

10 Times

By Marty Anderson

When I think about the power of prayer at work, I've always assumed it needed to have a happy ending in order for it to be a useful and effective story. But prayers aren't always answered, or at least not right away. Prayers are meant to draw us closer to God, our Abba Father, our most important relationship.

There is power in simply maintaining that relationship because even though God might not be doing what we want, he does have an opportunity to do what "he" wants. Sometimes it takes him longer to do what he wants though—or at least it seems that way.

About a year ago, a very close friend of mine was let go from his job as a VP for an expanding insurance technology company. It was a big surprise and shook him deeply. I met with him and encouraged him that God wasn't surprised! It could actually be a good thing as this would give him an opportunity to do what he really wanted to do and to draw closer to God in the process.

A year passed and we met again for lunch. He told me he'd had a lot of

great interviews and met a lot of great people. But he was so frustrated and confused. He had been a finalist with one other person 10 times and had not received the offer. Ten times! He couldn't believe it. Frankly neither could I.

What was God doing? What was my friend supposed to be learning from all this? There had to be a reason, right? My friend told me he just wanted clarity. I paused and quickly grabbed my phone to look up a devotional in my *Glorify* app that talked about someone who was seeking clarity and even asked Mother Teresa to pray for him. She said "no" she would not do that. When he asked her why, she said, "Clarity is the last thing you are clinging to and must let go of." When he responded that she always seemed to have clarity, she laughed and said: "I have never had clarity; what I've always had is trust. So, I will pray that you trust God."

As I shared the devotional with my friend, I also encouraged him to

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INSIDE: REFLECTIONS

Power of Prayer at Work

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people. (1 Timothy 2:1)

All people would include those we work with and have influence over our work environment. In WorkLight, we encourage one another to pray with people, not just pray for people. Our experience is that it is rare that people refuse our offer.

By praying with people, we invite them into our faith and our relationship with Jesus Christ, his Father, and the power of the Holy Spirit.



If with us, they ask, seek, and knock, Jesus promises they will receive, find, and the way will be opened for them. (Matthew 7:7-8).

Andrew Murray in his book, *School of Prayer*, says each step takes all of us deeper into our relationship with God. Asking illustrates what we want, seeking leads us to finding the giver, and knocking opens the door to God's love.

The power of prayer is not just an answer, it's a relationship with God and a life in his love.

October Reflections: Pages 2-4

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

Listen

By Paula Lent

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak ... (James 1:19)

Working in patient services for a medical hub, I encounter many people throughout my day, and a variety of different situations. It's choosing to do the work with and for the Lord that has helped me the most with this job, enabling me to be better poised to serve people personally. "Come, Holy Spirit" is my favorite prayer, and I say it before answering each phone call.

One day, a woman called in and casually shared she had recently been the victim of horrific violence. Shocked and sobered, I asked the Lord for guidance for the call. "Listen," he said.

I heard one of the saddest stories I have ever encountered, of a lifetime of

hardship and violence. As I listened, I would gently respond with "Wow, God bless you." But she didn't respond to those words, and I didn't offer to pray. As I continued to listen, I was struck by how, amidst the violence and suffering, the Lord was clearly loving her through some people in her life, had preserved her beautiful heart, and given her a strong grace of strength and lightness.

At the end of the conversation, once I had done all I could for her, she stopped and thanked me for listening. "Not many people would have listened to my story," she said. "Most people hear a little and don't want to deal with me."

I told her that I had been truly honored to meet her and praised her for the strengths I had seen in her. She then shared that she had been baptized just a few days before and was starting a new chapter with the Lord! It was then that I offered to pray with her.

Following our conversation, I sat and cried silently at my desk for several minutes, weeping over the depth of tragedy. God knows what everyone has

been through and what they need. We just need to ask him for guidance and insight, and act and respond accordingly.

Paula Lent is a former member of WorkLight's Editorial Team and lives in South Bend, Indiana.

PRAY

Lord, give me the strength to really listen to people I encounter during my workday so that I might respond with love and compassion.

REFLECT

How do you listen? Actively or passively? What can you do to improve?

DISCUSS

When have you been witness to a powerful story that brought you to tears? How did you respond to the person telling the story?



Three Keys to Transformative Small Groups

For Small Groups to be effective, members need to work together to be **missional, formational, and relational**. All three are needed.

Learn more at bit.ly/WLgroups

REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

Finding Harmony

By Ron Schmalz

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7)

Earlier this year I decided to leave the company where I had worked for over 11 years. This was not an easy decision, and the only way I was able to find clarity and peace was after a great deal of prayer and by surrendering to God's will.

The demands of work, family, friends, and faith can often leave us feeling like there are not enough hours in the day. How we choose to prioritize our time around these competing aspects of our lives directly impacts our quality of life and those around us. Finding a peaceful balance is challenging at best, and attempting to do so without God is even harder.

For many months I prayed, "Lord, please help me to see your will in this challenging situation." The answer became abundantly clear: "Let your suffering in this situation bear witness to and reflect Christ's love for us." In other words, I was to unite my pain and suffering to the Lord's rather than simply run away from a difficult work situation.

This is easier said than done, and I often found myself in quiet moments praying the verse from Philippians 4:13: "I can do all this through him who gives me strength." This steady reminder of the Lord's presence helped bring a sense of peace and serenity about how this important chapter of my work life would draw to a close. Ultimately, this meant leaving the company and many friends whom I dearly loved and respected, which I accomplished through God's grace.

When we establish faith in God as our first priority and seek to know and understand his will in our daily lives, the blessings of his mercy and grace are spilled out upon us abundantly.

Ron Schmalz currently lives in Boulder Creek, California. He and his wife Terri are blessed with four children and two grandchildren. Ron works in high tech, specializing in Cloud infrastructure.

PRAY

Lord, please strengthen me to always seek, know, and understand your will, so I become a better instrument of your mercy and love.

REFLECT

Are there times when I lose focus on God's will and miss opportunities to reflect his love and mercy to my family, friends, and coworkers?

DISCUSS

What distractions and temptations prevent me from keeping my focus on God and his will for me? What impact is this having on my life?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

Standing in the Gap

By Jack McCall

I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one." (Ezekiel 22:30)

One Friday night when we were on our way home, we pulled up behind a truck that was stalled in the intersection. As I approached the vehicle, I offered to help, but our attempts to start the truck failed.

There was no way I could move this truck by myself. I silently asked God for some help. I didn't know that the owner of the truck, Athena, was doing the same thing. At that very moment two men jumped out of their car and asked if they could help. Athena said,

"God's taking care of me." I smiled and said, "It's what God does."

I often end up standing in a gap for people, as Ezekiel beckons, by providing intercessory prayer to approach God with confidence on someone else's behalf. Admittedly, I haven't always been the best at this. When folks disclose a special need, I say, "I will keep you in my prayers." Was it merely a kind gesture without support?

Through prayer and petition, we can all become more sensitive to those he asks us to intercede for. Ask yourself: "Who have I promised to pray for recently? Was I faithful to their request or was it merely a kind gesture?"

Standing in the gap for family and friends, strangers, religious leaders, political leaders, our country, and the world is critical. Intercessory prayer is a gift that teaches persistence, determination, patience, faith, self-discipline, and selflessness. God is asking each of us to come before him and stand in the gap for someone; something.

Jack McCall lives in Brentwood, California with his wife Louise. He has a daughter, son-in-law, and four grandchildren. Jack has been involved in CIC for 29 years. He can be reached at jack-mccall@leavitt.com.

PRAY

Lord, help me to stand in the gap for others, praying in earnest for their needs, and faithfully asking for your help.

REFLECT

How can I become more in tune to the needs of others and to openly and honestly offer up intercessory prayers to the Lord?

DISCUSS

When have you been filled with awe or surprised by answered prayers?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

Mighty Words

By Annie Stutley

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:19-20)

I was working in New York City as a company manager for an off-Broadway show when I learned my grandfather died. Standing outside the box office, tears broke free as I handed out paychecks. There on West 4th Street, my wall of professionalism crumbled.

The cast was kind in their responses to my situation: “you’re in my thoughts” and “good vibes” and a new phrase, “sending you good ju-ju.” As I considered that new-to-me word, one unlikely actor said, “I’m praying for you.” I looked up and saw a glimmer in his eyes.

“Thank you,” I said. “You have no idea what it means to hear that right now.”

“I had an idea it was your language too,” he winked.

Until then, I was careful about my faith expression, choosing to be respectful and even toned in my dialogue outside my family and faith community. Jesus, scripture, and “holy talk” made people uncomfortable. But that day in Greenwich Village, as taxis zoomed by and stilettos clicked across the pavement, I committed to discarding the facade.

Our words are mighty. When we say, “I’m praying for you,” we’re essentially saying, “I am invested in your welfare, not only in the context of our shared workspace but on a profound spiritual level.” Just the simple act of choosing prayer over secular expressions has the potential to foster a more compassionate and even unexpectedly cohesive workplace.

Further, the words we choose when a coworker faces difficulty is a testament to how seriously we take Christ’s final instructions to his disciples before his ascension. It goes beyond fleeting

sentiments and taps into the wellspring of compassion that is sharing one’s faith. Consider the alternative. Imagine holding back your true intentions and playing along with what is socially acceptable. What is more generous in the long run? Which path expands the Kingdom?

Annie Stutley is a member of the editorial team living in New Orleans, Louisiana. Find her at anniestutley.com.

PRAY

Lord, give us the courage to bridge the gap and expand your Kingdom through our words.

REFLECT

Is there someone in your workplace who you suspect is a believer? Or could be?

DISCUSS

What are you afraid will happen if you share your identity with others?

PRESIDENT’S NOTE



“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.” (Matthew 21:22)

Ask and Ye Shall Receive

It’s a pretty bold assertion, isn’t it? If belief will bring us

whatever we ask for in prayer, then why can’t I ask and receive solutions to everything I don’t like right now?

It’s because God is far greater than any of us, and we live in a world of his divine design. Through Jesus we can approach the creator of this world as our Father. That gives us a mind-blowingly unearned amount of influence. But it does not give us control. Neither does it allow us to fully capture God with our mind’s understanding.

If we truly believe in Jesus, our prayers wouldn’t be distracted by fantasies like perfect knowledge, infinite money, or unlimited influence. We would be worshiping and praising our Heavenly Father, rooting our beliefs in Jesus, and being led by the Holy Spirit.

Prayer isn’t designed to merely give us what we want. It’s designed to provide us with what we need. Prayer is a means of discerning the path forward, not a way of getting God to do the work for us.

There are times when materialistic prayer is understandable. Financial crisis. A sick loved one. Life circumstances that leave us confused. But ultimately a prayer for earthly blessings is limited, because earthly blessings are miniscule in the face of our Lord.

In the face of thirst, who wouldn’t pray for something to drink? Just don’t forget that it’s the source of all life and the fountain of eternal living water, and you’re begging for a simple and temporary glass of water.

God offers us a renewed opportunity each day to pray for transformation, conversion, and divine guidance. It comes with an invitation to collaborate with the Holy Spirit to build God’s Kingdom in this world. Where is Jesus leading you today in prayer and action?

With you in Christ,
Wes



Prayerful Solutions

By Patrick Pingel

I run a Christian retirement community providing living opportunities from independent through end-of-life care. For years, I had been praying about the problem of childcare for my staff. I was open to building on our campus to include childcare but couldn't find a partner that aligned with our mission, vision, and values.

The Lord unexpectedly offered me a solution when a church decided to close their Early Learning Center (ELC) after 13 years. It was a high quality, four-star accredited preschool with a waitlist. I approached them immediately and we created an agreement for us to take over the school in a new facility on our campus as an intergenerational preschool.

The church embraced us with extreme generosity and faith, delaying their plans and sacrificing their space in order to house the school for two more years so we could finish building. It was risky for them to trust us, but we both had listened to God and obeyed.

But this gift to me was a source of strong emotions for others. There was public outcry over the closing, and anger over how it was handled. People called the news with outrage. Media coverage ran of disgruntled teachers and families.

Two years later, as we prepared to celebrate the opening, I held a press

conference with families, donors, the head of school, and the church leadership. I knew inviting the church leadership to speak and pray over the school would be very difficult for some, and had the potential for conflict, creating strained dynamics in a public forum. But I believed it was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that God wanted to do something powerful.

What ensued was an unexpected series of people witnessing the abundant way in which the Lord had worked.

Thirty minutes before the conference, a school leader apologized to the ELC leadership for how she had handled herself during the initial hurt and anger over the closing. She said she had come to see that God had worked miraculously, taking the ministry to a new level never imagined.

With cameras set, a previously outspoken parent who had given the leader a very difficult time was present to give a testimonial about the school. But, when the cameras rolled, he instead gave a testimony on how he personally worked through his initial disappointment and anger and realized that the new school was more than he hoped or imagined.

In response to my prayers, the Lord provided my community an intergenerational school enhancing

the lives of residents and families. It is an answer to the ELC's prayers for the ministry to continue, and for courage to follow God's new direction. This faith journey transformed us all as we witnessed the power, faithfulness, and generosity of our God.

Patrick Pingel is Chief Executive Officer of the faith-based, nationally recognized, nonprofit Hubbard Hill Living Wisdom Community, in Elkhart, Indiana. His healthcare career spans 32 years, 19 at Hubbard Hill. He and his wife, Beth, have been married 32 years and successfully launched five children.

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Continued from page 1

continue to live out loud and to not be afraid of sharing this frustrating journey with others. People need to hear what you're going through and see that you still have faith.

That's my prayer for him, for me, and for all of us. Trust God. In this world, we all seem to be focused on gaining control over our lives. Sometimes we even seek control over other people's lives. And if we were the runner-up 10 times, we would feel like our life is out of control. But there's one person who is in control—our Heavenly Father. None of what is happening is a surprise to him. It's all according to his purpose, not ours. The power of prayer is to draw us closer to understanding the will of our Heavenly Father who loves us dearly. Maybe your life is out of control right now. I pray you will trust God.

Marty Anderson lives in Bloomington, Minnesota, with his wife Cecilia. He is the president of the Minneapolis/St. Paul Chapter and a member of the WorkLight Editorial Board.



Let's Shine the Light

By Matthew Rafeedie

WorkLight is eternally grateful for all of the immense support we have received from our donors, igniters and reigniters, supporters, and ministry partners this year. Your generosity has allowed us to continue our mission of bringing Christians into the community with each other in the workplace.

We have hosted chapter events in California, Minnesota, Arizona, and other states, and we have seen firsthand the impact these events have on people's lives. Christians have come together to build relationships, share their faith, and learn from each other as we all navigate a chaotic world. We have seen people find jobs, start businesses, and launch ministries alongside one another. And, every day, WorkLight members have overcome adversity and challenges and built bonds.

We are so grateful for these and many other opportunities to make a difference in the lives of Christians in their workplaces. But we can't do it without your help and support. As we look to the future, the WorkLight community is doubling our commitment to outreach. We are on a mission to spread the love of Jesus Christ to every person. We seek to meet people where they are, invite them to join our mission, and encourage people through our shared faith.

That's why you have been seeing messages about our 2023 fundraising campaign, "Let's Shine the Light." This campaign is all about giving to the ministry so that we can continue to spread God's light to others.

Through your continued support, WorkLight has and will continue to:

- Provide resources for Christian ministry. We offer a variety of resources, including training materials, curriculum, and event planning assistance.
- Connect Christians with each other. We host a variety of events such as Challenge Weekends and Chapter events that bring Christians together where they are.
- Foster a supportive Christian community of faith in workplaces. In this chaotic world, we often need the Lord in our most challenging situations and moments. This includes the workplace where we work to connect and support Christians.

Your donations support WorkLight's chapters, national events, and upcoming Challenge Weekends, and also helps us to reach more people with the gospel and Jesus' love.

We hope you will consider making a donation to WorkLight this year. Your gift will make a difference in the lives of Christians all over the country and throughout our existing ministry.

To learn more about the "Let's Shine the Light" campaign, please visit our website at worklight.org. You can also make a donation online or by mailing a check to our office.

Matthew Rafeedie is co-chair of WorkLight's Fundraising Committee and lives in Georgia with his wife, Jensen. He is originally from California, was born again in 2020 and has joined WorkLight. Matthew is a vice president at Morgan Stanley.



Join our Community of CONTENT CONTRIBUTORS

We welcome stories for both *The Flame* and our Spark Workday Reflections. Go to bit.ly/WLcontentguide for details on contributing.

NEWS

500 BY 2025 UPDATE: IGNITER GOAL MET AND SURPASSED!

Back in January the National Growth Council set a goal of seeing 75 new igniters connect with WorkLight before the end of the year. As we finish up the third quarter of 2023, we have already seen 90 new igniter attendees on Challenge Weekends. Glory be to God in the highest! But the work is far from over. Attending a weekend is great, but completing the Coworker Challenge, becoming a part of a reigniter and igniter pairing, and finding community in Christ through a Chapter or Small Group is how we support new brothers and sisters to live their faith fully in the workplace. If you aren't already mentoring a new igniter, today's a great time to start praying for the Holy Spirit for guidance in that direction.

SPOTLIGHT CHALLENGE WEEKEND & TRANSFORM OUR WORLD

Instead of a National Conference this year, we have two great opportunities to come together in person as a national movement of the Holy Spirit.

1. Join the Salinas Chapter for our Men's National Spotlight Challenge Weekend at Mission San Antonio from November 17-19.

Learn more and register here – worklight.org/spotlightweekend

2. Check out the Transform Our World Global Conference in Santa Clara from October 26-28. All are welcome! Some Chapters are currently praying about regional gatherings to attend together virtually. Learn more and register here – transformourworld.org/events/global-conference/. Use code GROUP2023 for discounted registration. Remote/virtual options available. Looking for a payment plan? Other questions? Contact Stephanie@transformourworld.org for support.

DID YOU KNOW?

What we now know as "The Flame" was once called "The Challenge" Newsletter. In what month and year was this publication first published?

Last month's answer: The CIC cross-country Bicycle Prayer Tour took place in 1995.

SMALL GROUP & CHAPTER TOOLKIT

Challenge Weekends may be the origin story of this ministry and many of its members' involvement, but it takes more than a weekend to walk with

UPCOMING CHALLENGE WEEKENDS**Minneapolis' Hilltop Small Group**

- October 20-22 at lake cabins near Clear Lake, Minnesota

Fresno Men's Chapter

- October 21-22 at St. Anthony Retreat Center in Three Rivers, California

Orange County and Mission Viejo Men's Chapter

- October 27-28 at St. Kilian Catholic Church in Mission Viejo, California

Salinas and Santa Cruz Men's Chapters

- November 17-19 at Mission San Antonio De Padua, Jolon, California. *This is our Spotlight Men's weekend for 2023. If you're looking to travel for a weekend, we hope to see you!*

Check out these events and more at worklight.org/events/.

Jesus for a lifetime. Small Groups and Chapters play key roles in supporting relationships and communities in Christ. Looking to start something new or revitalize an existing group? Learn more at worklight.org/worklight-small-groups/small-group-and-chapter-toolkit.

LET'S SHINE THE LIGHT

WorkLight is making a difference in countless lives – and it's your generosity that empowers others to be Christ in their workplaces. Imagine the impact of God's light shining bright in more workplaces around the country. Help us spread the light of Christ by giving financially to the cause. More chapters. More resources. More events. More community. We can do this – together!

WorkLight.org/donate

WORKLIGHT

*"I have been
crucified with Christ
and I no longer live,
but Christ lives in me."*

Galatians 2:20

OCTOBER 2023

WorkLight.org

THE FLAME

WORKLIGHT PRAYER

Father,

*Fill us with your Holy Spirit
that we may be made new
and bring the presence of Christ into all we do;
That we may grow in love for you, and for all;
That we may be humble and wise stewards of your creation;
That we may bring your light into our workplaces;
That we may lead all to unity in you;
Through Jesus, our Lord.*


Amen

VISION Being Christ in the workplace

MISSION To encourage and equip Christians to be God's presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising faith, integrity, and excellence

VALUES Christians in Commerce (DBA WorkLight) is an ecumenical organization committed to:

- Growing and being transformed in Jesus Christ
- Manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Building strong brotherhood and sisterhood
- Serving God and expanding his Kingdom in all aspects of our lives

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