

THE ROMANCE OF A GOD-LED LIFE

By Lt. Colonel Lyell Rader (R)

Our Claimant Need

I am constantly amazed at the number of deeply spiritual people who, in a time of crisis, desperately need spiritual guidance and yet seem bewildered as to where to begin, They have no Scriptural plan or method by which to separate the still small voice from the Babel of other voices -- human and satanic.

Perhaps, I am, both by nature and by chemical training, cautious. The fact is that in both arenas I have seen such terrible accidents following upon one small mistake that I have cultivated the habit of rechecking my calculations several times. It is not surprising that in the tense life under the sea, orders in the submarine service are sent and repeated three times to be sure they are clearly understood.

Guidance -- or the lack of it -- can be a life and death matter. And certainly our lives can be infinitely more efficient being guided by the God who runs the very stars on time than by the haphazard winds of change and choice on our part. The least a faithful servant should expect from his loving Lord is clear orders. Praise God they are promised! Trim little ruby-throated Hummingbirds, weighing less than a penny, migrate under the eye of the Creator down a variety of flyways in North America to the island of Key West and then across the Caribbean to the northern edge of South America. And under the eye of the Creator, the migration of the homely, snake-like eel is no less remarkable, No eel has ever brought forth young in American or European waters -- much less in captivity. They all are born in the Sargasso sea of weeds in the Caribbean. When they become one year old, they take to the Gulf Stream, those of European parentage veering off to the East to swim the Atlantic, and those of American parentage veering to the West up the brackish waters of this country. They stay for five years, the European eel for six, and then head home. If streams have dried up in the meantime, they even attempt to go overland, catching the next stream which eventually flows into the sea. Those who live find the Sargasso sea, spawn and die. Their young, without ever having been taught how, repeat the cycle.

Are these not parables of God's pain-taking care for His Creation, a care which extends in detailed provision to the crown of that Creation?

God's Fatherly Command

The word "to know" or "to understand" is used in Scripture in some form over six hundred and fifty times. In Ephesians 5:17 we have a direct command: "...Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." When God commands, He enables. Guidance is not a matter of our cleverness but of His plain purpose and provision.

"The steps of a good man," writes the Psalmist, "are ordered of the Lord, and He delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23). No parent ever dreamed and planned for his child with as much delight as our Savior plans our abundant life. This is more than planning a general direction. God plans *the very steps*, and *sometimes the stops*. Our son, Captain Damon Rader, was surveying a Rhodesian creek bed in a dam construction

project when he felt a spiritual jolt to his peace and hesitated. Without warning, a cobra slithered through the gravel directly across the spot where he would have been standing had he not stopped. God is faithful in giving clear orders. Our simple task is to hear and heed. Most Christians choose what they will do for God. But the Word of God insist, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you..." (John 15:16). For a Christian to assert his own will in opposition to the mind of Christ, or even independent of it, is not just crazy -- it is high treason.

God has a plan for every life. We are expected to know this plan. He has promised to reveal it to us as unmistakable as though a voice had spoken, saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it..." (Isaiah 30:21).

Perhaps, you are musing that if you could be that sure of God's will, you would delight to do it with all your heart. A missionary would be foolish to risk life and limb or to leave loved ones, homeland, and the comforts and conveniences of life, unless he were absolutely sure of his call. St. Paul was so sure of his calling that in contemplation of countless dangers, he declared, "...None of these things move me..." (Acts 20:24).

Psalm 32:8-9 promises, "I will guide thee with mine eye." Of course, one must be looking in order to get the signal. The all-important thing, therefore, about guidance, is keeping one's eyes upon Jesus in unbroken fellowship

Now just how does God guide us? What are the faculties to which He speaks? Is this guidance fool-proof or can Satan counterfeit it under certain conditions? Is it possible to know these conditions -- to foresee and forestall them? Are there modern case histories which reveal the leading of God so that one can see for himself how it works?

Does this guidance come as a hunch? As a ball of fire? Can one objectively detect the call of God independent of obedience? Clear-cut answers to these questions can be found in the Word and in the experience of Spirit-led Christians.

Satan's Counterfeit

We will be spelling out the Divine method later and also drawing attention to the renewed faculties to which God speaks. Satan can counterfeit part of the method, but cannot deceive if we have patience to use it all. Satan certainly has no real substitute for peace, although there is a certain relief that comes from running away from God. When Jonah had turned his back on Divine orders, he was able to enter the ship and go to sleep! But being relieved of responsibility is a far cry from God's peace. "I would rather be saved through a thousand storms," said the Founder, "than damned in a single calm." One can have peace in a storm and panic in a calm. Certainly rebellion makes God's peace impossible, and therefore, guidance impossible. Only a heeding heart is a hearing heart. In both Hebrew and Greek the word "to hear" always implies obedience.

St. Paul's Method -- Triangulation

St. Paul in Acts 16:6-15 was busily engaged in the known will of God. Before his conversion it took a ball of fire to stop him and guide him into reverse. Never again did Paul need a ball of fire. It is easy to guide a moving ship or a moving car. Indeed, the faster it goes, the easier it is to guide. Somehow God gently restrained St. Paul from going into Asia or into Bithynia at that time. The answer is found in Acts 19:9-10. God wanted St. Paul to run a Training College in the School of Tyrannus. His Cadets, in that short span of two years totally evangelized Asia Minor. Verse 20 adds, "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed." It is over simplification to say that the need is always the call. The wisdom of the Holy Ghost is

needed to deploy His troops. Note there was more than a single factor in the guidance: "...immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us..."

(Acts 16:10). What were the elements comprising St. Paul's guidance?

1. St. Paul was busy obeying God's general orders. The written Word was enthroned in his mind; the Living Word was enthroned in his heart. Ninety percent of the light on our path comes from the Word. When God has spoken clearly on a subject in the Word, it is blasphemy to seek further.

2. St. Paul possessed a yielded will. He was able to take no for an answer. Human judgment is a wonderfully sensitive and accurate faculty when yielded to, and adjusted by, the Creator. There is, however, nothing more perverse when it is biased by sin and self and Satan. It can become an instrument of evil inventiveness and rationalization, that is, "thinking up the best reason in the world for doing the worst thing you ever did." probably nine percent of the light on our path is gained through our yielded judgment.

The great George Mueller, who prayed seven and a half million dollars out of the blue sky over a ministry of fifty years -- without asking one man for a penny -- was of the opinion that ninety percent of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are truly willing to do God's will, whatever it may be. "Light obeyed increaseth light," Charles Wesley put it; "Light resisted bringeth night." the witness of Eleazer back in Genesis is clear enough: "...I being in the way, the Lord led me..." (Genesis 24:27).

When you have cultivated the habit of being "in the way," that is, never getting out of it, never letting the green light flicker without instantly readjusting the course until peace is re-established, clear and steady, you are automatically guided. 3. St. Paul recognized in this vision a providential circumstance. God was trying to get through to him. This fact was later vindicated in the encounter with Lydia's prayer circle. Here was the final one percent of light from these three sources.

Dwight L. Moody once stood beside the pilot of a ship which was approaching the harbor at night. "How do you know where the channel is," he asked him, "on a night as dark as this?" the pilot pointed out three lights ahead. When these three lights line up as one," he said, "I know I am in the channel."

Coast Guard control centers use a method of detection known as Triangulation. Anchored off shore are thousands of hydrophones which transmit the sounds of the propeller of every unidentified craft. A single plotting would only give the general direction. Not even two Plottings are acceptable if three can be obtained. These three directional beams, converging on a single point, reveal the enemy craft's exact position.

You see the analogy. When the Word, our yielded judgment, and providential circumstances line up as one, we know God's will is straight ahead. But we must not be impatient. St. Paul besought the Lord thrice for the "thorn in the flesh" to be removed (II Corinthians 12:7-10). Jesus prayed three times for the bitter cup to pass from him (Matthew 26:36-45). It is better to pray a door open than to pry it open. If it does not yield to prayer, we could be bucking God to pry. Complete the triangulation and then pray through on all three points. Mountain-moving faith is not a struggle to overcome God's reluctance, but a loving laying hold of God's declared willingness.

Peace -- the Umpire

Even these three light sources -- the Word, yielded judgment, providential circumstances -- need a born-again heart to understand them. They need a mind renewed, a will aligned with His will. And most importantly, they require that the peace of God should "garrison and mount guard" over our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:6-9).

This peace is the most delicate instrument of all. Like the steady glow of a pilot-light, it lets the Christian know that the "power" is on. Man's feeble peace could easily turn out to be a fool's paradise, but God's peace is proof positive that we are on the beam of His perfect will and that all is well. God's peace is spoken of as "soul harmony which comes from the Christ rule" (Colossians 3:15-17, Amp.) and again, as an "umpire... Deciding and setting with finality all questions that arise in your minds..." (Philippians 4:6-7, Amp.).

This peace is infinitely more sensitive than conscience. But to be useful it must be steady. The intermittent peace of an up-and-down Christian is worthless. God guides us by disturbing our peace when something is wrong; but if peace is always being disturbed, how could that indicate anything? God's peace is much like the guidance of a missile governed by an "error-correction mechanism." the system doesn't function as long as it is on course; but the moment any force would press the rocket off course, its electronic brain instantly detects the amount and direction of that force and generates an equal and opposite force to hold it on course. God can often guide us in the absence of all information by a stabbing stop to our peace, indicating that whatever we are about to do should not be done. On the positive side, He can give us a sudden deep concern for someone and impress us with a great sense of urgency to pray or to write or to go or to take some other course of action. Should we resist this guidance, our pilot-light, so to speak, goes out; our peace fades. But when we obey it, a strong sense of peace and rightness persists.

Peace becomes as trustworthy as a directional antenna. On the beam, peace increases; off the beam, it fades. "Even when the future is clouded," wrote the saintly Oswald Chambers, "if peace persists, go forward, assuming the fog is merely dust from the Savior's feet."

But what of those who have no peace? They often place far too much confidence in the one percent of providential circumstance. You recall the story of Gideon's fleece (Judges 6:11-40). How he must have grieved God with his repeated test! As David Wilkerson has put it, "He should have trusted the Word instead of the wool." This is not to say that a "fleece" has no part in determining guidance but simply that its role must not be over-estimated. Satan had a ship headed for Tarshish when God called Jonah to Ninevah. Any servant of God wishing to run away will find a job ready and waiting to take him away from the will of God.

The person without peace can also depend far too much upon emotions. Some time ago, I spoke with a young woman who had grievously departed both from her call and her Christ. She scornfully rebuffed my efforts to help, saying with an air of the "perfect squelch," "I actually feel better now that I have given up all pretense of religion than when I professed to be saved." several years later I met this girl in another city. Sadder and wiser, she came back to God.

Certainty in Decision

I made sure of my call to Officership over forty years ago by using this method. There were three other worthy causes to which I could have committed my life. I was already preaching and witnessing, in season and out of season, as a chemist. My father was a genius at demonstrating a chemical process in glassware but all thumbs at building a pilot plant. For that reason, he depended quite heavily upon me in the laboratory. Secondly, my uncle, Dr. Paul Rader, wanted me in Chicago with his Gospel Tabernacle. Thirdly, the mission field which we had just visited in the Near East was beckoning; and fourthly, now the Salvation Army had suddenly rocketed across my path.

All four squared with the Word. I had an interest in all four -- a willingness to follow God's lead, whichever He chose. But I had no light. In desperation, I made four double columns on a legal-size paper, listing advantages and disadvantages in each column. In three columns there were handicaps, delays, disadvantages, but under the Army, none. I felt, indeed, I had been born for this ministry.

Getting my thoughts down on paper was very helpful in crystallizing my final judgment. But I felt I ought to lay a "fleece" before the Lord: if my father had no objection to my decision, I would consider my triangulation complete. The test came at 2:00 AM one morning, following a late Army meeting. Stranded at the railroad station, I had telephoned my father to pick me up. As the door of his car swung open, I started to tell him about my call. But he beat me to the draw: "Lyell," he boomed from his 360-pound frame, "you've been spending so much time lately, running around for the Army, Mother and I wouldn't be surprised if you joined it." "I am!" I said -- and a great surge of peace confirmed the last of the triangulation.

Using this method, I have not in forty years had to regret or retrace my steps in one major decision.

Let me emphasize it again: guidance is not an optional extra. It is part and parcel of the victorious life, and, just as definitely, not a part of a defeated life. Defeated Christians do not meditate on their Bibles. Defeated Christians do not possess yielded wills or unbiased judgments. They do not have the spiritual eyesight rightly to read providential circumstances. They surely do not possess the glorious "peace of God which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Remember, peace is the compass needle.

The Weight of a Ministry

Often the weight of one's ministry of fruitfulness hangs upon his sensitivity to guidance. Dr. Clarence Jones, the pioneer of modern missionary radio, found this so. He had spent a whole year raising \$10,000 for a transmitter which would double the power of his station in the Andes, H.C.J.B. (Heralding Christ Jesus' Blessings). He had even made out the check for a used transmitter and was about to sign it when he laid down his pen. "I'm sorry," he said to the seller, "but I'm going to have to delay at least twenty-four hours before I can sign this check."

The seller was furious. "What is this? Are you playing games? You have kept me waiting for a whole year and now that you have the money you won't sign the check!" "No! I'm not playing games," Dr. Jones answered. "I'm just a sensitive Christian and I've learned to stop and wait on God whenever I feel my peace violently disturbed." He left not having the slightest idea what might be wrong. At midnight the phone rang. "Is this Dr. Jones?" the caller inquired. "Yes."

"Have you signed that check yet?" "Well, who are you? And why are you interested?"

"I'm Clarence Moore, a 'ham' from Elkhart, Indiana. Been trying to get in touch with you all day. I've just been in Chicago and have seen the transmitter they are trying to sell you. It's a dog! It's obsolete! If you blow a tube, you will have to redesign the set in order to use modern tubes. But I can show you how you can quadruple your power for \$10,000 and yet be able to add still more wattage later."

If Dr. Jones had only been guided by conscience, God never could have gotten through to him because conscience requires light, full information. But God did get through to His child by means of the more delicate faculty of a disturbed peace. God also added another great heart to the spiritual partnership of missionary radio.

When God calls He equips. He powers His own project, although we are not always conscious of His guidance until afterwards. Hannah Hurned (The Hearing Heart) demonstrates this truth throughout her long and fantastic ministry. Brother Andrew (God's Smuggler) and David Wilkerson (The Cross and the Switchblade), etc.) also demonstrate the fact that God is constantly working all things together for good (Romans 8:28), even though your awareness of the fact is usually afterwards. "What I do thou knowest not now;" Jesus said to Peter, "but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7).

Captain (Dr.) Ted Gabrielsen and his wife, Jeanne -- our daughter -- were faced with heart-breaking problems when they first arrived at the little Salvation Army hospital in Yong Dong, Korea. As the months passed, supplies were prayed in from the homeland, Canada, Britain and Australia, and the picture began to brighten. But then another crisis arose.

Staphylococcus had been exposed to penicillin -- not enough to kill it but just enough to make it resistant. Before the "golden bug" was identified, everyone in the hospital, including Dr. Gabrielsen and their baby, had contracted the raging infection, which was utterly immune to penicillin and every other alternate drug he possessed. One of his fingers, vital to his surgery, was so infected it would have to come off within 24 hours in order to save his life. Other lives, no doubt, were at stake as well.

He called our son, Captain Paul Rader, at the Training School in Seoul, 130 miles to the north, begging him to scour the city to find some Hexachlorophene. "If you can't find the pure drug," he told him, "get Dial soap -- it's loaded with it!"

Just then the doorbell rang. A boy had come from the Post Office to say there was a big box there for the doctor. Ted had little interest in any more equipment. Only tragedy stared him in the face. But he went -- to find a whole case of Dial soap! The phone flashed the joyful news. Kay and Paul caught the next train South. Feverishly, they poulticed bodies from tip to toe, scrubbed floors and walls, saturated every corner with the germ-killing drug. Ted's finger was saved. There were no deaths. But where had the case come from? Only God could have timed its arrival at the moment of need. If it had come a few weeks before, it might have been wasted on ordinary chores. If it had come 24 hours later, amputation and death could have resulted. The story unfolded months later. We discovered that the inventor of Dial soap, waiting for an appointment in a Chicago chemical house, had chatted with the receptionist (my cousin's daughter) about the virtues of his brain child. Just as the president called to admit him, the receptionist had said, "Well, if Dial soap is so wonderful, why don't you send a case to my cousin? He is a Salvation Army doctor in charge of a little hospital in Korea." "What's his name and address?" was the parting shot. That's all there was to it. Neither the inventor nor the receptionist had been aware of the life and death importance of the almost jocular challenge. But God had it timed to perfection.

There is new meaning to Isaiah 65:24: And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. And there is thrilling comfort to Hebrews 4:16: Let us then fearlessly ... Draw near to the throne of grace ... That we may receive mercy /for our failures/ and find grace to help in good time for every need -- appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it (Amp.).

A Voice at the Fork

A. W. Tozer in his leaflet on guidance warns of the danger of demanding too precise guidance before action. This is really unbelief in pious disguise. We must hazard some things on the strength of God's faithfulness. We don't have to see a hundred miles ahead. God seldom grants us guidance before we reach the fork in the road. But there,

...Thine ears shall hear a word behind

thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left (Isaiah 30:21).

I know a godly man who was deeply in love with an equally godly girl. She returned that love, yet they refused to get married, waiting until some ball-of-fire certainty possessed them. I don't know that they ever did get married! Now it's good to wait upon God to know His will, but when God has made a matter that

plain, what are we waiting for? If peace persists, go forward. Missionaries would never go to the field or plunge into dangerous territory if they demanded such precise "pre-guidance." We all wish to know too much and too far ahead. It boils down to wanting too much security of a visible sort. But then we would be trusting ourselves instead of trusting Him.

If God has promised that our very steps are to be guided, let's take the fact for granted and step out upon the promises of God in confidence. If there is no stabbing stop to our peace -- no contrary guidance -- just assume this is the way and walk in it. We can't take all the hazard out of life. We must just be confident that God is faithful. He seldom saves us by a wide margin. He waits until the last minute, until every other source of help is gone; then He comes through, more than we could ask or think. And we know it is the Lord. Hallelujah!

Suffering -- in God's Will

One of the greatest mysteries of the Christian life is, why do persons in God's will suffer? Why do missionaries get hurt or even killed?

I'm not sure whether God can't or won't work His wonders in the absence of faith on the part of some human being, but evidently He doesn't. In Mark 6:5 the Spirit uses a strong word:

And He was not able to do even one work of power there, except that He laid His hands on a few sickly people /and/ cured them. And He marveled because of their unbelief -- their lack of faith in Him (Amp.).

How important then that we yield no ground to the enemy!

There are five possible forces which play -- and at times interplay -- upon us, causing the unpredictable circumstances of our lives. First, we are in a free-power universe, a dependable universe of law and order. The electricity that warms our homes and cooks our meals and turns the wheels of our industry can also electrocute us if its laws are broken.

Secondly, we are free moral agents ourselves, at liberty to do His will or assert our own. We can use this power for good or evil, consciously or unconsciously. Thirdly, other people are also free moral agents. Life in this world is largely a struggle between wills -- labor against capital, Democrats against Republicans, nation against nation. Even the new-born baby has a will of his own and often wears down the stoutest parent to his own emotional destruction.

Satan and his demons, fourthly, greatly affect the thoughts and deeds of deluded people. They also have great physical powers and territorial powers (see Daniel 10). Satan is called the "prince of this world" by Jesus (John 12:31), "the god of this world" by St. Paul (II Corinthians 4:4), and a "lion roaring/in fierce hunger/, seeking some-one to seize upon and devour" by St. Peter (I Peter 5:8, Amp.). In Revelation the earth is warned of Coming violence: Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time (Revelation 12:12).

Finally, God has necessarily to hide His hand. It would damn the unbeliever beyond hope if God were to reveal His glory in a sudden blast of light. It would kill the operation of faith which alone can slowly filter the truth and love of the Gospel through our minds down into our hearts and wills. The devils have all the facts (James 2:19), but it is too late to move their hearts. Thus God dares not (in view of the larger good), indiscriminately and automatically, keep interfering with the operation of His physical laws. It would make chaos of His universe if He suspended laws every time an innocent child was involved. We cannot blame everything that happens on our good God. Any one or all of these five interacting powers could be involved

in a given tragedy. But unless we or some child of God provides a path of prayer for His intervening power, we "hinder the Holy One of Israel."

Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy one of Israel (Psalm 78:41).

Hearing Hearts

How vital then it is for us to be spiritually sensitive so God can get through to us in a hurry. When our son Cadet (Dr.) Herbert Rader, was in surgical residency at Allentown (PA) General Hospital, he kept in immediate contact with the hospital by means of a small electronic device called a "Beeper." It had a radius of several miles. If an emergency arose at the hospital, a button was pressed and Herbert's "Beeper" would go off. Many a time, in the middle of a Corps meeting, the "Beeper" would sound and Herbert would slip out to a telephone and on to the hospital. The Major got used to bringing the family home.

God pushes the panic button and disturbs our peace when He wants us to pray, go, write, stop, turn. Often this signal relates to physical danger.

At 7:00 AM one morning years ago, I was coming down for breakfast when a sudden stabbing concern for Major and Mrs. Richard Atwell (now Lt. Col.), missionaries in Africa, hit me. So sharp was the disturbance of peace that I said to my wife, "We have sinned against the Lord in ceasing to pray for Dick and Doris. Let's kneel down right now and pray." At that exact moment -- as we found out later -- the Major lay delirious with a raging fever called "tick fever." There was no hope. But suddenly his mind cleared. He said to his wife, "Doris, don't worry. I'm going to get well. I just saw Lyell and Gladys and the five children around the kitchen table praying for me." His fever vanished from that moment.

In the early 50's, when our son Damon's plane took off with 46 young people of the Eastern Territory headed for a Youth Congress in England, we prayed once and slept in peace. When they were returning, we had no idea they were in the air. But we were awakened and were out of bed onto our knees several times that night until peace came. We learned later the reason why.

An undetected fire had wrapped one wing in flame, but the 46 weary delegates were all asleep. The pilots could not see the blazing wing, or even the reflection of it, since there was not dust in the air high over the ocean. God awakened our son and also John Wilberg. Both of scientific bent, they looked at their watches and saw they had only been airborne two hours -- the wings were still loaded with gasoline. What a setup for an explosion! It could have blown up like a gigantic flashbulb.

Damon elected to go forward and check with the pilots. When he announced the fire, there was a moment of feverish activity in the cockpit. Oil and gas lines were cut to that engine, the prop was feathered, and the pilot threw the plane into a dangerous side-slip maneuver to wipe the flame off the wing.

The loud talking had awakened the others. Before they could panic, Damon wheeled around and boomed out, "Lord, you take over!" The delegates kept their seats. The pilot afterward confessed, "Had those youngsters all lunged to one side of the plane at the critical moment of maneuver, the plane would have been thrown into the sea." On another occasion, Mrs. Rader and I were driving down the Garden State Parkway in New Jersey when we felt a stabbing concern for Damon and the family in Africa. At that moment, their youngest daughter had fallen through loose planking into a cistern of water. As we were praying, a little native girl heard the baby's cry in falling. She slithered down the slippery walls and held the half-drowned baby above water until help could come.

I cannot count the times that God's signal has come to alert us to spiritual danger or especially ripe spiritual

opportunity. For example, it was at midnight some time ago when a disturbed peace led Mrs. Rader and myself to the home of a Soldier. We had felt a sudden concern for her and didn't know why. When she and her godless husband both appeared at the door, I stammered out an apology for coming at such an hour, and said, "I really don't know why we have come." "Come on in!" the husband answered. "I'll tell you why you've come. For the first time in my long and worthless life I have had serious thoughts of God today." In a few minutes he was praising God for newness of life in Christ. Before dawn that very day, a sudden heart attack took him into the presence of his Lord. I tremble at the realization that had we misunderstood God's guidance and delayed a single day, this soul would be in Hell. Many times, with our missionary children on the far sides of the earth, the Holy Spirit has alerted us to pray, just at the life and death moment of miracle.

Dr. Paul Rader of Minneapolis, my uncle, was guided to go back and visit a man who had cursed him out of his office when, the day before, Paul had tried to lead him to Christ. As Paul called for a second appointment, he found that the man was not in. He traced him through his home to a golf course. After trampling over much of the course, without a club or caddie and without success, Paul began to feel foolish. Suddenly he saw his man on a distant green. Paul bowed his head to pray for wisdom, when the man spotted him and yelled, "Paul Rader, what are you doing here?" Paul fumbled for words: "I ... Ah ... I got your telegram."

"You didn't get my telegram," the man shouted. "I destroyed it." "I mean the one God sent me," Paul said. "God must have sent it," cried the man, "because I've gone through Hell this night, and I promised God that I would get right with Him if He would send you after me once more."

Handing his clubs to his partner, he and Paul knelt together on the green. The man rose a "new creature in Christ Jesus," beside himself with joy. He had discovered the dimension of life which had eluded him before. Together they admired the glory of the grass, the trees, the sky. As they walked, Paul posed a question, but there was no answer. He turned and caught his companion by the tie as he slumped into Paul's arms, dead.

Faith and Faithfulness

As young Samuel did not know he was being called by God at first, so we may miss His still, small voice. But once Samuel identified the voice of God and cultivated instant obedience, God trusted him for the next 40 years to be His prophet in Israel. We see a picture of that responsive, burdened heart in Samuel's words to wayward Israel: ...As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you... (I Samuel 12:23).

How often, when some dear one backslides, we let him slip away without a struggle! Manslaughter, resulting from criminal negligence, is a serious crime. But what of soul-slaughter, resulting from prayerlessness and disobedience to the Great Commission? How shall such a "crime" fare at the judgment Seat of Christ (Ezekiel 34:6-10)? On that day, may we be able to say with St. Paul:

...I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God (Acts 20:26).

Don't despair because you have not yet become spiritually sensitive to the still, small voice. After all, God had patience with young Samuel and called, and called, and called until he did hear.

God will never work a miracle to make men believe, he only works when men do believe. At the Red Sea, Moses' prayer was one of disappointment, fear and fainting. Israel wanted to lynch him. "why criest thou unto me?" God said -- in effect, "what are you whimpering for? Get up and command Israel to go forward!" (Exodus 14). Not until Moses was of a mind to be useful to God, not until he had presentense faith to obey and stretch out his staff over the sea, could God deliver Israel.

Such present-tense faith is attached to specifics. Generalized praying accomplishes little. But it is wonderful how fervently we can pray when God stabs us alert with insistent disturbance of peace and we pray under His presence with teeth in our faith and deep desire for the God of Miracle to step in and redeem the situation. When God puts the pressure on, we feel almost as importunate as if we knew what the need was. Prayerlessness is a sin. Nobody dreamed who was behind the great Charles G. Finney revival until it suddenly ceased. Finney searched his soul in agony for days. Then an old man whom people called Father Nash stood up in one of the services, perhaps, it could be his failure, he confessed. Ever since Finney's conversion, he said, he had spent every Saturday -- all night -- in prayer for his ministry. But the past Saturday he had been so weary he had asked the Lord to forgive him for going to bed. When Father Nash went back to his knees, the revival immediately resumed.

Where are the Father Nashes? The movers of mountains? The man who know the secret of the romance of the God-Led life?