



St. Thomas Malankara Orthodox Church Of Los Angeles

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Vicar's Desk:

STEP FOUR- SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE BUT PERFECT LOVE DRIVES OUT FEAR, BECAUSE FEAR HAS TO DO WITH PUNISHMENT. THE MAN WHO FEARS IS NOT MADE PERFECT IN LOVE. 1 john 4.18

Facing our resentments and fears requires a great deal of courage. Our past tendency has been to shut down our feelings. Now we begin to look at areas of our lives that we have never explored before. It is important to realize that God is with us and will help us every step of our way. With God's help and understanding, the pain will diminish.

EXAMINE YOURSELVES TO SEE WHETHER YOU ARE IN THE FAITH, TEST YOURSELVES. DO YOU NOT REALIZE THAT CHRIST JESUS IS IN YOU- UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU FAIL THE TEST? AND I TRUST THT YOU WILL DISCOVER THAT WE HAVE NOT FAILED THE TEST. 2 COR 13.5-6

We will look at our character traits and examine our strengths and weaknesses. Our strengths appear in behavior that has positive effects on us as well as on others. Our weaknesses are revealed in behavior that is destructive to us and others. Before we can correct our problem areas, We need to acknowledge and examine both. Understanding begins when we discover how we became the people we are- how we formulated the ideas, beliefs, and attitudes that govern how we act. This doesn't require years of therapy. It involves only an honest consideration of the forces, influences and needs that developed our survival skills and molded our current character traits. .

Please try to find answers yourselves for the following two questions.

1. What do you believe is your major strength? How does it support you?
2. What do you believe is your major weakness? How does it hurt you?

---- Rev. Fr. Yohannan Panicker



Stevie Wonder is a much beloved American icon and is a genius not only of R&B but popular music in general. He was blind virtually since birth; Stevie's awareness of sound helped him create vibrant, colorful music. Wonder was born as Steveland Hardaway Judkins in Saginaw, MI, on May 13th 1950. A premature infant, he was put on oxygen treatment in an incubator; likely it was an excess of oxygen that exacerbated a visual condition known as retinopathy of prematurely, causing his blindness.

In 1954, his family moved to Detroit, where the already musically inclined Stevie began singing in his church choir; from there he blossomed into a genius kid, learning piano, drums and harmonica all by the age of nine. Often it takes someone who can't see the light to

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**Sunday School Church Project
Ruben Varghese**

Special Topic

What to Pray for?

Prayer for Others:

A survey run a couple of years ago suggests Christians spend more time praying about their family and friends than for any other prayer topic. Yet knowing what to pray and how to pray for them is not always easy. Here are some thoughts that may help.

Firstly, we shouldn't worry about how we phrase our prayers. It can be easy to feel that our prayers need to be word-perfect, and phrased in that quaint Olde English found in the King James Bible and the old Prayer Books. God wants us to talk to him in ordinary, everyday conversational language, and we can lift our prayers to him without worrying about our grammar or getting the right phrases.



Our approach to prayer is more important than the words we use. Initially we may begin praying by bringing a "shopping list" of requests to God. In one sense, this is helpful - generally it is good to be as specific as we can be. Although God knows the finest detail of every situation, we should nevertheless ask God for specific things. What those things are requires some careful thought. Our aim should be to pray for what God wants for them, and the things that they desire for themselves, rather than for what we would like them to have, or to be. This means that it can be quite helpful to give some space to God during our prayer time, and ask Him to place on our mind the particular needs of the people we are praying for.

The Gospels tell us that when we ask for things in Jesus' name then the Father will grant us our request.

"In Jesus' name" means things that are in accordance with God's will and character - we can pray as hard as we like to win the lottery, but I judge our prayer is unlikely to lead us to riches! Perceiving more and more of God's character and nature will help us pray the things that are on God's agenda, and away from the shopping list of requests that we may have started with.

Prayer for Ourselves:

Praying for ourselves is one of the most difficult topics for many Christians, for we may fear two equal and opposite pitfalls.

On the one hand many Christians can feel that they should only be praying for others, that it would be selfish to pray about their own needs, and that God would not be interested in such prayers. Yet, the prayer that Jesus taught us to say, the Lords Prayer, is as much focused on ourselves as on others, asking for our needs to be met, that we might be forgiving, for forgiveness for ourselves, and that we might be protected from evil.

Prayer for the Church:

A growing church is likely to be a praying church. Some of the things you might like to pray for include : our leaders, those who minister faithfully week in, week out, many of whom doing low profile roles, for those

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*"Most men pray for power,
the strength to do things.
Few people pray for love,
the quality to be someone."
R D Foster*

Children's Corner

Barnabas

There were many leaders in the early church, but few were as humble and influential as Barnabas. His name was Joseph, but the apostles gave him the name "Barnabas" (BAR nuh bus) which means Son of Encouragement. It was an appropriate name because he was an encouragement to all who knew him.

There were thousands of Jews in Jerusalem who were converted on the day of Pentecost and the days following. They had not come prepared for an extended stay in the city, and yet many of them stayed on to hear the apostles' preaching. Their money was used up, and they became poor and in need.

Some people who had property, sold it and gave the money to the apostles so they could feed the multitude of needy people. One of those who sold a field was Barnabas from the island of Cyprus.

He was a Levite. According to the distribution of land when the Israelites entered Canaan, the Levites were given cities and pastureland around the cities for their cattle. The pastures extended 3,000 feet (over half a mile) in all four directions from each Levite city. Barnabas sold a field he owned and brought the proceeds to the apostles.

Peter, since the Lord had given him the "keys" to the kingdom, was the one who first preached to the Gentiles. Yet it was Paul, whom the Lord chose to be his special preacher to the Gentile nation. When he was a new convert, Paul went to Jerusalem and tried to contact the believers there, but they were afraid of him.



What if he was just pretending to be a believer in Christ? What if he was really just trying to find them and arrest them?

Barnabas saw what was happening. He himself had the trust and respect of the believers, and he thought Paul was sincere. If he introduced Paul to the apostles in Jerusalem, the others would accept him. That's what he did. Barnabas told them how Paul had been converted and how he was now preaching about Jesus.

The church accepted him, and he was able to stay in Jerusalem. Then evil men began to try to kill Paul and the brothers sent him to Tarsus.



Later Barnabas would go to Tarsus looking for Paul again. He found him and brought him to the city of Antioch and the two of them preached in the city for a whole year.

The Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to Cyprus to preach. There they met a false prophet named Bar-Jesus or Elymas (EE luh mus). He was an attendant to the proconsul, the government official. He opposed their preaching, and Paul called him a child of the devil and told him that he was going to be blind for a while.

Immediately he became blind and started looking for someone to lead him around. The proconsul was amazed and believed the teachings of Paul and Barnabas.

The Holy Spirit directed the work of Paul and Barnabas, and they traveled to many cities preaching the good news about Jesus.

In the city of Lystra (LIS truh) Paul worked a miracle in which a lame man was able to walk again. The heathen people of that city thought they were gods and prepared to offer sacrifices to them, but Paul and Barnabas rushed out shouting that they too, were human and were trying to get them to worship the true God.

Barnabas was not one of the twelve apostles, but in this instance he is called an apostle, because he was sent by the Holy Spirit on a special mission.

John Mark, his cousin, traveled with Barnabas and Paul to some of the cities, but he deserted them in one city and failed to continue the journey with them. This incident would later cause a problem because Barnabas wanted to again take John Mark with them, but Paul refused to take him.

There was sharp disagreement over the matter. Paul was reluctant to take a chance on John Mark, but Barnabas, always ready to encourage, wanted to give his relative a second chance.

They settled it by parting ways. Barnabas took John Mark with him to the island of Cyprus, and Paul took another preacher, Silas (SIGH lus) with him through Syria. They agreed on this compromise and God's work continued.

There is an indication that Paul and Barnabas worked together again, and in his letter to the Colossians which was written from prison, Paul mentions the fact that John Mark is with him, and he tells them that if John Mark comes to the church, they are to welcome him.

Barnabas was truly the Son of Encouragement who always looked for the best in people, and his faith in them was rewarded.



Memory Verse:

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

(Ephesians 4:29)

Church Column

Stevie Wonder

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remind us how blessed are we, who can see it. I have learned that the Lord wouldn't put more on you than you can bear. Stevie never looked at himself as blind and disable because he has never really stopped doing what he has always done. His motto is "I'm not Blind, I just can't see".

Stevie did not care about his blindness, instead he is happy that God has given him a great voice to sing and a great life that anyone would be happy to have. The disability did not prevent him from developing his musical ability because he knew that God had a plan for him. While he was dealing with the unfortunate death of his brother Larry and the illness of his first wife, one song came to him. It was a painful time in his life and for his family. But he has had amazing things that have happened in his life that have happened recently, but whenever he needed that place of strength, he remembered that moment when he wrote this song and what God told him through the song.

So what I think is that God is always there for you. He does not care about only one person but the whole world, whether blind or not. An example of this is a blind person called Stevie Wonder. His blindness did not stop him from signing when he was little and his mother used to take him to his church and there Stevie started to sing for the choir. By this people started to know that even though he was blind, God has given him so many talents. He later on started his singing career because he knew that God is always there to help him and he also knew in his heart that God did not punish him but instead gave him a great voice, a great life and wonderful talent to sing causing him to become so famous. This makes me believe, that God has created us all so that we can be different from each other and so that we can be with Him in heaven.



Minister: Do you know what's in the Bible?

Little Girl: Yes. I think I know everything that's in it.

Minister: You do? Tell me.

Little Girl: OK. There's a picture of my brother's girlfriend, a ticket from the dry cleaners, one of my curls, and a Pizza Hut coupon.

Abraham bought himself a fancy new computer. He was showing it to Isaac one day. "Look at all the wonderful programs it has on it. And look at all the neat things it can do..." Isaac was impressed, but a little concerned..."But dad, I don't think your computer has enough memory." Abraham said "Don't worry son; the Lord will provide the RAM."

From : [The Christian Humor Hotline!](#)

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How to take part in the Holy Qurbana?

We have to take part in the Holy Qurbana, with due discipline, standing well, in awe and sober minds, in comeliness and in holiness, in love and true faith and especially in the fear of God. At the time of prayer and when attending Holy Qurbana our hands are to be stretched straight downwards or holding the hands across the breast or with hands raised as we do when Lord's prayer is recited. The traditional Indian greeting with palms folded in reverence and awe is also good. But it is not proper to put down our hands carelessly or turning to the back side in a haphazard manner. All participants have ought to say in reply with loud voices and in clearly tone. Though most of us know the service by heart, still it is good to follow the service using a book as far as possible.



What to Pray for?

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working with young people, for the young people themselves, for the outreach programs of our church, for areas of our community where the church doesn't seem to reach.

Prayer for Mission:

Christians engaged in mission are working in the front line of Christian ministry. Whether they are working in the western world, or with communities which are largely unreached by the Christian gospel, there are many demands upon missionaries.

Please pray for

Their walk of faith. For those in mission to be effective, it is vital that their personal relationship with God is right, and that they are growing as a Christian themselves.

Support. Both financial and personal support is essential for them to keep going. In many cases this support is provided by churches back home who are willing to commit to this over a period of years. For financial support there are often practical problems in getting a smooth flow of funds out to the missionary based away from home.

Their family life. Whilst responding to an individual call is challenging enough, taking your family with you brings many additional challenges. Leaving them behind simply creates challenges of a different sort. Do pray for God's protection on the family, and for His wisdom in the decisions that they must take.

The places they are working, praying that the missionaries will "fit". Adjusting to different cultures and climates takes time, and many missionaries find making the adjustment very challenging.

Protection from Satan's attacks. There are a number of areas where the work of mission is challenged by Satan. Do pray for God's protection on their family life, on their team-working with other missionaries, on their relationships with key local people and authorities.

Praise for their Ministry : Thank God for their faith and commitment, and do praise Him for news of their work bearing fruit.

from Prayer Guide

prayerguide.org.uk/alone.htm

Sunday Service:

Namaskaram : 9.00 am – 9.45 am
Holy Qurbana : 9.45 am onwards
English : 1st & 2nd Sunday
Malayalam : 3rd, 4th & 5th Sunday

Sunday School:

Sunday School Summer Break till Sep 10th.

August 4th to 6th : **OVBS 2006**

August 26th : Visit the sick

Church Events:

Stay tuned for church events every Sunday during the announcements after the Holy Qurbana.

Aug 19th : Church Picnic between 10.00 Am to 3.30 PM

August 1st to 15th : 15 day lent starts



Prayer Corner

Church Activities:

The Young Adults meeting will be held at the residence of Dr. Sajini and Mr. Jacob George at Cerritos on Saturday August 12th @ 6.30 PM.

The Martha Mariam Samajam meeting will be held at Church on Sunday August 13th after the Holy Qurbana.

Meanings of Words Often Used in Church

Burksa	: that which is blessed
Damo	: blood
Danaha	: Rising (The sun of righteousness Arose at the time of baptism at Jordan)
Dukarono	: Remembrance
Eehidayakar	: Solitary living persons
Ereyar	: Angel who is always awake



Have any Questions?

OR

Your comments may be directed to the
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