

Words from the Woodwards

July, 2023

"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ..." Colossians 3:2,3

Dear ministry friend,

Thank you very much for your prayers and support. God continues to strengthen us, impact hearts through His Word, and open doors for ministry.

This next quarter may have a fuller schedule than any in my life... and that's saying a lot! We have

- the Finding Peace Seminar (July 29),
- the Exchanged Life Counseling Workshop (July 31-August 3rd),
- the ministry trip to South Africa (August 7-14), and I have
- the ministry trip to Cameroon (August 15-18).

That will be followed by a vacation with our extended family in Florida (including our 45th wedding anniversary on the 26th).

In September Mark and I plan to

- attend the Conference of American Association of Christian Counselors (Sept. 14-16),
- present a seminar and give coaching in Lakeland, Florida (Sept. 22-24).

October will also be an adventure. For over a year Linda and I have been saving and planning for a "trip of a lifetime" to Bible lands: Italy, Greece and Israel. That trip is scheduled for September 29-October 16th! This will be our first time to visit Israel. That will be followed by a trip for me to give a seminar in St. Louis, MO (Oct. 27-30).

So, a big prayer request for the next quarter is for our health, strength, traveling mercies, and "fruit that remains."

Mark and I have completed recording the 10 part audio series on *The Christ Centered Christian*. These scripts were originally prepared several years ago as a joint venture with TransWorld Radio's program, Champions Arise. For various reasons the recordings were not finished, so we were invited to use our new podcast recording equipment to record these 15 minute long conversation-style programs. Champions Arise plans to broadcast them and create a Portuguese edition. The set of MP3 audios is now in GFI's online store. (If you would like an audio CD edition, or download, as a gift, feel free to request this by contacting me.)

Thank you again for your partnership in ministry. May the Lord give each of us "open doors" to spread the Good News in our sphere of influence.

Yours in Christ,

John

A Recent Testimony

[After returning from the mission field] I developed severe insomnia. Three or four nights a week, I did not sleep at all, not even an hour. I might sleep 6 to 8 hours one other night in the week and the remaining two or three days I would sleep around 3 or 4 hours. I truly felt like I was in hell. I could barely function during the day. It was agony just trying to talk to people I was so exhausted... I cried, I prayed, I confessed Jesus was my healer, I memorized Scripture, I went to sleep doctors and psychologists, I took medicine. Nothing helped. I was completely at the end of myself.

I discovered Aaron Kim's videos on You Tube and he mentioned how Grace Fellowship was key in helping him overcome his really terrible case of insomnia. So I called them up!

After a couple of weeks of Grace Fellowship teaching, the first thing I realized was that, though I had confessed Romans 12:1 for years and had generally surrendered my life to Him, and though I had even sometimes surrendered particular aspects of my life when I noticed they were not surrendered, there were in fact many aspects of my life that were still tightly under my control. This was a huge revelation to me! Dr. John Woodward helped me with discussion of surrender using lists of specific rights to be surrendered and lists of ways people live out of the self-life contrasted with ways people live out of Christ. This really helped me identify areas that I was still tightly holding on to. There were a lot of them!...

I also realized that in the past I had often been trying to "put on" Christ in an area without identifying and putting off what needed to be put off. As I learned to clearly put off and surrender and *then* put on, anxiety fell away and I more and more relinquished control. After a few weeks my sleep improved. After a few weeks more I was sleeping like a baby every night. This was after almost 6 months of tortuous insomnia.

There are several other areas where I am also walking in much more freedom. Surrendering to Him, identifying with Him and appropriating His life in me is a daily, hourly business, and we will not 100 % appropriate His life in this life. But I feel I have made a major shift now – where I am really actively yielding control to Him to live His life through me on a daily basis. I am also seeking Him for grace and opportunities to share the exchanged life truths with others. Thanks be to our wonderful Jesus! - M. L.



Linda with our granddaughter, Lilah

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