

WATER OF THE WORD

Intercession for her

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P R E F A C E

Let Us Imitate Christ as He Prays for His Bride



“Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us” (Rom 8:34).

“He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25).

Jesus Christ prays for us. He prays for His Bride. He sets the glorious example of the husband who never tires in making intercession for her. It is a breathless wonder, a staggering and stupefying truth. Are you a husband like Jesus? Do you want to be?

Every earthly marriage has been ordained to point to the perfect union in the age to come—to reflect, albeit dimly, the intimacy and ecstasy of knowing our Saviour face to face. And if we are to be obedient to the command, “Love your wives as

Christ loved the church” (Eph 5:25) we must not only show a cruciform, sacrificial love, but must also follow Christ’s precedent of continual intercession for our wives, pleading constantly for their sanctification (Eph 5:26). When we pray like this we imitate Jesus’ beautiful example of praying for His Bride.

On the other hand, we are not God. There are many things a husband cannot do for his wife that only God can do. We are very small, very weak. We cannot ultimately deliver her from evil, be her everlasting joy, or turn her mourning into dancing. But God can. Therefore, praying for her is not optional. She needs God more than she needs us. Often we neglect this duty of prayer out of slothfulness or forgetfulness. Many of us are prone to foolishness, carelessness, and lack of discipline in prayer. Sadly, in the words of Alexander Whyte, numerous husbands are sleepy and lazy and stupid when it comes to prayer, even prayer for the woman closest to their heart.

May the LORD teach us, humble us, and sustain us in this responsibility. May He rescue us from robbing our-selves and our wives of a joy and privilege full of splendid reward. Of what good is it to do everything for your wife but *the best thing*? To bring all kinds of earthly goods before her for sustenance and honour is commendable, but to what end if you do not bring her before God? Will lifting her up by words of kindness and compliment suffice if you fail to lift her up before her Creator with supplications and thanksgivings? Why should you praise her for her beauty when you omit to exalt her Father for such matchless handiwork? You are not enough for her. Your strength is not strong enough for her. You are powerless to change her heart.

Therefore pray.

Pray with all zeal and all knowledge for her. Show forth Christ to her and to the fallen world in this way. And when you do, use His Word. O what a treasure trove of prayer is afforded to us in the Bible! Seize its wisdom of petition and exultation, and learn to be a conduit of its perfect intercession, entrusting who is flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone to her Maker, the Supreme Ruler of all the world.

Not until after ten years of wavering prayers did George Mueller learn the value of praying Scripture. What follows is his description of this marvellous discovery:

The difference then between my former practice and my present one is this. Formerly, when I arose, I began to pray as soon as possible... But what was the result? I often spent a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, or even an hour on my knees before being conscious to myself of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, &c.; and often, after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, or even half an hour, I only then began *really to pray*. I scarcely ever suffer now in this way.

My practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as an habitual thing, to give myself to prayer, after having dressed myself in the morning. *Now...* the first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord's blessing upon His precious word, was, to begin to meditate on the word of God, searching, as it were, into every verse, to get blessing out of it... The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to

supplication; so that, though I did not, as it were, give myself to *prayer*, but to *meditation*, yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer. When thus I have been for awhile making confession, or intercession, or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the Word may lead to it.¹

This book is meant to be a help and guide for that kind of praying. It consists of little else than the Word of God turned “more or less into prayer.” And more specifically it is a means toward one part of prayer—prayer for the good wife God has given you. We would do well to heed the council of Thomas Manton: “plead the promise of God in prayer, show Him His handwriting; God is tender of His Word.”

¹George Mueller, *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealing with George Mueller, Written by Himself, Jehovah Magnified. Addresses by George Mueller Complete and Unabridged*, 2 vols. (Muskegon, Mich.: Dust and Ashes Publications, 2003), 1:272-273.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE READER

Make It Your Own



Jesus Christ is emphatically the foundation for every prayer to the Father. But the reader will notice that not all of these prayers put this precious truth into words, simply because they are meant to be springboards that launch us into other specific and more personal prayer. You are encouraged to use them as a means of centring your mind on the Bible, so that what follows in your own individual supplications will be sweetened and guided by the Word and Spirit of God.

Therefore many times I have left it to you, the reader, to be mindful that we pray in Christ's name alone. Indeed, as He Himself said, "No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Thus we are to come to the Father in prayer always through Christ and only through Christ. Only because He is

our great high priest can we “with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:16). And we are to give “thanks always and for everything to God the Father *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Eph 5:20).

These prayers are also not intended to be merely read alone. To the married man I commend frequent use of these prayers *with* his wife, praying them over her from his heart, using her name. This should be the rule and not the exception, so that she is regularly reminded that Christ intercedes for her in the same way, that her husband loves her, and that the Word of God abounds with sanctifying power. For this reason a short exhortation or encouragement for her is included in many of the prayers, usually beginning with “O beloved...” Take these as occasions to lift her spirit, to strengthen her soul, to instruct her mind, to gladden her heart, to put a rock of confidence under her feet, to tenderly and humbly correct, and most of all, to point her to God as her all-satisfying joy.

As with all prayer, these must be employed in a spirit of humility, considering her better and more significant than yourself (Phil 2:3). Be ever conscious of your broken condition—that you are a sinful man who is in need of continual renewal by which you are being conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29). Therefore pray strongly, as one who knows he is weak. Pray boldly, as one who knows he has no ability or confidence in himself. Pray sweetly, as one well aware of the heart within him still tinged with the bitter fruit of wickedness. And pray mindful of the truth that you are in need of just as much intercession as she. “This is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at My word” (Isa 66:2).

The Apostle Peter warns us that it is possible to live toward our wives in such a way that our prayers become futile and unprofitable. God turns a deaf ear to the arrogant husband who dishonours his wife. “Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honour to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so *that your prayers may not be hindered*” (I Pet 3:7). The unrepentant, proud husband will use this book in vain. For “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6).

Finally, I solemnly charge you before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to never neglect the joy and privilege of interceding for your wife. “He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favour from the LORD” (Prov 18:22). And “a prudent wife is from the LORD” (Prov 19:14). God has shown marvellous favour to you, therefore pray for her with all your might while you live. Show Christ to her and to the fallen world in this way. Whatever you do for her, do not fail or forget to do the best thing. She is a gift too wonderful for you to care for alone; Sovereign Grace must guard, guide, and govern her heart and life.

WATER OF THE WORD



Be encouraged, dear Christian reader, with fresh earnestness to give yourself to prayer, if you can only be sure that you ask for things which are for the glory of God.

-GEORGE MUELLER

Prayer, at its best, is the noblest, the sublimest, the most magnificent, and stupendous act that any creature of God can perform on earth or in heaven. Prayer is far too princely a life for most men. It is high, and they are low, and they cannot attain it.

-ALEXANDER WHYTE

O Keeper of Your elect,

It is better to take refuge in You than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in You than to trust in princes. Therefore cause my sweet wife to take refuge in You alone. Be her strength and her song; be her great salvation.

Let her lift up the cup of salvation and call on Your Name. Open to her the gates of righteousness, that she may enter through them and give thanks to You. Raise her eyes to the hills to see from where her help comes. For her help comes from You, who made heaven and earth. Do not let her foot be moved; keep her and do not slumber. Please keep her and neither slumber nor sleep. Keep her from all evil; keep her life. Keep her going out and her coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

O gift of heaven, do you know who keeps you? The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

Lord Jesus, keep my wife. We wait eagerly for Your appearing. Hasten the wonderful day of Your return—the wedding supper of the Lamb. Amen (Psalm 118, 116, 121).



Precious Provider,

Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. May my precious wife keep them also. The unfolding of Your word gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple. May she open her mouth and pant, because she longs for Your commandments. Turn to her and be gracious to her, as is Your way with those who love Your name.

Keep steady her steps according to Your promise, let no iniquity get dominion over her. Redeem her from man's oppression, that she may keep Your precepts. Make Your face shine upon her, Your beautiful servant, and teach her Your statutes. May her eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep Your law (Psalm 119).



*A man cannot live unless he takes his breath,
nor can the soul, unless it breathes forth its desires to God.*

-THOMAS WATSON