

# SEE JESUS NETWORK

Interactive Bible Studies  
For Small Groups

COURTNEY SNEED, EDITOR

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## PRAYER. WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO?

BY PAUL MILLER

I'd taken five of our six kids camping for the weekend to the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania. After a disastrous camping experience the summer before, my wife, Jill was more than happy to stay home. She told me she'd given up camping for Lent.

As I was walking down from our campsite to our Dodge Caravan, I noticed our fourteen-year-old daughter, Ashley, standing in front of the van, tense and upset. When I asked her what was wrong, she angrily blurted, "I lost my contact lens. It's gone." I looked down with her at the forest floor, covered with leaves and twigs. There were a million little crevices for the lens to fall into. I said, "Ashley, don't move. Let's pray." But before I could pray, she burst into tears, "What good does it do? I've prayed for Kim to speak, and she isn't speaking."

Kim, who was eight at the time, was the child who'd stayed at home with Jill. She struggles with autism and developmental delays. Because of her weak fine motor skills, she is also mute. After five years of speech therapy, Kim had literally crawled out of the speech therapist's office crying from frustration. Jill had said, "No more," and we'd stopped speech therapy.

Prayer had been no mere formality for Ashley. She had taken God at his word and asked that he would let Kim speak. Nothing happened. Kim's muteness was testimony to a silent God. Prayer, it seemed, didn't work.

Few of us have Ashley's courage to articulate what happens to us when heart-felt prayer is unanswered. A quiet cynicism sets in. We keep it hidden even from ourselves because we don't want to sound like bad Christians. Our heart begins to shut down.

Cynicism is reinforced by the glib way we can talk about prayer. 'I'll keep you in my prayers,' is a comfortable way to end a conversation. We have a whole vocabulary of "prayer-speak" including, "I'll lift you up in prayer" and "I'll remember you in prayer." Yet few of us actually get around to praying. Why? Honestly, we don't think it makes any difference. Hypocrisy breeds cynicism.

*...continued page two*



ASHLEY (AGE 10) WITH KIM (AGE 4) AT THE PHILADELPHIA ZOO

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### OUR VISION

*A transformed church that reflects the beauty of Jesus.*

### OUR MISSION

*To create high-quality, interactive Bible studies and training for small groups and outreach.*

# PRAYER.

...continued from page one

## More Frustrations with Prayer

Cynicism and glibness are just part of the problem. The biggest frustration for most Christians is the activity of praying itself.

You launch into a reasonably good prayer for the first fifteen seconds. If you are feeling particularly spiritual, you might last a minute. Out of nowhere the day's to-do list pops up. Your mind wanders to a tangent. You worry. You plan. You catch yourself. By sheer force of will you go back to praying. Before you know it, another tangent comes to mind.

Then the guilt sets in. "Something must be wrong with me. Other Christians don't seem to have this trouble praying." After five minutes you give up, thinking, "I am no good at this. I might as well get some work done."

Before you get too depressed, let me pause to encourage you. This frustration with prayer is the experience of most Christians. *You are not alone.* I write this for badly-praying Christians who long to connect with their heavenly Father.

## Ashley's Contact

When Ashley burst into tears in front of our mini-van, it hit me like a bucket of cold water. I was frozen, caught between her doubts and my own. I had no idea that she'd been praying for Kim. What made her tears so powerful was that Kim was eight years old and mute. God had not answered her prayers. She was right. I was fearful for her faith and even my own. I did not know what to do.

I wondered if I would make it worse by praying. If we prayed and couldn't find the contact, it would just confirm Ashley's growing unbelief. We were beginning to lose her heart. Her childhood faith in God was being replaced by faith in boys. She was as cute as a button, and her warm, outgoing personality was drawing boys like flies. One boyfriend followed the other. Jill was having trouble keeping track so she started naming them like ancient kings: Frank the First, Frank the Second, Frank the Third and so on.

I had very little confidence that God would do anything. I prayed quietly to myself, "God, this would be a really good time to come through. You've got to hear this prayer for the sake of Ashley." Then I prayed out loud with Ashley, "God help us to find this contact." We bent down, and there sitting on a leaf was the contact. ✂

*This is an excerpt from chapter one of Paul's future book on prayer.*

**I was frozen, caught between her doubts and my own.**



MARTHA HOOTON BARKER AT 91 YEARS

## "I COULDN'T PRAY WHEN HE DIED."

I am 91 years old, and so thankful to be up and about. But after my husband died in November 2004, I could not pray. I had the hardest time. My husband had been a wonderful man: a scout leader, a committed deacon, and a founding elder of Faith Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Anniston, Alabama. After retirement, he put his whole heart into volunteering with hospice. He was so much fun too. We had a wonderful marriage of 70 years. That's why I couldn't pray when he died. I was in shock.

Then in January 2005, I went to a *PrayerLife* seminar. I started writing people's names *with scripture* on cards. I had done prayer cards before, but had never done exactly this. When I started to pray in the mornings, the joy of the Lord returned to me. His closeness filled my loneliness. Now so many people have asked me to pray. I couldn't tell you how many cards I have now! I delight in praying again. ✂

# THE PERSON OF JESUS TRAINING NOW ON DVD

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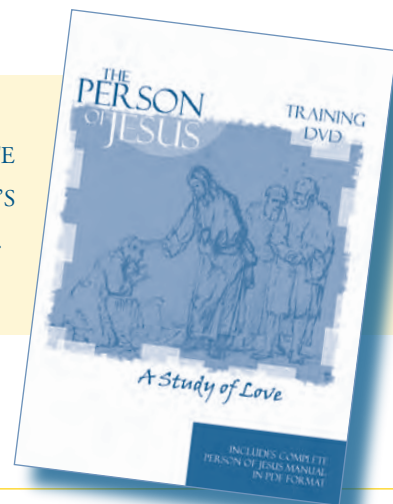
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6. Instruction: Post-modern Evangelism [60 min]

### —Disc Three

7. Instruction: How to Start a Study with Non-Christians [45 min]
8. Instruction: Overview of the Study How Love Works [45 min]
9. Lesson: "Judging" [30 min]



GABE AGOSTINI AND RICHARD ECKHARDT IN PERU

## LA PERSONA DE JESÚS GOES TO CHILE!

BY COURTNEY SNEED

John Piper writes in *Let the Nations Be Glad*, "Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't."<sup>1</sup> When Richard Eckhardt went to the 2003 seeJesus Conference in Cape May, he saw a tool that would stimulate worship and good teaching among leaders in Latin America.

Richard serves on the board of SALT (Support and Leadership Training), an indigenous Latin American mission. Gabriel Agostini, the director of SALT, and an Argentine himself, has invested 30 years in educating pastoral and lay leadership in Chile, Peru, and now throughout the continent.

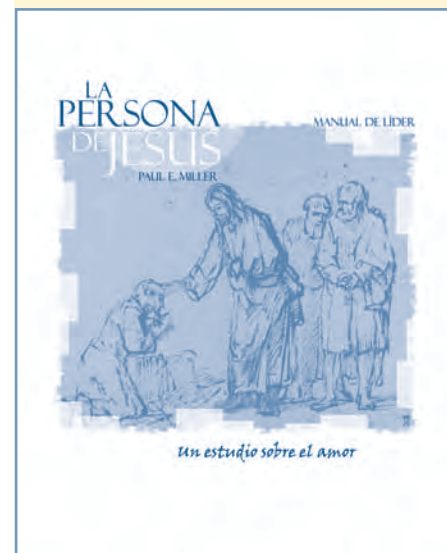
Gabriel invited Richard, along with Debbie Ellington, a seeJesus Trainer, to Chile April 22nd to May 6th to train leaders to use *The Person of Jesus*

study at three different conferences. seeJesus was thrilled to partner with this indigenous mission rather than independently pioneer a Spanish project. To the conferences Gabriel, Richard and Debbie will take the first draft (lessons 1-20) of *The Person of Jesus* in Spanish funded by Cheltenham Baptist and translated by a Peruvian woman named Minina.

While working on the translation, Minina suddenly realized the possible impact of what she was translating. She wrote us, "Several days ago, I was overcome with emotion and I couldn't do less than give thanks, crying with joy for the immense honor that the Lord has given me—by assigning me the task of translating *The Person of Jesus* for the Spanish people. I realized what I had in my hands will be an infinite blessing to so many people that are going to know my Lord through this study." She worshipped at the thought of Jesus being lifted up in a whole new way in Latin America. ✝

1. John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!*, (Baker Academic, 2003), p. 11.

### THE PERSON OF JESUS IN SPANISH (COMING SOON)



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## SEE INSIDE: PRAYERLIFE CHAPTER

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## WILLIAMSBURG REPORT

### A SEEJESUS CONFERENCE WILLIAMSBURG, VA MARCH 14-16, 2007

**“All of my senses have been woken up to Him—to feel Him, taste Him, smell Him. I’ve awoken to His fragrance and heard Him speak to me.”**

In this way, Carol Hill of Grace Community Church (PCA) in Charlottesville, summed up the Williamsburg Conference. In 2003 she went to the same conference in Cape May and took *The Person of Jesus* track. She was captivated by Jesus but knew she was not in a place to start leading.

God kept her desire alive for four years. Finally, a door opened for her to lead and teach women in her church. Because of this, she came to Williamsburg for small group leader training. She recently emailed, “There are so many women I want to gather together to start this study with, but He seems to be saying ‘Wait, let me lead you, let me pave the way—you need to stop jumping ahead of me!’”



Easter surprised Carol, when two not-yet-believing women expressed their desire to study Jesus with her. Carol says, “His ways are so much bigger, vaster than mine. I am so humbled.”

Altogether eight denominations were represented at the Williamsburg Conference: Baptist, Christian Missionary Alliance, Episcopal, PCA, PCUSA, EPC, E-Free, and Non-denominational. People participated in three seminars: *The Person of Jesus*, *Prayerlife*, and *Small Group Leaders’ Training*. Attendance was 58% women and 42% men. ✂