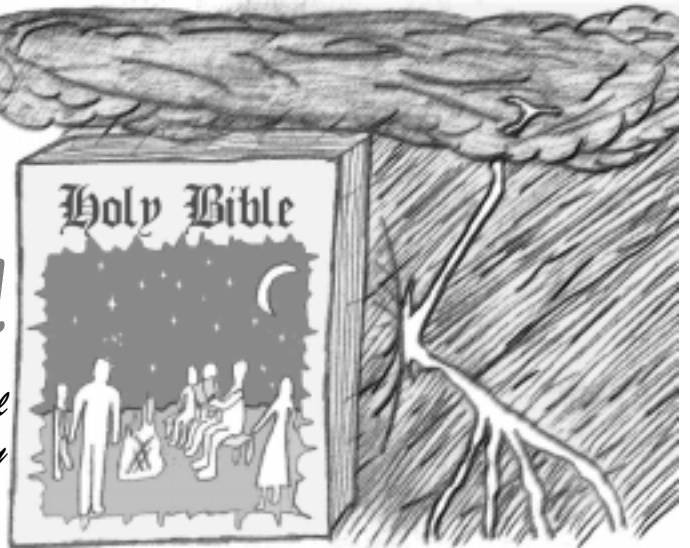


Shelter in the Word

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty... You are my refuge and shield: I have put my hope in your Word.

—Psalm 91:1, 119:114



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Helping you become self-sufficient in the Word—for a lasting relationship with the Almighty

Jan/Feb 1999

Learning to Pray ...from the Bible

by Norman Edwards

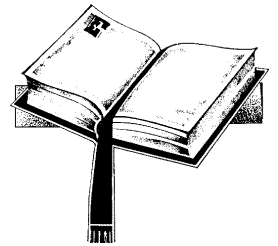
How do you pray?

- Say a memorized prayer?
- Say what comes to mind?
- Read prayers from the Bible?
- Pray from a "prayer list"?
- Say "amen" after another prays?
- More than one of the above?

When do you pray?

- When you are in trouble?
- Every morning?
- Every night?
- Before meals?
- At religious activities?
- Throughout the day?
- All of the above?
- None of the above?

Many types and times of prayer are mentioned in the Bible. This article is not to discourage you from prayer that works for you, but to encourage you to understand what the Bible teaches about prayer so you can be more effective in your prayers and in your life.



Please realize that the Bible does mention public prayer. It involves mostly praise of God and general requests of Him for a whole congregation or nation. Many of the Psalms of David were prayers put to music—sung in the temple and by other large groups. The Apostles went to the temple during the "hour of prayer" to pray with the other Jews (Acts 3:1). But the area where most believers need help, and the area where we find the most instruction in the Bible, is the area of individual prayers.

This is a rather long article with a lot of information about prayer—some of which will probably be new to you. You may want to read it through the first time, then read it again—looking up the scriptures that we cite, but do not include here. This writer feels that this is probably one of the most helpful articles he has written for individual spiritual growth.

What Is Prayer?

Individual prayer is talking to God, like a child talking to a kind, loving, just and perfectly righteous

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father. It is not a time to speak in King James English (saying “thee”, “thou”, “shalt”, “wouldest”, etc.). It is not a time to use a voice that is different than we normally otherwise use. It is not a chance to impress God with how much “Christian stuff” we know. It is not a time to make a lot of promises that we know that we cannot keep.

Individual prayer is talking to God and asking Him to respond. We should respect and honor Him, and give Him our best—but we should not “put on airs”. We cannot “fool” God.

Christ’s Teaching

The best place to start is with Christ’s instruction on how to pray in Matthew 6:

Matt 6:5 And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

You never need to feel “inadequate” when you pray! Just because your prayers do not sound like the great flowing prayers of religious leaders on TV or in

church meetings, does not mean that God does not hear you. Those who pray to impress others with their prayers receive their reward—the praise of men. Christ is not speaking against public prayer here, as He and His apostles took part in it. However, He clearly teaches that the **purpose of prayer is to communicate with our Father in heaven, not to impress others with our words.**

Christ follows with a **sample** prayer, or an **outline for prayer**. He clearly did not intend for people to repeat the exact words of this prayer over and over—every Bible example of an actual prayer is specific to the occasion, **not a memorized prayer.**

Matt 6:9 “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Prayer should begin by honoring and praising God. Most good parents will not give a child something if they **demand** it—the child needs to learn to ask in a pleasant manner. A child who sincerely thanks his or her parent(s) for what they have already done is more likely to receive their request. So we should ask our Heavenly Father by first thanking Him for the many great things He has done.

Secondly, we must ask according to **His will**. A little boy may ask his parents for a real cobra, jeep, gun, or bulldozer. A parent will almost never grant such a request because doing so would probably kill the child before he could grow up and know how to properly use these things. But a young child may not understand that unless his parents explain it to him or her. Similarly, when we pray, we must ask within the will of God. In order to do that, we have to spend a lot

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PO Box 220, Charlotte, Michigan 48813-0220
517-543-5544, Fax: 517-543-8899, e-mail: shelter@youall.com

Shelter staff: Tim & Jeanice Davis, George & Pam Dewey, Norm & Marleen Edwards, Missi Lara, Lee Lisman, Jon D. Pike, Anne Wibbelsmann.

Subscription and literature requests may be sent to the following addresses. (If you decide to send funds to help defer printing and mailing costs, please make it out to the name shown below).

Australia: Dale Heslin; 9 Alice Jackson Crescent; Gilmore, ACT 2905
Canada: Cherie Zimmerman, 268 Pennswood Wy SE, Calgary, AB T2A 4T3
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Europe: Guy Hodiament; Gulpen 122; 4852 Hombourg; Belgium
U.K.: Jenny Whiteman; 2 Warren Rd; Narborough, Leicester, LE9 5DR

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of time studying the Bible so we know what **His will is**. (See the sections on “Praise” and “Knowing His Will” later in this article.)

Matt 6:11 Give us today our daily bread.

12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

These three verses show us the important things within the will of God that we should ask for:

1. What we **need** to survive daily, not our **wants** or what we need to survive for a long time.
2. Personal forgiveness—**as we forgive others**.
3. Deliverance from temptation and the “evil one”—Satan the adversary or Devil.

These simple things are very different from the subjects of many people’s prayers. Many people continually come to God with a long list of people to bless, a long list of things they want and a long list of things they want to happen. There is nothing wrong with taking any problem to God, but we can be very frustrated if we continually ask for something that is not God’s will for our life.

Praying Within God’s Will

There are many promises in the Bible that prayers in the name of Jesus will be answered (Matt 7:7; 21:22; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:9; John 14:13-14; 16:23-26). For example: “If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*” (John 14:14). Most people who have read the Bible or been to almost any church have learned to pray in Jesus’ name—so we will not spend any more time on that. The difficulty is that our practical experience has shown us that the Father does not always do exactly what we ask. Many of us have prayed for an “A” on a test, a new car, a job, a mate, a healing, etc.—but these things have not always come as we asked. Was Christ telling the truth when He promised answers to prayers?

Yes! It is vital that we look at the context of the above statements. Christ was not talking about personal wants or healing when He promised answers to prayer, He was talking about doing things for people who were doing His work! John 15:16 makes this clear:

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

The book of 1 John even more clearly spells out some conditions to receiving answers to prayer:

1Jo 3:22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

1Jn 5:14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

The need for all prayers to fit within God’s will should be obvious, but we, as self-centered individuals, often do not think how it would be impossible even for

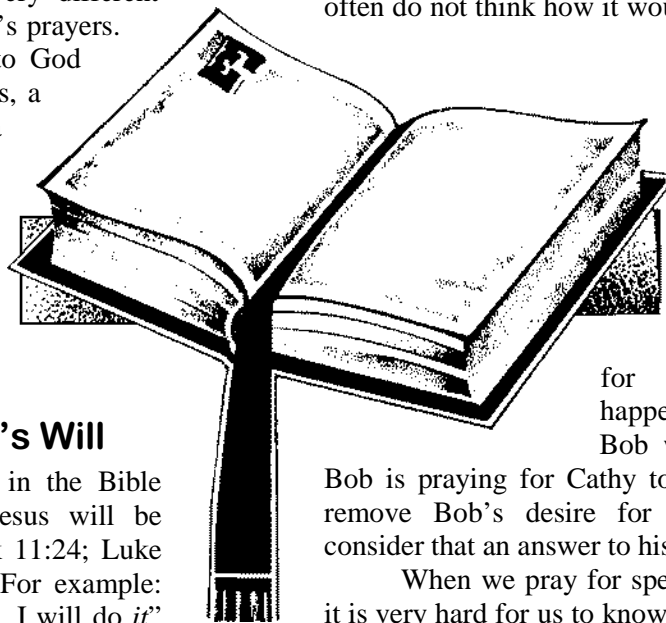
God to answer every prayer. What could He do when two people on opposite sides of a war (or a sports game) each pray for victory? He cannot satisfy their request with a “tie”, because both asked

for “victory”. Also, what happens when Alice prays that Bob will be her husband, but

Bob is praying for Cathy to be his wife? God could remove Bob’s desire for Cathy, but would Bob consider that an answer to his prayer?

When we pray for specific things that we want, it is very hard for us to know if it is God’s will. Once a rich nobleman came to Christ, wanting to follow Him, but would not when Christ revealed that he was too dependent upon his possessions and told him to sell them (Matt 19:16-22). If this man had prayed for more possessions, the Father probably would not grant them—because the Father’s will was to help him to grow in spirit, not in wealth. Those whom God calls to be his people are a special treasure to God, but their purpose is to serve Him, not the other way around:

1Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the



praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

When Christ, our Savior, was about to suffer greatly and die, He set the ultimate example of prayer:

Mrk 14:36 “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

The Apostle Paul had witnessed many great miracles and healings from the Eternal. But what did he do when he had an infirmity of his own which God chose not to heal?

2Cor 12:8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

10 That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

The basis of all prayer must be the understanding that God has a plan for the lives of people who yield themselves to Him. Sometimes this plan includes physical blessings, and sometimes these are forgone for a more important spiritual learning and blessing.

Prayer Lists and Frustration

Many people have become frustrated with prayer. They have written something on a prayer list, and prayed about it every day for months—some time years. Others have sent their prayer requests to someone who publishes a “prayer list”. Some just ask many

friends to pray. These problems they are facing are often severe. They may involve people who are near death, totally disabled, wasting their own life or making the lives of others miserable.

Crying out to God for mercy and compassion is a normal and good thing. Many of the Psalms of David cry out for God’s speedy intervention as he, the anointed king of Israel, was unjustly persecuted by his enemies. Nevertheless, it was the Eternal’s will for David to spend this time as a fugitive so he could learn the lessons of what it is like to be unjustly despised and a victim of corrupt rulership.

Nevertheless, after searching the Bible, the greatest number of times I could find someone *praying for the same thing* was three times. Examples of praying three times are Elijah asking for someone to be raised from the dead (1Kngs 17:21), Christ praying for a way to avoid his suffering (Matt 26:39-44), Paul asking to be delivered from his problem (2Cor 12:8-10). In the first case, God granted the request, in the last two He did not.

Do not make the mistake of saying “these are great men of the Bible, and God had a clear purpose for them—I seem to be suffering for no reason”. These were people praying, just like you are. Notice what James says about Elijah:

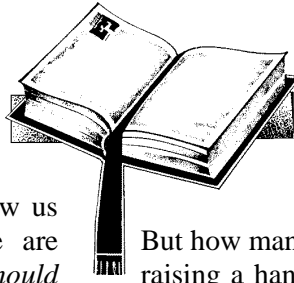
James 5:17 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.

It has been my experience that most people who do receive a dramatic result from a published prayer list (or by asking many friends to pray for them), receive it right away. Those who receive miraculous results after being on a prayer list for a long time usually attribute them to some other significant event about the time when the result occurred. In other words, it does not seem that God answers prayer based on the total quantity of prayers given for a specific situation.

While it is not a strict command of the Bible, the Bible seems to show that righteous men of God did not pray for the exact same thing more than three times. However, when righteous men wanted to change the mind of God, they often gave him a good **reason why He should change**. God told Abraham that He would destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, because of their sin; but Abraham asked Him to spare it if there were ten righteous people in it (Gen 18:16-33). God told Moses he was going to destroy the rebellious Israelites, but Moses asked Him to spare them because other nations would think that he is

unable to bring His people into the land (Num 14:11-20). If you are having trouble reaching God, try giving him a Biblical reason.

If we pray clearly with a reason three times, and if we do not receive an answer as we had hoped, then we should pray and ask God to show us **why** a problem is affecting us and what we are supposed to learn from it. Please realize that we *should* ask God for our daily needs every day—this is not praying the same thing over and over because our needs are different each day and, since you are still alive, God has answered those prayers. However, if you are asking God for a million dollars each day, or a certain healing each day, and He has not provided it, then it is time to ask Him for understanding of why.



he was born blind?’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.’” Jesus went on to heal the man—a great miracle which was a witness to many.

But how many years did the blind man’s parents suffer raising a handicapped child. How often did they pray for his healing?

When God has any of the above (or other) reasons for not giving us what we ask in prayer, we could become very frustrated if we think He is not hearing us. We should pray to understand His will instead, so that we can learn from it rather than fight it.

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

There are many Scriptures where God tells us that He wishes His people could be in good health—living meaningful and fulfilling lives. Why, then, do we suffer? Why do so many prayers seem to go unanswered?

This article cannot possibly tell you specifically why *you* are suffering, but it can give some of the general reasons why God allows suffering.

1. To show the evil effect of sin. God says that sins can sometimes cause ill effects for three or four generations (Ex 20:5). If He were to remove the effect of all sins from the lives of believers, they would not understand the real evil nature of sin and the need for Christ to return to govern in righteousness (Is 11:1-9; 42:13-16; Rev 19:11-16).

2. To help us learn obedience to God: “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered” (Heb 5:7).

3. As an example to others: This writer has often been amazed at the great amount of effort parents and other relatives go through to raise a sick or handicapped child—or to help a severely injured person recover. What would happen if healthy families would use a similar amount of effort to preach the Gospel or to help others who are less fortunate? By not healing some people who suffer, God has often left a human testimony of how much can be accomplished by those who dedicate their lives to helping someone in need.

4. For very specific purposes: One example can be found in John 9:2-3: “His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that

What Do We Pray About?

So if we are not continually asking God to bless various people, heal various people, etc. from a list, what do we pray about? We have already discussed the need to pray for daily needs. The Bible contains several examples of thanking God when eating food—this is a custom worth keeping. We also need to pray about **our daily activities and the daily activities of others.** We can pray that we may be an encouragement to someone *today*. If we have an ongoing problem, we can pray to overcome it in some way *today*. We can pray for God to use us according to *His plan* today. If we have too much to do today, we can pray for the wisdom to accomplish those things that God wants accomplished. If we do not have enough to do today, we can pray that He fills our time with something worthwhile.

The more important an issue is to our life, the more important it is to pray about it. When Abraham gave his servant the job of finding a wife for his son Isaac, the servant realized that it was an important task and wanted God’s decision, not his own:

Gen 24:12 Then he prayed, “O LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham.

13 See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water.

14 May it be that when I say to a girl, ‘Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too’—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will

know that you have shown kindness to my master.”

15 Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder.

As the story goes on, Rebekah offers Abraham’s servant a drink and offers to water his camels, too. We do not know the name of Abraham’s servant, he is not listed as a “great righteous man of the Bible”, but God answered his prayer. Rebecca was not necessarily even aware that she was part of an answer to prayer. We will talk more about how to ask in prayer later.

It is also important to realize that the servant, in the above prayer was not asking for himself, but to do a good job for Abraham. Many scriptural examples indicate that God seems to answer prayers more often when we **pray for others**:

Jms 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

The context of this verse is healing. God seems to be more interested that we pray for each other’s healing than we pray for our own.

How Do We Pray?

Many people fold their hands, close their eyes and bow their heads when they pray. None of that is commanded in the Bible. The only thing along this line that is mentioned in the Bible is the humble tax collector:

Luke 18:13 “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

14 “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Notice that the tax collector did not “bow his head”, but simply did not look to heaven. Also, he was commended for his humble attitude—not for the position of his head. Also, we see that on several occasions that Jesus raised his head and looked to

heaven when He prayed (Matt 14:19; Mark 6:41; 7:34; Luke 9:16; John 11:41). This does not mean that God does not hear prayers because our heads are bowed, but it is probably a mistake to teach or tell people to “bow their heads” when they pray—either alone or in a group.

The many scriptures on prayer show a great variety of positions. The most common is probably **kneeling** (1Kngs 8:54; Dan 6:10; Luke 22:41; Acts 9:40; 20:36; 21:5). But the scripture also mentions those who “**fell on their faces**” to pray (Gen 17:3; Josh 5:14; Num 16:22; 1Chrn 21:16-17; Math 26:39; Luke 5:12). Also, there are times when people are **standing** to pray (1Sam 1:26; Mark 11:25). In addition, some **raised their hands** to pray (1Kngs 8:22; Pslm 134:2; 1Tim 2:8) Since the Bible commands no specific prayer position and since several different ones are used, we can know that God does not insist on one position to hears prayers. Yet Jesus and others assumed some of these positions specifically to pray, so there must be value in them.

If nothing else, assuming a specific position to pray helps a person to realize that they are “addressing God” and that they should come with their thoughts collected, with organization and with respect. If you were going to ask your boss for a raise, ask a teacher for more time for an assignment, offer to purchase or sell a major item or something else of great importance, you would probably think it out ahead of time. You might even write down or practice what you are going to say. If we are going to God with a very important issue in our life, we should do it the same way. **We should know what we want to pray, we should pray it and then after we are through, we should know what we prayed.**

Obviously, if we are in sudden trouble, we do not have to prepare a speech, but can immediately cry out for God to save us. But on the other hand, how many people will remember their conversation with their friends, or what was said by the characters in a movie, but not remember what they asked the Creator of the universe?

In many ways, a **prayer diary** can be more important than a prayer list. Rather than writing requests down and asking for them over and over, ask them one, two or three times and then see what the Eternal does. If He does not answer, ask for understanding of why. Over time you will have a personal record of how God has worked with you. Obviously there is no Bible command to keep a prayer dairy—writing comes easy to some people, but is difficult for others. If you do not keep a diary, you may find it easier to remember prayers if you pray out loud. Asking major requests of God

together with a spouse or a family also helps us remember.

Can God Answer Our Questions?

There are many times when we desire to know the specific will of God. We may want to know whom we should marry, what job we should seek, where we should live, what ministry we should be involved in, etc. There are many situations in life where we face two or more clear alternatives—we must choose one. How can we know which one is the choice that God would want? We should read the Bible, and look for scriptures that would apply to our situation. Sometimes the answer is there. But even if it is, we sometimes cannot find it or we may simply need confirmation from God. When God told Gideon to lead an army to deliver Israel, Gideon asked for confirmation:

Jdgs 6:36 Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised—

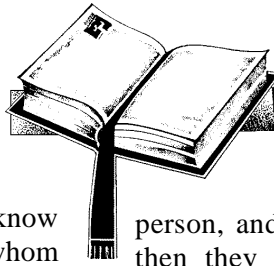
37 look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.”

38 And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.

39 Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew.”

40 That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Let us look at the nature of this miracle for which Gideon asked. It was a “private miracle”—something just for him. If he went running to someone who did not believe with his wet fleece and a handful of dry dirt, or on the next day, a dry fleece and a handful of wet dirt, they might simply laugh at him. “How do I know that you didn’t wet them yourself?” they might ask. God performed many marvelous, impressive open miracles through Moses, Elijah, Jesus, Peter, and others. These miracles were to demonstrate God’s great power and to attract attention. These were



power and to attract attention. These were done according to God’s plan and timing.

But if we want confirmation of God’s will for us, we probably should ask for a “private miracle”. God is concerned about the life of every person, and if He shows His great power to others, then they are responsible for acting on it (Luke 10:13, John 9:41). For example, if you are considering a used car, you could ask God to send fire down from heaven to destroy the car and/or the salesman if he is lying to you about the car. But is that God’s plan for the salesman’s life right now? The salesman may be behind on his bills and desperately praying to make a sale—he may be lying less than usual about this car. The point is, if you want God to give you a definite sign, do not ask for one that will involve other people, especially non-believers—you do not know how God is working with them now.

Also, notice that Gideon’s miracle was temporary in nature. Both fleece and ground were dry after a few hours. Gideon could have prayed that God drive a piece of straw through a solid piece of rock. But what would become of this rock with embedded straw? Would he show it to others as proof that God was “working through him”. Would it become an object of worship? God rarely works this way.

The most common way for individuals to ask the Eternal to guide their lives in the Bible is for them to ask Him to guide events or other people to produce a specific result. To other people, these events often do not seem miraculous—only to the person who asked and found God’s answer. Nobody knew about the fleece but Gideon. When Rebekah responded to Abraham’s servant in the way that he asked, Rebekah probably did not even know that she was an answer to prayer.

This writer knows of several believers who have asked the Eternal to send someone to answer their question. Sometimes, but not always, He did answer. One outstanding example was a woman who had been married, divorced and then married again. When she remarried, she felt she might have been violating the Bible teaching on marriage. It continued to bother her conscience. She had two children by the second marriage and knew that another divorce would be very difficult for everyone involved. She studied the scriptures again and could not come to a firm conclusion—different Bible teachers told her different things. Finally, she prayed for God to show her. If she was to remain married, she asked God to have a friend call her—one whom she had not heard from in a year, and had no real reason to expect a call from.

As soon as she finished praying, the friend called. It was an unpleasant conversation, but she believed her prayer was answered.

Other Ways God Communicates

In addition to this method, there are a few other methods used in the Bible. We note three of them, but mostly for your information, not because they were frequently used by believers.

1. Casting lots. There is only one incident where this was used in the New Testament, though it was common in the Old. When the Apostles determined to replace Judas, they found two qualified men, prayed and then cast lots (Acts 1:21-26). They probably wrote the two men's names on stones, shook them up in a jar, then let one drop out. Casting lots in the Bible is almost always used to make a decision between multiple individuals. Proverbs 18:18 says "Casting the lot settles disputes and keeps strong opponents apart." When you cast lots, you have no way at all to know if the Eternal answered your prayer for a decision or if it was simply chance. If you ever believe that God wants you to cast lots for any reason, you must be prepared to accept any possible result—otherwise your prayer for God's intervention is a sham.

2. Dreams and visions. A vision is essentially a dream that occurs when you are awake. Obviously, not every dream we have is sent from God, but those that this writer knows who believe they have had dreams from God say that the dreams stand out greatly from other dreams—like the difference between a 10-inch TV and a big-screen theater. Joseph was given several dreams to help him protect Jesus when he was little (Matt 1:2; 2:12,13,19,22). Pilate's wife received a dream warning against condemning Jesus (Matt 27:19). Numerous of the Apostles received visions (Mat 17:1-9; Acts 9:10,12; 10:3,10-19; 16:9-10; 18:9; 2Cor 12:1-4). However, there is no Bible example of someone praying and asking God to answer them in a dream or vision. There is a general encouragement to seek the gift of prophecy (1Cor 14:1,39) which often is granted in dreams and visions (Num 12:6; Acts 2:17). Dreams can often be very unclear, and many people interpret dreams when there is no sure way to know if they were sent from God. If you believe that God is speaking to you in dreams, ask Him to guide you in a small matter before basing any major decision on your dreams.

3. A direct word from the Holy Spirit. There are many instances when people heard from the Holy Spirit in the New Testament (Acts 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 16:6-7; 16:13; 1Tim 4:1). Did they actually hear a literal voice, or were the words just clearly placed in their mind? The Bible does not say exactly.

Believers that this writer knows report both, but most frequently the latter. In the Bible, it seems that the reader was expected to understand what was meant by "the spirit said". This direct contact with God has been missing from most of "Christianity" for so long that we have lost the meaning of some of these words. Hearing the spirit can be much like dreams—you have to be sure that you really are hearing from God. It is utterly essential that you seek His will—not just a "spiritual experience".

Important Cautions

Never ask of God in a trivial manner. We are asking the Creator of the Universe to do something for us. He loves us like a parent loves their child, but He does not *need* any one of us. We must go to Him in respect for His greatness and righteousness. We must ask from sincere and pure motives—like His.

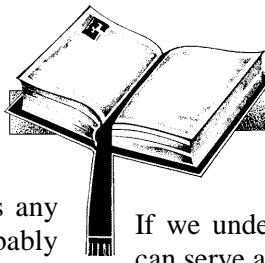
You cannot force God to answer. God does not always teach us knowledge or intervene in our lives when we want Him to. We must realize that God sometimes allows His people to be persecuted and killed by others. Righteous men like Daniel still had to work for evil kings, and were not even given understanding of the prophecies that they wrote (Dan 12:9). Even if you are praying to understand Bible doctrine, you may not get an instant answer. For many centuries most people did not ever see a Bible written in their own native language. God does not always provide us with all understanding—**He may choose not to answer your question.** It is therefore important when you pray for God's answer to only accept an unusual or miraculous event. The person who prays "God, if you want me to quit my job let the sun shine tomorrow" may well experience the results of random chance, not a miracle from God.

We also must realize that there is **nothing "magic" in any methods** described here. Do not go buy a fleece and put it on the ground thinking that God must answer you because He answered Gideon that way. God can answer you in whatever way you ask as long as you are really seeking His will, not simply a "spiritual experience" so you can feel righteous.

Please realize that **God's direct answer to your prayers is not going to suddenly eliminate all** (or maybe even any) **of the difficulties and sins** in your life. The Israelites saw great miracles in Egypt, but then often doubted God in the wilderness. Receiving answers from God is not a sign of great spiritual achievement on your part—it is simply God following up on His promise to answer us if we pray according to His will and yield our hearts and minds to Him.

Also, if God *does* miraculously answer you, please **do not think that His answering eliminates the need for personal Bible study and for fellowship with other brethren.** More than once, this writer has heard of people who probably have heard directly from God, only to conclude that they did not need other Christians any more. In a few years, their spiritual state was probably worse than it was before they had these answers to prayer. You can read the story of Balaam, a man who received messages from God, but was still evil (Num 22-24). **Any answer that we receive from God will not conflict with the Bible.** If we desire a miraculous event more than we desire to follow God, then Satan and his demons may also attempt to give us dreams, visions, or miraculous answers. Satan's interference is not a thing to be feared, but simply a reason to always check our own thoughts and requests against the written and revealed will of God—the Bible.

Finally, do not become superstitious. The Bible supports the idea of asking God for specific answers, but it does not teach us to interpret every little event as some kind of "sign from God". For example, if someone prayed for God to guide his or her day, and then they called someone on the telephone and the line was busy, should they assume that God does not want them to talk to that person and that they should forget about calling them back? Unless this person specifically prayed about that call, it is a mistake to take a busy-signal as a sign



from God. The difference between superstition and hearing from God is *specific prayer*.

Conclusion

Prayer is communication with God. If we understand God's ways and God's will, prayer can serve as a powerful force for peace and good. If we try to use prayer to "get God to do what we want", it will be a source of frustration.

Anyone can pray—even if their first prayer is "Father in heaven, help me to pray more effectively." You can be sure that it is God's will for you to pray.

Rom 12:12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Phlp 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

1Thes 5:16 Be joyful always;
17 pray continually;
18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 📖

A Public Prayer of Confession

*The above article dealt primarily with private prayer—the mainstay of our spiritual lives. We can also praise God, petition God, and confess to Him in public. Public prayer must also be made with a willingness to change things that have long been familiar and convenient. The following prayer was given by minister **Joe Wright** on January 23, 1996 to open a session of the Kansas State Senate. Some senators walked out, but most who heard it agreed it was true:*

Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask Your forgiveness and seek Your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, "Woe on those who call evil good", but that's exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that:

- We have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it "pluralism".
- We have worshipped other gods and called it "multiculturalism".
- We have endorsed perversion and called it an "alternative lifestyle".
- We have exploited the poor and called it "the lottery".

- We have neglected the needy and called it "self-preservation".
- We have rewarded laziness and called it "welfare".
- We have killed our unborn children and called it "choice".
- We have shot abortionists and called it "justifiable".
- We have neglected to discipline our children and called it "building self-esteem".
- We have abused power and called it "political savvy".
- We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it "ambition".
- We have polluted our air with profanity and pornography and called it "freedom of expression".
- We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it "enlightenment".

Search us, O God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of Kansas, and who have been ordained by you, to govern this great state. Grant them the wisdom to rule, and may their decisions direct us to the center of Your will. I ask it in the name of Your Son, the Living Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen. 📖

Let God's Spirit Guide You

by Tommy Willis

Through week after week of watching their favorite sitcom characters on TV, both children and many adults get a distorted view of reality. Thus, when confronted with real life, the young adults having been programmed by endless hours of TV, often become frustrated because they just do not seem to be having fun as the TV characters they admire.

Yet, TV is all an illusion, an image of life. TV shows only the eventful parts of life—**not** the eight hours of hard work each day or the eight hours of sleep each night that most of us need to survive. This sets up a pattern of thinking that leads to frustration. Young adults feel left out and it sets them up for perpetual dissatisfaction. Whole generations of people grow up feeling they 'deserve' a better way of life. Some will not learn to be thankful for what they have, as they continually want more.

Most Christians fail to realize how much they are influenced in this way. Our view gets distorted because we have not yet come out of the world's way of thinking.

This is one of the major reasons believers can be so easily swayed when they join a church organization. They simply carry this form of thinking into the churches. The church leaders should be teaching them to come out of this world's way of thinking. But all too often, the leaders have not come out of it themselves, so how can they teach the congregations?

God tells us to prove all things (1Thes 5:21) and not just go with the flow of the crowd:

Rom 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.



Your mind is what will take you out of the world while you are still in it. By allowing God to renew your mind daily through His Spirit, you



will then be able to discern what is good and what direction to go in. With His help, you will make the right decisions. Learning to follow the guidance of God's Spirit is very important for your spiritual protection.

Ps 143:10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.


It has been sad to watch how little prayer has been taught in the churches. Until prayer and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ become the focus of our attention, there will be little growth.

Rom 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but **that very Spirit intercedes** with sighs too deep for words (NRSV).

The study of scripture will show us the intent and mind of God. If we will go to God with child-like humility (and acknowledge we might be wrong), then He will surely lead us into His understanding.

Learning to follow the guidance of God's Spirit is the only way we will stay in focus with all that's going on around us. We need to learn that it's our "wisdom" that stands in the way. God cannot give us His wisdom when we are so full of our own. What a price we pay for relying on our own wisdom.

God wants to give us His wisdom. We must learn to empty ourselves and come before God like open, little children. Then, we become open vessels for God to pour His wisdom into.

With this humility, we will be able to properly follow the guidance of God's Spirit. 



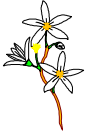
Natural Faith

by Ramona M. Leiter

Biblical Principles Seen In God's Creation

“Consider the lilies of the field...”

—Mat. 6:28



Alarm!

Recently I was dropping my son off at his kindergarten class. One of his classmates asked me if I had heard that the bowling alley had exploded. “Our bowling alley in Standish?” I asked incredulously. “Yes,” the boy nodded. The boy and another student then provided me with as many details of the incident as kindergarten students could be aware of. Still unbelieving, I drove by the site on the way home. There it was, as if a bomb had dropped on it, a heap of ashes and cement blocks. The bowling alley was the only thing gone. The surrounding buildings and even the adjoining lounge appeared unscathed.

I awaited the report from our weekly newspaper to fill in the pieces as to what had happened. As best as could be determined, a natural gas leak had ignited the furnace which led to an explosion and fire. As it was in the wee hours of Sunday morning, it went undetected for quite a while. After the fire was reported, over 60 firemen came from surrounding communities to our tiny town of Standish, Michigan. (The bowling alley was about the only recreation—there is not even one movie-theater.) While I and the other 1,200 residents slept, a battle had been raging. In the end, the loss of recreational opportunities and the end of a forty-year-old family business was sad, but at least no one had been killed or injured.

Oddly enough, the night before the fire I had been preoccupied with contemplating smoke alarms. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines an **alarm** as:

1. A sudden call to arms
2. A warning of danger
3. A mechanism that warns of danger, arouses from sleep
4. Fear caused by danger

The last three definitions equate alarm with danger in some way. But I haven't been afraid of the fire

that the alarms were meant to warn me about, but of the alarms themselves. I have been terrified of hearing one, even when testing the battery. And the fear goes deeper down than the shrill noise. I have finally come to realize that the sight and sound of the alarm represents for me *Webster's* first definition. An alarm is a sudden call to arms. It symbolizes my responsibility to my family and community. I'm responsible to be well-informed, well-prepared and ready to act any time the alarm sounds. If I don't, I suffer, my family suffers, and the greater community suffers. If the alarm sounds, you cannot sleep through it, you can't ignore it. So yes, I have feared alarms and the responsibility I must take from hearing one.

I have realized that for years I have been fighting against accepting responsibility, wishing others could do my jobs for me. But there are some things that I and I alone was created to do. I am a wife, mother, daughter, friend, a child of God, and part of the Body of Christ. The time is past to sleep as I was when the dozens of fire-fighters were putting out the blaze at our town's bowling alley.

Whether an alarm sounds or is silent, in ordinary or extraordinary circumstances, in the physical and spiritual realm, we must be well-informed, we must be well-prepared, we must take action now.

Do you hear the wake-up call?



Alarms for You to Watch:

Personal: School shootings and bombings have been in the news. How can a student who quietly goes to class one day be trying to kill his classmates the next? Steady diets of TV violence, sex and status seeking have replaced human relationships with fantasy. What are your relationships with your family, classmates or work-mates? Do you know what they are thinking or could some be bombs waiting to go off?

Community: It is only a few months till the Year 2000. Almost **no** industries or government agencies are claiming to be “completely ready”. Are you preparing for possible Y2K disasters? Are you encouraging others in your community to be prepared also?

World: There is a war in Europe. Nations are taking sides. This is how the last two World Wars began. With modern weapons, no country is safe. Do you trust God for your safety, or your nation's army?

Spiritual: Are you walking by faith and overcoming difficulties by the power of Jesus? Or is your life mired down by difficulties that neither you nor Christ seem to be solving?

Heed the **alarm!** Begin by praying!

—*NSE*



It's About Time

Biblical Chronology Made Easy!

David

In our previous installment, we considered the approximate central date for the life-time of Moses, 1500 BC. Knowing that date, we can pinpoint the *relative* time for many incidents in the scripture, and the general lifetime of many Bible characters. Any of the events of the Exodus such as the parting of the Red Sea and the giving of the Ten Commandments, the wandering in the wilderness for forty years of the people of Israel, and the conquering of the Promised Land will be shortly **after** 1500 BC. All of the events in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua are in this time frame. The lifetimes of individuals such as Aaron, Moses, Miriam, Joshua will also be included.

After the Israelites entered the Promised Land, and for the next 400 or so years, they had no king over them. This was the period of the “judges”, described in the book of Judges and Ruth. Thus any stories about these individuals will also be in the time period between 1500 BC and the next reference point on our time line, 1000 BC. Included in these stories would be the lives of Samson, Deborah, Ruth, and Gideon.

At the end of the period of the judges came the rise of the monarchy in Israel. The people of the land were uncomfortable not having a king over them as all the nations around them had. They wanted to have a regular champion who would represent them. Shortly before 1000 BC, the prophet Samuel spoke to the nation on behalf of God. It was to Samuel that the people brought their demand for a king:

1 Sam 8:1 When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel.

2 The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba.

3 But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice

4 So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.

5 They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.”

6 But when they said, “Give us a king to lead us,” this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD.

7 And the LORD told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.

8 As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.

9 Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.”

10 Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king.

11 He said, “This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots.

12 Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.

14 He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants.

15 He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants.

16 Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use.

17 He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves.

18 When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the LORD will not answer you in that day.”

19 But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us.

20 Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”

21 When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD.

22 The LORD answered, “Listen to them and give them a king.” Then Samuel said to the men of Israel, “Everyone go back to his town.”

From that time till our time now, many people, who should have looked to God as their king, have suffered under human kings and rulers. The Bible shows that most kings are not righteous men.

The first king chosen by God to rule in Israel was Saul. Saul was a tall and good-looking man who lead Israel to victory in many battles. But when Saul became corrupt, God cut off the monarchy from his family, and gave it to David and his descendants. For years Saul used his army to hunt down David and try to kill him. Finally, Saul died in battle.

David succeeded Saul as king. His lifetime was in the general area of 1000 BC. Once you commit this date to memory, you will be able to pinpoint the *relative* time of many other events and Bible characters.

David was a fair and just king. He was kind to the relatives of Saul and others who at one time fought against him. Probably the most famous story of David’s life is his battle as a young man with the giant experienced warrior, Goliath (1 Samuel 17). Nobody in the army of Israel would dare accept Goliath’s challenge to fight, so David, a shepherd boy with a stick and a sling, fought him and won. David made it clear

that it was not his superior skill that allowed him to win, but the power of God:

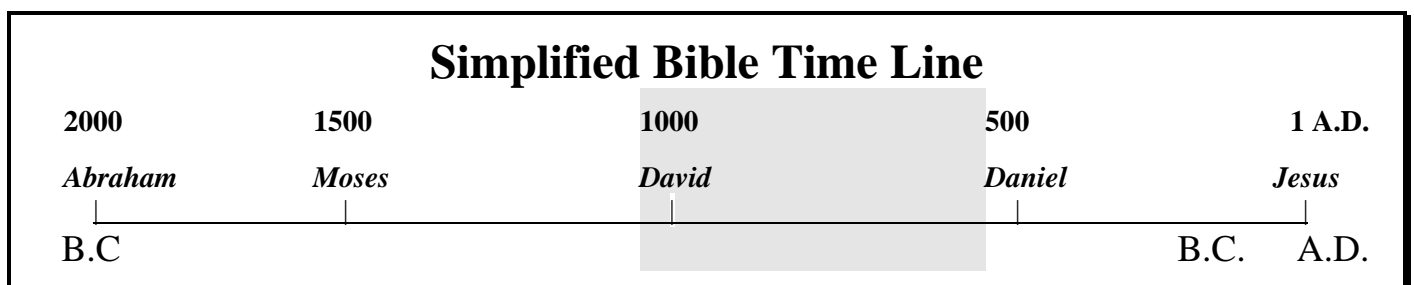
1Sam 17:45 David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

Another famous story is about David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11 & 12). David saw her bathing on a rooftop, sent for her and committed adultery with her. When David found out that she was pregnant, he arranged to have her husband, Uriah, killed in battle. Then David took Bathsheba to be one of his wives. This was the low point of David’s life. God sent the prophet Nathan to expose David’s sin. David is different than nearly all of the other kings (and other religious leaders) in that he publicly acknowledged his sin, **and then never did it again** (1Kngs 15:5). Even with David’s repentance, David still suffered punishment for his sin (2Sam 12:10-12). God said that the “sword would not depart from his house”. Some of his sons killed other sons, tried to take over his kingdom, raped a daughter, etc. Nevertheless, David set an excellent example for us: no matter what kind of evil we have done in the past, we can repent, turn to God, and by His power not repeat the evil again.

Solomon was king after David. He had great riches and wisdom, and built the first temple of God. After Solomon, the kingdom was divided into separate nations of **Israel** in the North, and **Judah** in the south. Both kingdoms had many kings. Most of these events are recorded in the books of 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles. They occurred between 1000 BC and 500 BC.

David’s family tree goes through the kings of Judah and leads directly to Jesus of Nazareth, who will someday return as King of Kings. Because of the prophetic importance of David throughout the Bible, we have chosen to mark the 1000 BC point on our timeline with his name.

—PSD





Questions & Comments

from Our Readers



May 25, 1998

Hi Norman,

It is my understanding that partial "fixes" [to the year 2000 computer problems] are occurring on a company-by-company basis, but that no universal solution is in the offing. One would think that this would be Bill Gates' golden opportunity to rule the world. If he's tied up in law suits with the gov't over Windows 98, he won't have the energy for it I guess.

Russia could be hardest hit. It is apparently far worse off than we are when it comes to finding a fix.

I do believe there are those who will seek to take advantage of this problem, and who are even now laying plans to do so. Some states will undoubtedly seek to impose martial law "until the crisis is past." That may become a permanent arrangement.

Militarily, militant low-tech nations could seek to take advantage of temporary problems with the high-tech military equipment used by the more advanced nations. I can see the Islamic militants seeking to take advantage.

At the same time, I have zero trust for the Clinton administration, it's motives and methods. Clinton & Gore will undoubtedly find some way to capitalize on this. Who knows what it will be?

My greatest concern is what will happen to the large, institutional investors? These investment groups drive everything. They are behind the endless mergers and downsizings of the largest international companies. Americans have trillions of dollars invested in the big mutual fund companies, which in turn invest in all sectors.

Worse than the actual YK2 problem could be the problem of panic. If the investing public gets the idea that it could stand to lose its shirt at the critical point, it could begin a run on the mutual fund companies, on banks, and on savings & loans and credit unions. We could have people with hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash rushing to banks to jam it in their safety deposit boxes, or stuff it under their mattresses. All kinds of people could try to turn it into gold and silver and find places to protect it. Arms sales could soar. It's not a pretty picture!

A most basic problem in the whole scenario is that the only people who are communicating much about it are the doomsday types. Many are seeking to "disturb" people into buying books, subscribing to newsletters, or investing in commodities. Hopefully, 1999 will see a massive public education program from those who are more constructive. How this issue is being communicated about is **the** problem.

—Brian

Dear Brian,

Thanks for your concern about the year 2000 problem. Even if Bill Gates had 100% of his attention on this problem, he could not fix it. As an analogy, what would happen if scientists at a huge iron mine discovered that for the past 30 years some of the iron ore they sold contained a bizarre chemical which would survive the steel-process and cause any steel made with it to turn to powder as of January 1, 2000? They don't know which batches of their ore went out with the chemical in, and the steel makers are not exactly sure which parts could have been made with this ore, and manufacturers don't know for sure what things contain those parts today. Yes, it is possible to prove that certain parts could not have been made with this bad ore, and that some batches of parts definitely were. But a large number will simply remain in doubt until tested somehow.

At best, we could hope for scientists to find a way to test items to determine if they contain the harmful chemical, and then come up with an antidote to stop its effect. But even if this happens, how does everyone begin to test every piece of metal—especially when it is in such inconvenient locations like inside engines, inside buildings, deep under water, or out in space? Furthermore, 99% of a car engine can be made of good metal, but one bearing or fitting that fails can cause the whole engine to fail.

The problem with computer systems is very similar to this. Some is known to be bad, some is known to be all right, but the vast majority of hardware and software in existence had no specifications regarding Y2K compliance when they were made—no one knows if they will work or not. In some cases, no one may even remember that they exist.

Russia and other less-modern foreign countries will certainly be the hardest hit. Some of these countries have used much "stolen" software. That means that they have no way to upgrade it to a version that will work in Year 2000—neither can they get any help fixing it. The US and other software-producing nations will be too busy with their own problems to help those nations at all. Some nation's economies may really collapse. People who rely on items made overseas should stock-up now!

Politicians are well acquainted with the concept of using a disaster to their own advantage. After watching the Clinton scandal of the past year, no one should have any doubts about the dishonesty of our

politicians. While I am saddened to think that some nations might use this as a chance to go to war, I think you are right. If a nation is at war, they are less likely to think about removing their leaders for their own failure to keep their computers working. If a modern nation's military is crippled (even temporarily) by failing computers, it will certainly give an advantage to the non-computerized army.

Other nations (including ours) may want to impose martial law, but that will probably make the disaster so much worse. For example, suppose a food processing plant is able to continue to operate except that its automated boxing system has failed and cannot be quickly fixed. Also, its office and banking systems are not working. It would like to hire a lot of people to manually box the food, and then pay them in food. But under martial law, getting approval for such a plan might be impossible, who does one begin to talk to? Nearly all martial law plans deal with seizing and allocating scarce resources, not with producing more. Even without martial law, the food processing company would have to violate government employment regulations to have people work in a place designed for machines, and to pay in food, not money. So that plant will probably close, decreasing the total amount of food available. Governments could probably help by temporarily suspending numerous regulations so people can find flexible solutions to Year 2000 problems.

It is hard to know what will happen to the big institutional investors, but I would expect a major market drop toward the end of this year as people begin to pull money out of stocks to have more cash on hand. Mutual funds will probably survive, though, because some big businesses will fail, but others will take up the slack and make big profits. Preparing for, and recovering from the disasters of Year 2000 will create the need for many jobs. Martial law is again a big factor—does martial law mean a martial economy, too? Will there be controls on how much stock one can sell? As far as I know, mar-

tial law has never been tried in a nation like ours, so dependent upon private capital.

The year-end panic will certainly be here. Already, government stories about Y2K are obviously designed to reduce panic. That is why people should make preparations **now**, when there is still time to manufacture new supplies, rather than in the last months when there will simply be a fight over what is left.

There are always people looking for reasons to predict the end of the world or a disaster to come. Some “prophecy preachers” have falsely predicted a “disaster in the next few years” for their entire adult life—and it has not come. Nevertheless, if a disaster is really coming, those people who are always looking for a disaster are likely to find it. (Evidence of a real disaster should be more convincing than evidence of one that will never happen.) On the other hand, most people are unwilling to face the possibility of a disaster no matter how much evidence there is. In our century, Adolf Hitler gradually turned Germany from a democracy to a dictatorship which ruthlessly eliminated many minorities and anyone who disagreed with him. It did not happen overnight. People gave away one freedom after another. Hitler's long-term plans were available to any who wanted to look for them, but most people simply were/are not interested in looking into unpleasant things until they happen—until it is too late.

Now, Year 2000 is in the news regularly. The fact that it has taken this long is a testimony to the lack of foresight of our leaders and press. The computer journals had regular columns on it in 1996, but almost nobody outside the industry paid much attention—even managers of corporations. Had government leaders or the press picked up on the story then, we would not have the disaster that we have today.

We all need to get ready **now**, to help ourselves, and to help others.

—Norman Edwards

Church Loses Tax Exempt Status for Ads Against Clinton

In October of 1992, the Pierce Creek Church of Binghamton, New York ran full page ads in USA Today and other papers showing Bill Clinton's support of abortion, homosexual practices and promiscuity. They solicited “tax deductible” donations to help pay for the ads. In 1995, the IRS removed their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status because the ads were “political activity”—even though the ads were exclusively about moral issues and did not endorse any other candidate or political party. In April of 1999, U.S. District Court

Judge Paul Friedman upheld the IRS decision.

Christ and the Apostles did not apply to Jewish or Roman governments to form a church (corporations did exist at the time). When church groups apply under section 501(c)(3), they must agree to follow all present **and future** IRS rules. If a new law defined preaching the gospel as a political activity, all 501(c)(3) churches have already agreed to stop doing it. Code section 508(c)(1) gives exemptions to the organizations that must apply:

Mandatory exemptions... churches, their integrated auxiliaries, and conventions or associations of churches...

If the law leaves a way to serve only one master, let us leave state applications alone, and serve God! ☞

Keep Your Way Pure

By Jerry Laus

1 John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

1John 3:1-3 tells us that because we are now (present) children of God, we have the hope (future) that we shall see Christ when He appears. In the meantime, we are to walk in that **pure** way of life. The question is, “How do we keep our way pure?”

David asked this same question in **Psalms 119:9** and proceeded to give us an answer in the verses 9 through 16. Let’s examine what he said:

Apply The Word

Ps 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

In this verse there is a question and an answer. In the question there are several things supposed: First, it is the natural way of humans to be unclean—the Scriptures call it sin. Second, we should recognize this natural way early in our lives—in our youth. Third, we should earnestly seek a remedy—to become entirely clean or pure.

The answer to this question is the Word. Not just any word, but “Your Word” refers to the Designer and Creator of all life. Without this revealed word, there would be no hope for mankind. The complete answer is in the depth of understanding and manner of appli-



cation, i.e., by studying and keeping in conformity to God’s will.

This section of the Bible is directed to the youth—both chronologically and spiritually. If we can catch the vision during this period of our life (when our thinking process is beginning to mature) then not only will we live happier, healthier lives, but we will have more time to acquire that full maturity which Paul speaks about in Ephesians 4. Some of us come along later after some hard knocks, and some never seem to grasp what is really worth-while in this journey

we call “life”. Therefore, these verses apply to all mankind, from the youth—so vulnerable to the glitter of the way of the world, up to and including the elderly—who often look forward to rest from this earthly toil.

Christ said, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God” (Matt 5:8). David had that desire to become pure in God’s sight—and desire is the mother of action. He also knew the foundation of a pure life was in keeping (action) of God’s Holy Word. Matt 7:13-14 gives us a warning that we should guard our manner of living, for it is a narrow path that leads to eternal life and few are they that find it.

Seek Him

Ps 119:10 I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.

Acts 13:22 tells us that David was a man after God’s own heart. The Psalms give us some insight as to why this was so. This is no idle statement to commit one’s “whole heart” to the search for God. (The heart is the very center of our being.) Oh yes, many of us know “about” Him and seem to settle for this warm feeling of the womb. But how many of us have made that whole-hearted commitment to love Him more than our father and mother, spouse and children, even more than ourselves? How many of us have the deep desire to truly know our God and to come out of the warmth of the womb and be willing to accept transformation, with all the turmoil that generally accompanies change?

David, here, declares to the Omniscient One that not only is he willing, but from the depth of his soul he is working towards a deeper fellowship with his God.

Prayer is born out of need and David recognizes the great need for God's guidance that he might "not wander from Your commandments". He has seen the confusion that reigns in the world and has experienced how easily one might get engrossed in this system of separation from God.

David's own son, Solomon, was inspired to write of the results of wandering and also seems to indicate that we have a choice in the matter. "A man who strays from the path of understanding comes to rest in the company of the dead" (Prov 21:16).

Recognizing that God has provided for us a way of life, David pleads for God's strong hand to keep him within the boundaries of righteousness as revealed in "Your commandments".

Believe the Word

Ps 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

To assume that David had little else to occupy his time but study the written word is quite naive, for the one who sits at the head of a kingdom or any organization has much responsibility which requires a great deal of time and effort. Yet David found time day and night to study and meditate on His word and would store it in the great treasury of his heart.

This is more than intellectual knowledge of the Word, but comes only through experience of applying that which is comprehended, there-by placing it deeply in the inner soul. This is what **believing** is all about.

David understood the great power in God's Word, "that I might not sin against You," and he continually sought that cleansing power. "Create in me a clean heart O God!" (Ps 51:10)—to walk in newness of life and be pure before You.

Praise Him

Ps 119:12 Praise be to you, O LORD; teach me your decrees.

David stated his adoration of God and also acknowledged Him as the inner core of the fountain of blessings from which comes forth His mercy and His love. His blessedness is an everlasting fountain, a full fountain, always pouring out blessedness.

King David was not without "experts" in the word of God. He had Nathan the prophet, whom he con-

sulted in building the temple (1Sam 7). He also had many priests to assist him. But all their teaching was nothing without God's blessings, and therefore David prays, "Teach me," give me the eyes to see and the ears to hear the wonderful things that are in your statutes.

Speak the Word

Ps 119:13 With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth.

God's word is a living thing, and when poured into a vessel, it will overflow so that other vessels may also be filled. We are to be vessels of His mercy (Rom. 9:23).

Having hid the purifying word in his heart, David declared it from his lips to all who would listen. Out of the abundance of the heart speak the good things of God. This is in an outward direction to other people. There is also the "lip fruit" in an upward direction. Here was a human being who had a tremendous relationship with his God. The Psalms are filled with communication to the Eternal One.

Rejoice in the Word

Ps 119:14 I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

David was called to an earthly crown, and as such had great material wealth—more gold, land and physical possessions that most men can dream of owning. Yet, his joy came not in his own way, but in the way of "Your testimonies". "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?" (Mk 8:36.)

The testimony of God is His word, for it testifies of His Will. The way of His testimonies is the application of His Word. Not only did David find sweetness in the hearing, reading and proclaiming the Word, but also in the practicing of it. Faith is understanding and trusting in God. Believing is the application of the Word.

Meditate on the Word

Ps 119:15 I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.

All along David had shown what he had done: Verse 10, I have sought; verse 11, I have hid; verse 12, I have declared; verse 14, I have rejoiced. Now in these next two verses, he makes his commitment to the future—and it is no idle promise one makes to God.

The words, "I will" also denote the power of choice. This same power is available to all mankind;

“This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now **choose life** [Jesus Christ], so that you and your children may live” (Deut 30:19).

David committed himself to meditate. Meditation is more than mere reading or thinking. One could read the Bible in a few weeks or even hours as a novel. But meditation in His word is a **lifetime process of careful study, examination and application**. We do not meditate in order to rest in contemplation, but in order to obey “His precepts”, that our way of life may become “His Pure Way”.

When righteousness becomes a matter of choice, rather than constraint, it instantly changes its whole nature and rises to a higher moral rank than before. And so it is with God’s statutes, judgments and precepts—His entire Word—obedience is changed from a thing of force into a thing of freeness, and there is great delight in this freeness. We are not driven to it by the “God of authority”, but we are drawn to it by a now willing heart, towards all moral and all Spiritual excellence.

Delight in the Word

Ps 119:16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

Delight prevents neglect. Those who are intent on carnal interests, neglect the Word because it is not their delight. If anything causes pressure on us or displeases us—moving us out of our desired ‘comfort zone’—we are glad to forget it. The mind will run on

that which the heart delights—“Where your treasure is there your heart will be also” (Mat 6:21).

The writer of the book of Hebrews quoted the Old Testament promise of the New Covenant and part of this promise states, “...I will put My laws into their mind, and write them on their hearts...” (Heb 8:10).

This promise is available to us **now** in our lifetime, but we must desire it from the depth of our soul. God’s word does not come by osmosis—by setting a Bible on our head and thereby absorbing the words in the book. Nor does He force-feed it to humans. It comes by His grace and our diligent study, examination and application. “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2Tim 2:15).

King David understood this principle and he also had the desire to apply it, yet he had only a few books written which he could study. He also had a very special fellowship with his God. Now, we have not only the **Written Word**, which was specifically designed to bring us to the **Living Word**, but we also have His **personal Holy Spirit** dwelling within us. And, one of the primary functions of God’s Spirit is to teach us to know all the things that were freely given to us in Christ Jesus (1 Cor 2:12).

What you are is God’s gift to you. What you make of yourself is your gift to God.

Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. 

Time Management Expert

(author unknown)

One day, an expert in time management was speaking to a group of business students. He pulled out a one-gallon, wide mouth Mason jar and set it on the table in front of him. Then he produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top he asked, “Is this jar full?”


Everyone in the class said, “Yes.” Then he said, “Really?” He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. He dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the space between the big rocks. Then he asked the group once more, “Is the jar full?”

By this time the class was on to him. “Probably not,” one answered. “Good!” he replied. He brought out a bucket of sand and poured it in—filling the

spaces left between the rocks and the gravel.

Again he asked the question, “Is this jar full?” “No!” the class shouted. Once again he said, “Good.” Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and poured until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he asked the class, “What is the point of this illustration?” One eager beaver raised his hand and said, “No matter how full your schedule is, you can always fit more stuff in!” “No,” the speaker replied, “the point is: If you don’t put the big rocks in first, you’ll never get them in at all.”

What are the “big rocks” in your life? God? Your education, your dreams? Time with your loved ones? A worthy cause? Teaching or mentoring others? Put these **big rocks** in first or you’ll never get them in at all. When you reflect on this short story, ask yourself this question: “What are the ‘big rocks’ in my life?” Then, put those in your jar first.

Prv 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. 

Christians and Y2K—Part 2



by Norman Edwards

Our last issue explained the nature of the year 2000 computer problem (Y2K) and why Christians should prepare for it. But exactly what should they prepare for? This article will cover that issue. Here are a few important general principles of preparation:

1. Prepare in ways that help others as well as yourself. Rather than spend \$200 on emergency food and \$800 to fortify your house to prevent people from stealing it, spend most of it on food so you can have some to sell or give to others. The first method will make enemies; the second, friends.

2. Plan to work with others. Most Americans do not know their neighbors. We have an economic self-sufficiency mentality—our job or our pension provides money, we buy what we need with money, and we “don’t depend upon anyone else”. We probably need to change (more about this later).

3. Plan to meet real needs, not to maintain your present lifestyle. Most people in the USA could survive with less than half of what they normally consume. They could eat less than half as much, live in a house less than half the size, take less than half as many showers, and use less than half as much electricity. This may not be true in other countries.

4. Country and big city problems are different. If there are long-term outages of power, food and water, the biggest danger in big cities may be gangs or mobs wandering through buildings and houses looking for supplies. If things get bad, big city dwellers need to have an escape plan (a place to go in the country) or they need to hide their resources to outside observers. On the other hand, one advantage to city dwelling in that governments will try to restore order, power and essential services there first. Therefore, those in the country need to be much better prepared than those in big cities. People who live in small towns or sprawling suburbs fit somewhere in between—they will have some advantages and some disadvantages of both.

5. Everyone’s needs are different. There is no single list that will work for everyone. People in the north may be most

concerned about heat. People in deserts may need water the most. Others may be most concerned about their medicine or an electronic medical device that they depend upon. Make a list of all of the essential things that you regularly buy or that are provided for you. Think about how you will obtain them as the possible problems are discussed below:

Immediate Problems:

Electric Power

Senator Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) said it all with his now-famous line: “Quite honestly, I think we’re no longer at the point of asking whether or not there will be any power disruptions, but we are now forced to ask how severe the disruptions are going to be.”

Almost everything that is done in our society depends upon electric power to some degree.

Electric power generation involves numerous embedded computer chips in numerous places. Several different power plants have already been thoroughly renovated to make them Y2K compliant. When they were tested (the dates on all computers set to Dec 31, 1999), many of them still shut down due to some unforeseen Y2K problem. Some were repaired in a few hours, others a few days, and some took weeks.

Most of the nation’s power plants are connected together in what is called the “power grid”.

During normal operation, there is about 15% of excess capacity for power generation. Since January 1, 2000, is a Saturday, industrial use would normally be less, leaving more capacity. But if many industries are working overtime to fix computer problems that day, they may use more electricity than normal. If it is a very cold day, there will be less surplus capacity; if it is a warm day, there will be more. In the January 11, 1999 North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC) Survey, 17% of the nation’s independent power

GAO says Washington DC Will Not Be Ready for Y2K

Because of its lack of preparation for Y2K, the US General Accounting Office stated that “The District [of Columbia] may be unable to effectively ensure public safety, collect revenue, educate students and provide health care services. As a result, the District faces a significant risk that vital services will be disrupted.”

An article explaining the GAO study appeared in the Washington Post, Friday, February 19, 1999; page B1. The article may be read on the Internet at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/local/daily/feb99/district021999.htm>

producers were only 10 percent finished with their Y2K work. If this group does not get finished, the grid is at risk. Another 50% of power producers were less than half-way done.

These questions nobody can answer for sure: What will the electricity demand be on that day? What percent of power plants will fail? Will the remainder of working plants be able to meet the demand? If the answer is “no”, then the results are quite unpredictable. Various sections of the grid will automatically disconnect themselves from other sections when the voltage drops too low. Some areas will be without power. Restarting a section of the grid that is “off” usually requires about six times more power than normal (motors and lights all draw much more power when they first go on). If many sections of the grid are not working, it will take days to restart all of them—even if all of the power plants are fixed.

On April 9th, utilities across the U.S.A. practiced coordination of their operations via radios—in case telephone systems are out of operation. Their test was largely a success—which means the chances of a coordinated recovery are good. But do not be fooled—this test had nothing to do with the Y2K compliance of their power generating equipment.

People should be prepared to be without electricity for a few weeks. It is not likely that everyone will be affected, but it is hard to know who will be and who won't be. **Everyone should have a supply of batteries, flashlights, candles and matches.** If you live in the cold, you need a source of heat. See the section below and the short article at the end of this issue, *Poor Man's Portable Power*, for methods to cope with a lack of electricity.

Water & Natural Gas

Water is more important in warm or desert climates. People in the North can melt snow for water—provided they have some fuel with which to do it. People in warm climates can do without heat if necessary. You must decide what is important to you.

Some water systems will automatically fail if the power fails, others will not. Check with your local water utility and ask about their capability if the power fails. In an emergency, you can use the water out of your toilet tank (not the bowl!) and hot water heater. Learn how! If you have a source of water near you (lake or stream), obtain a way to purify it—there are many filters that will do this. Sporting stores sell water purification tablets, or you can use 16 drops of bleach per gallon (a teaspoon for 5 gallons). Use only pure liquid bleach (sodium hypochlorite)—never color-safe or powdered bleach. If you do not have water nearby,

Power Company Doubletalk

The following is the entire Y2K-related statement mailed in April 1999 to all customers of Consumer's Energy, a major Michigan utility company:

Like many companies, Consumers Energy has been busy preparing for year 2000, or “Y2K” as it's come to be known.

We decided five years ago to get an early start on addressing any issues that could affect our computer systems when midnight chimes on Dec. 31.

We began by checking ALL of our essential technologies that might be affected by the date change.

Next, we put in place plans to fix systems that needed attention and to test and verify they will perform correctly.

This \$22 million program is on schedule for completion well before the end of this year.

Thanks to these efforts, we don't anticipate any major problems with our electric and gas systems.

In fact, both the North American Electric Reliability Council and the American Gas Association believe the nation's utilities are in good shape for Y2K.

But as extra assurance, we have developed detailed contingency plans to come with the unexpected.

At year end, we will have extra employees on duty at power plants and key transmission and distribution facilities. They will operate some systems manually during the calendar change and respond promptly to any unusual occurrences.

We're also working closely with the federal government, other Michigan utilities and state governmental agencies to address any external factors which could affect energy delivery.

Finally, please keep in mind that any Y2K issues that do crop up will not hit every part of the world at the same time. Consumers Energy employees will monitor CNN throughout the day on Dec 31 to see if there are problems in, say, Japan or Australia.

Along with our contingency plans, this “Y2K preview” will help us serve all of our customers safely and reliably through the turn of the century.

The beginning of this statement sounds very reassuring. But if Consumer's Power really started on the project five years ago, and if it really is “on schedule”, why did they schedule such an important project to finish sometime in the middle of 1999? **They did not say when they are scheduled to finish!** Also, they said nothing about how much of their equipment has **actually been tested** and shown to work in Y2K. It is good that they plan to have extra people on duty, run some systems manually and watch other country's utilities. But that means that they are not completely confident that their equipment will work.

The paragraph about working with other utilities and governments appears deliberately hazy. What are the “external factors which could affect energy delivery”? If many power plants in other areas suffer failures, someone (probably governments) will have to decide who will get power and who will not.

then store it. Adding the above amount of bleach will keep bacteria from growing. You can filter out the bleach just before you drink the water with most any inexpensive charcoal filter.

Natural gas supplies are much more likely to be functioning than electric power. While it is possible that some computerized gas valves may fail and, create shortages in some areas, natural gas is **stored locally** by many gas companies, whereas no electric utility stores power! A failure in one gas distribution area is not likely to affect another until the local gas storage runs out. Gas companies often have a supply for many days. Also, much local gas distribution can function without utility power.

However, many home gas appliances will not function without electricity. Gas “forced air” or “hot water” heaters are of little use without a healthy amount of electricity to run blowers and pumps. This can be done with a large inverter or a generator if someone prepares ahead of time.

If your local gas provider will not make any clear statement about being Y2K compliant, you should look to other means for heat and cooking. **Fireplaces** will usually only heat the room they are in, but with a “Dutch oven” or other cast iron cookware you will be able to cook in them. **Wood stoves** are fairly effective for both heating and cooking. If you heat with wood, you need to store wood—or have a way to cut it.

A propane, or white gas, or charcoal camp stove will provide a way to cook for weeks for less than \$100. Portable kerosene or propane space heaters are another way to heat. You will need to stockpile fuel in safe containers. Use only K-1 kerosene—it does not have an odor, but most other kerosene does.

It is possible to convert most home natural gas appliances to use propane. Propane can be purchased in large tanks, and you can have a valve installed near your gas meter to run propane through your house gas pipes. You will usually need to change the gas orifices on each appliance. The manual that comes with many gas appliances usually shows how to do this—the parts may be included, too. If you do not have what you need, a hardware store or the manufacturer of your gas appliances probably does. If you would like the option of using propane as a backup in case of a natural gas failure, do not wait until December to look for parts or hire someone to do the work.

If you use any heating devices with a flame in your house, it is worth \$30 for a **carbon monoxide detector** to prevent accidental suffocation. A **fire extinguisher** is also a must.

Sewer



Sewer failures may seem like a trivial item, but they are one of the biggest problems for densely populated areas. Most sewer systems rely on electric pump stations. This is certainly true for low or very flat ground. Cities usually have some backup power for these stations, but not enough for all of them. If an entire city is without power, many of the sewers will become inoperable—people will not be able to flush their toilets even if they have water. If wastes are not disposed in some way, disease can spread rapidly.

If you have a way to build an outhouse, or dig a waste pit (with a protective lid over it), that is the best solution. Rather than have to use an outdoor toilet in the winter, it will help to have a lot of strong, small plastic bags, and a portable toilet seat that makes it easy to catch the “output” directly. (If not, you can simply use a bucket and dump the contents—but that leaves a sometimes messy cleaning job.) The used plastic bags or buckets can then be dumped into your outhouse or covered pit. If it is well below freezing on January 1, waste can simply be left to freeze outside, but it **must be** disposed of before it thaws.

Densely populated areas are the biggest problem. There may be no place to bury waste and people may be tempted to throw it in trashcans and dumpsters. Diseases can spread very rapidly in this environment.

If you have a septic tank, you should not have trouble—but if it has not been pumped for several years, consider doing this before Year 2000 comes.

Food

Most Americans have never had a day in their lives when they did not have something to eat. Many believe that they would starve to death if they had to go for several days without food. **You will be much better prepared for Y2K if you simply know that this is not true!** (And, it costs you nothing to know this.) Healthy adults (especially those with a little excess weight) can function for weeks without food, and much longer with only a little food. This writer has gone without food on over a dozen occasions, the longest time being 21 days. Most of the headaches, weakness and other difficulties occur within the first few days. After this, most people can work effectively for a number of weeks until their body reserves run out. Thin people run out much more quickly than heavy people. Hard work or exposure to cold also greatly shorten the survival time without food. Knowing that you can survive a number of weeks without food may

save you from an unnecessary fight over food or from mentally giving up when you could go on.

Children and sick people need to be fed much more regularly. Also, some people that are otherwise healthy may have severe medical problems going without food for a few days. Everyone will feel a whole lot better if they are fed regularly, so plan to have emergency food!

You do not need expensive survival rations! Many businesses are selling these as “Y2K food”. Most of these are designed to be lightweight so a person can carry them in a backpack. *These only make sense if you think you will need to leave your home on foot.* They are much easier for someone else to steal than heavy, canned food. Canned goods make much better survival rations for home—they come with their own water. Most canned goods can be eaten without heating, though a camp-stove will certainly make them much more satisfying.

Dried beans, rice, and other grains provide the cheapest way to store food for a long time. To keep bugs from eating them, pack them in air-tight buckets or jars with oxygen absorbers inside. Bay leaves and some other strong spices can also work to keep out bugs. In order to use grains, you will need either more fuel for your stove to cook them a long time, or a flourmill to grind them.

Telephone, Internet, Etc.

Our telephone system is essentially one big computer network. In many places, it is now being integrated with Internet service and cable TV. While much effort is being made to make it all Y2K compliant, only one small error could create quite a problem. Several times in the past, software bugs or a fire in a switching station have crippled long distance service in the USA. Practical experience from earthquakes and hurricanes show that even when the telephone systems are not damaged, the number of calls created by people trying to contact loved-ones in emergencies can easily overwhelm our telephone system.

Calls to 911 and other emergency services may not be able to get through. Calling your friend across town may be impossible. If you regularly help handicapped friends who live alone, it may be best to plan for them to move in with you for a few days beginning late in December. **The possible lack of telephone communication is why it is so important to know your neighbors and to be able to work with others locally.**

If telephones are down, it will greatly affect most businesses. Their ability to make orders, provide service, authorize check and credit purchases will be

greatly hampered. This is a good reason to have cash on hand.

Everyone should have a battery-operated radio to hear news and emergency broadcasts. A short-wave radio will allow you to hear the perspective from other countries. Short wave stations can be received all over the world (depending upon atmospheric conditions), so you will always be able to get some news. In times of disaster, it is nice to get more than one opinion.

Believe it or not, the postal system will probably continue working in the Year 2000—for first class mail. Even if they have Y2K problems, they can simply stop processing bulk mail (which makes up a large part of their work) and devote all of their resources to first class.

Transportation

Do not plan to be on a trip around January 1, 2000, unless the place you are going is a safer place to ride out the difficulties than being at your home.

Auto transportation should be possible at the beginning of January 2000. Public ground transportation will probably work too—if power failures do not prevent it. Most gas stations have a several-day supply of gasoline, and even more is stored locally by distributors. Y2K or power problems may prevent some stations from pumping, but others will work. It is hard to know which will and will not. If your Y2K emergency plans call for leaving your home to drive to a country friend, your successful journey would be much more likely if you kept enough gas either in your car’s tank or in storage to make the trip.

Air transportation should be avoided. Although the FAA claims that air traffic control systems will be Y2K compliant, their computer systems are massive and old—problems are likely. If computerized systems fail, manual systems will have to be used or some airports may simply be closed. Previous bad weather experience shows that if a few air hubs close, air traffic for the whole nation can be greatly infringed upon. Cancelled flights *from* one area mean that airplanes are not available to go on to other working areas. When this is combined with possible power failures, we can **expect air travel to be slow and difficult in the year 2000.** It will be much easier for the airline people to iron out the problems with a few passengers (they can combine two flights into one if necessary) rather than with many. **One- and two-day air delivery services will probably not work nearly as well as normal.**

Other Critical Supplies

If power is off in parts of the country or if Y2K causes failures in computerized distribution systems,

buying anything may be difficult for a few days or weeks. Most big stores today use “just in time” inventory methods. Computers keep track of what leaves the store from the barcode scanners, automatically reorder when quantities are low, and then items are moved from trucks directly to the shelves. Stores have almost no products in reserve. Even the warehouses that receive products from manufacturers try to have only a few days’ supply in reserve. Even now, whenever an unexpected rain or snowstorm occurs, rain and snow gear, bottled water, batteries, and other supplies simply **disappear from store shelves** until warehouses and factories can gear up for the demand. We can expect stores to be short of essential survival items during the year 2000. **If you buy what you need now, factories will be able to replace it on the store shelves. If you try to buy during the Y2K crisis, you will be competing with millions of others, and factories may no longer be able to make such items.**

Money: Failures in power, telephones, and banking software may limit the services provided by banks and automatic teller machines. A supply of cash to buy essentials for a few weeks or months is a good idea. The Federal Reserve is printing 200 billion in extra currency for this purpose. Banks will want to stay in business—they will try to continue as many of their functions as possible. Leaving money in a bank always has some risk—if losses occur at many banks, government insurance may not be able to cover all of them. Also, governments sometimes confiscate money in banks. However, even if your bank is closed for several months, you will only lose access to your money while it is closed. When it reopens, your money is still likely to be there. Y2K problems are not likely to cause banks to lose all record of your accounts. Before you convert your life savings to cash and hide it under your mattress, think about what might happen if somebody breaks into your house looking for food and finds your stash of cash.

Clothing & Bedding: Everyone for whom you are responsible should have a couple of sets of clothing that will keep them comfortably warm in whatever winter temperatures are likely for where you live. It is much cheaper and safer to dress people warmly than it is to feed them enough to endure weeks of cold. Sleeping bags, down comforters or other warm clothing should be purchased for each person. Many of these things are available cheaply during the summer in yard sales and second-hand stores.

Prescriptions: Many people’s lives depend upon prescriptions. Having a 30- to 60-day reserve would be good. Some pharmacies will not fill some prescriptions more than 30 days in advance. Doctors may be able to prescribe an emergency supply. Also,

some prescriptions leave the patient an option of how much to take—if you take a lesser amount, you can save some for emergencies. If someone loses a full bottle of their prescription, the pharmacy will probably sell them a replacement. Finding it during Y2K could save your life! Whatever you do, always make sure that prescriptions are stored in properly labeled bottles.



Paper Goods: If there are problems with power, water and heat, washing dishes and clothes becomes a much more difficult task. An ample supply of disposable plates, cups, utensils, napkins, paper towels and diapers (if you need them) will give you more time for attention to priority matters.

Personal Computer Software: If there is any software that you depend upon, find out if it is Y2K compliant very soon. Manufacturers, stores, PC publications, and some Web sites give lists of compliant programs. Next January, there will be a mass exodus to stores to purchase Y2K compliant versions when old versions fail. Even if software stores are open, they will quickly run out of copies of software that replace non-compliant versions.

Long-term Problems:

These issues may not be a problem right away, but will surface some days or weeks after the Y2K crisis. It will be much easier to be prepared for them now, rather than in the year 2000.

Safety Issues

Many government agencies and corporations are reporting only on their “mission-critical” systems that they plan to have ready by the year 2000. There is no standard or clear definition of what makes a system “mission critical”. Some of these non-mission-critical systems may contribute to the safety of systems in ways that nobody has thought about—because they have always worked in the past.

Also, even some “mission critical” safety systems may be bypassed in order to keep power plants and other vital functions working. For example, a non-Y2K-compliant power plant may be able to operate if its computer date is set back to 1972. However, the “automatic part replacement” function may stop working. It may be designed to automatically request the replacement of critical parts that are over 30 years old. However, parts purchased in 1970 now appear to be only 2 years old rather than 30 years old, so none will be automatically replaced.

When the first major accident causing the death of employees and/or nearby citizens occurs, many industries may have to reassess their safety status and be forced to stop working until safety systems can be made ready. The important part of this point is realizing that problems will come and go for several months after January 1, 2000. Just because something works on that day does not mean it will continue to work for the next several months.

Emergency Services

Hospitals, fire departments, and other emergency services are likely to be overwhelmed for a variety of reasons:

1. Some of their equipment is not Y2K-compliant.
2. Power and utility failures will cut down on the effectiveness of their services.
3. Volunteers who help in these services may be busy dealing with their own family's needs.
4. Y2K problems as well as accidents caused by people using unfamiliar alternate forms of heating and cooking will greatly increase demand for service.

Emergency services will probably only be able to help with the most life-threatening calls. For example, a person with second-degree burns from a stove might be told to find a physician or take care of it himself. **Everyone should have a good first-aid kit and a first-aid book or two.** It is also helpful to know which people in your neighborhood have medical knowledge.

Shortages—Especially International Goods

Everything we buy either has a method whereby it was “harvested” or a method whereby it was manufactured. Many products are built from other products. Everything has to be transported to its consumers. Every manufacturer will be affected by their own Y2K problems, as well as utility failures and the failures of their many suppliers. Some manufacturers will be able to keep up with their normal production, others will fail completely. Some will continue with limited capability.

Most countries outside of the United States are much further behind in their Y2K preparations. What is likely to be difficult for us could be disastrous for them. These countries often use second-hand hardware and software that is not Y2K compliant. One advantage some have is that their power normally goes off several times a year and most people know how to get along without it. But Y2K is going to be a much bigger problem than one of their “normal” outages. In many

cases, there is nobody in their country who can fix it—and people who can fix it may be impossible to get any time soon. It may be many months before power and other critical systems are back to normal in these countries. Much of their industrial production will not work until power and other utilities are restored.

If possible, **it would be wise to stockpile any supplies that are critical to your life or business—**especially if they are produced in a foreign country.

Oil & Gasoline

One of the most important imports to the United States is oil—from which gasoline is made. About 50% of what we use is imported. There will be some kind of oil shortage in the year 2000, the only question is, “how bad?” Why? **1)** Many of the foreign producers are just now beginning to think about Y2K compliance. **2)** Many of the oil tankers and other transportation systems are just beginning to make Y2K repairs. **3)** Refineries have many hundreds of embedded computer chips, some in inaccessible places.

Some oil will be available, but it will not be as much. The price will be higher. The gas station lines of the 1970's are likely to return. Rationing is a possibility. Arrangements to carpool or use public transportation might be a good idea—especially if you need to use some of your gasoline for a generator.

Financial Markets

People with a substantial amount of wealth invested in stocks, bonds and other instruments are always concerned about what the future may bring. This article cannot give anyone specific financial advice, but the history of what happens to financial markets in difficulties and disasters is fairly consistent.

The short-term value of securities depends largely on what people think is going to happen. When rumors of wars, poor economy, or other problems circulate, people may believe stock prices are about to drop, so they sell their shares. This selling drives the price down, so others begin to sell while they still have a profit. If nothing happens to make people want to buy and the price continues to drop, then even more people sell while they can still “get something back out of their investment”. This is a “market crash”—it usually occurs when a market is overvalued to begin with. Treasury Department is planning to print \$200 billion in extra cash in anticipation of people holding it for Y2K. A lot of that money will come out of the financial markets. A short-term decline in securities prices can certainly be expected some time this year. How large a decline it will be depends upon factors beyond anyone's knowledge.

The long-term value of securities depends on what does happen. An enterprise that does something that people want in an efficient manner will increase in value. Alternate energy and food and water storage businesses will do very well this year and probably next year, too. Many people who had to eat cold meals for a few weeks during the Y2K disaster may go out and buy a camp stove as soon as they are available again. Any business that is prepared for Y2K will do much better than any similar business which is not. **If you invest in businesses that are Y2K-ready, or that provide goods and services that will be in demand during the year 2000, you help yourself and everyone whom that business serves.** If you invest in businesses that are ill-prepared for Y2K or that make products not needed in 2000, you hurt yourself and the economy. Finding out which businesses are Y2K-ready, or determining exactly which products will be in demand is not always a simple task. But determining which businesses will be profitable in the future **is always the job** of a successful long-term investor.

Job Changes

Major changes will occur in the demand for various kinds of employment. Obviously, people who fix computer systems will be in demand for years. The number of non-mission critical systems that will not be fixed by 2000 is large. The demand to fix them will be much greater once they stop working. People who can work with emergency energy systems and solve other Y2K related problems will be in high demand.

But people who may now be making a fortune in expensive entertainment and luxury items may suddenly find themselves with nearly no work to do. Even those who produce or sell furniture, dress clothing, power-consuming appliances, etc. may find themselves with little work to do. People simply do not spend large amounts of money on these things when their basic survival is at stake. (Cheap entertainment often thrives—movie theaters may be packed because people want to forget their troubles for a while. There is more reason to go if the theater is heated and many of the people's homes are not.)

You need to think about your job and ask, "During a time of great difficulty, do people really need what I make or do?" If the answer is clearly, "no", then it would be good for you to begin looking for something else to do that will support you during Y2K. For example, delivering firewood to houses is not a common occupation today. But in the year 2000, thousands of normally dormant fireplaces may spring to life, there may be a high demand for wood delivery.

Some industries may be able to continue provided that they change focus. For example, the tourist industry may largely disappear, but there may be many people traveling to help fix broken computer and utility systems. People in the travel industry need to prepare to serve this kind of customer. Also, hotels and motels could do themselves and everyone else a favor by planning to operate from their own emergency power and other resources. They will need their own emergency gear, as well as a way to shut off power and other utilities to all but essential resources (the heated pool is not one of them). Some people whose own homes have become unlivable would probably be glad to stay in such a motel.



Similarly, restaurants, stores and other essential service industries will find plenty of customers if they can operate when the power or other utilities are out.

We Need Other People!

Americans often pride themselves on being "self-sufficient". In some ways most of us are not dependent upon any other one person, but we are very dependent upon electronic things, corporations and governments. **These entities are all very susceptible to Y2K problems. People are not** (unless they have had pacemakers or other electronic parts installed). Electronic things normally tend to be predictable in their operation; when they fail, we have them fixed or replaced. Governments and corporations are governed by rules and laws that they are supposed to follow; if they do not follow them, we take them to court. But people are all different and often do whatever they want at the moment. They can become angry or emotional for no apparent reason—but they also can be compassionate and loving in a way that electronic things, corporations and governments are not.

If all that we have said about preparing for Y2K seems like an impossible task, it is probably because you or your family are trying to do it all. Suppose this burden was suddenly nearly cut in half? Two next-door families could share an electric generator/inverter, cooking facilities, a water filter, an outhouse, etc. If staying warm without electricity is the main problem, two families sharing a house will actually keep it warmer just by being in it—and only one alternate heat source will be needed. But who wants to share their house with people whom they may not even know?

Work with Neighbors Now

Our job, school, church, and entertainment practices often create situations where our best friends are widely scattered. Sharing food and other resources with our current friends by driving back and forth every day would be difficult enough now—and probably impossible during a Y2K gasoline shortage. Also, if you have saved supplies for Y2K, you want them to be where you are, but you do not want to be driving them around where they can be easily seen and stolen. **It is much better to work with people who are geographically close to you.** That allows sharing some resources at each other's houses, while keeping access to your own resources at your own house. You can either walk or take a bicycle back and forth—or at least you will need only a tiny amount of gas for a car trip.

If your neighbors are impossible for you to work with (they don't speak your language, they totally dismiss Y2K problems, etc.), **and if you cannot prepare for Y2K on your own, at least consider moving soon or making arrangements to live with a friend or relative during Y2K.** You may be giving up a lot of privacy and independence, but it may save your life. Transfer whatever supplies you have to your temporary place **before** the end of December 1999.

During World War II when many European houses were destroyed by bombing, it was very common for several families to be sharing a house—each often had one room. This is efficient for resources, but it takes away privacy and creates a number of interpersonal problems. How do you decide who gets to eat, sleep or use the bathroom?—when and where? At what times does everyone have to be quiet so people can sleep? Who is allowed to use how much electricity, water, hot water, etc? **These problems can be difficult to solve, but solving them is better than freezing alone—or better than going to a public shelter where all decisions will be made for you.**

There are many ways to share resources short of sharing houses. People can buy different parts of an alternate energy system (inverter, batteries, generator, gasoline, etc.), then share the power with a 12- or 10-gauge extension cord. People can share cooking resources—it takes only a little more fuel to cook two meals on a wood or charcoal fire as it does one. Water filters, outhouses or waste pits, first aid supplies, short-wave radios, battery operated TV's and other long-lasting items can be shared among several families. Reasons for sharing are not just economic—they can also be related to skills. One family may have no skill with electrical things, a single person may know nothing about cooking, an elderly person may be unable to

move firewood. But together, they can accomplish all necessary functions.

Having someone to trade with is also quite valuable. Most of us will not perfectly plan for our needs. You may have more candles than you need—but want to trade them for a thick sleeping bag. Somebody else may want to trade a pack of flashlight batteries for five gallons of gasoline.

Services can also be shared. Several families may want to work together to have a 24 hour watch. The watchman would look out for intruders and fires (especially if flame heaters are being used). If a gas shortage is severe, carpooling to work and shopping can save a lot. Childcare, or care for the infirm can also be shared.

Some of our readers probably already know and work with their neighbors regularly. Others will see this section as “too weird” to put into practice. Everyone's situation is different. You probably cannot feed your entire neighborhood on your own. You do not want to be the only person on your block with energy, food and water, and have everyone else staring in your windows. Work with and help those whom you can now, and ask God to take care of the rest.

Prepare for Those Who Cannot

You may have friends or relatives who are sick, disabled or on low “fixed” incomes. There may be very little that some of these people can do about Y2K. To the extent possible, plan to help them. There are many Scriptures that show us that we should plan for the poor. This may involve making sure they have adequate facilities to continue to live where they are, or planning a place for them to stay in your home.

How can one plan for a very sick relative whose life now depends upon access to very expensive medical machines, procedures or prescriptions? Does one try to buy or stockpile these things along with emergency power to run them? In most cases this will be impractical or impossible. We can pray for God's intervention and their continued life. But our resources would be much better spent helping the many healthy, rather than the few who are sick.

“Wildcard” Issues:

All of us would like to avoid the following problems—indeed we would probably nearly all agree to pay money or give of our time if there was a sure way to prevent one of these things from happening. Nevertheless, Y2K problems could bring about all, any or none of the following situations. These are not things to fear, but things of which we should be

aware. While we *physically* prepare for the **probable** disruption of electric power and other resources, we must also *spiritually* prepare so we can calmly trust God to protect us if one of these **possible** situations occur.

Industrial Disasters

Every decade or so, a major industrial accident occurs that affects an entire city or region. Examples are large explosions, poison gas discharge, nuclear radiation leaks, etc. In almost every case, safety systems were in place, but a combination of systems failures and human error caused the accident. Usually, the rest of the world does whatever they can to send in experts, tools, or supplies to help with the problem.

If Y2K failures contribute to causing a major industrial accident, the rest of the world may be busy. A large land area could become uninhabitable. Everyone will be trying to use the phone. Even if you plan to ride out the Y2K problems at home, consider a backup plan where you could go if you had to leave where you live.

International Collapse

We have already discussed how most countries outside the USA are far behind in Y2K preparations. Massive infrastructure failures could cause major cities to be almost unlivable. Thousands or millions of lives could be threatened. Help from developed countries would be little if any. When major difficulties like this arise, people tend to blame someone. They may blame their own leaders, or they may blame the countries like the USA that sold them the technology that failed. (It is actually quite common for companies in the USA to sell used, older-generation computers to other countries—most of these systems are not Y2K compliant.) In situations where people's lifestyle has been ruined and their very survival is at stake, people are likely to either overthrow governments or support extremist government policies.

Martial Law

Today, most countries have some kind of "rule of law". The governments cannot simply seize any property they want, or jail or execute citizens simply for their own reasons. Such actions can normally occur only when approved by an impartial judge or jury. Under **martial law**, governments use the military to enforce whatever they want—treating all the property and people of the nation as if they all belonged to the state. The reason given for declaring martial law is always "to protect the nation in time of emergency"—and that happens sometimes. On the other hand, martial law is

sometimes used by leaders to accomplish their own objectives.

As an example, England declared a form of martial law during World War II when they were suffering daily bombing raids from the Germans. When a factory or office critical to defense was destroyed by bombs, there was not time to build a new building or use a lengthy court process to require someone to sell the government a replacement building. It was the job of the British government to quickly determine which building was best for their use—with the least impact on the country—and then take it over. A family who had made furniture for 100 years might suddenly find themselves looking for another job because their building was taken over to make airplane parts. The defeat of Germany was more important than personal property at the moment. When the war was over, martial law ended and some people were compensated.

As another example, martial law was declared in Germany after the Reichstag building (equivalent to Congress or Parliament) burned down. This fire was officially blamed on the Communists and martial law was declared "necessary" to protect the people—especially since the legislative body could no longer meet. But from that point onward, Adolf Hitler had complete control of the German government and used it to fight all of his enemies, both within Germany, and later throughout much of the world. The German people did not vote to build an army and try to take over the world. They allowed Hitler to impose martial law for what appeared to be a crisis—and then soon found that they either had to cooperate with the military government, or face imprisonment or death for disagreeing.

In the USA, the Constitution provides for emergency laws. The agency currently planning for such emergencies is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It has issued documents giving a number of possible responses to Y2K depending upon its severity. FEMA could invoke Executive Order 12919, which has already been signed by President Clinton. The Executive Order gives FEMA power to coordinate other agencies and also control over "all free market resources". This means that they can take whatever they want (houses, food, vehicles, fuel, etc.). In addition to Federal emergency laws, individual states have their own emergency management laws (in Michigan, Public Act 390). The actual documents of these emergency laws and how they can affect Y2K may be found at the web-site maintained by Franklin Frith:

WWW.Y2KCOMING.COM



Nearly every other nation today has a provision to enact martial law in an emergency. Y2K certainly promises to create some kind of emergency for nearly every industrialized nation. The difficulty is that so many in governments today have demonstrated a great capacity to serve themselves first and their citizens later. Will the governments of various nations invoke martial law? People in government who are self-seeking would probably like to because that would give them more power and wealth. However, if the people believe that the emergency is not bad enough, or if the people believe that the government created the emergency, then they will often rebel against the government, and those who tried to implement martial law run the risk of being deposed and losing everything.

Wars

If the effects of Y2K and the possibility of martial law were not bad enough, we may have wars to contend with also. This stems from leaders who want primarily “to stay in power” rather than help their people. Since most people do not understand computer technology, governments may try to blame the problems on whomever they want. They can blame their enemies within their country, enemies outside the country, or the big nations that installed their computer systems. When things are going very badly in a country, a war creates a distraction. Also, nations with less technology may conclude that they have the advantage against high technology nations who are trying to recover from their Y2K problems.

We cannot know which of the above events, if any, will happen. It does not make sense to dedicate our lives to preparing for them. It does make sense to realize that God allows great calamities to come upon nations and people who are doing great evil. It also makes sense to learn to have the faith to trust God to take care of us even if our lives are forced into very different circumstances.

Start Getting Ready Now:

Sooner is Better for You

Right now, it is relatively easy to prepare for Y2K. Most food and alternate energy prices are still close to what they have been for years. Some products have already disappeared from the market due to demand, but many are still available. There is not any

kind of rationing of goods or services essential to Y2K—you can buy as much food, or withdraw as much cash as you think you need.

If you need to find a new job and/or move to another place, there is still time to complete the necessary arrangements. Some of these things may not be so easy several months from now. **Do not wait to prepare “until there is more information”** about what will happen on January 1, 2000. There is no nationwide or even industry-wide plan to test everything that might fail due to Y2K computer problems. To avoid lawsuits, most companies are very secretive about the Y2K-related failures they already have had. **There will never be a time when anyone will be able to accurately say what Y2K will bring, until it is actually here.** Begin preparing now.


Sooner is Better for Others

It is not selfish, but helpful to others to prepare now. If there is a great demand for canned food and grains now, farmers will plant more this year and there will be more for others to buy this fall. If other supplies are bought in quantity, more will be made. If you move to a house in the country to get away from possible city riots, you encourage builders to build more houses in the country.

For those who wait until the last few months to prepare, these effects will not happen. If many people wait until late in 1999 to buy extra heaters and food, it will simply create shortages, which will tend to generate even more panic buying. By buying now, you help make more for others who may not buy till later.

Ask God

The Almighty knows the situation of each one of us. He knows how we can best prepare. He can give us the strength to give up some of our entertainment and less important needs so that we may prepare for ourselves and others. Those who believe in Jesus should be helping others in times of crisis—they should not bewilderingly ask, “How did God let this happen?” Prepare for yourself and prepare to help others:

Matt 16:25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. 

Y2K: Poor-man's Portable Power

The prospect of facing an extended period of time without any electrical power can be frightening, especially for people who have lived with ample, reliable electricity since they were born. It is not too difficult to see how one can work around our largest consumers of electricity:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Replace With</u>
electric heat	wood stove or kerosene space heater
electric stove	wood stove or camp stove
electric lights	work in day-light, candles, oil lamps
hot water htr.	pan of water heated on stove
well pump	stored water, treated lake water
hair dryer	towel and a different hair style
clothes dryer	clothesline, drying racks in house
air conditioner	sweat

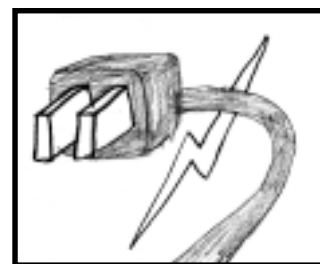
But what about the myriad of low-power electric devices that we use? These things include radio, TV, some telephones, electric tools, medical equipment, safety equipment, battery re-chargers, food processors, flour mills, shavers, etc. Some of these items we can simply do without, but others our lives depend upon. "Manual" versions of most of these items may be available, but buying a whole separate set of manual equivalents may be much more expensive than buying a little bit of portable power. How do you buy portable power "on a budget"?

The easiest way is to buy an *inverter*, a device that converts DC voltage from batteries to the 120 volts AC found in your house. Devices that can be plugged into the cigarette lighter of a car are available from \$50 to several hundred dollars. Inverters are rated in *watts*, the amount of electrical power they can produce (some may be rated in *volt-amps* or *VA*—subtract about 20% to get a rough equivalent to watts). Generally, the more expensive the inverter, the more watts you can obtain. Most electrical appliances have a rating in watts. (If they have a rating in amps, multiply this by 120 to get the equivalent in watts, for example: 1.5Amps x 120 = 180 watts.) You need to buy an inverter with a "watt rating" higher than the highest watt rating of any device that you need to run in emergencies.

You may need to use your inverter to run a device in your home, not in your car. You can use an extension cord to run this power into your house—the bigger the wire in the extension cord, the less power you will lose. Keep in mind that the inverter is

draining the battery in your vehicle.

Using 100 watts from your car is about like leaving your regular headlights on. If you can leave your headlights on for 6 hours before your battery goes dead, you can use 100 watts from your inverter for 6 hours before your battery goes dead. If you are using 300 watts from your inverter, you will have less than two hours.



If you plan to use your car battery and inverter very much, it is good to buy a second battery. "Deep cycle" or "marine" batteries will last much longer than standard car batteries for this kind of use. Look for a battery with a "long reserve time", **not** one with high "cranking amps". With two batteries you can connect the second battery and a set of "jumper cables" to charge it or to start your car if you accidentally drain a battery too far. (Batteries will last much longer if you do not drain them close to all the way, but trade the batteries before they get low.) You can bring a charged battery into your house and use it to run your inverter or you can run a cord inside (use #4 wires or bigger).

If you need more than 300 watts of AC power at a time, you will probably need an inverter that connects directly to a car battery (rather than through a cigarette lighter). Inverters over 1000 watts need to connect to batteries directly, with the same kind of cables that your car uses. These large inverters can run high power things such as heater blower motors and well pumps—but not for very long. The cost will be between \$500 and \$2000. **Pierce Independent Power Systems** (see *Y2K Resource List*, below) specializes in inverter systems that use car engines to recharge batteries.

If you want to keep heater blowers, freezers, pumps and other major appliances running, you will probably need a separate generator to recharge your batteries. Generators are available that run from natural gas, propane and/or gasoline. You can get AC models that provide regular house current or DC models that will simply charge batteries. It is also possible to recharge batteries with solar cells or wind energy. These are less reliable and more expensive, but they do not require any additional fuel. The alternative energy suppliers listed below will be glad to make recommendations, but it would be best to get a book on the subject.

Buy Now!

Some inverters and generator orders now take weeks to fill. Each one bought *now* helps ensure that more are produced!

For most emergency electrical needs, an inverter and batteries are more important than a generator. Inverters and batteries use energy only as it is demanded. A running gas generator

with nothing plugged in will still use almost half the amount of fuel it uses at maximum load. It may also wear out faster with very light loads. It is much better to use a generator for high power needs and to charge batteries; and then use an inverter for low power needs.

Sometimes, it is cheaper to buy energy-saving appliances than it is to provide *more* alternative power. A 60-watt standard light bulb can be replaced by a 15-watt compact fluorescent light bulb for \$12. These pay for themselves in two years even with utility power. Other energy efficient appliances, like refrigerators, are quite expensive and take longer to “pay back”.

Safety Is Important

If you are depending upon using a car engine or gas generator, you may want to store some extra gasoline. Be careful how you do it! Store it **only** in containers designed for gasoline, preferably in a separate shed away from inhabited dwellings. Stabilizing additives such as “Sta-Bil” will allow gasoline to be stored longer—1 to 2 years.

Be very careful with car batteries. If you accidentally short the battery (touch a wire, tool or piece of metal between its two terminals), hot metal will go flying. Batteries that remain shorted can explode. Always connect red wires to the “+” terminal and black wires to the “-” terminal. Hooking up a car battery backwards will usually damage a car’s electrical system. —*NSE*

Share Your Shelter

Our Savior never argued or tried to force someone to believe in Him. We should not do that either. But if *Shelter in the Word* has helped you, you can share it with others who might be interested in it or helped by it. One of these methods might work for you.

1. Talk to them about what you have learned and encourage them to study the Bible themselves.
2. Copy your *Shelter* and give it to them (almost any office or copy store will do this for \$1 to \$2).
3. Give them your *Shelter* (we will send you a replacement issue if you write or call).
4. Copy just this page or write down the address or phone so they can request their own subscription.

For subscriptions and other literature, write or phone:

Shelter in the Word
PO Box 220
Charlotte Michigan, 48813-0220
517-543-5544, Fax: 517-543-8899
e-mail: Shelter@youall.com

Y2K Resource List:

We have no interest, financial or otherwise in the following businesses. There may be others that are better. We recommend buying sensible items that will help you through Y2K or other emergencies. Do not *create an emergency* by buying things you cannot afford.

Books and Publications

(books available from most bookstores)

The Millennium Bug, by Michael S. Hyatt, Regnery Publishing, Inc. Wash. DC, 1998.

Time Bomb 2000, by Edward Yourdon and Jennifer Yourdon, Prentice Hall PTR, 1998.

Y2K News Magazine, Wilson Publications, LLC; 20 Our Way Dr.; Crossville, TN 38555; 888-Y2K News or 888-925-9925. (A free sample issue is available from *Shelter in the Word*.)

Emergency Equipment

Jade Mountain, Inc.; 717 Poplar Ave; Boulder, CO 80304; 303-449-6601; web: www.jade-mtn.com.

Major Surplus & Survival; 435 W. Alondra Blvd; Gardena, CA 90248; 800-441-8855.

Northern Tool & Equipment; PO Box 1499; Burnsville, MN 55337; 800-533-5545.

Volcano Corporation (efficient charcoal stoves); 3450 W. 8550 S.; West Jordan, Utah 84088; 888-532-9800; Eastern USA: 800-480-5226.

Alternate Energy

Northern Arizona Wind & Sun, Inc.; 2725 E. Lakin Dr. #2; Flagstaff, AZ 86004; 888-881-6464 or 800-383-0195; web site: www.solar-electric.com; e-mail: Windsun@Windsun.com

Pierce Independent Power Systems; 1935 Dodge Road; Deford, MI 48729; Phone and fax: (517) 872-3424

GEET of MD; 150 Mullar Lane, Stevensville MD 21666; 410-643-1240; web: www.friend.ly.net/GEET.

Serious Error from Y2K Preparation

A *Shelter in the Word* reader received “past due” notices—about bills he never received. Why? Because the bills were sent to the wrong address. The business that sent them used US West Dex to keep their addresses automatically updated from industry databases. US West Dex had recently updated software in preparation for Y2K, but errors caused them to give clients 5-year old addresses instead of the most current. Bills for people who had moved were returned. It took a while to figure out why. We can expect many more errors like this as we approach the year 2000.