



Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

July, 1998



Dear friends,

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life."
Jude 20,21

Upon coming home from Ukraine and Bosnia, I found myself going through what some might call "spiritual warfare". Basically it was a bad frame of mind. I was having trouble staying in my "abiding place", or "in the Spirit", if you will. It was difficult to pray or praise the Lord, and I frequently had compulsive thoughts about present problems and future challenges.

I asked the Lord what the trouble was. What was I doing that made things so difficult? Was there some hidden sin? As I asked, an answer came in a clear thought: "You're not keeping yourself in the love of God." Knowing that such a phrase was in the book of Jude, I turned to it and read the above verses. In them are four practical things for anyone who has a problem staying at rest spiritually -- in other words, staying in their "abiding place":

1. "Build yourself up on your most holy faith"

We build up our spirit as we feed ourselves with the word of God, and stay in obedience to the known will of God. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word (Romans 10:17). We need to keep hearing life giving, faith building words, and keep meditating on the wonderful promises and excellent character of God, so that our faith will keep growing. Walking in obedience to what we know to be the will of God will also allow us to keep fed spiritually, for Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and finish His work." (John 4)

The term "most holy faith" indicates how important and valuable our faith is. Jesus told Peter, "Satan has asked to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your **faith may not fail.**" Our faith in the Lord is precious, and is to be nurtured and strengthened. Satan can rob us by damaging our faith, putting us into doubt and unbelief. When this happens, we must admit it, stop other things, and take time to build ourselves up again on that most holy faith. Unbelief leads to all manner of evil. Faith leads to all manner of goodness and holiness.

2. "Pray in the Holy Spirit"

It is still a mystery to me how praying in other tongues, which I think Jude was referring to, can strengthen us on the inside. As in I Corinthians 14:4, "He who speaks in another tongue edifies himself." Often this verse is used to emphasize the need for prophecy in the church, rather than tongues, and that is right, if we want to edify the church. But how do we encourage ourselves? Pray in the Holy Spirit.

There is another sense of praying in the Spirit, that is, praying under the anointing of the Spirit. This may be in our own language, as well as in tongues. The need is to get under the anointing so that we can pray with the anointing. For me, this means praising and worshipping until I almost uncon-

sciously slip into prayer. When I get into prayer that way, through the doorway of praise and worship, I find myself praying with the anointing of the Spirit. It is usually a mixture of tongues and my natural language -- first one, then the other, coming up like a fountain from within my spirit. This is a different kind of praying than praying out of my mind, which can at times be troubled or compulsive. Such mental praying doesn't build us up, but may bring us under heaviness, because it is without the presence and anointing of the Spirit.

Prayer in the presence of God -- released through praise and worship -- edifies, encourages, and builds us up. I don't know how it works; it just does.

3. "Keep yourselves in the love of God"

The continuous strategy of Satan is to get us out of the knowledge and awareness of the love of God. In Ephesians 6, we see the image of a wrestling match, with our opponents being princes of darkness. The picture is of a Greek wrestling match, during which the object was to get the opponent out of a defined circle. He who was able to push his opponent over the line was the winner. Do you let Satan push you over the line?

There is a circle of God's love, a line defined clearly by the Word of God. It is summarized in Romans 8:38,39:

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The love of God is the root of our faith and hope. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us..." "That you, being rooted and grounded in love..." The awareness of His love anchors our soul, gives us courage, and removes fear. ("Perfect love casts out fear.")

Is it a wonder then, that Satan secretly gets us to doubt God's love? When this happens, we become targets for many other "fiery darts" thrown with an intent to destroy us. Keeping ourselves in the love of God, through simple and frequent reminders of His promises and His presence, is a strong shield against Satan's discouragements and torments.

4. "Look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ"

I have trouble when I lose my perspective on life, forgetting where I am heading, and forgetting that it is the pure mercy of the Lord that will get me there. When I forget that my life rides on the mercy of God, it is because I have in a subtle way been riding on my own energy, my own works. This makes me vulnerable to condemnation and guilt, as I easily realize my own inadequacy and failures. God brings me back to reality: it is His mercy that is carrying me through. I must live in the perspective of Psalms 23, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" It is His mercy that carries me and you, and it is His mercy that will bring us into

an eternity with God. Looking for the mercy of Jesus is to let go of today's anxieties, yesterday's failures, and tomorrow's unknowns. His mercy covers it all.

Receive these simple instructions from Jude. They point to our secret, besetting sins: losing faith, not praying in the Spirit, not keeping ourselves in God's love, and forgetting the mercy of Jesus. When we slip into these sins, our life gets into turmoil and fruitlessness.

In like manner, these four things point to the root of holy and healthy living. By keeping ourselves in the love of God, the life of Jesus is released within us. We find ourselves blessed and being a blessing to those around us.

Ukraine update: New Bible School to open!

The Bible School will open mid September, by God's grace. Our main translator, Lubov, has agreed to move to Krivoy Rog for the nine months of the school year to be the resident translator for the school! This is an answer to prayer, and allows us to move ahead with sending teachers to Krivoy Rog each month. We will be responsible to provide her financial support, a small apartment for her to live, and also an apartment for the teachers from the West. **Please pray** for these needs to be met.

A team will go in September to start the school: Mark Johnson, seasoned in street evangelism and worship, will go with two other men who have worked with him in evangelism. They will kick off the school with training in evangelism, and take the students out to do it, going to the marketplaces and large apartment complexes within walking distance of the church and school. Pastor Jeff Orluck will also go. He has been there with us twice before. I have asked him to train the students to start evangelistic home groups by using the "Alpha" course, which he has successfully used in reaching many "generation X'ers". The course is being widely used to draw unbelievers into neighborhood Bible studies. This will be a great beginning for the school! **Pray for this team.**

Jackie and I will go in October, and then again in the winter and spring. By God's grace, we will have an anointed teacher there for two weeks of each month! **Please pray!**

I am working with pastor Gregori in the planning of the curriculum for the Bible School. Continue to **pray for wisdom** for this. Through access to the Internet, I am discovering sources for teaching materials and literature that have already been translated into Russian, such as the Alpha course. (**Pray** that the Alpha materials can be sent from Russia to Ukraine in time for Jeff to use them.) We want to provide the school with teaching resources so that they can function without being unnecessarily dependent on us in the future.

It is possible that we will also need to do translating of teaching materials ourselves during the school year, therefore needing a skilled translator here in Minnesota to work with us. Please pray for this. It is possible that Olga, Jen's roommate, could do this as a part time job while she works on her master's degree at Bethel. The Lord would have to provide for us to pay her salary, so **please pray.**

We also would like to provide a computer for the church and Bible School in Krivoy Rog. This will help the church develop a publishing ministry, and enable us to communicate easily by E-mail, since Lubov will be there to translate. A

laptop computer would be best, so it can be carried on a plane, and so it can be used both in the church office and at pastor Gregori's home (which has the only telephone connection).

Please pray for this need to be met by September. I would like to send it with pastor Jeff and Mark when they go.

Indonesia report: Greater trouble than we hear in the news...

Our missionary friends who work among the Chantik in Indonesia are in Minnesota, and have given us a first hand report of the trouble in the nation. (Most of you know we have taken teams there several times.) The trouble in Indonesia is far greater than what we have gleaned from the American news media. The Indonesian government is essentially collapsed, all the banks are bankrupt, as well as most businesses and factories. The inflation rate is 400% and rising. This has stopped the flow of all foreign goods into the country (since no one can afford them) Starvation is at the door for millions of people. The streets of Jakarta are literally lined with beggars. Almost all foreigners have left. During the rioting, there were not enough planes to evacuate them, so the United States navy sent ships right into the harbors of Indonesia, over the protests of the Indonesian government, which declared this to be an act of war. Deaths are probably in the tens of thousands. There is an invasion of organized crime into this vacuum of lawlessness. Furthermore, gangs of Muslims are destroying churches, non-Muslim homes and businesses, and raping and killing women and children. The overwhelming loss and terror has driven many to suicide.

In the face of such trouble our missionary friends have reported the protection of the Lord over their city and their team, which has grown to nearly thirty missionaries (foreigners and Indonesians). A few days before the rioting began, the Lord impressed them to gather the entire team to go around their city and pray over all significant places. They prayed over all entrances to the city, and all government buildings, anointing them with oil and praying for the peace of the city. You must remember that they live in the strictest Muslim province in all of Indonesia. They have reported that there has been NO rioting in their city and they have felt completely safe through all the trouble in the nation. Hallelujah!

This has been a reminder to me that God protects, but we must cooperate in active faith to enforce His promises and protection against the enemy. Remember Passover night, when the angel of death passed through the land. The Israelites were told to APPLY the blood of the Lamb to the doorposts of their houses. These missionaries, in effect, applied the blood to the doors of their Muslim city. Peace has reigned in their city, and the number of gospel workers is increasing. By year's end, they expect the team to be more than forty. In the midst of the trouble, they have found people to be increasingly open to sharing about the Lord. **Please pray for them.**

Thank you once again...

Thank you again for praying for us and supporting us in ministry. Your prayer and financial gifts keep us going. Where would we be without you??? You continue to be our LIFELINE! May the Lord bless you richly in every way, as you "*keep yourself in the love of God!*"

With love,

John and Jackie

Remember: for tax purposes, write checks to Prayer International, with note attached "for the Matthews"

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