



## **Give Your Spiritual Life A Lift...** (Tips for improving your spiritual life...)

- **Pray.**
- **Give Thanks.**
- **Serve Somebody.**
- **Feed on God's Word.**
- **Be like trees and plants**

### **\*Pray.**

Prayer is so simple and at the same time so difficult.

Is the point of the following story sometimes true about your prayer life....

*A young woman, home from college for the weekend, was complaining about how tough the exams were. She was especially worried about the one coming up the next week. Her mother gave her the standard lecture, saying, "You should try studying this time."*

*Rena took her advice this time and studied intensely for three days, only coming out of her studies to eat and sleep. When she came home the following weekend, her mother asked her how she had done,*

*"Mom, I don't know why I bothered to study. That was the easiest test I've ever taken."*

*Isn't that a lot like prayer? After finding how well prayer works for us, we often decide things are going so well we don't need it.*

This month we begin a series of articles on prayer in an effort to help it become the simple thing God designed it to be.

### **What it means to address God as "Father."**

In the example of prayer we know as "The Lord's Prayer" Jesus tells us to start off by addressing God as "Father." I think that one word sets the tone for the whole prayer. Jesus could have told us to start off with "Oh Great Ruler of the Heavens" or "Your Majesty" or "King of Kings." But he didn't. He told us to start with "Father."

What does that title tell us?

1. It tells us that when we come to God, we come to the One who created us and thus

loves us - unconditionally - like a Father loves his children.

2. It tells us that God is approachable. He *wants* us to come to him and talk to him, just like a father longs to have his kids come and talk to him.

3. It tells us that we come to a God, who like a Father, wants what is best for you.

In short, that one simple word Jesus told us to start with, bids us to simply come. And come with confidence that the one you are coming to loves you and always wants what is best for you and delights in having you come.

So, take a moment now to simply come to your Father

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### **\*Give Thanks.**

Life is a series of choices. One choice that we have every day is the choice to give thanks for what God has given OR to complain about what he hasn't given. It doesn't take a rocket-scientist to figure out which choice gives you a lift - and which choice brings you (and everyone around you) down.

Don't wait until Thanksgiving Day to give thanks. Start right now, so that by the time November 28 rolls around, you'll be into the thanksgiving habit and out of the complaining habit.

**Take a moment to [download the "Thank You" page](#) and write down the things God *has* given you. Don't forget the spiritual blessings like forgiveness and eternal life. And don't complain about what God *hasn't* given. Instead, **thank him for what he hasn't given - because if it was good for you, he'd have given it.****

Cultivating an attitude of gratitude will give your spiritual life a lift!

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### **\*Serve Somebody**

The Bible is full of examples of servants - folks who did things to serve other people. the greatest of which was God's own Son, Jesus Christ. As Jesus himself said, "The Son of Man came not to be served, but *to serve*." (Matthew 20:28) He also said that his followers need to do the same:

"I have set you an example, that you should do as I have done for you." (John 13:15)

One of the greatest ways to give your spiritual life a lift is to do something to serve someone. Someone once said "The greatest way to be helped is to help." So, if you want to give your spiritual life a lift, find someone to help. Find someone to serve.

You will be amazed at how being a servant will give your spiritual life a lift!

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### **\*Daily feed on God's Word.**



In order for your body to grow and stay healthy, you need to feed it the right kind of nutrients. You need a balance of foods from all the food groups. The same is true of our spirit. In order for your spirit to grow - and stay healthy, you need to feed it the right kind of nutrients. You need a balance of God's law (the part that shows us our sin) and God's gospel (the part that shows us our savior).

Of all the things you can resolve to do this new year, the one that will likely give your spiritual life the biggest life lift (not to mention your physical and emotional life) is this one: Read God's Diary (His Word)

### **A New Bible-Reading Plan to Assist You : An Overview of the Bible through Easter.**

- 100 daily readings.
- Sundays as "review"/ "catch-up" days.
- Keep in mind that the Bible is "God's Diary" in which he reveals himself and his innermost desires, after each reading, record what you learned about God or from God.

### **Here are some of the results God promises from reading. You will . . .**

- be able to live a life worthy of the Lord
- please God
- bear fruit, fruit like: love, joy, peace, patience, self-control, kindness, faithfulness
- grow in your faith - your trust in God will be strengthened
- tap into God's power for life - physical as well as spiritual
- gain endurance for getting through life
- gain a thankful attitude as you are reminded of all God has done for you and focus on Jesus instead of on your expectations that haven't been met.
- grow in your love - for God *and* the people in your life
- be able to tell what is good and right
- be *completely* equipped for every good work.

### **Be it resolved that . . . .**

1) *Make the commitment today:*

"I commit to feeding my Spirit with God's word daily." Signed \_\_\_\_\_

2) *Pick the time that will work best for you:*

"I will set aside time at \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_ each day to spend with God."

3) *Set your Bible in a place where you literally will trip over it every day:*

"I'll put my Bible \_\_\_\_\_"

4) PRAY. Ask God to help you resist Satan's temptations to quit.

"Lord, I know Satan will tempt me by \_\_\_\_\_." Help me to resist

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**\*Be like the trees and plants.**

Summer is the season that trees and plants and vines produce fruit. Jesus is very explicit that all who seek to follow Jesus must also produce fruit.

*"Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. Matthew 21:43*

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful...This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit\_\_fruit that will last... John 15:1-2,8 & 16*

To "bear fruit" is to do things that "nourish" people around you and to do things that attract people to the Vine (Jesus).

Jesus also said that we can only "bear fruit" when we are firmly attached to him, the Vine.

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5*

Summer is the time when trees and plants and vines naturally produce fruit. Summer is also the time when we are most tempted to get "detached" from the Vine, to not worship or read our Bibles or attend Bible studies. In other words it is the time when it is tempting *not* to bear fruit.

Give your spiritual life a lift this summer. Make the commitment to stay attached to the Vine through worship (come on Monday evening if you can't make it Sunday), Bible Study, prayer and reading your Bible (see the Summer Reading Program elsewhere in the newsletter). God will bless you and you will nourish the lives of the people around you and give God glory by bearing much fruit!