

Spring 2023

Dear Friends,

This is a letter on how to pray for the people you love—especially those who do not yet love Jesus or see the Truth in him.

I'm moved to share this for two reasons.

First, because it's where many of my own heart-cries have been focused recently. And secondly, because the Spirit seems to be moving over the earth, and those are ripe times to pray!

I'm not sure if I've ever told the story in these letters of how I came to meet Jesus, so let's start there.

The current movie *Jesus Revolution* retells the story of the last great revival, which broke out in Southern California in the late '60s and early '70s. It was as a result of that move of God that Stasi and I both came to Christ! Though in different ways. We were both living in Southern California at that time, both part of the hippie thing in our own way. Stasi was in a Catholic youth study, and the Spirit moved in that little group and many gave their lives to Jesus. (Thank you, Jesus!) I came in through a different door.

Unlike Stasi, I was not raised with a faith at all. Our family was a typical 1950s–1960s agnostic American home. Decent values, but no God. I became spiritually hungry in high school, but that was the time another movement was also sweeping through: the drug culture. Like *Jesus Revolution* portrays, many of us young people were taking acid and going to spiritual gurus to try to find the truth. And then one night Jesus simply walked into my life.

Yep.

I had never heard the Gospel, never read a Bible, never been to church. (Well, once, for a funeral.) But I was aching, and God was moving powerfully, thanks to that revival. The presence of Jesus simply came into the room one night, and I gave my life to him. Much like the conversion stories we are hearing out of the Islamic world—how Jesus is simply walking into people's lives in their dreams, in waking visions and encounters. (I heard a recent story where having “met” a Muslim woman this way, Jesus also gave her the cell phone number of a priest several countries away, whom she called! He baptized her over the phone and helped her upload a Bible app so she could have God's Word!)

I share my story and hers because it increases our faith that Jesus does this—*he reveals himself*. And that is what I have been praying for those I love.

Let me explain a little of the prayer itself.

In the book of 2 Corinthians, Paul tells us that the Enemy both blinds the mind and veils the heart of the unbeliever:

But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (2 Cor. 3:14-17)

Paul is referring to the Jews here, but the Enemy uses those “veils” with other people groups, too. Mine was certainly veiled.

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ. (2 Cor. 4:4-6)

Here he expands the dilemma—and hope—to all unbelievers. From these passages, and my own encounter with Jesus, I have developed a very simple prayer strategy: I pray that God would remove the veils and blinders from the hearts and minds of those I am praying for, and that Jesus would simply reveal himself to them as he did to me, as he is doing for many Muslims, and as he has for millions of people down through the centuries. Like this:

*Merciful God, God of our salvation, I pray that your Spirit would burn away every veil and every blinder over the heart and mind of [who I’m praying for]. Let every veil and every blinder the Enemy has placed over their heart and mind be utterly removed, so that they may see the glory of God in the face of Jesus. Jesus, I pray you would reveal yourself to them, Lord. Walk into their lives. Make yourself known! May they see you, encounter you, and receive you. Let the light of God shine in their heart to give them the knowledge of God in the face of Christ. In Jesus’ name I pray!*

It’s an ongoing prayer, not just one-and-done. I pray this quietly, as I walk through airports and supermarkets, too! I pray it for the people I encounter and those I simply pass by. Often, Jesus will move me to “target” someone. *That woman over there—pray for her heart to be unveiled.* And I do.

I’m sending this letter because I think the timing is important. Now, I’m not the kind of guy that jumps on band-wagons, and I am suspicious of those who do. I don’t know that revival is breaking out in a major way. Maybe. But Matthew 24 and 1 Thessalonians 2 promise the opposite: a great falling away before Christ returns. So be careful when you hear people promising otherwise.

What I *do* know is that the hour is late, God is merciful, and I’m praying for people’s souls with passion!

I know you will, too!

Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'John' written in a cursive, stylized script.

John