

**Naya Jeevan's
7th Annual**

**Day With The Lord
Handbook**

PERSIST



**IN KNOWING THE
LORD**



**Matthew 7:7 Ask, and it will be
given you; seek, and you will
find; knock, and the door will be
opened to you.**

Theme: Persist in Knowing God

*"Keep on asking and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find, keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7
(NLT)*

Every year in September, Naya Jeevan Ministry encourages friends and partners to set aside special time to be with the Lord - for intercession, devotion, deeper study, and refreshment of our souls. And we facilitate this by providing this handbook for your convenience, full of spiritual resources and ideas to make your Day with the Lord meaningful. Plan ahead, don't wait for your chosen Day to arrive before you start thinking of your devotional activities. Looking through the ideas ahead of time may help you decide how much time to set aside, where you want to spend it, and what special resources you may need to have on hand.

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The past two years have been very different and difficult for each one of us. The world is going through an unprecedented pandemic that has affected every aspect of life – our health, our priorities, the way we work, how we interact with others and where we go. We have also experienced individual and collective grief, loneliness and loss of livelihoods and loved ones.

Life seemed almost to come to a standstill, as a new normal was created. Worshiping together wasn't possible, but our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ reached out to each of us and met us at our point of need in unique and marvelous ways. Praise God! Many of us experienced a closer walk with the Lord, as we had less distractions around us and were shut off from people. Many of us experienced God as the creator of this universe, and the miraculous provider of all our needs.

However you have experienced Him through this season, whatever you have learnt from Him and about Him, our prayer is that today, as you enter your dedicated Day with the Lord, He will enable you to know Him at an even deeper and more intimate level.

In this handbook, there are resources to read and meditate on. Relax. Enjoy listening to God speaking to you through various means. We hope the time you dedicate will be a blessed investment! **Please remember to fill in the feedback form once you are done.**

[CLICK HERE FOR DAY WITH THE LORD FEEDBACK FORM](#)

Persist in Knowing God

Knowing God doesn't refer to knowledge of facts about God, but rather to knowing Him personally – understanding his character, his heart and his intent. Knowledge of God and his character is always at his initiative, and is based on two key factors: our experiences and relationship with Him, and His revelation in our hearts and minds.

Relationship: We come to know God by experience - through seeing his hand at work in every life situation. We can know Him more intimately and personally when we, like Mary, sit at his feet and listen to him speak, instead of focusing on the never-ending list of things to do like Martha did.

Revelation: God, in Jesus, revealed his very self to all of humanity. When we meditate and reflect on God's word, the Holy Spirit will make specific truths about God come alive to us. And believing and applying these truths form a big part of our knowing God.ⁱ

Common to building a relationship with Him and receiving His revelation, is dedicated time and a specific posture of persistence. In this chaotic world, there are so many things to distract us from knowing God personally. We need to persist in knowing God, through reading and meditating on His word and communicating with God as often as we can. We are also exhorted to depend on the Holy Spirit to guide us in every aspect of our experience in knowing God intimately.

The parable in Luke 18:1-8 is a great example of persistence. A widow of a city came to the judge in that city repeatedly saying, "Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy." The judge initially kept ignoring her request, but when she was persistent, we see that he finally said to himself, "I don't fear God or care about people, but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she's wearing me out with her constant requests!" This was the response of an unjust judge in the face of persistence.

Unlike the judge in the story, our God is good and loving, and he delights in making himself known to those who ask! Our persistence is not meant to twist his arm and make him do what he doesn't want to do. Rather, it is meant to build our character, solidify our priorities and give us hope.

When we persist in this manner in spending time in his presence, in asking him to reveal himself and in seeking his will, won't he do all this and more? In this life, and for eternity, nothing could be better than developing a relationship with our Father who loves us perfectly and wants us to know Him and grow into the people He created us to be!

Reflect and Journal:

Look back at your life and map out critical and life-changing instances and seasons.

- How did you experience God in each of those situations?
- What did you learn about Him and His character then?
- How does that knowledge impact your current situation?
- How has God revealed Himself to you through times of meditation on His word?

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"Keep on asking and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find, keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7 (NLT)

As we grow in knowing Him, we will want to express our praise, gratitude, and worship to Him. (Blackaby and King; pg. 13.) We will constantly seek his guidance and express our inmost thoughts to Him. We will then persist in prayer.

God wants us to frequently experience the mighty power of prayer on our own. Across centuries, great and godly people of the church have been those who learned how to persist in prayer. We have great examples of this in the scriptures. The apostles deliberately chose to give their attention to prayer (Acts 6:4). As a result, three verses later we are told, "The word of the Lord spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly. Even a large number of priests [perhaps the most difficult to win] became obedient to the faith." (Dewey, pg. 21)

So, what is it about prayer - persistent prayer - that helps us know God?

ASK the right way

A critical part of any relationship is developing a sensitivity to the other person and their needs. In our relationship with God, it's obvious that He already knows our needs. Matthew 6:8 says, "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him". But how well do we know what God wants for us? We have to learn to put ourselves at the disposal of God's agenda. God mercifully withholds His answers to our prayers until we come to Him with the right request.

Ask: If we want to ask God the right questions, we should first examine our needs. If they are genuine and in accordance with God's will, then we can ask with our pure motives, and that's crucial to having our prayers answered. James 4:3

Seek: When we seek, as Jesus directs us to do, we are looking for his guidance and direction. 2 Thess. 3:10; Matthew 25:29. When we seek in prayer it means that we are willing to hold on in intercession until we receive His guidance and answer. His word assures us that we will.

Knock: When Jesus directs us to knock, He's asking us to be persistent. Matthew 7:7-8 (Amp. Version) "Keep on asking and it will be given you; keep on seeking and you will find; keep on knocking {reverently} and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who keeps on asking receives, and he who keeps on seeking finds, and to him who keeps on knocking, the door will be opened."

As you plan and go through your Day with the Lord, spend some unhurried time in conversation with God about the state of your body, mind and soul. Ask God boldly and specifically for whatever you sense you need and for everything he lays on your heart.

1. Be Still

Find a comfortable place to sit and simply rest in silence for 5 minutes or so. Let quiet gratefulness for your own breath and life draw you into God's presence. Release to your heavenly Father each issue, agenda item, anxiety and to-do-list item that comes to your mind. Let your mind and heart sit in stillness long enough that you begin to feel peace and rest.

2. Be Spontaneous

Spontaneity requires a willingness to abandon your own agenda and adopt God's. It means being flexible and willing to sense His direction and leading no matter what comes your way. Ask your Maker to guide and prompt you, to replace your thoughts and plans with His. Then follow where he leads.

3. Be Specific

Let us be specific in giving thanks to God for His protection, presence and provision in every aspect of our lives. We are usually just specific in our requests to Him, but let us be specific in expressing our love, gratitude and sincerity too.

Jesus says that you will be given whatever you ask for, in His name (John 16:23-24). So, with that assurance and confidence, **pray with all your heart** (James 1:8, Matt. 6:6) and **pray continually** (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Reflect and Journal:

A prayer burden begins as an inner impression that we should pray for a known or unknown need. It is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit applying spiritual pressure on our heart. (Deuewel, 196)

Take your journal, sit and wait on the Lord to put that burden in you (spiritual concern, God-given, personal). Spend time listening to His gentle voice speak to you.

1. Give as immediate attention as possible to what he places on your heart.
2. Concentrate primarily on this burden. Write down any steps you think of with God's guidance to help answer your prayer.
3. Hold on to this point and pray often until God lifts the burden (may be immediate or may take some time).

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Pleading with God

When we walk closely with God and become His constant companion, we have a Spirit-given freedom in prayer that enables us to place our requests and arguments before the Lord without fear or difficulty, for God's glory and for advances in His kingdom. Pleading with God can become almost as natural to us as expressing our love to the Lord. (Deuewel,303)

1. Plead for the glory and honor of God's name. Read these passages to see God's name honored. Psalm 106:8; Joshua 7:9; 2 Sam. 7:26, Ps. 23:3; 31:3, 109:21; 143:11; Jer. 14:7, 21; Matt. 6:9; Phil 2:10-11.
How can you glorify God in your life?
2. Plead for God's relationship with you. He is your:
Creator (Job 10:3, 8-9; 14:15; Ps. 119:73), we are the work of His own hands;
Helper (Ps. 27:9; 33:20; 40:17; 46:1; 63:7), so we can put our hope in Him at all times;
Redeemer (Ps. 19:14; Isa. 41:14; 48:17; 49:26; 54:5, 8; 63:16), redeemed by His blood;
Father (Isa 64:8; Ps. 103:13; Mal. 3:14, Mark 14:36; Rom. 8:15; Gal 4:6), tender and compassionate, transforming us to His likeness;
As your Creator, Helper, Redeemer and Father will He not remember you, protect you, and provide for you and for all those He has created and redeemed?

3. Plead for God's attributes.
Justice of God (Gen. 18: 25; Neh. 9:33),
Righteousness of God (Isa. 42:21, 59:16-17; 11:5; 16:5; Ps. 85:13; 97:2; 96:3;),
Faithfulness of God (Ps. 89; 143:1; Deut. 7:9),
Mercy and love of God (Deut. 8:18; Ps 4:1; 27:7; 30:10; 86:6, 15 - 16; 25:6; 79:8; Dan. 2:18)
4. Plead for the sorrows and needs of the people. Ps. 16:9; Lam. 2:20, 5:1.
Will you identify yourself with those suffering and plead for them?
5. Plead with the past answers to prayer. Sing the Hymn: "Count your Blessings, name them one by one'. *Reflect on ALL that the Lord has done for you in the past, spending as much time as you want in reflection of God's ways in your life.* Ex. 32:11-12; Ps. 27:9; 71:17-18; 85:1-7; 105-106; 136)
6. Plead with the word and the promises of God. Gen. 32:9,12; Ex. 33:12, 13; 33:17- 18, 19-22. 1 Chron. 17: 23-26; 2 Chron. 6:14-17
Do you plead His words to present your full needs, insisting that God's full will be released?
7. Plead for the name and victory of Jesus. Phil. 2: 9-10 (Dewel, 303-313)

We trust you will have a meaningful time with the Lord knowing Him, as you renew your relationship in these quiet moments with Him. We enter in with the sense of awe and as we know Him, He is a loving Father, who reveals His character to us and leads us through the struggles of life so that we will be transformed into His likeness and we will be effective tools in the hands of the redeemer who created us for His kingdom purposes. Though the days are uncertain we will go forward with the strength that the Lord gives us, knowing Him and being His representatives in this dark and difficult world. Knowing God is a life-long process. May we persist in knowing Him till we find ourselves on the other shore with Him, worshipping God forever.

References:

- Blackaby T. Henry and King V. Claude, Experiencing God, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998.
Dewel L. Wesley, Mighty Prevailing Prayer, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishers, 1991.
Maxwell John, Partners in Prayer, New Delhi: ICI, 1996.
Pike Wentworth, Principles of Effective Prayer, Alberta: Action International Ministries; 1993.

DAY WITH THE LORD



Practical Ideas for your Day with the Lord

Since you have taken the time off to be with the Lord, make it meaningful and may you grow in knowing Him as He is.

- ❖ **Read this article and reflect on it:**
“Why We Sin When We Know So Much: Finding God in the Deep” Dr. John H. Coe
(found at the end of this handbook)

- ❖ **Enthusiastically use the Word of God**
Read passages of the Bible that have spoken to you or those suggested below.
John 15:7-8
2 Chronicles 14:11
Psalm 29:10-11
Deuteronomy 1:1-2
Ruth 2:20
Esther 4:13-14
John 1:3
Titus 1:1
Joshua 21:43-45
Mark 1:2-3
Philippians 4:10-14
Focus on God’s power, His purpose, and His specific promises. When we dwell or meditate on God’s Word, we will find that what we read often becomes our prayer (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4).

More Ideas for Your Day with the Lord

- ❖ Pray the Lord’s Prayer in your own words
- ❖ Spend time in repentance personally and nationally
- ❖ Spend some time praying loudly and some silently; similarly with Bible reading
- ❖ Cover yourself with a prayer shawl during some of your prayers for a sense of the comfort and family inclusion with our heavenly Father
- ❖ Draw or paint a picture that comes to you as you read Scripture, or write biblical flash fiction as a way of deeply imagining the scene.
- ❖ Hand copy Psalms or other Bible portions into a journal, meditating on the words as you write.
- ❖ Sing or listen to hymns, praise, or worship songs
- ❖ Read a book of the Bible

- ❖ Read from a devotional book
- ❖ Listen to or watch a sermon
- ❖ Fast throughout the day or for several days leading up to the time; fasting can include food, sleep, entertainment, and other distractions you feel led to give up for a time.
- ❖ Write a letter to the Lord
- ❖ Journal
- ❖ Compose a worship song
- ❖ Memorize a passage of Scripture
- ❖ Pray through the names and attributes of God:
<https://www.navigators.org/Tools/Discipleship%20Resources/Tools/30%20Days%20of%20Praying%20the%20Names%20and%20Attributes%20of%20God>
- ❖ Prayer-walk or prayer-drive through a neighborhood or city
- ❖ Pray through a passage of the Bible
- ❖ Read one of the Gospel accounts of someone who encountered Jesus, such as the sinful woman in Luke 7:36-50; the centurion whose boy was healed, Zacchaeus, etc. Think about what it teaches us about God and ourselves. Learn it well enough to tell it accurately and pray by name for a particular person you should share that story with during the week.
- ❖ Pray through a newspaper or news magazine article

Prayer Postures

Try incorporating different prayer postures appropriate to your prayer moods or topics throughout your Day (taken from [Strengthening Your Prayer Skills](#)).

- ❖ Sitting denotes rest 2 Sam 7:1
- ❖ Kneeling portrays submission to God Acts 7:60, Dan 6:10
- ❖ Standing displays respect and attentiveness Mark 11:25
- ❖ Uplifted hands mean surrender or praise 1 Tim 2:8, Ps 63:4
- ❖ Prostration indicates beseeching, agonizing, repenting Matt 26:39
- ❖ Walking denotes ownership, expectation of victory Josh 6:1-5

PRAYER RESOURCES

- ❖ **Strengthening Your Prayer Skills** by Dr Shashi Jatiani makes an excellent resource for prayer training and is filled with creative ideas to deepen and enliven your prayer times. Consider watching one session during your Day with the Lord, with time spent meditating on your application points. Or look through your SYPS workbook as you plan your Day and incorporate some of the creative ideas found throughout the sessions. If you do not yet have a workbook (hard or soft copy) or the videos or DVDs, please make a donation of any amount to the Breakthrough account <https://give.cru.org/0803950>. We will receive an automatic notification, then contact you and gladly send you what you request.
- ❖ **Video testimonies of salvation and prayer (copy and paste url)**
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLk-u40hUR8O0JCa7okOKSgr53JSAsILcJ>
- ❖ **Prayer websites:**
www.tandemprayer.org
<http://www.thisdayipray.com/>
<http://operationworld.org>
<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/prayer.html>

<https://www.namb.net/pray/>
<https://pray.interserve.org/>
<https://joshuaproject.net/pray/videos>
<http://southasianpeoples.imb.org/pray>

- ❖ **Devotional apps:**
One Minute Pause (John Eldredge)
Pray as you Go (Loyola)
- ❖ **Prayer walking guide:**
<http://media1.imbresources.org/files/85/8522/8522-46575.pdf>
- ❖ **Prayer Guide for Every Village in South Asia:**
<http://pray4ev.org/>

NAYA JEEVAN BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER 2021 **Unreached People Group Focus**

MUSLIM GUJJAR PEOPLE

- ★ Sunni Muslim Gujjars are around 5-10 million, living in the mountains and plains of northern India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. They raise cattle or other livestock and speak their own language Gojri. Due to their nomadic lifestyle, remoteness, lower educational levels and religious conservatism, they have largely remained unreached with the good news.
- ★ Pray that biblical discipleship takes place with the small number of Gujjars who follow Christ and for their community to grow in faith and numbers.
- ★ Pray for efforts to use digital media content online for seekers.
- ★ Pray for lives, families and communities to be transformed as the good news takes root among the Gujjars, for God's glory.

NAYA JEEVAN Ministry Prayer Points

OFFERING STRATEGIES, RESOURCES, & TRAINING TO MOBILIZE BELIEVERS FOR MINISTRY TO SOUTH ASIANS.

Pray for:

- ❖ South Asian Churches, Pastors and ministries to model love towards their neighbors and caring towards the hurting.
- ❖ Political leaders to promote peace, justice and freedom.
- ❖ Raising up new generation of church leaders for South Asia to replace those lost in the pandemic
- ❖ Covid fears hampering group and personal outreach
- ❖ Overcome Covid limitations to video record LYN and create further video resources
- ❖ Passion and excellence to be maintained in the 20+ trainers on five continents
- ❖ To strategically connect more ministry resources with more partners to use them this year

- ❖ Breakthrough Prayer Leaders to be zealous and faithful in prayer
- ❖ More Punjabi internet mentors so seekers in this language can be reached.
- ❖ Fruitfulness of explorejesusbible.com evangelistic website

Thank God for:

- ❖ LYN training that is helping believers share Christ out of compassion and sensitivity
- ❖ The internet outreach expanding into new South Asian language groups
- ❖ New Gujarati internet mentors
- ❖ Faithful financial partners and Churches and for his gracious provisions.
- ❖ Adding new video ministry resources this year
- ❖ Our administrative assistant Ronald Christopher

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Prayer Points for South Asia

Courtesy of Operation World: <https://operationworld.org/prayer-resources/countries-alphabetically>

Courtesy of Global Connections: <https://www.globalconnections.org.uk/prayer/southern-asia/bangladesh>

Bangladesh

Shaikh unreached people

The Shaikh people, descended from Arabs, are spread across seven countries. Bangladesh alone has over 135 million Shaikh. They are devoted to Islam; pray that they will come to know the glory of God in Christ Jesus. Pray too for more workers to respond to the many gospel opportunities among this people group: there is a great need for workers.

Fire aftermath in Bangladesh

On 22nd March, a devastating fire tore through a Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh. Around 45,000 people have been affected: 15 confirmed dead, more than 500 injured, and hundreds still missing. Shelter and hygiene needs are extremely high. Many Rohingya families living in the camp fled from violence in their native Myanmar; this is the second time these families have lost everything in a tragedy! Please pray that families and friends will be reunited, and for comfort for those grieving the loss of loved ones and their homes. Please also pray that Medair will be able to provide emergency shelter and hygiene assistance to families. Pray that God will protect families from the monsoon and cyclone season that is approaching. Pray that families will be able to rebuild shelters in time to stay safe and warm.

Floods in Bangladesh

Please pray for the continued recovery and rebuilding in Bangladesh, following the heavy seasonal rains in September 2020 which triggered flooding that have inundated 40% of the country. The flood was described as the 'worst flooding' since 1998. Pray for all the humanitarian organization which were involved in the relief efforts, and for the people of Bangladesh who are having to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. Pray that the Lord's presence would be tangible for the affected people.

Poverty

The cycle of poverty will continue unless fundamental changes occur. Bangladesh has few natural resources; around 25% of the population lives below the poverty line. The country sits on level ground beside the gigantic Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers, and floods and monsoon rains regularly devastate the nation. The political situation offers little hope, as it seems more focused on arguments between wealthy clans than on improvements for the people. Pray for long-term transformation in this land of desperate need.

Church Leadership

Pray for leadership for the churches. Earlier movements brought thousands of people into the Church. But the lack of trained, godly leadership eventually left many believers with a weak and shallow faith. Poverty limits the number of full-time ministers and theological students, but churches also lack spiritually mature lay leaders. In Bangladesh, as in any nation, robust discipleship processes would go a long way to solving these challenges.

Unreached

The Bengali, or Shaikh, people (240 million globally) remain the largest unreached people group in the world. Even 200 years after William Carey came as a missionary to the Bengali they still honor his memory, but a breakthrough for the gospel has not come. • Pray for Bengali Muslims. Many follow “folk” Islam (a blend of Sufi Islam, indigenous cultures, and Hinduism). Most have never heard the true gospel. Pray for the few Bengali believers to depend on God in their poverty, to be strong when faced with persecution, and to find community with followers of Christ from different backgrounds. • Pray for Bengali Hindus (201 Hindu groups, of which 188 are unreached), who face violence and persecution as a religious minority.

Bhutan

Tibetan unreached peoples

Pray that Tibetans would truly perceive that the gospel is ‘good news’ and that Jesus is the true Lord of all 5.5 million Tibetans. A version of the New Testament is now complete and freely available to Tibetan people groups, both on the Internet and as an app. Pray that, through these means, the word will be sowed widely, find fertile soil and bear much fruit. May whole households and communities receive Jesus as Lord and be disciplined together.

Pray for true spiritual freedom in this “Land of the Dragon”. The Buddhist monarchy, the government policies to keep Bhutan isolated, and the strong hold of Vajrayana Buddhism resulted in Bhutan being one of the world’s least-evangelized nations. Bon (an indigenous religion) was replaced by Buddhism, but maintains a strong occultic/demonic influence. Pray for Jesus to reveal Himself to King Wangchuk and royal family, so that they might know His love and power. Among the 5 largest Tibetan/Himalayan peoples (Dzongkha, Tshangla, Lepcha, Kheng, Gurung), only the Lepcha have a significant Christian population. Pray for a fellowship of believers to witness among every ethnic group of the Bhutanese! A New Testament exists in Dzongkha (official language), but most languages have no Scriptures.

Nepali people of Bhutan

Bhutan has a population of nearly 770,000 people, of which 88% are Buddhists. Pray for a growing work of God among the minority Nepali people group in this country, who are Hindus. Pray that God will raise up Christian leaders who will be able to make the most of the opportunities available to advance the gospel. And pray for the resources and personnel required to deliver good leadership training.

India

India is the world’s largest democracy. Political, economic, and social challenges all place a heavy burden on the government. Pray that the government will choose to build on the progress of recent decades, especially to preserve and protect human dignity, rights, and freedoms. The current government has been operating on a Hindutva (Hindu nationalist) platform. This has brought about intensifying persecution of other religions, increasing re-Hinduization/reconversion of Dalit and tribal groups, and the introduction of many barriers of foreign Christian mission in India. The government’s aggressive stance to defend Hinduism – and persecute other faiths – has emboldened religious violence by radical Hindu groups.

Caste System

The caste system remains a major issue. The Dalits/Bahujans/Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes together are 25% of the population. Others oppressed these groups for thousands of years, and used the caste system (and Hinduism) to justify their harmful actions. The UN, the Indian government, and international NGOs have all taken action to address the situation. Churches also work to establish human rights, education, health, and employment, and also for salvation of the Dalits. The Church has an opportunity to show that the love of Christ extends to all people, regardless of caste, race, language, gender, and economic status. Pray for Christians to remove all caste discrimination from the Church, where it sadly does exist. The Dalit Freedom Network educates Christians about issues related to Dalit rights and freedoms.

Women and Children

Women and children suffer the most. Pray for state programs and loving Christian ministries to address these desperate needs. Pray that God will change attitudes and practices in society to reflect His care for women and children. Of the 400 million children, possibly up to 35 million are orphans. 11 million are abandoned (90% are girls). 3 million live on the streets. Some families sell children into slavery to pay off family debts. Two-thirds of all children suffer physical abuse, and half suffer some kind of sexual harassment or abuse. Over 1 million end up in prostitution (mostly Nepalis and Bangladeshis). Society prefers male children, so some families abort, abandon, or even kill girl babies. The female population today lacks 35 million girls when compared with the male population. Women have lower rates of literacy and education, and domestic abuse is a widespread problem. Some young girls get dedicated to the ancient service of temple prostitution.

Training Church Leaders

Training for Christian workers is an urgent need. The life and health of the Church depend on pastors, teachers, evangelists, and missionaries. Many new believers come to faith through large rallies, healings, or miracles, but have few opportunities for Christian discipleship. Most leaders and pastors received very little preparation for their work. Pray for the formal training institutions. India now has over 100 degree-level seminaries! Many are evangelical. Bible schools number over 1,000. Many teach practical skills (such as church planting) in addition to theology. Training centers for indigenous workers (to train church planters) now also play a significant role. But much more is needed. Pray for creative, effective models to reach the country's pastors and leaders with Bible teaching. All Christians need training to be effective ambassadors for Christ in their society. The Indian Church must learn to have greater impact in the workplace and in national life. Currently most Indians associate Christianity with the deprived and lower classes of society (80% of Indian Christians come from Dalit or tribal communities). The gospel has not yet made a significant impact on business, politics, arts, or culture.

Demographics

India has more unreached individuals than any other nation. The south and northeast have a higher proportion of Christians than the more populated north and west. Pray that the Church worldwide might rise to this task! Pray for:

- The great cities, where the very rich live close to the very poor. Millions come from rural areas to cities every year, and most end up in slums. Mumbai and Hyderabad have significant Christian populations, while Kolkata, Delhi, Varanasi, and Lucknow have little Christian witness.
- The middle classes (up to 350 million people). Half the cross-cultural missionaries worked among tribal groups, and many of the rest among the neediest sections of the population. Few today work among the urban middle class and the higher castes. This needs to change, but most workers feel unprepared for such challenges.

Persecution in India

We're heartbroken to hear that 171 people are missing and 26 have lost their lives in India's state of Uttarakhand after a Himalayan glacier burst on 7th Feb. Please pray with us for all of the families affected. Please also pray for more Adult Literacy Class teachers in the state of Haryana where only 65.5% of women can read, and for Persecuted Christians all across India - ranked the tenth most severe country for

persecution for a third year in a row. Join us as we pray for the safety and salvation of the millions of people flocking to temples in the city of Varanasi.

Seminaries and Colleges

The Seminaries and Bible colleges in the country are going through tremendous pressure. Last year, almost all seminaries had closed residential programs. And now this year there is a dilemma about how to move forward. It is affecting leadership training, the preparation of thousands of future leaders.

Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh was one of the last states to open up for missions. It is strongly Hindu, with strict laws that limit conversions to Christianity. Madhya Pradesh has many large tribal peoples, and more tribal groups than anywhere else in the world. Most practice a version of animism that was influenced by Hinduism. Many practice witchcraft, Shaktism (worship of female energy), and Saivism (worship of the god Shiva). Christians planted thousands of new churches in 20 years. Praise God for house church movements among some of the tribes. The whole state needs pioneer mission work. Pray for open doors for the gospel!

Nepal

A new Nepal began in 2008, when the absolute power of the Hindu monarchy finally ended after years of Maoist rebel fighting and then pro-democracy protests. This was an answer to the prayers of most Christians in Nepal! A new era of opportunities for Christian ministry has now changed into an era of deep concern for eroding religious freedom. Religious conversion and the “hurting of religious sentiment” have been criminalized. Although Nepal is a secular country, this harsh new law is meant to target Christian mission in particular and defend Nepal’s Hindu traditions. Pray for wisdom and courage for all who wish to be witnesses for Christ in Nepal.

Church in Nepal

The Church in Nepal continues to flourish amid pressure as a remarkable indigenous movement; the large majority of Nepali Christians worship and fellowship in thoroughly indigenous structures and networks. The Church is growing in numbers, diversity and maturity, but prayer is still needed regarding:

- The public image of Christianity in Nepal is as a foreign, mostly Western, intrusion that undermines traditional culture and society and appeals only to lower castes. Despite this, Nepal’s Christians are, with increasing confidence, defending their rights and building a fully Nepali, fully Christian identity. Pray for discernment, courage and faithfulness for those seeking to overturn two generations of negative opinion.
- Denominationalism. Many foreign-based denominations as well as indigenous networks of churches are established. Pray that the Church may be kept from division and error. Pray specifically for the Nepal Christian Society (NCS) as it seeks to provide a forum for prayer, sharing, unity and cooperative ministries.
- Persecution remains, and is intensifying. It can come from the religious majority but also socially from within families and communities. Pray for grace and perseverance for believers, and that Christians may be accepted and appreciated for their contribution to the country’s well-being. Pray also for the efforts of NCS and others seeking to secure the legal and religious rights of Christians regarding arbitrary arrests, evangelism, property, discrimination and other maltreatments.
- Partnership between Nepali churches and foreign agencies. As the Nepali Church matures, it increasingly takes stake in ministry and mission to its own country. Foreign input, especially through finance, often generates tension or dependency and continues to be an issue. But the national Church is flourishing, and indigenous Christian NGOs are mushrooming around the country.

Nepali diaspora

Thousands of Nepalis want to return to Nepal from overseas. Their situation is, in many cases, miserable. There have been very limited quarantine and isolation facilities available in the country, and many families in Nepal are starving, as they have no income and therefore no means to get any food. Pray with us for safety, and for the logistics of getting them back to Nepal and through quarantine and testing to reach their homes.

Pakistan

Pakistan's government normally alternates between inefficient, corrupt political parties and authoritarian military dictatorships. Power and wealth are concentrated in too few hands. This hinders economic and social development. The country faces pressure from Islamist forces (in the west, Afghanistan, the Punjab), and from troubles with India over the Kashmir region. Pray that the Lord would free Pakistan from spirits of lawlessness and violence that harm the nation. Pray for government that will move the nation forward.

Hard Life for Christians

Religious minorities face discrimination and persecution in many forms. Christians, Hindus, and minority Muslim groups (Shi'a, Ahmaddiya) suffer the most. The famous "blasphemy law" allows the death penalty on anyone who insults Mohammed, and life in prison for anyone who damages a Quran. Extremists use this law to falsely accuse innocent people. They stir up religious frenzy so the crowd enforces the punishment. Enemies of Christ vandalize or destroy churches. They beat, murder, abduct, rape, or force conversion on Christians and other minorities. Even amidst such persecution, Pakistani Christians love their nation and want it to prosper. Pray that believers might always be ready to share about Jesus, and to repay violence with love.

The Church continues to grow, despite many obstacles. Poverty, illiteracy, and lack of teaching opened the door to corruption, immorality, and low spiritual standards among Christians. Some Christians live devoted lives, committed to God, but the majority have a weak, immature faith. Common problems in churches include leadership struggles, greed, court cases, substance abuse, and divisions. Ask God to raise up humble, committed spiritual leaders with passion to serve the Church. Pray for more students in Bible and leadership training, wise and godly leaders, and adequate financial resources for Christian work.

Christians (indeed any non-Muslims) are marginalized because of their faith, often forced to work at menial jobs such as in brick kilns or as domestic servants. A good education for their children is hard to find, and they are vulnerable to accusations of blasphemy purely to settle personal scores. Victims can be imprisoned for years before their cases are resolved and if they are exonerated there is no guarantee they won't be targeted by extremists. For some like Asia Bibi, who spent eight years on death row after being convicted of blasphemy, a charge later overturned by the Supreme Court, their only option is to leave the country. For those who convert to Christianity the risks are greater, as they are rejected by family and friends and can be forced into hiding. Pray for protection, justice and provision for Christians in Pakistan.

Unreached Pashtun people

Worldwide there are over 33 million Pashtuns in 18 countries. The majority of Pashtuns live mostly in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pray that God will open Pashtun hearts to the light of the gospel and bring them into contact with local believers, either in person or online. Pray that those believers will have boldness to speak about God's love, and that the Pashtuns will respond to the good news. Pray too for people to have a heart to pray for this unreached people group.

Protection of female human rights defenders

Female human rights defenders in Pakistan regularly face harassment and online bullying both for their work defending the rights of others and because of their gender. Pray that the government would create

safe spaces in which they can work, and that God would protect them and bless them with much needed resources.

Security measures needed for Punjab churches

Churches in Pakistan's Punjab province have been instructed to put security measures in place by the provincial government because of fears of an attack. The authorities issued a notification to close or seal churches in the province if adequate measures were not taken. Please pray for those Christians in Punjab province amid this latest threat of attack. Christians in Pakistan feel particularly vulnerable after the hardliner reaction to the acquittal of Christian prisoner Asia Bibi. Asia, who was falsely accused of blasphemy, spent ten years behind bars, eight of which were on death row.

Sri Lanka

The end of civil war was an answer to prayer. Government forces defeated the "Tamil Tigers" in 2009, but with much violence. Sri Lanka suffered greatly in the past generation from the long civil war, the excessively bloody end to the conflict, and the 2004 tsunami. Over 100,000 people lost their lives, and over 900,000 (mostly Tamils) fled the country. More than 1 million people left their homes. Many Tamils feel deep resentment. Corruption and ethnic prejudice remain common. Pray that this new era might bring a time of safety, stability, justice for all ethnic and religious groups, and freedom for the gospel.

Violence and Tolerance

Sri Lanka once was known for its tolerance and non-violence. For centuries it was a Buddhist kingdom that welcomed refugees from India (Hindu, Muslim, Christian). But Buddhist extremism has grown in this multi-religious, multi-ethnic country. Many reacted to the Tamil violence, to Muslim growth, or to inappropriate methods of Christian evangelism. Persecution against Christians comes in waves, and at least 250 churches were destroyed or damaged in recent years. Beneath the layers of Buddhism and Hinduism the ancient spirits, gods, and demons still hold power. Pray for the power of Christ to break these strongholds.

Widows

Life as a widow can be so difficult, but in many places in Asia, becoming a widow is like living in hell on earth. Society often believes widows have sinned in some horrible way which resulted in their husbands' deaths, and, as a result, widows can be labelled as cursed and rejected as outcasts. Pray that widows will be able to grieve their husbands' deaths, and for God to provide for each widow's needs. Pray each widow will find hope and the joy of Jesus for her and her children's future.

Maldives

Tourists see the Maldives as an island paradise, but a darker reality hides below the surface. Powerful social and official forces limit freedom of expression and belief. The Maldives has one of the highest divorce rates in the world. Crime rates and gang activity both continue to rise. Child abuse and teenage drug abuse (among up to 70% of teens) indicate deep problems. Islam is the only recognized religion, and the government forbids open practice of all other religions. But beyond Islamic beliefs, many people follow occult practices. Pray for the light of the gospel to shine among Maldivians. Pray against strongholds of pride, fear, and selfish pursuit of physical pleasures.

The Hidden Heart:

Why We Still Sin When We Know So Much

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Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."

John Calvin

One of the great frustrations for pastor and parishioner alike is when the response to the Word of God in teaching or counseling is "I know those scriptures pastor, so what is wrong with me? Why do I still struggle with that same sin?" This is a significant situation and opportunity for the church, for it is both telling about *the complex nature of sin* in the Christian life and about *the complex process of transformation*. It is also telling about our training of pastors. Unpacking this situation reveals the following observations:

1. Most believers' sins of omission and commission are not conscious intentions of the will but are typically contrary to their better judgments and intentions, that is, they are in some sense against their will and what they know to be good.
2. Thus, most Christians do not seem to intend to sin but rather "leak," a descriptive term for a habitual response to certain situations stemming from deep characteristic sins or vices of the hidden heart that to some degree enslave the heart and for which the believer both is responsible and feels regret.

I do not have time in this brief examination to thoroughly argue for these observations. Rather, I will build upon them in order to develop some of the groundwork or contours for a theory of the nature of sin in the life of the believer and the process of transforming the heart. I do not intend to argue for or provide a thoroughgoing account of these matters but merely hint at what might be a productive research project. If time permits, I look forward to my audience's comments and criticisms for future investigation. If my suggestions are correct, it will be significant for a pastor to come to grips with the fact that (a) most of his parishioners do not intend to sin but do so from a hidden heart and (b) that no amount of quick correcting of sinful, irrational beliefs will alter the course of these vice habits. This is also significant for theologians, for perhaps our seminary training has room for developing an even more robust hamartiology regarding the complex dynamics of the sins of the heart and pneumatology regarding the complex process of transformation that would be helpful to the church. From this vantage point, the spiritual formation movement, with all its excesses and goods, is perhaps providing the church an opportunity in the history of doctrine to address these issues in a more thoughtful and exhaustive manner.

The fact that believers sin against their better intentions is borne out by both experience and Scripture. Most believers that I am around do not wake up in the morning intending to sin but, rather, the opposite: they hope and pray that they live for God and sin less. This is their conscious daily intention. We work on our sins – we memorize verses not to worry, to love our spouses, to not exasperate our children – we pray about these things - we might even see a wise counselor about them. But once in the door of our homes, out comes our worries over finances, our anger towards our spouse, and impatience with our children's folly. Whence

cometh sin?

The ancient pagans in Plato and Aristotle were also struck with this phenomenon of how we often act against our best intentions, which they termed ἀκρασία, a want of power, lack of self-control or incontinence (by medical extension, a kind of moral bladder-control problem!). According to Aristotle, there were three types of experience that were not dominated by conscious intentions of vice:

1. Incontinence: The situation in which a person in some sense knows the good, desires the good, chooses the good but fails to do the good.
2. Continence: The situation in which a person knows the good, desires the good, chooses the good and does the good but with no joy.
3. Virtue: The situation in which the person knows the good, desires the good, chooses the good and does the good with joy.

We all know the experience of wanting to pray more, to love more, to not worry, to not be impatient and then, against our best wishes, do the opposite or resist but with great difficulty. In this case, *joy* is the operative word and the sign of full virtue – where the person loves, truly desires and “gets off on” doing the good. As the ancient pagans reflected on this problem of why someone would act against their desires and beliefs, they reasoned that *there must be another set of deep beliefs and desires which are hidden from simple consciousness but are in some way implicit in the deep habituated dynamics of the human soul and are triggered by certain human circumstances*. These deep beliefs and desires, upon being cued, control the behavior of the person against their better surface, conscious beliefs and desires, typically resulting in grief and regret.

Is something of this phenomenon of ἀκρασία discussed by the Greek pagans reflected in Scripture? On the surface, this seem to be evident in the standard Reformed interpretation (e.g. Charles Hodge, John Murray etc.) of Romans 7 regarding the struggle of the mature believer in which the good that he wishes he does not do but practices the very evil that he does not wish (Rom. 7:19). This is also apparently evident in Paul’s discussion in Galatians in which the flesh sets its desires against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are in opposition to one another so that the believer cannot do the things that he pleases (Gal. 5:17). Of course, there is much controversy over these text as to the precise nature of this struggle and to whom it applies (see, e.g., Moo’s excellent discussion of Romans 7: 14-25 as being Paul’s “pre-Christian situation, as a Jew who reverences the Mosaic law but finds that the power of sin is too strong to enable him to comply with the demands of that law . . .” (Moo, *Romans*, NICC, 465).

However, I would argue that the problem of ἀκρασία is evident with either interpretation and, interestingly, could even be predicted given Moo’s interpretation of Romans 7. According to Moo, the believer no longer belongs to the old age of flesh (sin and death) but of the new age or realm of the Spirit (life and righteousness), and yet despite this still continues to sin. Thus, perhaps we can best make sense of the believer’s experience of ἀκρασία on Moo’s interpretation given two facts:

1. that the *power of sin has been broken* in the believer’s life by his participation in the new eschatological realm of Spirit in the New Covenant resulting in new, godly intentions of the heart (Rom. 8:9, 6:6, Jer.31: 31), coupled with...

2. that we still live in an unperfected state in which we must continuously “put off” and resist the sinful habits of the heart that remain and plague the believer as the residue of the pre-converted dynamics of the heart habituated in the weakness of human autonomy that are carried into the Christian experience and have not as yet been transformed as instruments of righteousness (Eph. 4:22ff., Col. 3:8, Rom. 6:12ff).

The reality of the power of sin being broken at the core of the believer’s spirit or heart by being a new creation in the Spirit accounts for the new *intention* of heart by the Spirit to obey God’s law or will from the heart (Jer. 31:31). However, we still sin and must *resist* the inclination to act against this new intention of the will by the Spirit – even though it may not be a surface conscious intention to disobey. This tendency or inclination of the heart still resides within the self as the pre-converted *residue* of the old domination of σαρξ or the “old man” (τον παλαιον ανθρωπον, Eph. 4:22). Although the believer enjoys being in a new sphere of existence in Christ and is slowly being made new in reality into the image of Christ by the Spirit, the old residue of the Fall is still at work in the *recesses* of the heart and, as such, is often hidden from the believer’s more conscious renewed intentions by the Spirit. *Interestingly, this new inclination of heart by the Spirit may even put sin more at a distance from conscious awareness, which makes it feel unnatural to uncover. That is, the emphasis on the believer’s consciousness is to be aware of the good or God’s will and pursue it and not necessarily focus on the bad.* This is particularly evident in the new convert’s sometimes exuberant though mistaken, if not absurd, belief that his long-time sins of the past have been entirely rooted out at conversion. (Just ask his wife on that question!)

All of this is even more *complicated* by the fact that part of the pre-converted sinful strategies of dealing with sin were, in fact, *to not be aware of sin*, to deceive others and even oneself about the true state of one’s heart. As we will discuss, the sinful strategies of deception and self-deception of the heart evident from the first sin and inherent in original sin come right into the Christian life as a habit that obfuscates what is really driving sin from the deep. This is born out by the fact that most believers know little of what really drives their sin, only the regret that they do sin.

The account of the Fall in Genesis 3 helps illustrate this fact that the human strategy of the corrupted nature in original sin is to obfuscate the truth of one’s evil deeds. Though the couple was naked and unashamed, with the first sin and the feeling of uncomfortable exposure, their inclination of nature was to seek to not be seen by covering themselves (Gen. 3:7). Furthermore, their first inclination of their fallen nature in response to God was to hide and blame due to the fear of His wrath in light of their guilt. In both cases, the human strategy in relation to self-awareness of sin and truth about the self is to conceal this from the self and others. From the very beginning, we find a penchant in distorted human nature towards deception and, particularly, self- deception. Sin and guilt are known but *not wanted to be known in present experience* and are, thus, repressed, becoming part of the deep or “hidden heart.”

This attempt to obfuscate or make unclear the truth of oneself to the self and others comes into the Christian experience in two ways. First, sometimes the believer does not want to know what is driving his heart and will *consciously* seek to deceive himself and others from seeing the sin beneath. Second, even in those cases where the intention of the will is good as motivated by his renewed nature, *the pre-converted habit of obfuscation of motives of sin* carries on habitually or unconsciously and hinders the believer from having any inclination to look at the motives of

sin beneath – and this is not due to any conscious sinister intention. Rather, the believer is intent on the good and, perhaps especially in his early stages of growth, content to ponder more his good intentions and *look at his sin only when he is forced to when it leaks out into his behavior*. This is born out by the fact that many believers do not know what really drives their sin; they know only the regret that results when they do sin. That is why they come to the pastor to help them figure out what is wrong when they act against their better intentions and do not know what to do about this. In their case, they do not know what is going on in their heart. It is the result of experience and even maturity to begin to wonder at what is going on below the surface and thoughtfully explore the hidden motives of the heart.

Of all the psychological terms used for the person in the Bible, perhaps the concept of the “heart” is most central for understanding the person.¹ The heart is used for the core of human personality and is the nexus of human will, affect and intellect (Prov. 27:19, 23:7-8). The heart is what really drives a person and dictates the direction of his life (Pr. 4:23, Ecc. 10:2). With the heart we think, feel, doubt, believe, remember and act. The goal is to love God with the whole heart (Mk. 12:29), to trust in God with all the heart (Pr. 3:5), to love from a pure heart (I Tim. 1:5). In particular, the man of God is to have a clean heart (Ps. 51:6) and a heart of integrity, speaking truth from the heart (Ps. 15:1-2). However, fallen human nature distorts the functions of the heart.

The fallen human heart can become hidden to itself, able to so deceive itself that it is no longer fathomable or transparent to itself. It becomes proud (Pr. 16:5) and fat or unresponsive to the Word (Ps. 119:70). As such, the heart can harden itself to God (Zech. 7:12) and become incurably deceived and deceiving (Jer. 17:9-10). This can include both the simple self-deception of repressing painful experiences into the hidden heart as well as the more sinister self-deception of deep motives of sin and hiding from guilt and shame. In the case of the former, we repress those things we know that we no longer want to be aware of continuously (“Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, And the end of joy may be grief. Pr. 14:13). In this case, the development of various levels in the heart is the result of an ability to repress parts of the unwanted memories into the recesses of the heart.

However, more serious is the conscious intention since the Fall to not want to experience the truth of one’s own sinfulness and guilt. Though God designed the heart to have a certain integrity in being transparent in truth, He also gave it the unusual capability in the Fall to be able to deceive itself, to become opaque to know the truth of its own state and other realities that are painful and too revealing. The extent of the self-deception can be so extreme, according to Jeremiah, so that there is part of it that cannot even be known by the self, only by God (Jer. 17:9-10). Even the believer does not always know what is going on in the deep and knows that the Lord can see into the deep motives better than himself (Pr. 16:2). Similarly, the psalmist asks God to “Examine me, O Lord, and try me, test my mind and my heart,” (Ps. 26:3), to search and try the heart (Ps. 139:23-24). This resulting “hidden heart” becomes the repository of a host of scattered false beliefs and sinful desires which become part of the memory and character of a person of which one may be more or less aware.

¹ I am indebted to years of team-teaching with Dr. Robert Saucy a course on “Theology of Human Nature” in which we have together discussed the nature of the heart and, particularly, the hidden heart. I am indebted to his biblical insight on these matters.

Though the pre-converted conscious sins of the heart may no longer be reflected in the conscious beliefs and desire of the believer, nevertheless, these sins of the heart with their deep beliefs and desires *remain implicit in the very fabric of the dynamics of the habituated vices of the heart*. This is in spite of the presence of true beliefs and good desires that have developed since conversion and are to the contrary. These deep “fleshy” beliefs and desires, if they are strong enough in habits, can continue to drive the person against their will. For example, I may believe consciously that I am not to worry over finances because God is good and cares for me. Nevertheless, worry “leaks” out as the result of irrational deep beliefs, for instance, that no one really cares about my problems, that God is not really good so that I must take life into my own hand and deal with my problems on my own. This may be coupled with sinful desires that I must have life on my terms, that I should have no troubles or hardships. These are not my conscious desires or beliefs. And no quick rational correction of these beliefs will suffice to change the deep beliefs and desires of the heart. Instead, they lie buried, implicit in the flesh-residue habits of the heart that remain hidden from superficial awareness. And this scenario could be multiplied over again with each vice of the heart. Although this raises questions about the believer’s role in unearthing or “putting off” these deep beliefs with the Lord for the sake of growth, ultimately, He alone at the judgment will “bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motive of men’s hearts” (1 Cor. 4:5).

Given this discussion of the sins of the believer’s hidden heart, I conclude with a laundry list of implications and hints that might provide some of the contours for a theory of sin and the process of growth. These require full analysis and argument for another occasion. I offer them for your comment and assistance to determine their value and truth content in understanding the process of spiritual formation.

1. Most believers do not intend to sin; rather, they “leak” or respond to situations out of the more or less strength of the vice habits of the heart that seek to enslave the heart and behavior.
2. These sins or vices of the heart are reflected in the Bible’s view of the “hidden heart” in which deep sinful beliefs and desires are embedded within the habituated vice dynamics of the heart-body connection which are capable of controlling the believer’s behavior to act against their intentions.
3. These sins of the heart and their corresponding deep beliefs and desires in the hidden heart have an etiology most fundamentally in original sin (the “flesh” residue in the life of the believer) that provides the deep structure of these sins which, subsequently, receive their particular directionality in our relational histories, particularly in childhood.
4. These vice habits of heart do not entirely enslave the believer insofar as the Spirit’s empowering the heart by love and truth results in new second-order desires on the part of the believer to love God more and not be dominated by sin despite the fact that he still act against these better intentions.
5. Thus, the believer “leaks” in the sense that these sins are no longer under his total control insofar as these deep desires and beliefs of the heart lie hidden and undisturbed in the heart, ready to control the believer against their intentions resulting in regret.

6. This leaking of sins of the heart does not excuse the believer from responsibility, for one is as responsible for his character as much as intended actions, despite the complex etiology of how character is derived (cf. the ancient Greek-Medieval- Reformed concept of the “voluntary”).
 7. No amount of (a) surface correcting of deep sinful beliefs (or overlaying the beliefs by the truth alone), (b) behavioral change or (c) human love will resolve the deep beliefs and desire behind the sins of the heart (II Cor. 3:4ff). These are fueled by a sinful attachment of the self in autonomy to meet some perceived need. Thus, Aristotle, Freud and all the Pagan moralists cannot experience the radical change of heart spoken of in the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31, Ez. 36:25ff.).
 8. Self-awareness of one’s sin through the means of the Word, truth, prayer, or counseling, and the panoply of the spiritual disciplines is a required beginning for the transformation of the heart and is part of what it is to “put off the old man” but is insufficient on its own for salvation or sanctification.
 9. The process of conversion and transformation of the sins of the heart is complex and ultimately requires a power strong enough to penetrate into the heart and resolve the self’s fleshy deep attachment to those sins (deep beliefs and desires) to meet some perceived need. This power can be mirrored by the love of the believer in the truth but ultimately can only be met in the ministry of the Holy Spirit loving and speaking His Word into the heart, for this alone is capable of convincing the self that its needs are met in love. This is both for conversion and ongoing transformation of the hidden heart.
 10. Thus, the process of spiritual formation involves the panoply of the spiritual disciplines (such as meditation on the Word, prayer, obedience, receiving counsel etc.) as legitimate means of grace, (a) insufficient on their own but (b) capable of opening the heart to (c) the ministry of the Spirit in truth, who alone is the agent of change in the heart of the believer (I Pet. 1:2, I Thess. 2:13, Gal. 5:22ff., cf. also I Thess. 5:23, Heb. 9:20ff.).
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