

FOCUSED LIVING PRAYER December 2015

Men hate interruptions! Many men barely tolerate the hectic press of the Christmas season as one big interruption to their business, personal goals, flow of life, well deserved down time and schedule! But our gracious God continues to interrupt the **plans** we have for our lives so that He can work His **purpose** in our lives. And because the Lord is supremely sovereign, all interruptions are ultimately His interruptions! Just maybe every interruption is really a gift from God to help us experience His **glory**, understand the **gospel** of His grace and help us **grow** to become more like Christ! Perhaps we shouldn't reject these Christmas gifts just because they aren't wrapped the way we would like. The Lord especially likes to interrupt folks during Christmas.



God interrupted...

- ✚ **Mary's** wedding plans with a scandalous unplanned pregnancy (Luke 1:26-38).
- ✚ **Joseph's** future goals and reputation with a wife impregnated by the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:18-25). His life situation was further interrupted as his family became hunted fugitives in Egypt (Matt 2:13-15).
- ✚ **King Herod's** political quest for power and prestige with the real authority of King Jesus who is above all Kings (Matt 2:1-8).
- ✚ **The shepherd's** same ol' uneventful life and quiet evening of watching their flocks (Luke 2:8-20).
- ✚ **The Magi's** theological framework, world view, travel plans and lifestyle as kings (Matt 2:1-12).
- ✚ **Bethlehem's** safety as a sleepy suburb of Jerusalem with the severe adversity of infant genocide by Herod (Matt 2:16-18).
- ✚ **Zacharias'** plans to preach and lead the temple with 9 months of silence (Luke 1:5-23, 57-79).
- ✚ **Elizabeth's** desire to settle down and retire at old age with a surprise pregnancy (Luke 1:13-15, 24, 36, 39-44).
- ✚ **Jesus'** reign in heaven to pass through a birth canal and end up impaled to a cross for our sin (Phil 2:6-11).

Yes...God is in the interruptions...especially at Christmas! Why? Because He wants to get your attention so that you will fully and finally receive the **"good news of great joy...that there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!"** (Lk 2:10-11) **Jesus was born to die. He died so you could be born...again!** (Gal 4:2-7; Jn 3:5,7,16)

So...are you listening? Will you stop to thank Him for the various interruptions He will inevitably bring to you during this Christmas season? Remember, He is in the interruptions in our lives, not in the plans we make for ourselves.

Ministry Prayer & Praise

Lord, as 2015 comes to a close, we are grateful for Your work, visible and invisible, in our midst this year. This fall, for the first time in our 22 year history, You led us to start tracking (in more than an anecdotal way) the men who have come into a relationship with you through Christ and tracking the men who have started discipling another man. We rejoice with the angels in heaven over the lost being found - Andrew T., Barney, Vinny, Terrel, Wayne, Andrew S.! We thank you that each one of these men is tethered to a Focused Living man who is living a life worth imitating. We praise you for the 25 men whom we know of who have started intentionally discipling at least one other man. We thank You, Father, for more and more men having an internal spiritual motivation to join You in your discipling mission. God, we thank You for the men who are plugging into local churches for the first time; for the husbands praying with their wives for the first time; for the spontaneous ministry during the great flood in Columbia this fall; for the new male mentors at Daybreak Pregnancy Center; for men who are owning their spiritual growth for the first time; for the material provision for yet another year! Lord, you have taken our few fish and couple loaves of bread and have multiplied them. And in the process, we realize that you have caused us to depend on You more tangibly and more deeply.

As we enter this Christmas season, remind us yet again of the royal flush you have dealt us! Your character is rock solid. Your promises are a sure thing. Nothing is impossible for You. Nothing can thwart Your purposes in our life. You are sovereign and totally in control. And on top of all this, YOU LOVE US! Yup, we can go ALL IN for You, because you have already gone ALL IN for us.

Bowers' Family Prayer

Perry – praising God for my word Abide for 2015 and asking for a listening ear to know what to focus on in 2016. Wisdom regarding ministry pace, investing in our grandkids and whether to continue road biking after the accident this past fall.

Janet - grateful for deeper understanding of grace and my need for the gospel EVERY day. Thankful for prayer times with sisters in Christ.

Joy & Eddie - energy, wisdom and prayerful hearts as we parent the ever changing needs of a three year old girl, five and seven year old boys, and a nine year old girl. Praise for good friendships in our neighborhood.

Megan & Marc - thankful for Megan's part time teaching job which allows her more time & energy to focus on parenting our two year old son and five year old kindergarten daughter. Praise for a new church home.

Andes' Family Prayer

David & Katherine –

“I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous.” Joshua 1:5,6

“Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.” Psalm 16:8

God - **in** Whom we believe, **to** Whom we belong, **from** Whom we have been sent, and **with** Whom we serve - has been close to us and walked with us this whole year. He has strengthened us in our parenting, comforted us in job transition for Katherine, blessed us with 25 years of marriage, prepared us for the middle school years, provided for special needs through a variety of avenues. We have found Him faithful in 2015 and gladly entrust our lives to Him for 2016!