



Doing What You Can Do

2018

No matter who you are, no matter how limiting your situation today, you have choices. In particular, you can choose to turn toward God or turn away from Him. You can say “Yes, Lord” to Jesus, or you can turn down his loving invitation. I hope you have said “Yes,” because He suffered and died and rose again so that you would have that option. If you haven’t, I pray the Holy Spirit will bug you until you do.

Limitations. If you’re incarcerated, you are very limited. Or you may be old, or in poor health, or poor. There are many circumstances that restrict what people can do. But let’s instead focus on what you can do in spite of your limitations.



First of all, stay connected to the source of power. An electric appliance is useless when it isn’t plugged in. Likewise, as Jesus put it, “*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*” (John 15:5) So make time every day to pray, and also just talk with Jesus informally during the day. And read your Bible often. There’s a lot of good stuff in it.



The second thing you can do is to check your attitude. No whining, no complaining, no feeling sorry for yourself. What you choose to think about matters. In St. Paul’s words: *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* (Philippians 4:8)

With a smile, a kind or encouraging word, an expression of interest, a gentle hug or a kiss for a loved one—you can be a ray of sunshine for someone’s dark day. By doing that you will not only be a blessing to someone else, but you will have brightened your own life a little bit!

Forgive. If someone has harmed you, or insulted you, or done anything to you that you still resent, whether it was recently or many years ago—let it go. Set yourself free from that resentment. Even if there

is still pain, the act itself is in the past. Let the resentment also belong to the past. Sometimes this can be very difficult, but it is worth the effort. With God’s help, you can do it. And you really should.

Pray. Whether you’re cell-bound or home-bound or even bed-bound, you can pray. Let’s look at whom to pray for and how to pray.



Pray for yourself. Use the prayer of the tax collector from Luke 13:18: “*God, be merciful to me, a sinner!*” Thank God for His loving provision of all you will ever need. Then ask God to give you the energy and strength and wisdom to pray according to His will

Pray for your family and friends, especially those who are burdened in any way because of you. Ask God to meet all of their needs—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and financial.

Pray for those around you—neighbors, staff members if you’re in an institution, medical people, caregivers. Pray for those who serve in the military or as police and firefighters—those who face danger to protect the rest of us; all those whose lives are focused on serving others. Pray for all who live in your community and the surrounding areas. All are loved by God; all are in need of His blessings.

So what? Should you pray with a long list of those who need to be mentioned every time? I don’t think that’s necessary. God knows who they all are and what they need. I would rather let the Holy Spirit bring to my mind the groups and individuals I should mention during any particular time of prayer.

So, then, what to ask God for. The one thing that is most important, of course, is the prayer that never fails: “Thy will be done.”

The LORD is faithful to all his promises

Psalm 145:13

Consider those who are not saved. I’m not asking you to judge whether or not any individual is saved; but you know people who are not saved, and you know there are many people who are your “neighbors” who are not saved. Some of these think they are saved but they aren’t; others don’t care or don’t want to face the question. I Timothy 2:4 says, God “*desires all people to be saved and to come to*

the knowledge of the truth," so you know that if you pray for their salvation, you are asking for God's will to be done for them.

What about priests, ministers, teachers, coaches, and others in a position of trust who sexually molest those in their charge. What if we all prayed that the people in those trusted positions would successfully resist the temptation to do such shameful and damaging acts?

The point I'm trying to make right now is this: your prayers—that's right your prayers—can make a vital difference in someone's life. If we ask anything according to His will, He will do it. We might not ever know the details, but we can trust His promise.

What else can you do? How about this: be ready, willing, and able to talk about Jesus. I don't mean preaching on street corners, unless that's your thing. I mean, when the Holy Spirit provides an opportunity

to put in a good word for Jesus, don't hesitate, just do it. Even if you turn someone off by doing it, you will have planted a small seed that will eventually produce fruit for God's Kingdom.



One final suggestion about what you can do, from Jesus' words in Luke 6:31: "*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*" This is known as the Golden Rule. And, as I have said in the past, I also like what Dr. Bob Cook used to say at the end of his daily radio program: "Walk with the King today, and be a blessing."

Hallelujah! Christmas has come and gone; Jesus, our Emmanuel, is with us as we enter into a new calendar year. May we all live faithfully and joyfully in Him. God bless you!

Brother Roland

He Wipes My Tears Away

By Keith Spriggs

As I think about the past I feel a pain in my heart.
It's so hard to put this into words—how do I start?
I feel like I have done more things wrong than I have right.
And through it all I have not given up the fight.
My past haunts me to this very day.
That's why I try to always get on my knees and pray.
But it's hard to have faith all will be okay.
I cry out to God, asking why this life was mine.
He says, "Continue to have faith in Me, son, and everything will be fine."
It's hard to stay positive when you have made so many mistakes.
He says, "Hang in there, son, I know you got what it takes."
I don't know how He has faith in me when I don't have faith in myself.
I have not done what is required of me to keep up my spiritual health.
Sometimes I feel like I will never get it together,
Like every day of my life will be filled with stormy weather.
I don't understand his love toward me. All I can ask is, Why?
Then when His presence falls upon me, a tear burns my eye,
And there in His presence is where I want to stay!
And there in His presence He wipes my tears away.

Questions about the Bible or the Christian life? Write to me and I'll try to help, and maybe your question will be a blessing to someone else. Write to Brother Roland, PO Box 14, Fayetteville PA 17222.

From John 15 ,,,

A bonus second puzzle for January! This puzzle consists of words and phrases taken from Chapter 15 of John's Gospel, where Jesus talks about "abiding" in Him. Eternal words of wisdom ...

Puzzle:

B R A N C H C A N N O T B E A R U B E U Z N T Q N H O B K Y
K Y F Q T K U W X N Q O I R I T O E E M P C I P G W R G A I
H S Z V R U R Y M Z V V A N Y N Z A S A M O W J Z F G W F A
D E R E H T A G E R A S E H C N A R B K R O O P P O A L Q V
I U D X K E E P M Y C O M M A N D M E N T S R E C N E I Z H
I O B R O J D C Z E G C A A E L C U J H I B N F W S V W Z X
N Y V E O Q K Q M S N B A H Y O U C A N D O N O T H I N G U
B N E H D W Z R X A I O E B M X A H P U G I R I F R U F M K
E I J T U Q E X A D K R D X X C Q F E F R H Y W S R A U Y O
T E B O I S O H E S E E I E R E S R N W T B X R U P U P F O
E B T N S W K I T M I E I N B X F U O Y N I E D I B A I A N
L Y P A A L N X O Y Q H H T T L Z I U N P H A T B U E W T I
P A M E P M I V Z E B L A L B O L T O M T W M H Z O G O H C
M M J N E G E V Q T F D V V E E T I F I M E T I O Y S S E T
O Y J O H S I W U O Y R E V E T A H W R O F K S A N B U R O
C O A E T T K Q P N Q O S S I L R R E T T Y F I I I X W I I
E J V V M H S Y E S H N A R N N O U M F I Y R S H E P W S H
B Y U O Y N A C R E H T I E N A E V E O I N X M A D Q Y G H
Y M W L L Q E D P O R Y D Z O E E G E V R R B Y V I V X L J
A Y F L V F X R R D I E T J Q C H L R D I E E C E B N K O Q
M V G B Z U U W H R V O H I Z F I U C O Y N U O L A V A R E
Y S E H C N A R B E H T E R A U O Y A G W O E M O S I A I A
O G N M E L Z O R V M C S J Z M K D O D T E U M V D W N F Z
J I K S V D O Y L E C M E B S K T B N G C P R A E R Z L I X
R F A D X H B G L O Z H T G P F U H C K U Q R N D O P N E V
U I H R X R F A T H E R H A S L O V E D M E D D Y W J F D I
O T F C A C Z E M W O F I Q W T Q O L V I R X M O Y F R P N
Y G B N E B A B I D E I N M Y L O V E G I T J E U M Z G O T
M I C L X E J R D E I N G G R J R M V U Y N D N U G G S P X
T H B E C O M E M Y D I S C I P L E S A W N E T B T U F B M

Words:

TRUE VINE
VINEGROWER
HE REMOVES
BEARS NO FRUIT
EVERY BRANCH
HE PRUNES
MAKE IT BEAR MORE
CLEANSED BY THE WORD
ABIDE IN ME
I ABIDE IN YOU
BRANCH CANNOT BEAR
BY ITSELF
NEITHER CAN YOU

I AM THE VINE
YOU ARE THE BRANCHES
APART FROM ME
YOU CAN DO NOTHING
WHOEVER DOES NOT
THROWN AWAY
WITHERS
BRANCHES ARE GATHERED
INTO THE FIRE
MY WORDS ABIDE IN YOU
ASK FOR WHATEVER YOU WISH
IT WILL BE DONE
MY FATHER IS GLORIFIED

BEAR MUCH FRUIT
BECOME MY DISCIPLES
FATHER HAS LOVED ME
I HAVE LOVED YOU
ABIDE IN MY LOVE
KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS
I HAVE SAID THESE THINGS
MY JOY MAY BE IN YOU
YOUR JOY MAY BE COMPLETE
THIS IS MY COMMANDMENT
LOVE ONE ANOTHER
AS I HAVE LOVED YOU

About Prayer

Some of what the Bible has to say about prayer.

Puzzle:

A N D I N C O M M U N I T Y B V G W Y M X D P Q K T W Y P X A
G V B B M O V P D D B J T J I E K B N Z A R Q X C N A E U Y F
E M O C M O D G N I K S D O G Q S D E E I L T M E B L M G T M
L B I E F X J T O D S A C L F P J I V V Z K N T E B S D N S V
S E T I R C O P Y H E H T E K I L Z A S C O F N O L D E I K Q
F Y G B R O B V C Z N B O M S N I T E R H O W Z F Q O M V O U
L K T X J W F H S F R G Z E M T E W H N P O I Z W Q G U I W N
U B Q I L E E Z B E E J M H G L H U N O A H W A H B G N G R C
J V V Y L Z R V O V T I F N Y H C O I T E L T I F O N D R Q O
E P S T W I T H L O T S O F W O R D S F I W G I N L I U E G N
W D O H B N M B M L A T U T K R H G A E O N F Y W G R F V E F
I P V E I Q H U L D P W N K G H L G H A I J T M E C O A E H E
T R R P Q B L A H C E K E L A R L L T R I N J H H G N F N U S
H E M E P X T A L H H W B B E N Y R R I C W A E E O G R F E S
T S Z O H A S N O I T C A R T S I D A N S O R U H S I T L B E
H U V P Y K Q W B H R I N D Z E I M E G Y I N I T W P F O F D
A M E L A B I O H B E X W M W K K F N T S O S F Y H I I O L S
N P O E A S D A E R B Y L I A D R U O H D W U Y I S O R R F I
K T H Y D Y O L Y Q M J M K W O B Y I E I N Y R H D G R O I N
S U M O G Z G B J I E Q H S M W C N U L W Q I M E I E V I Y T
G O M U L L G U W S M C Q T I N G A L O N I O M V N T N L T K
I U D L F O N W G N E I H J X S L B R R E T Q E E Z E H T C Y
V S B O H N I P K X R E M H I W E H D D I C N Z B H S M T L B
I L X V J T T O S S H Z N N W D J O N V Z E Z C B I T V I P Y
N Y E E H M S N U E W I T H O U T C E A S I N G F D A H J E G
G T R J X B U C A X L A X N S X E S Z S K T S L G R H I T M S
P K O X Y M R R N E H G E N N S N S E F K A E W J W E P S I K
H Y I W V H T U N F O R G I V E N E S S U S Z Y D D E D V F W

Words:

*** When to pray**

AT ALL TIMES
WITHOUT CEASING
OFTEN
NEVER GIVING UP

*** Whom to pray for**

THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE
THOSE IN AUTHORITY
YOUR ENEMIES

*** What to ask for**

WISDOM
GOD'S KINGDOM COME
HIS WILL BE DONE
ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN
OUR DAILY BREAD
FORGIVENESS

*** How to pray**

PRIVATELY
AND IN COMMUNITY
WITH HUMILITY
FROM THE HEART
WITH JOY
WITH PRAISE
WITH THANKSGIVING
CONFIDENTLY
TRUSTING GOD
IN THE SPIRIT
WITH THE MIND
REMEMBER THE PATTERN

*** How NOT to pray**

LIKE THE HYPOCRITES
SHOWING OFF
WITH LOTS OF WORDS
SELFISHLY
PRESUMPTUOUSLY

*** Hindrances to prayer**

DISTRACTIONS
UNCONFESSED SIN
CHERISHING SIN
NOT FEARING THE LORD
IGNORING GOD'S LAW
UNFORGIVENESS
SELFISH MOTIVES