

# The BEGGING PLACE



"For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord,  
"plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future  
and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray  
to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find  
Me when you search for Me with all your heart"  
(Jeremiah 29:11-13).

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*To my sweet husband Jeff, who encouraged me every step of  
the way and worked so diligently for the book's success.  
You will always be my forever friend.*

*To my wonderful children, Jennifer and Jeffrey, who have surrounded  
me with unconditional love and glorious laughter.*

*To my dear sisters who have prayed for this book—  
what would I do without you in my life?*

*To my mother, Lea Fowler:  
This is especially for you, Mom. You will always be my best friend,  
my soul mate, and my best Bible teacher.  
What a privilege and honor it is to be called your daughter!*



LEA FOWLER, 1942

# The BEGGING PLACE

A BOOK ABOUT PRAYER  
FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN

BECKY BLACKMON

Publishing Designs, Inc.  
Huntsville, Alabama

Publishing Designs, Inc.  
P.O. Box 3241  
Huntsville, Alabama 35810

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DEDICATION

To my Father in Heaven





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# MEET THE FOWLERS

## HER LAP

I was raised on my mother's lap. It was simply "my spot." I was the third child in a very busy family, and the only time Mom and I had to bond was in church. Since we were there at least three times a week for several hours, that lap was my claim to Mom. Church was "our time," and no one dared to infringe on my territory.

That lap was specially made, you know. Surely, all children feel this way. Mother's lap has just the right natural folds and cushions. It is always "just right" for young'uns. You know what I mean. God certainly knew what He was doing when He created it. Mom's lap was my comfort, my peace, and all mine.

I grew up surrounded by love. My brother, sister, and I were constantly hugged, kissed, and encouraged. However, discipline was plentiful—we had a red-haired mama with a short fuse. And we were red-headed kids up to no good. Life at the Fowler home was exciting, I am sure, to our many friends and visitors.

Mom's magnetic personality drew people to her. She loved people, loved being around people. She had a fantastic sense of humor that not only made her laugh (even at herself) but caused others to laugh as well. Like Lucille Ball, she was just naturally funny. In fact, we often called her "Lucy."

Were we a typical American family? I don't think so, as I look back upon those years. Why not? Because God was the hub of our family, and His will was to be obeyed. The Bible was, and still is, precious to us. I have countless memories of Bible discussions and personal Bible studies at our kitchen table. My parents were true missionaries. They looked for people who needed the gospel; they used every possible opportunity to talk about the Lord; they went into mission fields to convert the lost. One of my later memories of my parents is hearing them read and discuss their daily Bible chapters.

As a teenager, I once expressed to my mother how wonderful it would be to live in Europe and travel constantly from country to country. She replied, "If you do that, how will you grow spiritually? How will you be able to help the church? You will not have a home congregation that needs you and your money to grow. You will not be able to take advantage of the classes and study times that are offered because you are too busy traveling." Did she know how to burst a bubble! But she was right.

## MOM

Lea Emma Reid was born in Delaware, Oklahoma, the eldest of three children. Mom's mother died in her early thirties, leaving the three children in the care of her husband. They were a humorous family, full of laughter and practical jokes, and constant singing. Grandfather played just about any instrument and had a repertoire of vaudeville songs. At age fourteen, he ran away from home and joined a circus band. Like George Burns, he would do a little tap dance and say, "Hey, kids, have I ever sung the song about a million-dollar baby?" At family reunions we children listened in awe to my grandfather's tales of his three children's shenanigans.

My mother was never spanked. Her father could not bring himself to physically punish any of his children. He would only say, "Did you learn your lesson?" (This was always puzzling to me since Mom would beat the fire out of her own children. When I reminded her that she was never spanked, she replied, "Well, I always knew I needed it!" That did not help much.)

## DAD

Russell William Fowler was born in Eakley, Oklahoma, into a hard-working farm family of nine children. The boys rose early and went to the field while the girls cooked, cleaned, and cared for the men when they came home. My grandmother, a little German woman, was a wonderful cook. She cooked homemade bread daily that deliciously melted in the mouth. She loved *National Geographic* magazines—had wallpapered an entire room in her home with its maps. She had many grandchildren, and she called all the granddaughters "Sister" or "Sissy." The family was no stranger to tragedy. Daddy's father died too early from a heart attack. My dad, only fourteen at the time, quietly shouldered the responsibility of maintaining the farm. On the heels of the tragedy of his Father's death came the Great Depression.

## RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS

Both my parents were raised in strong Baptist homes. My dad told many stories of riding in a wagon or a Model T to the church in town. Mom was a city girl in Tulsa and worshiped at the big Baptist church in the middle of town where the preacher wore a tuxedo every Sunday. Mom was born to do mission work. She reminisced about walking down the aisle with tears streaming down her face during an altar call for missionary hopefuls.

When my mother was nearing twenty, she visited a cousin in Borger, Texas. What a change of scenery! She left grass and lush trees and came to no grass and no trees. Borger was an oil boom town, and Mom often said it was a wild place in the '40s. Her cousin Della, a member of the church of Christ, invited Mom to go to church with her. Mom was delighted, secretly hoping there would be speaking in tongues and all kinds of gyrations.

Contrary to what she supposed, Mom found the church of Christ to be open, simple, honest, and interesting. There was no “show.” The Bible was their only guide. Mom began the habit of underlining passages that conflicted with her belief, particularly passages in the New Testament. After listening and studying, she knew she had to make a change in her life. She did not know how her father would react, but she knew she had to become a member of the church that traced its roots back to the day of Pentecost. Mom paid quite a price for becoming a Christian; her father never forgave her.

### THE SPARKS FLY!

Soon after she became a Christian, my mother met my father. She was engaged to Noel, but on a double date Mom met his roommate, Russell. Their eyes met, and Mom said, “Hello, Russell.” Dad said he knew immediately he was in love with her by the way she said his name. Mom said she knew her engagement to Noel was history. Here, in a booming and wild place in west Texas, God saw fit to bring two souls—two absolutely opposite people—together.

Mom and Dad dated six weeks and then married. Mom started studying the Bible with Dad, and soon he obeyed the same gospel the Ethiopian eunuch obeyed in Acts 8. We children teased them about getting married so quickly. “What was the rush?” we asked. Mom always said something like, “We were away from home, but I don’t advise getting married so quickly.”

### THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE

Mom and Dad had a great love for each other, full of passion. But they were also full of differences like the tortoise and the hare. Dad was the tortoise, slow moving and slow talking, methodically going about his day. Mom was the rabbit, bouncing here, bouncing there, and making life fun and exciting. It is hard for a turtle and a jackrabbit to understand each other, but after sixty-two years, their love was still mighty strong and passionate. They may not have been soul mates when they began, but they definitely were when their lives together came to an end.

My parents wanted lots of children, but God knew that three were all they could handle. My brother Tom was born in Phillips, Texas; Judy, in Tulsa during World War II; and I, in Andrews, Texas, after the war. Our home was Grand Central Station. Guests, visitors, and friends were always there. Mom was a wonderful hostess, extremely hospitable. Even when we were small children, she and Dad devoted Sunday nights to “fellowship” meetings for the teenagers of the church. We were promptly put to bed and went to sleep to the sound of laughter and the smell of the popcorn.

Dad, an accomplished welder, provided very well for us. Dad worked for Halliburton in Marlow, Oklahoma. He became a young elder in the church at Marlow. Our spiritual and social lives centered around the church: worship, vacation Bible schools, dinners on the grounds, lake parties, and the like. Life was great but things were about to change.

## THE MISSION BUG BITES

A new preacher and his wife moved to our congregation. Charles and Sue Chandler quickly became close family friends. They had done mission work in New England and planned on going back as soon as possible. They loved New England; they even cried when they saw a picture of the Northeast countryside. We thought that was funny, but later we changed our minds. Naturally, the Chandlers' experiences in evangelism drew our families closer until my parents finally decided to visit the Northeast.

I shall never forget the summer of '57. We packed our huge and long Pontiac station wagon and headed to New England for a two-week vacation. (That trip alone is worthy of a book.) I will never forget the beauty of New England. I had never seen the ocean and I had never seen mountains as beautiful as the White Mountains of New Hampshire. We traveled through town after town that did not have a church of Christ. My parents looked at each other in disbelief. There were only six congregations of the Lord's body in the New England states—Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, and Rhode Island. While on this vacation, my parents, passionate for the Lord's work, decided to move to the Northeast.

Mom, the rabbit, was ready to move immediately. Dad, the turtle, insisted on waiting until he could collect his retirement from Halliburton. During a family discussion, my brother Tom asked, "Dad, if we wait until you retire, what will happen to all those people who would have become Christians if we had moved sooner?" Tom's question turned the tide. Nothing more had to be said.

We went back to Marlow, sold everything we possibly could, and headed to New England in the same summer. We packed that oversized station wagon and pulled a U-Haul trailer filled with clothes, furniture, piano, freezer, dishes—all our treasures. Dad said we looked like a big turtle. Our adventure had begun and we would never be the same again.

## MY BROTHER TOM REMEMBERS

Dad had experienced an "epiphany" while we were at Springfield, Vermont, attending a singing. As we sang "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord," Dad just sat there beside Mom and wept silently. He knew that any expenses for his faith paled in comparison to Christ's investment in him.

He had already brought up the financial facts of the thing, and made a pretty good case for delaying our going until he had a nest egg called "retirement." However, we all recognized that the need was immediate, and waiting for retirement would mean that we kids would be gone, which might have been a desirable thing, from his perspective.

I asked, "How many might be saved in the years in between?" I was pretty doctrinaire, and things were more black and white for me. Obviously, I had no idea of the hardships that lay ahead. I did not have the burden of bills upon me. Dad did. He had no answer to my question. He wanted to answer, but he could not.

We made the move. I think we all knew that Dad had a huge load to carry in a land where we had no house and no job. His best friend came to bid him goodbye, and I could not bear to see Dad hug this friend. I looked down at the driveway, embarrassed. That is when I saw their tears wetting the concrete driveway beside the shadows of their embrace. That moment is still fresh in my mind. It made me understand a tiny bit the enormities of Dad's sacrifice and decision.

The Lord had opened a door, and a family that looked like a turtle drove through. We, too, soon learned to cry when we were away from New England and saw a picture of it. Mom often said, "When we moved to New England, we burned our bridges behind us. We got our feet stuck in the door and never looked back."

Once again, she was so right. We took to heart Jesus' words: "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). We ate, breathed, slept, and lived evangelism. We children were taught always to be on our toes, looking for opportunities to help someone find his or her way home to God. We learned the value of the church for which Jesus died, and we saw the deep importance of the Word of God. In New England, we witnessed many baptisms and observed first-hand how lives can be changed for the Lord.

I am so thankful to God and to my sweet parents for choosing to move us to the Northeast. Growing up on the mission field was a great honor and a great blessing. We found this to be true: We grew up quickly. And, for the most part, we were spiritually deeper and more committed than other Christians our age. However, it was often difficult to find where we belonged.

I treasure the Bible my mother has passed on to me. She has written many wonderful notes all through it. Beside the passage in Luke 9:62 that we just read, she has penned, *You can't go forward looking back.*

And we never did.



My Mother was in a coma—unresponsive.  
I called our good friend: "Fran, Mom is in a coma.  
Please pray that God takes her now. She has suffered so  
long. Beg for her to fly away." Fran replied with all the  
sympathy a Christian can muster:  
"I will go to the Begging Place."

## THE BEGGING PLACE

*Do you know the Begging Place? If you are a Christian, you should know it well. You have been there. Life has many lessons to teach us, but so does the Father. If you are a child of the King, an heir of salvation, God has many plans for you on earth. He knows what is ahead of you, and what decisions you will make. Above all, He knows the desires of your heart.*

*The Begging Place tells of my personal journey with God as His daughter. My story includes the amazing evidence of God's providence in my life, amidst much joy and much sadness. It reveals the special path I had to travel through the last days of my mother's life. Many memories still are painful. But God is the master of my life and the deliverer of my soul. This journey is not unusual because of death, for we all will lose our parents in this life, if Jesus does not come before then. The remarkable lesson is this: sadness and trials are not prohibited for the Christian; they produce a better Christian. And isn't that what God really wants us to be?*

*To please God, we must change and grow and suffer and mature. We learn our most valuable lessons when we are on our knees, when we turn to Him and let Him lead. When we truly become His sheep and trust Him as our Shepherd, we are the most blessed people in the world. Sheep have learned the power of prayer. Sheep have been to the Begging Place. Are you a sheep?*





## CHAPTER 1

# PRAYER CHANGES THINGS

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit (James 5:17-18).

As I was packing up my parents' home after their deaths, I stood gazing at Mom's kitchen window. As she did the dishes, she loved to look at the small objects that lined the windowsill. One was a little sign—a few words in a frame that held meaning for her: “Prayer changes things.” Oh, how it does.

Perhaps you are wondering about prayer. What does prayer do? Maybe you are at the end of your rope. Is your life a mess? Do you see no hope for the future? Please take a moment and breathe deeply. Together, you and I will search the Scriptures for help. Praying is to the Christian as breathing is to the human. We cannot survive without talking to God. Prayer is the stuff from which strong Christians are made.

When did prayer start? Why did God give us the Begging Place? How many people today really pray? These are just a few questions all humans ask at one time or another.

I found these figures to be interesting. According to a study by the Barna Research Group, from 1991 to 2001, 82 percent of adults and 89 percent of teenagers pray in a normal week. Eighty-eight percent of the women and 75 percent of the men pray in a normal week (Mack Lyon, *In Search of the Lord's Way*, May 2005, 36).

God created man and woman, and He knew from the very beginning that we would need Him. He knows it is human nature to worry and fret because He knows our minds, and He knows our lives. From the very beginning, God has wanted men and women to seek Him. Prayer is our opportunity to meet God and lay our burdens

upon Him. Prayer opens the door to building a relationship with the Master, to surrendering our burdens to His care, and to receiving the peace of mind only the Father can bestow. And let us not forget that through prayer we can praise our Father and thank Him for His many blessings. Mack Lyon put it this way:

About the first thing that needs to be said about prayer is that it is an antidote, a corrective, or a cure for worry. It is a sincere form of the recognition of God and His very being, who is, who He is, His nature, and His personal presence in our day-to-day world. It's also an invitation to Him who is all-knowing, infinitely wise, and almighty to take charge of the things that trouble us or provoke us to worry (Mack Lyon, *In Search of the Lord's Way*, May 2005, 45).

### BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF TIME

God has always desired a relationship with mankind, and mankind has always desired a relationship with God. God enjoyed walking and talking with Adam and Eve. The Creator of the universe customarily met the created in the cool of the day. They had the honor and privilege of communicating directly with God.

After Adam and Eve sinned, God came looking for them: "And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden" (Genesis 3:8).

Because of their sin, Adam and Eve were hiding, fearful for the very first time in their lives. Their relationship with God had changed.

Prayer is our  
opportunity to meet  
God and lay our  
burdens upon Him.

Sin always changes any relationship with God. Why? Because it separates us from Him. Sin creates a huge, gaping barrier. Only repentance and getting our lives right with God can make that barrier disappear. It was that way for the first family, and it is the same for you and me. In our home, this was always called "keeping the slate clean." As kids, my brother and sister and I had not only

to keep the slate clean with our parents, but also with our Father in heaven. Life just did not go well for us until we had made all things right.

What is amazing is that our Father in heaven, the most awesome master of the universe, is even interested in having a relationship with mankind! But He is. In his work on God's nature, Frank Chesser wrote:

Man's very existence and nature offer further insight into the nature of God. God is a social being. The reality of man is proof thereof. God is love (1 John 4:8). Love demands an object. God created man as the object of His love. God loves man, and God greatly desires for man to love Him. Man's very being testifies to the social and loving nature of God (Frank Chesser, *Portrait of God* [Publishing Designs, Inc.: Huntsville, AL, 2004], 15).

Even after Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden, God continued to talk to them and to the patriarchs, judges, and prophets who came after them. Read your Old Testament and find the many times that God personally talked to Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Samuel, and Jeremiah. God did not hide from His people. He could always be reached.

## GOD OF THE HEBREWS

How did Moses know where to go when he led God's people out of Egypt? God guided him by providing a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. When the cloud stopped moving, Moses stopped. And when it was dark, Moses and the people could easily see the pillar of fire.

And the Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people (Exodus 13:21–22).

When God was instructing Moses about the many laws by which His people were to live, He continually reassured Moses that He was with His people and among them. God wanted them to feel secure. Here are two examples:

- ✠ (Concerning leprosy) "You shall send away both male and female; you shall send them outside the camp so that they will not defile their camp where I dwell in their midst" (Numbers 5:3).

✠ “And you shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel” (Numbers 35:34).

God has always loved His people, even when they were unfaithful and disobedient. (That is amazing!) We know He provided manna and quail and water to the children of Israel, even when they wandered in the wilderness for forty years because of their unbelief. He still loved His people. Consider the following verses from Nehemiah 9 and notice God’s unfailing love and deliverance:

O may Thy glorious name be blessed and exalted above all blessing and praise! Thou alone art the Lord. Thou hast made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. Thou dost give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before Thee . . . Thou didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and didst hear their cry by the Red Sea. Then Thou didst perform signs and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his servants and all the people of his land; . . . and thou didst make a name for Thyself as it is this day. And Thou didst divide the sea before them, so they passed through the midst of the sea on dry ground; and their pursuers Thou didst hurl into

“Thou art a God of forgiveness . . . slow to anger, and abounding in loving-kindness . . . Thou didst not forsake them.

the depths, like a stone into raging waters. And with a pillar of cloud Thou didst lead them by day, and with a pillar of fire by night to light for them the way in which they were to go. Then thou didst come down on Mount Sinai, and didst speak with them from heaven; Thou didst give to them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments. So Thou didst make known to them Thy holy sabbath, and didst

lay down for them commandments, statutes, and law, through Thy servant Moses. Thou didst provide bread from heaven for them for their hunger, Thou didst bring forth water from a rock for them for their thirst, and Thou didst tell them to enter in order to possess the land which Thou didst swear to give them. But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly; they became stubborn and would not listen to Thy commandments. And they refused to listen, and did not remember Thy wondrous deeds which Thou hadst performed among them; so they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But Thou art a God of forgiveness, gracious

and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness; and Thou didst not forsake them. Even when they made for themselves a calf of molten metal and said, "This is your god who brought you up from Egypt," and committed great blasphemies, Thou, in Thy great compassion, didst not forsake them in the wilderness; the pillar of cloud did not leave them by day, to guide them on their way, nor the pillar of fire by night, to light for them the way in which they were to go. And Thou didst give Thy good Spirit to instruct them, Thy manna Thou didst not withhold from their mouth, and Thou didst give them water for their thirst. Indeed, forty years Thou didst provide for them in the wilderness and they were not in want, their clothes did not wear out, nor did their feet swell . . . However, Thou didst bear with them for many years, and admonished them by Thy Spirit through Thy prophets, yet they would not give ear. Therefore Thou didst give them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. Nevertheless, in Thy great compassion Thou didst not make an end of them or forsake them, for Thou art a gracious and compassionate God (Nehemiah 9:5–31).

God spoke directly to the fathers and prophets of the Patriarchal Age and the Mosaic Age. Throughout the Old Testament we see over and over again how much God loved Israel, His chosen nation. However, her continual spiritual adultery and idolatrous worship caused her eventual downfall and captivity.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world (Hebrews 1:1–2).

Are we living in the Patriarchal or Mosaic Age now? No. God promised in Genesis 3:15 that the seed of woman would bruise Satan's head. In other words, the Messiah would come to earth and save mankind. This was God's scheme of redemption. Jesus changed everything when He came to earth, was crucified, buried, and rose on the third day. On the day of Pentecost, the Christian Age was ushered in, and the church of Christ was established (Acts 2:47; Romans 16:16).

Even during the first days of the church, God still wanted the Jews to be a part of that kingdom for which Jesus died. It was the Jews who heard the first gospel sermon preached on Pentecost by the apostle Peter. Over and over we read in the Bible how Paul would enter a city and immediately go to the local synagogue where he con-

vinced Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. Here is his message to the Romans: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

Paul explained to the Greeks gathered on Mars’ Hill:

He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us (Acts 17:27).

God made all the nations of the world by means of one man, Adam. Is not Adam called the father of mankind today? This Scripture says God had already determined what nations would appear,

“They should seek  
God . . . grope for  
Him and find Him,  
though He is not far  
from each one of us.

where they would live, and how long they would exist. God has also determined that nations—humans—should seek God. Note the conditional verb *should*. The translation is “should,” not “shall”! Nations and people should seek God, but we know realistically that not all seek Him.

Now let’s think about that last phrase of verse 27: “He is not far from each one of us.” Who is not far from us? God. The Father, the Creator, is always near. He has not abandoned His creation; He promised that He will always be close to us.

One of the most wonderful “comfort” passages in the whole Bible is: “Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5).

## GETTING TO KNOW THE FATHER

Does it surprise you that the Father wants a relationship with you? It most certainly surprises me! However, I am absolutely positive that I want a very close and personal relationship with Him. I believe that most Christians do. God the Son stands at the door of our hearts and knocks, desiring a home with us. He will never force His way in. The choice is ours. We either let Him in or we leave Him out in the cold:

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne (Revelation 3:20–21).

When I was a child, I loved to look at the beautiful pictures in Bibles: The Good Shepherd with a lamb in His arms, Jesus on the cross, Pharaoh's daughter finding baby Moses in the bulrushes, Moses on Mt. Sinai, and Jesus praying in Gethsemane, just to name a few. But the picture of Jesus standing and knocking at a door that only opened from the inside was the most intriguing to me.

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light (Matthew 11:28–30).

Jesus' call two thousand years ago still has an impact on hearts searching for peace and rest. In fact, I believe His words are even more powerful and meaningful to us now living in this stressful, demanding, fast-paced twenty-first century! Christ's pleas for mankind to surrender to Him are still as pertinent and touching today as when He walked upon earth.

I am a Christian, and my desire is to please God every way I possibly can. I have made my decision—I chose Him a long time ago. He is my Father; I am His daughter, and I want to know Him better. How do I achieve this? Well, there are two ways to know the Father better and to walk more closely with Him: pray and study His Word. This is where our relationship with Him begins.

### WHAT IS THE BEGGING PLACE?

The Begging Place is a place of prayer. However, prayers offered at the Begging Place are not typical supplications requesting quick, simple answers. It is one thing to pray, but it is an entirely different thing to beg, plead, implore. At the Begging Place hearts are poured out to God, often with many tears. It is a place of the deepest entreaty we can possibly offer up to Him. At the Begging Place our prayers are pleas of the deepest nature, as our lives are upset with conflict, problems, sin, and Satan's attacks. We have a reason to be there.

Frequently, we go to the Begging Place in behalf of someone we love. Parents will find themselves at God's door, begging for their children's lives or answers to their children's problems. Brothers and sisters in a church will pour out their hearts to God in behalf of another brother or sister with a serious illness or a grievous crisis. Many times we beg God to touch the hearts of unfaithful Christians. And we often go to the Begging Place to ask for forgiveness of sin. How many Christians have gone to the

*"He only is my rock  
and my salvation,  
my stronghold; I  
shall not be shaken.*

Begging Place because of broken hearts, broken dreams, and broken marriages?

Listen to this sweet song of David:

My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken. On God my salvation and my glory rest; the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us (Psalm 62:5-8).

David had an unusual relationship with God. He certainly knew how to pour out his heart before Him. Think of David, alone many a night on a hilltop, guarding his father's sheep. Think of David, the anointed, whom Saul hated and tried to kill. Think of David, the shepherd king, begging God for guidance as he ruled Israel. And think of David, as the father of problem children and the husband of many wives. Those factors in themselves demanded lots of prayers, wouldn't you say?

## PRAYERS OF FAITH

Paul was inspired to make a request of the church at Thessalonica: "Brethren, pray for us" (1 Thessalonians 5:25). Read all of chapter 5, and you will sense the urgency of Paul's request. Specifically he said, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We can gather from these two passages that Paul was most certainly coveting the prayers of the brethren in troubled times of the church and teaching the necessity of prayer in a Christian's life.

Listen to James, the brother of Jesus:

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit (James 5:13–18).

What is the meaning of “the prayer offered in faith”? How does one do that? By praying, knowing that God can fix the problem. We pray with faith, knowing that God is hearing our prayer and answering it also. So we are living the Scripture: “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Our preacher once told a story about Parker, his young grandson. Parker’s grandmother was sick, and Parker told his grandfather, “Grandmother is going to get better.” His grandfather asked, “How do you know this, Parker?” The reply was quick and sure: “Because I prayed for her.” Now folks, that prayer was offered in faith!

## ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE SCRIPTURES

Let’s examine James’ mention of Elijah. The Scriptures say that Elijah had a nature like ours—which means he was just like us. Elijah also prayed earnestly. What does that mean? Sincerely. Devoutly. Soberly. Could it be that Elijah went to the Begging Place, too? While we do not know the details, we do know this: God heard and granted Elijah’s request! Was Elijah’s prayer a simple request? I do not believe so because requesting no rain has a huge effect on the earth, and the Scripture says it did not rain for three and a half years.

The Bible tells us of quite a few people who went to the Begging Place with a desperate request of the Lord. We are going to look at six exemplary accounts—Hannah, Hezekiah, Esther, David, Jesus, and Cornelius. These events from the Book are given to demonstrate that

God is ever present in our lives, working things out for our good. Two of my favorite Scriptures are:

- ✠ “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope” (Romans 15:4).
- ✠ “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Our Father has not left us in the dark. He has given us a wealth of information to help us persevere and be encouraged. But most of all, these Scriptures will give us hope. What a wonderful word—*hope*. What did Paul mean by “Scriptures”? The Old Testament. The early Christians did not have a completed New Testament. Now we have God’s entire revelation—the Old Testament and the New Testament—to give us even more hope.

### THE BAD TIMES

What defines us as children of God is not how we handle the good times, but how we handle the bad times. Anyone can adjust to a life full of good days and money in the bank. That’s a day in the park!

It is when we are  
tested or tempted  
that we show our true  
colors—our real selves.

It is when we are tested or tempted that we show our true colors—our real selves. Where do we turn when we are upset, when our lives are full of troubles, and when Satan hurls catastrophes at us? Do we immediately seek our Father in prayer and run to the Bible for help, solace, and teaching? In troubled times we learn to bow before our awesome Father

and beg for deliverance. We turn to our source of strength—God.

I have a dear sister in Georgia named Belle. Yes, she is a true Southern belle. She is also a mighty servant of the Lord—a doer. She is one of those types of gals who just “appear” when you need someone the most. She is very intuitive and sensitive and loving. She is unafraid to show her emotions or to say what she truly thinks—always in love, of course.

Belle has just been diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor, and my heart is heavy for her and for me. I talked to her today and once again, her positive outlook on life is reigning supreme. She told me, "I am ready for whatever the Lord has planned for me. He has another life ready for me, and His will is best."

When I asked her about her prayer life, she replied, "I have learned how to pray. I thought I knew how, but I had never been sick before. Now I know how to pray."

Belle has been to the Begging Place. And those of us who know her and love her have been to the Begging Place on her behalf.

### IT'S ALL ABOUT HIM

Whatever happens to us, no matter how bad it is, God will work it out for our good. The world often misquotes that great Romans passage: "Everything will work together for good." That is not what the Bible says. God issues two conditions. God will cause all things to work out for those who love Him and those who are called according to His purpose—God's purpose, not man's. In order for God to bless us and work out our problems, we must love Him and do His will. It is all about Him and not us, my friend! God is the only one who can take something absolutely horrible and turn it into something positive and beneficial for His children. He is near; all we must do is draw near.



DRAW NIGH UNTO GOD

In the quietness 'mid the stillness  
We commune as friend with friend.  
He is near us, He will hear us  
As long as time extends.

When the busy rush of Life around us  
Captures all our needs and cares.  
We speak those words within our hearts,  
Because we know He is there.

When the early sun awakens  
Over the distant hill,  
The sun breaks forth with many colors  
Everything is so quiet and so still.

In these peaceful moments of our Lives  
We pause and talk to Him in prayer.  
We know that God is listening  
Because He is always there.

—Mary Margerum

When we meet God at the Begging Place, we pray in faith, knowing He hears and answers our cries. We are never alone there. We bare our soul to our Father, and we are unashamed to beg at His feet. There is hope at the Begging Place because “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). My dad used to say, “With God the impossible is possible!”

There is one very important fact to consider here: the act of praying is as serious as it can possibly be. When we pray, we approach the throne of God; we are in His presence. And like Moses, we are on holy ground. “Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

1. Why do we pray?
2. Name five ways God cared for the Israelites in the wilderness.
3. Why don't we live under the Old Law today?
4. What does it mean to pour out one's soul to God?

SONG FOR TODAY

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

What a Friend we have in Jesus,  
 All our sins and griefs to bear!  
 What a privilege to carry  
 Ev'rything to God in prayer!  
 O what peace we often forfeit,  
 O what needless pain we bear,  
 All because we do not carry  
 Ev'rything to God in prayer.



Have we trials and temptations?  
 Is there trouble anywhere?  
 We should never be discouraged;  
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
 Can we find a friend so faithful,  
 Who will all our sorrows share?  
 Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness;  
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,  
 Cumbered with a load of care?  
 Precious Savior, still our refuge—  
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
 Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
 Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
 In His arms He'll take and shield thee;  
 Thou wilt find a solace there.

PRAYER FOR TODAY

*Dear Father, we praise Your Holy Name and give You all the glory. You spoke this world into existence and created us so tenderly. We are Your children and the sheep of Your pasture.*

*We thank You for Your magnificent love in sending Your Son Jesus to this earth to die for our sins. And though there was no room in the inn for Him, please help me always to have room for Him in my heart. Oh, never let me keep Him standing out in the cold, dear Father, but may I continually set His cross and His empty tomb before my eyes as constant reminders of Your incredible love.*

*Help me always to be sensitive to others and their needs. And help me to tell all that I meet about Jesus and His love for them. Thank You for this day, and help me to live for You tomorrow. Please forgive me of my sins, and help me to be more aware of them. In Jesus' name. Amen.*



# BECKY'S MEMORIES

## EARLY BEGGING PLACES

When I was a young girl, Mom and Dad went on one of their occasional hunting trips to Colorado. We three children were left with Mom and Dad's best friends, the Montgomerys. Nita and George lived in Marlow, Oklahoma, where we lived and worshiped together. Their three children, Leroy, Jerry, and Linda, were close to our ages; their home was our home. Our mothers were "Lucy and Ethel." There was always an abundance of laughter anywhere they were.

All of a sudden, I had a horrible attack of tonsillitis—a high fever and a painful sore throat. Nita was a wonderful nurse. She swabbed my throat and took measures to lower my temperature. That night, as I slept on a hide-a-bed in my best friend Linda's bedroom, I awoke with the awareness of someone's kneeling beside my bed. It was Nita, her head bowed and her hands folded. I could not hear what she was saying, but I knew she was in a deep prayer to God. I lay there, watching her form as she prayed in the dark. She did not know I was awake and observing her. She was obviously deeply concerned about my health. After about ten minutes, she rose from her knees and left the room.

How could I ever forget that pivotal moment! It was then that I realized Nita loved me. She cared enough to pray for me. We never spoke about it. But the impression Nita made on my life that night was very significant. It was hard for me to imagine someone other than my parents praying for me. "Why would anyone do that?" I wondered. And then I realized she loved me as much as my own mother. She was concerned about me, and went to the Father on my behalf.

I was better the next day and very grateful for Nita's vigilant care and doctoring skills. The lesson I learned that night will forever be etched in my mind. When people love each other, they pray for each other. And when a child is sick, mothers and substitute mothers go to the Begging Place.

When I grew up and became a mother of two sweet children, this precious memory came flooding over me as I knelt by their beds. It became a habit of mine



to kneel by my children's beds and pray for them in sickness and in health. In troubled times, too.

When my children left for college, the empty nest was difficult for me. I went into their rooms, knelt beside their beds, and prayed for them. Naturally I was praying for various things: for their safe care, for them to use wisdom in all things, and for their futures. There were also serious times of going to the Begging Place when they were sick or involved in unhealthy relationships. They were too far away from home for me to rescue. There was nothing I could do—except pray.

When you have children, you will pray—a lot. You will learn to “let go and let God.” What else can you do? At times you will feel as if you have gone to hell and back because of your own children. In those times of devastating worry, you will discover a marvelous thing. Our God—the Omnipresent, the Omniscient, and the Omnipotent—is alive and well and delivering your children, just like He delivered you when you were their age. You will sink to your knees in gratitude to Him as you realize what might otherwise have happened to your children. And you will thank Him for His marvelous grace and mercy once again.

I personally learned what “trust in the Lord” really means. For years I had quoted Proverbs 3:5 incorrectly. I always told my sisters, “Trust in the Lord, and do not lean on your own understanding.” But that is not what that Scripture says. It says: “Trust in the Lord *with all your heart*, and do not lean on your own understanding.”

You see, any of us can say “I trust in the Lord” and then go about our business and continue to worry and fret. Look at it again. The proverb says to “trust in the Lord with *all* your heart.” Ah, that is different, isn't it? What does it mean? It means one trusts completely, wholly in the Lord and does not doubt a thing—Becky's definition, of course. It means “I surrender all to God.”

There are several instances in the Scripture that God speaks about our children and their children. These are passages of comfort to those of us who have children and naturally worry about their destiny. Let us meditate on one of them:

As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more; and its place acknowledges it no longer. But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to those who keep His covenant, and who remember His precepts to do them (Psalm 103:15–18).

Girls, the years are flying by and our lives are but vapors (James 4:14). We are like the flower that flourishes in the grass, here one day and gone the next. We are rocking our babies one moment and then rocking our grandbabies the next. Our short time on this planet must be spent wisely. And the wisest thing we mothers can do is to teach our children about the marvelous love of the Lord and His plans for them (Jeremiah 29:11–13). So as we are rocking our babies, let's do some wise talking and some sweet singing.





# THE GIFT OF PRAYER

The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous,  
and His ears are open to their cry.

The face of the Lord is against evildoers, to cut off the  
memory of them from the earth. The righteous cry and  
the Lord hears, and delivers them  
out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the  
brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit  
(Psalm 34:15-18).

Talking to God brings great blessings. There is comfort and there is peace for the Christian who seeks the Father and His will. There is also confidence in knowing that there will be an answer to that prayer. Let us not forget His promise: “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8).

In His famous *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus gave us the model prayer. Wedged between His thoughts is a Scripture that we must not miss:

And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore, do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him (Matthew 6:7-8).

Did you catch that: “before you ask Him”? When does God know what I am getting ready to pray for and ask for? Before I even utter the request or prayer. He knows me, and He knows my thoughts, and He knows my heart.

Consider a similar Old Testament passage: “Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O Lord, Thou dost know it all (Psalm 139:4). Some might say, “Then why bother to pray if He already knows what I am going to say?” Because God wants us to talk to Him, seek Him, and have a relationship with Him. Evidently God wants us to ask! Remember, Jesus says in Matthew 7:7-8: “Ask, and it shall be