

**Be a Berean!**

*The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day* (Acts 17:11). "Be a Berean" will regularly cover topics that arise during Lockport Alliance Bible classes. Contact Franklyn Pfeil—[liftedup@lockportalliance.org](mailto:liftedup@lockportalliance.org)—with questions or comments.

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**"Frankie, don't lose that number"**

It may not look like it, but I am particular about my Bible class.

I over-prepare, all week long. Every Saturday in the late afternoon, I pray for miles. (Pray-running is something I do every day. I used to pray as I ran. Now I run as I pray. Easily my most fervent prayer is on the run. And though my run is always the same distance, my prayer-time increases each year!)

I shine my shoes every Saturday night. I'm in bed by 9:00. I get up at 4:43 every Sunday morning and I over-prepare for three more hours, right up until the last minute. By the time I get there, Shelley, Frankie, and Eddy have the room set up. Shelley reads a pertinent scripture and says a prayer. I step up and say some lame nondescript thing about whatever occurs to me at that second, just to ease in. About a half-minute of banter later, I launch. It's always exactly like that. I've built my life around that hour. My gravestone might read like this:

Franklyn Pfeil  
1953--Rapture  
(But most alive from 9:45--10:45 on Sundays)

Anything that detours from that ritual truly bothers me. You can say it shouldn't bother me, and you'd be right. But saying 'It shouldn't' doesn't change the fact that it does. So you might imagine how out-of-kilter I felt when, on the night before the first Cross-Ties class--a class I'd taken a 9-month sabbatical to prepare to write--I couldn't begin to pray-run until about 8:00 p.m.

It had been a completely discombobulated day and I'd fallen hours behind. And on top of it all, Shelley had gone to dinner with her Mom in Buffalo somewhere. So, as the September sun was starting to slide, I parked at Lockport Hospital, next to the Washington Hunt fence, the same spot every time. Then I prayed the streets of Lockport like a rosary: down Union Street; past Dudley Square; to Chestnut, past the library; to Main, then over the Pine Street bridge; through the St. Pat's lot, toward Prospect; to Washington, then past my childhood home on Gooding Street; down Clinton Street hill, over the Exchange Street bridge; to Market, up Vine Street hill, down Irving-- past Glenn and Ruby Baum's, past Bob and Joan Smith's--to Rogers, to my spot in the hospital lot.

Now I was feeling better about things. I'd connected, really connected, with Our Father in prayer. The wind of the Spirit was behind every step, no matter which way I'd turned. I'd reclaimed the day, and things were going my way. I lowered the tailgate of my truck. Under the bed liner is a spot where I always hide my key. I reached into the little crevice, but there was no key. Panicked, I looked on the ground. Nothing there. So I peered through the window. There were the keys, on the passenger seat.

Sunday school teachers shouldn't swear; especially the night before class, especially that word.

You've been there, so you know the drill: I went into the hospital and asked for a metal coat hanger. They couldn't find one. But the way the windows were sealed on my truck, it wouldn't have helped anyway. I was dripping with sweat from my run, and a chill was settling in. When I sweat then chill like that I get chest colds. There was only one thing to do. The only way I could avoid a sore throat or a cold was to stay warm by running home.

I'm guessing it's about 6 miles from the hospital to my house on Lincoln Extension near Gasport Road. Normally that's not a real big deal, but when it happens to be the night before the first Bible class in nearly a year--for a teacher who'd turned his pre-class routine into nearly a fetish--it's tantamount to disaster.

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Of course, the class on Sunday morning went well, better than well. On the way out to my car after the worship service, I ran into Jim Reid. He asked me how things were going. I began to relate how last night's misadventures turned into an 11-mile run into the dark. Suddenly he interrupted my story.

"Why didn't you call me from the hospital? I could have been there in 5 minutes."

The next time I'm in that situation, I'm going to appropriate a promise. I'm going to call on Jimmy Reid, my Blood-brother, my true forever friend. Jimmy's no stranger to darkness. He testifies, nearly daily, against it.

There comes the inevitable night when you can't find your way. At its heels comes the cold gray dawn, when you can't find your courage, or your will to carry on; when you feel like you're losing your grip, or maybe even your mind; when you can't remember who you're supposed to be, but you know you're not who they think you are--and you can't maintain the charade much longer.

If the paragraph you just read isn't foreign to you--if you're there, or fast approaching, I can testify that your day is on its way. While God has allowed you to turn the wheel, He's been doing the steering, maneuvering you to the place where He's your only prayer, where all that's left is for you to say so. So call out, cry out, into the directionless darkness. His help will find you where you are, as surely as your sin once found you out. (1)

*I am He, I am He who will sustain you.*

*I have made you and I will carry you;*

*I will sustain you and I will rescue you. (2)*

Jesus Christ, no stranger to your darkness (3), will pick you up, and He will see you home. All you have to do is call (4).

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Scripture references: (1) Numbers 32:23; (2) Isaiah 46:4; (3) Luke 23:44; (4) Joel 2:32; Romans 10:13

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It is our fervent hope that you will 'be a Berean' by attending one of these Bible-based classes this week! —

"Cross Ties"--Sunday at 9:45

"Becoming A Woman of Purpose"--Sunday at 9:45

"A Detailed Study of Luke"--Sunday at 9:45