Not too long ago, I was browsing in a used bookstore I had never before visited. Since the conglomeration of books was new to me, I had the ridiculously unrealistic goal of viewing every book and purchasing quite a few of them. But my task was halted by the sound of beautiful music. From behind the cashier’s counter came the ineffable strains of Puccini’s aria O Mio Babbino Caro. My book scanning came to an end as I stood motionless and allowed the music to wash over me. I looked at the sound system from which the music came and caught the eye of the only other person in the store, the manager standing next to the speakers. She, too, was captivated and said, “It takes you to another world, doesn’t it?”

“It does indeed,” I responded in a soft voice, so as not to overshadow the beauty of the moment.

Music does indeed take us to another world. Or, more accurately, it points us there. For me, music is one of those stimulators of desire that reminds me of what C.S. Lewis wrote in Mere Christianity, “If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for an other world.”

Before coming to faith in Jesus, I “worshiped” music as my ultimate god. My weekly service occurred every Saturday night at the temple of the Philadelphia Academy of Music. My minister was Eugene Ormandy and sacraments were provided by Beethoven, Dvorak, Tchaikovsky, and other “patron saints.” But the repeated pattern of letdown after each and every concert became undeniable and the growing disappointment was palpable.

During that time, I read the New Testament, thinking that perhaps music was an inadequate messiah. God used Matthew’s Gospel to convince me that Jesus was the true Messiah, the one who fulfilled the prophecies of Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, and all the other parts of the Old Testament.

C.S. Lewis helped me see that Jesus was the Messiah I was looking for at those devotional times with the Philadelphia Orchestra. He was the one who could satisfy when Brahms could not. His sacrifice provided the open door to “the other world” to which O Mio Babbino Caro pointed. I resonated with Lewis’s observation from The Weight of Glory,

The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing. These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself, they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.

(continued on page 12)
Share Your Salvation Story for the Purpose of Christian Unity

I’m amazed at how diverse the backgrounds are in my small group and yet we don’t notice the differences as we’re all focused on Jesus. It’s such a joy to experience this kind of Christian unity through the Institute’s Fellows Program!” This comment from a young professional woman of color at our 2016 Washington, D.C. Fellows retreat struck me. I was thrilled that the Holy Spirit had brought together Americans with ethnic and racial heritages from Europe, Korea, China, the Philippines, Africa, Sri Lanka, and India to be part of this year-long CSLI Fellows discipleship journey. The Fellows also represented people from many different professions including the military, education, medicine, law, business, church, technology and government. And perhaps even more amazing was the fact that we had people representing 41 different local churches from Greater Washington, D.C. who were pursuing the common goal of learning to obey all that Jesus commanded so that they could become more faithful and fruitful disciple-makers!

As our nation struggles with the ever-present problems of racism, hatred, bigotry and division, the American church is dealing with the same issues. We should be different in our attitudes and behaviors as followers of Jesus when compared to the world. Unfortunately, that isn’t always the case. Unity in the church is the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in John 17:20-22 prayed to the Father, “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (ESV) That Christian unity should transcend all barriers of race, ethnicity, politics, economics, social class, etc…

Jesus’ prayer makes a connection between true Christian unity and the resulting effect – “so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” This is a powerful message to us who make up the body of Christ. If we desire to reach our neighbors with the good news of Jesus, we must first present a picture of oneness in relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Unfortunately, the world doesn’t always see this desired picture of believers as being diverse in background, yet one in Christ.

In reflecting upon the unity experienced by many of our CSLI Fellows, I think there is one component that helps develop this authentic sense of unity. At the beginning of our fall retreat, in the safety of a confidential, actively listening small group of men or women, the Fellows share their stories of how Jesus made Himself known to them and rescued them. While each person’s story is unique and different, at the same time, each shares the same story line in which they were saved by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior. When we understand that we’ve each been “born again” into the same family, we suddenly realize that we actually are brothers and sisters in Christ and, as a result, share the unity that comes from being in the same spiritual family.

May I suggest a simple step toward unity among believers from different churches, races, political parties and professional backgrounds? Take the time to share your spiritual journey with another believer who is different from you in race, church denomination, party or employment history. And then take the time to listen to his or her testimony. I think that you will find that it can only bring you closer to one another and help you participate more deeply in the unity that God the Father desires of us and that Jesus prayed so desperately to become a reality. ☩
Growing in Prayer
Part 1: Hindrances to Prayer
by Bill Kynes, Ph.D.
C.S. Lewis Institute Senior Fellow

Pray continually.
—1 Thess. 5:17 (NIV)

We hear it all the time, don’t we? If you are really serious about your faith, if you want to be more than merely a nominal Christian, a really spiritual person, then you must be a man or woman of prayer.

Warren Wiersbe, author and speaker, put it this way: “No Christian rises any higher than his or her prayer life.” And, “The hidden life of prayer is the secret of an open life of victory.”

“This is the testimony of saints through the ages,” wrote William Carey, the missionary pioneer. “Prayer—secret, fervent, believing prayer—lies at the root of all personal godli-ness.”

Nineteenth-century pastor E.M. Bounds, who wrote extensively on the subject, noted,

God’s acquaintance is not made hurriedly.
He does not bestow His gifts on the casual or hasty com-er and go-er. No man can do a great and enduring work for God who is not a man of prayer, and no man can be a man of prayer who does not give much time to praying.

Yes, prayer is important; it is essential.1 Considering this, Paul exhorts us to “pray continually” (1 Thess. 5:17 NIV).

But I confess, as a pastor, I don’t. Prayer is a subject that haunts me; it convicts me; it draws forth feelings of regret, guilt, even grief. For I know about myself (as you know about yourselves) that I do not pray as I ought. I would be ashamed for the world to know how little I pray. But here I am writing on the theme “How to grow in prayer.” So as I write these words, I say, “Lord, teach me to pray.” How can I more fully enter into this world that all too often I glimpse only from afar? I know that I’ve only waded in the shallows of a vast ocean that lies before me—an ocean than others have experienced far more deeply than I.

I write aspirationally, as when we sing hymns that speak of Christian experience far beyond us. A life of prayer is something to which we are all called and to which we should all aspire. What would it mean for me to “devote myself to prayer,” to “pray continually”? How can we grow in prayer?

Why Is Prayer So Hard?

I begin this two-part journey by addressing the first question that came to my mind: why is prayer so hard? I don’t want to offer any excuses; we have no excuse for not doing anything that God calls us to do. But understanding hindrances to prayer does help us to see what we’re up against when we face the challenge of becoming the people of prayer God wants us to be. I’ll use the three standard categories of Scripture as a guide: prayer is hard because of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

We dare not stop for a moment to spend time in God’s presence, to rest in His love.

The World That Shapes Us

First, think about the effect of the world around us—this contemporary culture in which we live. I doubt if there has ever been a time that has been so antithetical to a life of prayer.

We live in a world that bombards us with its constant distractions. You can’t get away from it. Ours is a world of constant noise and chatter, wherever you go—from the radio in the car, to the TV at home, to the Muzak at the mall. It’s all around us. Where can you find those precious moments of silence and solitude where you can gather your thoughts and focus on the Lord?

(continued on page 16)
The three previous articles of this series focused on three locations in Belfast that have strong associations with C.S. Lewis and his family. These locations and the focus of the articles were (1) Little Lea, his boyhood home from 1905, (2) Dundela Villas, where C.S. Lewis was born in 1898, and (3) St. Mark’s Church where Lewis was baptized in 1899. Events that took place at these locations shaped Lewis’s early life and influenced it forever.

This fourth and final article in the “Surprised by Belfast” series focuses on the area of south Belfast, now often called the University Quarter. Traveling south from the city center, the University Quarter commences after passing Shaftsbury Square; it is bounded by the main arterial routes of the Ormeau Road and the Lisburn Road that run radially outward from the Shaftsbury hub until they reach the outer ring of the city. The sector enclosed by these boundaries contains the buildings that comprise the main campus of Queen’s University Belfast (QUB), the Botanic Gardens, sprawling student accommodation, dozens of church buildings, schools, coffee shops, offices, and restaurants of every description. Its heart is a thriving, bustling mixture of interesting architecture that contains the beat of new generations of young university students charting their paths in life. Within a dozen miles from the center of the city, the journey out through the University Quarter takes you through an area that gradually becomes more residential and more affluent in character, and eventually becomes the green landscapes and gently undulating hills of County Down.

Queen’s University

Although the university buildings today can boast an eclectic array of architectural styles, the school’s beginnings were mainly contained in what is known as the Lanyon Building, named after its architect Sir Charles Lanyon. The beginning of Queen’s can be traced back to the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, founded in 1810, making QUB the ninth-oldest university in the United Kingdom. In 1845 a charter was granted by Queen Victoria for the establishment of three colleges in Ireland which together were known as the Queen’s University of Ireland. The three colleges were Queen’s College Belfast, Queen’s College Cork, and Queen’s College Galway. In 1879 the three colleges were associated as the Royal University of Ireland (RUI), and in 1907 the RUI was dissolved to form two new institutions, the Queen’s University Belfast and the National University of Ireland. The current charter for QUB was established in 1908. Following the establishment of Queen’s College Belfast in 1845, the Lanyon Building opened in 1849, serving some three hundred students. It requires little imagination to capture the difference in the level of activity from those early beginnings to the current university that accommodates some twenty-four thousand students.
C.S. Lewis did not study at Queen's. However, his mother, Florence Augusta (nee Hamilton) did. Flora was born in Ireland in 1862. In 1874 she came with her parents to Belfast from Rome, where her father, Thomas R. Hamilton, had served the Anglican community as a curate for four years at the Church of Holy Trinity. On the family's arrival in Belfast, Flora continued her early education at Methodist College, which comprises a series of architecturally imposing buildings, occupying a large site just opposite both the Lanyon Building of QUB and the Botanical Gardens on Belfast's University Road. On completion of her studies at Methodist College, Flora progressed to Queen's College Belfast, where in the early 1880s she completed a BA degree in mathematics.

The fact that Lewis's mother graduated from Queen's and attended school at Methodist College is reason enough for Lewis enthusiasts to visit the University Quarter in Belfast. It was also reason enough for the university to include a C.S. Lewis reading room in the large McClay Library, part of a multimillion-pound development of the university completed in 2009, and which is now the main library building of the entire campus. The C.S. Lewis reading room was included in honor of Lewis, and it is certainly worth visiting.

The room is circular in shape and has commanding views from its glazed façade over the entrance to the McClay complex, the back of the Lanyon Building, Union College, and College Park. The reading room is interesting partly because of its circular shape, but also because of its dramatic entrance, in the form of a deep doorway. The dark wooden doors create the illusion of entering the room through a wardrobe. Those familiar with the vocabulary of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* hesitate momentarily if they feel inclined to close the door fully, especially when they are on the inside! Once inside, visitors are immediately aware of the large circular, glass-toped table that displays, beneath the glass, a circular map of Narnia as depicted by Pauline Baynes. In addition to the map, the walls of the room are decorated with images of Irish landscapes and with appropriate quotations taken from across the breadth of Lewis's writing, one of which will be used to conclude this article.

No visit to the reading room and to the McClay Library would be complete without inspecting the original copy of a letter from C.S. Lewis to a little girl called Anne Jenkins. Anne read *The Chronicles of Narnia* and was motivated by the stories to write to the author and ask a number of questions about the narrative. As a consequence of Anne's curiosity, we have been left with Lewis's own précis of the seven Narnian chronicles. He sums up each book in one line as part of his reply to Anne. The complete reply by Lewis to Anne is also reproduced on a bronze sculpture of the wardrobe displayed in east Belfast, close to Lewis's birthplace.

“I am attending at the almost painless sickbed of one for whom I have little affection and whose society has for years given me much discomfort and no pleasure.”

If QUB serves to focus our attention on Lewis’s mother and on some parts of his writing, there are three other buildings in the University Quarter that have associations with Lewis and his father. The first is the Crescent Church on University Road; the others are now pleasant terrace buildings formerly used as “nursing homes.”

**Crescent Church**

The Crescent Church in Belfast is a large sandstone structure with Gothic-style arched doorways and windows and a unique, square, open bell tower rising majestically above the adjacent buildings. Lewis refers to this church in *Surprised by Joy* in an amusing reflection about his father. The piece is in chapter 8, “Release,” in which he describes the process that resulted in him leaving the boarding schools to which he had been sent and entering the tutelage of...
being led by the Holy Spirit is at the heart of the Christian life. This is clear in the Bible and in the history of the church. If we let the Spirit lead us, our lives will blossom and flourish. But if we neglect or refuse His leading, our lives will languish. Strangely, many believers today seem to misunderstand the Spirit’s leading and how it relates to personal transformation. A clearer grasp of what the Bible teaches about this vital truth will help us all as we seek to grow in grace.

This leads us to ask, what does the New Testament mean by the phrase led by the Spirit? What is the fruit of His leading in one’s life? These are questions we will explore in this article. As it unfolds, we will gain clarity, encouragement, and practical help in our walk with God.

First, some clarity. The phrase led by the Spirit occurs only twice in the New Testament, and both instances are frequently misused today. The first is in Romans 8:14, “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” The immediate context is the believer’s battle with the flesh through the empowerment of the Spirit. The second usage occurs in Galatians 5:18, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” Again, the immediate context is the believer’s battle with sin. In both instances, the larger concern is to show us how to live joyful, obedient lives that produce the beauty of holiness and glorify God.

Let’s explore this more deeply by focusing on Galatians 5:16–25, a passage filled with great riches for anyone who is hungry for God and wants to please Him. In this passage Paul addresses two problems that plagued the Galatian church and has plagued the church universal up to the present day: legalism and licentiousness. Some people in the Galatian church urged observance of parts of the Mosaic Law, and others were disregarding moral constraints. Paul doesn’t look for Aristotle’s Golden Mean and take a mediating position between the two; rather, as one writer has said, he builds a highway above both. He does this by giving a command and a promise: “Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (v. 16). The word Spirit refers to the Holy Spirit, who dwells in those who have been born again. The word flesh is Paul’s term to describe fallen human nature and its self-centered attitudes, desires, and behaviors. The word walk is commonly used in Scripture to refer to one’s daily conduct. Thus, to walk by the Spirit means to live one’s daily life by the Holy Spirit’s guidance and empowerment. To walk in the flesh is to live a life characterized by various sins and selfish behaviors.

Paul goes on to talk about how the flesh and the Spirit oppose and contend against each other, something every believer can identify with. This struggle is a part of our lifelong battle against the world, the flesh, and the Devil, as the Holy Spirit works to make us progressively more like Jesus. Sometimes we can grow weary and discouraged with this struggle and even doubt our salvation, but actually it is a sign of life. Walking by the Spirit is the pathway to overcoming the desires of the flesh and living a holy life. What a great encouragement—to know that we don’t have to stay trapped in our sins, in an endless demoralizing cycle of defeat after defeat with no way out!

Practically speaking, how do we walk by the Spirit and overcome the desires of the flesh? We must allow ourselves to be “led by the Spirit” (emphasis added; v. 18). The word led is a present-passive verb, indicating that we should continuously surrender and yield ourselves to the desires of the Spirit, whose leading is always diametrically opposed to the desires of our sinful flesh (our old self). Our surrender to the Spirit’s leading is an act of the will, a choice we must...
make; it is saying yes to the Spirit’s leading and no to the desires of the flesh. We will say more about that ahead. But for now, let’s be clear that as we allow the Spirit to influence, direct, and empower us, we can overcome the flesh. Certainty about this is crucial, and uncertainty is self-defeating.

At this point some concrete examples might help us better understand the struggle between the Spirit and the flesh and where surrender to each leads. In Galatians 5:19–21, Paul says, “Now the works of the flesh are evident.” In what follows, he gives a list of various works of the flesh, the self-centered life, that were common in Paul’s day (and in ours). It provides a representative sample and is by no means exhaustive. For clarity, I have given the meaning of each word, drawing from the work of two highly acclaimed New Testament scholars.

- **Sexual immorality** has been a perennial problem in human societies since the fall because it is rooted in one of our strongest drives. The Greek word used here, *porneia* (from which we get pornography), encompasses a variety of sexual sins, including using prostitutes, committing adultery, engaging in premarital sex, homosexual acts, and incest.

- **Impurity** is an even broader term covering any inappropriate sexual activity, that is, sexual activities that make a person unclean and unfit for approaching God. One example would be viewing pornography, which has a long history and was part of Greco-Roman culture.

- **Sensuality** refers to throwing restraint to the wind and indulging oneself without regard for normal moral standards. It denotes being so consumed by the pursuit of sexual pleasure that public opinion no longer matters. *Wild living* is a modern term for it.

- **Idolatry**, the worship of idols, was a major problem in the Old Testament and was common in the Greco-Roman culture of Paul’s day. However, idolatry was not limited to material objects of wood or stone. When Paul describes covetousness (greed) as idolatry (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5), he shows that idolatry can take nonmaterial forms. Money, possessions, career, reputation, and ambitions of various sorts can all be forms of idolatry—and much else besides. As John Calvin observed, “The human heart is an idol factory.”

- **Sorcery** is the English translation of the Greek word *pharmaka*, from which we get the words *pharmacy* and *pharmaceutical*. It means “using drugs.” In Paul’s day, it was applied ominously to drugs used in witchcraft and used for poisoning people.

True saving faith in Christ involves repentance, a turning away from one’s sins, and a daily battle against them in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Today sorcery would include astrology, fortune telling, and other occult practices. It would also include using drugs (legal or illegal) not for medical purposes but for their mind-altering effects (getting high).

- **Enmity** includes negative attitudes and feelings and hostile actions toward other people, either individuals or groups. On an individual level, examples would include refusing to forgive, holding grudges, and working mischief against someone. At the group or community level today, enmity would encompass dislike and prejudice toward people of other races and religions,
Time with God: An Interview with J.I. Packer
Professor of Theology at Regent College

On September 26, 2008, J.I. Packer took time to sit down and answer questions from C.S. Lewis Fellows and pastors in the Washington, D.C., area. The following is an excerpt from that session. Audio of the full interview can be found on our website at www.cslewisinstitute.org.

Which writers have influenced you the most, and which writers would you recommend?

Well, you ask which writers in my understanding of myself have had most influence on me—that’s a different question from which writers would I recommend. I’m going to answer the autobiographical question first, and then I will decide whether I’m going to say anything more. John Calvin, Martin Luther, John Bunyan (17th-century Puritan), John Owen, Richard Baxter (two more 17th-century Puritans), Abraham Kuyper (a Dutchman), C.S. Lewis, and C.S. Lewis’s buddy Charles Williams. Little is known about Williams, but he has had a tremendous influence on me, not so much in forming my doctrinal understanding, as in giving me imaginative projections which give color to the doctrinal understanding. In other words, it’s Williams’s fiction first, and then his bits of biography and theology afterward, that have made the difference. And people ordinarily have their own favorites among the Inklings. Well, Williams is my favorite, although he’s the most uneven of them. Lewis, however, is the one who I think has given me most, but I love them both.

Is there anyone else? … Yes, the first Bishop of Liverpool, John Charles Ryle, who was an evangelical, popular writer, extremely strong devotionally, his roots well down in the Puritan and Reformed perspective, a wonderful communicator in my judgment. And his judgment on just about everything seems to me to have been as sound as a bell. He has given me a great deal. That’s the personal answer.

And then, whom do I recommend? I will make a recommendation: Get the C.S. Lewis corpus, that’s the corpus of his theological writings, an exculpatory in apologetics. Get that under your belt. Read John Bunyan’s The Pilgrim’s Progress, both parts, once a year. I do that; I don’t see why you shouldn’t. Dip into Luther and Calvin and see whether you like them. Liking does actually play a big part, I think, in the appreciation of both. Some find both of them difficult, and some find both of them enormously congenial. Try yourself out by dipping into both of them.

Beyond that … I’m going to be very bold and lapse into bad manners and recommend two of my own books—apologies in advance—but I think you’ll benefit from my book Knowing God, which has had a very wide ministry over the nearly forty years that it’s been going. I also think you will get benefit from my book Concise Theology, published by Tyndale House, which is meant to be a popular survey of the whole of Christian doctrine. I think that it’s more likely than not that you will get help from my attempt briefly to survey the whole range of Christian theology in a Bible-based way and, as far as possible, to make it sing in the course of the exposition of it. Well, that’s enough of that, you will agree.

Would you be willing to share about your own time alone with God and the materials you use devotionally?

I don’t think I’ve got anything out of the ordinary to share. Like other Christians, I try to get up in the morning early enough to start the day with God and the Bible, shall I say with God through the Bible. I’ve been telling people for years that every Christian worth his salt ought to read the Bible from cover to cover every year. And I do that myself by using the One-Year Bible that Tyndale House publishes. I don’t know whether you know it; it gives you every day a hunk of the Old Testament, a passage from the New Testament, a psalm or part of a psalm, and something from the Proverbs. And you do get through the whole Bible, and the Psalter twice, in the course of a year.

You’ll find that there are any number of remarkable aptnesses in the way that the Old Testament, New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs
passages fit together. It’s a lovely tool for devotional use.

I read the Bible, and as I read it, I ask questions in order to get my thoughts into shape. I think when one reads the Bible one ought always to be asking questions, and my questions are basically three: (1) What does this show me about God? (2) What does this teach me about life? (3) What direction does this give me for my life today?

And you’ll need to go through questions 1 and 2 before you’re qualified really to answer question 3. Otherwise, you’ll answer question 3 on the basis of impressionism, and you will in the outcome miss a great deal of what each passage has to say to you.

I expect you’ve proved this in experience. What does it tell you about God and what does it tell you about life and its ups and downs, its joys and sorrows, with its temptations and its battles, with its responsibilities, and so on and so forth? There’s a lot of thinking to do, but it’s fruitful thinking. Whether I do it well, of course, is another question, but this is what I try to do.

Then, it comes around in due course that it’s breakfast time and on with the day’s work. I try during the day to remember whom I belong to and whom I’m serving. I do try to cultivate, to practice what they call “arrow prayers,” when you’re constantly making remarks or offering questions or reactions or praises to God as you go along. It’s called in some circles “the practice of the presence of God.” I’m not very good at it, but I try to do it, and it does become more and more of a habit the more you try. So that I’m attempting, you see, to live consciously in God’s presence as the day goes on.

In relationships I try to remember that I must behave godly, and I try to control my tongue and my temper and sometimes my impatience. And certainly when I’m in any sort of relation to another human being, I try to focus my interest on that human being and ask myself, do I have any ministry to this human being? The answer may be yes, the answer may be no, but at least one tries to act friendly and respectful and affirmative and warm in all these relationships.

I have to fight my natural tendencies to shy withdrawal; that’s the error in my make-up, and I have to counter it; well, I try to counter it. None of us ought to allow ourselves to fall victims to our own temperaments, so it’s rather important that at some stage we should do an inventory of our temperament and discover what our natural inclinations are and discern where there are weaknesses and where there are changes that could be made with advantage.

And then eventually comes bedtime, but by bedtime, I am personally bushed! So I don’t attempt to do any serious praying at night. I wish God good-night, and off to sleep.

Jesus knew what He was talking about when He said, “Go make learners.”

What counsel would you give to those involved in church planting and disciple making?

I would say, understand that making disciples means making learners. A friend of mine, recently deceased, published a book on this subject with this arresting title, Go Make Learners. That was his way of paraphrasing “Go and make disciples.” Disciples are learners. That’s what the word means, and of course there won’t be learning unless there’s teaching.

When I was a theological student at a liberal college learning—oh yes, I did learn some

(continued on page 28)
What is True Practical Holiness?
by J. C. Ryle (1816–1900)
First Bishop of Liverpool


What then is true practical holiness? It is a hard question to answer. I do not mean that there is any want of Scriptural matter on the subject. But I fear lest I should give a defective view of holiness, and not say all that ought to be said; or lest I should say things about it that ought not to be said, and so do harm. Let me, however, try to draw a picture of holiness, that we may see it clearly before the eyes of our minds. Only let it never be forgotten, when I have said all, that my account is but a poor imperfect outline at the best.

(a) Holiness is the habit of being of one mind with God, according as we find His mind described in Scripture. It is the habit of agreeing in God’s judgment – hating what He hates – loving what He loves – and measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word…

(b) A holy man will endeavour to shun every known sin, and to keep every known commandment. He will have a decided bent of mind toward God, a hearty desire to do His will – a greater fear of displeasing Him than of displeasing the world, and a love to all His ways. He will feel what Paul felt when he said, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Rom. 7:22)…

(c) A holy man will strive to be like our Lord Jesus Christ. He will not only live the life of faith in Him, and draw from Him all his daily peace and strength, but he will also labour to have the mind that was in Him, and to be “conformed to His image” (Rom. 8:29). It will be his aim to bear with and forgive others, even as Christ forgave us – to be unselfish, even as Christ pleased not Himself – to walk in love, even as Christ loved us – to be lowly-minded and humble… He will remember that Christ was a faithful witness for the truth – that He came not to do His own will – that it was His meat and drink to do His Father’s will… He will lay to heart the saying of John, “He that saith he abideth in [Christ] ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked” (1 John 2:6)…

(d) A holy man will follow after meekness, longsuffering, gentleness, patience, kind tempers, government of his tongue. He will bear much, forbear much, overlook much, and be slow to talk of standing on his rights…

(e) A holy man will follow after temperance and self-denial. He will labour to mortify the desires of his body – to crucify his flesh with his affections and lusts – to curb his passions – to restrain his carnal inclinations, lest at any time they break loose… [See Luke 21:34 and 1 Cor. 9:27]…

(f) A holy man will follow after charity and brotherly kindness. He will endeavour to observe the golden rule of doing as he would have men do to him, and speaking as he would have men speak to him… He will abhor all lying, slandering, backbiting, cheating, dishonesty, and unfair dealing, even in the least things…

(g) A holy man will follow after a spirit of mercy and benevolence towards others. He will not stand all the day idle. He will not be content with doing no harm – he will try to do good. He will strive to be useful in his day and generation, and to lessen the spiritual wants and misery around him, as far as he can. Such was Dorcas, “full of good works and alms-deeds, which she did,” – not merely purposed and talked about, but did… (Acts 9:36)…

(h) A holy man will follow after purity of heart. He will dread all filthiness and uncleanness of spirit, and seek to avoid all things that might draw him into it. He knows his own heart is like tinder, and will diligently keep clear of the sparks of temptation…
A holy man will follow after the fear of God. I do not mean the fear of a slave, who only works because he is afraid of punishment, and would be idle if he did not dread discovery. I mean rather the fear of a child, who wishes to live and move as if he was always before his father’s face, because he loves him...

(i) A holy man will follow after humility. He will desire, in lowliness of mind, to esteem all others better than himself. He will see more evil in his own heart than in any other in the world...

(j) A holy man will follow after faithfulness in all the duties and relations in life. He will try, not merely to fill his place as well as others who take no thought for their souls, but even better, because he has higher motives, and more help than they.

Those words of Paul should never be forgotten, “Whatever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord” ... (Col. 3:23). Holy persons should aim at doing everything well, and should be ashamed of allowing themselves to do anything ill if they can help it... They should strive to be good husbands and good wives, good parents and good children, good masters and good servants, good neighbours, good friends, good subjects, good in private and good in public, good in the place of business and good by their firesides... The Lord Jesus puts a searching question to His people, when He says, “What do ye more than others?” (Matt. 5:47).

(k) Last, but not least, a holy man will follow after spiritual mindedness. He will endeavour to set his affections entirely on things above, and to hold things on earth with a very loose hand. He will not neglect the business of the life that now is; but the first place in his mind and thoughts will be given to the life to come. He will aim to live like one whose treasure is in heaven, and to pass through this world like a stranger and pilgrim travelling to his home. To commune with God in prayer, in the Bible, and in the assembly of His people – these things will be the holy man’s chiefest enjoyments. He will value every thing and place and company, just in proportion as it draws him nearer to God... 

How little people know who think that holiness is dull. When one meets the real thing ... it is irresistible. If even 10% of the world’s population had it, would not the whole world be converted and happy before a year’s end?

C.S. Lewis
Music is a great gift but a poor god. As such, it is an example of God’s common grace, which He can use for our good. I’m using the term common grace to refer to all those many blessings that God sends to all people, saved and unsaved. Just as He “sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matt. 5:45 NIV), so He provides beautiful music, delicious food, breathtaking sunsets, laughter, friendship, and so many other blessings for all people—whether they acknowledge the source or not. Music can also serve as common ground in our efforts to connect with nonbelievers. They love music too and may be looking to music to provide more than it can. Perhaps they have experienced a similar disappointment to what I felt after all those orchestra concerts.

Common Grace

Here are just four ways music can work as common grace in the lives of all people, both believers and nonbelievers.

First, music can connect us to beauty, which could remind us of the way God originally created the world—good, without the ravages and damages of sin and the fall. For believers, music can prompt deeper worship of the God who created all things merely by uttering words. (Note that God used sound to create!) It can expand our appreciation for God’s creative acts and help us see His handiwork in all places—physical beauty, signs of order or design, and many other “natural” things that really are remarkably supernatural.

For non-Christians, music can lift them out of the dominant message of our world, which claims that life is an accident in a random universe as a product of chance. Since God has “set eternity in their heart” (Eccl. 3:11 NASB), music can point people in that direction.

Even some convinced naturalists who have little good to say about religion seem to wax eloquent about music in almost doxological ways. For example, Anthony Storr, an Oxford professor in psychiatry, in his Music and the Mind dismisses religious beliefs as mere attempts to “find comfort in supposing that God meant there to be order . . .”3 But in search of a conclusion to his lengthy naturalistic discussion of music, he proclaimed, “Music is a source of reconciliation, exhilaration, and hope which never fails . . . [and] something for the sake of which it is worthwhile to live on earth.”4 I love music, but I think we need something more substantive to make life “worthwhile.” I wonder if we might have some friends who would want Storr to be right about music but wonder why it sometimes does “fail.”

Second, music can help us see the richness of life. Put negatively, music can serve as a preventative against reductionism—the tendency to think of anything in just one dimension. For example, we can think of this world as “just” organic matter. We can think of friendship as “just” an alternative to loneliness. We can view work as “just” a means to a paycheck. We can consider prayer as “just” a way to get God to do things for us. The complexities of music force us to see the richness in other things—people, activities, tasks, etc. As we close our eyes and explore the whole of music, which is so much greater than the sum of its parts, we attune our minds to seek similar complexity elsewhere. We become enriched as we appreciate the richness around us.

A great deal of music is built around a theme and variations. The best jazz musicians, like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, take a ba-
sic tune and extrapolate for seemingly endless repetitions without running out of ideas. Many classical works, such as Rachmaninoff’s *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, take a simple motif and expand on it for what seems like hours. Rock guitarists such as Jerry Garcia (was there ever really anyone like Jerry Garcia?) could find nuances in chord progressions that enable them to “compose on the spot” as they allow their creative minds to explore more and more variations upon a single theme. Careful listening to complex music can prevent us from thinking that life is simple, one dimensional, or boring.

Third, music can heighten our experience of tension and release. It can help us feel the depths of pain and heights of joy that we need to feel. It can protect us against emotional numbness. Certain pieces of music create a sense of “unresolvedness” and then provide the resolution rather quickly. Mozart may have been the best at this. In his *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* the cycles of tension and release are short. The overall effect helps us feel a sense of order in the universe. That’s why some people tell us we can reorder our brains by listening to Mozart. Pregnant mothers are told to listen to Mozart so their developing babies can grow in a peaceful environment.

Other pieces of music (e.g., the final movement of Sibelius’s *Symphony No. 5*) extend the tension for so long that, when the resolution finally comes, the exhale feels monumental. In a parallel way, the Bible creates a tension that is resolved only by the cross. It is the tension between holiness (God’s) and sin (ours). We long for righteousness and goodness, and we resonate with it to a certain extent. But we also feel a tension, because we also resonate with the notion that something’s just not right with the world and with us. That tension is resolved only as God’s judgment and grace meet at Calvary. God’s righteous requirement for atonement is satisfied. God’s love provides that atonement. He is both the just and the justifier. Listening to music that highlights tension and release can help us lament more painfully about the evil in our world, repent more thoroughly from the sin in our hearts, and appreciate the gospel more gratefully for our entire lives.

Fourth, music can increase our longing for a return to home. For believers, this is the longing of the ages, for the final stage of God’s redemptive, four-chapter drama of Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation. When a piece of music ends by restating the theme it introduced at the beginning, we find ourselves at home. And that theme’s “at-home-ness” seems even better after having been away. This happens so often in a wide variety of genres—popular music, jazz, folk, and classical—that it suggests a deeply ingrained longing for a return to the way things once had been.

Robert Greenberg, a music historian and brilliant lecturer about music, says that when we hear the return of the main theme at the end of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations*,

> “If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”

...though, in its return, the Aria is unchanged, we now hear a world of possibilities and experience implicit within it that we could not possibly have heard at the outset of the piece. We are the wiser at this point of the piece, and the serenity and completion . . . are not unlike those one might feel when looking back across a long and well lived life.

Common Ground

As mentioned above, music can be the basis for discussions with non-Christian friends that points them toward the gospel. Here are some suggestions for how that can happen.

Many Christians wonder what activities they can share with non-Christians. To be sure, there may be some party invitations we should decline. But music often can provide common ground. Going to concerts together, listening to music together, or discussing which of their
The Gift of Music: Common Grace and Common Ground

iPhone playlists get the most air time can begin deeper discussions about beauty, creation, and meaning.

The question, why do you think music moves us so much?, can launch many conversations that point to a Creator who made life orderly, enjoyable, and rich. But you’ll want to think through how your love for music connects to your faith. You may not be able to come up with an explanation as easily as a jazz musician improvises on the spot.

If your testimony of coming to faith in Jesus has a C.S. Lewisian component of disappointment that led to the “other world” of the gospel, prepare ways to express that in words. Maybe this is something you could share in writing through social media. Or maybe you can post updates about concerts, art exhibits, or movies you’ve seen and share how the experience pointed you beyond.

When people share their wonderings about what life is all about or how random or chaotic our world seems, affirm their suspicion that “there’s got to be more to life.” Maybe you will have opportunity to quote Leonard Bernstein and see what they think of his insights. The great composer of classical and Broadway masterpieces and conductor of the New York Philharmonic once said, “Beethoven … leaves us … with the feeling that something is right in the world, that something checks throughout, something that follows its own laws consistently, something we can trust, that will never let us down.”

I believe Bernstein was on to something. Music does indeed make us think that “something is right in the world.” But I disagree with his view that music “will never let us down.” We need to look to Someone greater than Beethoven for that.

Notes
4 Ibid., 188.

I have found my musical soul again … this time in the preludes of Chopin… Aren’t they wonderful? … they are so passionate, so hopeless, I could almost cry over them; they are unbearable. I will find out the numbers of the ones I mean and we will have a feast next holidays.

C.S. Lewis (in a letter to his friend Arthur Greeves)
The image of the Nativity scene with baby Jesus lying in a manger, surrounded by the animals in the stable, is one that has captured the imagination of many children and adults alike. One legend tells how the animals received the gift of speech for a few hours on Christmas Eve so they could sing praises to the son of Mary. In the story of *The Little Drummer Boy*, the animals dance in rhythm to the boy’s drumming to honor the Christ Child. The French carol *The Friendly Beasts* gives the animals human characteristics as they share their unique gifts with the newborn King of Kings.

C.S. Lewis in his poem, *The Nativity*, focuses on the animals of the crèche, but instead of giving them human qualities, he reflects on both the negative and positive character traits of each animal and how those traits are manifested in his own life. Here is Lewis’s poem.

THE NATIVITY

Among the oxen (like an ox I’m slow)  
see a glory in the stable grow  
Which, with the ox’s dullness might at length  
Give me an ox’s strength.

Among the asses (stubborn I as they)  
I see my Saviour where I looked for hay;  
So may my beastlike folly learn at least  
The patience of a beast.

Among the sheep (I like a sheep have strayed)  
I watch the manger where my Lord is laid;  
Oh that my baa-ing nature would win thence  
Some woolly innocence!

As we contemplate the miracle of Christ’s birth this Christmas season, let us like C.S. Lewis, in humility, seek after the strength, patience and innocence symbolized in the animals of the Christmas story that can only come when we confess our sins, receive forgiveness from the Lord and allow Him to give us the most important gifts of Christmas.

“The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together,  
and the lion will eat straw like the ox...  
In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.”

ISAIAH 11:7, 10 (NIV)

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We now carry our computers with us in our pockets. Our smart phones connect us to the whole world 24/7. Technological progress flows toward increasing complexity, and it always results in more and more of everything faster and faster. As Max Lucado observed, America is the only country in the world with a mountain named Rushmore. I think of Dallas Willard’s challenging response when people asked him how to grow spiritually: “You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life, for hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our world today.”

Or, in the words of English preacher Samuel Chadwick (1860–1932), “Hurry is the death of prayer.”

In such a fast-paced world, who has time to pray? I like C.S. Lewis’s observation:

_The very moment you wake up each morning. . . . All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in._

That’s not easy. The world we live in _distracts_ us.

And the world we live in _seduces_ us. The world dazzles us with its goodies. Like Christian at Vanity Fair in _The Pilgrim’s Progress_, we are lured off the road to the Celestial City to spend a while in the pleasures of this life.

Who thinks of the eternal anymore? Who cares about sin and righteousness, heaven and hell? This world is full of enticements and entertainments of every sort—those subtle seductions that pull us away from focusing on God and His kingdom and His glory.

We are bombarded with messages that brainwash us into thinking that prayer is a waste of time. Let’s be _practical_—get busy—_do_ something. Don’t get on your knees. That’s why the life of prayer is inherently countercultural. To pray faithfully, you must be willing to swim against the cultural stream. Paul says, “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2 Phillips and NIV). Or Peter says, recognize that this world is only temporary—it will not last. “The end of all things is near,” he says. “Therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers” (1 Pet. 4:7 ESV).

And this is a fallen world, a sinful world. As a result, this world not only distracts us and seduces us, but it also _wounds_ us. Abused children have a difficult time trusting anyone; jilted lovers are reticent to open their hearts again. In this world, dangers abound—bad things happen and God doesn’t seem to care.

Maybe you prayed as a child that your parents would quit fighting, and they didn’t. I remember growing up, praying that the Vietnam War would end. It didn’t, at least, not in my time frame. Prayer didn’t work for me in that regard. Life is hard. We learn to protect ourselves, and we retreat into our shells like little hermit crabs, insulating ourselves from the threats that surround us—insulating ourselves even from God Himself.

Or maybe we develop another form of compensation; we become driven to achieve, to be somebody, to prove ourselves to the world. We become consumed by a restless ambition that makes us addicted to activity. We dare not stop for a moment to spend time in God’s presence, to rest in His love.

That’s what the world does to us: it distracts us, it seduces us, and it wounds us. No wonder prayer is hard.
The Flesh We Indulge

If the world distracts us, then I would say the flesh deludes us. Our lustful cravings for the physical pleasures and comforts consume us. We face the battle of simple laziness. Prayer takes self-discipline; it takes diligence. Unlike eating and sleeping and watching TV, it does not come naturally to us. It is demanding. The spirit is willing at times, but the flesh is weak. And we too often indulge the flesh at the expense of the spirit. So we continue to splash around in the shallowness of the spiritual baby pool instead of swimming in the spiritual depths—an experience made possible only by the discipline of prayer.

But “the flesh” is more than just our bodily appetites. The flesh as Paul uses the term refers to our whole fallen humanity. It speaks of a life-orientation that is cut off from God and that, in fact, opposes Him. The flesh is our self-centered, self-exalting self-pride that deludes us into thinking that we are self-created and self-sufficient.

Who needs God? As Oprah preaches, “You can do it.” Prayer, why, that’s a last resort, maybe. It’s the back-up parachute, an emergency measure when all else fails. In effect, we think, prayer is for weaklings; it’s for failures; it’s for those not strong enough to stand up courageously to the challenges of life. “I can do it. So who needs God?” We don’t say that exactly—not if we are churchgoers in good standing, but that is how we live—“in the flesh”—trusting in our own strength and our own power, bolstered by our own self-sufficient pride.

I say we are deluded, because, in fact, we are not self-created, and we are not self-sufficient. We think we hold our destinies in our own hands, that we are the masters of our fates, the captains of our souls. But it’s a lie! We don’t know what a day will bring.

Not long ago, a very close pastoral friend of mine was encouraged by his wife to get a check-up, and they discovered a tumor in his brain. His life was turned upside down in an instant. I asked, “Jim, we preach about this sort of thing all the time. How does it feel to experience it?” I am glad to say he is facing this with great courage and faith. But we just never know—so much of life really is outside our control. The very act of praying recognizes that. It says, I can’t do it; I don’t control my fate.

In that sense, prayer is an act of personal humiliation. When we pray, we acknowledge our weakness, our lowliness. We acknowledge that we have needs that we cannot meet ourselves. Abraham Lincoln famously said, “I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me seemed insufficient for the day.”

That’s what it takes—a humility that recognizes our need. And our flesh rebels against such a confession. But listen to what Jesus says:

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (John 15:5–8 NIV)

But understanding hindrances to prayer does help us to see what we’re up against when we face the challenge of becoming the people of prayer God wants us to be.

The Devil Who Deceives

The world distracts; the flesh deludes; and the devil, he deceives. I like the quote again from Samuel Chadwick: “The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies or work or Christian activities. He laughs at our toil, mocks our wisdom, but trembles when we pray.”
So we should not be surprised, then, that one of the devil’s chief aims is to hinder our prayers. He does this in all sorts of ways, all related to his primary weapon of deception, since, as Jesus tells us, he is a liar from the beginning, and when he speaks lies, he is speaking his native language. He deceives us, and two forms of deception stick out in my mind.

First, he deceives us by accusing us. That’s what the name satan in Hebrew and diabolos in Greek means—one who opposes or accuses. And he hinders our prayers through his whispering in our ears, “Who do you think you are praying to God? Ha! You hypocrite! Why should God listen to you—the way you’ve lived?”

You know that you have done what you ought not to have done, and that you have not done what you ought to have done, and there is no health in you. The devil is right—you’ve failed as a follower of Jesus Christ. You have denied Him by your life, if not by your lips. You don’t deserve the name Christian.

Yes, the devil’s accusations hit the mark, and when you listen to that voice you are filled with guilt. You know you’re just a spiritual derelict, and you despair of ever being that man or woman of God you once aspired to be. Why bother, it will never happen. So you don’t pray. And the devil wins.

But though some of what the devil says is true, it’s not all true; more important, it’s not the whole truth. You see, he deceives us when he accuses us, because in the process he confuses us. Yes, we are sinners; yes, we have failed to be and do what God has called us to; yes, we don’t deserve to be heard when we come before the righteous and holy King of heaven and earth. But the devil knows nothing of God’s grace. For in the end, it’s not our sin that keeps us from God, it’s our pride.

You see, the gospel tells us that we’ve all sinned before God—every one of us. We’re all guilty before Him—far more guilty than we realize. God knows our sin, even more than the devil does, but in His grace He has overcome our sin by taking that sin upon Himself through the death of His Son Jesus Christ. It is as we acknowledge our sin before God and call upon Him to rescue us in His grace and put our faith in Jesus as our Savior—when we say, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner”—that’s when the gates of heaven are opened, and we are given free access into the heavenly throne room.

Grace comes through truth. That’s the truth that the devil doesn’t want you to know. But the devil continues to confuse us—he continues to fill our minds with false ideas about God. That’s been his modus operandi since those first days in the garden.

We Learn to protect ourselves, and we retreat into our shells like little hermit crabs, insulating ourselves from the threats that surround us—insulating ourselves even from God Himself.

You know that you have done what you ought not to have done, and that you have not done what you ought to have done, and there is no health in you. The devil is right—you’ve failed as a follower of Jesus Christ. You have denied Him by your life, if not by your lips. You don’t deserve the name Christian.

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The Challenge of Faith

And this leads to what I consider our final and greatest hindrance to a real life of prayer: We don’t pray because we don’t really believe what we say we believe. It is what Jesus called quite simply “little faith.” “O you of little faith,” He said to His disciples—and He says the same to us.

When we don’t pray, we have to ask ourselves if we really believe that God is great and God is good. The devil has confused us, as he confused Eve in the garden, with the idea that the Lord doesn’t have our best interests in mind—He can’t be trusted with our welfare. Maybe we really do know better than He does what is best for us after all. So why should we pray?

But after the revelation of the love of God on the cross of Christ, how can we possibly believe that? Paul put it like this: “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all -- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32 NIV). He gave us His own Son. Do you think He will withhold from you anything—anything at all—which is for your eternal and ultimate good? It’s ludicrous!
Then why don’t we pray to this good and gracious God? “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone?” Jesus asks. “Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (Matt. 7:9–11 NIV).

Prayer Is a Relationship of Love

Do we think of God as our Father in heaven? Maybe we don’t pray because we don’t really think that God is, in fact, personal in that way. Too often, we think of Him as some great life force that somehow governs the cosmos—a benign energy field that keeps things running according to some mysterious plan. Maybe we don’t pray because we don’t really believe that in Christ this great and good God is in truth our loving heavenly Father.

You see, prayer is not a transaction. It is not a form of magical manipulation by which we say certain words in a certain way as a kind of incantation, and—bingo!—we get what we want. Prayer, in the Bible, is essentially about a relationship—a relationship with God who created us in His image. God is a person, and He created us in His image as persons.

And He is a speaking God. “In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1–2 NIV). The Person of God has taken humanity into Himself. The eternal Word of God has become flesh in Jesus Christ. God has given us His testimony to that incarnate Word in the written Word, the Scriptures. And by the Spirit, our God continues to speak to us through that Word, and in prayer He invites us to speak to Him and to relate to Him. The true I in relationship with the true God, that’s what true prayer is. It’s a relationship—a communion of love. “True, whole prayer,” wrote Augustine, “is nothing but love.”

And that, you see, is what leads us directly to Jesus. So we ask Him, “Lord, teach us to pray.” And in part 2 of this article, we will consider Jesus’ response to that simple request.

Notes

1 This is especially true for church leaders, note 1 Sam. 12:23; Acts 6:4.
3 Oprah’s Lifeclass, “How to Fulfill Your Dream,” www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKkhsXqf43g.
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Growing in Prayer | Part 1: Hindrances to Prayer

[Answering the question, “What is your view of the daily discipline of the Christian life—the need for taking time to be alone with God?]:
We have our New Testament regimental orders upon the subject. I would take it for granted that everyone who becomes a Christian would undertake this practice. It is enjoined upon us by Our Lord; and since they are his commands, I believe in following them. It is always just possible that Jesus Christ meant what he said when He told us to seek the secret place and to close the door.

_C.S. Lewis_

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**RECOMMENDED READING**

Kevin DeYoung, *Crazy Busy: A (Mercifully) Short Book about a (Really) Big Problem* (Crossway, 2013)

“I’M TOO BUSY!” We’ve all heard it. We’ve all said it. All too often, busyness gets the best of us.

Just one look at our jam-packed schedules tells us how hard it can be to strike a well-reasoned balance between doing nothing and doing it all.

That’s why award-winning author and pastor Kevin DeYoung addresses the busyness problem head on in his book, *Crazy Busy* — and not with the typical arsenal of time management tips, but rather with the biblical tools we need to get to the source of the issue and pull the problem out by the roots.

Highly practical and super short, *Crazy Busy* will help you put an end to “busyness as usual.”
In the reflection, Lewis gives a humorous insight into the cross-purposes and confusions that often characterized conversations he and his brother had with their father. Lewis had formed the view in his early life that their father absent-mindedly listened to their contributions to these conversations and all too hastily jumped to his own view of what his sons were saying without fully comprehending their intents. One of these confusions involved the Greek lettering displayed in the arch above the doorway of the Crescent Church. Lewis introduces and records the conversation as follows:

"A certain church in Belfast has both a Greek inscription over the door and a curious tower. 'That church is a great landmark', said I, 'I can pick it out from all sorts of places—even from the top of the Cave Hill.' "Such nonsense", said my father, 'how could you make out Greek letters three or four miles away?"

The confusion had arisen because Lewis was referring to the curious tower above the church while his father had attended only to the reference to the Greek letters above the door. The church referenced is the Crescent Church in the University Quarter of Belfast.

Upper Crescent and College Park

Belfast

The other two buildings in that immediate area were associated with Lewis and his father at a different juncture of Lewis's life. It is altogether a much darker period of their relationship and a period lacking in humor or other mitigating circumstances.

In 1929 Lewis's father, Albert, became unwell. The National Health Service was not in existence in Britain at that time and hospitals were not as well developed as they are today. In those days, between the two world wars, those who could afford to pay were often admitted into "nursing homes"—essentially large houses, adapted to provide private accommodation where patients could avail themselves to twenty-four-hour medical care by nurses trained to the best standards available at the time; patients were treated by doctors with skills considered appropriate to the diagnosed condition of the patient. Albert Lewis was admitted to and cared for in two such nursing homes. One was located in Upper Crescent, just across from the Crescent Church; the other was in College Park, just beside and visible from the McClay Library at QUB. In 1929 C.S. Lewis visited his father in Miss Bradshaw's nursing home in College Park, and Albert's burial record indicates that he died in Miss Wallace's nursing home at Upper Crescent.

Lewis gives us some insights into those difficult weeks of the summer of 1929, spent in Belfast with his father during his illness. The first surviving record that indicates something amiss with Albert's health is a letter from C.S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves written July 25, 1929:
I have had bad news from home. First a letter from my Scotch uncle commenting on my father’s poor state of health … they suspect ‘something internal’ … Second, a letter from my cousin Joey to say that … they are putting him into a nursing home for inspection to-day … saying that they … suspect some inflammation.

This same letter also provides an insight into the difficulty Lewis experienced in coping with the situation. Most biographers and commentators note that the relationship between Lewis and his father was not totally relaxed or comfortable.

In a letter to Owen Barfield, Lewis describes his innermost feelings: “I am attending at the almost painless sickbed of one for whom I have little affection and whose society has for years given me much discomfort and no pleasure.”

These sentiments along with two additional portions of the letter to Arthur Greeves of July 25, 1929, demonstrate the conflicts of the emotion Lewis was experiencing. On the one hand, this letter indicates sorrow at his father’s illness and imminent demise:

Isn’t it all beastly. Poor, poor old Pdaitabird [a nickname the boys used for their father because of his unusual pronunciation of the word Potato, which he appears to have said with a heavy emphasis on a ‘d’ sound, making it more like pdiata], I could cry over the whole thing.

On the other hand in an earlier sentence, Lewis says:

how horrible one feels when the people whom one ought to love, but doesn’t very much, are ill and in need of your help and sympathy; when you have to behave as love would dictate and yet feel all the time as if you were doing nothing—because you can’t give what’s really wanted.

When I visit the locations in Belfast where these emotions were played out and observed by Lewis himself, I remember the talks he was to give many years later. In 1929 when these events occurred, Lewis was only commencing the final phase of his return journey back to Christian belief. By 1941 he had been a Christian for the best part of a decade and was giving his famous Broadcast Talks published in 1942 (later as book 1 of Mere Christianity). In Broadcast Talks he returns to these themes and to the dilemma they present. He concludes with these words:

These, then, are the two points I wanted to make. First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in.

In these words, Lewis not only expounds a great biblical truth stated by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, but he also demonstrates that he recognized it in himself. That truth is stated in Romans 7:15, 18, 21, 24–25 (NIV):

I do not understand what I do. For I want to do what I do not, but what I hate I do … I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out …
So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me … What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

In conclusion, I wish again to refer briefly to the C.S. Lewis reading room in the McClay Library of QUB. I mentioned in passing that the reading room walls are decorated with images of Ireland and quotations from C.S. Lewis’s writings. It is appropriate to conclude this series of articles, “Surprised by Belfast,” by using one of those quotations seen in the reading room. It has its genesis at Dundela Villas, where Lewis was born, in east Belfast:

I remind myself that all these toys were never intended to possess my heart, that my true good is in another world and my only real treasure is Christ.

C.S. Lewis

Notes
4 Lewis, They Stand Together, letter dated 25 July 1929.
5 Ibid.
7 Ibid., 121.

Recommended DVD
The Life of C.S. Lewis, A Day of Discovery Production (2005, approximately 120 minutes)
In this revealing look at the life of C. S. Lewis, go behind the scenes to see the sites he knew so well, and to meet those who knew Lewis personally.

C. S. Lewis is remembered as a scholar, teacher, and writer. He’s also been called one of the most influential spokesmen for the Christian faith in the 20th century. During his 30 years at Oxford University, Lewis produced a number of bestselling books that are still widely read today including The Chronicles of Narnia, and Mere Christianity.

This 4-part video from Day of Discovery, The Life of C. S. Lewis, explores how Lewis changed from an outspoken opponent of Christianity to one of its most powerful defenders.
Being Led and Transformed by the Holy Spirit
(continued from page 7)

as well as hatred of political figures and parties.

- **Strife** is the relational discord and animosity resulting from a quarrelsome, argumentative attitude that takes pleasure in self-assertion and confrontation.

- **Jealousy** refers to the selfish resentment of another’s success or achievement.

- **Fits of anger**, often called temper tantrums, are explosive outbursts of anger against other people.

- **Rivalries** denote selfish ambition and putting oneself and one’s interests above those of others.

- **Dissensions** refer to unbiblical, divisive teaching that is disruptive of church unity.

- **Divisions** are a party (partisan) spirit or cliques around particular people or teachings.

- **Envy** is not merely begrudging the good fortune of others, but also maliciously resenting it and wanting to spoil it or deprive them of it.

- **Drunkenness** speaks of revelry where alcohol impairs moral judgment and inhibitions and possibly leads to immoral actions.

- **Orgies** are closely connected with drunkenness and denote wild partying behavior.

“**And things like these**” (v. 21) indicates that the list is only a sampling.

The sins in this list were common and no doubt characterized some of the people in the Galatian church before they professed faith in Christ. True saving faith in Christ involves repentance, a turning away from one’s sins, and a daily battle against them in the power of the Holy Spirit. Apparently some in the church were continuing in their sins and not seeking to forsake them. Whether from ignorance of biblical teaching, backsliding, or lack of true conversion, this was a serious issue. This is why Paul, in the sentence immediately following this list, delivered a sober comment on these behaviors: “I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (v. 21).

In Galatians 5:22–23, Paul shifts to happier thoughts, saying, “But the fruit of the Spirit is …” In what follows he gives nine characteristics of the Holy Spirit’s work in the life of a born again believer. Unlike the word *works* (of the flesh), *fruit* is singular, indicating that the nine characteristics are part of a unified whole and are not separable. In other words, a believer doesn’t have some and not others, though their relative strength may vary.

- **Love**, by which Paul means the love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). The Greek word is *agape*. This is a responsive love that evokes in us a love for God and a desire to please Him. Worship, wholehearted surrender, and obedience are at the heart of pleasing Him. God’s love also produces in us a love for our neighbor, a servant love that is rooted primarily in the will and acts for our neighbor’s best interest and highest good. As Paul says in Galatians 5:6, the only thing that matters in the Christian life is “faith working through love,” and in Galatians 5:13, “through love serve one another.” This humble, servant love was the dominant characteristic of Jesus’ life and is to be so for His followers. In a very real sense, the other eight characteristics of the Spirit are expressions of this agape love.

- **Joy** flows out of the awareness of God’s gracious favor to us and the hope of living with Him and His Son and all His children in the world to come. Hope for the future is a key part of joy and is an anchor that keeps us from being blown to and fro by the many and varied circumstances of life and the hard times that sometimes overtake us. Unlike happiness, its worldly and elusive equivalent, joy does not depend on favorable circumstances.
Peace is not simply the absence of conflict, but the deep abiding peace of God, the sovereign and almighty King of creation. It is grounded in the assurance of God’s rich mercy and personal love for us, shown supremely in His saving us by grace alone, through Christ alone and not by our works. This produces a tranquil heart that is at rest in God. And it impels and enables us to be peacemakers, to pursue peace with others, including those in our family, community, church, and beyond, and across all ethnic, racial, political, and other barriers that separate and divide people.

Patience, also translated as long-suffering, is chiefly a matter of forbearance with other people and of not being easily offended. This particularly includes people who displease, irritate, provoke, or mistreat us—including those who persecute us. Steadfast endurance with difficult people and circumstances is the idea. Such patience illustrates the patience of God and is a powerful witness to others.

Kindness is an attitude of graciousness and goodwill toward others, especially those who do not deserve it. Kindness is an expression of love that goes above and beyond what is warranted and demonstrates the kindness of God. It resists all harshness and coldness toward others.

Goodness is love and kindness in action, an expression of moral excellence. It gives generously and spends itself to help others, without any expectation of return.

Faithfulness is a matter of being trustworthy and reliable to God and to others, being dependable and true to one’s word and commitments, someone in whom others can have confidence.

Gentleness is not weakness but strength under control, rooted in humility. Jesus was gentle yet capable of expressing righteous indignation, when appropriate. Gentleness is not arrogant, doesn’t bully or force others, but is considerate and exercises mildness in dealing with them.

Self-control engages both mind and body in the business of properly regulating one’s life in all its parts. The scope of self-control ranges from such mundane matters as food and drink to material possessions, to one’s thought life, to speech, to the expression of emotions and much more, but with special attention to sexual matters and the mastery of our passions.

Though not an exhaustive list, these nine characteristic traits that are the fruit of the Holy Spirit, taken together, form a beautiful portrait of Jesus as we see Him in the Gospels. In their Christ-centered selflessness, they stand in stark contrast to the self-centered life of the flesh. They are supernatural in nature and not a human attainment, though we have an essential role in their blossoming. They do not appear piecemeal but all together. Nor do they appear in full bloom but mature over time as we continue to walk in the Spirit and put sin to death. Not only do they have a personal dimension; they also have a community dimension that blesses and edifies fellow believers and strengthens the unity of the church.

If we let the Spirit lead us, our lives will blossom and flourish. But if we neglect or refuse His leading, our lives will languish.
Being Led and Transformed by the Holy Spirit

Christ in faith—dying to the old life and coming alive to the new. The effect of this is that the bondage and enslavement of our will to sin has been broken, and we are now liberated and able to say no to sin. This does not mean that we cannot sin anymore; rather, it means we have been set free to obey God. However, we must choose to yield ourselves, body and soul, to Him (Rom. 6:12–14). If we don’t, we will remain mired in sin. That is why Paul goes on to say to the Galatians, “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by [keep in step with] the Spirit” (v. 25). The Spirit leads and empowers us to walk in obedience to God.

How does this work in practice? Being led by the Spirit, walking by the Spirit, keeping in step with the Spirit, is predicated on our previously surrendering ourselves wholeheartedly to God in response to His grace. This surrender is an act of the will, a choice we make; it is saying yes to God and the Spirit’s leading and no to the desires of the flesh. However, it is precisely here that many of us have a problem. Research has shown that the vast majority of professing believers in the American church have never made such a surrender of themselves to God. They have never taken a decisive stand against the flesh—their old sinful self and its desires—and put God first in their lives. But as Paul makes clear in Romans 6 and 12, putting God first is the only appropriate response to God for the completely undeserved grace and mercy He has lavished upon us, and it is essential for living the Christian life. In Romans 12:1, for example, Paul exhorts the church, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” If we haven’t done this, it means we still have a divided heart; we have one foot in the kingdom and one foot in the world. We are of two minds. We want the blessings of God but refuse His conditions. We will say no to sin only so far as we find it agreeable. We rationalize and make excuses about our sins, saying we can’t resist, or that we will sin only a little or only occasionally. Then we deceive ourselves into thinking that God understands we are weak and will be satisfied if we do the best we can—which is to assume He will be satisfied with our compromise, our partial obedience, and our halfhearted commitment. But He won’t. God knows that we are weak; He knows it far better than we do. And He has made a provision for it. That is precisely why He gave us the Holy Spirit! But as I mentioned in the article “Holiness” (Knowing & Doing, Fall 2016), there is a big difference between the Spirit residing in us (which is true of all born again believers), and the Spirit reigning in us (which is true of only some). The Spirit is ready and willing and eager to reign in us, but His power is blocked until we surrender fully to God. Once we surrender to God and ask the Spirit to fill us, He will begin to change our lives.

In ways that will amaze and delight you, the Holy Spirit will actively carry forward the process of transforming you through the renewing of your mind. The process works from the inside out. It is not simply the changing of external behaviors but the changing of their source. Renewed minds produce renewed thinking, values, attitudes, desires, motives, and behaviors. At the deepest level, we will begin to experience “the expulsive power of a new affection.” Our hearts will increasingly appreciate God’s grace to us, and our minds will increasingly desire God and His will more than our sin and its plea, thus weakening its hold on us.

The Scriptures are the Holy Spirit’s chief instrument in renewing our minds, and His primary focus is Jesus—glorifying Jesus to us (John 16:14). He does this through illuminating our minds and hearts to grasp ever more deeply the love of God and of Jesus for us and to focus our attention on Jesus’ life, His works, His teachings, His death, resurrection, and ascension to glory. This highlights the great importance of being immersed in the Scriptures and praying that God will “grant us so to hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them” (Book of Common Prayer) that we are truly transformed. One of our main responsibilities in this process is to sit under good preaching and teaching and also read, study, memorize, and meditate on Scripture—the Gospels, the Epistles, and the rest of

“I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Paul, v. 21).
the Bible. As we behold the glory of the Lord Jesus over time, pondering and deeply reflecting upon Him and all He has done, our love for Him will grow and with it our desire to please Him and be like Him. These holy desires in turn will propel our daily obedience, which the Spirit will help us render by calling to our minds the teachings and the example of Jesus that apply to the circumstances we face each day—in areas of personal temptation, family relations, friendships, church life, the workplace, community affairs, and ministry opportunities, among others.

By immersing ourselves in the Scriptures, consistently walking in the Spirit, asking Him to reveal the transforming glory of Christ to us, and obediently following as He leads us, we will see the fruit of the Spirit maturing in our lives; we will find ourselves being transformed from one level of glory to another by the Spirit—transformed into the image of Jesus Himself (2 Cor. 3:18). It isn’t easy; it involves challenge and discipline, may lead to hardship or persecution, and takes a lifetime, but the rewards are infinitely greater than anything this world can offer.

Notes
1 Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.
4 John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 1.11.8

If we let Him—for we can prevent Him, if we choose—He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a ... dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright, stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness.

**C.S Lewis**

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**RECOMMENDED READING**


This classic book on the work of the Holy Spirit was written by one of the most prominent evangelical preachers of the nineteenth century, Octavius Winslow. From the author’s preface: “To the subject discussed in the following pages, the author earnestly bespeaks the prayerful consideration of the Christian reader. It cannot occupy a position too prominent in our Christianity, nor can it be a theme presented too frequently for our contemplation. All that we spiritually know of ourselves, all that we know of God, and of Jesus, and his Word, we owe to the teaching of the Holy Spirit; and all the real light, sanctification, strength and comfort we are made to possess on our way to glory, we must ascribe to Him. To be richly anointed with the Spirit is to be led into all truth; and to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with love to God and man.”
things there—but I learned by reaction; that is, I learned by asking myself after each lecture, why did I disagree with so much of that?, and making myself answer the question thoroughly. Well, there came a moment of joy from the elaborate acreage of rather dreary liberal instruction in this seminary, when a visiting lecturer said that in the pastoral ministry there are three priorities: the first is teach, and the second is teach, and the third is teach; and I thought that was a wonderful way of expressing a wonderful truth. It seemed obvious to me before ever I got into pastoral ministry that that has to be the case. Since I got into ministry, and my ministry has had a pastoral dimension over the years, I’ve had occasion to prove that yes, indeed, that’s the way it must be.

There are existing patterns of ministry that are intended to inspire and encourage and—how can I say?—warm the heart, and all that kind of thing, but without teaching, patterns where the truths that are handled are simple truths that everybody knows already, and they are just there in the sermon as a launch pad for the application. Well, I have in my hand the Bible. This is God’s lesson or series of lessons, if you like. I want to teach the truth that’s in the Bible. I want to teach the range of the books and the contents of the books that make up the Bible. I want people to thoroughly understand what the various writers of the Bible were concerned to convey, and I try to ensure that in every bit of ministry I do, whatever else the ministry is intended to accomplish, that there is real serious teaching at the heart of what I say. Teach, teach, teach. If you ask whether Packer supposes himself at this very moment to be teaching, the answer is, yes, he does. It becomes a mind-set and, seems to me, is the way of wisdom in church planting. You gather a little group of people, maybe, but people who are willing to be taught, and you work with them. You don’t have to set yourself up on a pedestal, indeed, you’re not likely to get very far if you do. You generate, rather, a sense of fellowship between you and them and them and each other, of course, and all together, you are moving forward into becoming a church. But your particular job as the church-planting agent is teach, teach, teach. Keep the people who are going to become the congregation learning, keep them aware that the Christian life really is meant to be a matter of learning, from the moment it starts to the grave, and ask for what in effect is a moral contract: I’m going to teach; I want you to agree that you’ll come along with me and labor to learn.

Christianity needs to be learned! It isn’t the religion that is instinctive to all good men, which is what liberals of the old generation used to think. It is a faith that has to be taught! Jesus knew what He was talking about when He said, “Go make learners.” So this is the really big thing that I would say, which I don’t find said in all the texts that I see—of course I don’t see them all, but I do see some—texts about church planting and wisdom for doing it, texts about this, that, and the other, and that’s my burden.

What’s your perspective on how the culture in the United States affects Christians?

I would answer that off the top of my head by saying, everything, it seems to me, in U.S. culture conspiries to make us worldly; worldly minded, preoccupied with the things—perfectly lawful things most of the time—that are involved in keeping going in this life. But these things pre-occupy us so that spiritual concerns just don’t preoccupy us. And I think we’ve got to watch against the pressure of the world to make us worldly—we who live in North America. I don’t live in the United States, but I live in southern British Columbia; the United States is only half an hour’s drive away, so I think I know pretty much what it’s like living here. Let me elaborate a little. Material values are insidious. The bank balance, a nice home, getting on in terms of place and position in the firm or getting on with the business that you’ve started yourself, getting ahead—it’s the preoccupation that will most certainly get hold of you if you don’t deliberately set yourself to counter it. And you counter it by saying, “Now wait a minute. I am in this world to love and serve the God who saved me. I am in this world to help people any way that I can. These are my priorities. On the Lord’s Day, for instance, I put fellowship with His people in church before
the allurements of the countryside and the golf
course and all that sort of thing. I try to get my
priorities clear and stick to them in that way.”
That’s the way, I think, that we learn to coun-
ter the pressure to be worldly, that is, simply
living in terms of the set of values that unbel-
lievers around us live by, and we just have to
be disciplined about it because the pressure is
constantly on.

What is your perspective on how spiritual
darkness operates in the West?

My perspective can be stated quite briefly. I
do believe that the world is full of hostile spiri-
tual powers, just as the sixth chapter of Ephe-
sians indicated when Paul wrote it nearly two
thousand years ago. I don’t think anything has
changed there. I do believe, however, that Satan
and his cohorts these days in North America
intend to keep out of sight. They don’t always
do that. There are cultural situations in Africa
and in some equatorial and near-equatorial
parts of the world where Satan and his hosts
gain more by frightening people and having
them running scared from morning to night,
scared of evil spirits, than he would gain by
keeping out of sight. So he has people running
scared and scores that way.

But for us in the sophisticated West, he
achieves far more by concealing himself and
his spirits achieve far more by concealing them-
selves than by coming out into the open. So
your textbook, to psyche you up and arm you

I’ve been telling people for years that every
Christian worth his salt ought to read the
Bible from cover to cover every year.

What matters supremely, therefore, is not, in the last analysis, the fact
that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it—the fact that
He knows me.

J. I. Packer

What matters supremely, therefore, is not, in the last analysis, the fact
that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it—the fact that
He knows me.

J. I. Packer

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

Read through the whole Bible using a plan that has been helpful to many people connected
Scrooges, Traditionalists and Nicholases

by Joel S. Woodruff, Ed.D.
President, C.S. Lewis Institute

“Merry Christmas! Long live the true King!” These are the parting words of Father Christmas to Peter, Susan, Lucy, and Mr. and Mrs. Beaver after leaving them with magical gifts in the land of Narnia. The arrival of Father Christmas or St. Nicholas, as he’s called by some in our world, is one of the signs to the inhabitants of Narnia that Aslan is on the move to free the land from the White Witch – a country in which “it was always winter and never Christmas.”

Like Narnia, we have people in our world today who have different takes on Christmas. The first group is made up of the “Scrooges” who, like the White Witch, don’t like Christmas and in fact at times are downright antagonistic toward the celebration of Christ’s birth. An example is a group of atheists called the American Humanist Association who paid to place ads on buses in Washington, D.C. in 2008 that read, “Why believe in a god? Just be good for goodness’ sake.” Interestingly, this ad received over 250 complaints and only one compliment according to the Metro bus authority. I think that this is due to the fact that only a small percentage of people in America don’t believe in God.

The majority of people probably fall into a second group called the “Traditionalists,” who love the trappings, customs, music, food, and colors of Christmas. After all, what’s not to like about stories such as, “Twas the Night Before Christmas,” the sound of Bing Crosby singing, “White Christmas,” or drinking a refreshing glass of eggnog while sitting around a crackling fire and a sparkling Christmas tree? And don’t forget about the fun of exchanging presents and the after-Christmas sales! These traditions aren’t bad in and of themselves, but they can distract us from the main person and message of Christmas.

In a letter to an American friend, C.S. Lewis wrote, “My brother heard a woman on a ‘bus say, as the ‘bus passed a church with a Crib outside it, ‘Oh Lor’! They bring religion into everything. Look – they’re dragging it even into Christmas now!” Many would like to keep religion out of their celebration of Christmas.

This leaves the third group of people, the Nicholases, who have a great message for the other two groups. These are true followers of Jesus Christ who, like the real St. Nicholas or like Father Christmas in Narnia, understand the real meaning of Christmas and actively share it with others.

As C.S. Lewis put it in Mere Christianity, it is the story of how “The Son of God became a man to enable men to become the sons of God.”

This Christmas season, let’s commit to being like St. Nicholas who actively shared his love for Jesus through both his words and gift-giving. The Scrooges and Traditionalists are in need of a Savior. So, let’s actively and fearlessly share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and cry out together, “Merry Christmas! Long live the True King!”

In a civilization like ours, I feel that everyone has to come to terms with the claims of Jesus Christ upon his life, or else be guilty of inattention or of evading the question.

C.S. Lewis
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A Conference of the C.S. Lewis Institute

The C.S. Lewis Institute will present the Discipleship Coaching and Spiritual Mentoring Conference to be held in the Washington, D.C. area on March 3-4, 2017. This weekend event will bring together some of the best teachers in the U.S. to address the subject of mentoring with a view toward discipleship.

This mentor seminar is a valuable resource for those wanting to be more effective in helping others grow spiritually. You will become aware of helpful resources that you can use for discipling. Mentoring is “coming alongside an individual or group of individuals to learn a skill, develop an ability or deepen some experience of life.” (Tom Schwanda, associate professor of Christian Formation and Ministry, Wheaton College)

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Russell Moore
Author of Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel
— CT Book of the Year, 2015

Fairview Park Marriott, Falls Church, Virginia

In the legacy of C.S. Lewis, the Institute endeavors to develop disciples who can articulate, defend, and live faith in Christ through personal and public life.