gospel of John, and it must have taken some time with the Lord to do it. However, John's greatest masterpiece was virtually written by the Lord, while John was in exile on an island—the book of Revelation. His biggest work was just letting God do all the directing, the speaking, the revealing—*everything!* Let's slow it down! Stop! ... Look! ... Listen!

The world is always in a hurry! That's the Devil's own plan: "Speed up the world! Anything to make everything move faster!" God created the earth 6,000 years ago, and it has hardly varied in its speed since then. *God* never got in a hurry. It's still revolving at the same rate every day. God hasn't speeded up the seasons or the years, but man is speeding things up—and the result is a world hell-bent for destruction!

So let's try to slow things down. Relax! But most of all, stop, look, listen ... and *wait!* Warning signs

¹Luke 3:1–18; 7:24–28

like this are posted at dangerous places, such as railroad crossings—places of crisis where there is an interruption of your routine, your way, your road, your highway—otherwise you might drive across the train tracks and get hit by a train.

“But,” you say, “I don’t have *time* to stop, look, and listen!” Well, if you don’t, you may never make it. Better late than never! Which is easier, to try to beat the train, to try to plow through the train, to jump over the train—or to stop for a few minutes and watch it go by? It’ll soon be gone, and you can go peacefully on your way.

Trying to force the situation and push your way through just won’t work! It doesn’t pay to rush around trying to get someplace or to do something when you’re supposed to be waiting on the Lord to find out where He wants you to be and what He wants you to do.

The Lord wants to teach you to make decisions. The first step in making a decision is not to try to reason it out in your mind or discuss the situation with others. The first step is to ask the Lord. God likes for you to give Him a little honor. Prayer is not just speaking your piece, but most of all letting God speak His piece, and waiting in quietness and confidence until He does.

You’ve got to get not only in prayer, but you’ve got to get in the Spirit. You’ve got to put aside your own thoughts and partake of the Lord’s Spirit, through communion with Him. If you’ll do that,

He'll tell you what you're supposed to do. You've got to know that you can't do it and be desperate for God's answer, and then you've got to stop everything else and listen. Getting quiet before the Lord shows that you have faith that God is going to handle the situation, that He's going to take care of things. Take time to hear from God, and He'll take time to straighten out the problem. Your feverish activity is nothing, your service is nothing, if you don't give the King your attention, your love, your time, your communion.

Remember that hurry is lack of faith and is of the Devil! If you're hurrying and rushing around, fretting and impatient, you'll never be able to focus your full attention—your eyes, ears, mind, and heart—on the Lord for the solutions to your problems, the answers to your questions, the best decisions for your situation! But when you have learned to stop, look, listen, and wait in communion with Him until you get His answers, you will have learned how to make decisions! You will have learned to pray and to truly follow God.

He gives the very best to them who leave the choices up to Him!

Diamonds of Dust

God put on a “light show” the other day, and we were there to see it. He said a lot of things, too, and we tried to listen. I’m sure He must have shown it before, but we were all too busy to watch.

The Lord let three tiny rays of sunlight beam their way into our dark room—not through the shutter, which was obstructing the light, but through pinholes, letting it in. It’s like your life for the Lord: The smaller you are, the clearer others can see Jesus. The less there is of you, the more His light shines through!

The rays were many different colors, all showing a different color of God’s light, but the same light. It is similar to what the Bible says about each Christian being given different gifts, but all from the same Holy Spirit.¹ Each of us reflects in our own way the light of God—each one letting our light shine, showing our particular kind of works to cause men to glorify the beauty of God.²

¹ | Corinthians 12:4

² Matthew 5:16

We're like little rays of light in this spiritually dark world. Even a few rays of light can make a difference. Don't ever think because there's so much darkness that it's no use to have just a little light, because even one candle can be seen a mile away when it's dark.

Even a speck of dust, as small as it is, can sparkle like a diamond if it will get in the sunshine—and the greater the darkness, the brighter the light! A little diamond of dust or a little ray of sunshine shows up best when the room is very dark. “Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.”¹

You don't dare look right at the sun; it's so bright it could blind you. But you see its reflection in the things that it shines on. Just so, people can only see God as His children reflect Him, like little diamonds of dust. They can't look at God, because He's too bright. They have to look at us believers to see God in our reflection of Him.

God's light can only be seen if you reflect it! People can only see God in you as you reflect Him. So “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.”² If the dust weren't there, you couldn't see the light, and if the light weren't there, you couldn't see the dust. It takes both.

You may never see one of those little diamonds of dust again, for some of them just float into the

¹Romans 5:20

²Matthew 5:16

light, sparkle for a moment, and then vanish back into the darkness. Some only have their moment of truth, but if only once in its life that grain of dust scintillates with the light of the Lord, it's worth it! Even if only once in its life, it is life and joy to someone, it's worth it! But if it could *stay* in the Lord's light, it could sparkle its life out to the end, like one candlestick gives light to the whole house until it is finished. The longer that little grain of dust stays right in the light, the longer it shines and the longer it stays a diamond.

Those diamonds of dust can sparkle so short a while, and then they're gone—like a man's life that is like the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is gone! For what is your life? It's but a vapor that reflects His rays of light for a little while and then it's gone.¹ You have no guarantee of tomorrow, so you'd better sparkle now while you have the light, or you may fade into oblivion.² Hardly anyone will know you even existed, because so few ever saw God's light reflected in you, shining through you, because you didn't stay in the light. "He who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."³

The path of the light, the ray we see, is very straight and very narrow. It only shines in one direction, and its source is only in one direction. Likewise there is only one way to the Source, God, and you've

¹Psalms 103:15–16

³John 3:21

²James 4:14

got to follow that way or you won't make it! Jesus is the light of the world.¹ He's the *only* way. Only in Him is there light—the straight and narrow beam that points to the love of God—and unless you get in that beam of love, you'll never shine. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."²

Think how much God can show you from even a little beam of light if you're just simple and child-like enough to appreciate it. Unless you become as a little child, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven.³

To learn from the Lord, you have to stop, look, and listen. If you don't, you'll get run over by all the cares of this life, instead of running over with His truth, His love and His joy. You'll be overcome by the world, instead of overcoming the world through Him. If you're too busy or in too big of a hurry or too full of your own doings, your own things, you'll never learn anything.

Watch the diamonds of dust: They don't try to sparkle and shine. They just let the light shine on them. They don't *work* at shining or moving. They're not trying to get anywhere. They're not in a hurry. They just float so quietly on God's air.

So stop—look—listen—and let your dust become a diamond that shows the beauty of God!

¹John 8:12

³Matthew 18:3

²John 14:6

Faith

It's easy to hear from the Lord. You just have to have faith. When you ask the Lord for an answer to a question or problem, *expect* an answer and take the first thing that comes. If you want the Lord to answer and really believe He can and will, you won't be disappointed. What you see or hear with the eyes or ears of your spirit, that's the Lord answering. It will be such a comfort to you. Expect God to answer. Just open up your heart and let it in.

Hearing from the Lord is your spiritual nourishment: You've got to be able to hear from Him in order to grow spiritually. A baby is a good illustration of this principle: When you're asking the Lord to speak, you're like a baby crying for food—in this case, the spiritual food you need to live on.

When a baby is crying for his mother, she wouldn't think of refusing him. That little baby has more faith than a lot of adults do when they pray, because the baby *expects* someone to hear him when he cries. He knows—God put it in him to know—that if he calls, his mother will answer. He expects an answer, and he gets it. If he asks for milk, his mother is certainly not going to deny him or give

him something else.¹ She's going to give him what he needs. Just so, when you ask God to speak to you, you must believe that the next thing that comes into your mind or heart is from the Lord.

Shutting your eyes helps you to see in the spirit and to become less conscious of the things and people around you. It helps you get your mind on the Lord and in a relaxed position where nothing distracts you. When you ask the Lord to speak to you, believe that whatever you hear or see is a message or vision from Him. When you are asking Him to speak, you are like a baby crying for food—in this case, the spiritual food you need to live on.

When a mother picks up her child to nurse him, what does she do? She reveals herself to him. If he's a tiny baby, she also has to bring the nourishment to him. She has to show him where it is; she has to place her nipple in his mouth. As he gets older, he automatically knows where to find the milk and he can reach out for it himself. It's the same with hearing from God. The longer you practice receiving nourishment from the Lord, the better you know where to find it. You just open your spiritual eyes and see it and reach for it.

Faith is the hand of the spirit, which reaches out and receives. It is the part that you do, your spiritual effort. After the nipple is in the baby's mouth, he automatically starts nursing. When you ask God for spiritual nourishment, He puts it there for you,

¹Luke 11:11-13

but if you don't start sucking, you'll never get it. You have to have the faith to begin to receive. You literally have to draw God's nourishment. If you don't suck, you won't get anything. The child sucks because God has put that automatic reaction in him to do it. A lot of times he has to suck for a while before he gets anything, but if he doesn't give up, eventually he will.

Faith is a type of drawing power. It is you drawing power from God. What is it that brings the mother's milk out of her breast? How is this explained in scientific terms? When the baby sucks, he creates a vacuum inside his mouth, which pulls the milk out. Similarly, you have to create a vacuum in your spirit: "Lord, here is an empty space. Please fill it!"

When you reduce the pressure in one area, what fills that vacuum? In the case of the nursing child, it's his mother's milk. All the child does is create the vacuum. He reduces the pressure inside his mouth, which then becomes lower than the pressure inside his mother's breast, so the milk flows out into his mouth. That sucking on the part of the baby is his effort; the mother does all the rest.

In prayer, you create a vacuum and the Lord's pressure fills it. Every time you open up your spirit, every time you create a low-pressure area, His Spirit will flow in, in all His power!

What if the baby took one big suck and got discouraged? "Well, I didn't get anything, so I'll just quit!" Sooner or later he would get so hungry that

he would start sucking again and not give up. When you start sucking for dear life and really desire that spiritual nourishment with all your heart, you'll get it.

You have to believe that when you create that vacuum in your spirit, the first thing that comes into your mind is from the Lord, and you must go straight on from there. If the baby didn't swallow the first mouthful, he couldn't get any more! His mouth can only hold so much at once. He gets a mouthful and swallows it, and then he gets another mouthful. He's got to swallow each mouthful as it comes, or he won't get more—and it's the same with receiving messages from the Lord.

He gives you a little to start with, but then you've got to expect and make room for more. In this case you empty your mouth, you "swallow," by believing the first words or Scriptures that He gives you, and repeating them out loud or writing them down—and you've got to keep swallowing. The Lord's not going to squirt milk out into the thin air where it will be lost, or into some baby who won't swallow it. You only get one mouthful at a time, and if you don't swallow that mouthful, you won't get another!

Likewise, when you ask the Lord for a vision and you begin to see something, you need to start describing it. Describe what you see, and then the Lord will give you more. What do you do when you watch a movie? You have to keep drinking it in,

scene by scene. You couldn't possibly get it all in one picture. You have to keep "swallowing."

Unlike the mother, God has unlimited capacity to give. What you get is only limited by your capacity to receive. When receiving messages from the Lord, pretty soon you get so full that you can hardly stand it. The Lord will keep on feeding you until your vacuum has been filled, your "stomach" is satisfied and your spirit is content.

The Lord is always there, ready, willing and able to speak to you if you're willing to listen, but He won't force you. The mother can place her breast in the baby's mouth, but if the baby takes one gulp and doesn't like it and quits swallowing, he's not going to get any more. You have to be willing to *receive* what God gives!

Prayer Power

The Lord leaves a lot up to us and our concern and prayer. If we only pray halfheartedly, we only get half an answer. But if we pray with our whole heart, we get a wholehearted, strong answer. If we turn it on real strong, then it reflects strong. Like a beam of light focused on a mirror, prayer will reflect or be answered with the same intensity that it originates with. It will bounce back with as much power as it began with.

The Lord leaves a lot up to us—our faith, our prayers, and what we want done. If we stir up ourselves to pray for a needy person or situation, then God will stir up Himself to do something about it. A lot of people have a lazy attitude and seem to think the Lord will do it all no matter what, but the truth of the matter is, a lot depends on us. He wants us to show concern and pray, and to be specific about what we want Him to do.

If we really believe, every prayer is heard and answered. But if we don't pray, it is not done! An awful lot depends on us. We have to visualize the

people we're praying for and pray specifically for the Lord to do this or that for them.

The very intensity with which we pray and really mean it or desire it is reflected in the answer. Like a radio beam that hits a satellite, our prayer is reflected according to the intensity of the original beam. The power with which it is sent determines the power that is reflected and the power that is received. The result of our prayer—the answer or help that the person we pray for receives—is determined by the power of our prayer for him. He is not going to receive any more than we send.

Why do certain answers take longer to come than others? Some prayers are like radio waves being bounced off a distant planet: It may take years to get the answer, but it *will* eventually come.

Also, while we would like for our prayers to be answered immediately, the Lord may know that it's not the best time. It's sort of like sending a spacecraft to the moon, the timing of which is dependent on both the position of Earth and the position of the moon. Why do they pick a certain day to send it? Because the moon needs to be at its closest point to Earth when the spacecraft arrives, so when it's time to leave, the moon will still be close enough for the spacecraft to get home.

The game of pocket billiards, or pool, also makes a fitting analogy. There are a number of variations of the game, but all are played on a six-pocket billiard

table and have the same basic object: to use a cue ball to knock other balls into the pockets.

The player controls the original force and direction in which the cue ball is set in motion, and that determines everything else that happens. The most common variations of the game start off with fifteen numbered balls arranged in a tight triangle toward the far end of the table. One player takes the opening shot, or break shot, to scatter the balls around the table. Then each player, in turn, tries to knock as many of the balls as he can into the pockets. He is not allowed to move any of the balls by hand from the positions they land in—not even the cue ball, except under special conditions. He must try to shoot the cue ball in such a way that it strikes another ball at just the right angle to knock it or one of the other balls into a pocket, using one or more of the cushions, if necessary.

Prayer works much the same way. God wrote the rules of the game, and He fired the break shot. People and situations are out there in the positions He destined them to be in, and we have to play by His rules. He sets the original scheme of things, and we need to try to do something with what He has set up.

The position of each of the people or situations involved has a major bearing on what happens next, but the way in which we pray for them also helps determine the outcome. The way we word or express our prayer and the way we ask God to

answer are like the way we hit the cue ball. The force, the angle and the spin we put on it all work together to help determine the outcome.

Depending on the variation of the game that is being played, the players must hit the numbered balls into the pockets in a certain sequence. They can't hit a certain ball into a pocket until its number comes up—and of course, the One who created the game numbered the balls.

As one of the players, you don't control where on the table that numbered ball or the cue ball are going to be when it's your turn to shoot. Those factors are determined by the way the balls were scattered in the first place, and what's happened since then. You have to wait until the cue ball and your target ball are in good positions in relation to one of the pockets, and then you must shoot just right to get the target ball to go where you want it to.

The lead player is God. He made the break shot that scattered the balls originally. Shot by shot, He and you and the other players keep changing the position of the balls. The only difference is, God is not trying to beat you. He's actually trying to help you win, if you're on His side.

It's like playing doubles: Your partner is God, and your opponents are the Devil and his ilk. Your partner, God, tries to "set up" your next shot for you. But of course, it doesn't matter how good God sets things up, if you don't shoot straight, it won't do any good.

And no matter how good your aim is, that target ball (the person or situation you're praying about) has to be in a certain position for you to be able to hit it right. You may be doing everything right, but if the path to the object of your prayer is obstructed, your prayer is not going to get through. A lot depends on the recipient of your prayers, too. To get the benefit of your prayer, *you* have to be in the right position and *he* has to be in the right position.

Let's take radio waves for another illustration: Say you're going to send a radio message via satellite, for someone on the other side of the world to pick up. First of all, your transmitter won't have any power unless it's plugged into the current. Next, your transmitter has to be in good condition. If it's faulty or out of whack or tuned to the wrong frequency, it won't transmit properly and it won't get the message through clearly. Also, the antenna has to be aimed so that the message is beamed in exactly the right direction to hit the relay satellite.

In this illustration, you are the transmitter and antenna, the Holy Spirit provides the power, and God's will is the satellite. God controls and limits the direction of your prayer, in a sense, because if you don't beam it in the general area of His satellite, it will miss altogether. The satellite of God's will is on a fixed orbit that you can't change—like God's overall plan that is fixed. You must use your antenna to aim

your prayer within the limits of that fixed orbit. It won't do a bit of good if you're firing off in some other direction. You've got to be on target.

If you're in tune, the Holy Spirit directs your prayer. If your set is automated so that the Holy Spirit is in control, then it's automatically tuned just right—power, beam, direction, everything—by the Lord's own computer, and it can't miss! But if you've been fooling around with the dials and the settings, you can mess up the whole works by trying to do it *your* way. Also, the satellite of God's will has to be in just the right position to bounce it down to the intended recipient, and the recipient has got to be in just the right position and have his receiver turned on in order to receive it.

So there are a lot of factors that affect the whole process of prayer, any one of which could explain why we don't always get the answer we ask for right away. The trouble may be with us, or maybe it's not God's time because His satellite isn't in the right position yet, or the trouble may be at the other end.

This leads to another question: Is it necessary to keep praying the same prayer over and over until it gets answered, which may take years? In answer to that, I would say an original prayer is probably enough, except that you may want to remind God from time to time that you're monitoring to see if He's still on the line, or to find out if He's gotten through to the one you're praying for. Or you may continue to put out CQ ("seek you") transmissions,

hoping the recipient will tune in and pick up the message.

So prayer depends on four principal factors: Your position, God's position, the position of the person or situation you're praying for, and the way you pray.

In the pocket billiards illustration, it depends on the positions of the cue ball, the target ball, the pocket and the way you shoot. You don't control the outcome completely, the person you're praying for doesn't control it completely, and God has specifically limited Himself not to control it completely, but to let it be affected by these other factors.

In the radio transmission illustration, the position of His satellite is set, but how it is used depends on you and the recipient. In other words, God has set the position of His overall plans, but how you fit into the plan depends on your position, the position of the person or thing you're praying for, and whether or not your beam is aimed right to hit the satellite.

So God has left a lot up to *you* and a lot up to *them*. He will always do His part. His orbit is set, and His satellite will always be where it's supposed to be at any given time. So the only things that will change the outcome are your position, the recipient's position, and the power and direction of your transmission.

Prayer is also like a mathematical problem: The more factors there are, the more complicated the problem becomes and the more difficult it is to

work out the solution. It's easy to get a simple little answer to a simple little problem like adding two plus two, but bigger problems are harder and take longer to solve.

So that's how prayer works. If it's according to God's will—what He knows is best for everyone concerned—and you and the object of your prayer are in the right position and you aim straight, your prayer will hit the target and have the desired effect!

Feet of Faith

(Written to a couple whose baby was born with deformed feet.)

My dear loved ones,
Our prayers are with you for your baby's feet. The Lord has a promise for feet: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"¹

Remember that nothing happens by accident! God has a purpose in everything, even if it is only to force us to exercise our faith for healing, and to demonstrate it for the encouragement of others. Maybe the Lord is going to give you such a ministry. He needs more Christians with gifts of healing, not only for our own sake, but to inspire the faith of unbelievers and to encourage them to trust in the Lord.

So "be not faithless, but believing!"² In prayer for you and your child just now, the Lord reminded me of the following Bible verse, taken

¹Isaiah 52:7

²John 20:27 KJV

from the story of the blind man in the Gospel of John: “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.”¹ Is anything too hard for the Lord? No, this is a small thing for the God of creation.² If He can create the baby, He certainly can straighten his feet. The One who made him can certainly fix him!

I suggest that you pray earnestly for your child to be healed, perhaps with others, and then expect a miracle! You do your part by praying, and the rest is up to God.

“With God nothing will be impossible,” and “all things are possible to him who believes.”³ Trust in the Lord. He never fails. “There has not failed one word of all His good promise.”⁴

My family and I have had many serious diseases and injuries, but God has never failed to heal them. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.”⁵ When I was three years old, an automobile ran over my foot and severely damaged it. The doctors said that many of the bones in my foot were crushed, and that I would never walk again. But my parents believed God and prayed, and I’ve been walking ever since! The Lord healed it completely, just as though it had never been broken!

¹John 9:3

²Jeremiah 32:27

³Luke 1:37; Mark 9:23

⁴1 Kings 8:56

⁵Psalms 34:19

I once worked for one of the greatest Christians I have ever known, Dr. A.U. Michelson. I never knew a humbler, sweeter, more compassionate, loving and hard-working man. He was a famous missionary to his fellow Jews in America. He founded the world's first Hebrew-Christian Synagogue, and produced a Gospel program that was heard on hundreds of radio stations around the world—a man who undoubtedly won thousands of people to the Lord, for which I'm sure he has been gloriously rewarded in Heaven!

Yet this dear man's foot was pitifully deformed so that he had to hobble around on crutches, in constant pain. Maybe this is one reason he had such compassion on others. We comfort others with the same comfort we find in the Lord.¹ How can we be more than conquerors?—By being good losers, and even praising God in our affliction! Dr. Michelson had miraculous faith for souls and for the finances needed to support missionaries around the world, and he prayed for many others who were healed, but he never seemed to have the faith for his *own* healing.

So who knows the will of God? All we can do is believe His promises and pray, and expect some kind of answer. Sometimes these things happen to draw us much closer to the Lord, to keep us humble and more dependent on Him, and sometimes they are to help us learn and grow spiritu-

¹2 Corinthians 1:4

ally. In any case, God has a loving purpose, and when we have learned the lesson that He's trying to teach us or the conditions are ready for the result that He wants to bring, He says He would rather that we be healed.¹ God prefers to heal. He *wants* to heal us, but He also wants us to learn through our afflictions, and He wants us to let them accomplish His purpose.

In some cases, it took years of patient waiting before Jesus or the disciples came along to bring people healing, but when the time was right, the Lord did the miracle—like the healing of the man who had been lame since birth, which resulted in the conversion of more than 5,000 in a single day and launched the Early Church on paths of glory!² So expect a miracle for the glory of God!

Search the Scriptures and see what these verses mean: “The lame take the prey.”³ “The lame shall leap like a deer.”⁴ “But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings.”⁵ Jesus even said that He caused the lame to walk, as one of the proofs of His messiahship.⁶ He also promises: “I am the Lord who heals you,”⁷ “who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases.”⁸ There are no exceptions: God can heal *anything*!

¹Hebrews 12:13

²Acts 3:1–12; 4:4

³Isaiah 33:23

⁴Isaiah 35:6

⁵Malachi 4:2

⁶Matthew 11:5

⁷Exodus 15:26

⁸Psalms 103:3

The day of miracles is not past! Our God is still a God of miracles. In our day-to-day ministry, we've usually emphasized the miracles of salvation and the spiritual transformation of people's lives, but God is still in the business of transforming the *bodies* that need it, as well as the hearts, minds and spirits.

I myself am a living witness to His healing power, having been given up for dead 30 years ago. At the age of 22, my heart was in such bad condition that the doctors said if I would stay in bed, I might live a year. However, I promised to serve the Lord if He healed me—and I've been busy for Him ever since. Now at the age of 52 (1971), I'm in better health than ever. Jesus never fails! God not only *can* do it, but He *wants* to do it! He's more willing to give than we are to receive.

“Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.”¹ Believe God! He never fails—even when we are faithless! Hold Him to His Word. He says, “Command Me.”² Demand and expect an answer! God has promised it.

And remember that “all things work together for good to those who love God,”³ and that this, too, has befallen you for the glory of God. Love and trust and praise Him more than ever, and I know

¹Hebrews 10:35–36

³Romans 8:28

²Isaiah 45:11

He'll not fail. He cannot deny Himself. He is bound by His Word. Remind Him of it, cling to His promises, memorize and quote them continually, and never doubt for a moment that God is going to answer—and He will! He has to! He wants to! Trust Him! And thank Him for the answer, even if you don't see it immediately! Your faith is much more precious than gold.¹ God bless you! I'm praying for you.

¹ | Peter 1:7

The Operator

Do you know how powerful your prayers are? Prayers are powered by the Spirit of God, and *nothing* can limit the power of the Spirit of God. It doesn't matter if you're praying for something big or small, or who you're praying for or where they are. Your prayers find whomever you pray for, wherever they are. God doesn't even have to have the address; He already knows it.

We really should pray more for others, because there are so many people we could help through our prayers. Whenever we think about someone or some needy situation, we should send out a prayer.

A thought is not a prayer. A thought is only the *beginning* of a prayer. A thought is like an employee who's standing there waiting for an order: If he's just left standing there waiting, he'll never get anything done. Just thinking about a person in need is not going to do it. We have to send the messenger. We have to *pray* the thought. We have to put feet to that thought by sending it in the form of a prayer. Jesus said, "Whatever you ask the Father in My name He

will give you.”¹ When we pray in Jesus’ name, it runs like a messenger. That’s the difference between a thought and a prayer.

So much depends on our prayers, because although God can do anything, He has committed Himself to work largely through us. When you think about someone you love or feel sorry for or know needs help, it is God who has put that thought in your mind. It’s like a telephone call: God initiates the call and sends it from His Spirit to your mind. You’re like the operator at the telephone exchange. God gives you the number He wants you to put through, and it’s up to you to make the connection—to send the call on to the party who needs to receive it. When God makes a call, He “plugs” a thought into your mind. He makes you think about that person, but then *you* have to plug in the patch cord that makes the connection and sends it on its way to that person. You are the link between God and the person He’s trying to reach, and it’s your prayers that make the connection.

You can’t just say, “Oh, that poor person, I feel so sorry for them.” If you just feel sorry for the person instead of making the connection between God and the person through prayer, it’s like you’re telling God that it’s no use, that there’s nothing you or He can do about it. That’s what happens when people don’t understand or believe in the power of prayer. If you believe, then you will send that prayer; you will for-

¹John 16:23

ward the call. You, as the operator, have to believe that the message comes from God, and then you have to believe that your prayer can make the connection and get the message through to the other party. Faith flips the switch or plugs the cord into the jack, and puts God's message through to the recipient.

God is the One who's calling, but He tries to put the call through *you* because He wants to show you what real love is. Love is making a connection between God and somebody who needs His and your love. You are the connection between God and that person, in love. You have very little power in yourself, but if you are willing to make the connection, you can reach whomever He's trying to reach with His love. Isn't that beautiful?

In order to be able to make the connection, you've first of all got to be plugged into the power source, God. Second, you've got to make the connection. The power may be there, but *you* have to operate it. The power can't flow through if you don't flip the switch to make the connection. If you're lazy or slow or negligent with these calls so you don't make the connection, then the people God wants to reach will never get the message and they'll never receive the love.

So much depends on prayer, and so much depends on *us*. There are a lot of people who need to and want to receive, but all too often we fail to make the connection. We don't flip the switch, or

we don't plug in the cord to complete the call. We have the switch right there in our mind, and all we have to do is flip it. God can call and call, but some people won't get the messages God has for them because of operators who either don't hear God calling, or who are not concerned enough to plug in the cord or flip the switch that makes the connection that sends it on to those God's trying to reach.

Of course, there are all kinds of reasons why operators sometimes can't get through: bad connections, too much traffic on the line, static on the line, or something wrong on the other end. You may not always be able to get the message through, but you have to try. You are responsible to pray. Then if there's something wrong out there, it's not your fault. Even the best of operators can't always get through. They may try and try and try and still not get through, but at least they've done their part—and that's how your faith should be.

The instant you pray for someone, the message is on its way. The call has already passed through the telephone exchange; it's on the line, and you are ringing that person's bell. Then the other party has to answer the phone, of course. He or she has to receive the call. But some people either don't hear the phone ringing or don't pick up the receiver, so they never get the message. You can't make the other party pick up the phone. All you can do is try to put the call through. After the message is on the line, then it's the other person's responsibility.

People could get all the answers they need and have all of their problems solved if they would just pick up the telephone and listen and receive God's message, but some people don't even want to hear. And there are other people who pick up the phone and listen a little bit, but they're not really interested in the message or don't think it's important, so they hang up. How sad!

Prayer is just that simple! When God puts a thought in your mind about someone, that's a message from God. He's putting in a phone call to that person, and He wants you to be the operator to try to put that call through, by prayer.

We could accomplish so much through prayer! We can pray for a poor little girl, or a homeless person, or a world leader, or a nation or *anything*. We can pray, and set God's power in motion! God's Word says, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes,"¹ and, "Concerning the work of My hands, you command Me."² Our prayers can do mighty things and change the course of history!

The world will never know how much has *not* been accomplished because people didn't pray—so please pray! You're the operator. It's your responsibility to pass on the message. Please don't fail, or someone might miss God's important call. Be a faithful operator.—Pray!

¹Proverbs 21:1

²Isaiah 45:11

Desperate Prayer

When do you really pray? When do you pour out your heart to the Lord? There should be some time when you really get “in the Spirit”—especially close to Jesus. It’s very important; it’s good for your soul and your spiritual condition to pour out your heart to the Lord in prayer.

There are times when you ought to really get down to business with God! There must be times when you call upon the Lord with a whole heart. *That’s* when He will answer.¹

All of our little daily prayers are well and good. I’m sure the Lord hears them and knows they’re sincere, and He answers accordingly. But there are times when you should get *desperate* with the Lord in prayer about certain situations and people that need your prayers.

Sometimes the Lord has to allow troubles or problems to happen in order to get us serious with Him, so we’ll fervently pray. He wants us to be happy

¹Jeremiah 29:13

and we usually are, but there should also be times when we are not satisfied with the usual run of things, when we desperately seek the Lord for a needed change and pour out our hearts to Him. When was the last time you did that? Do you ever pray like that?

When do you get concerned and really pray in the Spirit about your children or other family members, your friends, and your associates? The prophet Isaiah said, "There is no one who calls on Your name, who *stirs* himself up to take hold of You."¹ If we're not stirred up when we pray, I wonder sometimes how far our prayers get.

The Lord encourages us, "You *will* seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."² I know our little prayers are sincere, but there are times when we also need to get desperate in prayer about any serious situations. This is something we all should do and we'd *better* do! Otherwise God may have to let something happen that will make us get desperate and really pray.

Are *you* desperate with the Lord? Call upon Him with your whole heart and He will surely answer. He has *promised* to!

¹Isaiah 64:7

²Jeremiah 29:13

Seven Ways to Find God's Will

How should Christians go about making decisions? When we're faced with having to make a decision, what are we trying to find?—The will of God! So the real question is this: How do we find the will of God?

A good Scripture on the subject is found in Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

So what is the most important requirement in finding God's will?—Having no will of your own! Surrender your will, your body, and your mind to the Lord. Everybody has free will, of course, but as Christians we're supposed to have already chosen to

surrender our will to Jesus Christ. We're supposed to let *Him* make the decisions. This is one of my favorite little poems on the subject:

He knows, He loves, He cares;
Nothing His truth can dim!
He gives His very best to those
Who leave the choice with Him!

That may not be an actual Scripture, but it's scriptural. "He knows, He loves, He cares." Do you believe that? "Nothing His truth can dim." Is that true? "He gives His very best to those who leave the choice with Him!" If you're His child and you're letting Him do the choosing, what is He going to choose for you? He's going to choose that which is best for you, that which will make you happiest in the long run.

Some people say, "Yes, my will *is* surrendered to God. I *have* yielded my life to the Lord, I *am* trusting the Lord, but I still haven't been able to find His will. I'm still confused. I can't even understand the problem, much less the answer!" It's a dilemma most of us face at some time in our lives.

So how do you find the will of God? What does He require, according to the Scripture in Romans?—Utter abandonment! Utterly yield your mind, body, and will to God. Then you'll know! You'll soon find out, because then you're in a position for God to show you!

Here are seven basic elements to finding God's will:

1. The Word

The first place we look for the will of God is in the Word of God, the Bible. This is the known, sure, absolute, revealed will of God. There's no doubt about it. This is it! If God never tells you another thing than what He has already written, if you just operate according to the Bible, you'll get along great!

If you never have a revelation, if you never hear a heavenly voice, if you never receive a prophecy, if you never have the gifts of knowledge or wisdom or discernment or healing or of performing miracles, if you'll just operate according to the Word of God, you'll accomplish a whole lot—and eventually you'll probably receive many of these spiritual gifts as well!

Some people don't appreciate the Bible like they should. They've got to have it all spoon-fed to them. They don't know how to dig out the spiritual nourishment for themselves—the strong meat of the Word. Some things you've got to work for! “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.”¹

2. The Voice of the Word

The second way to find God's will is by the voice of His Word. God speaks not only through His Word,

¹2 Timothy 2:15

but He speaks through the *voice* of His Word. The Psalmist says, “Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His Word, heeding the voice of His Word.”¹

Have you ever been reading a passage of Scripture when all of a sudden a verse or phrase or even a single word comes alive and hits you between the eyes? “That’s for *me!* That’s the answer!” Or perhaps you’ve been praying about a certain situation when the Lord reminded you of a verse or passage that was exactly the answer you needed. It was so loud and clear that God couldn’t have spoken any more emphatically if He’d yelled it out! That is the voice of His Word, speaking through His tried-and-proven written Word. It may have been originally given for somebody thousands of years ago, and yet, all of a sudden, it speaks to *you* personally.

So the first way to find God’s will is through His Word, the Bible. Then there is the voice of the Word—a specific verse, phrase, or passage from the Bible, which speaks to you personally.

3. Direct Revelation

What do you think would be the third surest indication of the will of God?—A direct revelation: a prophecy, dream, vision, or voice.

For example, when God speaks to you in prophecy, it may come in the form of one or more Bible verses, or fresh, new words not found in the Bible. When I

¹Psalm 103:20

ask God for an answer to a problem, I have found that He usually gives me a Scripture—an answer that He's already given somewhere in the Bible. As the old song says:

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
You who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Be sure that any direct revelation you receive does not contradict the Word of God. You have to measure your revelation against the Word. “Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”¹ Make sure it is according to His Word!

4. Godly Counsel

Fourth on the list is godly counselors. “In the multitude of counselors there is safety. ... Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established.”² Godly counselors are people who not only believe the Bible, but who are practicing it the way they ought to. They are not only hearers of the Word, but doers also.³

A godly counselor is someone who loves the Lord, and whose life shows the good fruit of living

¹1 John 4:1

³James 1:22

²Proverbs 11:14; 15:22

close to Him.¹ If I wanted to learn how to play the piano, I wouldn't go to business college; I'd go to a pianist who knows how to play well. If I wanted to learn how to cook, I wouldn't go to a see a computer technician, but to somebody who knows how to cook, whose meals I've enjoyed. So godly counselors are people that you can trust because they bear good spiritual fruit.

God does not necessarily follow any particular order when revealing His will through these means. He may speak to you through a prophecy first, then you may confirm that prophecy by the Word. Or He may speak to you through the voice of His Word, and then you search other Scriptures and see what the Lord generally has to say about the subject. We can't put God in a box and say He's got to speak to us in this or that way, or in this or that order. But these are ways we know He works, not only from our own experience, but also from what He has said in His written Word.

5. Open and Closed Doors

The fifth way to determine the will of God is through "open and closed doors." These are generally a poor means of finding the will of God, but sometimes they are an indication.²

For example, many years ago the board of my church decided that my family and I could not go

¹Matthew 7:15–20

²1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; Revelation 3:7–8

to a certain country as missionaries, and they gave several reasons: The country that I wished to go to was closed to any new missionaries, there were severe food shortages there, and I had been unable to raise our fares. I looked at all those “closed doors” and agreed that that country wasn’t the place for us to go. Then right about that time, the Lord opened the door to another place of service where there were millions of people who needed to hear the Gospel!

So which way does God seem to be leading? Where do you have open doors of service? Where have you got a possibility of a job? In which direction does it seem that God is providing the way and the means? That’s one way to find out the will of God—the circumstances and conditions, the open and closed doors.

6. Burdens (the Witness of the Spirit)

Number six is the witness of the Spirit—a certain intuitive conviction that gives you faith. You just *know* that a certain course of action is the will of God! The Lord may not tell you in an audible voice or give you a visible sign, but you know from that still, small voice in your heart,¹ that inner conviction. Some people refer to this as “burdens.”

I don’t like to go by feelings, because sometimes feelings can be wrong. They can be the wrong feelings from the wrong spirit! Nevertheless, some

¹ | Kings 19:12

feelings are put there by the Lord, as one indication of His will for you. The Spirit of God speaks to your heart about a decision you face, and gives you an inner conviction about what God wants you to do.

Sometimes the witness of the Spirit may be a warning *not* to do a certain thing—that it's *not* God's will. Your heart or spirit hears a voice saying *Stop, don't do that! Watch out!* The Holy Spirit doesn't even have to use words, but you *know* what He means!

So that's the sixth way to find God's will: the witness of the Spirit.

7. Fleeces

And finally, what is the seventh way to know the will of God? Sometimes you can ask for a specific sign. This we call a “fleece,” a term taken from the story of Gideon in the Old Testament.¹ Gideon wanted to know the Lord's will about a matter, so he spread out a fleece of wool on the ground one evening and said, “Now, Lord, if tomorrow morning the fleece is *wet* from the dew and the ground all around it is *dry*, then I will know that You have been talking to me and I'm supposed to do such-and-such.” But even when the Lord met that condition, Gideon still wasn't sure, so he asked the Lord to do the reverse. “Now, Lord, tomorrow if the fleece is *dry* and the ground is *wet*, I'll believe that You want me to do

¹Judges 6:36–40

such-and-such”—and the Lord did it! So if you resort to fleeces, check and double check.

I like to get a sign from the Lord, a confirmation that I'm on the right track, and that's one way. I'll ask for a sign, I'll “put out a fleece” by asking God to meet certain conditions.

Conclusion

So how do you find the will of God? Surrender your all to Him and “do not be conformed to this world [or worldly ways of doing things], but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may *prove* [there will be no doubt] what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”¹

Sometimes we want to know what God's will *isn't!* If, after trying all these ways, you still can't find the will of God, go ahead and do *something*. You will soon find out whether it is His will or not. Just pray for God to lead you, and start. A boat has to be in motion before the rudder can take effect.

You don't find God's will by just sitting around doing nothing. I once knew someone who did that. He said that he had been called by God to be a missionary, but he had since been sitting around, doing little or nothing, for many months. He said he was “waiting on the Lord.” Well, while this man was waiting on God to do something to

¹Romans 12:2

get him started, God was waiting on him to get busy!

So may God help us all to not only find His will, but to *do* it! “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”¹

Summary: Seven Ways to Find God’s Will

1. The Word
2. The Voice of the Word
3. Direct Revelation
4. Godly Counsel
5. Open and Closed Doors
6. Burdens (the Witness of the Spirit)
7. Fleeces

Choice

(Written to an individual who was faced with making a life-changing personal decision—a marriage proposal.)

It may surprise you to know that God likes you, His child, to make your own choices within His will. As long as you delight yourself in the Lord most of all and want to do His will, it is His delight to also give you the desires of your heart, because He's the One who puts them there when you're pleasing Him! His Word says, "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."¹ If you love the Lord with all your heart, your personal desires are usually the right ones, because you want most of all to please Him. So your personal desires in the matter have a great deal to do with God's will. He gives us what we want and have faith for!

But as my mother used to say, "When in doubt, don't!" The Bible also warns us that whatever is not done in faith is sin.² However, if you're truly con-

¹Psalms 37:4

²Romans 14:23

vinced that a certain thing is God's will, you should do it, no matter what anybody else says. But if you're convinced in your own heart that something is *not* God's will, you *shouldn't* do it, no matter what anybody says. And if you're not *sure* that a thing is God's will, then the best thing to do is to wait until the Lord reveals His will to you one way or the other.

In the meantime, don't let anybody else tell you that some course of action is "of the Lord" and that it is okay to proceed, if He has not confirmed this to you personally. If anyone asks, just say that you're waiting for the Lord to show you His will. Anything is possible, for with God nothing is impossible, for "all things are possible to him that believes."¹ However you must be personally sure, and not merely swayed by others. It must be your own personal decision, what you truly have faith for, in which case, if it were in accordance with God's Word, it would be "of God."

When making a major, life-changing decision such as you are doing, time is often the great tester. I'd certainly advise you to wait until you're sure in your own mind and heart of God's will. As Paul says, "Let each be fully convinced in his own mind."²

In affairs of the heart, I do not believe in acting merely out of a sense of duty. There must be a great deal of genuine love, personal love as well as love for God. If it's God's will, He gives us this kind of love,

¹Luke 1:37; Mark 9:23

²Romans 14:5

real love. Any relationship that does not have such love will likely result in heartache, and some people could get hurt—including you! But if it is real love, God's love, it will survive anything. So if I were you, I would wait until I was sure.

In this matter of marriage, God may know you both need a companion, comforter, encourager, inspirer, and example—the kind of genuine helpmeet that God designs for His own. It could be that you have both found the will of God. But if not, it is possible that you both may miss it due to the well-meaning but misguided advice of others, or your own mistakes. Or if you do not really love each other, you may be making a great mistake to marry!

You must make your own choice. Be sure that you do not let someone else make such a decision for you. If you truly do love this person and she loves you, and if it is God's will, nothing short of this will ever satisfy you. But the decision is up to you, and you alone. No one else can make it for you—not even God!

This is one of the mysteries of His will and His plan: He has bestowed upon each of us the immortal majesty of personal choice. And strange as it may seem to some, it even pleases the Lord to give us our personal choice between several possibilities, all within His will. It is similar to how we sometimes let our children choose a toy to buy or an activity, as long as it's safe and good for them, and doesn't harm others. This is one thing people don't seem

to understand about God: As our loving heavenly Father, He really likes to give us *our* choice.

If a previous choice did not work out well, it could be that you made a mistake at that time, perhaps because you let others overly influence your choice. Don't let that happen again. This time, make your own choice. God will give you whatever you want, if it's good for you, because He loves you. "No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly."¹ If it is good for you and the others involved, He will be more than glad to give it to you. However, if we insist on making what He knows will be a bad choice, He often lets us suffer the consequences. He may give us the desires of our heart, but send leanness to our soul.²

So, contrary to common misconception, God does not usually choose for us! We have to choose for ourselves and find His will for ourselves. We have to find what is best for us through our knowledge of His Word, personal experience, and asking Him. This is why He put us here on Earth. This is what we're here to learn and a major part of our Christian training: how to make the right decisions through our personal contact with the Lord, our knowledge of His Word and His will, and our love for Him and others. We must do what we know is right.

It comes back to the Scripture, "Let each be fully convinced in his own mind."³ Be sure you're right,

¹Psalm 84:11

³Romans 14:5

²Psalm 106:15

then go ahead and do what you know is right, no matter what anybody says. Do it because you are personally convinced it's God's will, it's according to His Word, and you have confirmed it through several other means. Best of all, pray and ask the Lord. He likes for you to seek out His will and find it, so you will know without a doubt that it's right when you do it.

Until then, don't! As long as you're doubtful about a decision, don't let anyone else pressure you to act upon it, one way or the other. He wants to give you the desires of your heart, but they must be the desires of *your* heart and not someone else's—your choice and not another's.

May God bless and keep you and continue to make you a great blessing, and may He give you every desire of your heart as you delight yourself in Him and His love! “Do not fear ... for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”¹ Your will be done in Him! That's what He wants to know: that you're making your own personal choice in the matter!

¹Luke 12:32

Temple Time

I see a vision of a group of people under a dome in a big central room. They're all looking up, like they expect something. There are other people rushing around busily out in the wings [in service to God], but the people under the central dome are just standing there quietly, looking up. They're bathed in a beautiful golden glow from above, and they take deep breaths of the heavenly air that descends on them. It's the Lord's temple.

(Prayer:) Oh Lord, for a breath of Your heavenly air to refresh us and clear our minds and inspire our hearts and give us visions that thrill us, that set our heads awirl for You, Jesus!

The people who are so busy rushing around get tired and have to come under the dome to get refreshed and refilled.

(Prayer:) Help us to be like that, Jesus. Help us to remember we can't go on without the heavenly vision You give, without a breath of heavenly fresh air, without the sound of that sweet music. We just

can't go on without hearing Your voice and getting inspired by the upward look!

We wouldn't worry and fret so if we spent more time with the Lord, looking up through that starry dome, breathing that heavenly air, and hearing that beautiful music. We'd find peace and rest for our soul. It would totally renew us and refresh us and give us new vision and fresh inspiration, new strength, rest and peace and joy.

Have you been there?

Have you taken time to get quiet before God as you slip into the temple of the Spirit? Have you been there to get a fresh breath of air from Heaven? If you haven't, you've really missed something! You'll get awfully tired and weary and upset and fearful and doubtful and discouraged and worried and flurried and hurried. You'll get out of touch with the Lord and run out of strength and wisdom and love and patience—all because you haven't come into the temple to be refreshed and renewed by His Spirit.

Are you too busy? Are you in too big a hurry? Is your work too important to stop for a few minutes of inspiration and refreshing from on high, spiritual renewal, physical rest—a little love feast with the Lord? You'll never make it if you don't stop for a while under the dome. If you don't get in there and catch a little of His light, you're not going to reflect much of it to others.

All you have to do is get alone with the Lord and look up at all His beauties and breathe His heavenly air and hear His heavenly music and see His heavenly visions.

It doesn't have to be at any set time. You can look up through the dome any time of day, anywhere, wherever you are, whatever you're doing. Just take a few quiet moments with the Lord. Anytime, anywhere, you can come swiftly out of the wings and enter the temple in spirit.¹ Look and live! Look up! Make a temple of your heart. See what God can do in that beautiful realm of the spirit.

You just can't do that very well in the midst of the other voices and the clamor of business. Those other things may be necessary, but you have to keep coming back into the rotunda in spirit to get your batteries recharged. You can't do it without Him. You'll never make it without His power. You may run for a while, but unless you come back and get hooked up to the current again, you'll run slower and slower till you have nothing left and are just plumb flat!

It can be downright hard work out in the wings, and you'll never have the strength or the vision or the inspiration that you need to do that work unless you keep coming back in under the dome.

He can solve all your problems in one little glimpse. He can refresh your whole spirit with one deep breath. He can clarify all your thoughts with

¹John 4:24

just one sweet strain of heavenly music. He can wipe away all your fears and tears with just one little restful moment in that perfect peace He gives when your mind is stayed on Him and Him alone, because you trust in Him.¹

It just takes one little glimpse of Jesus to make it worth it all—and to help you be able to do it all. Take time in the temple today!

¹Isaiah 26:3

AFTERWORD

How can you know beyond doubt that Jesus Christ really is the Son of God, the way to salvation? The answer is simple: Try Him! Simply humble yourself and sincerely ask Him to reveal Himself to you. Ask Him to come into your heart, forgive you for your sins, and fill your life with His love, peace, and joy.

Jesus is real and He loves you—so much so that He suffered for your sins and died in your place so that you wouldn't have to, if you'll just receive Him and His forgiveness and His free gift of eternal life. But He can't save you unless you want Him to. His love is all-powerful, but He won't force His way into your life.

Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20). He gently knocks at the door of your heart. He doesn't break it down or force His way in. He stands there meekly, lovingly, patiently—waiting for you to open your life and ask Him in.

Will you receive Him? If so, He will be your closest friend and companion, who will be with you always. He came for love and lived in love and died for love, that we might live and love forever!

You can receive Jesus into your heart right now by sincerely praying this simple prayer:

Dear Jesus, please forgive me for all the wrongs I've done. I believe that You are the Son of God and that You died for me. I open the door to my heart to You. Please come in, Jesus, and give me eternal life. Then help me to share Your love and truth with others. Amen.

God has promised to answer your prayer, so you are now His child. He will *never* leave you (Hebrews 13:5). He loves you that much!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Brandt Berg (1919–94) was online with God—so much so that God was able to tell him things that started a worldwide Christian missionary movement.

Berg's parents were both active pastors and evangelists, and his early years were spent traveling with them in evangelistic work. In 1941 he nearly died of pneumonia, shortly after being drafted into the U.S. Army. After determining to rededicate his life to Christian service, he experienced a miraculous healing.

For most of the next 27 years, he worked as a pastor and in various evangelistic endeavors until, in 1968, he received God's call to take the Gospel to the hippies of southern California. There he and his then teen-aged children began a ministry to the youth that grew and eventually became known as The Family. Today, members of The Family engage in missionary and humanitarian work in over 100 countries worldwide.

Berg called on his followers to devote their full time to spreading the message of Christ's love and salvation as far and wide as possible, unfettered by convention or tradition, and to teach others to do the same.

Berg also decried the de-Christianization and decay in moral values of Western society. He viewed the trend toward a New World Order as setting the stage for the rise of the Antichrist, a godless world dictator whom the Bible predicts will rule the world in the last days before Christ's return.

Berg's lively, down-to-earth and sometimes unconventional approach to heavenly matters makes his writings a unique contribution to Christian literature. He once said that the greatest thing one Christian can teach another is how to follow God and hear from Him fresh every day. Through his writings, he did just that.

Also from Aurora ...

Dare to Be Different

From the *Mountain Streams* collection: Inspirational and refreshingly iconoclastic essays on some of the fundamental issues of Christian life and faith. Guaranteed to challenge you to be different and make a difference!

More Like Jesus

More Like Jesus puts true Christian living where it belongs—within easy reach of anyone who loves Jesus and wants to please Him. In 12 Bible-based articles, David Brandt Berg points the reader to God's profound yet simple rules for a happy, productive, love-filled life.

Discovering Truth

This two-volume topical study guide to the Bible will help you quickly find what the Bible has to say on a wide range of topics related to your faith and daily life!

From Jesus, With Love

A heartwarming collection of capsules of wisdom, comfort and instruction from the greatest Teacher of all: Jesus Himself!

The *Get Activated!* series

If you would like to learn more about how you can develop your personal relationship with God and receive His blessings, love, and happiness in your life, don't miss *Get Activated!*—a series of booklets covering the fundamentals of faith and how to apply them to your life today. Titles include:

Prayer Power

Obstacles Are for Overcoming

Understanding God's Word

One Heart at a Time

Hearing from Heaven

Love's Many Faces

God's Gifts

Visit our WEB site at www.auroraproduction.com

Have you ever wished ...

... you could make one phone call or send one e-mail and get all the help, relief, or answers you needed? Or better yet, have you ever wished you had a hotline to Heaven so you could get God's help? Well, you can!

God Online helps you make the connection between your needs and God's infinite resources. In this series of 10 articles, David Brandt Berg uses key verses from the Bible and sometimes-surprising analogies to make communicating with God as simple and natural as God means for it to be. Get online!



ISBN 3-905332-50-7



9 783905 133250 6