



Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

November, 1997



Dear friends,

We greet you once again in Jesus' name!

Jackie and I are doing well, in the joy of the Lord and easily staying busy. Sometimes people ask me one of the Minnesota trivial greeting questions: "Staying busy?" I think this question comes from the Scandinavian work ethic, which says if you're working and busy, then life is good and you're OK.

I always respond, "Oh yes, that's easy. But my real concern is 'staying fruitful!'"

So...are you "staying busy"?

Actually I love to "stay busy". It's one of the idols I have had to dethrone in order to have a prayer life. My flesh likes to be busy all the time. It hates for me to stop and listen to God!

I remember a day during a long season of waiting on God, when I was disciplining myself to spend long hours alone with Him. It was not pleasant. Not because God is unpleasant -- NO! IN HIS PRESENCE THERE IS JOY FOREVERMORE!

The problem was my own soul. In quietness I would face the anxiety and self - incrimination that is so common in people, in fact so common that someone wrote a book titled "When I Relax I Feel Guilty!"

In that season of learning I found I was nearer to my own unsanctified soul life than I was to God. As a result my hours trying to be "alone with God" turned into frustration. I was mostly alone with *myself* instead of alone with God.

On the particular day mentioned above, I had a schedule of meetings and responsibilities that caused me to be on the run from 6 a.m. until midnight. It was an 18 hour day of busyness with people and projects nonstop. For me, it was fun. I loved it. I was, I hate to admit it, happy that I had no time to pray! I was "staying busy". It really didn't matter to me if I was being fruitful! I just loved being busy.

Well, by now you might guess that I'm sneaking up on you with a message. The message is this: unless you know how to stop, look, and listen for the Lord, so that you do ONLY WHAT THE FATHER SHOWS YOU, you are destined to a life of busyness without fruitfulness in the things that matter most. You may complain about the "tyranny of the urgent"; but the fact is, your own flesh would rather keep busy with natural things and people than get alone with God. Stillness may not be a friend to you, because you have never learned to shut out the noisy voices that make you feel anxious or guilty when you try to quiet down on the inside.

If you have never dethroned your idolatrous soul, which exalts the needs and pressures of life above the voice of God, *it is time to do so*. Confess your bad mental habits and repent from them. Apply the blood of Jesus to your mind. This will stop the flood of urgent and anxious thought and allow you to recognize the refreshing presence of God.

I have been surprised at the quietness of my mind when the blood of Jesus has been applied to it. Instead of dozens of

priorities and memories flooding my thoughts, my mind becomes like still water. In that blood washed inward hush, the Holy Spirit seems to feel welcomed. (*The Spirit can only come where the blood has been applied.*) It is then that I recognize the Lord present and personal. It is then He speaks. It is then I am able to listen. It is then I can respond to Him. Out of this redeemed hidden life with God comes fruitfulness, not just busyness.

Don't worry workaholics. Listening to God will not relieve you of your great love -- working long and hard. Serving God is healthy and hard work, but you'll no longer be serving hidden idols in your heart which produce a lot of activity with no fruit in God's kingdom. Instead, you will know His presence in what you are doing, and watch Him bring about fruitfulness with lasting value.

Are you "staying busy" or serving the Lord HIMSELF?

Bound for Ukraine...in just a few days!

You know from last month's letter that Jackie and I are going to Krivoy Rog for the seventh time. Pastor Jeff Orluck will accompany us. As before, we will be busy from morning till night ministering and praying for people. We hope many will come to Jesus while we are there, and that the churches and leaders will be encouraged and strengthened. We know we will be...they are always a great encouragement to us! We will have an extra honor in helping to dedicate the mother church's new building, constructed through three years of faith and hard work on their part. Some of you helped to partly finance this building, so you share in the blessing!

Beyond the finances we need for travel, we hope to bring an offering of \$1500 for Russian language children's Bible teaching material, which will provide everything for the teachers and the children in all thirteen churches. This will be a great blessing. Last time we were there, we learned that they had absolutely no teaching supplies for the children. Would you pray for this offering to be released, or would you like to help with this?

Also, do you have any good mens' dress suits, women's dress clothes, or dress shoes? We would like to take some for the pastors and their wives.

Here is our itinerary:

Thursday, Dec. 4

9:30 p.m. Leave Minneapolis on KLM #664

Friday, Dec. 5

12:20 p.m.: Arrive in Amsterdam, overnight stay

Saturday, Dec. 6

10:25 a.m.: Leave Amsterdam on KLM #283

2:20 p.m.: Arrive in Kiev

7:00 p.m.: Depart by train for Krivoy Rog

Sunday, Dec. 7

7:00 a.m. Arrive in Krivoy Rog

"Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession."

Sunday— Friday, Dec. 7-12

Meetings in as many of the thirteen churches as possible, with preaching, prayer for the sick, leading people to Christ, and seeing them filled with the Holy Spirit.

Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 13, 14

United celebration and conference in the new church building. All thirteen churches will gather for this two day assembly of praise, preaching and prayer. The theme is: "You can be an effective minister — just like the apostles!" The new facility will also be dedicated during this time.

Monday, Dec. 15

Meetings with church leaders, and preparing to leave.
7:00 p.m.: Board the train to Kiev

Tuesday, Dec. 16:

7:00 a.m.: Arrive in Kiev
3:20 p.m.: Leave Ukraine on KLM #284
5:30 p.m.: Arrive in Amsterdam, overnight stay. See Marcia LaRock, Church Upon The Rock missionary who serves with YWAM Heidebeek, Netherlands.

Wednesday, Dec. 17

4:35 p.m.: Leave Amsterdam on KLM#665
6:25 p.m.: Arrive in Minneapolis

Prayer requests for the Ukraine outreach:

1. *Travel finances. As of this writing we still need all our travel funds. The time is very short until our departure. Jehovah Jireh. The Lord will Provide!*
2. *For anointed preaching, teaching and ministry while we are there. We will be stretched beyond our ability.*
3. *Our health and safety as we travel.*
4. *For many to be saved, healed, and filled with the Spirit.*
5. *For the strengthening of the Krivoy Rog churches*
6. *For funds for children's Bible teaching materials for all the churches*

You are invited to two new Schools of Prayer -- if you live in the Twin Cities!

1. "JESUS CHRIST, CHIEF INTERCESSOR"

Tuesday mornings, 10:10 - noon, starting January 13, at Heart for the Nations Bible School (Ch. of the Resurrection)
Note the enclosed flyer.

This will be a different course than we have ever taught before, so you may want to join us for this. The heart of this school is for all believers to "Fix their eyes on Jesus". We need a stronger foundation in Christ for a stronger prayer life. Who He is and what He accomplished is the backbone of all prayer. Even the Holy Spirit is limited in your prayer life unless you have a deep foundation in the intercessory work of Jesus Christ. Get your spiritual roots deeper in Him!

2. "I WILL NOT LET YOU GO UNTIL YOU BLESS ME!" ...contending for God's blessings --a school of fervent, unceasing, persevering and travailing prayer.

Tuesday evenings, 7 p.m. at Church Upon The Rock, starting January 13. Take note of the enclosed flyer.

This is also a new school, patterned after the image of

Jacob wrestling with the angel of the Lord. Followers of Jesus are called to be wrestlers -- holding on to God with all their might, and fighting against the enemy of men's souls.

This calls for prayer life coming from deep within the well of our spirits, energized by the Holy Spirit. It is prayer from the heart, not the head. It is praying with the unction, fervent and unstoppable. It is prayer born of God within us.

You need not register for this school, and are welcome to come as much as you are able. There is no charge at all; offerings will be received.

Prayer requests for the Schools of Prayer:

1. *That the Lord will take Jackie and me deeper into the life of prayer. We cannot teach things or try to lead others into things that are not part of our life. What we have received, we can give away. This request is not just so that we can teach better; we long to be closer to God.*
2. *That He will give us creativity and wisdom in these schools. We have found that all schools of prayer tend to go by very quickly. We sometimes feel we are just beginning, and suddenly it's over!*
3. *That the Lord will send people with hungry hearts and a deep longing for more of the Lord and less of themselves.*

In addition, in January and February, we are teaching an eight night school of prayer and spiritual warfare at the Salvation Army on the East Side of St. Paul. This church is in the heart of a most needy part of St. Paul, with hundreds of broken lives at their door regularly. Their hearts' cry is to see God bring deliverance and restoration in the families of this community. There are also several other churches on the "East Side" whose pastors (friends of ours) have been praying for their community for years. We hope that the Lord may give a strategy at this time for ongoing fervent intercession for the East Side among the churches with a heart for revival. *Will you pray for this Salvation Army church and for the East Side community of St. Paul?*

Other prayer requests:

1. *Our need to write and publish new devotional and teaching booklets.*
2. *Ongoing personal financial support. We thank the Lord for what He is doing. We always need new miracles!*
3. *Our ongoing leadership of several prayer groups and Bible studies.*
4. *1998 international outreach plans. We are waiting on God and have not made any commitments yet. India, China, Indonesia, Ukraine, Siberia, and certain other places are on our hearts.*
5. *Our children and spouses, and our elderly parents.*

May the Lord bless you, and keep you close to Him in the upcoming holiday season. May you continue to "stop, look, and listen" to see and hear what God is doing -- that you might adjust to Him and be involved with Him in His work. May your life be noted for fruitfulness, not for just "staying busy".

With love,

John and Jackie