

Joy's Corner...

PRAYER POWER

Prayer has POWER. When I pray, asking for something, I have a God (so do you!) who answers prayer. He answers: YES, YES, YES. He's eager to answer our prayers.

The first "yes" is often immediate, always on course, and always just what you need. The second "yes" is "Yes, but wait." And the third "yes" is "Yes, but my solution is even better."

We have a God we can trust. God does answer prayers. There is POWER IN PRAYER.

I fell asleep while driving on a trip in New Mexico. The road was so straight, and I was sleepy—not a good combination. As the tires rolled over the road bumps on the left side of the road, I jerked awake, and screamed, "HELP!"

Fortunately, no other car was on the road at the moment, and the road bumps woke me up. I looked both ways with relief and smoothly drove onto the right side of the highway, shaking, and very grateful. That one-word prayer "HELP" was answered as soon as I prayed it. Awesome God!

Sometimes, God asks us to wait. In the second grade in our little church school, Miss B. taught us about the cross of Jesus and what it meant. I understood her, and I wanted Jesus to be MY Savior. With Jesus in my heart, I began to pray for others. From that day until I was seventeen years old, I prayed for my dad.

I loved Dad; he was a very good man, but he wasn't going to church. I prayed for him every day for eleven years before he was finally baptized. That was the happiest day of my life. God answered my prayer for Dad. WAIT...sometimes our prayers take a while. God KNOWS your prayer. He is in process. Don't give up. God's time is always best.

I'm a piano player, and I also teach piano lessons. In fact, teaching has been my life's work. Because my fingers are very short, one teacher told me I'd never be a piano player,

and this was just after I had played the very difficult Flight of the Bumble Bee by Rimsky Korsakov.

Yes, I knew I would never be able to play Malagueña because that piano piece is full of octaves, and, indeed, my fingers never grew long enough to play magnificent songs such as that. And you must believe I prayed for my fingers to grow longer, as I really wanted to play everything on the keyboard. I love playing what I CAN play, but there is so much more I could play if my fingers were just a little longer. I prayed for longer fingers for many years. Finally when I reached my thirtieth birthday, I looked at my hands and accepted my short fingers, realizing that God answered my prayers in another way. I needed to learn gratitude for the fingers I already had. Now I play very well, having learned a few tricks to work around the "octave" problem; I play with delight...as I teach...as I play in concerts...and as I play for the church, for my family, and, many times, just for myself.

When I think about my limitations on the piano, I realize that God is just keeping me humble while I perform. God is all-wise. HE always knows best.

His "Yes, NOW," or "Yes, but wait," or His "Yes, but I have a better plan" is sufficient. So is His GRACE.

THANKFUL WHEN COUNTING PENNIES A. Rogers

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places." Habakkuk 3:17-19

In Habakkuk's day, there was an economic recession. There were no cows in the barn. "Yet..." he writes. Oh, how I love that "yet" in verse 18. "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation." Where was his joy? In the Lord, not circumstances.

If you depend on circumstances, you can't say "rejoice always," because circumstances change. You lose your job. You lose your health. You lose your friends. You lose your prestige. If that's where you're getting your joy, and that changes, you can't say, "Yet will I rejoice." But Habakkuk said, "Yet will I joy in the God of my salvation."

Where are you getting your joy? From the Lord? I hope you are. There's one way we can find out. If you're getting your joy from your job, we can find out if we take your job and see if you still have your joy. Maybe you're getting your joy from your health. You say, "No, it's from the Lord." If your health fails, see if you still have your joy.

You see, the only joy anyone can have is in the Lord, because He never changes. Your joy can be threatened if you get it anywhere else. It's not wrong to joy in your health or your job. But that's the kind of joy that can be threatened. You need a joy which supersedes that. Psalm 16:11: says, "Thou will show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fullness of joy." Rejoice in the Lord always. It's to be continuous joy.

4 Scriptures to memorize when depression strikes

M. Fuller

I had my first experience with depression at 22. I had no idea how to manage it, navigate it, or even talk about it.

It felt like my world was crashing down. It felt hopeless and dark. Since then I've experienced seasons where depression was triggered by circumstances and depression when everything in life

was going well. I've experienced seasons when depression was brought on by severe anxiety and fear of the future.

We will all experience seasons in our lives like these, and if not personally, someone we love will likely walk through a season of depression. Whether it is depression from grief or loss, anxiety as a result of a global pandemic, or a mental illness that always seems to loom under the surface, there is little we can do to plan for these seasons.

They often hit unexpectedly and quickly, leaving us broken and in need of encouragement and hope.

Though various things have helped me walk through different seasons (counseling, therapy, medication, etc.) one thing that has always helped was the truth and comfort of God's Word.

Even on days when opening my Bible seemed impossible, when turning to the Lord the last thing I wanted to do, the truth of God's Word and the comfort He provides always offered encouragement and healing.

When I find myself in a dark season, I do my best to meditate on these passages day after day. I've even, by His grace, found myself sharing these passages and the hope and truth they offer with those in my life experiencing depression and other mental illnesses.

No matter the circumstances surrounding me, God's Word is constant, offering hope and encouragement each day. There are 4 passages I always turn to in seasons of depression.

1. Psalm 29:10-11

"The LORD sits enthroned over the engulfing waters, the LORD sits enthroned as the eternal king.

The LORD gives his people strength;

the LORD grants his people security." (NET)

They say when you come to a roadway that has flooded, you shouldn't try to navigate it or drive through it. Instead, you should turn around and go down another road. You never know how deep the water is or if the flood has washed the road away. Rushing water can fill a car quickly, potentially leaving you trapped or drowned.

I would never attempt to cross a flooded roadway, but when I'm faced with the engulfing waters of depression, I often try to navigate the flood alone. When the waters come, I remember Psalm 29. This psalm of praise acknowledges God and His power.

The imagery throughout the psalm is powerful, describing the ways in which God is sovereign over all He has made, including the water when it surges and the water that engulfs.

The word used in Hebrew for engulfing waters is used in Psalm 29 and in Genesis to describe the flood of Noah. If God is king of that flood, the flood that destroyed all life on earth except eight people, then He is certainly king of your flood.

He is certainly enthroned over the engulfing waters of your emotions, your loneliness, your disaster, your fear, and your pain. When the floods come, remember His voice. He thunders and appears over the waters as they threaten to overcome.

No matter the strength or the shape of the engulfing waters, He is king. He is enthroned over the waters. He is enthroned over all. He is enthroned eternally. We don't have to navigate the flood. We can surrender the flood to Him. He is enthroned over it.

2. Luke 8:43-48

When the woman saw that she could not escape notice, she came trembling and fell down before him. In the presence of all the people, she explained why she had touched him and how she had been immediately healed. Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace." (NET)

The unnamed woman in Luke 8 suffered from a condition that caused her to bleed continually. She suffered with this condition for twelve long years.

She spent all she had on doctors who could not heal her. Not only was she suffering physically, but she was banished, ignored, even feared. She was isolated from society, deemed unclean by the purity laws in Jewish culture. She could not worship or associate with others.

Alone and in pain, all she had the strength to do was reach out and touch Jesus' cloak. She believed Jesus was sovereign and powerful and able to heal her. She knew she didn't need much of Jesus; one touch was all she needed to be healed.

Jesus stopped the moving crowd, likely made up of many prominent men of the city. Jesus asked who touched Him, and the woman knew she would not go unnoticed.

Jesus singled her out and declared to everyone standing there she had, in fact, been healed. Jesus restored her physically when she touched His robe. He restored her socially when He publicly declared her faith had made her well. She no longer had to live in the shadows or hide from society.

What this unnamed woman's story shows us is the character of our Savior. He is not solely interested in saving us from sin or pain or difficult circumstances. He restores us in ways we don't even realize we need. He heals, restores, and redeems.

He meets the needs we can see and the needs we can't see. He restores us fully, even when we only expect Him to do the minimum.

3. Isaiah 45:3

I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches from secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD. I am the God of Israel, who calls you by your name. (ESV)

After promising to bring judgment on an unfaithful people of Judah, God promised to restore His people. He offered hope to His people in exile, continually affirming His love for them through His promise to redeem and restore.

Mental illness can often feel like a type of exile, being far removed from your usual self or feeling trapped and unable to escape. Depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses can feel like an overwhelming season of darkness.

In Isaiah 45, God's character is on display. He promised to restore His people, to bring them out of their exile to the place He had prepared for them. He would use their season of darkness to bring them back to Him.

God has a plan for all the seasons in our lives, including those marked by mental illness. Though they feel overwhelmed by darkness, we can be confident God will redeem and restore, and even allow us to find treasure in the darkness.

When I remember this passage, I am overwhelmed by the power of God. If He can restore even the darkest season for His chosen people, surely, He can redeem my seasons of depression, allowing me to find treasure in the darkness. And by that, we will know God's good, faithful, loving character.

4. 2 Corinthians 1:9-10

"Indeed we felt as if the sentence of death had been passed against us, so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead. He delivered us from so great a risk of death, and he will deliver us. We have set our hope on him that he will deliver us yet again." (NET)

No matter what we face in life, chronic pain, cancer, job loss, death of a loved one, a broken relationship, the despair can multiply if it occurs during a season of mental illness. The world can quickly come crashing down, making us feel utterly hopeless.

In Paul's letter to the church at Corinth he described a situation in which he and his companions were certain they would die. Paul explained that even though they felt this crushing despair, it was so he would come to rely on God alone. God alone can save, God alone can raise the dead.

When we feel lost in despair, whether from our circumstances or from mental illness, God is the only one who can offer us hope.

God delivered Paul and his companions. I can testify He has delivered me time and again.

Scripture is full of examples of God delivering His people when they faced the impossible. He is the God who delivers. He can deliver you. Deliverance may not look exactly like we think it should or come immediately, but it indeed will come. He has delivered us. He will deliver us again. No matter what we're facing, we can place our hope in His promises.

When depression and anxiety come like a flood, we can remember God's power and His promises. When we are unable to stand on our own, when we feel isolated and have given all we have, Jesus can still bring healing.

When the darkness is overwhelming, we can trust God to work in our situation and even give us treasures in the darkest seasons. And when we feel despair to the point of death, our God alone is the one who delivers us. We can always turn to Him.

TIME WITH GOD

John North

Matthew 6:5-8

"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in

secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Don't pray only when you are with other people; develop your secret, private life of prayer!

When you have a special friend, you love doing things with them in a big group of friends. But the best times in the friendship are the times when it is just the two of you. That is when you go deep.

It's the same with God. He loves to be involved in our meetings, our group times. But it is the inner, secret, private times of prayer that take your relationship to a much deeper level. If you want an intimate walk with God, learn to spend lots of time with him "in secret."

Can We Know if the Gospel Is True?

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. -John 20:31

Professional golfer Tommy Bolt was known to be very particular about taking advice from his caddies. Once while playing in Los Angeles, Bolt told his caddy, "Don't say a word to me. And if I ask you something, just answer yes or no."

At one point, Bolt approached the ball under a tree where he had a very tough shot to make. He looked at his caddy and asked, "Five-iron?"

"No, Mr. Bolt."

"What do you mean, 'No'?" And with that, Bolt took out his five-iron and hit the ball two feet from the hole. He smirked at his caddy and said, "Now what do you think? You can talk now."

"Mr. Bolt," the caddy said, "that wasn't your ball."

It's possible to be very sure about something, yet still be far from the truth. All you have to do is take a look around the world today and see there are many people who are passionate about different things. And not everything can be true. So someone has to be wrong!

This is why we can't base our search for truth on our passions. We have to look for what's credible. And with all the spiritual beliefs out there today, none of them is as credible as the one that claims Jesus was raised from the dead. It's as provable as any other event of its time!

Christianity isn't right because you believe it. It's right because it's true, and that's why you can believe it!

Prayer Challenge

Pray and ask God to confirm in your heart the truth of Jesus' teaching, the reality of His death and resurrection, and the presence of His Spirit in your life today.

Questions for Thought

Think of something you really believed was true but turned out to be wrong. How did it make you feel?

When we share Christ with others who have different beliefs from us, how can we present God's truth in a loving way?

So, what is prayer really? Does God really hear us? Does He really care? Job 33.26

He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness. Job 33:26.

No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature.

There are few who rightly appreciate or improve the precious privilege of prayer. We should go to Jesus and tell Him all our needs. We may bring Him our little cares and perplexities as well as our greater troubles. Whatever arises to disturb or distress us, we should take it to the Lord in prayer. When we feel that we need the presence of Christ at every step, Satan will have little opportunity to intrude his temptations. It is his studied effort to keep us away from our best and most sympathizing friend. We should make no one our confidant but Jesus. We can safely commune with Him of all that is in our hearts.

Every sincere prayer is heard in heaven. It may not be fluently expressed; but if the heart is in it, it will ascend to the sanctuary where Jesus ministers, and He will present it to the Father without one awkward, stammering word, beautiful and fragrant with the incense of His own perfection.

If we would only take the Lord at His word, what blessings might be ours! Would that there were more fervent, effectual prayer. Christ will be the helper of all who seek Him in faith.

AN AMAZING FACT....

Some ants live in super colonies that contain more than 300 million individuals.

Perhaps you have heard of the famous “parasol” or “leaf-cutter” ants that make gardens and raise their own crops! These amazing creatures are often seen walking in processions, each one holding a piece of green leaf above its head! These bits of green leaf are not for food, but are taken to their nests and made into a compost soil—for these ants are actually farmers. They deliberately sow, prune, fertilize, weed, harvest, and store a fungus crop as carefully as any gardener tends his vegetables.

Some ants living in Texas clear a “field” of one or two

square yards and then plant rice. They lay out the rice in beds with pathways running among the plants, and they keep their rice fields carefully weeded. When the rice seeds ripen, the ants harvest them, remove the husks, and store the kernels for food. Later, the ants with very large jaws crack the seeds and crush the kernels into meal for the rest of the ants. If the rice gets damp and is in danger of spoiling, other ants have the sole responsibility of carrying the damp grain out into the sunshine for drying.

There are thousands of amazing scenarios to be found among the roughly 10,000 species of ants on earth, and probably many thousands of lessons to be learned from this tiny creature. In fact, the Bible calls the lowly ant, which typically prepares in advance for the colder months, “exceedingly wise.”

It’s important for us to store the bread of life in our minds and be prepared in advance when it comes to our relationship with God. As a Christian, you always need to “be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15 NIV). And we should be “sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work” (2 Timothy 2:21).

Most important, we need to be prepared to meet the Lord when He returns. In Jesus’ story of the wise and foolish virgins, only five of them carried extra oil along with them and were ready to meet the bridegroom when He arrived at an unexpected hour. Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2, 3). The Lord has prepared to receive us into His awesome presence. Are we prepared to go home with Him?

Father in heaven, give me the oil of your Holy Spirit and make me wise. Help me be prepared to meet my Savior at His soon return.

Humor's Hallway...

The psychic gathering has been canceled due to unforeseen circumstances.

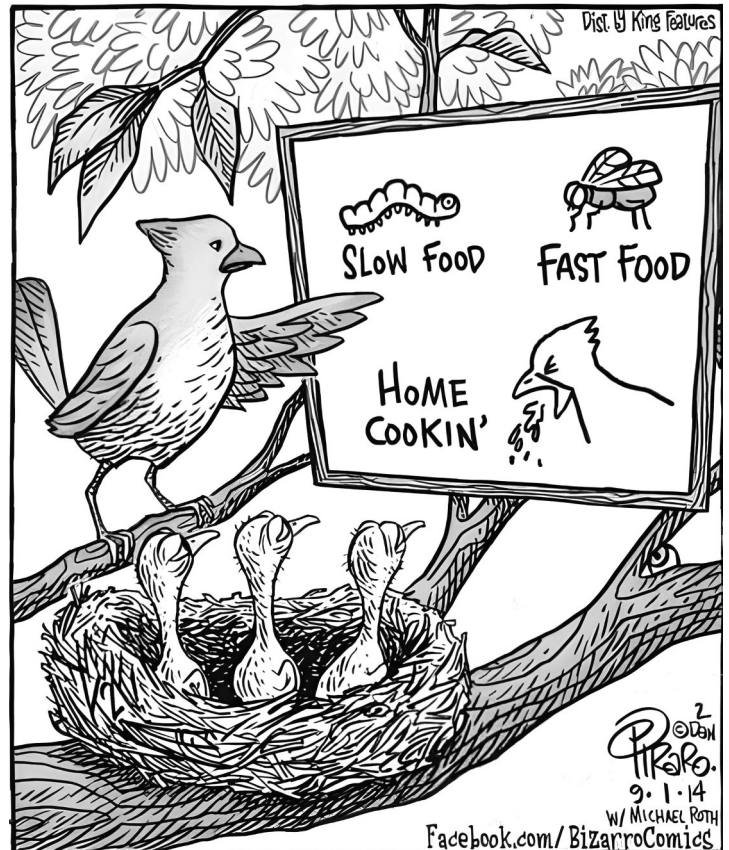
Did you hear about the gardener that refused to work with compost?
It was degrading.

The greatest thing about telepathy is....
I know, right?

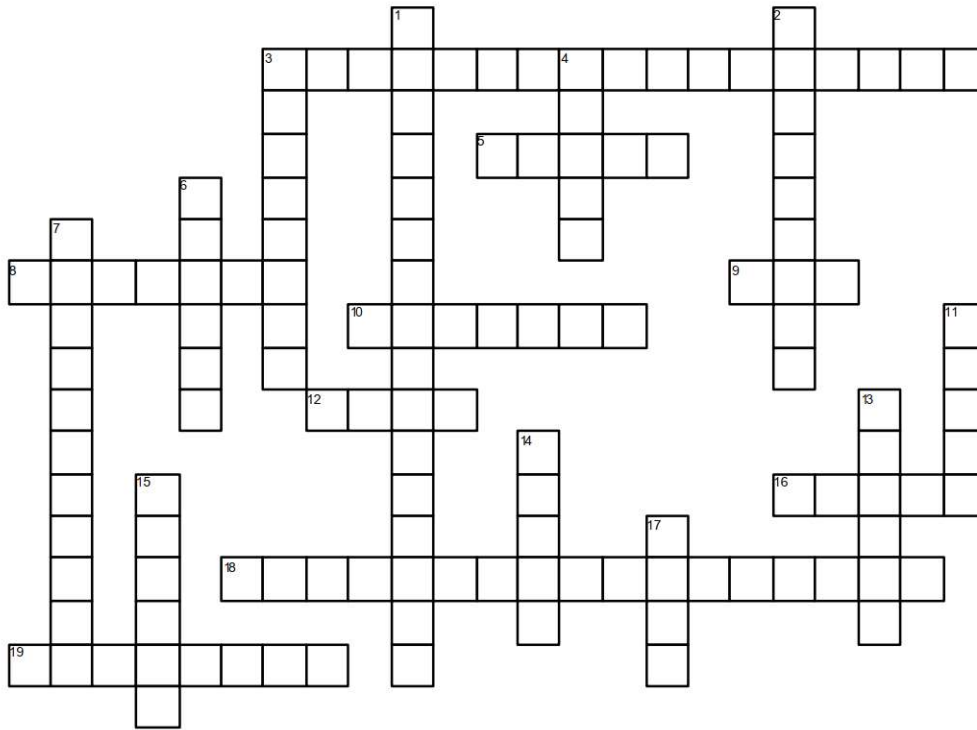
"MATTHEW, MARK, AND LUKE, SEEM AFTER CLASS."



It was so hot this summer... even the trees were looking for shade.



1 Kings 5 - 8



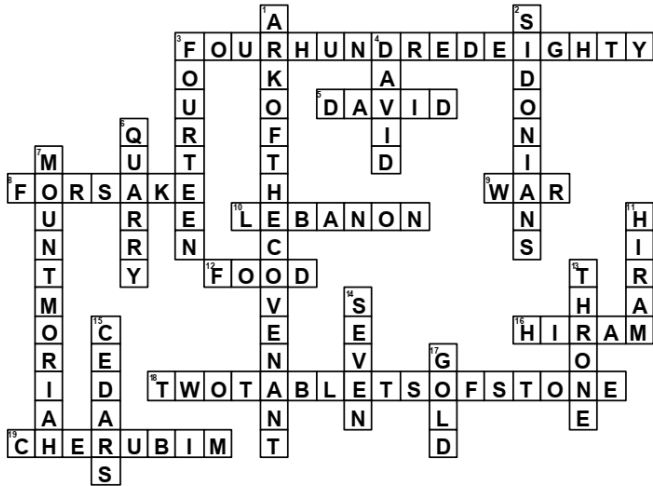
ACROSS

- 3 How many years after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt did Solomon began to build the house of the Lord? (1 Ki. 6:1) three words
- 5 Who gave Solomon the architectural design for the temple? (1 Chron. 28:11-12)
- 8 As the temple was being built, the Lord said to Solomon, that if he (Solomon) would obey the commandments of the Lord, the Lord said He would not _____ His people. (1 Ki. 6:13)
- 9 King David was not able to build a house for the name of the Lord his God because he was at _____ with his neighboring enemies. (1 Ki. 5:3)
- 10 What country had the specific cedar timbers that Solomon desired for the building of the Temple? (1 Ki. 5:6)
- 12 In exchange for the cedars and cypress wood that would be supplied to Solomon for the temple, Solomon would provide wages for the workers and _____ for Hiram's people. (1 Ki. 5:11)
- 16 Who rejoiced that David's son was a wise son who would rule over this great people of Israel? (1 Ki. 5:7)
- 18 What was inside the ark of the covenant? (1 Ki. 8:9) four words
- 19 What was made of olive wood and placed in the inner sanctuary? (1 Ki. 6:23)

DOWN

- 1 What was placed in the most holy place in the inner sanctuary? (1 Ki. 6:19) four words
- 2 Who were the skilled lumbermen that were commended for cutting the timbers? (1 Ki. 5:6)
- 3 How many days were set aside for the dedication of the temple and feast? (2 Chron. 6:9)
- 4 Who was the father of Solomon who also served as king of Israel? (1 Ki. 5:3)
- 6 Where were the stones for the building of the temple prepared so that there was no noise was heard in the temple area? (1 Ki. 6:7)
- 7 The temple site was located on _____ where Abraham had offered Isaac. (Gn. 22:2) two words
- 11 Who was the king of Tyre when Solomon became king of Israel? (1 Ki. 5:1)
- 13 The Lord had told David that his son, who would set on the _____, will build a house for the Lord. (1 Ki. 5:5)
- 14 How many years did it take to build Solomon's temple? (1 Ki. 6:38)
- 15 What was the name of the timbers that were ordered to be cut down for the Temple? (1 Ki. 5:6)
- 17 What was used to overlay the inside of the house of the Lord? (1 Ki. 6:21)

Puzzle answers....



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May God richly bless you as you study His word and plan for your life's journey