



Ready

&

Willing





**CHRISTIAN FAMILY
FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY**

Ready
&
Willing

By

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Introduction

On the Sunday immediately after the resurrection of Jesus two men took about a seven mile walk to Emmaus and had quite an experience on the way. They were sad and distraught about what had happened to Jesus. As they were walking along the road Jesus came and joined them, but they didn't recognize him. Jesus asked why they were so sad, and they told him about recent events and of the report of the women who didn't find Jesus' body in the sepulcher. After mildly reproving them, he told them they should have expected as much. Then he began at Moses and shared with them the scriptures concerning himself.

When they arrived in Emmaus, they constrained the stranger to stay with them because it was so late. After Jesus agreed he sat down to break bread and as he blessed it, they realized who he was. He then vanished out of their sight. Then they exclaimed to each other, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" They were electrified by the Word he shared with them and immediately arose and returned to Jerusalem to tell the others what had happened.

That's the kind of heartburn we want to have. The kind where our heart burns within us with the sharing of the Word when needs get met, when desires are rekindled, and hope is reestablished. They started their day with negative heartbreak and ended it with positive heartburn. They started their day with a heart of despair and ended their day with a heart of hope. What a difference in attitude. There is no doubt that their attitude was affected by the time they spent with Jesus.

This *Study in Victorious Christian Living* investigates the foundation of an advantageous attitude that springs from a genuine and vital spiritual relationship with God. We will see five activi-

ties that the Word identifies as springing from a proper attitude and approach to life.

We will see the importance of:

1. Prayer and Praise
2. Reading the Scriptures
3. Speaking the Word of God to Others
4. Giving of our Abundance
5. Fellowshiping with like-minded believers.

We'll come to see these five activities as believers' vital signs. Just as our pulse rate, blood pressure, body temperature, and rate of respiration are usually measured to obtain a quick evaluation of the person's general physical condition, the five essentials that *prothumos* identifies for us will give us an evaluation of a believer's general spiritual renewed mind well-being.

The Greek word *prothumos* is the key to unlock God's heart on these activities. It is a compound word, made up of the two words *pro* and *thumos*. *Pro* means "before" and can refer to rank, place or time. In this instance, it refers to time.

Bullinger translates *thumos* as "an intense passion of the mind." It does not describe the heat of the fire, but rather the bursting forth of the flame. Another definition of *thumos* in Thayer's Greek Lexicon is "glow, ardor, the wine of passion, inflaming wine." Bullinger translates *prothumos* as "predisposed, willing, eager, and zealous." It shows ardent desire. Because it is used with *pro*, it could be translated as "passion before it subsides" or "intensity at its peak." In other words, psyched, wired, keyed, jazzed, stoked, hot-to-trot, or passionate!

This state of mind is not a physical feeling, although it may incite emotional responses. It's not simply knowledge of something, although knowledge of the truth certainly contributes to it. Perhaps you experienced it the first time you spoke in tongues... Or ministered healing to someone... Or had the eyes of your understanding opened as God's Word melted your heart like the men on the road to Emmaus. That's a *prothumos* state of mind!

Prothumos shows a predisposition, an inclination, to respond in certain manners. Just like a basketball is predisposed to roll and bounce by its design and production, we can predispose ourselves to respond as we choose by controlling our attitudes. What are we predisposed to do, now? How does God want us predisposed to act? If you think God may have some suggestions as to what He thinks we ought to be ready and willing to do, you would be right.

In the nine occurrences of the words in the *prothumos* word family we will find five direct actions that should become a part of our temperament as a believer. It may be that our first exposure to the *believer's vital signs* was in *Part III of Living In God's Power, Redemption Realized*. We will spend some time and look at each. Then, as we do each one *prothumosly*, we will be totally *prothumofied*.

Chapter 1: Prayer and Praise

The first two occurrences of *prothumos* are found in identical accounts in different gospels. Although they are each translated differently, combining both translations gets to the heart of the meaning of the word quickly.

Matthew 26:41:

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing [*prothumos*], but the flesh is weak.

Later, referring to the same incident in the garden Mark reads;

Mark 14:38:

Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready [*prothumos*], but the flesh is weak.

These two verses regarding the same incident give us the first two uses of the word we are working. Here we find our word *prothumos* translated both “ready” and “willing.” Curiously, much of the heart of *prothumos* is captured in our understanding of an attitude that is both ready and willing. God has done His part. He has made us able. We must provide the ready and willing aspects. Ready, willing and able is quite a combination.

The context of both of these verses gives us the first step in “*prothumozation*,” prayer and praise. Jesus Christ is in the garden of Gethsemane, undergoing the greatest mental anguish any man will ever endure. What keeps him going? It’s his true and vital spiritual relationship with God his Father. We can see the foundation of such a relationship in his exhortation to the dozing disciples.

“Watch ye and pray....” That’s our number one priority, maintaining the proper vertical relationship with our Father. Prayer and praise form the foundation. The spirit is *prothumos*. The real you is always *prothumos* to pray and praise.

Contrasting *Prothumos* with *Asthenēs*:

“The spirit is ready and willing, but the flesh is weak [*asthenēs*].” Established by two verses, in its first two uses, we see

prothumos specifically contrasted with the word *asthenēs*. Thus one way we can see more depth of meaning of *prothumos* is to look at *asthenēs*, an antonym. *Prothumos*, being ready and willing is the opposite of weakness. When we are weak we are unlikely to respond, let alone be ready and willing to do so. Controlling our freewill attitude so that we are ready and willing, summons great strength for living.

Thayer gives the following shades of meaning for *asthenēs* based upon its Biblical usages: “unable to achieve anything great; destitute of power among men; weak and inferior; sluggish in doing right; wanting in manliness and dignity; having no power to promote piety and salvation; wanting in decision about things lawful and unlawful.”

The real you is *prothumos* in prayer and praise. You are not weak. You’re just the opposite of weak. You are:

- (1) able to achieve greatness
- (2) powerful among men
- (3) strong and superior to the adversary
- (4) diligent in doing right
- (5) full of courage, honor, and dignity
- (6) able to promote holiness and salvation
- (7) decisive about the right things to do

That’s the picture you should have of yourself. Prayer and praise are the foundation for the other four activities. If our vertical relationship with God is alive and vital, we will have the strength to handle our horizontal relationships and the needs of life will be taken care of. When we develop an attitude of prayer and praise, we will see that God responds. He will talk back. This attitude of prayer and praise will establish our humility, our meekness, our thankfulness, and our ability to keep our heads above the negatives of this world. We have direct communication with God, and we should enjoy the communion it fosters.

Epaineō and epainos:

“*Epaineō*” and “*epainos*” are Greek words for “praise.” One translation of these words is “applause.” Our lives should be a walking applause, a standing ovation for what the Father has done for and in us. When others look at us, our lives should be an arrow, pointing straight to the Father. The attention we receive should be reflected to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. This all begins with prayer and praise to God.

A proper recognition of the goodness of God should be a springboard for our praise and thankfulness. We were created in Christ Jesus to be unto the praise of God’s glory.

Ephesians 1:3-6:

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...

What a great way to open this wonderful epistle. This unfolding of the truth of the great mystery of godliness begins with a declaration and acknowledgement of the blessedness of God. He is great and greatly to be praised. Three times in Psalms the heart of the psalmist cries out, “Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised.”¹ That same attitude is fixed at the very beginning of this magnificent epistle. Let’s continue reading.

Ephesians 1:3-6:

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise [*epainos*] of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

¹ Psalms 48:1; 96:4; and 145:3

We are to be unto the praise of the glory of his grace. Our lives should sound out the gracious glory of God. Verse 12 repeats the truth.

Ephesians 1:12:

That we should be to the praise [*epainos*] of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Philippians instructs us to think about things that are praise-worthy. Certainly God is in that category.

Philippians 4:8:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise [*epainos*], think on these things.

Our prayer life should be something we stay involved with and persevere in.

Colossians 4:2:

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

Not only are we to continue in prayer we are to see that we are careful to do it with thanksgiving.

Romans 12:12:

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

We are to be devoted or constant in prayer. We are to be steadfastly attentive to prayer. We are to give unremitting care to prayer... to persevere and not to faint when it comes to prayer. We should be courageous and in constant readiness to pray. Being instant in prayer is a real *prothumos* state of mind.

Philippians 4:6:

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and

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supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

We can live without anxiety when our concern is to be thankful in all things. Prayer and praise is a wonderful mindset to develop. The real “you” and the real “me” are ready and willing to engage in prayer and praise at any point in time.

Prayer and Praise in the Spirit:

In our day and time, in this wonderful administration of the grace of God, much of our prayer and praise should be in the spirit. Part of our infirmity is not knowing what we should pray for as we ought (Romans 8:26). Speaking in tongues is such a vital lever in our prayer life. Through it God has made a way for us to engage in perfect prayer and praise. It is the foundational manifestation, and we can operate it as much or as little as we choose. Learning how much God desires us to do it and how many benefits it provides the believer makes this activity even more exciting.

Did you know...?

1. Speaking in tongues is a legitimate, genuine language of men or angels. It is not gibberish. It's not incoherent. It is an intelligible language with perfect form and structure — it's just unknown to the speaker. No one knows the meaning of what he says in tongues as he says it. It can be interpreted but the interpretation comes after one finishes the tongue when the manifestation of interpretation of tongues is operated. (I Corinthians 13:1; 14:10)
2. Speaking in tongues is a pure language. It's not irreverent, improper, contemptuous, base, or blasphemous. It is our spirit functioning at the direction of God. We never need be concerned about what is being said because God is the One giving the utterance (Zephaniah 3:9, I Corinthians 12:3, Acts 2:4)
3. Speaking in tongues confirms the written Word. It's one of the signs listed in Mark 16:17.

4. Speaking in tongues edifies you; it builds you up. It makes you more able to handle the things that come up in life. That happens every time we decide to manifest the spirit in this way. (I Corinthians 14:4a; Jude 20)
5. Speaking in tongues is God bearing witness with our spirit that we are His children. God energizes the words as we operate the manifestation of speaking in tongues. We exercise our God-given ability and He is always faithful to give the utterance. He only does this for his children. What a comfort to know we are part of this great big wonderful family of God. (Romans 8:16; Acts 2:4)
6. Speaking in tongues is a witness that we are joint heirs with Christ. Everything that God gave to Christ we share in. Christ was the firstborn among many brethren, and we as brothers and sisters in Christ have the full measure of the inheritance, also. Romans 8:17a
7. Speaking in tongues strengthens us with might in our inner man. What an absolutely magnificent opportunity is at our disposal. How much time do people spend exercising physically to strengthen themselves, to build their physical endurance? Should we spend any less time or energy to strengthen ourselves with might spiritually by way of His spirit in our inner man? (Ephesians 3:16; II Corinthians 4:16)
8. Speaking in tongues is a sign to unbelievers. Speaking in tongues recognizes and indicates the significance of the work God has wrought in your life. Everyone who hears it can recognize it as a language. Our ability to do that indicates that God has done something special for us. Without God's help we can't speak languages we do not know. Now there are people with great linguistic ability who may know several languages. But they can't speak a language they do not know. That's what speaking in tongues is. It's using the spirit to communicate with God and for God. Honest people have to admit that God is working in us as we do it decently and in order. (I Corinthians 14:22a; Mark 16:17)

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9. Speaking in tongues proves the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Unless he arose from the dead and ascended into heaven he could not have given the gift on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:32,33)
10. Speaking in tongues is a guarantee of our new spiritual body in the future. It's going to happen according to God's timetable, but it's definitely going to happen. (Ephesians 1:13b,14)
11. Speaking in tongues produces the fruit of the spirit. Do you know what they are from Galatians 5? They are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. They indicate great quality of life. The quality of our life continues to get better and better as we renew our minds to operate this wonderful manifestation of the spirit. (Galatians 5:22,23)
12. Speaking in tongues declares Jesus is Lord. It's how we know we have made him lord which is the qualification in Romans 10:9 and 10. When we speak in tongues we know that we have done that; it declares that we have made that decision. We make Jesus Lord by obedience. Jesus said we should speak in tongues in Mark 16:17. (I Corinthians 12:3)
13. Speaking in tongues provides a foundation for the operation of the other eight manifestations. We prove God's faithfulness to energize the spirit as we speak in tongues. The other manifestations of the spirit are operated with the same simplicity of believing as speaking in tongues. If you can speak in tongues you can do all the rest. If you speak in tongues you can interpret them. You can prophesy. You can receive word of knowledge and word of wisdom. You can discern spirits. You can believe to the uttermost. You can perform miracles and impart healing. (I Corinthians 12:8-10)
14. Speaking in tongues provides a way to speak mysteries (divine secrets) to God. Speaking in tongues is interaction with God. We cannot do it without His assistance. It provides a wonderful way to open our heart to Him and express deep

- things on our hearts even when we don't understand everything about what's going on. (I Corinthians 14:2)
15. Speaking in tongues provides a way to speak the wonderful works of God. Wouldn't you like to speak of the great and magnificent works God' has done for His people? (Acts 2:11)
 16. Speaking in tongues magnifies God. One of the biggest challenges that a believer faces is becoming complacent in their relationship with God. Speaking in tongues magnifies God in our thinking. We get closer to Him and see Him more clearly. Speaking in tongues makes God more conspicuous. It allows us to esteem Him highly... to extol, laud, and celebrate our relationship with Him. (Acts 10:46a)
 17. Speaking in tongues provides a way to pray perfectly. There is no selfishness in speaking in tongues. Since we are using the words which God gives us, it can only be perfect. (Romans 8: 26)
 18. Speaking in tongues provides a way to give thanks well. When I want to thank God for His goodness and graciousness unto me, I simply hold that desire in my mind and speak in tongues. Then I know beyond any shadow of a doubt that I am thanking Him well because I'm using His perfect words to do it. (I Corinthians 14:17)
 19. Speaking in tongues provides a way to worship in spirit and in truth. This is what Jesus promised we would be able to do after the Day of Pentecost. (John 4:24; Philippians 3:3.)
 20. Speaking in tongues provides a way to be filled with joy. (Acts 13:52; I Thessalonians 1:6)
 21. Speaking in tongues provides a way to refresh or invigorate oneself. (Isaiah 28:11,12)
 22. Speaking in tongues gives rest to the soul. How refreshing it can be to take a break and speak in tongues. It can rev us up or calm us down. We decide because of what we purpose in our minds; then we let it rip. (Isaiah 28:11,12; I Corinthians 14:21)

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23. Speaking in tongues provides a way to quicken our mortal bodies. It not only strengthens our inner man, but it adds life to our physical bodies, too. (Romans 8:11)
24. Speaking in tongues provides a way to make intercession for the believers and the work of the ministry. We simply have to stay our mind on the person or situation to which we want to direct the power of God and speak in tongues. God allows us to direct the exceeding greatness of His power where we need it go by staying our minds and speaking in tongues. (Romans 8:26,27; Ephesians 6:18,19; Romans 1:9)
25. Speaking in tongues provides power for effectual witnessing. We can not only pray for doors of utterance, but the very operating of the power of God makes our witness more effectual. (Acts 1:8)
26. Speaking in tongues provides a way to open your heart intimately to the Father. (Romans 8:14,15; Galatians 4:6)
27. Speaking in tongues, when exercised with its companion manifestation of interpretation of speaking in tongues, brings forth a message of edification, exhortation and comfort to the believers. (I Corinthians 14:13,27)

Chapter 2: Reading the Word

We saw in the last chapter that prayer and praise was the foundation upon which we build. We find the second of our key activities or vital signs, in the next use of the words in the *prothumos* word family.

Acts 17:11,12a:

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind [*prothumia*], and searched the scriptures daily [not “weakly”], whether those things were so.

12 Therefore many of them believed....

They received God’s Word with all the intensity that comes from being ready and willing. That same attitude prevailed as they put their heads in the Book, daily! “Therefore....” Their readiness to receive and search the scriptures resulted in believing!

You cannot be *prothumos* unless you spend time with God in His Word. It’s God’s Word that directs us in both faith and practice. It sets the doctrine and directs our practice of it. We will see the heart of a father teaching his son in the scriptures we are going to read next. It contains the figure of speech *anabasis*, gradual ascent. We will see steps building up to a climax.

Proverbs 4:20-23:

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

22 [Why?] For [That’s another figure of speech *aetialogia*, cause shown or reason given] they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; [Why?] for out of it are the issues of life.

It starts by attending and paying attention. Then we put in a little more effort and incline our ear. We keep our Bibles open so

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they stay before our eyes. Our goal is to get them into our heart, and we do it by repetition and application.

Reading Is Important:

That's *prothumos* parchment perusal that leads to spiritual heartburn of a serious kind. We ought to get comfortable reading the Scripture. Enjoy reading it from various translations. Apply the keys to the Bible's interpretation, knowing that you never need doubt the integrity of God's Word.

II Corinthians 1:13:

For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end;

Reading is important. That's why the Word was written. It was written so it could be read, and read over and over again. If we are to acknowledge it unto the end, we will have to keep reading it over and over again. We just can't read it once and think we received it all. We have to keep reading it over and over again.

I Thessalonians 5:27:

I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

Reading is important. I Thessalonians 5:27 is a charge, a commandment to read the Word. We not only read it ourselves, but it's great to read it aloud to others, also. We all need to hear it over and over again. That will require reading it over and over again.

Ephesians 3:4:

Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

It was written so it could be read, and it is read so it could be understood. Reading is important. It leads to understanding. If we are going to understand the mystery of Christ, we must read it. There is no place else to read about the great mystery of godliness than in God's Word where it is written. It's a word of eternity for

every day and time; only God's Word lives and abides forever. It's important for us to keep our heads in the Book; it leads to understanding.

I Timothy 4:13:

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

Reading is important, and we should encourage it. We need to attend fellowships where the Word is read and enjoyed. When we read it we read it like Ezra did. We read it and give the sense so people understand it.

Nehemiah 8:8:

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

That's what we do in our fellowships; we read God's Word. We call it teaching at times. But we read it and give the sense and cause the people to understand it. Reading is important. We read what is written and give the correct sense. We want to understand it so we can get it into our heart.

Psalms 119:11:

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Reading is important. It helps us get the Word into our heart. If we never read it, it will never get into our hearts. The goal of reading is understanding, getting it into our hearts so it impacts the way we live. That will take repetition. Repetition is the key to memorization. Reading it over and over again is how it gets into our hearts, and once it's there it can keep us from sin, from missing the mark.

Habakkuk 2:2:

And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

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Reading is important. It was written so it could be read. Having it written makes God's will clear and precise. It's established; it's not going to change. That certainty allows us to run, to go for it when we read it. We have God's will, His communication to us in written form, and we can hold it in our hands. For that will, to get off the pages and into our lives, we must read it. Reading and re-reading is how it gets into our hearts. Then when it is in our hearts it will issue in our lives.²

Jeremiah 15:16:

Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Reading is important. It provides sustenance for our souls, and it is a cause of rejoicing.

George Mueller:

George Mueller was a great Christian man of faith and miracles. He lived between 1805 and 1898, and he developed a vast orphanage program in Victorian England. He gave sole credit to God and the power of prayer. With such a reputation in his prayer-life, it is interesting to note the vital significance that Mueller placed on the faithful reading of Scripture. Here are some highlights.³

Speaking about the importance of Bible reading to his own congregation at Bethesda Chapel in Bristol in May, 1871, he said:

“I judge that though prayer is of the utmost moment, yet still this is as deeply, or more deeply important than prayer itself: for when we pray to God, we speak to God; but when we read the Scriptures God speaks to us, and this is what we so much need.”

² Proverbs 4:23: Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

³ Roger Steer, *Spiritual Secrets of George Mueller*, pgs. 59-61

In the spring of 1841, Muller spent seven weeks with his family at Nailsworth in the Cotswold Hills. It was during this time, that he made a discovery about his daily quiet time with God which transformed his spiritual life. He described his new insight like this:

“Before this time my practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as an habitual thing, to give myself to prayer after having dressed myself in the morning. Now, I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God, and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprovéd, instructed.... I began therefore to meditate on the New Testament from the beginning, early in the morning. The first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord’s blessing upon His precious Word, was to begin to meditate on the Word of God, searching as it were into every verse to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word, not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon, but for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul.”

There is no way to develop a relationship with God without developing a relationship with His Word. God’s Word establishes God’s Will. Our heavenly Father decided He would communicate Himself to mankind through His Word. Therefore, if we want to learn of Him we must come to His Word.

Delight in the Scriptures:

The greater our desire for and delight in the scriptures, the more simple our lives becomes. Where else are we going to learn about God’s love? Where else are we going to learn how to operate the nine manifestations of the spirit? God’s Word contains all things that pertain to life and godliness.⁴ God’s Word tells us “what is available” regarding spiritual matters, and we renew our minds to claim it.

⁴ II Peter 1:3

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When our hearts stand in awe of His Word (Psalms 119:161), and we have respect unto it continually (Psalms 119:117), it will be more than just a vain curiosity. It will be a longing that presses for fulfillment.⁵ Spending time with God in His Word develops our passion to live for God. We want to know God's Word so we can do God's will.

If we want to be men and women after God's own heart, we have to be involved on a heart-level. Superficial pleasantries and niceties rarely make for a meaningful relationship, but when we live our lives with delight and passion for the things of God, even a mundane and routine life can be transformed by a heartfelt personal relationship with God, the Author of the Book.

It is during our time spent with God in His Word that we begin to learn how God speaks to our hearts. God's Word expressly declares God's will and lights our path so we can walk with Him. There is no substitute for being diligent to present ourselves approved unto God as workmen who need not to be ashamed as we rightly divide the Word of truth. When we know what the Word says, we know what God's wants us to do. When we know the Word we will be less likely to be surprised at His direction via the manifestations.

⁵ Delight is found in Psalms 119, The Acrostic Psalm of God's Word, nine times: Psalms 119:16,24,36,47,70,77,92,143,174

Chapter 3: Speaking the Word

The third vital sign is found in the next occurrence of *prothumos* in Romans 1. There is really no order to these activities. You do not have to do one before you do another. They all go together. We are ready and willing to do any of them at any time. Then as opportunities present themselves we do them. Paul took advantage of the many opportunities he had to speak God's Word.

Romans 1:15:

So, as much as in me is, I am ready [*prothumos*] to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

Paul was *prothumos* to preach the gospel because he understood the "good news" and knew what it had done for him and would do for "every one that believeth" like it says in verse 16.

But what does the third activity have to do with the second? Matthew 12:34 says, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If you put an "abundance" of the Word in your heart, you will inevitably bubble up all over people with it. And you won't get "burnt out" because you'll be giving from your abundance, not your need.

Reach out with the truth of God's Word and be a dynamic witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Share what you know from God's Word and what God has done for you. You have earned the right to tell your own story like no one else can.

Psalms 107:2:

Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

We are redeemed and we should say so. We have been redeemed from the hand of the enemy and our bold declaration of it keeps his hand off of our lives. We should talk about the greatness of God all the time.

Psalms 66:16:

Come and hear, all ye that fear [respect] God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

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I love to declare the great things God has done for me. God gave me a wonderful wife. I have 6 great kids. Each one of us has experienced miraculous healings. We have had our lives touched by God in so many ways. We're peaceful; we're prosperous; we're healthy. God has opened up so many doors for us. He has allowed us to touch the lives of so many people. He's done wonders for my soul.

Fellowlaborers with God:

When we speak God's Word, God knows and He upholds the truth of His Word wherever it is spoken.

Mark 16:15-20:

And he [Jesus] said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 [If] They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

We work with God as fellowlaborers. He confirms the Words we speak with signs, miracles and wonders. We are life-savers. When we speak people turn from darkness unto light and from the power of Satan unto God.

Acts 1:8:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

These people had been behind closed doors for fear of the Jews; they were intimidated.⁶ But, Jesus tells them they were going to be witnesses right there in Jerusalem before they moved out to the uttermost part of the earth. Like them, the reason we received the power from on high was to be witnesses. So let's get witnessing by operating that power.

Acts 4:20:

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

What have you seen and heard? Talk about it.

Acts 5:20:

Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

God can be as specific with us as He was with them. When we determine to tell our story, He can direct us to the people and the places where we should go. When we get there, what do we do?

Acts 26:18:

To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

What a message we have to give! The story we tell isn't a Shakespearean tragedy. It's not a fairy tale. It's a non-fiction account of God working in the lives of His people.

Romans 16:25:

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

God can establish us. The gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the mystery, is the most amazing and marvelous story

⁶ John 20:19

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ever written, and we have the privilege to make it known, to speak as Ambassadors for Christ.

II Corinthians 5:18-20:

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

What did Christ do while he was here on the earth? Well, we are supposed to walk in his steps. We minister in his stead. He is in us and we reconcile men and women back to God through the power of the risen Christ.

Ephesians 6:19,20:

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

We pray for each other and our outreach efforts. Paul asked for it. He asked for prayer so that he would speak boldly, as he ought to speak. We ought to speak in the same way.

Philippians 2:16:

Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

Those are two main reasons for holding forth the Word of Life: #1 So that we will rejoice in the day of Christ. And #2 so our lives have meaning and purpose. So we don't waste our time or labor in vain.

II Timothy 2:2:

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

We are faithful men who teach other faithful men. God wants us to have an impact on this world.

So, Tell your Story!

- 1) What was your life like before you made Christ your lord?
- 2) How did you come to know God and His Son, your lord Jesus Christ?
- 3) What has your life been like since you Jesus Christ your lord?

These are things many are hungering to know in the heart of their hearts. We should be led to Christ. We should lead others to Christ. We should also teach others how to lead others to Christ.

Let's be *prothumos* and preach provocatively.

Chapter 4: Giving

In II Corinthians 8 and 9 the noun *prothumia* occurs four times. It is translated “readiness” in 8:11, “willing mind” in 8:12, “ready mind” in 8:19, and “the forwardness of mind” in 9:2. These are all set in the context of sharing of our abundance in the material category.

Supporting the Furtherance of the Gospel:

There’s no way around it. If you want passion for God you must give financially and support His work in the furtherance of the gospel. It must be done by freewill according as one purposes in his heart.⁷

II Corinthians 8:7-10:

Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing*, *in* faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and *in* all diligence, and *in* your love to us, *see* that ye abound in this grace also. [Giving in the financial category is called “grace” in this section.]

8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness [*spoudē*] of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

10 And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward [willing] a year ago.

Paul is saying, “You said you wanted to do it before, so get with it.” *Git er done!* It is not enough to want to do what is right. It is not enough to intend to do what is right. We must follow through and actually do it. Once we purpose it, we have to perform it.

II Corinthians 8:11:

Now therefore perform the doing *of it*; that as *there was* a

⁷ II Corinthians 9:7

readiness [*prothumia*] to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have.

Bullinger says “to will” here in verse 11 is an idiom. It is used meaning “to wish to do anything speedily and spontaneously.” That’s not an unusual reaction when giving comes up. We all know intuitively that we must sow seed if we want increase. We respond almost immediately with, “Yes, I’m going to give.” We all know we want to do. We are even *prothumos*, passionate, to do so. However, over time that readiness and willingness can evaporate.

Often our willingness exceeds our ability. I’d like to give a thousand dollars, but I don’t have it so I can’t give it. Don’t wait until you have a thousand to give. Paul says perform the doing of it, the giving, right now, out of that which you do have. God never expects us to give what we do not have. We should just be diligent to give what we can give right now, speedily and spontaneously as we purpose in our hearts.

II Corinthians 8:12-19:

For if there be first a willing [*prothumia*] mind, *it is* accepted [well-received or welcomed] according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not.

13 For *I mean* not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:

14 But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want: that there may be equality:

15 As it is written, He that *had gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little had no lack. [That described how God supplied in the wilderness for His people.⁸]

16 But thanks *be* to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

⁸ Exodus 16:18

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17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;

19 And not *that* only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace [the love offering], which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration* of your ready mind [*prothumia*]:

The love offering that Paul and the others received and took to Jerusalem was a testimony to the ready mind of the Corinthians. They were ready and willing, and they performed what they promised.

II Corinthians 9:2,7:

For I know the forwardness of your mind [*prothumia*], for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Paul boasted of their passion to give. That didn't happen initially. It developed over time. The Macedonians supported Paul in Corinth initially, and now Paul is proud to report back to the Macedonians that the Corinthians have gotten on board and are giving themselves.

Work to Have, to Give:

Chapter 8, verse 5 tells you how you should *prothumosly* purpose in your heart, and that is to first give yourself to the Lord. Then *prothumosly* share of your financial abundance. It follows like a tail on a dog. We should have a dynamic heart to give of our abundance; be it our time, talents, or material prosperity. A great motive is to HAVE so that we can GIVE.

Ephesians 4:28:

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour,

working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

We all want and need to contribute to the overall good and welfare of the church. We work so we have to give.

Proverbs 30:8-9:

Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Solomon was sure a wise man. Paul also had some sound financial instruction for Timothy.

I Timothy 6:17-19:

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate [*koinonikos*, share fully, liberal, generous];

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life [Life that is life indeed.]

Even rich people can't trust in their riches. That's all temporary and transitory. We must trust in God, and that trust is demonstrated by doing good and giving to the work of the ministry. That's the only way to be secure and protected against what may come.

Luke 12:15,21:

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life [*zōē*] consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

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How important it is for us to be rich toward God!

Chapter 5: Fellowshiping

We are ready and willing to pray and to praise God, to spend time with Him in His Word, to speak that Word to others, and to share financially in the work of the ministry. Well, there's one more activity to cover and we'll find it in I Peter. The last one is fellowshiping with the saints, taking care of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

I Peter 5:2:

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind [*prothumos*].

I Peter 5:1-11 is music to the ears of a leader in God's ministry. And heck, if you want to walk with God, you're automatically a leader in one sense, for you lead people to Him, one at a time. Yes, you pastor people. Sometimes we call it *undershepherding*. Jesus is the chief shepherd, and we work under him.⁹

Opening Your Heart to Your Brothers and Sisters:

Does this take heart? Sure, and you have the heart that it takes, because the real you is *prothumos*. As you hide the Word in your heart and open your heart to people, you will be opening God's heart to them. Many will respond affirmatively.

Philippians 1:3-8:

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are

⁹ I Peter 5:4

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partakers of my grace.

8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

We have the hope of Christ's Return. Until that time, we should enjoy the fellowship of other saints. We should develop a keen awareness of the Christ in others. Since we are going to spend eternity with each other, we might as well learn to love and appreciate each other in the meantime.

Episunagōgē:

II Thessalonians 2:1 uses a Greek term to describe the return of Jesus Christ. A scripture in Hebrews 10:25 is the only other occurrence of that identical word in the Greek texts of the New Testament, and it refers to the regular fellowship of the believers before and until Christ's return! What a great comparison between the gathering together at Christ's return and the gathering together of the believers in the meantime!

Hebrews 10:25:

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together [“assembling together” is Greek, *episunagōgē*], as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching [the hope of Christ's return].

II Thessalonians 2:1:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together [“gathering together” is Greek, *episunagōgē*] unto him

The fellowship we have with one another should be the sweetest thing this side of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Proverbs 27:9 says, “Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so *doth* the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.” It is not just spending time together, but it's what we do during that time. It's how we contribute to one another's lives by sharing our hearts.

Every Christian should at least consider their home as a possible location for a church fellowship. Envision people coming to

the Lord in our homes. Picture deliverance within those walls that you know so well. We should keep our homes as examples of order and warmth; a healing haven ready to receive people with godly hospitality.

We are to be “body-builders,” building up the Body of Christ. When our groups get too large, we simply split, rise up other leaders, and grow across the world within home units. Our vision should be the outreach of God’s Word over our world. It all begins in the home unit!

I Timothy 3:15:

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

“House” in this verse refers to the household of God which meets together and takes care of each other. There is a proper way to do it, and the Word shows us how.

I Corinthians 16:19:

The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

These home fellowship units are recorded and established in God’s Word. It is an integral part of God’s plan for the growth of His church. The basic unit of outreach is the family, and the family lives in the home together. Then we invite other people in to join us, and it grows from there.

Philemon 1:2:

And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:

These home fellowships are proudly spoken of in God’s Word. God has great esteem for these wonderful servants who open their homes and teach the greatness of His Word in them. These home fellowships are oases in the desert of the world.

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Psalms 133:1:

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Life can be pleasant as we live it together, as brothers and sisters in the family of God.

Chapter 6: Summary

So when we develop a *prothumos* mind-set, we will be involved with those five activities:

1. Prayer and Praise
2. Reading the Scriptures
3. Speaking the Word of God to Others
4. Giving of our Abundance
5. Fellowshiping with like minded believers.

How are your vital signs? Those **ACT**ivities provide **prACTi**cal production. Doing them gets the job done. Once we know the truth we can do it, and we should get started right away. Remember, we should run when we read.¹⁰ We “get after it” right away.

We have talked about these activities as vital signs, they indicate our spiritual health. We can also think of them as gauges. We’re all familiar with gauges in our cars. (Except in some of our cars they have been replaced with idiot lights. That’s what my dad called them because he said, “If they ever come on you’re an idiot because you should have been checking the oil all along.”

Gauges are designed to help us anticipate and avoid breakdowns. In our cars, they show us how much fuel we have or if our engines are overheating. Although we might not stare at them when we’re driving, we keep our eyes on them and check them regularly, understanding the role they play. The same is true of our lives and our fellowships. We should use these five *prothumos* activities as gauges to monitor as we move ahead. What are we ready and willing to do?

We can continue to build more and more spiritual momentum. What else is there to do? Why coast? We will eventually come to a stop. As we plunge *prothumosly* into these activities your *prothumos* heart is more and more manifest.

Perhaps there is an area where the excitement has died and although we’re still doing it, we’re not really invested in it? Monitor-

¹⁰ Psalms 119:32; Habakkuk 2:2

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ing these activities can help us quickly expose areas needing attention whether personally or collectively. This allows us the opportunity to fix them before things get too unhealthy. Don't continue to ignore them. We have to give them our attention before they will get better.

We should approach each activity aggressively. Proverbs 15:15 says, "...he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast." Life can be a *prothumos* party. We can cook on the Word without fear of getting burnt or burned out.

It's simple. All we need to do is speak in tongues, study the Word, witness, give financially, and fellowship with God's household. That's all we need to do to live healthy, vital lives. That's how we will see the first century church in the twenty-first century. When we live like they lived and we show ourselves *prothumos*, ready and willing.

God showed us from his Word using the *prothumos* word family what things we should be ready to do. We should be ready and willing to pray and praise God. We should be ready and willing to read His Word. We should be ready and willing to speak His Word. We should be ready and willing to give financially. We should be ready and willing to spend time together in fellowship. God is the One Who has made us able; we must demonstrate our readiness and willingness to do as He requests. We can use these essentials to check ourselves and keep ourselves healthy and vital.

