

# Letter 161.

by James Bourne

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*James Bourne emphasizes the importance of earnest prayer and trusting God's guidance through life's challenges.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 13:21, Psalm 32:8, Philippians 4:6, Hebrews 13:5

**Topics:** "Personal Testimony", "Prayer Guidance"

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## Description

James Bourne shares his personal testimony of how the Lord directed his path and called him to salvation and spiritual knowledge, despite the doubts and fears of others. He encourages the young friend to earnestly seek God in prayer, both for temporal and spiritual blessings, trusting that God can provide the energy and guidance needed for their pursuits. Bourne emphasizes the importance of being honest and earnest in seeking God's blessing, assuring that God can fit them for any task and lead them in the right way.

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## Transcript

[To W. B.] London, 17 April 1839.

My dear young Friend,

I cannot forget you, and the way in which we first became acquainted at Pulverbach. I am anxious to tell you of the unsettled state of my mind when first the Lord began to work upon me. I could give no reason why it should be so, nor settle myself by any means; I changed my purposes and accomplished nothing, till at length I was quite cast down, and felt myself an outcast whom no man regarded. Here I was led, before I knew the Lord for myself, to go in secret, and most earnestly cry to the Lord to direct my way and show me what it was his will I should do, that I might not appear as an idler in the world; and to my utter astonishment the Lord plainly pointed out the way I have followed these last forty years, and prospered me in it; and in this employment he called me by his grace to the saving and spiritual knowledge of himself. All my friends feared I should come to ruin, but God had different purposes for me; and in due time, though by very slow degrees, unfolded his manifold wisdom and mercy to me in Christ Jesus. Mine has been a path of great tribulation; my sin has made it so. My foolish back has called for many strokes, and the Lord has not spared for my much crying, but his compassions have never failed. Always in the time of extremity the Lord Jesus Christ has been a very present help.

Do you find your spirit in earnest prayer in secret? Prayer God appoints (as Hart says) to convey the blessings he designs to give; and I hope you will manifest, sooner or later, that he has given you a spirit of grace and supplication. Let me be allowed to give you a piece of advice. You are of such an age as is considered in the world, in some measure, equal not only to judge for yourself, but also to act for yourself, without being a burden to your father, who, being a clergyman, is not capable of properly settling you in active life. Therefore let your restless spirit unceasingly cry to God for all things temporal and spiritual; and let it be seen that God can give you that energy which shall determine your pursuits, and that you are right down in earnest to seek the blessing of God in them. If you are honest here, be assured you cannot seek in vain. He can fit you for anything, and lead you the right way to accomplish it; and if you watch his hand, you will see how wonderfully he will lead you and guide you; and if you be not as the horse too rash, or as the mule too stubborn, you will perceive his gracious eye upon you for good. [Psalm xxxii. 8, 9.] The pillar of cloud will be your direction by day, and the pillar of fire your protection in the night of affliction and adversity. This I can well testify. He has never left nor forsaken me; and I still trust he will yet deliver.

I am, my dear friend, yours faithfully, J. B.

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