

# Challenge

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

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PRAYER LETTER OF CHALLENGE LITERATURE FELLOWSHIP (AUST.) INC.

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Psalm 23 is such a wonderful account of the nature and character of God and how He is so concerned for the well-being of His children. Last month we looked at verse 2 and how God makes us to lie down in green pastures. We saw that sometimes it is necessary for God to draw us aside for Him to get our attention and to enable us to rest and to be still in His presence.

Then in verse 3 we read that our divine shepherd; "...restores our soul." So when God pulls us aside for a while He is looking to restore our soul. The fact that something has to be restored implies that the nature and or quality of the thing or person have deteriorated considerably. From a spiritual point of view we can find our lives becoming dry and parched of the living water. It is just so easy to find ourselves drifting in our walk with God. Like sheep we can wander of the path and it usually is not long before we are in trouble. The problem with drifting in our walk with God is that it can happen so slowly that we hardly notice we have drifted.

A few years ago I went up to Geraldton, a city four hours north of Perth, for a fishing trip. It was one of those rare occasions when the traditional south east wind was not blowing a gale. In fact the ocean was so flat it could have been described as a mill-pond and you could bring out the bar of soap and have a bath. Because the ocean was so flat we decided that we did not need to put out the anchor. I took the opportunity to take note of where we were located by lining the boat up with a spot on shore.

For some time we operated without an anchor in the water and to us who were busy fishing from the boat we had not moved from our original position. However, when I tried to match up the boat with the spot I had selected on shore, we had moved significantly away from our original location. This is exactly what happens in our Christian lives when we stop doing certain disciplines in our walk with God. We think that it will not make any difference to the quality of our spiritual lives, but over time we begin to realise that the absence of them does make a difference. We find that we come to a point of recognizing that we are in deep need of restoration.

In his excellent little devotional book on Psalm 23, J. Wilbur Chapman gives us some ways to identify if our souls need restoring or not.

1. We are in need of restoration when we are marked by a restlessness and general dissatisfaction with ourselves and everything around us. It appears that nothing is right, and that everybody is wrong and we are not content with our lot in life.
2. We are in need of restoration when we find that we are not interested in the things of the kingdom of God. Our lives are totally taken up with this world and the idea of being burdened about lost men and women seems almost foreign.
3. We are in need of restoration when our lives are characterised by an attitude of impatience and intolerance of others.
4. We are in need of restoration when there is neglect of the reading and study of the Bible.
5. We are in need of restoration when we are happy to tolerate unconfessed sin in our lives.
6. We are in need of restoration when we are walking in disobedience to God's call on our lives.

Where do you stand on these things that I have mentioned above? Sadly for many Christians their lives are in drift mode and are in need of restoration. My wife and I have recently returned from a trip to the U.S. As you can imagine it is a long way to travel. However, just before we landed the flight attendants handed out a hot towel to help refresh their passengers before heading through customs.

Just as that towel going over our faces helped to refresh us physically, so the word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit restores our soul. There are many Christians who are in desperate need of restoration because they have drifted far from God over a long period of time. For some it is not until a crisis hits that someone gets the revelation that spiritually things are not going as well as he or she had assumed. Making us lie down is part of God's way of alerting us to the need of restoration physically emotionally and most of all spiritually. So if you find yourself pulled aside for a while do not kick against it, but let God use it for His restoration work. I know how much I need this and I am sure I am no orphan.

*(Please turn over)*

Why don't you start the process by getting right with God by confessing sin that you have been tolerating in your life? Then make a commitment to read your Bible on a daily basis asking God to give you the strength to abide by that commitment and watch how God will restore your soul.

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge



## *Prayer*

1. Prayer is much needed for Impact Africa, our short term mission initiative into Africa. We are looking to having 25 folks going July 9th and at the moment we are 3-4 people short. We need prayer for the Lord's protection, fruitfulness in ministry and for a well organised trip that will change the lives of those who come.
2. We would value prayer for Challenge representatives in each State. At the present we have folk interested in doing promotion work in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. We have Alan Bailey taking on promotion in South Australia as he is able, for which we are enormously thankful.
3. Challenge is struggling financially mainly because there is just such a huge demand on our limited financial base. Pray for ongoing gifts to help us pay our bills and staff allowances.
4. Challenge distribution has plateaued in Australia over the last couple of years mainly because of the new work in Africa, and to a lesser extent New Zealand. We would appreciate your prayer for the Lord to bring about a turnaround in our circulation. We are looking to seeing the paper growing to 80,000 per month, as it grows in its penetration and effectiveness, to engage people to think about their need of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
5. We would value prayer for some more volunteers to help with the wrap of Challenge paper each month. If you are available ring Challenge and ask for Ken James.
6. Continue to pray for our writers and for the Lord's inspiration as they faithfully provide articles for the paper.
7. Continue in prayer for the finances for the provision of our much needed air conditioning in our factory. So far we have seen about \$1,000.
8. Please pray for the opportunity that Carl Carmody has to go to Englewood Baptist Church in North Carolina in the US. Please pray for the funds to enable Carl to be able to attend this strategic mission conference.

## *Praise*

1. Praise God for who He is and for His faithfulness to His people. Here at Challenge we are so aware of His unconditional love and care.
2. Continue to praise God for the Liberty Heights Church, who has been an incredible encouragement to the Challenge team. Their pray and practical support have been amazing.
3. Praise God for the continued flow of good quality second-hand books for South Africa. They are proving to be a great encouragement and blessing to pastors and leaders.
4. The flow of commitments from our African edition of Challenge in particular, has been incredible. At this stage we are seeing approximately 1,000 commitments per month in Africa. In Australia and New Zealand we are seeing only a steady trickle, for which we praise God.
5. We do praise God for the opportunities that God is providing to expand the work in Africa. The opportunities are outstripping our ability to provide.

## Challenge Literature Fellowship

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