

**JESUS IN YOU AND DISCIPLINED**  
**Patterning After the Healthy Christ**  
**Part 8**  
**Dr. George O. Wood**

We're going to take a moment to share a passage of scripture from Hebrews 12. I'm not speaking from it expositionally today but it is a scripture that speaks to us of discipline. I'm always intrigued by the timing the Lord arranges for a particular message. I had not when I started our preaching this series on "Patterning After the Healthy Christ" really realized that the last message, on discipline, would be preached the Sunday morning that the time change would have gone into effect. "Therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood and you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons. My son do not make light of the Lord's discipline and do not lose heart when he rebukes you. For the Lord disciplines those he loves and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline. God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father. If you are not disciplined, and everyone undergoes discipline, then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live. Our fathers disciplined us for a little while, as they thought best. But God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time. But painful. Later on however it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. Make level paths for your feet so that the lame may not be disabled but rather healed."

In the Los Angeles *Times* in the entertainment section the Nielson survey that monitors television watching in the country indicated that the average American household has the television on 7 hours and 4 minutes of every day. One person in the family is probably not watching television to that extent, but the television is on. This would add up to the television in the average household being on 49½ hours a week, 214½ hours a month and 2574 hours a year. By the time a child grows up to the age of 18 in American culture today using these statistics he will have lived in a household whose television has been on 46,332 hours or an equivalent of 5 years, 3 months, and 14 days of his 18 year old life. Almost one third of his life in a household in which he was either watching television or the television was on in the other room.

My message today doesn't have anything to do so much with television as I want to use television at the outset to illustrate a symptom that is ramped in our society and even among Christians today. That symptom is a kind of letting life drift by in the course of least resistance. No pain and no discipline and hardship. The easiest thing we have to do when we are tired or when we want to occupy our time is simply set down in front of a television and begin to look at whatever is there.

We can even I think be guilty of watching Christian television too much. We use it properly, we let it edify our life. But it's like anything we take too much of it and it impedes the development of service in our life to God and to others. If television becomes a means by which our

## **JESUS IN YOU AND AT**

### **Patterning After the Healthy Christ – Part 8**

relationship with our family, conversation is blocked off, if it begins to reduce our ability to have prayer or to grow through reading. If it hinders us from serving others in the body of Christ by meaningful involvement with them and building relationships with people, then it becomes a symptom of our inability to bring discipline to bear on our life.

That's my theme today. If we're to pattern after the healthy Christ then one of the things that the Lord certainly was in his life and is now through the power of his Spirit is disciplined. As we look at this eighth in a series of "Patterning after the Healthy Christ" I'll begin as we have all of these sermons by looking at our level of discipline. We'll just ask some questions. Today the questions that I'm going to ask not only relate to our level of discipline as it applies to the full spectrum of our life but our level of discipline as it applies as well to our Christian experience. So I share with you some questions. You can ask them of yourself.

1. Do I live without working towards some future goal or goals? It's obvious in reading in the gospels that the Lord lived with a very specific plan for his life. He says at the beginning of his ministry "I have come to do the work of him who has sent me." He knew what that work would involve. He knew he had three years to get that work done. He knew the work would be completed when he died on the cross and rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven. He had very clear goals. He knew that in that period of time he must collect to himself a company whom he would send to the end of the world with a proclamation of his saving life and death and resurrection. So the Lord had clear cut goals and objectives.

If we answer this question, Do I live without working towards some future goal or goals, if we answer that yes it is an indication that rather than our letting the Lord set the agenda for our lives other people are setting the agenda. Rather than being an active person participating with God in knowing what directions we are go, we're simply going with the flow of whatever is happening. It is perhaps the first tip off to maybe a lack of discipline in our experience. Do I live without working towards some future goal or goals?

2. Do I make many unrealistic plans about the future, which later have to be abandoned? There are sometimes we do set goals and maybe we're a goal setter but not a goal completer. There's a great deal of difference between setting a goal and completing a goal. So we have to answer that. There are many unrealistic plans, which I start out to do but I'm unable to complete them. Maybe a good way to find that out is look around our home and that ought to be tip off right away. Do I/you make unrealistic plans, which have to be abandoned?

I think all of us are human enough to recognize that there are occasions when we start out to do something and cannot for one reason or another get it done. But if it becomes a continual habit of our life that we start things but never complete them there is a good level of un-discipline suggested in our life.

3. Do I act impulsively rather than deliberately? Acting impulsively would mean to really be hasty in the decision making process. To go with whatever one's impulses feel. In the gospels, the apostle Peter was like this. I think this is one of the areas he really had to work in the development of Peter's temperament and emotionality. He has to teach this man Peter to not always open his mouth and insert his foot. To not always act before he thought.

## JESUS IN YOU AND AT

### Patterning After the Healthy Christ – Part 8

One of the classic examples I think of in the gospels where Peter acted before he thought was in that delightful moment when he and the others had gone out fishing because they had been impatient that the Lord hadn't appeared to them in Galilee after his resurrection. The Lord appears on the beach and tells them to cast the net on the other side. They do and a draft of fishes are caught. Then John says, "It's the Lord!" And then the text of the gospel of John says "Peter seeing that it was the Lord, put on his clothes for he was stripped for work and sprang into the sea and swam to shore." That's such a classic example of impulsiveness. It indicates that the normal person would have swam making themselves lighter, to propel themselves through the water. But Peter out of his impulsiveness doesn't wait for the ship to dock – puts on his clothes and swims.

There may be sometimes when you and I like Peter have done some fairly stupid things. But is it a characteristic pattern of behavior – acting impulsively rather than deliberately?

4. Am I easily tempted by a bargain? This not only applies to shopping at a grocery store or any other kind of store but it can also apply perhaps to the spiritual life. We often look for short cuts, for convenient ways to instantly develop as a Christian. So we are willing to think that if we get *this* book or hear *that* speaker or have *that* particular experience that if we can just get that then all of our needing to strive and to be disciplined will pass away. In one grand moment of time we'll suddenly be elevated. The Lord in his graciousness by the way does allow us to come across books and speakers and experiences, which give us great elevation in our faith. But we can be so easily tempted by a bargain, which would suggest that if you'll just try this panacea, this solution then everything will turn out all right. Rather than realizing that for everything which the Lord does which has significant lasting value he calls us to count the cost of it as we start the task whether we have the discipline to complete it.

5. Do I find myself often leaving a task before I complete it? This would suggest if we answer that yes, that our interest very easily shifts from one thing to another.

6. Do I find it difficult to follow a definite plan? I can't stick to an agenda because I find it very easy to flip from thing to thing.

If we answer all these questions, and some of them are parallel and somewhat repetitive but if we answer all 6 yes it would suggest that there is a good deal of impulsiveness and wrongful kinds of spontaneity in our life. That we tend to go with whatever direction is coming up. We're easily influenced by friends. Rather than influencing others we're more likely dragged long by others in the direction they're going.

If we answer no to all of these it would tend to suggest that there is a good deal of discipline and planning and diligence and perseverance in our life.

If we kind of have mixed yeses and nos it's suggestive of the fact that here is certainly room for improvement as we pattern after the healthy Christ.

You can answer all these questions no and be a supremely disciplined person in terms of living life now. But you may be a very, very undisciplined person spiritually. That's why I've put in a

## **JESUS IN YOU AND AT**

### **Patterning After the Healthy Christ – Part 8**

second set of questions today to help us look at such things as spiritual discipline. Am I/are you a spiritually disciplined person? What's the first discipline of the Christian life?

1. Repenting of sin and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is a discipline. We must make a conscious decision to receive Jesus and to acknowledge that only he can forgive our sins. None of us on our own merit or righteousness are worthy to stand in his presence. But Jesus has come to present us to the Father if we'll repent of sin. All the rest of the Christian life is a free gift of God's grace. I don't want anybody to presume as we go through the remaining part of these questions that simply because you can answer all of them yes doesn't necessarily mean you are a Christian. If you don't answer number one yes, then the free gift of God's grace hasn't been received. You can answer all the rest of them yes but if you've answered number one no then it doesn't make you a Christian. I don't want anybody to think that discipline is what makes you a believer. But discipline will cause you to grow and prosper as a believer. And cause you to be more pliable instruments to be used of the Lord.

2. Have you been baptized in water? That's a discipline of the Christian life. "Repent and be baptized," Jesus said. If you have repented and believed in Christ and have put a period of time between you and baptism then the Lord is saying, This is the first standing order that I give you when you follow me. I want you to begin living with that discipline and embrace that as what I'm asking you to do. It's a conscious decision on your part as a witness to others. Be baptized.

3. Do I have a time of daily prayer? Here we're speaking of more than prayers that are simply shot up on occasion as we drift through the day. But a time in which we commit ourselves to praying. Maybe daily or regularly. A time of regular study of the scripture – personal.

4. Do I get together with a small group of believers at least once a week to study scripture, share and pray. This is important to our spiritual life, the development of it. Getting together for worship is needful and we must do it. But there also needs to be that time when we gather ourselves in a more intimate way with other members of the body of Christ and share what's going on in our life. Share the scripture and pray together. We can do this sometimes in a Sunday school class, sometimes in a midweek Bible study, sometimes in a home Bible study, sometimes just in terms of being a family together. But it's important that we share. We have to ask ourselves do we have that discipline.

6. Have I made a commitment to be part of a local church and faithfully attend worship? There is a scripture that says of Jesus that "he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as was his custom." As was his habit. Jesus found himself regularly in the place of worship.

Our kind of society in southern California easily lends itself to church hopping. It's to kind of drift from here to there to see what's going on, who's speaking, and what's the latest. There can be those occasions maybe where we can profit from a special ministry that comes long. But if it's the characteristic of our life to simply go from one place to another it suggests that we're simply looking for what blessing we can receive. We have really no intent in our life to let our life be a blessing to others. We simply come always as a receiving people rather than as giving people.

One of the things about plunking down in a regular body of believers is that you give a chance to give and share and to live the Christian life on a more keen and cutting level rather than simply

## **JESUS IN YOU AND AT**

### **Patterning After the Healthy Christ – Part 8**

participating through watching what is going on. The Lord had a regular habit of attending worship.

7. Do I have some regular responsibility in the body of Christ that I faithfully fulfill? Do you have some aspect of service in the body of Christ where someone is counting upon you to do some particular task or some ministry, to employ some gift that you have that the Lord has given you?

8. This question has to do with the discipline of witness. Have a witness verbally to anyone in the last month about Jesus Christ? I put “verbally”. Our lives are meant to be a witness but simply by watching my life a person cannot know that Jesus died or their sins and rose again from the dead. That can only be known as I share it verbally.

9. Have I fasted a meal in the past month in order to pray? Jesus says to us, “When you fast, don’t be like the hypocrites who make themselves look sad. But go into your closet and fast and there pray in secret.” Jesus expected fasting to be part of the discipline of his disciples.

10. Do I faithfully support the work of the Lord with my tithes and with my offerings? This is also another aspect of disciplining our life for the Lord.

How did you fare? Let’s not be afraid time to time of having the Holy Spirit probe around in our life and point out areas where we need discipline. Let’s use these questions rather than simply saying to us, if we’ve answered no on any number of them, rather than saying, You’re a big failure as a Christian, let’s look at these questions in light of the solution of how the Lord can help us to get going and get on the disciplines.

These are not all the discipline of the Christian life, these ten disciplines. But I think they’re a fairly good indicator of the level of discipline and commitment we bring to the Christian life. One of the characteristics, by the way, in the gospel of those who follow Jesus is that they are called “disciples” rather than “believers.” The emphasis in the gospel is on being a disciple, one who lives by a disciple. The discipline of the Lord. As we live by that discipline then the word “believer” has all that much more strength and power to it. Because it’s the belief that’s backed up with commitment and action.

We might ask ourselves What keeps me from being a disciplined person?

There is a tie in with some of the other messages I’ve given in this series. For example if you’re supremely anxious and nervous person, worried, it’s kind of hard when you’re really anxious about something, anxious about life, to set down and be disciplined. You find a struggle to do that. I would suggest that if that’s keeping you from discipline then go back and review the teaching that was given in that area.

When you’re depressed it’s hard to be disciplined. When you’re depressed it’s so easy to sit and do nothing and not be able to make any concrete plans. I think of that classic example of depression in Luke 24 where the two disciples were on the road to Emmaus. Their last knowledge of the Lord was that he had been laid in a tomb. Jesus in different form appears to them as they are on the road. Jesus says “What are these things you are talking about together as you walk on the way.” Luke says “And they stood still looking sad. They had no plans. All

## **JESUS IN YOU AND AT**

### **Patterning After the Healthy Christ – Part 8**

their plans and all their dreams were shattered. Just like our plans and dreams are shattered when we go through some serious loss in our life. They were depressed and Jesus needed to go with them on the road and reveal his presence to them. When that depression is lifted by his presence then they can go on with ordering their life and hearing his command.

Anger also can be a real thing that keeps us away from being disciplined. Anger operates on our impulsiveness. If we're hostile and if we're showing anger in emotional ways then that will keep us from being disciplined.

Sin can also keep us from discipline. How often have we found that when we have committed sin we are reluctant to open our scriptures and read the Bible? When we've committed sin we're reluctant to come the Lord in prayer. When we've committed sin we're reluctant to even gather together with other believers because we feel so like we're hypocrites, so unworthy that we can't live the Christian life. Yet it's in those precise moments when we most need and God most wants us to come into his presence and bring to him our failures and our needs.

In dealing with temptation how often we give in because we feel the pressure is so great. And if we don't give in the pressure will get all the stronger. Whereas the scripture really says, "Resist the devil and he'll flee from you." At the moment you're being tested and you feel the pressure is so great you can't hang on any longer. If at that moment you'll resist you'll find that instead of the pressure getting greater, the pressure will get less. Because the devil will have to operate with you like he operates with Jesus. When it came to the supreme moment of crisis and the Lord gave him an irrevocable no, then the devil let him. When he had finished all this tempting, until a more opportune time. He had to leave him for a while. Satan had to back off.

Sin can so deaden us that we may not be living with spiritual disciplines.

How do we build a disciplined life? How would you start? I'm not sure that in the rest of the time we have today that I can give you the steps. Wouldn't it be nice if there were just three simple things? I hope what I share will simply be seeds that will grow in your life. I believe you can take these principles and put them to work in such a way with the Holy Spirit's help, they will actually grow discipline in your experience.

The first thing I feel toward building a disciplined life is establishing some goals and priorities. This is not simply goals and priorities from the fleshly human kind of sense. But it involves coming to the Lord and saying, Lord, what goals and priorities do you have for my life? What environment did you give me that puts unique things in me? What traits did you put in me? What capabilities did you put in me that could be brought towards fulfilling some goal, some priority in my life?

Faith requires an object. Like someone who says, "I'm in love!" Who are you in love with? "I don't know but I'm in love!" That's all well and good but if love doesn't have an object it's not very substantive love. Love must have an object: I am in love... with some person.

Faith must have an object. You can't go around simply saying, "I have faith!" What do you have faith for? "I don't know but I have faith." Faith requires us setting some kind of direction. With the Lord's help keying in on an objective. I really believe that through establishing objectives and priorities in prayer we can become with God a co-author of his will. If I

## **JESUS IN YOU AND AT**

### **Patterning After the Healthy Christ – Part 8**

understand anything about prayer in regard to petition is that prayer gives us an opportunity to be a co-author with God of his will. He's invited us to come and bring to him the desires of our heart. Desires that I believe that he himself has placed there.

How do I know what my goals and priorities are? Especially this would be the case if you don't have any at this current moment. Can I give you a couple exercises which you can do today which may help you get an idea of goals and priorities in your life?

Sit down and write your eulogy. A eulogy is the good word someone will speak at your funeral service. What do you want to be said of you? When your time on this earth, when your lease on life is done, what would you like for someone else to say of you? What did you do? What were you like? That right away can open the arena of your mind to a whole host of things that maybe your life should be aimed toward.

Sit down and describe an ideal day in your life ten years from now, if the Lord carries and if you have life. What would be an ideal day in your life ten years from now?

Ask the Lord's help in formulating this so this doesn't become just another experiment but something that you work out with the Lord's help. That can help you begin to establish some sense of direction.

Jesus set goals. His goal was to go to Jerusalem. Time and again the gospel of Luke says, He set his face to go to Jerusalem. He set goals in terms of the fact that he needed to have a group of committed disciples he would leave behind to carry on his message. Goals keep our dreams alive. I've found when I get pounded by life and I have setbacks and I'm lying down on the sidewalk of life like I've been run over with a Mack truck, that the goals and dreams that the Lord has dropped in my heart give me through the Spirit's help the strength to rise up and say, "Life isn't over. God's still given me that as an objective and vision. I can press toward it."

Goals certainly help us to establish our priorities. We know what to turn down and what to accept if we're operating with goals and priorities.

I had a seminary prof that said this, some of the best counsel I've had in terms of practical wisdom and approaching life: The key to making decision in life is not simply to distinguish between the good and the bad. Most of us can do that. We know what's good and we know what's bad. We know what the Lord would approve and we know what he wouldn't approve. The real key for the believer is learning to distinguish between the good and the best.

There are lots of things we could settle down and might be good for us. But they may not be God's best. Coming at our life with goal and priorities can give us this sense of direction.

May I suggest that as you work in establishing goals and priorities in your life with the Lord's help is that you then begin to take faith size steps of obedience towards your objective. Faith size steps of obedience. I think a faith size step of obedience involves two things. It involves the big picture and the little picture. The big picture is the overall dream, the overall plan. Jesus had this in regard to the disciples. He wanted to send them to all the world. People inspired with the Holy Spirit to bring his message. But when they first began following him they were not sufficiently trained to be able to take on that big goal and take that the Lord had for them. He

## **JESUS IN YOU AND AT**

### **Patterning After the Healthy Christ – Part 8**

sent them on their first training mission simply to their own countrymen. He told them not to go to the Samaritans or Gentiles. Told them not to get into arguments with people. Why? They were too racially prejudiced to go to Gentiles and Samaritans. And they didn't know enough at that point to get into arguments with people. They were to simply share their testimony with a relative kinsman, fellow citizen, and move on. It was a small way to begin.

Sometimes if we have a goal it may become so big, such a vast goal, that it seems like we never will attain it. And we won't unless we put some intermediary faith size steps along the way.

One of the things that happens in our Christian life is we get all motivated to really begin serving the Lord and we say, I'm going to become a person of prayer. I'm going to become a person of scripture. And we set these immense goals. Then all of a sudden we fall flat on our face because we have not like an athlete or soldier disciplined ourselves in increments or steps which will help us attain that goal. The Chinese proverb, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." It involves as we are being disciplined to start out in faith-size chunks. And also to not only have a vision that's large enough and a vision that's small enough that can take faith-size chunks but also be adaptable and flexible. Because in the course of living the Lord may choose to alter our course. May choose to feed us new direction an input and cause us to re-evaluate.

Let me give you a practical exercise to work on a concrete goal. If you had a piece of paper with five columns spread across it in parallel fashion. On the far right column set down what your goal would be. Secularly maybe your goal would be to read 20 books in 1979 or maybe lose 20 pounds in 1979. That's at the right. That's my goal.

Then in the column to the far left put where you're at right now. Right now you can say, I'm reading 4-5 books a year. Generally they're not books I pre-selected. I either buy them on impulse or someone gives it to me. I'm not making my own choices. Also if it's the 20-pound thing: Right now I weigh 173 pounds and I want to weigh 153. Whatever.

Then in the second column to the left as you're moving across the page. You've got your goal n you've got where you're at. You want to fill in things between it. Put down a list of some of the things that are working for you. Some of the things that you know would help you toward that goal. Some of the positive factors. Like, the Lord has given me a mind that loves to inquire. Therefore he must want me to grow in mind even as the Lord Jesus grew in mind. Or in regard to losing weigh, My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. I don't feel good at the weight level I now weight. I'm sure that the Lord would want me to do this and he would be for me and help me in this task.

Then in the next column over list the things that are working against you to attain that goal. Things working against me – too much TV time is keeping me away from my 20 books a year. Or too un-disciplined. Or too irregular go to bed habits or the like. Or my 20 pounds, what's keeping me from my goal: my fondness for chocolate. That's working against me. My fondness for pie a la mode. My fondness for a second helping of food.

We know what the obstacles are and we can clearly identify them.

Then finally in the column just before you get to your goal the practical steps you can take that the Lord would have you take to fulfill that goal. Practical steps like for example, If I'm going to

## **JESUS IN YOU AND AT**

### **Patterning After the Healthy Christ – Part 8**

read 20 books this year, then figure out a number of pages. Then divide the pages by the number of days in the year. That would mean that I roughly need to read 15 pages a day in order to accomplish that. Then if that's the case then I need to daily block out this amount of time. Or on a weekly basis block out this amount of time so that that goal can be fulfilled. A practical working plan.

This can be done as we look at the 10 questions on a spiritual level that were at the front of the sermon. We talked about beginning some of the disciplines in our Christian experience. Maybe the discipline of prayer or reading the word or the discipline of getting involved with other believers or doing some meaningful thing in the body of Christ. Often, sitting down with paper and pen, helps us to objectify, to put in concrete what we need to do so that we can stop being the drifters and letting life happen to us. Rather than letting the Holy Spirit guide and inform and direct our lives.

I think there's a third key to developing a disciplined life in addition to setting goals and priorities, and establishing faith size steps of obedience.

The third thing is perseverance.

You will find this quality consistent in every disciplined person's life. There is that trait I would identify as perseverance. Perseverance is a word that comes from a Latin word. It literally means "very strict." It carries the idea to continue in a given course especially in the face of discouragement, obstacles or the like. It's never, according to the Oxford Dictionary, used in the negative or evil sense. We don't for example speak of a person persevering in evil. We speak of them persisting in evil. Whenever we use the word "perseverance" we use describes a person who is bound towards some positive good and healthy goal and who is bumped and who is tried, and for whom obstacles come against them. But they persevere.

This is what the writer of Hebrews was saying this morning. We are to run with patience the race that is set before us. That we are to persevere and not be easily bumped by the obstacles of life. Nor are we to be easily bumped by our emotions, which feel like are calling on us to stop. Tenacity is part of the Christian life. With the Lord's help, we will. We shall overcome.

He who has begun a good work in you will complete it. Completing it!

To do thy will. That's what following Christ and discipline is all about – to do it for him.

Lord, we thank you for these moments you've given to us today in your presence. We think Lord, how you were disciplined in reaching us. How it was in your heart that the whole world should be saved. How you left that dream and goal and priority not only in your heart but you put it into action by coming into life, by risking and being vulnerable and going to the cross and persevering in spite of friends leaving you. In spite of even God abandoning in you on the cross. You persevered and you became the author and the perfecter of our faith. The pioneer and completer of all we have. You persevered and you fought sin unto the death. We praise you, Lord, because your goals for us are being realized. Because the steps you're taken in our life are coming to pass and because your grace is at work in us to cause us to persevere until the end. We think, Lord, of your word, which tells us that "He that endures to the end shall be saved." We realize, Lord, that in that the message of

**JESUS IN YOU AND AT**  
**Patterning After the Healthy Christ – Part 8**

perseverance is bound up. The whole idea of completeness. We are called to follow you, to remain disciplined and under discipline for the glory of your name. Now, Lord, I cannot possibly evaluate where every person here is. But I thank you that the Holy Spirit can. And that you, Holy Spirit of God, will now take what seeds in this message are designed for each one of our lives, will plant those firmly in the soil of our receptivity so that coming out of this service will be a new level of walking with you. Restore our souls and bring us to that position, Lord, of obedience to you in everything we ask. Thank you, Lord, for the grace you give and the love you give to us and the repair you give us when we are broken. Through Jesus our Lord. Amen.

A prayer by Catherine Marshall: Father, once I had such big dreams, so much anticipation of the future. Now no shimmering horizon beckons me. My days are lackluster. I see so little of lasting value in the daily round. Where is your plan for my life? You have told us that without vision, we men perish. So Father in heaven, knowing that I can ask in confidence for what is your expressed will to give me. I ask you to deposit in my mind and heart that particular dream, the special vision you have for my life. And along with the dream will you give me whatever graces, patience and stamina it takes to see the dream through to fruition. I sense that this may involve adventures I have not bargained for. But I want to trust you, to follow even if you lead along new paths. I admit to liking some of my ruts. But I know that my habit patterns that seem like cozy nests from the inside from your vantagepoint may be prison cells. Lord, if you have to break down any prisons of mine before I can see the stars and catch the vision then Lord begin the process now, in joyous expectation. Amen.