



January 2023

Church Press Newsletter

Dear Julie,

Welcome! Please come in. A father was passing his young son's bedroom one night and overheard a rather interesting prayer. The boy was kneeling by his bed with head bowed. He said, "Dear God, please make me a good boy, but it's all right with me if You'd like to take Your time about it. Amen." While God may not have answered his prayer, we do know that what is taught in the following article IS true.

[Visit Our Website](#)

LORD, Teach Me to Be A Person of Prayer!

By Pastor Don Ginkel!

A true story: Brenda went with a group rock climbing. Although apprehensive, she wanted to go with her friends, so she put on the gear, took hold of the rope, and started up the face of the rock. As she took a breather halfway up, a safety rope slapped her in the face and knocked out a contact lens. It was a hard lens for corrective vision, and just flew out of her eye. With a hundred feet below her and a hundred feet left to go, she knew that her lens was gone. But she really needed it, her vision was so blurry. She continued to the top when a memorized Bible verse came to her, "**The eyes of the LORD are everywhere**" (*Proverbs 15:30*). So she prayed, asking God to help her somehow find that contact lens.



When all had climbed to the top, they walked a trail to the bottom where a new party of climbers was just starting up the face of the cliff. One of them said, "Anybody lose a contact lens?" It was Brenda's. Her lens had fallen down the cliff and, **of all things, an ant was carrying it at just the moment the other climber looked down.** Sometimes God answers prayer in amazing ways. Brenda's father was a cartoonist and later drew a picture of an ant carrying a contact lens and saying, "**I don't know why You want me to carry this, but if this is what You want, I'll do it.**"

Now the LORD doesn't always give an amazing answer to prayer. However, in my parish ministry I remember a mother and I praying for her little daughter. Doctors told us that, barring a miracle, she would not survive the surgery. She survived! God rarely tells us why things happen at the beginning. But somewhere along the line, God reveals His power and love. Sometimes His answer to prayer is "Yes," "No," or "Maybe later."

Isaiah 65:24 says, "*Before they call I will answer, while they are still speaking I will hear.*" **What is God promising here? He says that He sees our needs and anticipates our prayer. Oh, how eager God is to supply our needs.** Oh, how He carefully watches us. I know that this has happened to me many times. I can recall instances when I knew I was going to pray for something and before I had a chance to say the words the need was taken care of. Is God encouraging us to be people of prayer? Oh, yes, is He ever! **Be sure that you develop good prayer habits. Work hard at it. You heavenly Father will be honored. and you will be blessed.**

Stack of Stuff

Preaching Without Notes by Joseph Webb (50% Discount)

Preaching without notes is not a matter of talent as much as it is preparation. Learn the practices that make it possible to deliver thoughtfully crafted sermons as a natural, spontaneous act of oral communication. Sermons will be more effective and forceful in presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. 134 pages. To order click [#187](#) \$16.00.

Discounted price \$8.00.

Big Homiletical Point

Repeat the sermon theme again and again throughout the message. Include the theme and its implications in the exorde prayer after the sermon.

Cover to Cover

Is it time to read your Bible through from cover to cover? Set aside ten minutes each morning before reading the paper or going to work. Here is a [Bible reading schedule](#) for 2023. Print it off. Make additional copies to place in your worship bulletins for next Sunday.

One Church Secretary to Another Church Secretary

"When you're really mad at your pastor do you ever send him off to fake lunch appointments just so he'll sit in some restaurant and stare at his watch for 30 minutes and he'll be out of your hair? I've never done it, but I've sure thought about it."

Wow!

A few days ago a secretary of an LCMS church in IL called to place an order for some materials. She said, "Our church has been declining. We've had several vacancy pastors. We continued to decline, but now, all of a sudden, things have changed and we're excited. Our new vacancy pastor is just what we need. He has **fire in his belly!**" One dictionary says: "If you have **fire in your belly** you are ready to do something in a very energetic and passionate way."

Charles Wesley was once asked how he drew such huge crowds to hear him preach. He replied, "I light myself on fire and people come to watch me burn!"

Charles Spurgeon

"The fact is, brethren, we must have conversion work here. We cannot go on as some churches do without converts. We cannot, we will not, we must not, we dare not. Souls must be converted here, and if there be not many born to Christ, may the Lord grant to me that I may sleep in the tomb and be heard no more. Better indeed for us to die than to live, if souls be not saved" (*Outreach November/December, p. 62*).

Five Questions to Answer

1. What's the last book you read and finished? *Answer?* 2. What's the first thing you do when you get out of bed in the morning? *Answer?* 3. Favorite television show? *Answer?* 4. The book, besides the Bible, that has impacted your ministry the most? *Answer?* 5. Do you have a hero when it comes to outreach? *If so, who?*

H. B. London Jr.

"Last week while in California, I visited a 93-year-old colleague of mine. He had recently suffered a stroke. The few minutes I spent with him brought joy to his life and encouragement to mine. As I walked the halls of that place and looked into the eyes of patients in wheelchairs, I wondered if they had a pastor or belonged to a church who would remember to pay them a visit. I am hopeful they did."

Seen On a Sign in Front of an Episcopal Church

"The person who stole our A/C unit is really going to need it!"

Consider Reading

Amazing Grace by Eric Metaxas. It's the true story of British abolitionist William Wilberforce (1759-1833) and his struggle to abolish slavery in the British colonies. Vividly presents the horrible picture of slavery and the unbelievable efforts put forth to end it. Wilberforce is a true brother in the Christian faith and encourages us to be brave as we

face our enemies. Once you start reading the book, you'll not want to put it down. Check with your local library or order from Amazon.

Special Paragraphs

I Try to Remember Too Much

Someone long ago observed, "A short pencil is better than a long memory." My years of attempting to organize my activities have proven this axiom true repeatedly. To restate it: Writing information down is better than trying to remember it. I find the more responsibilities I have the need to write things down moves from "helpful" to "imperative." When I try to remember multiple items, not only will I forget one or more, my brain will not stop bringing it back to consciousness. During extreme times, I awake in the middle of the night with my brain rehearsing a to-do list. Place a small notepad next to your bed to "catch" stray thoughts, I also use the note app on my phone. Writing it down to dispose of later makes me a better self-manager, and helps me sleep better. - By Marty Duren

Be determined to make this year . . .

a year of growth for yourself and your church. One step in this direction is easy and practical. Pastor - every three months have lunch with another pastor (doesn't have to be your denomination, but you pay for the lunch). Each of you share problem solving, brainstorming, and goal setting thoughts and experiences. Make a few notes for yourself in advance on a legal pad. The opportunity for growth is huge. Encourage everyone in leadership roles to do this: Church secretaries, church administrators, music directors, youth ministers, teaching staffs, etc. (Get a legal pad out now and make plans on paper to do this in all areas of leadership.)

Nine Surprises in Worship Services that Made Guests Return

By Thom S. Rainer

In a recent Twitter survey, I asked respondents to share with me a singular event that impressed them in a church worship service. In fact, most of the respondents said they were "delighted" or "surprised," and that one event made them desire to return to the church. A pattern developed around nine factors. Here are some representative quotes around each of the issues: [\[read more\]](#)

7 Risks Every Leader Should Take

By Carey Nieuwhof

The problem with many leaders is that there is a gap between what they want to see happen and the courage it takes to get there. You dream of a radical new future, but then you answer email all day, go to meetings, inhale caffeine and go home before it's too late with far too much of whatever-you-did-today (what did I do again today?) leftover for a boring repeat tomorrow...

This scares the socks off of most of us. After all, risk is for risk-takers, and many of us are not crazy risk-takers. So the question becomes when you realize fear is holding you back, how do you act? How do you push past your fear? Well, start with small steps. Small victories over fear quickly become larger ones because like any good muscle, the more you practice overcoming your fears, the more fear you overcome...

Here's what's worse. From a distance, it's hard to tell the difference between a fearful leader and a lazy leader. Why? Well, while the motivation is different, the outcome is often indistinguishable. I believe risk-taking is both a habit and a mindset. Take a few steps



toward tackling small challenges, and soon you'll be up for the bigger ones...

7 RISKS ANY LEADER CAN TAKE TODAY

So, if you want to flex your risk muscle for the first time or the 1,000th time, here are seven things you can do today to get started: [\[read more\]](#)

Our Newest Digital Bible Study On Esther Is Here

A nine-lesson digital Bible study by Pastor Don. There is drama and laughter. There is divine providence. God's name is not mentioned once, but He is on every page. There is application for our lives today. Important discussion questions. The story is set in Susa, which is one of the Persian capitals. Esther and Mordecai are the main characters who show great initiative and courage. They are followed by King Ahasuerus who is also known by His Greek name Xerxes (486-464 B.C.) and Haman. Mordecai is thought to be the author. \$12.95. Run off as many copies as you wish. [Ask for #171](#). It will be emailed to you together with the invoice.

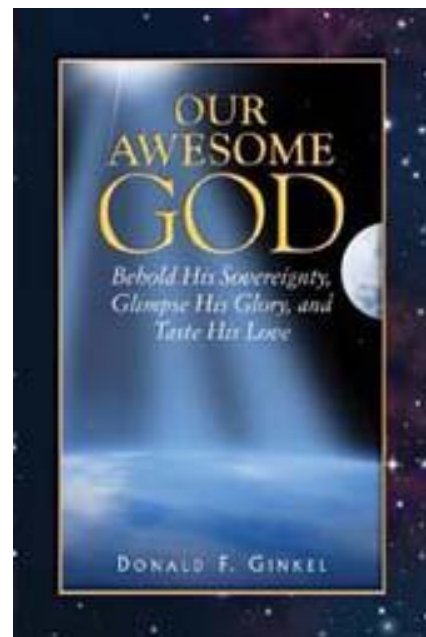
Our Awesome God

By Pastor Don Ginkel

"Let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows Me" (Jeremiah 9:24). "... the LORD your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God" (Deuteronomy 7:21). A ten lesson Bible study that will help you think of God more nearly as He is.

1. A Study of God - Why?
2. His Characteristic - Awesome
3. His Sovereignty - Awesome
4. His Holiness - Awesome
5. His Glory - Awesome
6. His Abilities - Awesome
7. His Wrath - Awesome
8. His Love - Awesome
9. His City - Awesome
10. Getting Ready

Student Guide, 120 pages #160 \$6.95. Leader's Guide, 120 pages #161 \$6.95. 50 Flyers #162 \$3.50. Order from our [website](#) or [email](#) us. Will take approximately 20 hours to complete this study.



Adult Class Promotional Paragraphs

... for your bulletins and newsletter

Our next _____ Class begins January 22, at 6:00 p.m., in the _____ Room. We will study a course which over half a million people have taken: I Have Good News For You. It's a ten week Bible study which covers all the basic teachings of the New Testament. The student grows immensely in knowledge, but even more important, he moves closer to God, knows it, and likes it.

People from various church backgrounds are usually in attendance which promotes good discussion and excellent questions without embarrassment. The sessions are informal, which makes for a good learning situation. A good dose of humor is used.

This course helps people learn what our church and pastor believe and teach. Sometimes

people join a church without this knowledge. At the close of the class those who wish may become members of our church. That is a nice approach.

You may attend just the first lesson or all ten of them. Why not give it a try? We are sure you will discover that this Bible study is unlike any you've attended before. The impact it will have on your life will be surprising and pleasant.

Couple of Practical Ideas for Pastors (and others)

By Pastor Don

Idea # 1: Beware of cliques in your congregation. They separate insiders from outsiders and that's not good. What are cliques really saying? "You are not welcome here. We have our friends and you are not one of them." Oh, they do not say this with words, but with their actions. A friend of ours attended a church here in Denver. The church prides itself on being a Christian congregation with many laudable activities. But the church is filled with cliques. After several months this close friend told us she could no longer attend there. She is now attending another church. Try to discourage cliques in your congregation. In churches I served, and where there was a gathering, I always watched for someone who did not seem to fit in. I made it a habit to visit with them and would then encourage a few people to go get involved with that person. This takes constant work.



Idea # 2: "Sour grapes" before preaching or teaching. Try not to allow someone to feed you with negative thoughts before preaching or teaching. We need to be positive and upbeat. There is a time for everything, and "sour grapes" are not one of them before being engaged in preaching and teaching.

"Don't Quit!"

A high school coach was attempting to motivate his players to persevere through a difficult schedule. Halfway through, he stood before his team and asked, "Did Michael Jordan ever quit?" The team shouted "No!" "Did Larry Bird ever quit?" The team responded "No!" "Did Magic Johnson ever quit?" Again the team responded "No!" "Did Elmer McCallister ever quit?" There was a long silence. Finally one player was bold enough to ask, "Who was Elmer McCallister? We never heard of him." The coach snapped back, "Of course you never heard of him - he quit!"

Reaching careful and Godly goals in your life is a lot like a long basketball season with many opponents. You must face each goal for 2023 with determination and focus. Decide now that you will see it through to the end. "Don't Quit!" What did we say? "Don't Quit!" I can't hear you. What? **"DON'T QUIT!"**

4 Things Competing for Your People's Attention During Your Sermon

By Lane Sebring



It's more important than ever before to work on gaining and keeping the attention of your listeners while you preach. Capturing and maintaining attention is one of the most difficult things a communicator must do. The reason we have to work harder to gain and keep attention has to do with what competes for the attention of our people

every time we preach. Our listeners are so distracted, and we need to know what we're up against. Some of these distractions are new, and some are as timeless as humanity, but

they are all present every time you stand up to preach. Here are 4 things competing for your people's attention during your sermon: [\[read more\]](#)

Everyday Miracles

By Martin Luther (Faith Alone - 365 Devotional Readings)

*The Lord's deeds are spectacular. They should be studied by all who enjoy them.
Psalm 111:2*

What the Lord does is spectacular. But in this passage, the psalmist points out that only a few devout people notice what God has done. Most people don't praise God or thank Him. They never say, "The Lord's deeds are spectacular." Though they are completely surrounded by His gifts, they have gotten used to them. They take advantage of what God has given them, rooting around in God's gifts like a hog in a bag of feed. They say, "What's so special about the fact that the sun shines, fire gives warmth, the ocean provides fish, the earth yields grain, cows have calves, women give birth to children, and hens lay eggs? These things happen every day!"

Is something insignificant just because it happens every day? If fire only existed in one place on earth, I think it would be more precious than gold or silver. If there were only one well in the world, I imagine that a drop of water would be worth more than a thousand dollars.

God showers people with rich and wonderful blessings. But how ungrateful and blind people are! They don't recognize these blessings as amazing miracles from God, so they won't admire them, give thanks for them, or act happy about them. However, if a clown can walk a tightrope or train monkeys, people are ready to admire and praise him for it. The psalmist points out that the Lord's deeds are spectacular, But those deeds are only appreciated in the eye's of God's faithful followers.



**What gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer
There is no more for heaven now to give
He is my joy my righteousness and freedom
My steadfast love my deep and boundless peace**

**To this I hold my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to His
Oh how strange and divine I can sing all is mine
Yet not I but through Christ in me**

And Can It Be
by Charles Wesley

How is it that we can approach the eternal throne with such boldness?
Being dressed in Christ's righteousness affords us such a privilege.
A condemned sinner can boldly approach the almighty Creator

with such confidence because all that can be seen is the
righteousness provided by a perfect Savior.

We are perfect before the throne. To
view and/or to sing along click

And Can It Be.

NOW SEND THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO A FRIEND

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