

Faith of a Scientist

The Impact of the Bible Upon a Christian Professor

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Chapter 1

Soopa! Soopa!

September 3, 1993, at 6:00 AM in the hotel room on the edge of campus, I was on my knees reading the Scriptures and in prayer concerning the lecture that I was to deliver. I was a newly tenured Professor of Organic Chemistry at a major east coast university and I had been invited to give a lecture at Purdue University's Department of Chemistry on the subject of molecular electronics.

As was my daily practice, I was reading the Bible precisely where I left off the day before, and that morning, I was in *Matthew* chapter 21. I always start reading in *Genesis* chapter 1 and then continue through *Revelation* chapter 22, and when I am done, I start again. I don't read rapidly. In fact, I read the Bible slowly and deliberately. It can take 2-3 years for me to complete the Bible at the daily pace that I read. But that's just fine with me, and I suspect it's also okay with God. God speaks to me almost every day from the pages of that book. And that morning I read,

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen." (Matthew 21:21)*

I responded to God saying, "Lord, you are raising my faith through this passage. So I pray that the chemistry seminar that I give today will be the *best* seminar that has ever been given in that department. The very best." Then it occurred to me, How would I know if it is the best seminar that has ever been given in that department? So I said, "Lord, that department is probably 100 years old, so how will I know if it really is the best?" In light of the scripture that I had just read, I sensed that I should ask for some

sign to know the level of quality of the seminar - a mountain of sorts, being cast into the sea. Then I said, “Lord, if it is the best seminar, I pray that Professor Negishi says that it was a super seminar.”

Professor Negishi was the advisor for my Ph.D. research work that I completed several years earlier. He had never said that any of my work was super. On the contrary, when I was a graduate student in his research group, whenever I had done something that I thought was really good, he would face his palm downward and move his open hand horizontally in front of his belt buckle and say, “Pretty good, *for your level.*” I never seemed to get above his belt buckle. Therefore I was emphatic, “Lord, make it the best seminar, and confirm it by Professor Negishi saying that it was a *super* seminar.”

Before I ever give a seminar or a lecture, whether it be in my academic line of work such as a university chemistry lecture, or a Sunday school class exposition, I always pray and ask God to permit the Holy Spirit to overflow through my life. I cry, “Lord, blow them away through me. Hit them with the power of the Holy Spirit!” Yes, I find this equally important in the academic lectures that I administer. And it is always a delight to see God blow the socks off a bunch of unbelieving scientists and their students who think that they have the keys to the knowledge of life. As far as I’m concerned, there’s never a dull moment in service to Jesus in my secular line of work. And He certainly did not disappoint me on that day.

When I completed my seminar that afternoon, I knew that God had anointed and He had blessed. As soon as I concluded and thanked the audience for their attendance, Professor Negishi, who was sitting in the front row of the lecture hall, rose to his feet, raised his arm, pointed his index finger in the air and cried in his Japanese accent,

“Soopa! Soopa!” Indeed, God had confirmed it! And I bowed my heart for a moment and quietly thanked Jesus before answering the audience’s questions.

As those in attendance were filing out, I walked over to 82-year-old Professor H. C. Brown, the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1979. Professor Negishi had studied under the tutelage of Professor Brown, and due to the common academic lineage, Brown and I were also well acquainted. He was on the third row’s aisle seat, his common location. I extended my hand to shake his and I said, “Thank you for attending the seminar today.” While still holding my hand he said, “That was the best seminar I have ever seen in my life.” I replied, “That’s kind of you to say.” In a typical Nobel Laureate fashion, Professor Brown scolded, “I’m not saying it to be kind. I really mean it!” I again bowed my heart and praised God who fulfills His word in the lives of His children.

Indeed, the Lord confirmed His word that day as He has done for me many times through my simple practice of *daily reading and meditating* upon the words written in the Bible. Could that work for others? Yes! A thousand times, yes! How do I know? Because it is so written in the Bible. It’s God’s promise.

Every word of God proves true... (Proverbs 30:5b, ESV)

Chapter 2

What is Meditation?

What is meditation in the context that I am using? It is *not* an ethereal state where my mind is out of touch with reality. Jesus said that, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind...” (Luke 10:27). So my mind is always with me and I am quite conscious of all my thoughts and feelings in that time. In the context that I am using, *meditation is the contemplative reading and reflection upon his word*. It’s a slow and deliberate repetitive reading of a passage as I ask God to confirm it in my life and to speak to me through the passage, a pondering upon His thoughts, as recorded in the written word. And it is the application of that passage to my life as God speaks to *me* through the very pages of those ancient writings. And He does speak, as I will share here regarding situations in my own life.

Moreover, in the cases where I find a particularly compelling passage, I write it down and put a copy in my pocket. I re-read it many times throughout the day and try to commit it to memory. I often meditate upon a passage and memorize it in the process. I also make this a family affair. Along with my wife and four children, we rise daily to recite, from memory, the passages upon which we are meditating. In that manner, I find that the text becomes a part of my thought process, a part of my life.

Some view my practice of carrying scripture texts in my pocket as being childish. Well, they can think as they like, but carrying Scriptures in my pocket is not childish for me. It is a practice that I have maintained for nearly 25 years and I will continue that

practice until the day I am promoted to the presence of Jesus. And may you too be so engrossed in this practice to experience the blessing that results.

I will simply share my experiences wherein the direct speaking and blessing of God has come from the pages of the Bible. Through that text, God speaks. Certainly God can speak in many ways including through people, through experiences, and through a “still small voice.” However, for me, I often find myself hearing what *I* want to hear through that “still small voice” because my discernment is poorly refined. Therefore, unless I use the Scriptures to gauge the authenticity of God’s voice in a situation, I find frustration. When God speaks through the Scriptures, it becomes a bastion of God’s voice of counsel and direction.

From these personal examples here, I hope you will embark on the practice of hearing God’s voice through the Bible. God does speak. And in obedience to that, there is great blessing.

I shall delight in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word. (Psalm 119:

16)

Chapter 3

Meditation Yields Blessings

After spending the past 25 years daily reading the Bible, cover to cover, the passage that I have meditated upon more than any other is from Psalm 119:97-100:

O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation.

Look at the results of meditating on the law of God:

(1) You'll be wiser than your enemies.

I recall a time in graduate school where I was working on the synthesis of a molecule only to learn that another research team led by one of the world's most productive synthetic organic chemists was working on the same target via a very similar route. I remember thinking that in spite of all the work that I have done, this talented guy and his group would beat us to press. So I took hold of this passage from the Scriptures and prayed, and the synthesis proceeded amazingly fast from that point and we won by publishing before the other team.

(2) You'll have more insight than all your teachers.

Some might think that this could only apply to teachers within the church, but that is not true. The Lord places no qualifications on the teachers that you could exceed beyond if you would meditate on the Scriptures. Think about the passage. If you meditate on God's law, you'll have more insight than your teachers. Period. That is what it says. Therefore, I have taken this passage to heart and said, "Lord, make this real in my life." I had the good fortune to have studied with some of the very best chemists in the world. Nonetheless, I took him at His word. During my last visit to see Professor Negishi, my

Ph.D. mentor, he said to me that I had excelled his accomplishments and would likely go far further than he had. For one to whom I could not get past the statement, “pretty good, *for your level,*” it was an overwhelmingly powerful confirmation.

Another portion that speaks of the blessing that comes in a life that delights in His word is from Joshua Chapter 1: 7-8 where a God is telling Joshua what he must do to be successful:

Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Notice how success is mentioned twice in this passage. You will have success if you meditate on the law of the Lord and carefully do it. You will also have prosperity. Let me caution you, however, that the success and prosperity of the Lord is very different than the world’s view of the same. Success and prosperity in God does not necessarily involve the kind of car you drive or the size of your house. It is a quality of life and family that far exceeds the things that world has to offer. When we are hit by the challenges of life that are common to all people such as sickness, pain and death, there is a sustenance and victory. Jesus even said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies...” (John 11:25) The prescription for success is clear. If you meditate on God’s word and its precepts and are careful to observe it, you will have God’s success and prosperity showered upon you.

You might think that these are isolated verses on blessings that come through meditation, but that is not so. There are many such verses. Look at what the Psalmist says about meditating on God's word in Psalm 1: 1-6.

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season,
And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers.

Notice that if we delight in the law of God and make it a practice to meditate upon it day and night, there will be firmness to our life; we'll bear fruit even when others are drying up, and in whatever we do, we'll *prosper*! There again is that promise, the promise of prosperity. That's not my promise to you; it's God's promise.

However, *every* promise in scripture is coupled to some act of obedience. The act here is to walk in obedience to meditate on God's word day and night. So often we want God's blessing but we are unwilling to walk in the tasks needed, and specifically defined by God, to see the fulfillment of the blessing. Sometimes all we want to do is whine and cry for God's promised blessings. But God has made his will clear. If we obey, we'll be blessed. It's that simple. Blessing comes with obedience. And the act of obedience here is to make his word our delight and our daily meditation.

For a period of 10 years I spent every Monday night teaching God's word in a maximum security prison. I met many men who came from a diversity of backgrounds and who were incarcerated for a plethora of offenses. Although I have heard of people who do not care at all for their children, I have personally never met such a person.

Every man that I ever met, including those in the prison, wanted God's best for his children. In fact, on occasions when I was making no headway in striking up a conversation with an inmate, I would say, "Do you have children that I can pray for?" Immediately, the hardest man's demeanor would change, and he would begin to tell me about his children so that I could pray for them. Surely, the way to an inmate's heart is by a prayerful concern for his children. Likewise, all parents want God's best for their children. So how do we see God's best for them? Consider the passage in Psalm 112: 1-3 wherein God makes special promises for the children of those who make his commandments their delight.

Praise the Lord!
How blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
Who greatly delights in His commandments.
His descendants will be mighty on earth;
The generation of the upright will be blessed.
Wealth and riches are in his house,
And his righteousness endures forever.
Light arises in the darkness for the upright....

In this passage we see that if we make God's commandments our delight, even our children will be mighty on earth. Yes, on this earth! But again we see the need for delighting in His commandments.

For those who think that we are free of the need to follow God's commandments, you should count the New Testament commandments, many of which were pronounced by Jesus himself. In fact there are over 150 commandments in the New Testament and Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." (John 14: 15) So keep His commandments, delight in them, and your children will be mighty. It's God's promise.

Furthermore, we see in this passage that there are wealth and riches that will also fill our homes. Again, the richness that God brings is far more wonderful than what the world offers. God's riches need not include money and status. They might, but they might not. Be sure, however, they always embrace a quality of life and peace in the home that will be the envy of all your neighbors.

The final part of the verse cited above mentions that "light arises in the darkness for the upright." In the context of those who are delighting in His commandments, light arises in their darkness. As a scientist, when posed with scientific mysteries that have presented themselves in my research, I have so often bowed my heart and prayed, "Lord, make your light shine on this darkness. When no others can see, please Lord, let me see." On many occasions, when graduate students have brought their puzzling laboratory results and laid them on my desk, I have been as baffled as they. So remembering this verse, which I had long before committed to memory, I pray for light, and God answers. Surely, meditating on God's word can cause light to arise in darkness even for the challenges that confront our secular careers.

I will meditate on Your precepts and regard Your ways. Psalm 119: 15

Chapter 4

Students, Chicken Bones and Oxen

When I was in graduate school, my wife and I had a small one-bedroom apartment in the married student housing area. We used to invite about a dozen college students to our home each week for an evening meal and a time of fellowship and study of the Scriptures. But many of them were simply slobbers when it came to their physical existence. They didn't mean to be slobbers. They just were. As they would sit on the couch and eat, food would roll off their plates onto the couch, and they didn't even notice it. And when they did notice, they made half-hearted attempts to clean it up. Some of them would walk in the apartment with snow on their boots and would not even wipe their feet. My daughter, who was about one year old at the time, would follow behind those guys and eat the dirty snow clods that had fallen off their boots.

One afternoon, two days after the weekly dinner with the students, I found my daughter chewing on an old chicken bone that she had found behind the cushion on the sofa. That was it! Those sloppy college students. The apartment was becoming as muddled as a fraternity house. Maybe the best thing was to tell those students to go elsewhere, I thought.

The following week, as I was conducting my daily practice of rising early, reading the Bible and meditating on the Scriptures, I read Proverbs 14: 4.

Where no oxen are, the manger is clean,
But much increase comes by the strength of the ox.

My eyes kept returning to that verse. I could not get it out of my thoughts. What was God saying to me through that passage? So often when God speaks to me through the Scriptures, I can't get my eyes past that portion. I therefore prayed, "Lord, what are you

saying to me through this passage?" As Jesus said, "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." (Matthew 7: 8) The Lord then spoke clearly to my heart through that passage. He said, "You can keep your apartment clean—just don't invite those students into your home. But if you want to see the "increase" of God in their lives, then keep your home open to them and I'll take care of the rest." I bowed my heart in instant obedience.

From that day on, I have always opened my home for Christian service. I further recalled a passage which I had often pondered from II Samuel where a man named Obed-edom had opened his home for the service of God and he too was greatly blessed. The context of the passage comes from a time when King David attempted to move the ark of the covenant (which signified the place where God dwelt among Israel) to his own city, Jerusalem. David loved God and God's presence, which the ark represented, so he went about having it moved. In the process, however, David failed to follow the precise guidelines, designated by God, generations earlier. The ark was only to be moved by a certain tribe of Israel and only upon the shoulders of the men from that tribe. As a result of David's failure to follow God's precise instructions, a man was struck dead by God for his irreverence. II Samuel 6: 9-11 says,

So David was afraid of the Lord that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?" And David was unwilling to move the ark of the Lord into the city of David with him; but David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. Thus the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

The point of my story is that Obed-edom made his home available for the presence of God, and God blessed Obed-edom and his whole family. In fact, when David was told that God was blessing Obed-edom's entire household, David demanded that the ark be

immediately moved to his own home town, Jerusalem. Clearly, David, too, wanted the blessing. II Samuel 6: 12 says,

Now it was told King David, saying, "The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, on account of the ark of God." David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.

I want that kind of blessing! And from that day, I always opened my home, with gladness, for the Lord's work.

We have moved to four other states since that time, and six different homes, and in every case, I had my home opened for the service of God's work. Why? For the "increase" in other's lives and the blessing upon my entire household. And as my children became teenagers, I told them to use our home for their Bible study groups and other Christian meetings because of the blessing that comes when we realize that much "increase" comes by the strength of these visitors growing in the knowledge of God in our home. Why are we so ready to do this? Because God spoke clearly to my heart through the Scriptures, almost 20 years ago. And the blessings have flowed as a result of the obedience to his word.

Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return. (Luke 6: 38)

Chapter 5

Mary Kay Cosmetics

My wife, Shireen, and I had a sharp disagreement in our early-married life. But God, in His grace, interceded by telling *me*, in a sense, to “leave her alone.” We had been married for about five years and had “discussed” an issue many times. That issue was her wearing of make-up. (I know many women will start becoming really stirred right now, but just bear with me; you’ll be pleased with the outcome.) I had long read the passage in I Timothy 2: 9, 10,

Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.

Shireen never wore much make-up, but any amount seemed problematic to me in light of this passage in I Timothy. She gently contended that the verse never mentioned the specific use of make-up and that a little make-up is rightly discreet. “It’s not bad or spiritually wrong,” she pled, “to put on a little eye-liner.” She had a point, though in my zeal and in my own young mind I was not pacified.

And it didn’t stop there. Although I was a post doctoral researcher trying to live on a meager federal research fellowship (and I mean meager) while living in expensive Menlo Park, California, and supporting a family of four, Shireen announced that she had purchased a Mary Kay Cosmetics sales representative starter-kit. She was now going into the business of selling cosmetics! “There’s nothing in the Bible against selling make-up,” she argued. That bothered me for several reasons, even though, fundamentally, she was correct. First, I was not even convinced that she should be

wearing make-up, let alone selling it to others. Second, that starter kit cost far more than I thought we could afford. And third, I suspected my wife would not be a good sales person.

I prayed every day regarding this issue of make-up and the cosmetics sales. The tension rising in the home was not small either. It was by no means a marriage-threatening issue, but it was distressing for both of us. After praying for a couple of weeks, I was again reading God's word early one morning and God spoke to me from the pages of scripture. Proverbs 27: 9a says,

Oil and perfume make the heart glad...

And from that one miniscule passage of seven words, the peace of God filled my heart, as it often does when He's speaking, and I felt God saying to me, "Stop bothering your wife. She likes make-up and it makes her heart glad. Leave her alone." From that moment I was free! I recall Shireen walking out of the bedroom shortly after that and I said, "You can wear all the make-up you want any time you want." As I was leaning over my Bible, she stared at me shaking her head and said, "You're a moody man! You should enroll in the Moody Bible Institute." But I never again struggled with the make-up issue. When God speaks, liberty comes.

Interestingly, Shireen is a gracious giver, which precipitated the demise of her new business. Whenever a woman would come to our home, my wife would give her a free cosmetic product and refuse to accept payment. Before long, she was out of stock and that was the end of her career as a cosmetics sales representative. So we were both happy.

So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8: 36)

Chapter 6

Thorn Removal

How dare a colleague talk about me like that! That was my thought when the undergraduate pre-med student came to my office and told me what that professor had said to her about me. Other students had told me similar things that were told to them by that same person. In the university, if you want dirt to flow, just tell the students, and within hours the news will travel unfiltered, and even embroidered, all across campus. And that's what was happening.

This young professor and I had started at the university at about the same time. We were both working toward achieving tenure within our allotted six-year trial period. Based on our incoming credentials, my colleague seemed more promising than I, and he was not afraid to point that out to me. In fact, on one occasion he said to me, "I'll get tenure before you ever do." Although we openly tolerated each other, he was a thorn in my flesh, and I in his. But as most such thorns, God had placed him there for the reason of *my* dying to my self and seeing God exalted.

God, in His grace, had caused my career to rocket. By the end of my third year, I applied for early tenure and received it. At the end of four years I was further promoted from the intermediate level of Associate Professor to the level of Professor. At the same time, this promising young colleague of mine was still trying to secure his first large federal research grant and he was approaching his six-year decision point with some uneasiness.

So when he began to point out my deficiencies to the undergraduates, in some ways his frustration was understandable. But at the moment, it infuriated me. So I rose

up from my chair, I proceeded swiftly and determined to his office, and I pounded on his door. I was going to give him a piece of my mind for what he had been saying about me! But God, in his gracious way, kept me from making a fool of myself, although I deserved to be made the fool. God accomplished this simply since my colleague was not in his office. So there was no way to vent, at least not to him and not at that moment where fury was motivating me.

But then the Holy Spirit began to work on my heart. He brought to my memory a passage that I had recently committed to memory, namely from Luke 6.

But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Luke 6: 27, 28

I began to meditate on that portion once again. I asked God to give me a heart to pray for this struggling young man and to give me the love of Christ for him. Without rebellion or questioning God's wisdom in *commanding* that I bless those who curse me, I began to pray *daily* for God's blessing on this colleague of mine. And as always takes place, God began to deal with my heart in the process.

As I prayed that God would bless that young professor, God blessed him—a lot! He blessed him over and over again. He received the big federal research grant that he had been trying to secure for years, and he had indeed hit the level of professional productivity that was the envy of many. He received awards and honors and the associated accolades from the professional societies. In fact, as I prayed, he received so much success that he got an offer from another university, and he accepted the offer and moved away—what a blessing! God dealt with *my* heart by obedience to his word. And

God also dealt with the situation in a way that was, to me, nothing less than supernatural. That thorn, which was no longer so thorny to me, was removed. His word is true.

For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. (Matthew 6: 14, 15)

Chapter 7

Executive Advice

A few years ago I was serving on the Board of Directors of a high-tech company. That was a bone-crushing experience in some ways, but certainly the least enjoyable event was on the occasion that I needed to deal with an executive who was under-performing. I was instructed by the Board of Directors to dismiss that executive, a directive that I did not relish. Why me? I just wanted to be a nice guy and be friends with folks. Why was I being given such an unpleasant task?

Two days before the termination date, I was reading the Scriptures and I came across a passage in Psalm 105: 21, 22 that says,

[Pharaoh] made [Joseph] lord of his house and ruler over all his possessions, to imprison his princes at will, that he might teach his elders wisdom.

I was struck by that passage as God spoke to my heart regarding the job that was so unpleasant in my eyes. I had always admired Joseph the son of Jacob. He was a kind and generous man who fled from evil and sought to please his superiors at every turn. But there he was, commissioned and raised up by God, to “imprison his princes” or discipline executives in my case. Even for this most distressing task, God’s presence was there in the Scriptures to give assurance that the assignment had to be done, and in fact, that is why I had been appointed to it, in a sense.

Your testimonies also are my delight; they are my counselors. (Ps 119: 24)

Chapter 8

Kindness and Truth

Walking briskly across campus to what was destined to be an intense and emotionally charged meeting, I was working through, in my mind, the strategy and words that I would forcibly speak. I was keenly focused and my jaw began to stiffen with intensity. Then it hit me. A passage from *Proverbs* 3:3 that I had meditated upon and memorized, together with my wife and children, years earlier:

Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.

The word, “kindness” was being underscored in my heart. Immediately, I said, “Yes, Lord. Let me not forget to address these people with kindness. Let it be around my neck, even like a choke-hold if need be, lest I say something unkind and something I’ll regret.”

And God did bless precisely as I prayed. The meeting was calm and I was able to present all my points and achieve my goals. In the process, I left that meeting with the sweetest of feelings for those administrators. What could have been a heated battle resulted in an oneness of mind and spirit simply by obedience to the scriptural commands. As the Scriptures say, “a gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” *Proverbs* 15: 1

As you commit Scriptures to memory, through meditation on those passages, you will have a wealth of truth from which to extract guidance. I have seen near feeding frenzies occur in universities where professors have attacked administrators with the knives of the tongue. But even the most heated of situations can be calmed and diffused with just one word, or one thought, as guided by the Holy Spirit from God’s word.

Recently such a diffusing of a volatile situation arose by my sending just one short e-mail note of encouragement and peace to all the parties concerned. A bloodbath, of sorts, was quelled. A colleague who had been the leader of the frenzy said to me, “No wonder everyone likes you,” because after that e-mail, there was little left to argue about.

“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God.” Matthew 5: 9

Chapter 9

Ask, Believe and Obey

Why doesn't Jesus answer my prayers? Primarily because I don't pray. James said, "You do not have because you do not ask." (James 4: 2b) So the main reason that we don't receive answers to prayer is that we simply don't pray. Secondly, we don't receive because when we do pray, we don't couple the prayer with faith. James said,

But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord... (James 1: 5, 6)

In other words, when we do finally ask, we lack faith. Therefore the asking and the faith are critical.

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. (Hebrews 11: 6)

See what the text says: *you must believe that He will reward you if you seek Him*. Faith is an act of the mind and will. You must choose to believe in God and to believe that He will reward you if you seek Him. The Spirit within you is always willing. It is merely a matter of having your will come into step with the Spirit. If you seek God, He will reward you—believe it! You don't receive the rewards by beating yourself on the back with chains or by having a pity party or by having a temper tantrum against God. You receive by obedience to His word and asking with faith. Obedience, asking and having faith, it's that simple. So when you meditate on God's word and ask Him to make that passage real in your life, then consciously direct your mind to believe that He will

answer. The answers from God may be different than we had planned upon, but they'll also be richer than we had envisioned.

Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know. Jeremiah 33: 3

Chapter 10

Is there a Father in the house?

About 15 years ago, my beloved father-in-law, a faithful man who fears God, took me aside and suggested that I meet every morning with my family for the study of the Bible. Although I was the father of two small daughters, he told me that the years would quickly pass. As their father, I should be speaking scriptural truths *daily* into their lives in the time when they are young and moldable. It was the best advice I ever got. Even though I had been meeting with them daily to pray at mealtime and their bedtime, I had to *define a set time for the systematic study of the Scriptures*. That practice has yielded a bounty of fruit one-hundred-fold. I even took our newborns (sometimes to my wife's dismay) from their cribs each morning to join us. My children know only of our daily rising to meet together as a family for study and prayer and they look forward to it. After we study God's word, we all get on our knees and pray, one by one. I close by placing my hand on each of their heads and praying a specific prayer for them for that day and for their future marriages and careers.

I recently asked my two daughters, ages 18 and 15, what their fondest memories are regarding our family. Their responses were revealing. It was not our family vacations. It was not the games we had played together. It was not our meals or our family holidays together. Both daughters agreed, without a second thought, that the highlight of their growing up in the Tour family was our daily family prayer times! (My dear father-in-law, thank you for loving me enough to speak truth into my life. God bless you for your advice.)

Let me speak for a moment to the fathers among you: don't abdicate this responsibility to your wife. This is your job! (But if you are a single mother, then God's grace is abundantly available to you). Teach these principles to your children in a regular and systematic manner. Meet at least five days per week with your family for the reading of the Bible, or if you have young ones, you might choose to use a good Bible storybook. I suggest Hurlbut's "Story of the Bible - For Young and Old." It is accurate, it follows the sequence of the Bible, but even the youngest in the family can understand the stories in the way that they are described. Read it with your family, from beginning to end, taking a portion each day. When you complete it, read it again and then again and again. Also memorize scripture passages together, as a family, while asking God to confirm that word in each other's lives. Even my 3-year-olds were able to memorize Scriptures. You're never too old or too young or too busy to make this a practice. After you meet as a family for the study of the word, encourage each of them to take some time to read the Scriptures themselves and meditate upon it.

Many have sacrificed their lives for Jesus, the one who gave himself on the cross for them. Can't you sacrifice 20-30 minutes per day of your sleep or other competing activities in order to bring the blessings of God into your home through this daily practice? Fathers, neglect this responsibility and you'll regret it. You'll long to recapture the days that passed when you had the chance to mold the hearts of your children in obedience to God's ways. Joshua said, "...choose for yourselves today whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24: 15) You can honor God and your family in this way. Even if your wife chooses to sleep in, take the initiative! Wake up the kids and teach them the Scriptures. In time, ashamed of her

stupor, your wife will likely join you (it may take months or even years) but she will see the blessing and come alongside. And eventually she'll thank God for the godly husband who bore the responsibility of the family's spiritual welfare.

Being in the University, I am well acquainted with the mindset of some parents that say they do not want to shape the minds of their children. They simply want their children to "find themselves" in this world. Be forewarned, if you don't direct your children's hearts and minds in God's ways, someone else, like a godless professor, will direct them in the ways of another.

These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up...When your son asks you in time to come, saying, "What do the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments mean which the Lord our God commanded you?" Then you shall say to your son, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand." Deuteronomy 6: 6, 7, 20, 21.

Chapter 11

The Challenge Before Us

If we meditate on God's word, delight in it, strive to obey it, and ask in faith that God makes its fruit evident in our lives, then God Himself *promises* clear and unmitigated blessings. Sometimes God speaks an exact word from the text of the Bible, but more often he raises our faith and supplies a principle upon which we can hang that faith. God often confirms this by causing us to reflect upon a passage and by giving a sense of his peace and presence while we are meditating upon the text.

There is nothing dull about the Christian life when we are walking in the precepts that God has commanded for us. The thoughts and experiences that I have outlined here are in no way unique to me. Many people have confirmed, with stories from their lives, the way God has dealt with them through specific passages from the pages of the Bible. Therefore, commit this day to:

1. Reading and mediating daily upon the Scriptures while asking God to speak to you through that passage. Read slowly, deliberately and contemplatively.
2. Obey God's prompting when he speaks to you through a passage.
3. Systematically and regularly teach these things to your family.

And enjoy the overflowing blessings, with thanksgiving, that will result.

Then the king [Josiah] sent and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. The king went up to the house of the Lord and all the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, the Levites and all the people, from the greatest to the least; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord. Then the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and with all his soul, to

perform the words of the covenant written in this book. Moreover, he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand with him. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. II Chronicles 29:26-32.

*All scripture texts we taken from the New American Standard version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

About the Author

James M. Tour is the Chao Professor of Chemistry, Professor of Computer Science, and Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science in Rice University's Smalley Institute for Nanoscale Science and Technology and Director of the Carbon Nanotechnology Laboratory. He has about 275 scientific publications as well as numerous patents. His scientific research areas include molecular electronics, molecular computing, nanomotors, methods for retarding chemical terrorist attacks and the NanoKids concept for K-12 education in nanoscale science. He is a co-founder of Molecular Electronics Corp. and NanoComposites Inc. Tour is a Messianic Jew (a Jew who believes that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God). He and his wife, Shireen, have four wonderful children, two daughters and two sons. More information can be obtained from his web site: www.jmtour.com.

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