



**IT IS TIME TO
BUILD**

Andrew Taylor

In this time of shaking,
**It is time
to build**
on a fresh revelation of the
resurrected Jesus Christ and
his passion for the nations

Andrew Taylor

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ is building his kingdom on a secure foundation and it will not be shaken. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus asked Peter: "... but who do you say I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood did not reveal this to you but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This rock is the revelation of Jesus Christ ... **Jesus is building his church on the revelation of who he really is, the resurrected Christ.**

When the Covid crisis began in March 2020 many globally were fasting and praying with Lou Engel for another Great Awakening, but questions were being asked: is this God or is this the enemy? In 1906, when an earthquake took place in San Francisco people were asking, 'Did God do that?'

In his book *Another wave of revival*¹ Frank Bartleman tells the story of the birth in prayer in 1904–06 of the Asuza Street revival in Los Angeles, which marked the global launch of Pentecostalism – the fastest growing religious movement in the world today.² It began with the tragic death of Frank's three-year-old daughter on 22 December 1904.³ A deep burden of prayer apprehended Frank Bartleman. He said 'the depth of revival will be determined exactly by the depth of the spirit of repentance ... and this will hold true for all people at all times ... the present worldwide Pentecostal manifestation did not break out in a moment like a huge prairie fire and set the world on fire. In fact, no work that God ever does appears in that way. There is a necessary time for preparation.'⁴ On 5 April 1906, he prayed for 10 days. 'On April 18th the terrible San Francisco earthquake came which devastated the surrounding cities and country and 500 lost their lives in San Francisco alone.' Bartleman said he felt that all hell was being moved to drown out God's voice in that earthquake.⁵ In 1904–06 the Lord was clearly birthing a global revival that took place in the context of much shaking and spiritual opposition.

Jesus said in Matthew 21:13: 'it is written that my house should be called a house of prayer'. Jesus has been building his house. There has been a growing global prayer movement for decades. In 1995 there were a few dozen houses of prayer, but within 10 years it grew to a few thousand.⁶ In early 2020 it felt like the prayers from this global prayer movement were being answered when stadiums were filled with thousands of youth in the USA and Brazil at 'The Send'⁷ gatherings. A new youth missions movement was being birthed. Suddenly in February 2020 the Covid crisis brought the world to a halt, including these stadium gatherings. The Covid crisis escalated, but we can be encouraged from Matthew 16:18 that the gates of hell will not prevail.

In 2016 RT Kendall wrote *Prepare your heart for the Midnight Cry*, saying **The Midnight Cry** of Matthew 25 is the next thing on God's calendar and it will be like another 9:11, sweeping the earth but on a bigger scale, before another move of the Holy Spirit. Since the pandemic, he has said that he believes the Covid crisis is only a mini-wake-up call, the big

1 Bartleman, F. *Another wave of revival*.

2 Anderson, A. *An introduction to Pentecostalism*.

3 Bartleman, 7.

4 Bartleman, 19,42.

5 Bartleman, 49.

6 <http://nations-hop.org/the-increase-of-houses-of-prayer-worldwide>

7 <https://thesend.org>

one is yet to come.⁸ But have we prepared our hearts yet to meet Jesus our bridegroom king? In February 2021, a year after the Covid crisis began, Josh Cole from New Zealand brought a word at the Youth With A Mission (YWAM) Malachi Gathering,⁹ also challenging us to prepare our hearts. He said:

‘The heart of the Lord is burning with zeal for the nations of this earth and the Lord wants us to have his heart afresh and see the nations as he sees them and more than that ... see him afresh. I believe the Lord is saying, “I want the mission’s full attention. There are new things I want to say and do and I want to invite you to partner with me in. As we were praying, I was reading Revelation 1 and in verse 12 it says, “I am the Alpha and Omega, the one who was and is and is to come. I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me.”

‘I believe that now is the time to fix our eyes on Jesus afresh. John had to shift his perspective and re-focus and look into the eyes of Jesus as he looked. He saw eyes that were blazing like fire. The eyes are blazing like fire and the eyes are the windows of the soul. What does that tell us of the burning heart of Jesus. My prayer is “let there be fire in your eyes and let there be fire in our souls. I believe that now is the time for a fresh love of Jesus globally, for himself and for an awakening to the splendour and majesty and beauty of Jesus burning for the nations but burning foremost for the Son of God.

‘John as he looked at his face, the face of Jesus was burning. His face was shining like the brilliance of the sun and he fell like a dead man. He was overwhelmed, filled with reverence and awe. We see a similar thing happening in Isaiah 6, where in a time of uncertainty, transition and turmoil, Isaiah said he saw the Lord. His gaze was fixed on God and he became very aware of his own failings, his own weakness and that of his people. Coal was taken from the altar and touched his lips. Here was Isaiah’s personal response to the Lord, and he dealt with areas of compromise in his life. In that process of refinement of his own life, in the breaking up of the hard ground of his heart, there was a preparation for him to be sent with a new assignment.

‘YWAM family, the Lord is after our gaze afresh that we might love him with our heart, mind, soul, strength. He wants to speak to us and invite us into what he is doing across this world in these days. The Lord has been dealing with my own heart, saying you are on a slippery slope. You have been losing the affection of your heart, when you get more excited with what the Lord is doing in you and through you, rather than who God is to you, that is the slippery slope. The way God sets it up is ... the more we engage with him ... the more we feel what he feels and begin to partner with him in intercession and prayer to see breakthrough in the world.’

Lynn Green said at the Malachi Gathering from Revelation 3:19:

‘We live in troubling times but we are called to be conquerors and if we are conquerors we are seated with Christ on his throne. How do we conquer? We remain friends with him. When we are friends, he tells us when we are in the wrong. So we repent and as we conquer, we take our seats on the throne room and pray and intercede.’¹⁰ He challenged us not to forsake Joy

8 <https://rtkendallministries.com/the-midnight-cry>

9 Malachi Gathering — Josh Cole: <https://youtu.be/kYSKuuSCJT0?t=2730--> starting 45mins 30sec

10 Malachi Gathering — Lynn Green <https://youtu.be/kYSKuuSCJT0> starting 57 mins 15 secs

Dawson's 12 steps of world intercession (see Appendix 2), which emphasise heart preparation before prayer. The Lord is inviting us to pray and to partner with him for a global Great Awakening and missions movement to the nations.

This devotional is inspired by the Second Great Awakening and Charles Finney and Daniel Nash, who emphasised the 'breaking up of fallow ground.'

The first part of this devotional is a challenge to WAKE UP!

As we prepare our hearts for another move of the Spirit, a devotional reading of John 13–17 and Revelation 1–5 will wake us up to eternal realities. Mike Bickle says that at the second coming of Jesus, there are 12 themes in John 13–17 (in Appendix 3) that he taught just before the cross, and in the same way the Spirit will teach these things very intentionally at the end-times in the face of incredible pressure.

The second part of this devotional is a challenge to BREAK UP!

The **Second** Great Awakening took place in the 1820s and 1830s in North America. As we pray for another awakening, the emphasis on breaking up the fallow ground that Charles Finney brought is a vitally important way that we can prepare our hearts for the next Great Awakening. Self-examination consists in looking back, taking up our individual sins one by one. See *Ploughing up the Fallow Ground*, updated by Winkie Pratney and Keith Green (Appendix 1). There, 13 sins of Omission and 13 sins of Commission are outlined.

The third part of this devotional is a challenge to PRAY ... for the nations and for another GREAT AWAKENING

Psalms 2:8–9: 'Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'

Psalms 2 and Psalm 110 are the most quoted parts of the Old Testament in the New Testament. The Early Church had a revelation that Jesus was seated at the right hand of the Father and that they had authority to co-labour in prayer with Jesus. By standing on these scriptures, they overcame all opposition (Acts 4:25–26).

In this time of shaking, it is time to build on a fresh revelation of Jesus the resurrected Christ and his passion for the nations. It is time to prepare our hearts and to pray!

11 <https://storage.sardius.media/-K6FGrVYzVr92SDZiDnc/archives/32Ff4A7f93C50681D4E9C2002CCE/static/CDf319/8a7452a79AC6.pdf>

12 Finney, C. *Ploughing up the Fallow Ground* (updated by Winkie Pratney and Keith Green). https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59fa4362e9bfd8dee9aad3f/t/5e849d220a40547346a5dc90/1585749282724/Breaking+Up+The+Fallow+Ground_+An+Outline+For+Repentance.pdf

DAY 1

WAKE UP FROM THE DREAM OF WORLDLY HAPPINESS

READING

‘At midnight the cry rang out: “Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!”’

Matthew 25:6

In this time of shaking Jesus wants our full attention. If the present crisis is a mini-wake-up call to the Church, we do well to remember that Jesus is a secure foundation. He is building his kingdom, and if we are firmly rooted in him, if we are standing strong and secure in Christ, then we don’t have to worry. If we are hiding in that secret place (Psalm 91) of that most high God then we will be secure. We will stand strong as we go through this season, even though it is uncharted

territory ahead and we have never been this way before. ‘Once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heavens ... in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.’ (Hebrews 12:26–27) The Lord is waking us up, shaking everything that can be shaken so that what cannot be shaken will remain, firmly established on Jesus.

Over 250 years ago, during the **First Great Awakening**, Charles Wesley preached a sermon with the title ‘Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light. Ephesians 5:14’. This shortened updated excerpt below is from this sermon preached on 4 April 1742. It is written in old-fashioned language, but is still a wake-up call for us today.

‘What then do you mean O sleeper? Arise, call upon your God if your God will think of you. A mighty tempest is stirring around you and you are sinking into the depths of perdition. Awake, awake! Stand up this moment unless you drink at the Lord’s hand the cup of his fury. Stir yourself up to lay hold of the Lord your righteousness, mighty to save! Shake yourself from the dust. At least let the earthquake of God’s threatenings shake you. Awake and cry out with the trembling jailor, “What must I do to be saved?” And never rest until you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

‘If I speak to anyone of you, more than to another, it is to those who think yourselves unconcerned in this exhortation. I have a message from God for you. In his name I warn you “to flee from the wrath to come”. You unholy soul, see the picture in condemned Peter, lying in the dark dungeon, between the soldiers bound with two chains, the keepers before the door keeping the prison. The night is far spent, the morning is at hand, when you are to be brought for execution. And in these dreadful circumstances you are fast asleep, you are fast asleep in the Devil’s arms, on the brink of the pit in the jaws of everlasting destruction! May the angel of the Lord come upon you and light shine into your prison! And may you feel the stroke of an Almighty hand raising you with “Arise up quickly, gird yourself and put on your sandals and your clothes and follow me!”

‘Awake you everlasting spirit out of the dream of worldly happiness! Did not God create you for himself? You cannot rest until you rest in him. Return you wanderer! Fly back to your

ark! This is not your home. Think not of building Tabernacles here. You are but a stranger, a sojourner upon earth, a creature of a day, but just launching out into an unchangeable state. Make haste. Eternity is at hand. Eternity depends on this moment; an eternity of happiness or an eternity of misery!



READ AND MEDITATE

Read John 13–17

Jesus spoke John 13–17 to the leadership of his new Church to prepare his disciples to thrive spiritually in the face of the pressures they would encounter as new leaders in the kingdom. There are 12 themes in John 13–17 that are identified from the truths, promises, and warnings that Jesus emphasised at the Last Supper. They are for the benefit of the Church throughout history but have significant application and fulfilment in the end-times as Jesus' Bride is prepared for his return. He says that in the end-times these pressures would be more intense than any other time in history (Matthew 24:21). The next 12 days we will look at these themes.

PRAYER

Lord, wake me up from the dream of worldly happiness. Show me how I can thrive spiritually in the shakings and pressures in the world today. As I awake from that sleep open my eyes to see You more clearly, to fix my eyes on You, Jesus – to see your majesty and your beauty.

FURTHER STUDY

Read the message by Charles Finney of the Second Great Awakening, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Ephesians 5:14".¹

¹ Finney, C. Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=36432>

DAY 2

WAKE UP TO A VISION OF THE DISRUPTIVE JESUS

READING

‘I am the Alpha and the Omega says the Lord God, who is, who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’

Revelation 1:8

When the Apostle John turned and saw Jesus, he fell down at his feet as though dead. This vision of Jesus that broke into John’s consciousness in that prison cell was not what he was expecting that Sunday morning on the isle of Patmos. When Jesus came the first time, he was not the Messiah the Jews expected. His contemporaries mostly totally misunderstood what he said and who he really was.

‘Didn’t you come to deal with our oppressors the Romans?’ ‘No!’ He had come with a bigger agenda. Jesus asked his disciples, ‘Who do men say that I am?’ and then personalised the question, asking ‘but who do you say that I am?’ Jesus Christ was not the Messiah they expected the first time and he won’t be the Messiah expected when he comes again.

Jesus is unpredictable.

When Jesus was 12 years old his parents went to the temple according to their custom probably, and verse 43 says: ‘The boy Jesus stayed back in Jerusalem but they were unaware of it’. They thought that he was in his company, as for them it was business as usual, the routine return home. They travelled on for another day, thinking he was in their company. They did not think he would stay. They went back to look for him. He said, ‘Why were you worried? I had to be about my Father’s business’, astonishing them as he was only 12 years old. Jesus was not trying to keep the status quo going. He was about his Father’s business.

Jesus himself is unpredictable. In Mark 1 everyone was looking for Jesus. Crowds had come, but Jesus said, ‘No, we are going to another place.’ The most predictable thing would have been to minister to the crowds instead of going to those that didn’t know him. He was not trying to be disruptive for the sake of it, but doing what the Father was doing. Disruption: we will see it more in 2021 than 2020. Don’t pine for the old. But stay close to Jesus, stay close to Jesus – it’s the safest place to be.

Jesus is disruptive.

In Matthew 21, Jesus went through the temple, turned over the benches and saying, ‘It is written, “my Father’s house will be called a house of prayer”’. It had been that way for decades, for centuries. These were good people, religious people, but Jesus walked in and disrupted the whole thing. Money was going everywhere. Animals flying free, and Jesus was saying my house will be called a house of prayer.

Jesus is unstoppable.

In Luke 4 the people took Jesus to the brow of the hill. They were going to throw him off the cliff. He had just read from Isaiah but Jesus walked right through them. In John 7 the temple guards went to arrest him and came back empty-handed. When asked why, they said ‘no one spoke like this man before’. Supernatural manifestations through his people are going to become more commonplace in the years to come. They are not going to be easy years but they are going to be glorious years. We are going to see darkness rising on the earth. We are going to see the unstoppable Jesus manifesting his kingdom through those who have said ‘Yes’, no matter what it costs. He is unstoppable. His purpose is unstoppable. Let’s stay close to Jesus and his purpose. Jesus broke into human history 2,000 years ago and he will do so again.

Wake up

Mike Bickle says that at the second coming of Jesus the themes in John 13–17 will be emphasised. These themes will be a focus over the next 12 days.¹ Bickle says that these themes will be taught by the Holy Spirit intentionally and should be read together with the first five chapters of Revelation.



READ AND MEDITATE

John 15:11 [2x]; 16:20, 21, 22, 24; 17:13 *The Purpose of his message (1)*

The purpose of John 13–17 is to impart joy and peace unto love. The end-time story line is to release supernatural peace. He is making these themes known so that joy will be the empowering of the end-time Church. Jesus will bring joy and peace unto love.

READ

Revelation 1–5

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, in the midst of this current shaking, bring me a revelation of who you really are. I embrace the unpredictable, disruptive, unstoppable Jesus. Come and have your way!

FURTHER STUDY

Listen to/watch the message by Steve Uppal – *Jesus is coming*.²

1 Bickle, M. Twelve primary themes in John 13-17. <https://storage.sardius.media/-K6FGrVYzVr92SDZiDnc/archives/32Ff4A7f93C50681D4E9C2002CCE/static/Cdf319/8a7452a79AC6.pdf>

2 Uppal, S. *Jesus is coming*. <https://youtu.be/y2UOs45-j24?t=5>

DAY 3

WAKE UP TO A FRESH VISION OF JESUS THE FIRSTBORN OF THE DEAD

READING

‘Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died and behold I am alive for evermore and I hold the keys of death and Hades’

Revelation 1:17–18

After seeing the risen, ascended, resurrected Christ in his glory, John fell down at the feet of Jesus as though dead. Then Jesus laid his hand on John and said, ‘Fear not ... I hold the keys of death and Hades.’ How well do we know Jesus, the ‘Lord our righteousness’ who conquered death through living a righteous life? That is, *Yahweh Tsidkenu* who holds the keys of hell? He was **so righteous** and **so loved us** that he went to the cross, knowing what crucifixion was, what a cruel and painful death it was, yet he did that for us. He

went to hell for us because he knew that without doing that for us we would inevitably have an eternity in hell.

We live in the 21st century in a world that is besotted with affluence and worldly pleasure, living for self. While sharing our faith this summer on the streets, one of our team members started talking to a Satanist and an atheist and asked them, ‘What is so good about being a Satanist?’ The answer came: ‘In satanism ... it’s all about self ... it’s all about self.’ The next question was, ‘What’s so good about being an atheist’, and the answer was, ‘As an atheist I am free to do whatever I want.’

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ how well do you know him? Do you love the fact that he was spotless and perfectly without sin but became sin and went to hell for you? Jesus Christ lived a totally selfless life! Do you have a revelation of the resurrected Christ, who conquered physical death yes, but who conquered spiritual death, conquered atheism and Satanism, and conquered selfishness.

But in a day when there is so much shaking of the selfish, affluent society around us, do we know Jesus Christ as the ‘Lord our righteousness’? That first love we had when we came to Christ was for Jesus the Lamb of God who was slain for you and me. He is now seated at the right hand of the Father. This is a time for a fresh vision of the pure, righteous Lord Jesus Christ. John saw the resurrected Jesus Christ, **‘someone like a son of man dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.’** He holds the keys of death, he is the firstborn of the dead!



READ AND MEDITATE

John 14:9–20 *Union with God* (2)

In this passage Jesus is saying that he is giving the disciples insight into how to relate to God and one another. You need to take time in this theme. The Lord is going to emphasise the purity of mutual indwelling of Father, Son and Spirit in the end-time Church. The Father, Son and Spirit enjoy, they celebrate and they honour one another. Jesus is giving a model of how they are going to relate to God. There are four statements of mutual indwelling. Drink deep of this truth:

1. Jesus is in the Father (John 14:10a, 20a).
2. The Father is Jesus' son (John 14:10b).
3. The believer is in Jesus (John 14:20b).
4. Jesus is in the believer (John 14:20c).

These are statements of Jesus' Spirit-filled humanity, not doctrinal statements. (See Appendix 3).

READ

Revelation 1

PRAYER

Lord, I pray for a fresh revelation of the resurrected Christ, who conquered death. Through his victory we can abide with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. John's vision of Jesus Christ was a vision of his face shining in all its brilliance. He saw the pure, righteous, resurrected Christ, the firstborn from the dead. Open my eyes to the beauty of your purity and your holiness, Lord. Your hair is white like wool, white as snow, your eyes like blazing fire, your feet like bronze glowing in a furnace, and your voice like the sound of rushing waters. Open my eyes to the vanity and foolishness of living for self. I draw close to you and I long to participate in the mutual indwelling with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Draw me deeper into the life of abiding in Christ and celebrating enjoying and honouring Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

FURTHER STUDY

Listen to message by Mike Bickle – *Jesus the faithful witness, firstborn and ruler*.¹

¹ Bickle, M. *Jesus the faithful witness, firstborn and ruler*. https://mikebickle.org/watch/mb_1674

DAY 4

WAKE UP AND RETURN TO YOUR FIRST LOVE

READING

‘You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.’

Revelation 2:4–5

Jesus wants our full attention. Are you attentive to the voice of the resurrected Christ? Are you spiritually awake? You may think that you are awake as you read this, but are you really half-asleep, are you really more in a state of slumber than wakefulness?

One Sunday morning, just under 2,000 years ago, on the isle of Patmos, Jesus had a message for seven churches that would have been close to the heart of John the Apostle. These letters were first written to seven actual churches in John’s generation. They were written

to inspire wholeheartedness in individuals. They were also written to prepare the end-time Church for the events of Revelation 4–20.

One of these churches was the church in Ephesus. This was a church with a rich history: the Apostle Paul had stayed there for 2½ years. Priscilla and Aquilla had been there, so had Apollos, who was skilled in expounding the Old Testament, and the Apostle John also had been their pastor. Ephesus was a religious Disneyland: there was a museum and a great sports centre, and the Pan-Ionian games were held there every May. We live in a situation similar in many ways to that of Ephesus, a country with a rich spiritual history but many distractions.

What was Jesus’ word was to this church – and maybe to you and me too? You have lost your first love. It is like a woman who was a proud housewife. Her house was a spotless museum of domestic science, but the husband did not like coming back home from work. There had been a time when he loved going home – after the first rapture of their marriage – but now the first careless rapture had gone. Now there was no dust there, there was nothing wrong but an absence of love.

It is time to return to our first love, to repent and to do the things we did at first. Is Jesus your first love? God first loved you! In response, will you give him the first place in the affections of your heart? In his book on the Song of Solomon, Charlie Cleverly says that ‘There is a sense in which one is never more alive than when in a relationship of love’.¹ How alive are we? Cleverly says that there is an existential ache and a yearning for connection in the heart of humankind. In the first chapter he says that his book is about a holy longing or ‘lovesickness’, a longing for human connection that includes a sexual connection, but is ultimately a connection with God, a longing for the divine romance.

Are you more dead than alive? Jesus is alive ... he is really alive. He is the firstborn from the dead, and the Holy Spirit is calling us back to life to falling back in love with Jesus.



READ AND MEDITATE

John 15:9–10; 17:23–24, 26, cf 3:35; 5:20; 10:17. *Jesus spoke of the Father's love for him (the ultimate reality and source of beauty) (3)*

'As the Father loved me, I also have loved you abide in my love'

John 5:9: The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.

John 3:35: For the Father loves the Son and shows him all.

READ

Revelation 2–3 — the message to the seven churches

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, reveal the love of the Father for the Son, that the Son has for me. Lover of my soul, kindle that first love in me once again that I might repent, that I might turn around and do the things that I did at first. I give you that first place in the affections of my heart, today! I turn from the amusements and distractions that have crowded you out of my heart, and I turn to you. Wake me up out of passivity and lethargy! Settling down to religious respectability and a busy Christian life is a sheer waste of time unless I simply listen and do what you say. Where the first careless rapture is gone, restore it, I pray!

FURTHER STUDY

Listen to the message by David Pawson — *Revelation 2:1–7*.²

² Pawson. D, *Revelation 2:1–7*

https://www.davidpawson.org/resources/resource/381?return_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.davidpawson.org%2Fresources%2Fcategory%2Fnew-testament-studies%2F Revelation%2F

DAY 5

JESUS IS IN THE HEAVENLY THRONE ROOM¹

READING

‘Then I saw in the right-hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written and, on the back, sealed with seven seals’

Revelation 5:1

John has been lying in a prison cell in Patmos chained to the wall. He’s been thinking over all he has seen and heard. Then he sees an open door to heaven and he

is given an invitation to ‘Come up.’ The scene now moves from earth to heaven, from present into the future, from the sinful to the holy and from the human world to the divine world. He is introduced to the heavenly hosts who are worshipping Jesus.

Revelation 4 stretches our imagination beyond the things we know. This new perspective stimulates our worship, and it becomes clear that the will of God is the final actor in everything that exists in the universe, both in heaven and on earth. It is his will alone that allows anything to happen that does happen. The scene is a throne room where orders are issued. A throne is a place of power and place of judgment. God has set his throne in heaven to judge the earth. This is clearly a throne of judgment because of the lightning and thunder. There are destructive forces as well as beauty here. There is a calmness and a serenity and a sovereignty about the throne of God.

There is also a scroll in the hand of God; God’s will and testament, God’s sealed orders. In that scroll are God’s orders for the end of human history, to banish evil, to destroy a civilisation that is godless that he might build a new universe. It is all in that scroll. Nobody up to this point knew how the world would end, whether good would triumph or evil. But there was nobody able to open it because when that scroll was opened the judgments of God would come on godless men. One of God’s principles of justice is this: no judge can judge men unless they have been under the same pressures they have faced and have come through victorious. There was nobody in heaven who has been tempted like men and conquered ... up until Jesus walked the earth.

John realised there will be a terrible hold-up on God’s plan: if there is no one worthy to judge then evil must go on forever. The will of God will be spoiled forever. Somebody must be found who is qualified to be God’s executor of his last will and testament. So John weeps in frustration that God’s plan is going to be held up. Then one of the elders says that it’s all right. There is one person who is fit to judge the world and only one who is worthy because he has been tempted. He has faced sin and has remained holy. He is fit to do it. So he says, ‘Behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David’. This is a phrase which the Jews of Old used, to look forward to the coming Messianic king.

1 Pawson, D. *Revelation 4–5*. (This devotional is a summary of David Pawson’s message.) https://www.davidpawson.org/resources/resource/372?return_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.davidpawson.org%2Fresources%2Fcategory%2Fnew-testament-studies%2F Revelation%2F



READ AND MEDITATE

John 14:16–17, 26; 15:26; 16:7–8, 13–14 *The person of the indwelling Spirit (4)*

Jesus makes five statements about the Helper (Paraclete).

- Firstly, the Spirit of truth dwells with you and will be in you.
- Secondly, the Holy Spirit will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.
- Thirdly, the Holy Spirit will testify of Jesus.
- Fourthly, when the Holy Spirit has come, he will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.
- Fifthly, he will guide you into all truth ... (including) he will tell you of the things to come.

READ

Revelation 4–5

Message to the 7 churches

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, guide us into the truth that the Father has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man, Jesus Christ, whom he has appointed and that he has given assurance to all people of this truth by raising Jesus from the dead (Acts 17:31). Jesus Christ, you alone are fit to judge the world. No one in heaven or earth is worthy to judge the quick and the dead. You alone, Lord Jesus, faced sin and remained holy! Take your place and execute the Father's eternal will, we pray, in his time and in his way, but Lord, remember mercy!

FURTHER STUDY

Mike Bickle, *The Father's throne and Jesus' exaltation*.²

² Bickle, M. *The Father's throne and Jesus' exaltation*. https://mikebickle.org/watch/vEup0VZ1Y-ldj_XES4hOk6VIkagq0W4Uq

DAY 6

JESUS IS THE LAMB OF GOD, THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH¹

READING

Revelation 2:4–5

“You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.”

Now comes the great surprise. When John looks around in heaven for the Lion of the tribe of Judah he can't see the Lion anywhere. Looking everywhere he spots an animal he has not seen before. It's a lamb.

It is the most amazing contradiction in a sense that Jesus is the Lion and the Lamb together. The Jesus who could take little children on his knees and bless them, could whip moneychangers out of the temple. The word 'lamb' in the Bible does not mean a warm, cuddly thing

gambolling across the hills. The picture is of a full-grown ram. Behold the ram of God. It has seven-horns and seven eyes. This is a tremendous picture. The seven horns represent strength and the seven eyes represent discernment. Jesus could see right through them. Harps and bowls stand for prayer and praise of the saints. Do you realise if you pray those prayers they are going to rise up and fill those bowls? Do you know these elders are holding up the bowls to Christ.

The word 'ransom' means to buy and set free. Christ ransomed us and set us free. We were in a slave market and he set us free. We were redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus. Not only did he set us free, he made us kings and priests of God. Every Christian is a king. He made us his kings and priests to our God and they shall reign. There is coming a day when this world will no longer be ruled by the politicians and the dictators.

Here is someone who doesn't rule in selfish dictatorial power. This why the saints praise. That's why they say 'Worthy are you to take the scroll'. He gave his own blood to save them from the judgment; here is someone who is worthy. He is the one who is going to open the scroll. The little word 'the' has been missed out of the translation of Revelation 5:12: worthy is 'the' lamb who has slain to receive '**the**' power and '**the**' wealth and '**the**' honour and '**the**' glory and finally the chorus swells. Christ alone is worthy of all the honour. He starts with just the elders and the creatures. We hear the sound of a grand 'Amen'. Let's hear the sound of a grand 'Amen'.

Jesus read the prophet Isaiah and said, 'The spirit the Lord is on me. He has sent me to proclaim liberty for those who are bruised and to proclaim the good news and the acceptable year of the Lord. **Then he stopped** dead in the middle of a sentence and sat down. If he had read the next phrase, he would have read **the day of vengeance of our God**. Many mistakenly believe that he didn't believe in the day of vengeance of our God, but he did; however, that was not the right time to read that sentence. When he came the first time it was to bring the acceptable year, but when he comes the second time he will come to open the seal of the vengeance of God upon the world that has been evil and turned sour and bad.

In heaven we read that there are golden bowls that are full of incense which are the prayers

of the saints. This is a wonderful reminder that we can boldly approach the throne of grace and our prayers make a difference. In the challenging days that we are living in let's be reminded of our responsibility to be priestly intercessors for our lost world.



READ AND MEDITATE

John 14:21, 23; 16:27; 17:23. *God's love for His people (5)*

God loves us as he loved Jesus (John 17:23). He expressed his love by loving them to the end (John 13:1).

READ

Song of Songs 1

PRAYER

Lord, we thank you that because of your great love; You are worthy to bring justice. The way you express your love to the end is by bringing justice for the oppressed. You are a God of vengeance, and you love people so much, even to the very end. You are listening to the prayers of the saints and you will right every wrong and bring good out of every evil because you are both loving and just. We trust you with the end of human history. You are our heavenly bridegroom, pursuing us to the very end. May your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven ... to the end.

FURTHER STUDY

David Pawson, *Revelation 4–5*.²

² Pawson, D. Revelation 4–5. https://www.davidpawson.org/resources/resource/372?return_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.davidpawson.org%2Fresources%2Fcategory%2Fnew-testament-studies%2F Revelation%2F

DAY 7

JESUS IS OUR BRIDEGROOM, KING AND JUDGE

READING

‘I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.’

Revelation 21:2

Mike Bickle says that at the end of history, Jesus will be revealed as a passionate **Bridegroom**, as the One with a burning desire for his people.¹

The Holy Spirit will restore the first commandment to first place in the Church. Deuteronomy 6:5 says, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.’

Jesus will be revealed not just as a bridegroom but as a Sovereign **King**, when he comes again as the One who possesses all power and authority, causing his people to experience the supernatural power of God in their lives

and ministries. In David’s prophetic Psalm 2, looking forward to the last days, the Father says to the Son, after Jesus ascended to the throne room of heaven: ‘Ask of me and I will make the nations as your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron sceptre, you will dash them to pieces like pottery.’

Jesus will also be revealed as the Righteous **Judge**. What is judgment? It is the removal of everything that hinders love. Jesus has great zeal to intervene in human history and remove everything that hinders love as he confronts all oppression instead of ignoring it (Zechariah 1:14; 8:2; Ezekiel 38:18–19; Revelation 19:2). Jesus is the only man worthy to judge the nations because, as Creator, he understands the design of the human spirit, and because he humbled himself to become a man (2 Corinthians 8:9).

The bride will be ready, when Jesus comes as a **Bridegroom, King and Judge**. In the calmness and the serenity of the throne of God, in the awareness of the power of the destructive forces as well as the beauty in this place of ultimate authority over the universe, let us be captivated and be drawn to a new place of worship. As we see Jesus as King and Judge, our hearts will be drawn to him in deeper ways as the bridegroom of our souls.

Let’s ask the Lord to reveal himself as the bridegroom of the Song of Songs. Song of Songs has been read emphasising its historical context, written by Solomon as a celebration of sexual love and marital fidelity between a man and woman. But it has also been read over the centuries figuratively as a picture of the relationship between Christ and the believer.

Song of Songs is a poetic book and historically many believers throughout the generations have seen the Bridegroom representing Jesus and the Bride as his Church. Her relationship with Jesus is like a garden. In the first four chapters, she is concerned with her inheritance (her garden). In the last four chapters, her focus is on Jesus’ inheritance in her. From then on, her heart is his garden.² Bernard of Clairvaux, CH Spurgeon, Watchman Nee and many others have read Song of Songs this way. God has planted us in our garden in Genesis 2:8 and then man and woman were both naked and felt no shame (Genesis 2:24–25), which is a

1 http://mikebickle.org/resources/resource/2979?return_url=http%3A%2F%2Fmikebickle.org%2Fresources%2Fseries%2Fthe-bride-of-christ-201

2 Bickle, M. *Overview of the storyline in the Song of Solomon*. https://backup.storage.sardius.media/file/akamaiBackup-ihopkc-103762/IHOP/909/983/20140214_An_Overview_of_the_Storyline_in_the_Song_of_Solomon_SOS02__study_notes.pdf

picture of sexual love. Song of Songs recaptures the scene: the man and woman take utter delight and pleasure in each other's bodies without shame.



READ AND MEDITATE

John 14:15, 21, 24; 15:10, 12–14, 17; 17:26. *Our love for Jesus is expressed by praise, gratitude and obedience (6)*

Jesus says, 'If you love me, keep my commandments.'

READ

Song of Songs 2

PRAYER

Lord, you alone are worthy to judge the nations. In your zeal for justice, as you confront all oppression rather than ignoring it, as you remove everything that hinders love, draw me closer to you as the bridegroom of my soul. Bring me to that deeper place of vulnerability and surrender of the garden of my heart. I will give you my praise, my gratitude and my obedience. You are my Bridegroom, my King and my Judge.

FURTHER STUDY

Mike Bickle, *Jesus as Bridegroom, King and Judge*.³

³ Bickle, M. *Jesus as Bridegroom, King and Judge*. https://mikebickle.org/watch/2018_08_31_1800_MB_F

DAY 8

JESUS IS THE WORD OF GOD

READING

‘Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine; your anointing oils are fragrant; your name is oil poured out; therefore virgins love you. Draw me after you; let us run. The king has brought me into his chambers.’

Song of Songs 1:2–4

The Song of Songs begins passionately.¹ It rushes headstrong into the plea: ‘Let him kiss me with the kisses of this mouth!’ (1:2) This is immediately demanding, intimate and intense.

How are we to understand this? The medieval mystic Bernard of Clairvaux said, ‘How shall I explain so abrupt a beginning, this sudden irruption as from a speech in mid-course? What do the kisses of his mouth refer to?’² Charlie Cleverly says we should not think of Jesus in a sexual way: this is entirely outside the boundaries of God’s will. To understand ‘the kisses of his mouth’, we should rather think of God’s hand on our heart expanding our capacity to give ourselves to him and receive his love.’ Mike Bickle says, ‘The divine kiss is God’s invitation to casual Christianity to go deeper.’³

Bernard of Clairvaux’s interpretation of the kisses of his mouth is that he believed that they refer to the affections of the believer being moved by the word of God. How hungry are you for the word of God to impact your soul? Do you long for the affections of your soul to be stirred by the word of God? Irenaeus said, ‘the glory of God is the human person fully alive’⁴ and Charlie Cleverly says, ‘There is a sense in which one is never more alive than when in a relationship of love. The Bible is the living word of God. Jesus is the word of God and in him is the life of men. When you read your Bible, expect it to bring life, read it with expectation that the affections of your soul will be stirred. Do you long to know God deeply and to be deeply known by him? If so, then lavish time on the reading of his word, and invite him to kiss you with the kisses of his mouth.’

Wade Taylor says, ‘This prayer of desire “Draw me” relates to our spiritual hunger.’⁵ The bride in the Song of Songs is a picture of the believer who is asking the Lord to increase his or her desire for an intimate prayer life. Are we willing to ask the Lord to increase our spiritual hunger, our desire for an intimate prayer life? Taylor also says, ‘Our bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ is seeking after and preparing a bride from those within the church who will respond to him. He greatly desires that we choose him above all else so we may become a part of the corporate bride which He is apprehending and preparing. As we progressively respond to him, he will draw us with determination, step upon and step, ever upward into his manifest presence. Here we become one as we partake with him in intimate fellowship and participate with him in the outworking of his purposes.’

How spiritually hungry are we? As we lift our desire for the Lord above all other desires and determine that he and he alone will feed and satisfy this hunger, we are truly ready to be brought into his chambers.

1 Cleverly, C. *The Song of Songs*. Hodder and Stoughton (2015): pp33-48.

2 Clairvaux, B. *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, p2.

22 3 Bickle, M. *Overview of the Storyline of Song of Songs* http://www.mikebickle.org.edgesuite.net/MikeBickleVOD/2007/20070302B_Overview_of_the_Storyline_in_the_Song_of_Solomon_SOS04.pdf

4 Irenaeus. *Against Heresies*, Book 4, 20:7.

5 Taylor, W. *The secret of the stairs: a guide to spiritual growth from the Song of Solomon*. Pinecrest Publications (2000): pp15-18.



READ AND MEDITATE

John 14:13, 14; 15:7; 16:23–24 *Prayer and praise (words/songs) releases power and fruitfulness (7)*

To pray 'in' Jesus' name includes being in agreement with what he thinks, feels, and says.

Jesus says, 'The words that I speak to you ... [are inspired from] the Father who dwells in me.' He also says, 'And whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son' as well as 'If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.' (John 14:10–14)

PRAYER

Lord, I invite you to saturate me in your word. I choose to lavish time on reading the Bible. Kiss me with the kisses of your mouth! Increase my spiritual hunger for your living and active word, that I might partner with you in prayer and agree with your word, so that your will and your word will be done.

FURTHER STUDY

Mike Bickle, *Song of Songs 1:2. The divine kiss.*⁶

⁶ Bickle, M. Song of Songs 1:2. The divine kiss. https://mikebickle.org/watch/mb_1380

DAY 9

JESUS INVITES US TO RUN AFTER HIM

READING

‘Draw me after you; let us run. The king has brought me into his chambers.’

Song of Songs 1:4

After the words ‘Draw me’ in the Song of Songs, Wade Taylor says, “The next step begins with the bride’s declaration, “We will run after you.”

This speaks of the special bond of fellowship between the true seekers of Christ. We must be certain that we have “counted the cost” and must be fully determined to run after him because the Lord will respond to this commitment. He will begin by causing the letter of

his word that is resident within us to become experientially a part of us. As a result, our understanding of the Word and of our spiritual experiences, will become so alive and real within us that we will relate to and love the Lord as never before. He will arrange all of the necessary circumstances to make this possible in our daily life. There are no accidents in the life of one who has made this commitment.¹

William Carey, the man who began life as the son of a poor weaver, taught himself Latin, Hebrew and Greek as he worked as a shoemaker. When he became convinced that England should be sending out missionaries to newly opened-up countries, he helped found the first English missionary society. He then felt obliged to go to India as its first missionary. When difficult circumstances surrounded him, he watched his children die and his wife go insane. He never lost faith. He always endured, always pressed ahead.

In the process, he founded the most prestigious college of its time in India. He translated the Bible into over 30 languages. He helped start numerous churches and schools around India. He introduced the steam engine to India and started the first newspaper in Asia. He spoke out against inhuman practices, including widow burning (or *sati* as it was called) as well as infanticide, and he never once wavered in his calling to share the gospel message with Indian people wherever he found them. He set a pattern and standard for missionary work that in the years since his death many have copied, but few have matched. He is known today as “The father of modern missions.”²

The word of God is never experientially ours until it has been personalised in our life experience. The Lord is preparing those who are willing to be tested and proven in order to become all that he has determined them to be, through their buying from him ‘gold tried in the fire’ (Revelation 3:18). If we will sincerely pray ‘Draw me’ and make this unconditional commitment to the Lord to ‘run after him’, the Lord will accept our prayer and begin his work within us.

1 Taylor, W. *The secret of the stairs: a guide to spiritual growth from the Song of Solomon*. Pinecrest Publications (2000): pp18–24.

2 Bengel, J and Bengel, G. *Obligated to go*. YWAM (1999): pp70, 72, 90.



READ AND MEDITATE

John 13:1, 3, 33, 36; 14:2, 4, 12, 28 [2x]; 16:5, 7 [2x], 10; 16, 28; 17:11 [2x], 13. *Jesus' death – trusting God when unexpected crises come (8)*

The paradigm of Jesus approaching death seemed like an unexpected crisis in God's plan. This theme of his death points to the fact that there will be surprising negative events that occur in God's end-times. They are not understood ahead of time because he wants us to trust his leadership.

READ

Song of Songs 4

PRAYER

Lord, we will run after you! Turn around apparently negative circumstances, even this Covid crisis, to accomplish your purposes. Lord, would you call more shoemakers, who will run after you; more ordinary young people with your extraordinary call, that they might answer that call of a wildly passionate God, and go and make a difference with their lives even to the ends of the earth. Raise up an army of young people who know you and will run together to make you known! Lord, raise up more William Careys!

FURTHER STUDY

Mike Bickle, *The Bride's Life vision*.³

³ Bickle, M. *The bride's life vision*. https://mikebickle.org/watch/mb_1435

DAY 10

JESUS INVITES US TO KNOW HIM MORE DEEPLY

READING

‘The king has brought me into his chambers.’

Song of Songs 1:4

In the Song of Songs, we have been looking at the bride’s response to her lover, ‘Draw me and we will run after you.’ Next we read: ‘The king has brought me into his chambers.’ The Lord wants to bring us into his chambers. How does he bring us into his chambers? Malachi says, ‘They will be mine, says the Lord Almighty, in the day when I make up my treasured

possession.’ (Malachi 3:17)

The Lord wants to make us into his treasured possession. How will he do it? An earlier passage in Malachi 3 says: ‘But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? He will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness.’ He longs to look into your eyes and mine and see his reflection, as a silversmith would look into purified silver and see his reflection and know that his work has been completed. As the Lord looks into your eyes what does he see?

In Song of Songs 4:9 we read: ‘You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride, you have stolen my heart with one look of your eyes.’ Do you long for that deep union and communion with the lover of your soul? There is a holy longing, an existential ache in our souls, but the Lord is the bridegroom of our souls. Only in him will we find true satisfaction. In his writings on the Song of Songs, Hudson Taylor, the famous pioneer missionary to China, says, ‘The Real secret of an unsatisfied life lies too often in an unsundered will.’¹

Hudson Taylor was one of the second wave of missionaries from Britain in the 1730s to the mid-20th century. After a difficult experience travelling as a lone missionary to China, he formed China Inland Mission, but the first group of missionaries nearly didn’t make the journey when they went through a typhoon. When two of the three masts were broken, and the boat was beginning to break up, Hudson and his wife Maria kissed each one of their children and commended them to God. The only hope was for the masts to be hacked away and jettisoned. The crew were too scared to do this, but when the new missionaries set to work the crew began to regain their courage and help as well. Miraculously not one of the missionaries (18 adults and four children) was lost in the storm, nor any of the crew. In 1905, 54 years after starting his adventure with God, over 18,000 Chinese Christians had been baptised and the China Inland Mission had 825 missionaries.²

1 Taylor, H. *Union and Communion or thoughts on the Book of Solomon*, 12.

2 Bengé, J and Bengé, G. *Deep in the heart of China*, YWAM (1998): p204.



READ AND MEDITATE

John 13:34; 15:12-13; 17:21. *Loving people and the call to servanthood (9)*

'I washed your feet ... love one another.'

READ

Song of Songs 5

PRAYER

Prayer Lord Jesus, you came not to be served but to serve. We thank you for the men and women of God whom you called to servanthood, who have gone before us: for John Wesley, William Carey, David Livingstone, Hudson Taylor, CT Studd, Gladys Aylward and many others. These men and women of God surrendered their wills to you. I too line up my life with your will and your purpose. I long to know you more deeply as I follow you in sacrificial service. Draw me Lord, refine me, possess me. I long to come into your chambers, I long to be your treasured possession. Only in you will I find true satisfaction. I yield to you, Lord, the deepest longings of my soul!

FURTHER STUDY

Mike Bickle, *The bride's life vision*.³

³ Bickle, M. *The bride's life vision*. https://mikebickle.org/watch/mb_1435

DAY 11

JESUS LONGS FOR OUR SINGLE VISION FOR HIM

READING

‘Behold, you are beautiful, my love your beautiful; your eyes are doves.’

Song of Songs 1:15

Wade Taylor says, ‘A dove has a very unusual quality. It has a single eye. That is, it does not have side vision. For this reason doves are often referred to as “lovebirds.” When a dove sets its gaze upon another dove it sees nothing else, nor is it easily distracted. Its eye is single. In the Authorised Version, the bridegroom says “Behold thou art fair my love; behold thou art fair; thou hast dove’s eyes.”¹

The bridegroom sees that the bride has set her desire for him above all others. In Psalm 27:4 David says, ‘One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, to dwell in the house of the Lord all of the days of my life.’ Wade Taylor says, ‘When he wrote this psalm, all of David’s drives and ambitions had been reduced to the expression of this single desire. David, who knew he was to become king over Israel, was a man with many desires. Yet, he was able to cry out from the depths of his being, “One thing have I desired of the Lord.” The Lord desires to bring us into this same experience of having a singleness of devotion, a single eye for him.’

When he sees that we long for his friendship and that we are determined to develop a single eye towards him, the Lord will come and say, ‘Oh my dove.’ This will be as music to our inner being. ‘Oh my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rocks’ (Song of Songs 1:14). Once we have stirred his desire towards us, he will gently place us within the clefts in the rock. This is a specially prepared environment, where he comes and progressively changes us according to our desire towards him. This ‘Rock’ is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Through direct intervention (‘clefts’) he will become active on our behalf and begin to remove all that hinders our relationship to him from us and from our surroundings.

Are we determined to develop a single eye towards Jesus? Do we long for him to become active on our behalf and to begin to remove all that hinders our relationship to him from us and from our surroundings?

William Wilberforce² was a man who developed a single eye for the Lord and was determined to remove the slave trade from this country, but he had to wait. It took 20 years to end the British trade in enslaved people and almost 30 more before slavery itself became illegal. The love of money and vested interests had delayed the abolition of slavery. On Friday 26 July 1833, William Wilberforce heard that the Abolition of Slavery Act had passed its third reading in the House of Commons. Passage through the Lords not being in doubt, slavery as a legal state was to all intents dead. ‘Thank God’ he said, ‘I have lived to witness a day in England which is willing to give 20 millions sterling for the abolition of slavery.’ Three days later on 29 July, at 3am early in the morning, Wilberforce died.

1 Taylor, W. *The secret of the stairs: a guide to spiritual growth from the Song of Solomon*. Pinecrest Publications (2000): pp51–57.

2 Pollock, J. *Wilberforce*. Kingsway (2007): p308.



READ AND MEDITATE

John 13:2, 11, 18, 21–30, 38 *Betrayal and failure and how Jesus responds to them (10)*

These passages show how betrayal and failure take place as the kingdom advances and how Jesus treats those who betray or fail him – both enemies and sincere believers. This theme needs to be taught often as the Spirit is leading his family into deep unity (John 17:23).

READ

Song of Songs 6

PRAYER

William Wilberforce kept failing to abolish slavery in the Houses of Parliament. Despite repeated failure, he had a tenacity, a determination and a devotion to you to accomplish your purposes in his generation. I yield my ambitions to a single desire for you – ‘to dwell in your house for ever.’ Whether I face failure or betrayal in my life or in the life of others, help me, Lord. I long to have a single eye for you!

FURTHER STUDY

Mike Bickle, *The Bridal Paradigm: Foundational truths*.³

³ Bickle, M. *The Bridal Paradigm: Foundational truths*. https://mikebickle.org/watch/mb_1464

DAY 12

JESUS DRAWS US INTO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

READING

‘O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.’

Song of Songs 2:13

I John 4:19 says ‘He first loved us.’ The Lord started romancing us a long time before we first responded to him and decided to lay down our lives for him. Can you remember when the Lord started progressively revealing himself to you, touching the deepest longings and yearnings in your heart? God first loved us and has been revealing himself progressively to us, long before we ever first responded to him. Now, as we set our gaze on him, and as we focus our attention on him above all else, the Lord, the bridegroom of our souls will begin the process of separating us, his bride unto himself.

‘The secret places of the stairs’¹ (Song of Songs 2:13)

in the King James Version refers to the processings of the Lord which he places in our path. If we are to become overcomers and to ascend, we need to respond with spiritual maturity and integrity to the revelations and challenges that he places before us. These stairs are secret. They are private and personal. They are part of the upward call that we each follow as we seek an intimate relationship with the Lord. The virgins in Jesus’ parable in Matthew 25 take time and energy to keep oil in their lamps, which Mike Bickle says refers to the ‘the oil of intimacy’ or ‘our secret history with the Lord’.² These wise virgins have a secret history with the Lord. They are like passionate, single-hearted doves in the secret places of the stairs.

Have you yielded your deepest longings and yearnings to the Lord Jesus? Are you going to respond to his divine initiatives in your life, those revelations that are calling you higher, step upon step. The Lord is intent on changing and transforming us as we respond in obedience to his word to us. He has begun a good work that he has determined that he will finish. Will we respond? You are his dove. You have dove’s eyes. His heart has been stolen with one look of your eyes. He has begun the process of separating you, his dove to himself. He is doggedly and diligently pursuing you. Will you respond to his advances?

There was a growing passion for a closer relationship with the Lord in the Keswick movement in the late 19th century which focused on the upward call of Christ. It had its roots in Wesleyan sanctification and it emphasised a Christian life characterised by the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The roots of the Welsh revival in 1904 and the East African Revival during the late 1920s and 1930s were in this Keswick movement.

1 Taylor, W. *The secret of the stairs: a guide to spiritual growth from the Song of Solomon*. Pinecrest Publications (2000): pp55–78.

2 http://mikebickle.org/resources/resource/1099?return_url=http%3A%2F%2Fmikebickle.org%2Fresources%2Fseries%2Fbridal-theology-in-the-new-testament



READ AND MEDITATE

John 15:18–16:4 *The privilege and inevitability of persecution (11)*

If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you
If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you ... They hated me with-
out a cause. (John 15:18–25).

READ

Song of Songs 7

PRAYER

As we move through shakings into the privilege and inevitability of persecution, Lord, I set my gaze on you! Separate me to yourself. May the revelations and challenges you place in my path cause me to grow in spiritual maturity. Bring to completion that good work that you have started! Change me! Transform me ... as I set my heart to obey your word You are the lover of my soul!

FURTHER STUDY

*Mike Bickle, Challenging the comfort zone: Song of Songs 2:8–17.*³

³ Bickle, M. *Challenging the comfort zone: Song of Songs 2:8–17.* https://mikebickle.org/watch/mb_2828

JESUS SETS A SEAL UPON OUR HEARTS WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

READING

‘Set me as a seal upon your heart and a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord.’

Song of Songs 8:6

Charlie Cleverly says, “The idea of sealing, in Song of Solomon 4:12 “a sealed fountain” refers to the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the Church’s history many have spoken tellingly of this: Blaise Pascal, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, George Whitfield, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Simeon and many more. It is important that we pursue the fullness of the Holy Spirit. It is not automatic.¹ AW Tozer describes the filling (or ‘sealing’) with the Holy Spirit, saying it is a commitment. He writes ‘After a person is convinced that they can be filled with the Spirit they must desire to be. Are you sure that you want to be possessed by a Spirit who, while He is pure and gentle and wise and loving,

will yet insist upon being Lord of your life?’²

Are you sure you want it? There is spiritual warfare going on around your intimate relationship with the Lord. We are given the charge and exhortation in Proverbs 4:23: ‘Guard your heart, for it is the fountain of life.’ How vigilant are we to guard our hearts from the attacks of the enemy of our souls. Then guard your heart, for it is the well-spring of your life. There is a battle going on around the affections of your heart, today. Surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ again: surrender the affections of your heart to him, and cry out to the living God to fall afresh on you today.

The Holy Spirit is referred to in Scripture as coming with fire (Matthew 3:11). Sergio Scatalini had a strong emphasis on fiery holiness of the Holy Spirit in the Argentinian Revival in the 1980s. He said that there are three dimensions in which you can live your life in the Holy Spirit. He says, first you become a seeker of the fire. Make it a lifelong journey to seek God. Second, you become a fire carrier. As you continue to seek him, allow the Holy Spirit to descend upon you mightily. You cannot produce this, but you can live in constant readiness for this to happen. Third, become fire-carried. Get to a point where you are so surrendered to God that he finds no resistance. The fire of God will guide you. You sense you are led by the Spirit and carried by his power.

Also, in the Scriptures one of the primary metaphors for the glory of God is fire. God is an all-consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29) and is a firewall around Jerusalem – ‘and I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the Lord, and I’ll be the glory in her midst.’ (Zechariah 2:5) There are different facets of God’s glory in Scripture as God sets his seal upon our hearts in these days. We can expect the Lord to reveal his glory in a number of ways, through the outpouring of the Spirit with dreams, visions and miracles; revelation of the beauty of Jesus and his bride; a global prayer and worship movement; supernatural church family unity; huge

1 Cleverly, C. *The Song of Songs*. Hodder and Stoughton (2016): pp261, 262, 264.

2 Tozer, AW. *Keys to the deeper life*. DLH Publishing (2019).

global harvest brought to maturity; global prayer and worship; a mature understanding of end-times narrative; and the hearts of fathers turned to children.



READ AND MEDITATE

John 17:5, 22, 24 *The glory that God gave Jesus is given to his people (12)*

‘Father, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory which I had ... before the world was’, ‘the glory which you gave me I have given them, that they may be one as we are one...’, ‘Father, I desire that they ... may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which you have given me; for you loved me before the foundation of the world.’

READ

Song of Songs 8

PRAYER

Lord, oh that we might behold your glory. Send your Spirit in greater measure, we pray! In the words of the old pentecostal hymn, ‘It is fire we want, it is fire we need, send the fire today! Yours, Lord, is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Set your fiery seal upon our hearts, the very flame of God!’

FURTHER STUDY

Mike Bickle, *The Bridal seal of mature love: Song of Songs 8:5–7*.³

³ Bickle, M. *The Bridal seal of mature love: Song of Songs 8:5–7*. https://mikebickle.org/watch/mb_1453

DAY 14

FINNEY AND THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING

Josh Cole, from YWAM Furnace, New Zealand, feels that this Covid season is a time of focusing on Jesus, breaking up the fallow ground of our hearts and preparing for new assignment. Cole says that just as Isaiah went through a process of refinement dealing with areas of compromise before he was available for a new assignment, we need to prepare our hearts too.

Charles Finney and Father Nash partnered together to see a major outpouring of the Holy Spirit and about 100,000 coming to Christ during the Second Great Awakening. Finney had an encounter with Jesus and his heart was prepared for this significant assignment. He tells in his autobiography how it all started when he came to Christ himself.

The Second Great Awakening began in the 1820s among the Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists in North America. Charles Finney was the leading revivalist. Finney himself was born in Warren, Litchfield, Connecticut, USA, on 27 August 1792. He went to Adams, New York, to study law. Finney says that he was almost as ignorant of religion as a heathen. He said of one evening in 1821: 'I went in and shut the door behind me. It seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ face-to-face. It seemed to me ... He stood before me and I fell down at his feet and poured out my soul to Him. I wept out loud like a child, and made such confessions as I could with my choked utterance. It seemed to me that I bathed His feet with my tears'¹

He began preaching in New York state, when America was being pioneered, and for seven years he saw revival in towns and villages wherever he went. He started in Evans Mills where there was a settlement of Germans, and they turned out en-masse in the school house. In a few days the whole community was under conviction of sin and converted.

The methods he used were simply preaching, prayer and conference meetings. Some complained that he let down the dignity of the pulpit, that he was a disgrace to the ministerial profession, that he talked like a lawyer at the bar; others that he talked in a colloquial manner, that he said 'you' instead of 'they' when preaching about sin and sinners, that he said hell with such an emphasis as often to shock people; that he urged people with such vehemence, as if they might not have a moment to live. They also complained that he was guilty of repetition, taking the same thought and turning it over and over and illustrating it in various ways.²

In his *Lectures on revivals of religion* he explains his approach, saying that a revival is needed when there is a lack of love in the church, when there are jealousies, when there is a worldly spirit, gross and scandalous sins, and the spirit of controversy in the church. He says that nothing but a revival of religion can preserve the church from annihilation. He says that revival can be expected when wickedness humbles and distresses Christians and when Christians have a spirit of prayer for revival. He says that a revival of religion may be expected when Christians begin to confess their sins to one another and when Christians are willing to make the necessary sacrifices to carry it on.³

Finney says that '**Revival of religion**' presupposes that there has been a decline from how things were in the past. He says that almost all religions in the world have been produced by

1 Finney, C. *Autobiography*. CreateSpace (2014): p15.

2 Finney, C. *Autobiography*. CreateSpace (2014): pp46, 51.

3 Finney, C. *Memoirs of Revivals of Religion*. CreateSpace (2014): pp13.

revivals. God has found it necessary to take advantage of the excitability in man to produce powerful excitements among them before he can lead them to obey. Men are so sluggish – there are so many things to lead their minds off religion – that it’s necessary to raise an excitement among them so the tide rises so high as to sweep away the opposing obstacles. They must be so aroused that they will break over these counteracting influences before they will obey God.⁴



BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND

Spiritual check list

(See Appendix 3).

PRAYER

Lord, I pray for another awakening, but begin with me! I have become sluggish. Revive me and show me where there is a lack of love in my heart. Sweep away every obstacle that might take my mind away from loving you and obeying you wholeheartedly.

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *What a revival of religion is.*⁵

⁴ Finney, C. *Memoirs of Revivals of Religion*. CreateSpace (2014): p6.

⁵ Finney, C. *What a revival of religion is*. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=3720>

DAY 15

BREAK UP THE FALLOW GROUND: EXAMINING THE HEART

READING

‘break up your unploughed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you.’

Hosea 10:12

In his *Lectures on the Revival of Religion*, Finney teaches on “The Breaking up of the fallow ground”.¹ He says, “To break up the fallow ground ... is to bring the mind into such a state that it is fitted to receive the Word of God. It is this softening of the heart, so as to make it feel the truth.”² Fallow ground is ground that has been fruitful in the past. When the first love that we had when we came to Christ has gone hard, our wills need breaking. In a time of shaking, men and women realise that they cannot save themselves through their own

strength and self-will. In a moral universe, righteousness is all that matters and man cannot save himself. We need a right relationship with Jesus, through whom we are righteous in God’s sight.

Roy Hession, in his booklet *The Calvary Road*, which came out of the East African revival in the 1950s, says, ‘if we are to come into this right relationship with Him (Jesus), the first thing we must learn is that our wills must be broken to His will. To be broken is the beginning of revival. It’s painful, it’s humiliating but it’s the only way. It is being “Not I, but Christ”. And a “C” is a bent “I”. The Lord Jesus cannot live in us fully and reveal Himself through us until the proud self within us is broken. This means that the hard, unyielding self, which justifies itself, wants its own way, stands up for its rights and seeks its own glory, at last bows its head to God’s will, admits it is wrong, gives up its own way to Jesus, surrenders its rights, and discards its own glory – that the Lord Jesus might have all and be all. In other words, it’s down to self and self attitudes.’³

In Scripture Egypt stands for the world, and its ways are contrasted with Canaan, which speaks of what is heavenly. ‘For the land which you are entering to take possession of it, is not like the land of Egypt, from which you come, where you sowed your seed and watered it with your feet, like a garden of vegetables; but the land which we are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by rain from heaven.’ (Deuteronomy 11:10–11)

Finney says, ‘If you mean to break up the fallow ground of your hearts, you must begin by looking at your hearts: examine and note the state of your minds and see where you are. Many never seem to think about this.’⁴ It is important to draw attention from other things and not to be in a hurry. ‘Examine thoroughly the state of your hearts and see whether you are walking with God every day, or with the devil. To do all this you must examine yourselves. Self-examination consists in looking at your lives, in considering your actions, in calling up the past, and learning its true character. Look back over your past. Take up your individual sins one by one, and look at them, **NOT** as ... a glance at your past life ... a sort of general confession (and asking) for pardon.’⁵

1 Finney, C. *Autobiography*. CreateSpace (2014): p21

2 Wallis, A. *Rain from Heaven*, p46

3 Hession, R. *The Calvary Road*. Rickford Hills (2003): p1

4 Finney, C. *Autobiography*. CreateSpace (2014): p21

5 Finney, C. *Autobiography*. CreateSpace (2014): p21

What is sin? Webster's dictionary⁶ says sin is 'Transgression of the law of God: disobedience to the divine will.' Sin is not natural, sin is not human weakness, sin is not something you can't help, sin is not temptation. Sin is a choice. Every choice has consequences. Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny.

What is repentance? Repentance is not an invitation; it is a command (Acts 17:30-31). God commands all men to repent. Repentance is not just 'feeling sorry'. It is not enough to be sorry about how sin affects you. It is necessary to be sorry for how sin affects God. Repentance is not confession of sin only. Repentance is forsaking all known sin.

WORSHIP

Listen to Matt Redman, 'Fall face down'.

PRAYER

Lord, if we confess our sins, you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Lord, in your mercy forgive!

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *How to promote a revival*⁸



⁶ Webster's dictionary. <http://www.merriam-webster.com>

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fB7nORy5EU>

⁸ <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=3722>

DAY 16

THROUGH PERSONAL REPENTANCE FROM SIN

READING

'... but now he (God) commands all people everywhere to repent.'

Acts 17:30

Fallow ground is ploughed up through repentance from sin. Jesus is the Lamb of God who died for our sin. God has commanded all people everywhere to repent of their sin. At a time when we're asking the Lord to shine his light on us to wake us up so that we might have his full attention let's focus on Jesus the Lamb of God. Let's be reminded that just as a husband lays down his life for his spouse, Jesus has

prepared himself to be the bridegroom of our souls by laying down his life, like a sacrificial lamb at Calvary, as it says in Ephesians 5:25–27:

'Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.'

As we are caught up in heaven from earth, as we look from the present into the future and see Jesus in his holiness while we are still living in a sinful world, let's take time to ask the Lord for that new divine perspective on our human condition. Let's allow the Lord to stretch our imagination and allow him to open our eyes to the true nature of Jesus the Lamb of God, the bridegroom of our souls.

'All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone into his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.' (Isaiah 53:6)

Jesus the Lamb of God laid down his life for us, and paid the price for our sins so that we might be restored to the Father.

See list below: On your own, over next 13 days try to take time each day with a blank sheet of paper and allow the Lord to search and uncover areas of your life where there is any unconfessed sin. A sort of general confession and a general request for pardon is not enough. Each sin was committed one by one. Each selfish sin needs to be repented of, one by one.



BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND

SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

Sin of omission

1. Ingratitude (Unthankfulness). Take this sin, for example, and write down under this heading all the times you can remember where you have received great blessings and favours from God for which you have never given thanks. How many cases can you remember? Some remarkable protection where your life was spared, some wonderful turn of events that saved you from ruin. Write down the instances of God's goodness to you when you were still in sin, before your conversion, for which you have never been half-thankful enough – and the uncountable mercies you have received since. How long the list of times where your ingratitude has been so black that you are forced to hide your face in shame! Get on your knees and confess them one by one to God, and ask him to forgive you. As you're confessing these, they will immediately remind you of others: write them down too. Go over them three or four times in this way, and see what an incredible number of times God has given you mercy for which you have never thanked him!

Sin of commission

1. Love of things and possessions. What has been the state of your heart concerning your earthly possessions? Have you looked at them as really yours – as if you had a right to use or dispose of them as your own? If you have, write it down! If you have loved property and sought after it for its own sake, or to gratify ambition, you have sinned and must repent.

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *On confessing and being cleansed from sin.*¹

¹ Finney, C. *On confessing and being cleansed from sin.* <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=36490>

DAY 17

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

READING

‘Then ye shall go and pray unto me and I will hearken unto you. Then shall ye seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.’

Jeremiah 29:12–13

The Holy Spirit breaks up our hard hearts and can prepare them for another great awakening.

Charles Finney relates in his autobiography how one evening in the autumn of 1821, ‘I returned to my office and found the fire that I had made was totally burned out. As I turned and was about to take a seat by the fire, I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. Without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for

me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through my body and soul. I could feel the impression like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed, it seemed to come in waves and waves of liquid love, for I could not express it in any other way. It seemed like the very breath of God. I can recollect distinctly that it seemed to fan me like immense wings. No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love and I do not know but I should say, literally I bellowed out the unutterable gushings of my heart. These waves came over me and over me and over me one after the other until I recollect, I cried out, “I shall die if these waves continue to pass over me.” I said Lord I cannot bear any more,” yet I had no fear of death. How long I continued in this state, with this baptism continuing to roll over me and go through me I do not know. But I know it was late in the evening when a member of my choir ... came into the office to see me ... He found me in this state of loud weeping and said to me, “Mr Finney what ails you? ... are you in pain?” I gathered myself up as best I could and replied, “No, but so happy that I cannot live.”¹

Finney’s experience was the beginning of an outbreak of Holy Spirit-initiated evangelism that swept New York state. This was how Jesus turned the world upside down.² His ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit and the whole book of Acts begins to make sense if we see the Holy Spirit as the power of God for evangelism. The word for power in Greek is *dunamis* (and from which we derive the word dynamite). God poured out his Holy Spirit on Jesus and his disciples, and it was like ‘dynamite’ because people’s hearts are hard and resistant to the good news about Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is God’s power for us to be witnesses.

Jesus said, ‘You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you’ (Acts 1:8). What might stop us receiving from the Holy Spirit? Some people are afraid – but perfect love drives out all fear (1 John 4:18). The Holy Spirit comes to reveal the love God has for us, for God is love. The Father gives good gifts — and especially the Holy Spirit — to those who ask. Jesus said, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come and drink.’ Let’s ask the Holy Spirit, like dynamite, to break up our hard hearts and prepare them for another great awakening.

1 Finney, C. *Autobiography*. CreateSpace (2014): pp15–16. The first paragraph is a summary of a description of Finney’s baptism in the Holy Spirit.

2 Summary of message preached by Connie Taylor at The Round Church, Cambridge, on 6/11/2014.



BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND

SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

Sin of omission

2 Lack of love for God. Think how grieved and alarmed you'd be if you suddenly realised a great lack of affection for you in your wife, husband, or children – if you saw that someone else had captured their hearts, thoughts, and time. Perhaps in such a case you would almost die with a just and holy jealousy. Now, God calls himself a jealous God. Have you not given your heart to other loves and infinitely offended him?

Sin of commission

2 Vanity. How many times have you spent more time decorating your body to go to church than you have in preparing your heart and mind for the worship of God? You have cared more about how you appeared outwardly to men than how your soul appeared in the sight of God. You sought to divide the worship of God's house, to draw off the attention of God's people, to look at your pretty appearance. And you pretend that you do not care anything about having people look at you? Be honest about it! Would you take all this pain about your looks if every person were blind?

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *Power from on high*.³

³ Finney, C. *Power from on high*. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=599>

THROUGH PRAYER

READING

‘I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.’

Matthew 18:19–20

Prayer can soften hearts and prepare them to hear the gospel. Charles Finney was accompanied for seven years by Daniel Nash. Finney says in his autobiography. ‘At this meeting of the presbytery I first saw Rev. Daniel Nash, who is generally known as ‘Father Nash.’ I observed that he was praying. I was surprised to see him looking all over the house, as if he were talking to the people; while in fact he was praying to God. Of course, it did not sound to me much like prayer; and he was at that time indeed in a very cold and backslidden state.’¹

After this meeting Nash was struck with a serious case of inflamed eyes. For several weeks he had to be kept in a dark room where he could neither read nor write.

During this time ‘he gave himself up almost entirely to prayer. He had a terrible overhauling of his whole Christian experience; and as soon as he was able to see, he sallied forth to labour for souls.’

Daniel Nash was a rejected and broken former preacher who gave himself to a labour that influences praying people to this day. Finney often sent Nash to an area to prepare the place and people for his coming. Often it would take three or four weeks of prayer to get the area ready. When God would direct where a meeting was to be held, Father Nash would slip quietly into town and seek to get two or three people to enter into a covenant of prayer with him. Sometimes he had with him a man with a similar prayer ministry, Abel Clary. Together they would begin to pray fervently for God to move in the community.

One record tells: ‘On one occasion when I got to town to start a revival a lady contacted me who ran a boarding house. She said, “Brother Finney, do you know a Father Nash? He and two other men have been at my boarding house for the last three days, but they haven’t eaten a bite of food. I opened the door and peeped in at them because I could hear them groaning, and I saw them down on their faces. They have been this way for three days, lying prostrate on the floor and groaning. I thought something awful must have happened to them. I was afraid to go in and I didn’t know what to do. Would you please come see about them?” “No, it isn’t necessary,” Finney replied. “They just have a spirit of travail in prayer.”’

Another record states: ‘Often Nash would not attend meetings, and while Finney was preaching Nash was praying for the Spirit’s outpouring upon him.’ Finney stated, ‘I did the preaching altogether, and brother Nash gave himself up almost continually to prayer.’ Often while the evangelist preached to the multitudes, ‘Nash in some adjoining house would be upon his face in an agony of prayer, and God answered in the marvels of his grace. The tears they shed, the groans they uttered are written in the book of the chronicles of the things of God.’ It is said of Finney that ‘his evangelistic party consisted of prayer partners, who went

before him and sought the Lord in some secluded spot. And when Finney was preaching Father Nash and Mr. Clary were hidden away somewhere praying for him.²



BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND

SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

Sin of omission

3 Neglect of the Bible. Put down the cases where for perhaps weeks or longer, God's word was not a pleasure to you. Some people, indeed, read over whole chapters in such a way that afterwards they could not tell you what they had been reading. If that is so with you, no wonder your life has no direction, and your relationship with God is in such a miserable state.

Sins of commission

3 Envy. Look at the cases in which you were jealous of those who were in a higher position than you. Or perhaps you have envied those who have been more talented or more useful than yourself. Have you not so envied some, that it has caused you pain to hear them praised? It has pleased you more to dwell upon their faults than upon their virtues, upon their failures rather than their successes. Be honest with yourself, and if you have harboured this spirit of hell, then repent deeply before God.

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *Prevailing prayer*.²

² Finney, C. *Prevailing prayer*. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=3723>

THROUGH BROKENNESS

READING

**'I am crucified with Christ,
but I live; yet not I, anymore
but Christ lives in me.'**

Galatians 2:20

Roy Hession says, 'As we look honestly at our Christian lives, we can see how much of self there is in each of us. As long as self is in control, God can do little with us. Being broken is both God's work and ours. He brings His pressure to bear, but we have to make the choice. If we are really open to conviction as we seek fellowship with God (and willingness for the light is the prime condition of fellowship with God), God will

show us the expressions of this proud hard self that causes him pain. Then it is, we stiffen our necks and refuse to repent, or we can bow the head and say "Yes, Lord." Brokenness in daily experience is simply the response of humility to the conviction of God.¹

Charles Finney tells the story of a young woman he met in the town of Rutland. He made an appointment to preach at the Baptist church there one afternoon. The weather was warm. He arrived early and found nobody there. Soon people began to take their place. Finney tells the story: "Presently a young woman came in who had two or three tall plumes in her bonnet and was rather gaily dressed. She was slender, tall, dignified and decidedly handsome. I observed as soon as she came in, that she waved her head and gave a very graceful motion to her plumes. She came as it were sailing around and up the broad aisle, toward where I sat, mincing as she came, at every step, waving her great plumes most gracefully looking around just enough to see the impression she was making."²

Finney says he spoke very earnestly, 'Did you come in here to divide the worship of God's house to make people worship you, to get their attention away from God and his worship?' He says, "This made her a writhe; and I followed her up, in a voice so low that nobody else heard me, but I made her hear me distinctly. She quailed under the rebuke and could not hold up her head. She began to tremble, and when I said enough to fasten the thought of her insufferable vanity on her mind, I arose and went into the pulpit. As soon as she saw me going into the pulpit and that I was the minister that was about to preach, her agitation began to increase."³

The Holy Spirit was moving as Finney preached. At the end of the sermon, he called upon any who would give their hearts to God, to come forward and take the front seat. Finney says, "The moment I made the call, this young woman was the first to arise. She burst out into the aisle, and came forward, like a person in a state of desperation. She seemed to have lost all sense of the presence of anybody but God. She came rushing forward to the front seats, until she finally fell in the aisle and shrieked with agony.' He found out she was regarded as 'the belle' of the place; agreeable, but seen by everybody as 'very vain and dressy.'

Finney says that many years after he was in Rutland he enquired about this young woman and found that she still lived in Rutland and had always from that time been a very earnest Christian.⁴

1 Hession, R. *The Calvary Road*. Rickford Hills (2003): p4.

2 Finney, C. *Autobiography*. CreateSpace (2014): p70.

3 Finney, C. *Autobiography*: p70.

4 Finney, C. *Autobiography*: p71.



BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND

SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

Sin of omission

4 Unbelief. Recall the instances in which you have virtually charged the God of truth with lying, by your unbelief of his express promises and declarations. If you have not believed or expected to receive the blessings which God has clearly promised, you have called him a liar.

Sins of commission

4 Bitterness. Recall all the instances in which you have harboured a grudge or a bitter spirit toward someone, or have spoken of Christians in a manner completely devoid of charity and love. Love 'hopes all things', but you have given no benefit of doubt, and have suspected the worst.

FURTHER STUDY

Listen to message by David Pawson *Revelation 2:1-7*¹⁸

⁴ Finney, C. *Hardness*. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=36366>

DAY 20

THROUGH THE HIGHWAY OF HOLINESS

READING

‘Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low’

Isaiah 40:4

Roy Hession says, ‘We are not likely to be broken except at the cross of Jesus Christ. The willingness of Jesus to be broken for us is the all-compelling motive in our being broken too. We see Him, who is in the form of God, counting not equality with God a prize to be grasped at and hung on to, but letting it go, for us and taking upon Him the form of a Servant – God’s Servant, man’s Servant. We see him willing to have no

rights of his own, no home of his own, no possessions of his own, willing to let men revile him, willing to let men tread on him and retaliate himself.¹

We need a greater vision of that love that was willing to be broken for us.

**Lord Bend that proud and stiff-necked I,
Help me to bow the head and die,
Beholding him on Calvary,
Who bowed his head for me?²**

Dean Sherman says the major problem in the world is selfishness born out of pride. If you are living in the truth, you are easier to relate to because you are honest, open and transparent. Whether we think more highly of ourselves than we ought, OR more lowly of ourselves than we ought, we need our pride revealed ... that hard, unyielding self, which justifies self, wants its own way, and stands up for its own rights and seeks its own glory.

How seriously do you see ‘pride’ as a mountain in your life that needs removing? As we seek to make a straight way, a highway for our God, a way of holiness, we need to see that the big problem that hinders our relationships in this world is ‘pride’. Why is pride the big problem that hinders relationships? Pride is thinking more highly of yourself than you ought, OR thinking more lowly of yourself than you ought (inverted pride). If you walk in humility and I walk in humility it is impossible for the two of us to not get alone. Humility is the willingness to be known for who you are. Unity is nothing less than corporate humility. The major problem in the world is selfishness born out of pride. If you are living in the truth, you are easier to relate to because you are honest, open and transparent.³

Do you have a negative self-image? Thinking more lowly of yourself than you ought is inverted pride. Having a negative self-image can result in a lack of faith and limit what God can do in your life, and can hinder your ability to love other people. A negative self-image can develop from regarding the world’s evaluation too highly, eg outward appearance, physical attractiveness, abilities, background, material possessions. A negative self-image can result from rejection from authority figures in your life in the past, from parents, friends

1 Hession, R. *The Calvary Road*. Rickford Hills (2003): p3.

2 Hession, R. *The Calvary Road*: p4.

3 Sherman, D. *Love Sex and Relationships*. YWAM (1999). (This paragraph is a summary of his teaching.)

and teachers. It can also result from wrong teaching, by believing that inferiority is humility. God accepts you and loves you the way you are with all your failings; in spite of your weakness he is bringing you to maturity. You are valuable, and made in God's image. Whether you have a mountain of pride or a valley of inverted pride, it needs dealing with, so that the glory of the Lord might be revealed in your life.

BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND



SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

Sins of omission

5 Lack of prayer. Think of all the times you have neglected private prayer, family prayer, and group prayer meetings; or you've prayed in such a way as to grieve and offend God more than if you hadn't prayed at all.

Sins of commission

5 Slander (gossip). Think of all the times you have spoken behind people's backs of their faults (real or supposed) unnecessarily and without cause. This is slander. You need not lie to be guilty of slander – to tell the truth with the intent to injure is slander.

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *On being holy*.⁴

⁴ Finney, C. *On being holy*. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=41599>

THROUGH CONVICTION OF SIN

READING

‘Up get you out of this place for the Lord will destroy this city.’

Genesis 19:14

When Charles Finney arrived in Antwerp in April 1825, he found that no religious services at all were held in the town. He said, ‘In passing around the village I heard a vast amount of profanity. I thought I’d never heard so much in any place that I had ever visited. It seemed to me as if the men playing ball upon the green and in every business place that I stepped into, were all cursing and swearing and

damning each other. I felt as if I had arrived upon the borders of hell ...

‘... I went immediately to the school house ... and it was packed to its utmost capacity. I read the text: “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him might not perish but have everlasting life.” I saw several of the men there from whom I had the day before heard the most awful profanity. I pointed them out in the meeting and told what they said, how they called on God to damn each other day. Indeed, I let lose my whole heart upon them. I told them that they seemed to howl blasphemy about the streets like hell-hounds, and it seemed to me that I had arrived on the verge of hell. Everybody knew that what I said was true and they quailed under it.’¹

Finney said, ‘On the third sabbath that I preached there an aged man came to me as I was entering the pulpit and asked me to ... preach in a school house.’ After they sang a hymn very badly, he rose to preach on ‘Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city.’ Finney continues: ‘I told them how exceedingly wicked Sodom became and what abominable practices they fell into (and) that Abraham prayed to the Lord to spare Sodom ... that if He found ten righteous persons in the city, he would spare it ... I observed the people looking as if they were angry. I saw their strange and unaccountable looks. It seemed to me that their anger rose higher and higher.’

After about quarter of an hour he said, ‘an awful solemnity seemed to settle on them and they began to fall from the seats in every direction and cried out for mercy. If I had a sword in each hand, I could not have cut them off their seats as fast as they fell. Indeed, nearly the whole congregation was either on their knees or prostrate, I should think in less than two minutes from this first shock that fell upon them. Everyone prayed for himself who was able to speak at all ... I was obliged to stop preaching for they no longer paid attention. I saw the old man who invited me there to preach and pointing to him I said “Can’t you pray?” He instantly fell upon his knees and with a stentorian voice poured himself out to God. I then spoke as loud as I could, and tried to make them attend to me. I said “You are not in hell yet; and now let me direct you to Christ.”

‘I learned later ... the place was called Sodom, and the old man that invited me there, was called Lot. The people supposed that I chose my subject and preached to them in that manner, because they were so wicked as to be called Sodom. This was a striking coincidence; but ... altogether accidental.’²

1 Finney, C. *Autobiography*. CreateSpace (2014): pp60–61. (Paraphrase.)

2 Finney, C. *Autobiography*: p62. (Paraphrase.)



BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND

SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

Sin of omission

6 Neglect of fellowship. When you have allowed yourself to make small and foolish excuses that have prevented you from attending meetings. When you have neglected and poured contempt upon the gathering of the saints merely because you 'didn't like church'!

Sins of commission

6 Levity (a spirit of excessive humour). How often have you joked before God, as you would not have dared in the presence of an earthly dignitary or important official? You have either been an atheist and forgotten that God existed – or you have had less respect for him and his presence than you would have had for a mere judge on earth.

PRAYER

'Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me, break me, melt me, mould me fill me, Spirit of the living God fall on me!'³

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *On confessing and being cleansed from sin.*⁴

³ *Prayer from the East African revival.*

⁴ Finney, C. *On confessing and being cleansed from sin.* <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=36490>

THROUGH FEAR OF THE LORD

READING

‘The fear of the Lord is the hatred of evil’

Proverbs 8:13

If we are serious in wanting to get to know the Lord Jesus Christ more deeply as our heavenly bridegroom then we need to diligently pursue the ‘fear of the Lord’. In her book *Intimate Friendship with God*, Joy Dawson says, ‘If there was a pile of cow manure on the carpet in your church in the front of your pulpit, what would you do? You would want to get it out of the church

quickly! Why? Because it stinks! If I said that I had a secret sin, a love for cow manure, and I needed prayer otherwise I might be tempted to get in it, you might think I was crazy!¹ ‘But this is exactly what it is like when people ask for prayer regarding their sins. They don’t hate their sin for what it is. They need the fear of the Lord, which is the hatred of evil.² When we see sin the way God sees sin, we see it as a sugar-coated cow pat!’

Friendship with the Lord is for those that fear him. Intimacy with God without obedience is like prostitution. Jesus clearly said, ‘If you love me, you will obey what I command.’³

What is obedience? It is doing what we are told when we are told and with the right attitude. When we know what it is right to do and we don’t do it, it is sin.⁴ Partial obedience is NOT obedience. How do we stay close to the Lord, in a consumer society that is so indulgent, hedonistic and narcissistic? We keep close to him, to the degree that we fear God and obey him and repent of our sin. The level of our repentance of sin will depend upon the extent to which we see sin as God sees it and hate it as he hates it.⁵ The deeper the understanding that we have of God’s character in the Bible – his justice, knowledge, wisdom, faithfulness and love – the easier it will be for us to obey him.⁶

We also have the fear of God upon us to the degree we are free from idolatry. An idol is that thing we go to for comfort before we go to God. In a consumer society it is so easy for us to make our own will into an idol. Anything that takes priority over the Lord Jesus Christ in our thinking, in our time, in our affection, in our loyalty, and in our obedience, can become an idol. Even our own ministry responsibilities can become the centre of our priorities, along with our possessions, our money, our food, our sexual gratification.⁷

Mike Bickle says ‘We need more fear of the Lord because when we sin, we give Satan legal entry into our lives to work in a greater way in us. Satan adds a heightened demonic energy to our sin as we yield to it. He wants our weaknesses to escalate to wickedness. Sin that is not rejected continues to increase in our life. Augustine said, “Lust yielded to becomes a habit, and a habit not resisted becomes a necessity.”’^{8 9}

1 Dawson, J. *Intimate Friendship with God*. Chosen Books: p54.

2 Proverbs 8:13.

3 John 14:15.

4 Dawson, J. *Intimate Friendship with God*: p57.

5 Dawson, J. *Intimate Friendship with God*: p23.

6 Dawson, J. *Intimate Friendship with God*: p116.

7 Dawson, J. *Intimate Friendship with God*: p117.

8 https://backup.storage.sardius.media/file/akamaiBackup-ihopkc-103762/IHOP/132/835/20110128-T-Bridal_Revelation_and_Spiritual_Warfare_JBG01.pdf

9 Augustine. *Confessions*. Book 8.



BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND

SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

Sin of omission

7 The manner in which you have performed spiritual duties. Think of all the times when you have spoken about God with such a lack of feeling and faith, in such a worldly frame of mind, that your words were nothing more than the mere chattering of a wretch who didn't deserve that God should listen to him at all. When you have fallen down upon your knees and 'said your prayers' in such an unfeeling and careless way that if you had been put under oath five minutes later, you could not say what you had been praying for.

Sins of commission

7 Lying. Any form of designed deception is lying. If you purpose to make an impression other than the naked truth, you lie. Put down all those cases you can recollect. Think of all your words, looks, and actions designed to make an impression on others contrary to the truth, for selfish reasons.

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney on *Fearing the Lord and walking in darkness*.¹⁰

¹⁰ Finney, C. *Fearing the Lord and walking in darkness*. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=36370>

THROUGH HOLY SPIRIT-EMPOWERED EVANGELISM

READING

‘But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses.’

Acts 1:8

Hard hearts are broken up by Holy Spirit-anointed evangelism. How did Jesus, who was an obedient son, a good Jew, a ‘nice guy’, turn the whole world upside down? As we read about Jesus in the Gospels it becomes clear. He was born in Bethlehem and dedicated at eight days, and he grew in wisdom and stature, but what happened so that he turned the whole world upside down? He met John the Baptist, who was called to baptise people until he found the man ‘on

whom you see the Holy Spirit come down’. Was this how Jesus began to turn the whole world upside down? When he was baptised with water and by the Spirit? Yes! It was only then that he became a great preacher, a deliverer of the demon-oppressed and a healer of the sick.

Jesus began his ministry with the Spirit of the Lord on him (Luke 4:1). Then Luke 4:17–19 records that after the 72 returned Jesus was full of joy through the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21). After Jesus died and was resurrected the disciples received the Holy Spirit and were commissioned to do the works of the kingdom (John 21:22, Matthew 28:19). They were commanded to wait until they were clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4–5). ‘But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses.’ (Acts 1:8) At 9am at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out, as promised in Joel (Acts 2:1–16). Peter then preached repentance from sin, baptism in water, forgiveness from sin and the receiving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38–39). He preached with authority, when filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8–10).

Nothing was going to be the same when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. After Peter preached, the people were cut to the heart, and their response was, ‘What must we do to be saved?’ Peter’s answer was ‘Repent and be baptised, every one of you.’ About 3,000 were added to their number that day. We need that power if we are to share our faith, if we are to have a similar result to Peter. Jesus says to us, ‘Just as the Father sent me, I am sending you.’ We may feel afraid but he said to the disciples, ‘Wait in Jerusalem until you receive what my Father promised, that you may be clothed with power from on high.’

So how do we receive this promise of the Father?

- First, we need to believe that this promise is for us so that we can be clothed with power. It’s not for an elite few, or the wacky or superstar Christian, but for anyone who wants to do the works of the kingdom in the power of the Holy Spirit. Mark 16 says that these signs will accompany ‘those who believe in my name’.
- Second, we need to be thirsty. The Lord responds to our desire. Jesus said in John 7:37: ‘If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink, for he who believes out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’

- Third and finally, we need to ask. In Luke 11:9–13, Jesus said, ‘Ask and you will receive ... for everyone who asks receives.’ He went on to say that ‘if you, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?’

BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND



SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

8 Lack of love for souls. Look around at all your friends and relatives, and think of how little compassion you have felt for them. You have stood by and seen them going straight to hell, and it seems as though you didn’t even care! How many days have there been when you have failed to make their wretched condition the subject of even one single fervent prayer, or to prove any real desire for their salvation?

Sins of commission

8 Cheating. Set down all the cases where you have dealt with anyone in a way you yourself would not like at all. That is cheating. God has said that we should treat all men in the same manner we would like to be treated. (Matthew 7:12) That is the rule. And if you have not done so you are a cheat! God did not say that you should do what you would expect them to do, for if that were the rule it would allow for all kinds of wickedness in our actions. But it says, do what you would want them to do to you! (Have you cheated the government? In other words, do you have unemployment insurance, welfare, food stamps, social security, student loans, etc, gained by fraud?)

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *On being filled with the Spirit.*²

² Finney, C. *On being filled with the Spirit.* <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=3726>

DAY 24

THROUGH THE SPIRIT OF PREVAILING PRAYER

READING

‘Elijah was a man with a nature just like ours and he prayed fervently’

James 5:17

Charles Finney in his *Revival lectures* was clear as to how to prepare fallow ground for times of refreshing from heaven: “There are two kinds of means (required) to promote a revival, the one to influence man, the other to influence God. The truth is employed to influence men, and prayer to move God. Prayer is the essential link in the chain of causes that leads to a revival as much so as truth. The overlooked

fact is that truth by itself will never produce the effect without the Spirit of God and that the Spirit is given in answer to prayer.¹

Finney said, ‘... the spirit of prayer that prevailed in those revivals was a very marked feature of them. It was common for young converts to be greatly exercised in prayer; and in some instances, so much so, that they were constrained to pray whole nights, until their bodily strength was quite exhausted, for the conversion of souls around them. It was very common to find Christians, whenever they met in any place instead of engaging in conversation to fall on their knees in prayer. Not only were prayer meetings greatly multiplied and fully attended, not only was the great solemnity in those meetings; but there was a mighty spirit of secret prayer. Christians prayed a great deal, many of them spending many hours in private prayer. Answers to prayer was so manifestly multiplied on every side, that no one could escape the conviction that God daily and hourly answers prayer.

‘If anything occurred that threatened to mar the work, if there was any appearance of any root of bitterness springing up, or any tendency to fanaticism or disorder, Christians would take the alarm, and give themselves to prayer that God would direct and control all things. In regard to my own experience, I will say that unless I have the spirit of prayer, I can do nothing.’²

Abel Clary had a spirit of prevailing prayer, and Finney said that he was so burdened that he was unable to stand, and he would writhe and groan in agony.³ He was a very silent man as almost all are who have that powerful spirit of prayer. In Rochester, USA, Finney was asked by a man whether he knew a Mr Abel Clary. The man said that Clary prayed nearly all the time day and night, and in such agony of mind that he did not know what to make of it. He said, ‘Sometimes he cannot even stand on his knees, but will lie prostrate on the floor, and groan and pray in a manner that quite astonishes me.’ Finney said to the man, ‘I understand it; please keep still. It will all come out right he will surely prevail.’⁴

1 Finney, C. *Lectures on Revival*. CreateSpace (2015): p28.

2 Finney, C. *Lectures on Revival*: p28. (Paraphrase.)

3 Finney, C. *Autobiography*. CreateSpace (2014): p175.

4 Finney, C. *Autobiography*: p175. (Paraphrase.)



BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND

SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

Sin of omission

9 Lack of care for the poor and lost in foreign lands. Perhaps you have not cared enough about them to even attempt to learn of their condition. Do you avoid mission magazines? How much do you really know or care about the unconverted masses of the world? Measure your desire for their salvation by the self-denial you practise in giving from your substance to send them the gospel. Do you deny yourself even the hurtful excesses of life, such as tobacco or alcohol? Do you defend your standard of living? Will you not suffer yourself *any* inconvenience to save them? Do you daily pray for them in private? Are you setting aside funds to put into the treasury of the Lord when you go up to pray? (As in the story of the widow's mite – Mark 12:41–44.) If your soul is not agonised for the poor and lost of this world, then why are you such a hypocrite as to pretend to be a Christian? (See Matthew 25:31–46.)

Sins of commission

9 Hypocrisy. For instance, in your prayers and confessions to God, set down all the times in which you have prayed for things you didn't really want. How many times have you confessed sins that you never intended to stop doing? Yes, you have confessed sins when you knew in your heart you as much expected to go and repeat them, as you expected to live!

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *Power from on High: Prevailing prayer*.⁵

⁵ Finney, C. *Power from on High: Prevailing prayer*. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=601>

THROUGH IMPORTUNATE PRAYER

READING

‘Elijah was a man with a nature just like ours and he prayed fervently’

James 5:17

Charles Finney said that “A spirit of importunity sometimes came upon me, so that I would say to God that he had made a promise to answer prayer, and I could not, and would not, be denied . . . I cannot tell how absurd unbelief looked to me, and how certain it was in my mind that God would answer prayer – those prayers that from day to day and from hour to hour, I found myself offering in such agony in faith.”¹

Jesus refers to this type of importunate prayer in the Gospels. In Luke 11:8 Jesus says, ‘I tell you he will not get up and give him bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.’ Luke 11:8 is sandwiched between the Lord’s prayer and the ask–seek–knock teaching, and is an illustration of the sort of prayer the Lord is looking for. The Greek word used here is an idea that means utter shamelessness: it includes the concept of great boldness, an urgency of pressing the request claim or demand to the real limits, and it includes a determination to assist in the boldness until it receives the answer importunity.

Wesley Duewel says: ‘How long must you persevere? ... How long were the disciples to tarry in Jerusalem? “Until you have been clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). How long did Moses keep his hands raised to God in prayer? Until Amalek was totally defeated (Exodus 17:13). How long did Joshua hold out his javelin toward Ai while the army attacked? Until Jericho was destroyed (Joshua 8:26). How long did Elijah stay on his knees in prevailing prayer after the three years’ drought? Until rain clouds formed in the sky (1 Kings 18:44). How long did Jesus pray in Gethsemane? Until Satan was defeated. How long did the disciples continue in prayer in the upper room? Until the Holy Spirit came upon them. No matter (the) request, if God has led us to pray for a need that we believe is the will of God, how long should we pray? Until the answer comes!’²

Many other men of God attest to the necessity of importunate prayer. Andrew Murray says that importunate prayer begins with a refusal to except denial.³ It grows to the determination to persevere, to spare no time or trouble, until an answer comes. It rises to the intensity in which the whole being is given to God in supplication, and the boldness comes to lay hold of God’s strength. Richard Stibbes writes, ‘It is atheism to pray and not to wait in hope. A sincere Christian will pray, wait, strengthen his heart with promises, and never leaves praying and looking up until God gives him a gracious answer.’⁴ Bengel, the Lutheran theologian who greatly influenced John Wesley, suggested that ‘we do not have God’s permission to quit praying until he gives us some answer.’⁵ EM Bounds says ‘He prays not at all who does not press his plea. Cold prayers have no claim on heaven, and no hearing in the courts above. Fire is the life of prayer, and heaven is reached by flaming importunity rising in an ascending scale.’⁶

1 Finney, C. *Lectures on Revival*. CreateSpace (2015): pp28–38.
 2 Duewel, W. *Mighty Prevailing Prayer*. Zondervan (2013): p157.
 3 Wallis, A. *Rain From Heaven*. Hodder and

Stoughton (1979): p80.
 4 Wallis, A. *Rain From Heaven*: p80.
 5 Wallis, A. *Rain From Heaven*: p81.
 6 Wallis, A. *Rain From Heaven*: p81.



BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND

SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

Sin of omission

10 Neglect of family duties. Think of how you have lived before your family, how you have prayed, what an example you have set before them. What direct efforts do you habitually make for their spiritual welfare?

Sins of commission

10 Robbing God. Think of all the instances in which you have totally misspent your time, squandering the hours which God gave you to serve him and save souls. Precious time wasted in vain amusement or worthless conversation, in reading worldly novels, or even doing nothing; cases where you have misused your talents and ability to think. Think of how you have squandered God's money on your lusts, or spent it on things which you really didn't need, which did not contribute to your health, comfort, or usefulness. Think of a professing believer using God's money to poison himself with tobacco or intoxicating drink!

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *The Spirit of prayer*.⁷

⁷ Finney, C. *The Spirit of prayer*. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=3725>

THROUGH SUDDEN OUTPOURINGS

READING

‘Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting’

Acts 2:2

Violent prayer reaps violent outpourings. Mark the gospel writer sees the beginning of Jesus Christ’s (Christ meaning ‘the anointed one’) ministry as a direct answer to the heart cry in Isaiah 64:1: ‘Oh that you would **tear the heavens** and come down.’ Mark says that when Jesus came up out of the water immediately he saw the **heavens being torn open** and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. There is suddenness to the move of God in the first two chapters of Mark, with the word ‘immediately’ being used eight times. Similarly, Luke

describes the Pentecostal outpouring as coming ‘suddenly from heaven.’ Arthur Wallis says that ‘God is a man of war and a superb strategist. He makes use of the surprise element by striking suddenly. Revival overtakes men, comes upon them, and takes them unawares. When men fear that God is about to corner them and confront them with His claims, they tend to take avoiding action. But in revival God often moves so swiftly that they are pierced with conviction before they know what has happened.’¹

Wallis refers to this feature of suddenness as ‘the hallmark of the real thing as distinct from those which men commonly call revival, but which may be organised, promoted and so presumably controlled. Did anyone organise, promote or control that which came from heaven on the day of Pentecost. Only God. Certainly not the men of “the upper room prayer meeting.”’²

‘Revival is spontaneous in the sense that it is not forced or suggested or caused by outside agency’ says the *Oxford Dictionary*.³ It is the result of divine and not human impulse. Revival can never be explained in terms of activity or organisation, personality or preaching. It is essentially a manifestation of God. It has the stamp of deity upon it, and this even the spiritually uninitiated are quick to recognise. We cannot explain revival because we cannot explain God. ‘The wind blows where it wills.’ Revival is different from evangelism. In evangelism man takes the initiative, though it be with the prompting of the Holy Spirit. ‘In revival the initiative is solely God’s. In the one the organisation is human. With the other it is divine ... Revival may break out in the midst of evangelism ... While revival tarries evangelism must go on.’⁴

Wallis goes on to say, ‘Revival is recognised as clearly heaven sent, when men cannot account for what is happening in terms of human personality or organisation. When a movement becomes organised or controlled by man, it has ceased to be spontaneous — it is no longer revival. It is of course necessary that leaders ensure that the work of the Spirit is not infiltrated by false doctrine or practice, but great care needs to be taken that we do not take things out of the control of the Holy Spirit. When God has put his hand on the helm, we do well to keep ours off.’⁵

1 Wallis, *A. Rain From Heaven*. Hodder and Stoughton (1979): p43.

2 Wallis, *Rain From Heaven*: p45.

3 Wallis, *Rain From Heaven*: p45.

4 Wallis, *Rain From Heaven*: p14.

5 Wallis, *Rain From Heaven*: p47.



BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND

SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

11 Lack of watchfulness over your witness. How many times have you failed to take your words and actions seriously? How often have you entirely neglected to watch your conduct and speech, and, having been off your guard, you have sinned before the world, the church, and before God!

Sins of commission

11 Bad temper. Perhaps you have abused your wife, or your children, or your family, or employees, or neighbours. Write it all down!

PRAYER

There is a sound of rushing of rain. Lord, rend the heavens and come down!

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *Excitement in revivals*.⁶

⁶ Finney, C. *Excitement in revivals*. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=590>

THROUGH PREVAILING OVER OPPOSITION

READING

‘This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.’

Luke 2:34

When Charles Finney arrived at Auburn in the summer and autumn of 1826, he said that he had not been fully aware of the amount of opposition. He said, ‘As the bell was ringing for people to assemble to a meeting, one lady came out of her closet and found her husband had come in from the shop and as she entered the sitting room, he asked her if she would not go to the meeting; and said that if she would go, he would accompany her. He afterwards informed me that he had made up his mind to see if he could not get something to justify his opposition to his wife; something to laugh about, and sustain him in ridiculing the whole work. When he proposed to accompany his

wife, she was very much surprised, but they came to the meeting.’¹

Finney said, ‘Of all this I knew nothing at the time, of course. In the middle of my sermon, I observed a person fall from a seat near the aisle, who cried out in a most terrific manner. The congregation were very much shocked and the outcry of the man was so great that I stopped preaching and stood still. After a few moments I requested the congregation to sit still while I went to speak with him. I found him to be (this man) of whom I have been speaking. The spirit of the Lord had so powerfully convicted him, that he was unable to sit on his seat. When I reached him, he had so far recovered his strength as to be on his knees, with his head on his wife’s lap. He was weeping like aloud like a child confessing his sins, and accusing himself in a terrible manner. I said a few words to him. The spirit of God had his attention so thoroughly, that I soon desisted from all efforts to make him attend to what I said. When I told the congregation who it was, they all knew him and his character; it produced tears and sobs in every part of the house. His loud weeping made it impossible (to carry on with the sermon). I can never forget the appearance of his wife, as she sat and held his face in her hands upon her lap. There appeared in her face a holy joy and triumph that words cannot express.’²

The Holy Spirit continues to move in spite of opposition, bringing conviction and repentance. It was the case with John Wesley and George Whitfield as well. Some speak against it because of fear and others because of ignorance, opposing it because it does not come as they expect. Just as the Jews rejected the Messiah because he did not conform to their preconceived ideas, so people reject the manifestation of God.³ When Simeon held Jesus as a baby in his arms and said that Jesus would be a sign spoken against, this prophecy was fulfilled many years later when Jesus first started his ministry in Nazareth. He was rejected and his audience tried to throw him over a cliff. Every true revival has been a sign spoken against uncovering the hidden thoughts of the heart.⁴

1 Finney, C. *Autobiography*. CreateSpace (2014): p115, 118.

2 Finney, C. *Autobiography*: p118. (Paraphrase.)

3 Wallis, A. *Rain From Heaven*. Hodder and Stoughton (1979): p21.

4 Wallis, A. *Rain From Heaven*: pp19, 20. (Paraphrase.)



BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND

SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

Sins of omission

12 Neglect to watch over your brethren. How often have you broken your covenant that you would watch over them in the Lord? How little do you know or care about the state of their souls? And yet you are under a solemn duty to watch over them. What have you done to get to know them better? How many times have you seen them falling into sin, and you let them go on? And you pretend to love them? Would you watch your wife or child going into disgrace, or falling into a fire, and hold your peace?

Sins of commission

12 Hindering others from being useful. You have not only robbed God of your own talents, but tied the hands of somebody else. What a wicked servant is he who not only is useless himself, but hinders the rest! This is done sometimes by taking their time needlessly. Thus you have played into the hands of Satan, and not only proved yourself to be an idle vagabond, but prevented others from working also.

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *Hindrances to revivals*.⁵

⁵ Finney, C. *Hindrances to revivals*. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=3734>

THROUGH THE BREAKING OUT OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD

READING

From the west, people will fear the name of the Lord, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory. For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the Lord drives along.

Isaiah 59:19

When we pray for revival, we are praying for heaven to come down, a tangible expression of heaven on earth. Corey Russell said, ‘Jesus’ manifest presence is ... when the holiness of God goes public, when the glory of God goes public, when God’s presence breaks in and when God shifts that landscape, where there is a tangible geographical zone, and the Lord breaks into bars and into crack houses.’¹

Charles Finney tells the story of what took place in Utica in New York. ‘I went to the factory. On passing through one of the apartments were a great number of young women who were attending to their weaving. I observed a couple of them eyeing me and speaking very earnestly to each other, and I could see that they were

a good deal agitated, although they both laughed. I went slowly towards them. They saw me coming and were evidently much excited. One of them was trying to mend a broken thread and I observed that her hands trembled so that she could not mend it. I approached slowly, looking on each side at the machinery, as I passed; but I observed that this girl grew more and more agitated and could not proceed with her work. When I came within eight or 10 feet of her, I looked solemnly at her. She observed it and was quite overcome, sunk down, and burst into tears. The impression caught almost like powder and in a few moments nearly all in the room were in tears. This feeling spread through the factory.

‘Mr W, the owner of the establishment, was present, and seeing the state of things, he said to the superintendent, “Stop the mill and let the people attend to religion; for it is more important that our souls should be saved than this factory run.” The gate was immediately shut down, and the factory stopped; but where should we assemble? The superintendent suggested that the mule room was large; and the mules being run up, we could assemble there. We did so and a more powerful meeting I scarcely ever attended. It went on with great power. The building was large and had many people in it, from the garret to the cellar. The revival went through the mill with astonishing power, in the course of a few days nearly all in the mill were hopefully converted.’

The glory came down in Utica in New York without even a word being preached.

1 Finney, C. *Autobiography*. CreateSpace (2014): pp108, 109.

2 Russell, C. *One Thing Conference*. 2013, (31 December 2013).



BREAK UP ... YOUR FALLOW GROUND

SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP LIST

Sins of omission

13 Neglect of self-denial. There are many professing Christians who are willing to do almost anything in religion **that does not require self-denial**. They think they are doing a great deal for God, and doing about as much as he ought to reasonably ask, but they are not willing to deny themselves any comfort or convenience whatsoever for the sake of serving the Lord.

Sins of commission

13 Idols and other religions. I found as I was sitting down to write out my sins, that there were whole categories of sins that are common today, that would never even have been spoken of to the church in Finney's day. Some of these include fornication and sexual sins, the whole area of false peace induced by drugs, and occult involvement – including astrology, witchcraft, meditation, yoga, and the whole gamut of Eastern religions and philosophies, etc. (Keith Green)

FURTHER STUDY

Sermon by Charles Finney – *The glory of God*.³

³ Finney, C. *The glory of God*. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=24627>

DAY 29

IT IS TIME TO ASK THE FATHER FOR THE NATIONS

READING

‘Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.’

Psalm 2:8

This present crisis is a mini-wake-up call to the Church, and in this time of shaking, Jesus the resurrected Christ wants our full attention. He is our secure foundation. We need to build on a revelation of Jesus the resurrected Christ, our Bridegroom, King and Judge. Just as Isaiah went through a process of refinement for a new assignment, we have been preparing our hearts for a new assignment too. We have a new assignment **to know Jesus** the resurrected Christ

of Revelation 1:12–20 and **to make him known**. Do we really know Jesus’ burning passion for the nations? We catch a glimpse in Psalm 2, a prophetic psalm written by King David, which is one of the most quoted parts of the Old Testament in the New Testament.

Mike Bickle says that Charles Spurgeon described Psalm 2 as a dramatic ‘fourfold picture’.¹ Psalm 2 resembles a theatrical drama, with a curtain opening and closing on each Act (like the West End theatre production *Les Misérables* in London). The four Acts of this great drama will be acted out in the last days.

- **Act 1** reveals the kings and the rulers of the earth centre-stage, presenting their case against God and his Christ, and wanting to remove the influence of God’s word from every part of society.
- **Act 2** puts God the Father centre-stage. His response to the kings and rulers’ opposition is mocking laughter, turning into terrible wrath and the unleashing of his vengeance and exalting his Son Jesus as king over all.
- **Act 3** puts the spotlight on Jesus, who repeats what the Father has said to him, namely, ‘Ask of me (the Father) for the nations as your (Jesus’) inheritance. You (Jesus) will break them with a rod of iron and dash them to pieces like pottery.’
- **Act 4** David speaks last from centre-stage, encouraging other kings and rulers to humble themselves and serve the Lord Jesus in humility and adoration.

Mike Bickle says that ‘although there is a lot of criticism and ridicule of Jesus and his followers today, we have not yet come to a day where there is a unified global coalition of national leaders and leaders of business, government, media, religion, education, family and arts/entertainment with a raging hatred against Jesus, but that day will come and it is coming soon.’ He says that verse 4 (Act 2) is one of the most terrifying statements in the Bible as the Father in a mocking tone laughs at the raging kings and rulers of the nations. Right now, Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father and has been there for 2,000 years, and in verses 7–9 (Act 3) David eavesdrops on the conversation between the Father and the Son. The Father tells the Son that he will inherit the raging nations and peoples. Jesus’ response to the rage is

1 Bickle, M. *God’s Answer to the Growing Crisis*. Charisma House (2017).

2 Russell, C. *Inheritance: Clinging to God’s promises in the midst of tragedy*. Forerunner (2018): pp73–74.

intercession. He will declare back to the Father what the Father has declared over him. Jesus' intercessory declarations will be like a rod of iron. He will dash the nations into pieces like a rod of iron.

In Acts chapter 4, the Early Church encountered huge opposition and used Psalm 2 as a backdrop for the crisis they faced. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, they prayed that God would put the rod of his mouth in the mouth of the Church. They quoted Psalm 2 and declared all opposition would be dashed to pieces, and the place where they gathered was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.²

PRAYER

Lord, we line up with your prayers and declare that the nations will be your inheritance, you will break the nations with a rod of iron. Those raging leaders and nations will be dashed like a potter's vessel. We line our prayers up with yours, Lord. Our food is to do your will and finish your work. May your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

FURTHER STUDY

Mike Bickle, *Understanding our times*.³



³ Bickle, M. Understanding our times. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89LXqZo8lao>

IT IS TIME FOR AN ARMY OF REVIVAL INTERCESSORS

READING

‘You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.’

Psalm 2:9

God is preparing us to intercede for the nations, and on our lips his words will be like a rod of iron, as we pray for his kingdom to come. In this time of shaking, he is our secure foundation. We need to build on a revelation of Jesus the resurrected Christ, who came humbly on a donkey, but will come on a horse as a warrior king. Are we willing to follow Jesus humbly through the refinement of these challenging days, facing

opposition like he did, betrayal and shakings and then line up with his passion for the nations in prayer?

At the Malachi Gathering, Lynn Green¹ said 1 John 5:14 has been a cornerstone in YWAM since Joy Dawson came to Lausanne to the first YWAM School of Evangelism, teaching on the 12 steps of intercession.² (See Appendix 2). She preached on ‘This is the bold confidence we have before him. If we ask for something according to his will, he hears us and if we know that he hears us according to what we ask we know that we already have the request we asked of him.’ Lynn Green also referenced Revelation 3:19: ‘When people are my friends, I tell them when they are in the wrong. I will punish them for it. So, stir up your spirits and repent. I am standing here knocking at the door. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come to them and eat with them and they with me. This will be my gift to the one who conquers. I will sit them beside me on my throne just as I conquered and sat with my Father on his throne.’

We live in troubling times. We are called to be conquerors. ‘How do we conquer?’ We conquer by remaining friends with him: when we are friends, he tells us when we are in the wrong. We must never lose that hunger to be God’s friend. Sometimes he punishes us because he wants us to repent; that is how we remain with him on his throne. Lynn Green reminded the next generation of YWAM leaders not to neglect the steps of intercession. He said, ‘Do not quit regularly waiting upon God and asking him to search your heart. Don’t substitute anything for waiting on God as a team, as a community, as a base. When we enter into prayer with our brothers and sisters ... we should ask him to reveal any sin in our hearts. The Holy Spirit will begin to convict, and it leads to repentance and confession for one another. That is how we secure our place on the throne, that keeps us where we belong above the principalities and powers ... You have a friend in Jesus; he wants to work on your behalf ... he may want to correct you first. Get to that point where you are praying and you know what his will is, because we can all have this confidence – if we ask anything according to his will then he hears us, and if he hears we know we have the requests we have made.’

Corey Russell says God is raising up an army of revival intercessors across the earth, not known by men, but known in heaven. Psalm 2:9 will be the fruit of their intercession. The fruit of their intercession will be the release of the power of God on his word; revival breaking

1 Malachi Gathering – Lynn Green: <https://youtu.be/kYSKuuSCJT0>, starting at 57 mins 15 secs.

2 <https://ywam.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/PrinciplesForEffectiveIntercession-JoyDawson.pdf>

out and destroying every opposition in its path. The fullness of this reality will take place when Jesus returns to utterly destroy all opposition with the power of his word. God's word dashing sin, sickness, and Satan to pieces like a piece of pottery. This is how He will rule the nations: Jesus shares this glorious honour of intercession with his people, and we can partner with him in seeing his inheritance come forth in the nations. His 'rod' will come out of the mouth of the church, destroying the power of the evil one in the earth.

Russell also says, 'Revelation of the Son's intercession is going to fill the end-time prayer movement in a deep way. We are already beginning to see it explode across the Earth as God brings together the prayer and missions' movements. Churches and ministries ... are beginning to prioritise prayer like never before.'³

So: do you know what time it is? It is time to wake up, to break up the fallow ground and to pray! We have a new assignment to pray for an end-time youth awakening leading to a mission movement. It is time to prioritise prayer like never before!

PRAYER

Lord, raise up an army of revival intercessors for the nations!

FURTHER STUDY

Joy Dawson, *Some principles for effective intercessory prayer*.⁴



3 Russell, C. *Inheritance: Clinging to God's promises I the midst of tragedy*. Forerunner (2018): pp73–74. (Paraphrase.)

4 Dawson, D. *Some principles for effective intercessory prayer*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhmp2hzc6o4>