

God Sees Our Potential

"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion." Philippians 1:6

REACHING YOUR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL IN CHRIST – Part 1

by Bill Rudge

It was my first year of coaching soccer when I met Michael. Tryouts had just begun. As the skills of the new kids were being tested, we coaches gathered to observe. We were looking for raw talent – someone we could work with.

Then I spotted him. He was the heaviest and slowest kid on the field. None of the other coaches seemed interested, but I wanted him for my team because I saw potential in him. I wanted to train him and turn him into a great player.

The next two years our team won the championship, and Michael played a crucial role by putting into practice what we had trained him to do. He shut down the other teams' offense. He used his great size to power kick the ball down the field and to take penalty and corner kicks. As a result, all the other coaches wanted him, and encouraged their "big" players to imitate him.

Michael went on to become an excellent wrestler and football player. He won the high school PIAA state heavyweight wrestling title in his senior year, and received a full football scholarship to the University of Buffalo. While there he became a standout in football. He was well respected and ranked nationally in wrestling, all the while maintaining dean's list academic standards.

Michael now has a successful career in Pittsburgh, is married to a wonderful woman and has three beautiful daughters (all of whom have taken the challenge of the Obstacle Course at Bill Rudge Ministries). Michael and his mom attribute much of his success in sports and life to inspiration from the early influence I had on him – especially when the other coaches saw no potential.

Jesus Christ saw His disciples in this way. Although the growth of His Church did not depend solely on that group of ordinary people, their development was assured by the power of His Spirit and by His sovereign design. Jesus chose to

begin His work with weak, sinful people who later turned the world upside down for Him. Jesus sees that same potential in each of us. Through the immeasurable power of His Word and His Spirit, He continually works in us to fulfill His purpose as we give our lives to Him and live by the principles of His Word.

The primary goals of the Bill Rudge Ministries are: 1) to evangelize a searching world with the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ; 2) to challenge believers to reach their maximum potential in Christ – physically, mentally, emotionally, and above all, spiritually – and to walk in faithfulness until He returns.

You will discover in future newsletters (and in a new and expanded book when this series is completed) the dynamic biblical principles that have transformed my life and molded my ministry. Jesus Christ can take an ordinary person and use him

or her in an extraordinary way. That's what He did with me, and with thousands of others who have accepted the challenge. As you apply these truths, you too, will begin to reach your maximum potential in Christ!



New and Expanded Book

One of our most popular books among athletes, military personnel, prisoners and missionaries is *Reaching Your Maximum Potential in Christ*.

Thousands of copies of this powerful book have been requested and distributed nationally and worldwide.

Bill is updating and expanding *Reaching Your Maximum Potential in Christ* for its third printing in English. It has been translated in various languages and printed in several countries. Once completed it

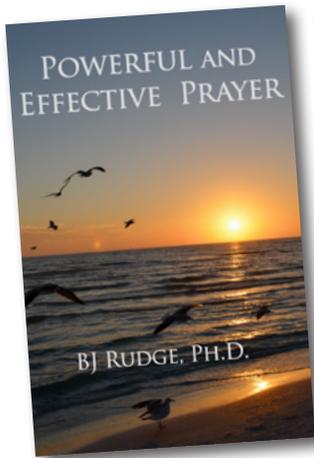
will also be available as an E-Book and possibly as an audio book.



Reverence for His Name

Powerful and Effective Prayer – Part 3

by BJ Rudge, Ph.D.



New E-Book available
at billrudge.org.

The Lord's Prayer opens with this concept of reverence: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name" (Matthew 6:9). Addressing God as our Father identifies us as His children. How do we become one of His children?

But as many as received Him [Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (John 1:12).

Besides having the privilege to address God as our Father, we are to hallow God's name when we pray. This means we should approach God with reverence and respect. In ancient times a name expressed the individual's essential being. Thus, by approaching God with reverence for His name, we are in reality expressing a respect for His very being. As David proclaims, "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!" (Psalm 8:9).

Seeking His Will

The essence of Jesus' life reflects His willingness to humble Himself and submit to the will of His Father (see Philippians 2:5-11). Jesus taught this in the Lord's Prayer, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). The apostle John reiterates that we should pray according to God's will.

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us (1 John 5:14).

He could not have stated it more clearly, if we want God to hear our prayers, then we must seek God's will and not our own.

In my youth, I *wanted* to be a professional soccer player. Certainly, there was nothing wrong in aspiring to such a lofty goal. The problem was, I allowed my desire to play soccer to be more important than my desire to serve and honor God. Soccer had become my identity and I based my self-value upon it. Essentially, I was living a self-centered life, rather than a Christ-centered life and my prayers reflected it. The pursuit of my own dreams nearly destroyed me; it took three injuries, which required surgery on my left ankle and both knees, to bring me to the point in my life where I began to seek God's will

and not my own. After my third operation, I wrote the following in my prayer journal,

"God, I give my life and desires to you. Take this and build within me a desire to serve You; stronger than my desire to play soccer."

As it says in Proverbs, "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails" (19:21).

Our prayer lives will be ineffective if we approach God on *our* own terms and in accordance to *our* own will. It will not be until we are willing to humble ourselves, and submit to His will for our lives, that we will see our prayer lives becoming powerful and effective.

Jesus Is Our Example

Jesus' life was defined by prayer. At the start of His ministry, as He was baptized, He prayed (Luke 3:21). Before He chose His disciples He spent time in prayer (Luke 6:12-16). Before He was betrayed, arrested, and condemned to death, He was on His knees in prayer (Matthew 26:36; Mark 14:32; Luke 22:41; John 17). This consistent pattern of prayer obviously left an impression on Jesus' disciples. As one of my former students, Mike J. Sarkissian, asserts in his excellent book: *Before God: The Biblical Doctrine of Prayer*:

The disciples had been used to going to the synagogues and the temple and hearing the cold, impersonal, repetitious prayers of the Pharisees. But once they began following Jesus, they must have immediately noticed that His prayer life was different. It was passionate and powerful. It was much different than what they were used to. When Jesus prayed things happened. Jesus' prayer life commanded the disciples' attention enough for them to ask Him for instruction on how to pray.

Spending Time in Prayer

Jesus separated Himself from others to spend time in prayer with His Father (Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16). Challenges we all face include distractions and busy schedules. I understand this! I have six children, work full time in the ministry, travel for speaking engagements, author books, coach high school soccer, and teach as part-time professor at an area university.

None of us is busier than Jesus was, and if He could make time to separate Himself to pray, we can do the same. While we may not have a mountain or wilderness available for solitude, we can still find places and make ways to spend time alone with God.

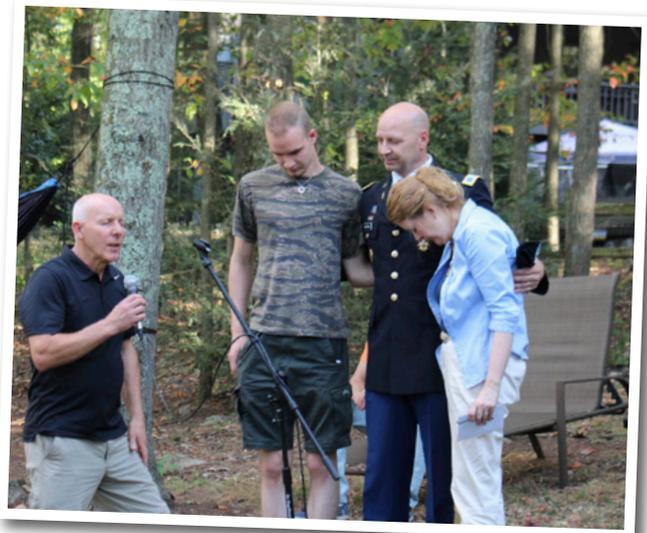
Colonel Mastriano, A Man for All Seasons

Sergeant York Display at BRM



Tim McCall, Sergeant First Class (retired) and Colonel Douglas Mastriano stand by the Sergeant York display at Bill Rudge Ministries. Colonel Mastriano is holding the first book he authored, *Alvin York, A New Biography Of The Hero Of The Argonne*. Bill and BJ were honored to dedicate the Sergeant York Historic Trail and Monuments in the Argonne Forest of France during the 90th anniversary of World War 1.

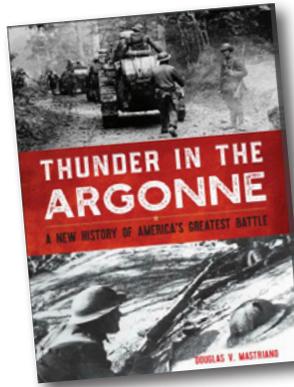
Prayer at Retirement Reception



In above photo Bill Rudge prays for Colonel Douglas V. Mastriano and his wife Rebbie and son Josiah. Bill Rudge was honored to speak and do the benediction at Colonel Mastriano's Retirement Reception. Bill and Karen Rudge presented Colonel Mastriano a special plaque (designed and donated by Laura Fleming, owner of The Engraving Place) for 30 years of faithful service to God and country.

Colonel Mastriano and his wife Rebbie have sponsored Bill and Karen to minister at numerous military bases and events in the U.S., Germany, France, and Canada.

New Book on WWI



Colonel Douglas V. Mastriano, Ph.D. has written a new book, *Thunder in the Argonne: A New History of America's Greatest Battle*, which gives the most comprehensive account of this legendary campaign. It provides American, French, and British perspectives on the offensive, and offers, for the first time in English, the German view. Orders may be made at amazon.com.

Candidacy for PA Congress Announced

Retired Colonel Douglas V. Mastriano, Ph.D. recently announced his candidacy for Pennsylvania Congress (www.mastriano4congress.org). Following are highlights of his career.

Doug was commissioned in the US Army in 1986. His career began on the Iron Curtain with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment based out of Nuremberg, Germany. While serving along the East German and Czechoslovakian borders, he participated in bringing the Cold War to an end, before being deployed to Iraq for Operation Desert Storm. Here, his regiment led the main attack against Saddam's elite Republican Guards. Having survived several close calls by God's grace, he subsequently served in tactical, operational and strategic levels which included assignments in the Pentagon, the 3rd Infantry Division "Rock of the Marne," and US Army Europe Contingency Plans. He also served four years with NATO Land Headquarters in Germany, from where he deployed three times to Afghanistan. While in Afghanistan, he served as the director of the ISAF Joint Intelligence Center, with eighty soldiers from 18 NATO and non-NATO nations. He also served as a faculty member at the US Army War College in the Department of Military Strategy, Plans and Operations.

Mastriano is a historian, a graduate of the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, has a Masters in Military Operational Art and Science, a Masters in Strategic Intelligence, a Masters in Airpower Theory, a Masters in Strategic Studies and a Ph.D. in history from the University of New Brunswick. Colonel Mastriano led the search to locate where, in 1918, Alvin York received the Medal of Honor. American and French authorities endorsed his findings, which led to the construction of a five-kilometer historic trail, replete with two monuments and nine historic markers in the Argonne Forest, France for visitors to walk where Sergeant York fought. His book, *Alvin York: A New Biography of the Hero of the Argonne*, received four awards.

Mastriano also served as the senior editor for an Army Chief of Staff Landmark study on Russian landpower. Mastriano has supported six NATO exercises in the Baltics and published twelve articles related to the region, NATO and Russia.



Two Men - Two Destinies

by Bill Rudge

Stephen Hawking was a brilliant physicist – but the intricate prophecies in Scripture and the glorious revelation of Jesus Christ far surpass even the highest level of human knowledge or ability. The psalmist stated, “The fool says in his heart, “There is no God”” (Psalm 14:1; 53:1). Conscience and the creation point with definitive clarity to a magnificent Creator! “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1).

The prophet Isaiah declared, “Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me” (Isaiah 43:10). Moses wrote, “There is no god besides Me; it is I who put to death and give life and there is no one who can deliver from My hand” (Deuteronomy 32:39).

If Stephen Hawking was right about God, then he and Billy Graham lost nothing. However, if Billy was right, then he won everything and Stephen lost everything. In other words, Stephen Hawking had nothing to gain and everything to lose. Billy Graham had nothing to lose and everything to gain.

The apostle Paul makes it clear that when we stand before God we will have no defense for rejecting Him. He states in Romans 1:20, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

Jeremiah the prophet quoted God stating, “You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart”(Jeremiah 29:13). God will move heaven and earth to make known His way of salvation to anyone who seeks Him with a sincere and humble heart. Each of us has both the freedom and opportunity in this life to determine our eternal destiny.

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent (John 17:3). And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life (1 John 5:11, 12).

Instead of discounting a creator and replacing Him with the faulty system of evolution that ultimately leads to a dead end, you can come to know the Creator in a real and personal way. Once you do – instead of endless hours studying unstable theories that continually change, then dissipate – you can look at our amazing Creator’s creation through eyes of wonder, gratitude, hope and assurance.

Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created (Revelation 4:11).

In Memory Of

Maxine Chizmar (Mom)

by Kathy & Sam Collovecchio

Semi-annual receipts (Jan. 1 to June 30) will be mailed the beginning of July.

Congratulations to DJ’s Greenhouse for 35 years of beautifying this community. And special thanks for donating flowers and faithfully supporting BRM. www.djsgreenhouse.com
1004 East Lake Road
Transfer, PA 724-962-1230

Leadership Training at BRM

Dr. BJ Rudge is teaching a two-week session on Leadership at Bill Rudge Ministries (280 N. Buhl Farm Drive, Hermitage, PA) from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. on Thursday April 12 and 19. The class will include PowerPoint, video, lecture and discussion. Originally developed as a college level course, it will prove beneficial to both clergy and laypersons. Past sessions have been very popular. There is no fee, but please pre-register: brm7@me.com or 724-983-1223.

This particular training at BRM will provide 3 hours of continuing education for those who need it for church, work or school related purposes. BJ has a Masters in Theology and a Doctorate in Philosophy and Apologetics. He is a high school varsity girls’ soccer coach, part-time professor at a university and a college, works full time at Bill Rudge Ministries and is a speaker and author. BJ and Tara have been married for 17 years and have six children.

Give Us Your Bible

Norm and Sue Simons are taking a load of BRM books and audio messages to Hands For Christ in Virginia. Hands for Christ is one of several missions who distribute our books and CDs to spiritually hungry people and Christian leaders around the world.

Drop off any new (or like new) Bibles, books, CDs and DVDs at Bill Rudge Ministries any Tuesday between 10:00 and 3:00 p.m. until April 17. Please, no cassettes, videos or materials that are not in good condition.

Also, thanks to everyone who gave last month to help sponsor World Outreach packages and the translation of Bill’s books and audio messages into other languages.

It has been a joy to serve the Lord Jesus these many years. We long for the day when we will see Him face to face. Until that day we will continue to faithfully minister in His name. We so appreciate your faithful monthly financial support. Your special occasional gifts and prayer support are crucial.

Thanks!

Bill and Karen

Special Thanks to The Country Critter Journal of Northeast Ohio for doing a free ad and article by Bill and BJ Rudge in their monthly online and quarterly printed journal.



billrudgeministries.org