



“God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.” (Exodus 2:25)

I do not know what the situation will be like in the Middle East in a few days' time when I send this edition of Saltshaker out to those of you who read it. Some may look at the current conflict and say it isn't really a Christian problem, just a political issue. Some may take sides with one group or another.

Personally, I have worried in the past about whether Israel reacts or over-reacts wisely in these situations but, just as when God looked down on the Israelites struggling as slaves in Egypt and was concerned, I believe that we too should be concerned. And for a Christian, concern should translate into action. The biggest weapon we have in any conflict is prayer and I suggest that all of us should be praying for God's intervention in this situation.

Over the years, God has famously moved in mysterious ways and used surprising agents to bring about his will. I find it hard to believe that God approves of Hamas and I certainly don't want to double-guess God by suggesting I know his purposes. I will personally pray that the power of Hamas will be broken but I will also pray for peace and justice in both Israel and in Gaza/Palestine, that the people there will come to know Jesus for who

he is as Lord and Saviour and that God's kingdom will be established in that part of the world.

Pray with me.

Prayer for a new month

Father Lord,

Thank you for your guidance and protection;

Thank you for your goodness and mercies in my life.

As we begin this new month, I pray that you Lord will help me to fix my heart on you and abide in you.

Help me to let go of any kind of distraction that will interfere with my connection with you.

Teach me to love you and help me to keep my focus on you.

Cleanse me of my sins and help me to let go of anything that does not honour your holy name.

Help me to live a life that is right in Christ.

Let your Holy Spirit be my guide in everything.

Let it be my reminder to always put you first no matter what.

Help me to study your word more and give me the wisdom and understanding to be able to apply your word in my life.

When things don't go as I plan, remind me that your plan for me is better than what I think I want.

Help me to grow in faith in each passing day, in Jesus' name,
Amen

Contrib by Cecile Ferreira

Wasting Time with God

Creating an empty space is one of the most daunting challenges we face. For most of us it takes both courage and discipline to do it. Wasting time with God goes against our nature. It doesn't look so good either with other folk rushing around us! We all want to impress. As soon as the slightest sign of an empty

space in our day appears we hurry to fill it. This or that must be done when quite often 'this or that' could be left until the next day. Our too busy lives leave us over simulated, sometimes anxious and often on edge. Is it worth the price we are paying and the peace we are forfeiting? The pace of life has quickened considerably. We are always available when our mobile is switched on and in our pocket. We don't have time to think, as we drive from one appointment to another.

When busyness isn't our problem then often entertainment is. There is a vast industry created to amuse or distract us. We can fill our spare time with one press of a button on our handset. Someone described to us the near panic in one household when the television broke down. Boredom is feared, sometimes communication has already broken and we fill the space. This is not to say that the TV or Internet is inherently evil. They can be informative and relaxing but living indiscriminately with opinions that are presented as truth, canned laughter and continual noise can only in the end do us harm. We become indoctrinated by the world and where is God in all this? If we are honest, he isn't.

The space was often there in previous ages in a way that it isn't today. St. Paul's life can lead us to look in admiration at the work he did but there must have been breathing-space as he travelled by foot between cities. We know that he withdrew into Arabia soon after he became a Christian. Similarly with John Wesley there must have been thousands of hours for quiet thought, prayer and reading, (yes, he really did read!) as he travelled on his horse. Perhaps Jesus is the one most like us working in a small area, crowds surrounding him, needs all around. It must have been very difficult for him to create space to be alone with his heavenly Father but he did it.

Wasting time with God gives us time to reflect, not alone but with the Holy Spirit. It allows the peace of God to enter our hearts and minds. It is healing. Creativity is released. There are gifts within each of us waiting for the kiss of life. Be brave;
switch off the television and the computer. There is no need to be afraid of the

silence. Let us welcome you. The Lord Jesus is waiting with arms held out. Resist the busyness. ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ Waste time with God.

Sisters of Jesus Way, From Re View St. Mary’s Upton, UK

Slow down by learning contentment

“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”

Philippians 4:11 (NIV)

If you’re serious about slowing down, don’t start with your schedule. Start with your heart.

Paul says in Philippians 4:11, *“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances”* (NIV). Notice that Paul says he has “learned” contentment. You are not by nature a contented person. Neither am I! It is our nature to be discontent—to want things to be different, to want them to be better. But if you’re going to slow down your life, you have to learn contentment. And you can only do that over time.

Paul explains what it looks like to be content. He says, *“Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that”* (1 Timothy 6:6-8 NIV).

Paul is emphasizing that life isn’t about things. A person who is content can acknowledge, “I didn’t have anything before I was born; I’m not going to have anything after I die. Yes, I need things, but they’re not what life is about—so I’ll just be content with what I’ve got.”

Let me explain what contentment is *not*. Contentment is not abandoning your ambition; you ought to have ambition and make the most of what God has given you. Contentment doesn’t mean you don’t have any goals, dreams, or plans for your life. In fact, God says it’s good to have godly ambition.

Contentment means this: You don't need *more* in order to be happy; you're happy right now with what you've been given.

Happiness is a choice. In other words, you are as happy as you choose to be! You can't blame unhappiness on your circumstances. If you're not happy with your current circumstances, you're not going to be happy with different ones. We live on a broken planet, and nothing is perfect; there will always be something wrong in your life.

God wants you to learn to be happy in spite of difficult situations by trusting that he will give you exactly what you need when you need it. Learning contentment is a process. Why don't you commit to starting that process today?

Rick Warren www.purposedriven.com

Verse and voice

Verse of the day

Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground; for it time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

Hosea 10:12

Voice of the day

Amidst the endless, short rush of these minutes, remember to plant seeds of prayer and attention

Ylan Chung

Prayer of the day

In the midst of this fast-paced life, Lord, may we find time to retreat and cultivate habits of prayer and attention.

www.sojo.net

God said, "I am"

GOD SAID, "I AM"
While praying one day. A woman asked.
"Who are you Lord?"
He answered, "I AM"
"But who is I AM?" she replied.
And He replied,
"I AM love,
I AM Peace,
I AM Grace,
I AM Joy,
I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life,
I AM the comforter,
I AM Strength,
I AM Safety,
I AM Shelter,
I AM Power,
I AM the Creator,
I AM the Beginning and the End,
I AM the Most High"
With tears in her eyes the woman
Looked towards Heaven and said
"Now I understand. But Lord, who am I?"
Then God tenderly wiped the tears
From her eyes and whispered,
"YOU ARE MINE"

From the Borrowdale Bell

Knee Polishing

I think we should once again focus our prayers on troubled spots around the world. I am sure there are more than the seven, I mention here!

Sunday : pray for a resolution to the conflict between Israel and Hamas

Monday : following the fall out relating to the election in Zimbabwe, pray for a Godly solution to the political tension

Tuesday : it is easy to forget the on-going war between Russia and Ukraine; pray that that fighting will come to an end

Wednesday : likewise the civil war in Sudan is old hat; pray for peace to return to that country

Thursday : earthquakes and storms cause devastation in various countries; pray for those suffering from natural disasters

Friday : dispute between China and Taiwan never seems far from open warfare; once more pray for peace and understanding to prevail

Saturday : migrants seeking entry into Europe are a source of contention; pray for justice to triumph and wisdom for those involved

A friend was in front of me coming out of the church one day, and the preacher was standing at the door as he always is to shake hands. He grabbed my friend by the hand and pulled him aside.

The pastor said to him, “You need to join the Army of the Lord!”

My friend replied, “I’m already in the Army of the Lord, Pastor.” The Pastor questioned, “How come I don’t see you except at Christmas and Easter?”

He whispered back, “I’m in the secret service.”

EDITORS : Richard Harrison and Tony Bancroft
Falcon College, Esigodini
Tel : 09-881249/881268/881269
Email : rharrison@falconcollege.com