



*“You, Then,  
You Will Pray  
Like This.”*

**Seventh Day Baptist  
Week of Prayer**

***January 7 - 13, 2024***

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# Seventh Day Baptist Week of Prayer January 7-13, 2024

*Sponsored by the*  
Seventh Day Baptist World Federation • [www.sdbwf.org](http://www.sdbwf.org)

During the first full week of January since 1967, Seventh Day Baptists around the world have come together in prayer, sharing theme-focused meditations chosen by the author of the Seventh Day Baptist Week of Prayer booklet. The theme for this year is, *"You, Then, You Will Pray Like This."*

## Purposes of the SDB World Federation include:

1. **To provide increased communication** among Seventh Day Baptist groups around the world.
2. **To promote projects of mutual interest** which will benefit from international cooperation.
3. **To stimulate fellowship** among Seventh Day Baptist Christians through periodic meetings of representatives between Conferences or groups and programs of mutual aid.
4. **To receive and evaluate statements** of need as may come to the Federation and to share such expression of need with its members, inviting their response as the Lord may lead.
5. **To provide leadership training** for Conference leaders, pastors and lay leaders appropriate to each individual conference, as determined through consultation.

## Sessions:

The last General Sessions were held in Blantyre, Malawi, September 16-23, 2023 under the theme, "Become Perfectly One," based on John 17:23. The next General Session is planned to be carried out in 2028 at a venue to be announced.

## Prayer Requests by Country:

In order to help the people in our conferences pray intelligently about concerns in particular countries, a page with relevant information by country has been posted to the SDB World Federation website, and may be accessed by clicking on the following link: <https://sdbwf.org/wop/2024>

## Officers:

Officers for the World Federation include General Secretary Douglas Machado ([generalsecretary@sdbwf.org](mailto:generalsecretary@sdbwf.org)); President Luciano Baretto Nogueira de Moura ([president@sdbwf.org](mailto:president@sdbwf.org)); Treasurer, Deborah Hargett ([treasurer@sdbwf.org](mailto:treasurer@sdbwf.org)); Assistant General Secretary, Andrew Samuels; Recording Secretary, Marcia Nembhard; Regional Vice Presidents: Canaan Phiri (Africa), Abel Caesar (Caribbean), Carlene Wynter (Europe), Amaury Moitinho (South America), and Nicholas Kersten (North America). Luis Lovelace serves as Editor of Publications.

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## **From the Treasurer**

The SDB World Federation desires to further the kingdom of God and make disciples in all nations. It is a volunteer organization relying on contributions from conferences, churches and individual donors. Donations to the SDB World Federation are used to provide increased communication among SDB groups around the world, promote projects of mutual interest benefitting international cooperation, stimulate fellowship among Seventh Day Baptist Christians, and fund the operating costs of the federation, including travel expenses and conference costs of the World Federation Sessions that occur every five years.

During the SDB World Federation Sessions in Malawi in September 2023, delegates had the opportunity to witness firsthand the needs of our largest member conference, the Central Africa Conference. Reports from other conferences around the world indicate similar needs. The World Federation aims to foster active communication and collaborative projects between member conferences to address these needs.

The World Federation encourages all member conferences to reintroduce an annual Sabbath giving week to support the World Federation. This event is recommended to take place on the last Sabbath of May each year. The theme for 2024 is "Give Freely and Increase" based on Proverbs 11:24. However, contributions and designations are welcome at any time throughout the year. To contribute, please make checks or money orders payable to SDBWF and mail them to the following address:

Treasurer, SDB World Federation, P.O. Box 581, Silver Creek, GA 30173-0581, USA.

Alternatively, donations can be made via PayPal at [treasurer@sdbwf.org](mailto:treasurer@sdbwf.org) or through our website at [sdbwf.org/donate](https://sdbwf.org/donate).

Your support and contributions play a vital role in furthering this mission. Together, we can make a significant impact in advancing God's kingdom and spreading His message to all nations.

Debbie Hargett,  
Treasurer, SDB World Federation

## **About the Author**



*Pastor Helmer Umaña with his wife Anna Vilma*

**Helmer Umaña** is the Pastor of the Seventh Day Baptist Christian Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA. His nationality is Salvadoran. He studied Engineering at the National University of El Salvador and for political reasons could not finish his studies. He was a teacher in private schools in his country.

Pastor Umaña married Anna Vilma 45 years ago in El Salvador and together

they have two children: Karen, who is the immediate past recording secretary for the World Federation, and Helmer Jr. who pastors a Seventh Day Church of God in the San Jose, California area. Helmer Jr. is married to Liz, a faithful servant of God and they are parents of a beautiful 3-year old daughter named Getsy. Pastor Helmer Umaña Sr's entire family have been Sabbath

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keepers all their lives. He was a member of the Seventh Day Church of God most of his life, serving as a Deacon in East Los Angeles in the mid-80's, then he became Elder in San Fernando Valley, California for three years. He and his family moved to Maryland in 1993 and he served as Co-Pastor at a Silver Spring Church.

Then in 1995, along with several other families, he started a Church in Silver Spring, Maryland. In 2005, his church joined the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference of USA & Canada. He was accredited by the General Conference in 2015. He has been

Pastor of that Church for 29 years. He was a student of Theology on different occasions in the Summit School of the General Conference of the Church of God Seventh Day in Denver, Colorado, USA. He was also a student at the Seventh Day Baptist Center on Ministry in the Summer Institute classes from 2008 to 2010. Lately, he has participated in working with missionaries in Sofia, Bulgaria, presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Muslim communities.

Pastor Umaña, is also the spiritual father of three adult men; Isaac, Axel, and Aaron.

### Introduction

The most sacred, delicate, and purest things of the spiritual life are generally the things which tend to be attacked, or damaged, and sometimes misrepresented. And we as Christians sometimes end up believing, accepting, and often using them. I was captivated that some of the apostles asked the Lord to teach them to pray. Perhaps they were impressed by His way of praying, or by the effectiveness of how Jesus Christ did it. Although we were not allowed to know how John taught his disciples, but I can safely say that we have no record that John taught them to say, "Our Father."

Looking at Matthew's context in Chapter six, we see that the Lord takes the time to teach first what to do, and what not to do regarding the themes of Giving, Prayer and Fasting. It seems that those disciplines were being practiced in the wrong way. Some of those who gave, made sounds like trumpets; some of those who prayed, did it standing in the synagogue or on the corners to be seen and some of those who fasted, disfigured their faces, to cause a look of piety.

I believe that the tone of our Lord in these passages is not casual, but it can carry the intention of establishing people who can really pray, with a more real, and clear intention. Jesus wanted them to utilize elements that were being left out of something so sacred as prayer is. For that reason, when our Lord says **"This, then is how you should pray,"** He is not making a suggestion. The expression itself denotes a command, from the highest spiritual authority.

For us Christians, praying is not an option. Being a Christian involves not only following Jesus, but even more, to know Him and maintain constant dialogue with Him. Prayer is intrinsic to Christianity. Believing in Jesus as our Lord and Savior leads us to have an ongoing personal relationship with Him.

It is mandatory to know the meaning of what we pray as Christians, and understand some fundamental concepts that help us to have a constant relationship with God in an appropriate way.

Normally when we talk about spirituality, we think of prayer. By saying that a person is spiritual, we are usually referring to someone who has frequent personal contact with God. But spirituality goes beyond simply praying. It involves every moment of our existence. Christian spirituality is indeed based on how we relate to God, but also in how we reflect Christ.

It is necessary to understand the importance that Jesus Christ highlighted to each of the elements that are part of His prayer. In Matthew chapter 6 for example, He uses the term, "Your Father," and He is not saying that in a general way to all men, but giving it to His disciples. And after using it for more than three occasions, He then teaches that we can use it also and begin our prayers with the sublime expression: "Our Father, who art in heaven."

I want to use those elements in this Week of Prayer, with the intention that they serve us, not only to improve our prayer life, but to improve our overall relationship with God.



***It came to pass that Jesus was praying in a place, and when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him: Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.***

**Luke 11:1**

I do not doubt that Jesus' disciples were men of prayer, and I do believe that they understood that there could be a better way to approach the Father. They understood the significance of bringing one's requests to the Lord. And what they meant by this particular request is: "Some of us were disciples of John and were taught by him to pray, but, Lord, we have been observing and we see that you are deeper and more effective in your prayers. Could you give us the secrets of your prayer?" They continue, "As we are watching you, we have seen that somehow the wonder and the mystery of your character is bound up in your prayer life, and you have made us aware of how little we really know about prayer. Lord, would You teach us to pray?"

What did they see in His life that produced this cry in their hearts? What impressed them, as they observed Jesus praying, that convinced them that His prayer life and His awesome power and wisdom were somehow linked? They saw that, with Jesus, prayer was a necessity. It was more than an occasional practice on His part. It was a lifelong habit. It was an attitude of the mind and heart. It was the atmosphere in which He lived; the air He breathed. Everything He did came out of prayer. He prayed without ceasing. It was not always formal prayer. He didn't kneel every time. He was not standing with His head lowered in an attitude of continuous prayer. If He did, of course, He could not have managed to do anything else. The amazing thing is that He performed His prayer life in the midst of an incredibly busy ministry. He was subject, like many of us, to a life of increasing pressure, and of continuous interruption. However, in the midst of this life of tremendous pressure, He was continually in prayer. He was praying in spirit when His hands were busy healing. He gave thanks by breaking bread and giving to the five thousand. At the tomb of Lazarus, before ordering him to come out, He thanked

the Father openly. When the Greeks came and wanted to see Jesus, His immediate response was one of "Father, glorify your name" (John 12:28a). There was a continuous sense of expectation that the Father would be working through Him, and therefore He was praying with that attitude all the time.

Surely this is what our Lord is teaching us. This is what we must learn. There is no activity in life that does not require prayer and a sense of expectation of God at work. Isn't this what the disciples felt as they watched the Lord pray? They knew that, for Him, prayer wasn't an option. This work, this call that I am about to make, I cannot do it well unless I am in prayer. It will never have the effect it is meant to have unless my heart looks to God and says: "Speak through me in this." This email I'm about to write, how can I get it right unless I look to You, Lord, that You may do it through me? This interview I'm about to carry out, this task that I have to do for my studies, this work that I have to deliver tomorrow, this room I'm cleaning, this walk I'm going to take, this business I'm about to close. These are some of the ever-present needs from which prayer arises. "Father, what can I say in this hour other than cry, as the disciples cried, "Lord, teach us to pray? Give me a conscious sense of dependence, an awareness that nothing I will do will be of any value, except I depend on You."

**Application to our life**

*What necessary implication does Jesus consulting with His Father about all things, have for us? Are we people of prayer?*

Today we will pray for Seventh Day Baptists in the countries of: Angola, Australia\*, Bangladesh, Brazil\*, Burundi\*, Cameroon, and Canary Islands.

\*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.

***He said to them, "When you pray, say, 'Our Father...***

**Luke 11:2a**

**T**he first expression, which Jesus referred to, was perhaps not something the disciples expected to be able to use; that word of relationship: "Father." There is a reverence for the word "father" that is absent in some modern expressions of parenting. It is essential that we know to Whom we pray. We are not, when we come in prayer, talking about God. We are not engaging in theological dialogue when talking to God. We are going to converse with Him directly and therefore it is essential that we understand Who we are talking to. Our Lord sums it all up beautifully in this: He is saying that true prayer must begin with the concept of God as Father. Immediately, that eliminates a number of concepts. It teaches us that prayer, true prayer should never be addressed to the Director of the Welfare and Relief Committee. Sometimes our prayers take on that demeanor. We are waiting for a donation. We want something to be put to our credit, something that we think we need, and by making a request mechanically we are fulfilling the forms properly prescribed. Prayer is not to be addressed to the Head of the Investigation Bureau. It should never be merely a confession of our crimes, in the hope that we will be able to throw ourselves on the mercy of the court. Nor is it an Appeal to the Secretary of the Treasury, some kind of noble international banker who we hope will take interest in our financial projects. Prayer should be to a Father with a father's heart, a Father's love, a Father's strength, and the first and truest prayer note should be a recognition that we come to this kind of Father. We must hear Him and come to Him as children, in confidence and simplicity, and with all the frankness of a child; otherwise, it is not prayer.

Someone has noted that this word "Father" answers all philosophical questions about the nature of God. A parent is a per-

son; therefore, God is not a blind force behind the inscrutable machinery of the universe. A parent is able to hear, and God is not simply an impersonal, distant being detached from all our difficulties and problems. Above all, a father is predisposed, by his love and relationship, to give a careful ear, and be attentive to what his child tells him. From a parent, a child can expect a loving answer. We are not just to address God as a Father. By believing that He is a Father, we exercise faith, and all that God makes available to humanity must always come to us through faith, and must always operate in our lives through faith. Conviction invariably involves a commitment of the will, a movement of the will, the deeper part of our nature. Therefore, when we come in prayer, if we begin with addressing God as "Almighty God," or "Mighty Creator," or "Foundation of all being," we may be demonstrating ignorance or unbelief. The greatest authority on prayer says that God is a Father! When my children turn to me, I don't want them to come to me in fear. I want my children to greet me like a father. It's never prayer until we recognize that we are coming to a patient and tender Father. That's the first note in the real prayer.

**Application to Our Life**

*By directing our prayers to God as our Father, we should think of tenderness and love that characterize a Father when He talks to His children.*

Let's pray for our brothers and sisters in the following countries: Canada\*, Chile, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cuba, Ecuador\*, and Egypt.

\*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.

***And the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. And won't God do justice to His chosen, who cry out to him day and night? Will He take time to respond to them?"***

**Luke 18:6-7**

I have seen it wrong to use these passages, teaching or encouraging a form of what is called "dominant prayer," which is often another way of describing an attempt to pray intensely to God, not to give Him peace, harassing the heavenly throne until we get the request we want. This is not the meaning of this Biblical writing. I read an article in the newspaper about a man who said he was concerned about moral conditions in this country (USA), and he had determined to fast and pray until God would exert a change, or at least do something that will be aimed at correcting immoral conditions that are increasingly departing from God's will. This man manifested and announced that he declared himself to be in a long fast, to the point where he was willing to die. Some newspapers followed his story, published it and in a mocking tone they predicted what would happen. His strength began to fail him, and he became weaker and weaker, and finally he was confined to his bed. The newspapers continued to publish stories about his deteriorated and feeble condition. He continued his fast until he died. The funeral was covered extensively by the media, and many praised his persistence.

Could that be considered a prayer or a petition to God? No! it wasn't! It was an attempt to bribe God. This kind of attempt has been seen before in Christian circles! This person was insisting that God will move on his terms and according to his schedule. That's not prayer. Jesus says God is not an unjust God, demanding that we flatter Him and fight and persuade Him to move. He is not spiteful. No! Prayer is eternally the cry of a beloved son to his Father, and often the cry of a lost child who does not know the way, who is lost in the dark and is desperately asking for help from a Father who, just by feeling Him by his side, knows that the conditions around him change completely. God is a Father and,

as Jesus said elsewhere, He already knows what things we need before we pray. Paul reminds us that we don't know what we need, we don't know what we should pray about, but God knows it. The Father knows this, and because He is a Father, He knows that it is not yet time to answer in that particular way, or that it may not be the best thing to do, or it may not even be advisable under the circumstances. No, it is true that the answer we want may be delayed indeed, but there is no delay in God answering our prayer. God's answer is going to come at the perfect time, although maybe not according to us. Lazarus' sisters would have wanted that our Lord obey them at the time they asked, and in the way they believed as the only form of response that existed for their understanding. Notice that their lament came practically; "You were late Lord." What Jesus is saying is that when we cry out, there is an immediate answer of reconfirmation that the Father is with us and, in His time and in His way, He will guide us, He will give us the security of being by our side. These words of Jesus have made me aware of the lack of faith in my life. "I cry out to You now, Father, in my weakness and in my failure to exercise faith and say, "O Father, teach me to pray." Teach me to depend continually on You, to pour out before You every aspect of my life, without reservation, and to listen to You about all things."

**Life Application**

*How meaningful is God's amazing relationship as our eternal Father to us? Can we learn the value of prayer as communication with Him, or is prayer for us nothing more than a request for help in a time of emergency?*

Today, let pray for our brethren from the following countries: England\*, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana\*, Guinea, Guyana\*, and Haiti.

\*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.

*But the publican, being far away, did not even want to raise his eyes to heaven, but he beat his chest, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." I tell you that this one descended to his house justified before the other, because anyone who exalts himself will be humiliated and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

**Luke 18:13-14**

**H**ow these verses express the true character of prayer! This man came to the temple and lowered his eyes. He did not assume the posture of prayer. All he could do was beat his chest and say, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." What can we learn about prayer from this man? Isn't it obvious that true, authentic prayer is an awareness of our helpless need? This man saw himself at the lowest place in which one can see a sinner. In fact, in the original language he calls himself, "the sinner." The sinner, the lowest guy, the worst guy. He believed that without God he could do nothing to help his position. Paul said that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Isn't it extraordinary that he doesn't try to add anything to give himself merit? It doesn't say, "God, be merciful to me, a penitent sinner." He was penitent, but he does not urge that as any basis for God's blessing. It doesn't say, "God, be merciful to me who am a reformed sinner. I'm going to be different from now on." He doesn't even say, "God, be merciful to me who am a sinner who is praying. Here I am, Lord, ready to tell you everything. Surely you can't ignore such honesty." No; he throws it all away. He says, "Lord, I have nothing to lean on but You."

How did he get to this place? Exactly the opposite of the Pharisee Jesus spoke of earlier. He did not belittle another person, but looked at God. He judged upwards, towards God. He saw no one but God; did not hear anything but God's high standard: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). "Lord, I am the sinner. I will never be better by myself; I am just a sinner." From this publican we also learn that true prayer is always a recognition of divine sufficiency. Our

help must be in God. This man did not seek help anywhere else. He did not say, "Lord, perhaps this Pharisee can help me." No, he said, "God, be merciful to me." In the words "have mercy" is hidden the wonderful story of the coming of Jesus, the cross and the resurrection. He used a theological word that means "be favorable to me," that is, "having had your satisfied justice, Lord, now teach me your love." And he believed that God's mercy was available; for Jesus said that he went home justified. He was changed; he was different; he was made complete. He turned to what God said and believed it. This is where Jesus leaves us. Perhaps for the first time we can say, "Lord, be merciful to me, the sinner." Even after years of living the Christian life we can start over and say, "Lord, let me count on Your faithfulness to me; let me count on Your willingness to be in me and to work on me to make my life all it should be." Holy Father, I pray to you now, in this quiet moment, that I may begin to live a life of prayer. I have no other help, but You are entirely sufficient. In this I rest.

**Life Application**

*Do we come to our Father as empty people, needing and waiting for Him with our weaknesses and insufficiency? Do we come to understand the true meaning of "mercy," acknowledging it with deep gratitude and humble repentance?*

Today let's pray for Seventh Day Baptists in the following countries: India\*, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Jamaica\*, Kenya\*, Lebanon, and Liberia.

\*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.



***Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive all who offend us.***

**Luke 11:4a**

**T**o begin this day, I think it is important to repeat the above verse aloud, thinking about what it says to our conscience. We should ask ourselves, where are the limitations of this request? This is where there is a need for a purified conscience, a feeling of peace, of rest with God and with man. This is the area where the emotional disorder of our lives takes a deadly toll. Who among us has not experienced problematic mental symptoms, morbid depressions, irrational fears and insecurities? Both Scripture and modern psychology, in their search for the truth agree that beneath these symptoms lurk two terrifying monsters: fear and fault. If we can find a way to kill these fiery dragons, then the whole atmosphere in our emotional life will pass to peace.

When we pray, "Forgive us our sins," we are asking for the reality that God promises to each believer in Jesus Christ: "Now therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1a). I know of nothing that bothers Christians more than a feeling of guilt. But in this simple prayer there is a fully adequate answer, because if we have resorted to forgiveness from God we know that there is nothing else between us and the Lord. Our hearts are there totally free before Him, and the result is a feeling of penetrating peace. Christ offers us the right of pardon, that's why He died. But notice, then, Jesus immediately adds a limitation to this. We cannot say to God, "Forgive us our sins," unless we are willing and have told others that they are forgiven of their sins against us. Jesus is not referring here to that divine forgiveness that accompanies conversion. The Lord's Prayer is for the Christians, because only Christians can pray intelligently. No unbeliever ever receives forgiveness from God based on the claim to have forgiven everyone. It is impossible for him to forgive until he has first received God's forgiveness, and forgiveness is offered by Jesus' death. Come, thanking Him for what death on the cross has already done in

taking away the terrible burden of sin in our lives. But, having received that forgiveness, we will never rest in God's forgiveness for the desecrations of our Christian walk unless we are willing to extend the same forgiveness to those who offend us. This forgiveness keeps us enjoying an intact relationship with the Father and with His Son, which is the secret of emotional tranquility and rest. Jesus is simply saying that if you are a Christian, then it is no use praying, "Father, forgive me my sins," if you are spiteful with another person, or you're burning with resentment or full of bitterness. What it says is: "Reconcile yourself first to your brother, and then go back and present your offering" (Matthew 5:24b). Forgive Him, and then God's healing forgiveness will flood your own heart, and then you will find that there is nothing that can destroy the peace that God gave you, that you have at the center of your being. If we refuse to forgive another person, we are really denying another that grace that has already been shown to us. It is only because we have already been forgiven the great and shocking debt of our own sins, that we can find grace to forgive, whether there are major offenses against us, or even the relatively minor slights that another has done to us.

### **Life Application**

*Are we blocking the fullness and freedom of God's forgiveness of our sins by refusing to extend to others the same grace of forgiveness that God has made available to us?*

Today's countries for prayer are: Seventh Day Baptists in Malawi\*, Mozambique, Netherlands\*, New Zealand\*, Nicaragua, and Nigeria\*

\*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.

***Therefore, we too, from the day we heard it,  
did not cease to pray for you.***

**Colossians 1:9a**

**A**t this time the Apostle Paul knew that the Colossian Christians were living in one dangerous world. A stream of false teaching was already damaging the Church, and He knew this threatened destroying the simplicity of faith that was producing such beauty and freedom in their lives. Paul was in Rome, a prisoner in chains and unable to travel to Colossae, a thousand miles to the east, to help them. There's nothing he can do for them physically. But spiritually he is a powerful prayer warrior who can create a tremendous opportunity for them to know the truth that can set them free and enable them to withstand the assault of false teaching. That, then, is what he is doing; he is praying for them. This speaks of superlatively needed spiritual support when they needed it. The remarkable thing about this prayer is the first sentence of it: "Wherefore we also, from the day that we heard it, we do not cease to pray for you." This was a continuous prayer. As far as we know, Paul had never been to Colossae. Apart from one or two of them, he didn't know these believers personally. And yet he prays unceasingly for them. When we come across statements like this in the scriptures, it is fair to ask, "When did he do this?" He is chained to a Roman guard day and night. He never has a moment in private. Asleep or awake, he is chained to his jailer. What's more, when he is awake, his friends are coming to visit him to seek his advice. He even ministers to the Roman guards, many of whom came to Christ, as we learn in the letter to the Philippians. He is busy writing letters as well; So, how many times do we promise to pray for someone and we don't?

The answer lies in a life of continuous prayer. This refers to silent prayers, whispered prayers, and praises that flow from our hearts all day long. We use interruptions, people or events that unexpectedly burst upon our day as specific calls to prayer. Most of us use mealtimes to think about God and to give

thanks for our loved ones. But there are other things besides food that can call us to prayer. We can even use the newspaper or television in the same way. By observing those in the media world before us, we can breathe a silent prayer for them by name. We can read a newspaper, whispering to God our intercession for those in need about which we are reading. When we meet someone, even in an impolite way, like cutting in front of us in traffic, God may be calling our attention to that individual in particular so that we can be inspired to pray for him. Have you ever prayed for people who are standing in front of you in a line, asking God to bless them? Here's what he's suggesting: Ongoing prayer constantly emerges as a reaction to what you're going through. I am sure this explains the apostle's words here. Throughout the day, Paul thought about the Colossians, how they were and what was threatening them, and he would breathe a prayer for them. This is what he means when he says, "We do not cease to pray for you." We can pray for each other in the same wonderful way.

**Life Application**

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*Think of someone who needs your spiritual help, and make a short prayer to God for that person. Someone will then take you in their prayers, and suddenly you will feel the relief you need. Lord, teach me the secret of continual prayer. Help me to see every event and every person in my life as an invitation to pray.*

Today we will pray for Seventh Day Baptists in the countries of: Pakistan, the Philippines\*, Poland\*, Rwanda\*, Sierra Leone, South Africa\*, and South Korea.

\*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.

***In my guard post I will be, on the fortress I will affirm my foot.  
I'll watch to see what He will tell me, and what I have to answer  
about this complaint.***

### **Habakkuk 2:1**

**W**e constantly face adverse situations beyond our control. For many of them we do not understand why they come into our lives, and we may even think they escaped from God's control. Many times, our spiritual maturity determines how we react to these adversities. We have to live under God's control over all creation, including us as well. Many people react differently by saying, "Well, I've tried faith, and it doesn't work," or "I've tried God, but that doesn't work," or "I've tried prayer, and it doesn't work." People who say those things don't really understand what they're saying, because, maybe without realizing it, what they're really saying is, "God is a liar; God is not real." What they are saying is, "God's Word is not true; the Bible is a fraud." They are declaring that God is unfaithful to His own promises. But God cannot be unfaithful to His Word. The problem is not God; The problem is us. Sometimes we look so ignorant when we see so little. We understand such an insignificant fraction of the scope of any problem. We should do what Habakkuk did: climb the tower and wait to see what God is going to say. If we ask Him, God will give us help to understand some of what we are going through. That's what Habakkuk did, because he expected an answer. Habakkuk says he is going to wait. God normally responds in one of three ways: "Yes," "Not yet," or "I have something better." It is common for Him to respond to us through His Word. That's what's so valuable about reading the Word of God, especially when you are confused or distressed about how He is acting. Often suddenly, the light comes on from a verse that seemed confusing. You will see a new perspective to what you are facing. Perhaps an answer comes when you are listening to a message, or a verse will come to mind and it will have to do with the situation. God has given us His Word, so that we can understand how He acts. So sometimes God answers directly in our spirit. We feel a kind of internal pressure that leads us in a certain direction. Some conviction comes and settles, and we

cannot get rid of it. We have to be careful here, because at this point the enemy can falsify the voice and the mind of God. But the voice of the enemy is always overwhelming (to make you feel guilty) and oppressive. The Spirit of God speaks softly but persistently. If this voice is in line with what God's Word says, that's the Spirit of God leading us. Paul says, "All who are led by the Spirit of God, they are children of God" (Romans 8:14). This is how we can expect to be guided. At other times God speaks through our circumstances. The doors close, and we cannot open them, no matter how hard we try. That is God at work, closing doors here and opening others, pushing us in one direction or another. Often that is the way God responds. But He promises us that He will answer us. He will not leave us as orphans, nor will He abandon us to ignorance. James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, ask God, who gives to all abundantly and without reproach, and it shall be given unto him" (James 1:5). That's what Habakkuk did.

Father, thank You that I can wait on You, knowing that You are a faithful God and You always answer.

### **Life Application**

*Are we responding as Habakkuk did, waiting expectantly for more complete understanding? What are three possible ways this can play out? While we wait, are we content to trust God, realizing that He has the whole picture, while we only have limited vision? And sometimes the circumstances around us further limit our understanding and dictate our reactions. God said, "Cry out to Me, and I will answer you, and I will teach you great and hidden things you do not know." Jeremiah 33: 3.*

Let us pray for Seventh Day Baptists in South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda\*, Ukraine, United States of America\*, and Zambia\*.

\*Conferences which are members of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation.



*[www.sdbwf.org](http://www.sdbwf.org)*

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