

HELP FOR CONTINUING YOUR PERSONAL WORSHIP

Do you remember the SEVEN THINGS THAT MUST HAPPEN before anything else can happen in your intimacy with God? When we mentioned them last quarter we were *real serious* about each of them. Let me review them in a little different form. *They are essential!*

1. *Our Lord had personal worship and assumed we would.* Read these references from your heart:

“But you, *when you pray*, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you” (Matthew 6:6, NAS).

“And in the early morning, while it was still dark, he arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there” (Mark 1:35, NAS).

“But he himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray” (Luke 5:16, NAS).

In the life of our Lord, he *took time* — he *made time* for personal worship. Intimacy alone with his Father was *one essential need that must be met*. If Jesus needed it we need it a thousand times more. If it was essential for Jesus — if he could not live successfully without it neither can we. The *only thing* his disciples asked him to teach them was how to pray:

“And it came about that while he was praying in a certain place, after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples’ ” (Luke 11:1, NAS).

Why ask him? Because there was something about the prayer life of Jesus that spoke volumes to these needy weak disciples. If we repeat the request are we ready to follow his example?

2. Paul had “prayers”, i.e. a time and a place for prayer. Paul had personal worship. Hear him:

“For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing *I mention you always in my prayers*” (Romans 1:9, RSV).

“I do not cease to give thanks for you, *remembering you in my prayers . . .*” (Ephesians 1:16, RSV).

Paul had *two* specified times for his *prayers*:

“I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, *as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers*” (II Timothy 1:3, NIV).

Paul’s companion in the gospel had a time and place for prayers:

“Epaphras, who is one of yourselves, a servant of

Christ, greets you, *always remembering you earnestly in his prayers*, that you may stand mature and fully assured in the will of God” (Colossians 4:12, RSV).

I am not suggesting that Paul did not pray at other times than during *his prayers*, indeed, he asked the Thessalonians to “pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5:17, NAS). It is in the closet of prayer we develop such a desire to “*pray at all times*” (Ephesians 6:18,19). In the same letter to the Thessalonians he *did say*:

“*We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers.*” Not only Paul, but Silas and Timothy are examples of those who had “*prayers*” (1:1). Or were they simply examples of those who prayed? I prefer the former thought.

In Paul’s letter to Philemon, Paul said:

“*I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers. . . .*”

With me it is a fact that unless I jot down a need and carry it with me into the closet of prayer I just do not remember to pray — I just *do not* fulfill my good intentions.

Our prayer life will be greatly hindered if our wives (or husbands) do not live with us in love and harmony. These words are especially directed to the husbands:

“You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, *so that your prayers may not be hindered*” (I Peter 3:7, NAS).

3. Do you believe Jesus prayed out loud? How could you believe anything else when we have the verbatim records of his prayers?

Why did our Lord pray out loud? Because unless he did his mind would wander — *perhaps NOT!* — but if *we do not I KNOW our minds will wander!* Inaudible or silent personal prayers without the aid of audible expressions or written requests just fall apart! There is no consistency in such a practice.

Paul wrote his prayers — we have several examples.

Just one more time I *must say*: If you do not pray out loud or write your prayers there will be no continuing visit to the prayer closet — *Please, please* begin to audibly pray — or write out all your expression in your personal worship!

4. Make a “*no exception*” commitment to this time and place of personal worship.

We only get done what we schedule *into* our daily

routine — when we schedule it *in* we get it done. If we “*let it slide*” or “*schedule it out*” — no matter how attractive it is, *it will NOT get done!*

Are you going to schedule an hour of worship *into your daily routine*? Look over your hour by hour routine — If you are like me your days are so varied you honestly do not know what you are going to do before you do it. If you have a job — 9-5 — you *KNOW* where you will be found nine to five. If you are a housewife you know where you will be and what you will be doing after the kids wake up.

Isn't there ANY hour you can give the ONE who gave you all 24? If your mother was dying and needed your help for an hour per day — or your children had a special need that required an hour of your time — or you could earn \$100 in a special hour of work — would you work it in? —or out?

Commit yourself — you will be so glad you did!

5. *Let's review* just three more benefits of your commitment. We said in the first volume there were at least a dozen — here are three more:

(1) You will never find a larger help in your understanding of his word than when you begin to view it from the nine perspectives of your time of personal worship. You consider a portion of the Old Testament *three times*. You lift up before our Lord the New Testament *six times*. You are NOT looking for lesson materials or sermon ideas — but you *will find them*. You are NOT primarily interested in careful exegesis — *but you will find it!*

(2) You will be able to help your wife or your husband or your children in their personal worship. It is impossible to hide your personal devotions from your family members. They know if or if not you do it. You help them first of all — and most of all by your example. BUT they will listen attentively if you want to help them in their own personal worship. If you pray with your wife or husband neither of you have in such a time of prayer *personal worship* — personal worship is just what the words imply — *individual worship* — it will be much easier to pray with your loved one IF you are already engaged in personal worship. You will get much less argument from your children for family worship if you have shown them by example what it means to worship. You can teach your children how to have their own personal worship — if they have their own time in the prayer closet family worship is indeed “a piece of cake.”

(3) Public worship takes on a dimension you never knew it had when you are consistent in your personal worship. If you sing the same songs to the Lord in the prayer closet that you sing in the public meeting — the repeating of such songs with others is a real spontaneous joy! When the preacher or teacher begins to read a text you have held up before the Lord it becomes the words of your beloved — and you are eager to hear it! What personal interest we can take in every part of the public assembly when we have been alone with God!

6. *Do you have personal worship as a habit?* Please, please do not assume one day you will if you are not now taking the time to do it. Every day the *first* consideration is meeting your Lord in this blessed trust! A habit is an involuntary action — when it is easier to do it than not to do it you have a habit. Feelings have very little — if anything — to do with this habit. I have approached the door of the prayer closet with very little feeling — *feelings follow action*. A habit is formed by making provision for fulfilling the desires of our Lord *before* any of our own. When you do this you will develop a deep love for our Lord that carries you into all of life with a joy — not a duty — but it *is a duty* — but it is done with joy not monotony or resentment.

7. *Are you committing an hour of your time to personal worship?* If you follow the sequence we have outlined — i.e. the twelve steps, an hour will hardly be long enough. Please notice that my example is before you to get you started — use the same verses I have suggested BUT write out your own expression — or audibly express yourself. Read what I have written and you will say: “That helps, but I would say it in just a little different way” — IF you say that I have accomplished my purpose! Each of us has a different way of expressing his praise — his confession — his thanksgiving — his petition — *from the same text*. Do it! This will indeed then become the “sweet hour of prayer” — and you will find as I do an hour is not long enough!

By this time the five expressions of worship should be very familiar to you. They are: *Praise — Confession — Thanksgiving — Petition — Intercession*.

We incorporate all five of these expressions individually and collectively. In the twelve segments we use them according to the following pattern:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Praise | (1) <i>Praise for God Himself.</i> |
| Praise | (2) <i>Praise for what God means to me.</i> |
| Confession | (3) <i>Confession of sin</i> as related to the attribute of God. |
| All five | (4) <i>Sing a song that uses any or all of the five expressions.</i> |
| All five | (5) Read the words of the N.T. <i>to God</i> . In this you use whatever of the five elements that are suggested in the text. |
| All five | (6) Read the words of the N.T. <i>for yourself</i> . In this you use whatever of the five elements are suggested in the text. |
| Thanksgiving | (7) Read the words of the N.T. <i>in thanksgiving</i> . Find expressions of thanks out of the N.T. text. |
| All five | (8) Read the words of the N.T. — just a small part of it <i>for meditation</i> . Use all five expressions on just this short phrase — or a few words. |
| Petitions | (9) Read these same words of the N.T. <i>in petitions</i> or requests. Find these requests in the text. Continue with your personal requests. |

- All five (10) *Let God speak to you* — his application of the words of the N.T. text could touch any one of the five expressions.
- Intercession (11) *Intercede* for the needs of those you know and love — or intercede for the lost world — country by country.
- All five (12) *Sing a song* that uses any or all of the five expressions.

I cannot emphasize too strongly that method is *very, very important!* We have spelled out repeatedly the twelve steps we take in the hour of personal worship. Just here I want to show you how such a method can become YOUR method.

We will use one of the days in the volume you have in your hands — but we will add a few words of help in making my efforts a help to *your personal worship*:

PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations. He will be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth” (Psa. 72:5,6). There is something solidly comforting in knowing that ten or twenty or one hundred generations from today you will still be the same. We might not be worshiping you — or perhaps time will have disappeared in eternity — but you are always the same. The sun and the moon appear to us as such permanent entities. There will be a time when the sun and the moon will be moved from their places, but there will never be a time when you change in any way. How good to put my confidence in total permanence!

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

You will not use the same words I do — you will perhaps not emphasize the same thoughts I do — but you can praise God for his *total permanence*. Do it!

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

In a more personal expression: “You are to me ‘like rain falling on a mown field.’” Dear Lord, how beautiful a description of yourself! (1) We do not deserve your mercies but each day we arise they fall upon us like the rain from heaven. (2) We sometimes mistake your mercies and complain — but like the rain we are not going to change your wonderful purpose! (3) As rain is perfectly adapted to the needs of the plant world so are your influences in our lives. If we will but wait and meditate — with thankfulness, we will see, if not in this world in the larger world to come, how your goodness was behind every shower. (4) How different are the attendant circumstances in this shower or that! Just so are your influences in our lives. I suppose there has never been one rain on a newly mown field just like another even on the same field. Thank you for your goodness.

How do you personally relate to the permanence of God, and God who endures forever?

Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

These beautiful thoughts came to me from someone else — I probably read Spurgeon on Psa. 72:5,6 — or someone else, It only took 5 or 6 minutes to read. You can too — do it!

CONFESSION OF SIN

How is it that I am caught up in the temporary when I know I live in eternity? How could I be so fascinated with the tinsel when I have pure gold nearby? How is it I complain about being dry when you send showers upon me as they are needed? Someone has been lying to me! Thank you for the awakening that I might see things as they truly are. My deepest need just now is to separate the temporary from the eternal. How I do need the wisdom that comes down from yourself! “Pure, peacable, gentle, easy to be entreated, without hypocrisy.” If my ability to use the knowledge which I have from your word was “pure” I would soon escape this deception of the evil one. Dear Lord, I so purpose — forgive me!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

Please, please — do NOT be satisfied with only my words. Write or speak out your own! Let my words “prime your pump” — there is a well of “living water” in you — please let it out!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

My soul in sad exile was out on life’s sea,
So burdened with sin, and distressed,
Till I heard a sweet voice saying,
“Make me your choice!”
And I entered the Haven of Rest.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

Of course I can not sing for you — you sing to God. He is listening — do not disappoint him!

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

²¹From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

²³Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Out of my sight, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” — Matthew 16:21-23, NIV

The time has come! Jesus can now explain in detail and plainly what he before had only spoken of in veiled form. Jesus not only here describes his death at the hands of “the elders, chief priests and teachers,” but he kept it up. What a shock to find out that Jesus

was not going to return force with force. *Jesus was not going to defend himself!* This must have been the greatest possible stumbling block. They missed the little power-packed phrase: "and on the third day be raised from the dead." If they had only been listening! How often is this true of all of us!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

There are elements of confession, praise and thanksgiving in the above expression. Perhaps you will want to be more obvious in identifying such elements — use whatever element of the five the text suggests to you — but do it! Make this *your* expression.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

Peter had good intentions. He had already developed the picture of the Messiah — and nothing Jesus said that destroyed that picture would be accepted. Peter did not lack for temerity — when he walked on the water or when he took Jesus aside and rebuked our Lord privately. We could hardly imagine a more ridiculous spectacle! And yet we are at the same time witnessing the most human of scenes. Death is a shock to anyone. If one of our loved ones were to predict his own death (even as my own father did) the first response is, "not so"! The rebuke of Jesus to Peter is also natural. Too much was in the balance for Jesus to say anything less. It was Satan's old ploy to sidetrack our Lord — and he would have none of it!

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

You can do it — but you must begin — use your own words — but do it!

This is only six of the twelve — but we have hopefully given you enough help to continue. Write to me if we haven't.

The key that opens the closet of prayer is to divide the time into twelve segments. Each segment could be five minutes and your time would be an hour of worship. You could spend 2½ minutes per segment and have 30 minutes of worship. Simply read what we have written for 15 minutes of worship. I hope you choose an hour — the best not less.

Praise for God. You just adore God for Himself.

Praise to God for all He has done and is doing for you. We give you 91 qualities of God to help you here. We show you by example what to say. We leave an area open for your own expression of praise.

Confession of sin, first, as it relates to the quality of God you have just considered — and then for your personal sins. We again help you by example.

Sing a prayer. We suggest a prayer song you can sing as your prayer.

Read His word to Him. This is a form of praise — thanksgiving or confession as you tell God what His word means to you.

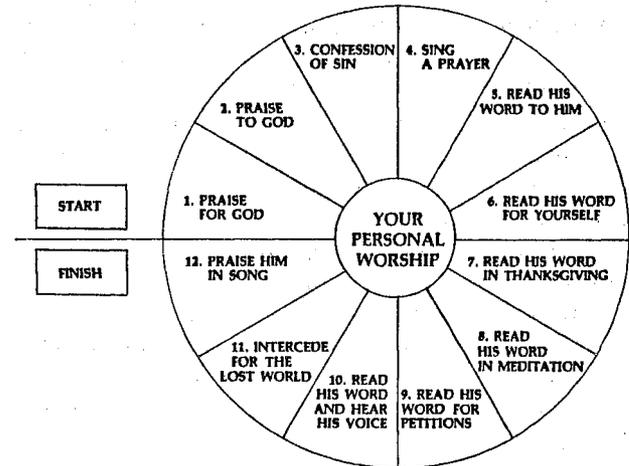
Read His word for yourself to find personal manna

for strength for the day. We offer an example to help you.

Read His word in thanksgiving. Find as many reasons in the text for thanking Him as you can. Once again we show you by example.

Read His word in meditation. In our book we will show you how.

Read the word for daily petitions. Each passage of scripture opens up areas for your requests. We leave a space for your own personal petitions and answers.



Listen to His voice from the five previous uses of His word. It is totally remarkable what direction you can get for your life in this period. We demonstrate by example.

Intercession. Intercession is a ministry of prayer by itself. The larger area of personal intercession is left open for your development. We offer you help in intercession for the lost world. We make extensive use of *Operation World, A day-to-day guide to praying for the world*. This is a 500 page book listing the countries of the world with prayer points for each country.

Sing a prayer of praise. We offer praise songs you can use or you can sing from your own hymn book.

I do hope each reader will consider the seriousness of what is here involved. I do wish I could sit down and look you in the eye and share with you my heart. Personal worship will help you in every area of your life. If it is necessary turn back to page five and reread the motivations for continuing your commitment.

On the next page I have a personal word from my heart to you. I do want to encourage you to write to me if you have a question or problem. I am here to help you.

A PERSONAL WORD WITH THE READER

This is addressed to all those who have started and stopped. Who have made resolutions and have broken them. I am not talking about starting and stopping out of a serious, but not a "life-threatening" commitment — but stopping after you had promised God you would not stop. I am not necessarily thinking about a New Year's Resolution — but about a resolution you made in the sacredness perhaps of a public rededication. But here you are "in the pits" again! I just want to say out of the above expressions repeated and repeated in my life that you *can* — you *will* overcome. You *can*, you *will* be the victor, not the victim!

Here are two factors that you can let be present in your life that will let Jesus have his way with you.

1. *Believe when you are forgiven he has no record of your failure! Do NOT — I repeat: do not* tell God how many times you have failed — he has no record to which to refer. He has chosen to forget your failures so he doesn't really know what you are talking about. Every day is the first day of a whole new world for you. Do not review and relive what God has forgotten. *Accept his awesome newness!*

2. *Make provisions to succeed — not to fail!*

Here is a poem that has spoken to my heart so many times. I never tire of reading it. *Let's read it again!*

If Jesus Came To Your House

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two —
If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do

Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room
to such an honored Guest,

And all the food you'd serve to Him
would be the very best,

And you would keep assuring Him
you're glad to have Him there —

That serving Him in your own home
is joy beyond compare

But — when you saw Him coming,
would you meet Him at the door

With arms outstretched in welcome
to your heav'nly Visitor?

Or would you have to change your clothes
before you let Him in,

Or hide some magazines and put
the Bible where they'd been?

Would you turn off the TV
and hope He hadn't heard,

And wish you hadn't uttered
that last, loud hasty word?

Would you hide your worldly music
and put some hymnbooks out?

Could you let Jesus walk right in,
or would you rush about?

And I wonder — if the Saviour
spent a day or two with you,

Would you go right on doing
the things you always do?

Would you keep right on saying

the things you always say?

Would life for you continue
as it does from day to day?

Would your family conversation
keep up its usual pace,

And would you find it hard each meal
to say a table grace?

Would you sing the songs you always sing
and read the books you read

And let Him know the things
on which your mind and spirit feed?

Would you take Jesus with you
ev'rywhere you'd planned to go,

Or would you maybe change your plans
for just a day or so?

Would you be glad to have Him meet
your very closest friends,

Or would you hope they'd stay away
until His visit ends?

Would you be glad to have Him stay
forever on and on,

Or would you sigh with great relief
when He at last was gone?

It might be interesting to know
the things that you would do

If Jesus Christ in person
came to spend some time with you.

—Lois Blanchard

The blessed Lord Jesus lives in our bodies in the person of the Holy Spirit. Please read with me these power-packed words:

“. . . you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed *the Spirit of God dwells in you*. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.”

“*And if Christ is in you*, (in the person of the Holy Spirit) though the body is dead, because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness” (Romans 8:9,10, NAS).

How shall we arrange our schedule so we will be able to entertain Jesus as a permanent unseen guest?

He wants to have a private personal conversation with us at least once a day — for at least an hour. Can we accommodate him?

The words you read in this volume of thirteen weeks of personal worship were written in at least a dozen places far removed from my home in Joplin, Missouri. I left the classroom and my home to journey to these places and to live in a strange home for a weekend. To speak Friday night, sometimes more than once on Saturday, several times on Sunday and return home Monday worn out. I had to get ready to teach again on Tuesday. What you read in this book was written out of the same weakness and failure you feel. But I haven't missed now for a long time. Stay with Him. Renew your love for Him. He will lift you up.

WEEK ONE

—Sunday—

He is our refuge and the One who makes us whole — Let's worship him!



PRAISE GOD FOR WHO HE IS

“It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to put confidence in princes” (Psa. 118:8,9). What a charming thought! “To take refuge in the Lord!” You are a refuge for the whole man, i.e., we can find protection for our mind in you. To think your thoughts is to bring a calmness of thought we cannot find anywhere else. We can find a bulwark of strength for our family in you. As we read together what you have said to each of us we sense a strength with each other and a love for each other we just do not have until we find it in you! What a refuge you are for the emotional chaos that fills our land! Man offers a refuge — indeed this seems to be his strongest emphasis — we could better label it “escapism.”

Express yourself in adoration for this quality of God. Speak it audibly or write out your praise in your own devotional journal.

PRAISE GOD FOR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME

Praise you for what you mean to me in this very quality! “Rock of ages, let me hide myself in you.” These words do indeed describe my desire and pursuit. All my confidence in what man can offer has ended in disappointment. It is just that it is not in man to direct his own steps, to say nothing of anyone else. My acknowledgement of need is not the same as the satisfaction of that need. Dear Lord, I do want to spend much more time in my refuge. I am so glad my refuge is not a place but a person, and an omnipresent, omnipotent Person!

How do you personally relate to the protection of God, and God who is our refuge? Speak it out or write it out. It is so important that you establish your own devotional journal.

CONFESSION OF SIN

All the above has been an expression of my spirit. At the same time, I can just as truly confess I have time after time put confidence in men and yes, princes. I

am learning, but it is a slow process. I am so glad you not only understand me, but directed the example of One who “did not trust himself to man for he knew what was in man” (John 2:24,25). My Lord found his daily refuge in you. How wonderful to be able to say we have never been disappointed in Jesus! In a very real sense confession becomes a means of strength since it propels me back to my only refuge — your dear self! I hide nothing, I want to repent deeply enough to change. Cleanse me from all my unwillingness!

What personal sins do you want to confess? We must speak them to remove them. Do it! Now. There is no one else you have sinned against more than God. Tell him so!

SING A PRAYER TO GOD

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its guilt and pow’r.

Open your hymn book and sing the rest of the verses — or even sing another prayer song.

HIS WORD

⁹Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, ¹⁰and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”

¹¹He said to them, “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” —Matthew 12:9-12, NIV

3 Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ²Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. ³Jesus said to the man with the

shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone."
 "Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. —*Mark 3:1-4, NIV*

READ HIS WORD TO HIM

My Father, why did your Son go into the synagogue? He knew this was the very arena of conflict with the wild beasts who came only to wait for an occasion to devour him. He went there because that is where your word was read and some men worshiped you. Indeed, Jesus went there to worship you in public as he worshiped you in private. Was the man with the withered hand "planted" there by the Pharisees? He seems to be very well known. His physical problem was easily seen. How wonderfully complete and full of life is your Son's answer to the accusing question: (1) *As to morality*: Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath? Is healing good? Is it lawful to save life? Is healing saving life? (2) *As to value*: Would you help a sheep on the Sabbath? Is man worth as much as a sheep — then shall I help this man? Thank you for such a courageous all-wise Savior!

Please express your response to this beautiful text. Put your expression in your own prayer diary.

READ HIS WORD FOR YOURSELF

"They were silent." Dear Lord, how often I have found myself here! I have been answered but I do not translate the answer into my life! Forgive, forgive me! Long held traditions are not easily given up, but we *can* change, we *must* change if Jesus is to be Lord. I can be so much like the scholars of the law. God wants me above and beyond *everything* else to show mercy and *meet* the needs of man. Open my heart through the words of my Lord: "How much more valuable is a man than a sheep?" I want to answer that question: (1) Only man is conscious of himself and will carry that consciousness throughout eternity. (2) Only man can sin — an animal cannot — therefore only man can be lost and only man can be, and must be saved. (3) Only man will live eternally and therefore only the salvation of man has eternal value — this could not be said of a sheep.

Pause in his presence and either audibly or in written form tell him all his word means to you.

READ HIS WORD IN THANKSGIVING

(1) Thank you for my Lord's example of the need for public worship. (2) Thank you Jesus was ready to face his accusers on their own ground. (3) Thank you that the closer we watch Jesus the better he looks. (4) Thank you for the eternal good Jesus came to give. (5) Thank you that my owner saved his sheep. (6) Thank you Jesus never did any of his miracles in such a way they could be doubted.

Give yourself to your own expression of gratitude — write it or speak it!

READ HIS WORD IN MEDITATION

"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Our Lord had

already plainly indicated that it was not a matter of law; it was a question of mercy. The question should read: "Is it merciful to heal on the Sabbath?" The need of man seems to be eclipsed by the question of law. Is it lawful to plot against an innocent man's life on the Sabbath? Is it right to hate and criticize on the Sabbath? These are all questions much more to the point. The seriousness of the situation is increased by the fact that Jesus knew their motives. The application of law is the whole point at issue. Our Lord's answer is "we shall apply it in mercy and love, with a desire to meet human need." Dear Lord, may we accept your word.

Pause — wait — think — then express yourself in thoughtful praise or thanks.

READ HIS WORD FOR PETITIONS

How much like the man here described do we all feel from time to time. (1) I want to bring all my needs to you in worship. (2) I know I operate far below the level you want me to — heal my withered efforts. (3) As this man looked with expectation and then joy upon your Son, help me to see him. (4) Make me deaf to all but the words of your Son as they relate to my need. (5) I want to remember who has the answers to the tough questions of life.

Please, please remember these are prayers — speak them — reword them!

READ HIS WORD AND WAIT — LISTEN — GOD SPEAKS

As the man with the withered hand listened to your Son, so do I: (1) "It is always lawful to help in the limitations of life." (2) "I can make you whole — stretch out your hand." (3) "How very valuable is one person."

INTERCESSION FOR THE LOST WORLD

Sri Lanka (Ceylon) — Population: 16,400,000. Growth rate — 2.1%. People per sq. km. — 216. Point for prayer: The land is very poorly evangelized and much prejudice and misunderstanding about the Gospel must be broken down. The colonial powers suppressed national culture and language and imposed national forms of Christianity in the past. Independence has brought in a backlash against Christianity and a "revival" of Buddhism. Pray for the evangelizing of this needy land.

SING PRAISES TO OUR LORD

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
 Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
 Angels descending, bring from above
 Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.
 This is my story, this is my song,
 Praising my Saviour all the day long;
 This is my story, this is my song,
 Praising my Saviour all the day long.