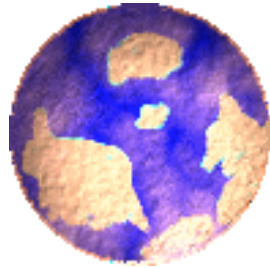


Dependency and Obligation

Several years ago I went through an “episode” that put me in the hospital for four days. I feel fortunate that some good, rather than a lot of bad, came from it. But while I was going through that experience I did some thinking, and I’d like to share my thoughts with you.

As I thought of my situation, I began to understand in a new way how very easy it is for something to come along and turn my world upside down. A very little thing—a blockage in my small intestine—resulted in three days of serious pain, plus the need to totally abandon any plan that I might have had for those three days and two more. I know, that’s trivial compared to what many people are suffering — more about that later. What struck me, though, was how utterly dependent we all are on God’s provision. He is the one who gives us each breath we breathe, never mind the health we take for granted. If He allows that provision to slip for a moment, whatever the reason, we find ourselves in deep trouble. As long as He sustains me I can keep going; if He quits, I’m a dead duck.



Aren’t we blessed, then, to have a God who loves us? A God who created us and who continues to love us wholeheartedly even when we ignore Him or despise His purposes? A God who gives us life and health and strength to carry on; and if we have to struggle, a God who goes with us through the struggle to help us endure and conquer it?

God says to us, as His greatest commandment, “Love Me,” and of course that also implies, “Trust Me.” Well, besides the fact that He commands it, why should we do that? The answer that I keep coming up with is that it lowers our resistance to

the guidance and benefits and blessings He wants to give us. You see, He gives us the freedom to resist Him; and even to rebel against Him. When we lower our guard and accept His will for our lives; when we say, “Lord, You are worthy, You are beautiful, and I love You,” and we truly mean it, then God can really work in our lives.

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11) This is what God says to the children of Israel, and we can be confident that He says the very same thing to us, because His revealed plan includes us all.

We need to acknowledge Who God is, and recognize our total dependence upon His loving mercy. We need to thank Him, surrender our will to His, and do our best to cooperate with His purposes. Only then can we move into the full measure of the sonship He has planned for us.

A second thing I began to understand is that whenever we are afflicted, this gives us an opportunity — no, more than that, it presents an actual obligation — to pray for others who have the same affliction. If I am in the hospital, suffering whatever level of pain, I can and must offer prayers to God for those people who are going through similar suffering or worse. If you are in prison, you can and must offer prayers for those who are imprisoned. Some are in jail cells like you who are inmates; others are housebound or wheelchair-bound or confined to bed because of illness or infirmity — you, in your very real distress in prison, can have sympathy for others, and can ask God to give them comfort and help.



It's important, too, to pray like you mean it. Don't just say words; tell God (and yourself) that you really care about the people for whom you are praying. Think about them; imagine yourself in their circumstances, and care.

Does this accomplish anything? The only answer we can give is, "God knows." But His word tells us to "*Pray without ceasing*" (1 Thessalonians



5:17); it tells us to "*bear one another's burdens*" (Galatians 6:2); it tells us that God "*comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble*

with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." (2 Corinthians 1:4) I am convinced that no heartfelt prayer that is made in a spirit of love and compassion will go unheard, and that, even if the prayer is not in agreement with God's current purposes, it still is a worthwhile effort.

I know that the prayers of fellow believers resulted in strength and comfort for me as I went through my illness, and I really felt that I needed to pass that comfort on by praying for others in similar situations. As if to underscore this thought, a neighbor and friend of mine was admitted to the hospital while I was there, and he endured suffering far longer with that awful tube down his throat than I had to. How could I have not kept him in my prayers?

That period of hospitalization gave me a real appreciation for the pains that others are suffering. My hospital roommate, who was my age, had had a stroke and was unable even to sit up without some help. What were my troubles compared to his? Not even worth mentioning.

Inmates, think about your own situation, behind bars. I have not been in that situation, but I know it must be hard to bear. But



now think of the families who just this year have lost their homes and all of their possessions to war or hurricanes or wildfires. Think of those who have lost loved ones to the coronavirus pandemic. Think of people who are hurting badly,

and pray for them. I don't know how your prayers will help them, but I believe that they will.

These are the thoughts I brought home from that time in the hospital: we are utterly dependent upon God's grace every minute of our lives; and we have a sacred duty to pray for others, especially those suffering the things we have suffered and worse.

Let's review what God has done for us:

- He created each of us, with love.
- He sustains us each minute through life.
- He sent His only Son to die for our sins.
- He sends His Holy Spirit to guide and empower us to live as He asks us to live.
- He has given us His word to be our guide.
- He gives us the love of others in Christian fellowship. How precious that has been to me, especially during that time of illness.
- He promises us joy forever with Him in eternity.

I hope this has been a helpful message for many of you. Think it over, and see if you find yourself agreeing with me. I bid you God's Peace and Joy, whatever your circumstances. His love is by far the greatest gift we could ever receive or desire.

Peace and Joy in Jesus —

Brother Roland

Send me your address changes and subscription requests. Also send me any Bible questions you have — I'll try to give you a helpful answer.

I'm sorry, but I do not have any Bibles or study materials to send to inmates. The latest information I have about sources is not very current, but I'm including it on Page 3.

Brother Roland
PO Box 14
Fayetteville PA 17222

This is the list of Bible correspondence schools I have found from the Internet or learned about from helpful inmates. I hope it will be helpful to those who want to learn from God's word. —Bro. Roland 26 March 2018

American Bible Academy PO Box 1627 Joplin, MO 64802	Andrew Wommack Ministries PO Box 3333 Colorado Springs, CO 80934	Bible Studies by Mail PO Box 2077 Las Cruces, NM 88004
Bible Study c/o Victory Baptist Church PO Box 100 Roan Mountain, TN 37687	Calvary Evangelistic Mission Inc. 1409 Ave. Ponce DeLeon 4th Floor San Juan, PR 907	Christ for Me, Inc. PO Box 1694 Tahlequah, OK 74465
Crossroads Prison Ministries PO Box 900 Grand Rapids, MI 49509	Crusaders Club International PO Box 547 Carmel, IN 46082	Emmaus International PO Box 1028 Dubuque, IA 52004
Exodus Prison Ministry 4243 34th St Lubbock, TX 79410	Follow Up Ministries Int'l PO Box 2514 Castro Valley, CA 94546	Global Univ. Prison Ministries 1211 S Glenstone Ave Springfield, MO 65804
Gospel Echoes PO Box 555 Goshen, IN 46527	Gospel Express Ministries PO Box 217 Lynn, NC 28750	Hope Aglow Ministries Inc. PO Box 10157 Lynchburg, VA 24506
International Prison Ministry PO Box 2868 Costa Mesa, CA 92628	Israel's Hope Inc. PO Box 724 Nyack, NY 10960	King James Bible Study 5311 Windridge Ln Lockhart, FL 32810
Lamp and Light Publishers 26 Road 5577 Farmington, NM 87401	Life'sKey PO Box 10 Bethel Park, PA 15102	Little Lambs Inc. 710 S Eucalyptus St Sebring, FL 33870
Loved Ones of Prisoners PO Box 14953 Odessa, TX 79768	Middletown Bible Church 349 East St Middletown, CT 6457	Mount Hope Prison Ministry 25 Summit Avenue Hagerstown, MD 21740
Mount Zion Bible Institute Chapel Library 2603 W Wright St Pensacola, FL 32505	Prison Mission Assn. PO Box 2300 Port Orchard, WA 98366	Prisoners for Christ PO Box 1530 Woodinville, WA 98072
Rock of Ages Ministries Discipleship Institute PO Box 2308 Cleveland, TN 37320	Ron Thompson Prison Ministry PO Box 618477 Orlando, FL 32861	Saints Prison Ministry PO Box 681 Moorestown, NJ 8057
Set Free Prison Ministries PO Box 5440 Riverside, CA 92517	Source of Light Ministries 1011 Mission Rd Madison, GA 30650	Stienkamp Bible Studies Water of Life Community Church 7625 East Ave Fontana, CA 92336
Ten Mile Bible School 12246 Lower River Rd Union, KY 41091	The Salvation Army Correctional Services Bureau 1424 Northeast Expy NE Atlanta, GA 30329	United Prison Ministries Int'l PO Box 8 Verbena, AL 36091
Voice of Prophecy Bible School PO Box 999 Loveland, CO 80539	World Bible School PO Box 2169 Cedar Park, TX 78630	Write-Way Prison Ministries, Inc. PO Box 461582 Garland, TX 75046

Let Us Give Thanks

November is the month during which we traditionally set aside a day to give thanks to God for the blessings He has given so abundantly to the United States of America. Sadly, most of us don't give much thought or energy to "thanking God" at Thanksgiving. But there is a lot to be thankful for, as this puzzle points out. Enjoy.

Puzzle:

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

Words:

* He has given us

OUR DAILY BREAD
 STRENGTH AND HEALTH
 LEGS FOR WALKING
 HANDS FOR WORKING
 EYES FOR SEEING
 EARS FOR HEARING
 MOUTHS FOR SPEAKING
 SENSES FOR ENJOYING
 MEMORY FOR LEARNING
 MINDS FOR UNDERSTANDING
 HEARTS FOR LOVING
 LIVES FOR LIVING

* He has given us

LOVING RELATIONSHIPS
 -SPOUSE
 -CHILDREN
 -PARENTS
 -SISTERS
 -BROTHERS
 -GRANDPARENTS
 -AUNTS AND UNCLES
 -COUSINS
 -CHRISTIAN FRIENDS
 -PASTORS
 -TEACHERS
 -MENTORS
 -NEIGHBORS

* He has given us

THE BIBLE
 LESSONS LEARNED
 GRACE TO CHANGE
 FREEDOM FROM PAST HABITS
 OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW
 CHALLENGES
 VISION FOR THE FUTURE
 WAYS TO SERVE OTHERS
 SELF-RESPECT

* He has given us

THE FATHER'S LOVE
 FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST
 FORGIVENESS OF SINS
 SALVATION
 HOLY SPIRIT POWER
 HOPE FOR TOMORROW
 A WHOLE NEW LIFE
 PEACE WITH GOD
 AN ETERNAL HOME