

PRAYER IS THE BEST

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DEFENSE

BY LYNN GRAY JACKSON

TODAY, the world seems to be taking sides—squaring off, if you will, picking “weapons of choice.” It may be a nuke here, a MIG there, a few homemade bombs wrapped around a suicide bomber, or, as the world saw a few years ago, box cutters and hijacked airplanes.

The weapons chosen may be physical, like the ones I've mentioned—or mental. For some, they're both. In my desire and effort to face the terrorism and resulting wars I see the world faced with, I've asked myself: What is my weapon of choice? And my answer is prayer.

This may seem odd, but to me prayer is a proven weapon. It's gotten me through tough times and out of tough situations. I've practiced it a lot and seen solid results, so I'm comfortable with its use. Admittedly, my prayer escalates (and I think others' prayers escalate as well) during times of fear and uncertainty.

Fear, love, peace, war—all these exist within thought before they're seen in our everyday lives. This makes me realize that the real battleground isn't this land or another land, this building or a storefront, but the land of our consciousness, our thinking—our spiritual frontier, if you will.

When fear and uncertainty take hold in consciousness, I've noticed a pattern: First, thought gets riled up; then we feel threatened or upset; and we begin to look for our mode of defense. Choosing prayer calms fear and quiets thought so that we can take sensible actions to improve our circumstances rather than simply resort to a knee-jerk response.

I've seen over and over how it's the thoughts coming to our consciousness that we battle, and not the circumstances. It's how we choose to view the challenges that come to us that really matters. And the more we gain dominion over fear and hatred, the better we are at removing fear and hate. That is what Christ Jesus did.

The difficulties you and I face each day—whether of actual war, or of war with disease, sin, or sickness—can be combated with spiritually right thinking, or prayer. How? By understanding that

these difficulties are not conditions of matter or irreversible facts, but are fears, errors, false suggestions, creeping into thought and producing fear and anxiety. If we each got better at handling the fear before it was manifested in sorrow and hatred, we would actually be terminating whatever "war" it is we're facing.

Just a few weeks ago I woke up not feeling well at all. I was conducting a meeting that afternoon that couldn't be missed. It was a Sunday morning, and I really didn't feel like going to church. But as I sat down to pray for myself, I realized the necessity of taking the time each week to go to church and thank God for His protection and care. So, I decided to go.

During the service, I felt God's peace and care sweep over my thought. Fear began to subside, and I prayed to see that my thought could only reflect the divine Mind's calm, clear direction. I felt better after the service, but I wasn't completely healed yet. In fact, the problem

seemed to reintensify, and I felt a lot of pain.

As I prayed, I realized that every thought that wasn't based on God had to go. Why? Because thoughts based on fear and hatred are misstatements of what is true. They can, and should, be eliminated so God's presence and all-power can be revealed.

The more I used this prayer to wipe out the suggestions of pain, fear, and incapacitation, the more I felt strength, health, love, and freedom, and the freer I got. Soon, I was completely healed. All pain and discomfort had dissolved, and I was able to participate in my meeting harmoniously. That's how my spiritual frontier took on new hues.

Prayer that is a spontaneous response to the wrong in our thought and experience is a defensive weapon. The more we pray, the more we become proficient with this weapon. The Founder of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, wrote: "Each day I pray for the pacification of all na-

tional difficulties, for the brotherhood of man, for the end of idolatry and infidelity, and for the growth and establishment of Christian religion—Christ's Christianity. I also have faith that my prayer availeth, and that He who is overturning will overturn until He whose right it is shall reign. Each day I pray: 'God bless my enemies; make them Thy friends; give them to know the joy and the peace of love'" (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 220). When we choose to fight our battles in this way, we stand on the spiritual frontier that will bring healing to the world. **icss**

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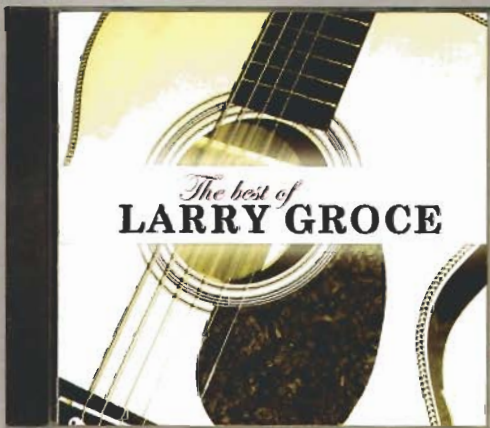
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