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PRAYER

Love and Devotion to God

October 2024

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LOVE AND DEVOTION TO GOD

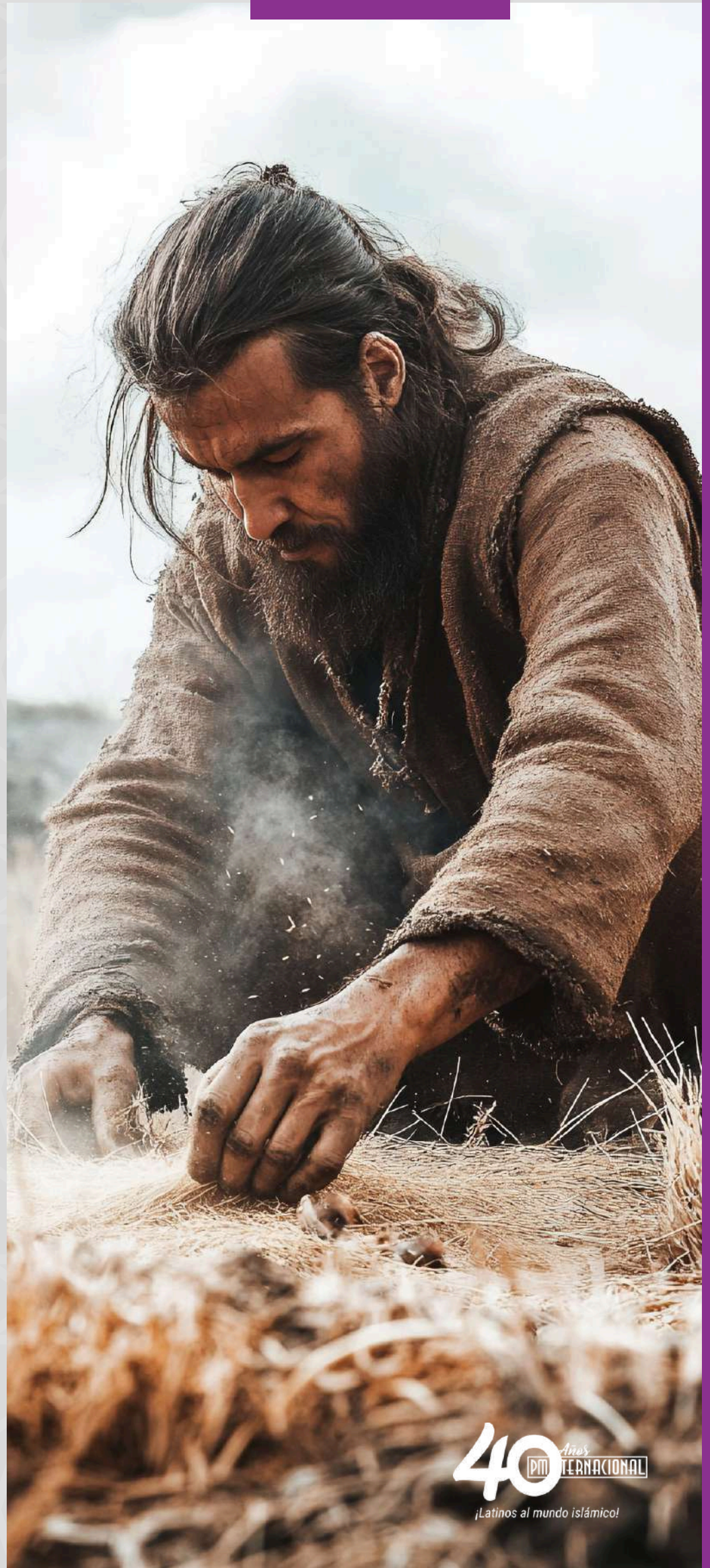
Love and devotion: two very common words in our Christian lexicon, and yet of profound and great importance.

To love God is an act of a person's will, as it hardly comes naturally to a human being. It is a voluntary response to God's love poured into our lives, which is perfect, unconditional, coming from His very nature, because He is in essence LOVE.

If we truly love God, this love will be manifested in our love for our neighbor, whether it is our family, our friends, our brothers in the faith, or, as the Lord taught us, even our enemies and those who are enemies of the cross of Christ who are therefore walking towards eternal damnation.

But we run some risks. We can serve others and work unceasingly on their behalf, "because it is our duty." We can sacrifice time, effort, money, rest, or health because of others, "because it is our duty." But perhaps Paul's message in 1 Corinthians 13 can prompt us to think, "Beware! I am only making noise, I am nothing, I am of no use, I gain nothing...if LOVE is not present."

When we love God, after arduous and sacrificial service, we should feel like Jacob (Gen. 29:20) who worked seven years for Rachel, but "they seemed to him as a few days because he LOVED her." He joyfully worked seven more years for her!



When we love God, we want everything we do to please Him, to bring Him delight, to bless Him, to glorify Him, and to gladden His heart.

Devotion is the fervor, the reverence, the ardent heart of the disciples who went to Emmaus (Luke 24). Nothing can be better than to be at the side of the Beloved One, than to share every circumstance of life and ministry with Him. Nothing can be better than waiting for His guidance, instruction, and direction for the task at hand. It is to admire Him, to be enraptured, to spend time with Him, and to manifest our love for Him in word and deed.

Love and devotion will be wrapped in praise, adoration, gratitude, and surrender. Servants will be overjoyed at the privilege of being worthy of service, and the heart of the Lord will be filled with joy.

We hope this Salat will bless the lives of these servants, and inspire all its readers to deep love and fervent devotion to our Loving God.

“So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” Ephesians 3:17-21

Executive Director PMI



THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF

devotion



We always had in mind that love and devotion to God are essential pillars in our lives, providing strength, guidance, and purpose in our daily mission. However, Tina and I only began to enjoy these values when our personal relationship with God changed upon our arrival on the mission field. Being away from our family, friends, church, and culture forced us to seek God and depend solely on Him, as everything around us was new and different. In this situation, we became closer to God. I believe we needed to be away from our comfort zone to fully experience God's presence in our lives. What we could not have imagined is that by deepening our devotional life, we would grow in love and that this would enable us even more to serve people.

For many years, Tina and I have sought a constant and personal relationship with God through prayer and scripture study. In our mission, this relationship is the source of wisdom and discernment needed to face daily challenges and make the right decisions. Today, we do not seek to do great feats on our own; we depend completely on the Lord to carry out our work effectively and lovingly. The constant relationship with God not only transforms us, but it also becomes a living testimony to those we serve, showing that true strength and peace come from a deep connection with the Creator.

We have also learned that the power of community is crucial in our spiritual journey. As we have shared our experiences and prayed together with other believers, especially our team, we have seen how God works in amazing ways. Our faith has been strengthened as we have seen answers to our prayers, and how God has worked miracles in the lives of the people around us. Mission is not only a task, but an extension of our living faith, an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. Love and devotion to God not only enrich our personal lives as missionaries, but also have the power to positively impact the communities we serve.

Prayer Requests:

- Pray that our relationship with God will always give us strength and wisdom in our ministry.
- Pray that we may maintain strong unity and mutual support in our community and missionary team.
- Pray that our actions and words will be a living testimony of God's love in the communities where we serve.

Ricardo Matioli
Worker in Europe



WHY DO I DO WHAT I DO?



After living more than 20 years in Central Asia, and having already overcome many major cultural and language challenges, it has often boggled my mind to consider that at this point...

.... a company would surely demand more dividends,

...a project should yield more successes

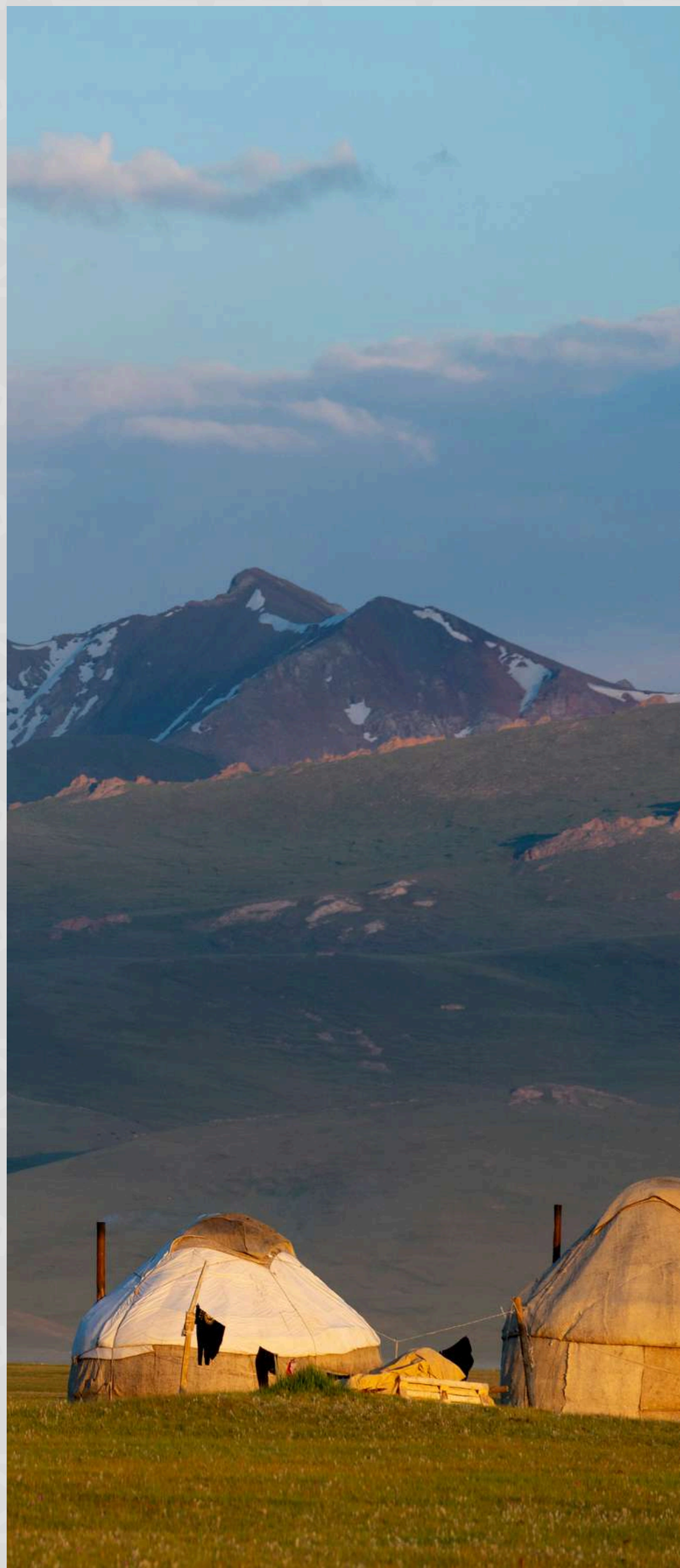
...or that "at least" there should be more visible results... that we should have a more fruitful harvest!

Then the Lord stops me and asks: Are the results YOUR motivation? Is the "progress" or lack of it YOUR concern...or is it YOUR sense of responsibility that feels betrayed, for not reaching "YOUR" expectations of success?

It makes me see...

that... HE called His disciples "to be with Him" (Mk.3:14), that... it is "The Father" who draws them (Jn.6:44), that... He is being the Good Shepherd of "those few sheep" that already follow Him with us, being the One who watches over them when they get entangled in the thickets of the cares of life, when they wander away as they are prone to do, when they quarrel among themselves... and then He reminds me that I myself am one of His sheep... as needy of everything as the others!

He also reminds me that He treasured when the new believer, with conviction, said: 'I play the audio of the Word at a high volume for my daughters because I know it does not return void' ... or when her husband, angry and drunk, comes home, and she prays while placing her hand on him as he sleeps.



... and then? ...How not to surrender in adoration before that God who loves us so intentionally? ...How not to put aside my own limitations and the expectations of the world, to serve Him with devotion? ...How not to live to know Him better and strive to come to love Him as He deserves?

I come now to the "practical point," where it makes perfect sense that Paul prayed," that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, that you...may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:16-19. And you... Why do you do what you do?

Prayer Requests:

- Let us intercede according to Eph. 3:16 for the Church ...and for us and each member of the small community of believers whom we are walking alongside.
- Let us discern and pray that each barrier which hinders those who have already heard the Message may be removed, in Jesus' name!
- Let us pray blessing over our students and the teachers, praying for humility, spiritual clarity, and courage.

M. P.

Worker in Central Asia





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CONNECT IN PRAYER


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CONTACT

Peoples in Mission International, Inc.
P.O. Box 30242
Wilmington, Delaware 19805
office@pmiusa.org

 www.pmiusa.org

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