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I've had the privilege of being involved in the NLT Prayer Bible from its early stages at Tyndale. While I have many good reasons to feel capable of undertaking a Bible project like this one, I have many more reasons to feel unprepared and inadequate. My personal prayer life falls far short of the ideal. I struggle to faithfully present needs to God or spend adequate time praising him. But, perhaps in the upside-down way of the Kingdom of God, that makes me more qualified than all my past work and training. I need these teachings and these prompts to pray as much as anyone who might eventually pick up this Bible and begin to develop a stronger, more intimate life of communion with God. Certainly, throughout the work, I have been alternately convicted of my need and brought to tears by the reality of what God has done in my life. In that sense, as much as any, this *NLT Prayer Bible* has been immersed in prayer from beginning to end.

Whenever someone tackles a Bible of this size and scope, the list of those who provided needed assistance could go on to fill pages and pages. Those I *must* thank include the following:

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THE WRITERS

Many of you fit this work into already busy schedules, simply because you believed in it. You creatively shared your thoughts on prayer—and your hearts. I have the deepest respect and gratitude for each of you.

PRAYER PROMPTS

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PRAYER TRADITIONS

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PRAYER PATHS

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Without mentioning any specific names (they know who they are), I'd like to thank those people in my own circle of personal friends who have been such a support to me throughout this process. Your prayers and your words of encouragement mean more than you'll ever know.

And how could I ever finish without thanking John, my husband and friend of 30 years? Your ready smiles and your patience with me, well, what can I say? You're my rock.

Loved and forgiven,
Jean E. Syswerda
GENERAL EDITOR

JEAN E. SYSWERDA is a former editor and associate publisher at Zondervan. While there she led the development of such best-selling Bibles as the *Women's Devotional Bible*, the *NIV Adventure Bible*, the *NIV Teen Study Bible*, and the *NIV Youthwalk Devotional Bible*. Jean is the general editor of the best-selling *NIV Women of Faith Study Bible*, the author of the *NIV Super Heroes Bible* and *Sleep Tight Bible Stories*, and coauthor of the best-selling *Women of the Bible* and the *Read With Me Bible*. Jean and her husband, John, have three children and three grandchildren and live the country life in Allendale, Michigan.

Welcome to THE PRAYER BIBLE

Here, maybe for the first time, is a Bible that you don't so much read and study as *do*. *The Prayer Bible* invites you to enter a quiet place, leave your lack of Bible knowledge and spiritual inadequacies behind, and immerse yourself in the Word of God and in communion with him.

A consistent and meaningful prayer life is not something that comes easily for most believers. Daily busyness and distractions break time up into little glassy fragments with hard edges, stark realities, and acute tensions. The fragments effectively cut away any chance—or perhaps even desire—for reviving time alone with God. *The Prayer Bible* offers a prescription, a workable solution, for your fragmented prayer life. Each feature of *The Prayer Bible* helps to set in motion a movement toward God and dialogue with him.

PRAYER TRADITIONS

Six articles on important prayer traditions begin on page A17. Each article presents a different approach or facet of a devoted life of prayer. The articles offer background and history on each tradition as well as ideas on how to implement these principles in your own prayer life. After you read each article, apply its principles as you walk your way through the other features of *The Prayer Bible*.

PRAYER PATHS

These are *The Prayer Bible's* teaching tool. You can walk these “prayer paths” through Scripture to learn about key prayer topics and how to apply them to your personal prayer life. Each of the fifteen prayer paths begins with a major article and then works its way through Scripture with eight to ten shorter articles. Flip through the pages of *The Prayer Bible* to find a prayer path article and use the directions at the end of each to follow the path through Scripture. Or go to page 1689 at the back of this Bible for a listing of each prayer path, with page numbers, and where it tracks through Scripture.

PRAYER PROMPTS

You'll find a multitude of these “prayer prompts” in a narrow side column on each page of the *NLT Prayer Bible*. Each prompt offers you direction in how to pray the Scriptures: by praying the actual words of Scripture, or by using the Scripture as a springboard to formulate your own prayers. On page 1693 you'll find a topical index of all the prayer prompts to guide you to prompts that meet special prayer needs.

STORIES OF ANSWERED PRAYER

These stories form the most personal component of *The Prayer Bible*. Each story gives you an intimate glimpse into the life of one person and how prayer accomplished something specific in that person's life. These stories of answered prayer will spark renewed assurance of God's promise to answer prayer. You can find a listing of each story and its location on page 1705.

PRAYER QUOTES

Scattered throughout *The Prayer Bible* are words of wisdom from various writers, some widely known and some not so well known. Try to be quiet and a bit introspective as you read their words, using their experiences and understanding of a life of prayer to examine your own need for deeper communion with God. Some are excerpts from hymns. Use these to sing your prayers and praises to the God who delights to listen. You'll find an index to quotes and hymns on pages 1707 and 1709.

BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

Each book of the Bible begins with an introduction to that book. These give a snapshot of the book's message, while offering insight into the prayers or the teachings on prayer that are found in that particular book.

PRAYER PROGRAMS

Here's one more way for you to begin to use the prayer materials in *The Prayer Bible*. Each of these thirty "prayer programs" guide you through a week of prayer on a specific subject. These are designed to meet a wide variety of prayer-needs. You'll find these prayer programs beginning on page 1675.

All the features of *The Prayer Bible* combine to lead you into a communication with God that can formulate the patterns of a lifetime. Open this Bible daily, or leave it open in an accessible place, using it often to pray your way through God's Word and to continue a dialogue with God that runs throughout your day.

TOPICAL GUIDE TO BIBLE PRAYERS

A list of Bible prayers organized by topic begins on page 1711. Use this list to explore further the biblical idea of prayer and to find biblical prayers that speak to certain life situations.

THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis	3
Exodus	71
Leviticus	129
Numbers	169
Deuteronomy	227
Joshua	277
Judges	311
Ruth	345
1 Samuel	351
2 Samuel	395
1 Kings	433
2 Kings	477
1 Chronicles	521
2 Chronicles	567
Ezra	615
Nehemiah	633
Esther	655
Job	667
Psalms	701
Proverbs	839
Ecclesiastes	873
Song of Songs	885
Isaiah	893
Jeremiah	961
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Ezekiel	1041
Daniel	1105
Hosea	1129
Joel	1141
Amos	1147
Obadiah	1159
Jonah	1163
Micah	1167
Nahum	1175

Habakkuk	1179
Zephaniah	1185
Haggai	1191
Zechariah	1195
Malachi	1209

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew	1217
Mark	1271
Luke	1305
John	1365
Acts	1405
Romans	1457
1 Corinthians	1483
2 Corinthians	1507
Galatians	1523
Ephesians	1533
Philippians	1543
Colossians	1551
1 Thessalonians	1559
2 Thessalonians	1565
1 Timothy	1569
2 Timothy	1577
Titus	1583
Philemon	1587
Hebrews	1589
James	1611
1 Peter	1619
2 Peter	1627
1 John	1633
2 John	1641
3 John	1643
Jude	1645
Revelation	1649

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF BIBLE BOOKS

Acts	1405	Judges	311
Amos	1147	1 Kings	433
1 Chronicles	521	2 Kings	477
2 Chronicles	567	Lamentations	1033
Colossians	1551	Leviticus	129
1 Corinthians	1483	Luke	1305
2 Corinthians	1507	Malachi	1209
Daniel	1105	Mark	1271
Deuteronomy	227	Matthew	1217
Ecclesiastes	873	Micah	1167
Ephesians	1533	Nahum	1175
Esther	655	Nehemiah	633
Exodus	71	Numbers	169
Ezekiel	1041	Obadiah	1159
Ezra	615	1 Peter	1619
Galatians	1523	2 Peter	1627
Genesis	3	Philemon	1587
Habakkuk	1179	Philippians	1543
Haggai	1191	Proverbs	839
Hebrews	1589	Psalms	701
Hosea	1129	Revelation	1649
Isaiah	893	Romans	1457
James	1611	Ruth	345
Jeremiah	961	1 Samuel	351
Job	667	2 Samuel	395
Joel	1141	Song of Songs	885
John	1365	1 Thessalonians	1559
1 John	1633	2 Thessalonians	1565
2 John	1641	1 Timothy	1569
3 John	1643	2 Timothy	1577
Jonah	1163	Titus	1583
Joshua	277	Zechariah	1195
Jude	1645	Zephaniah	1185

PRAYER TRADITIONS

PRAYING THE SCRIPTURES

Someone has said that one should never read the Bible without praying and never pray without reading the Bible. But the Scriptures have fallen on hard times. Academic inquiry has shaken the foundations of faith and practice for many. When people approach the Bible as a mere historical curiosity or ordinary literary work, criticizing its form and structure or dismissing its admonitions as applicable only to an ancient culture, they hold the Bible at a distance. They refuse to let it touch them personally.

But those who love Scripture, who think about it day and night (Psalm 1:2), experience a different consequence. The psalmist equated searching God's Word with searching for God himself. He rejoiced in God's Word "like one who finds a great treasure" (Psalm 119:162). The writer of Hebrews discovered that "the word of God is full of living power" (Hebrews 4:12). Literature that lives is unlike any other piece of literature. The power and presence of God himself wait to greet any who approach the Scriptures receptively.

Inspired Praying

As God reaches out to you through his Word, you can hardly keep yourself from responding. The Scriptures inspire prayer. Meditating on the Scriptures nurtures prayer. Prayer flows naturally, almost unbidden when you hear God speak to you through the Scriptures. Marjorie Thompson writes about "the direct cry of the heart to God that rises where we have heard ourselves personally addressed through the word. Perhaps the word has touched our pain, and we cry out in hurt, anger or frustration; perhaps God has revealed our sin, and we whisper in confession and repentance; perhaps the word has evoked gratitude, and our words leap up in thanksgiving; perhaps it has sparked our joy, and we sing out adoration and praise!"¹

Without the nourishment of Scripture, your prayers can begin to seem shallow, even to yourself! George Mueller, the nineteenth-century Christian leader, wrote of his frustration at trying to keep his mind from wandering as he prayed. Superficial concerns distracted him in prayer. Mueller decided to begin his prayer time by meditating on Scripture: "I scarcely ever suffer now this way. For my heart being nourished by the truth, being brought into . . . fellowship with God, I speak to my Father and to my friend . . . about the things that He has brought before me in His precious Word."²

Transformed Praying

When you come to the Scriptures listening for God, you give God room to transform *your* words with *his* Word. Prayer that comes only from your own thoughts and ideas is prayer limited by your thoughts and ideas. But prayer that springs from the inspiration of Scripture knows no limits. " 'My thoughts are completely different from yours,' says the LORD. 'And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine' " (Isaiah 55:8). The Scriptures give you "something substantial to say in prayer, and the confidence that we are praying God's thoughts to Him."³

Jesus himself used the Scriptures to express his deepest agony. When he cried out to God from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" he used words from the first line of Psalm 22. Twentieth-century pastor and courageous leader Dietrich Bonhoeffer called the Psalms "the prayer book of the Bible." The richness of the personal encounters with God recorded in the Psalms can give you the words to say in your own personal encounters with God.

Praying the Prayers of Scripture

When you pray for others, the Scriptures grant your prayers a depth you could not find on your own. You can take any prayer of the Bible and enlist it in your prayers for someone else. For example, in Ephesians 3:16-17 Paul included this prayer: "I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources [God] will give you mighty inner strength through his Holy Spirit. And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love." You can quite easily substitute the name of a person for whom you are praying for the pronouns Paul used: "Lord, I pray that from your glorious, unlimited resources you will give *John* mighty inner strength through your Holy Spirit. . . ."

God's living Spirit brings the Scriptures alive to us not only as we read but also as we pray. When we form our prayers using passages of Scripture, we speak God's own words after him, assuring that our prayers mirror God's character and will. And God's living Spirit, speaking to us through the Scriptures, guides and empowers us to fulfill Christ's mission in the world, as we work and witness and pray.

—Jill Zook-Jones

JOURNALING

Do you sometimes have trouble remembering valuable lessons learned in everyday living? Do you sometimes lose sight of God's daily blessings? Many people find that life rushes by so quickly that they have trouble keeping track of what matters most. Distracted by the urgent, they miss the important.

Struggling to Remember

Humans have long struggled to remember the spiritual significance of everyday events, tracing the hand of God in everyday choices or difficulties. Early in the biblical story Moses told the Hebrew people, "Remember how the LORD your God led you through the wilderness for forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character. . . . Do not forget that he led you through the great and terrifying wilderness" (Deuteronomy 8:2, 15).

Later the psalmist wrote:

*I recall all you have done, O LORD;
I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago.
They are constantly in my thoughts.
I cannot stop thinking about them (Psalm 77:11-12).*

From the beginning God's people wanted to remember what he had done in their lives. Sometimes that meant telling, other times it meant writing. How can you "remember" God's "wonderful deeds" today? Keeping a journal helps. You can write, for example, about an answered prayer for a friend's healing. Or you may record a new awareness of God's character that comes from a daily Bible reading. Or you may put on paper a conversation with a friend that stretches you to live more faithfully. In all these ways you help yourself remember, for the finest mind, says an old Chinese proverb, is less reliable than the simplest ink. Taking time to flip back and read earlier entries weeks or months or even years later reminds you of God's faithfulness. You're not remembering merely for the sake of nostalgic meandering but in order to help you pay attention to God, what he is doing and what he has done.

Writing it Down

Countless people have put pen to paper as a way to remember and reflect on God's actions, God's leadings, and the Bible's deep truths. Augustine, writing in the fifth century, wrote

his *Confessions* to sift through his life for signs of God's work. In more recent times—from Fyodor Dostoevski to Annie Dillard, from Sören Kierkegaard to C. S. Lewis—journal keepers have found that the practice helped them to remember spiritual insights and to better hear what God seemed to be communicating. The simple act of writing in a book of blank pages enabled them to discern God's faithfulness and guidance.

Here the difference between keeping a journal and keeping a diary is revealed. Diaries tend to record events. They tell of things seen or people met. A journal, however, travels deeper than a diary. Rather than cataloguing events, a journal reflects on the significance those events had on one's walk with God.

Journaling reveals the sometimes hidden significance of the detours and flat stretches and hills of life. It allows you to perceive more fully God's hand in the unfolding events of daily life. Even the bare act of writing may help reinforce an insight or call to mind the deeper details of an event or situation. You may not see God's hand in a disguised blessing until you stop to reflect on it by writing it down. Seventeenth-century spiritual life writer Jean-Pierre de Caussade wrote, "God carries out his purposes triumphantly in [life's] dark shadows: in failures, in bodily sickness, and spiritual weakness. But everything succeeds and turns out for the best in his hands, and it is through what most distresses human beings that he contrives and accomplishes his highest designs."⁴ God's "highest designs" may be hidden from you when you're in the thick of a difficult time or when your busyness suppresses an awareness of God's wonderful generosity and graciousness. But journaling can expose you to the truth and beauty and comfort of God's hand in every circumstance of life.

Getting Started

Here are some particulars if you decide to begin journaling:

- Begin with a blank book. This may be a leather-bound book purchased at a bookstore or a spiral bound notebook grabbed from a drugstore shelf. The important thing is that there's lots of room to write.
- At the top of each page write the date. Some days hold significance you cannot imagine at the time—you may only later discover a given date's considerable importance.
- Don't try to write fine prose. Concentrate instead on simply expressing your thoughts and questions and reactions.
- Try to write about events that relate to your relationship with God, your calling, your growth in holiness, or your struggles to live more compassionately.
- Use your journal to record verses of the Bible that speak especially powerfully to you. Or include quotes from sermons you hear or books you read.
- Use your journal to record prayers—and answers to prayer! A journal is also a perfect place to write down your struggles with God. You may even address such wrestling to God himself, allowing the very act of writing to become a prayer.

A Final Note

Don't feel that you must write every day. Many people avoid beginning a journal because they labor under the assumption that they must write something every day. Not so! You may well go through periods where you write frequently, and then other times when days or even weeks pass without an entry. What matters most is approaching your journal prayerfully. You ask God to help you grow—through your informal jottings—in faithfulness and love.

—Timothy Jones

FASTING

Fasting has a long history both in Judeo-Christian tradition and in other cultures. In ancient cultures outside of the Judeo-Christian tradition, fasting was often motivated by a fear of demons, which were thought to enter the body through eating and drinking. In other cultures fasting served as preparation, purifying mind and body to make a person ready to unite with the godhead or to receive ecstatic revelations. Some cultures sought fasting as a way to humiliate and deny the body. Plato recommended fasting because of its ability to clear the mind and give the body a sense of well being. But for Christians and Jews, fasting has always had to do with Almighty God. While the specific reason for the fast may vary, the goal remains increased communion with the Lord and attentiveness to his presence.

Communication with God

In ancient Israel, fasting frequently brought individuals or the nation into closer communion with God. God's people learned that only when they stopped filling themselves with food were they able to recognize other hungers. The greatest hunger of the human race is for God, but that hunger often goes unrecognized when they are always full, always well-fed. They don't recognize their need to be nourished by the presence of God.

The people of ancient Israel also fasted in repentance when they had turned away from the Lord. They fasted out of desperate need, as when David fasted and prayed for the life of Bathsheba's child (2 Samuel 12:15-16). They fasted for victory and protection before going into battle. They fasted to humble themselves before God. Whatever the specific reason, the fast looked to God as its focus and sought his presence as its goal.

A Hunger for God

When Jesus fasted for forty days and nights, he kept the focus not on the fast so much as on God's presence and power (Matthew 4:1-11). When Satan urged Jesus to turn stones into loaves of bread, Jesus responded by reminding Satan that human beings have another hunger, too deep for bread to fill (Matthew 4:4). Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3: "Yes, [the Lord] humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people need more than bread for their life; real life comes by feeding on every word of the LORD."

When you fast you become acutely aware of your humanness and the frailty of your body when compared to God's strength. You strip away the daily grind for food, allowing your spiritual hunger to rise, and depending on God to fill you. Done in the right spirit, fasting can be life transforming.

A Greater Power Gained

But fasting has to do with more than satisfying your personal hunger for God. It empowers you to change the world. The disciples fasted and prayed to discern God's will and to receive power for ministry. It was while several men were fasting and praying that they heard God telling them to set apart Saul and Barnabas for mission work (Acts 13:2-3). The disciples fasted in order to seek a power greater than their own for a work that was not their own. Fasting led them to an increased awareness of the Lord's power and a willingness to let him work through them.

What Is Fasting?

The discipline of fasting can differ greatly in scope and duration. Most people think of fasting as refraining from eating all food. However, people may choose to restrict their intake

of food but not abstain from it entirely. Often people will fast from solid food but drink fruit juices during the fast.

How long the fast extends can vary also. The Israelites usually fasted one day, from sunrise until after sunset. A newcomer to fasting should begin slowly, refraining from eating just one meal, one day a week at first, then increasing the fast to twenty-four hours. The time normally spent preparing and eating food is spent in prayer and meditation on Scripture. Care should be taken to prepare the body by eating lightly for a day or two leading up to the fast and as a follow-up to an extended fast.

A Life-Giving Discipline

Fasting has tremendous potential to enrich and reorient your life. It need not become yet another legalistic ritual but can be instead a life-giving discipline. “Rather than view fasting as a means of power beyond prayer,” writes R. D. Chatham, “we should see that the power of God is constantly available, and that through fasting we have finally surrendered ourselves to the power of God. Prior to this surrender we had not realized this power, because of our lack of attention toward God.”⁵

—*Jill Zook-Jones*

SILENCE

Often believers appear to think that prayer has to do mostly with words. They picture rich prayer as saying all that needs to be said. Sometimes, however, prayer’s profoundest moments come in the spaces between “speeches.” An acquaintance of mine claims that he does his best praying when he *stops* praying. By that he means that sometimes he needs to stop his pious chattiness. When you learn such taming of your tongue, prayer becomes not only you talking but also you resting reverently in the presence of God. “The LORD is in his holy Temple,” declared the prophet Habakkuk. “Let all the earth be silent before him” (Habakkuk 2:20). In the presence of holiness and glory, words pale in significance. You’ll quickly discover that there is “a time to be quiet and a time to speak up” (Ecclesiastes 3:7). “As you enter the house of God, keep your ears open and your mouth shut! . . . So let your words be few” (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2).

The Discipline of Stillness

While prayer does have an aggressive side—the prayer warrior image of one who is diligent and urgent—it also has a quiet side, allowing God room in a quieted heart. You’ll learn (and it takes practice!) what Bill Hybels calls “the discipline of stillness before God.”⁶ When you pray, call to mind the counsel of Psalm 37:7 to “be still in the presence of the LORD, and wait patiently for him.” Close your eyes and gently, slowly, quietly, say, “Lord,” or some other name for God. Leave silent spaces between your words. Close your Bible or other devotional book and simply sit in the presence of God with your hands outstretched, resisting the temptation to fill your prayer time with words.

While prayer most certainly does entail words—sometimes many of them—and while prayer brings you unashamedly to God with your requests (see the article on intercessory prayer), it’s easy to forget that prayer also majors on two other key aspects: relationship and listening.

Prayer as Relationship

Prayer does indeed draw on all the dynamics of conversation, but even more it takes place in a climate of communion. While surely you should feel free to speak, you should learn also to cultivate wordless awe and gratitude. The late Anthony Bloom tells the story of an eighteenth-century minister who asked an elderly peasant what he was doing during the

hours and hours he spent sitting in the church. The old man said, "I look at Him, He looks at me, and we are happy."⁷ What a warm and charming picture of prayerful communion with God!

Practicing periods of prayerful silence not only helps you quiet the words that sometimes seem to gush forth from within, but in doing so you also begin to approach both prayer and daily circumstances with less intent to manage and manipulate. You learn to open your hands and your heart and receive, not just expect to dictate and direct.

The deep intimacy that can sometimes come in quiet moments is also a reminder of just how vital it is to leave space for careful, calm dialogue with God. You certainly don't pray only for the sake of hearing yourself talk. You pray to *meet* someone—God himself—in a personal encounter. Cultivating silence, therefore, is not striving for a meditative state whereby you empty yourself of thought and emotion, as some Eastern religious traditions suggest. Rather, in the silence you create space for Christ to meet you and dwell within you. The goal is not silence itself, but the communion with God that silence makes possible.

Prayer as Listening

The goal of prayerful silence also involves learning and discerning God's guidance. You still your voice to hear God's. "When you pray," Jesus sternly warned, "don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered only by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, because your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!" (Matthew 6:7-8). While words are useful, they can also clutter and ultimately keep you from hearing God. After all, in prayer you want not only to be heard but also to hear. You close your mouth and practice letting go of your dependence on words. You fast not only from food but also from "talkativeness." You resolve to let God's word shape you and God's will guide you, something you cannot do if you are always filling the silences with chatter.

Today's culture so emphasizes self-expression that talk about restraining the constant articulation of your feelings seems counter-cultural. But in prayer resist the temptation to indulge in endless self-expression. Only then can God express himself in your heart and life. When you quiet your mind and heart before God, when you learn to listen, God will faithfully and wonderfully speak in the silence.

—Timothy Jones

INTERCESSION

Have you ever wondered why, if God already knows all, you are called to pray for particular people and specific situations? Can't you just assume God will do what's best anyway? Should your praying perhaps focus simply on knowing God and submitting to his will? Plus, how does praying "may your will be done" (Matthew 6:10) relate to prayers of "please" and "help"?

Earnest Prayer

Look carefully and you'll see that prayers in which you bring the needs of others to God—the kind of prayer known as *intercessory* prayer—hold a special place in the Bible. They play a key role in God's design. No wonder many of the Bible's instructions to pray have precisely this kind of prayer in mind. "The earnest prayer of a righteous person," said James, "has great power and wonderful results" (James 5:16). Look at Elijah, James said: He was "as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell!" (James 5:17). This is no blank check for every whim and want, of course. James reminds you also that some prayers go unanswered because your "whole motive is wrong"

(James 4:3). And Jesus reminds you to pray *in his name* (John 14:13-14), in the spirit of God's will and purpose, in other words.

Pray Boldly

Praying with confidence that God will do what's best doesn't preclude asking boldly for his intervention in specific situations. Jesus even commanded such praying: "Keep on asking," he told his followers. "Keep on looking. . . . Keep on knocking" (Matthew 7:7). In the original Greek these are strong, imperative statements. The statements progress in urgency from simply making a request to banging on a door in desperation: "Ask . . . look . . . knock!" Jesus even told his followers a story about a poor widow who nagged and nagged a judge for justice to, as Luke put it, "illustrate their need for constant prayer and to show them that they must never give up" (Luke 18:1).

What does this mean for your prayers? That you should boldly ask. That you should unreservedly pray for others. Have you ever heard the saying, "prayer doesn't change things; it changes *us*"? According to much of Scripture, that is only half true. Yes, you should expect your desires to be refined, your small horizons to be stretched as you meet God in your asking. But that truth does not keep you from including specific requests and from expecting God to respond *in some way* to what you ask. Prayer also changes *things*—the people and situations we pray about—even as it changes us.

Expectant Praying

Now, how does this understanding of prayer fit with your understanding of God as sovereign and all-powerful? Does your request for specific things contradict God's long-term plans and overarching purposes? Shouldn't you instead allow God full room to act according to counsels you cannot even glimpse?

Awareness of God's infinite wisdom should indeed instill humility in you. But it need not dampen your expectant praying. You are invited to ask in the first place because God desires a relationship with you. He invites you into conversation with him about your life and the lives of those you love. And he places on you the responsibility for the way the world turns out, not only through your actions but also through your prayers.

Relationship with God

Ultimately, then, a clear understanding of intercessory prayer comes not so much through philosophy but through relationship. Intercessory prayer puts you in dialogue with God about yourself and your loved ones and the world's wider circumstances. It gathers your daily life, with its concerns and longings, in the presence of One who already cares. This God indeed knows about the situations that provoke your longings and your compassionate cries for others. "Your Father knows," Jesus tells us, "exactly what you [and others, we might add!] need even before you ask him!" (Matthew 6:8). But that does not mean that God does not enlist you in his kingdom work, using your prayers (and his answers to them) to work great good. God so honors your participation with him in what transpires in the world that in some things he may wait for your asking before his acting.

Relationship with Others

Intercessory prayer also puts you in a new relationship with the people and situations you bring before God. Such prayer allows you to think and care in the presence of God. It reminds you that you face no situation without God's awareness and involvement. "Intercessory prayer," writes Paul Fiddes, "is an experience of interconnectedness and mutuality, because it is praying 'in God' who lives in relationships. . . . We enter into the life of prayer already going on within the communion of God's being; we pray to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit."⁸

To pray for others is to invite into any situation possibilities you could never manufacture on your own. "If we truly love people," Richard Foster writes, "we will desire for them far more than it is within our power to give them, and this will lead us to prayer."⁹ It will lead you to *asking*, without hesitation and with a holy assurance that God will hear and answer.

—Timothy Jones

WORSHIP

At a large church in the South, communion is celebrated every Sunday. After receiving communion, worshipers can go to one of the side aisles where specially trained lay people wait to pray for specific needs. Some years ago, the church hired a new pastor. Although hesitant to make quick changes, he disliked the practice of offering private prayer during communion. At a meeting shortly after his arrival, he complained to his staff about the practice, saying that private prayer distracted from gathered worship. When he expressed his dislike, one staff member commented, "I think that it's *because* we are all gathered together in worship that the private prayers become so significant. Those prayers gain added power because they are offered during gathered worship. The many voices in worship strengthen the individual's one voice in prayer."

Worshipping Together

God not only created you for communion with himself but also for fellowship with others. This flies in the face of so much of today's hyper-individualism. Most think of faith as "God and me," with little awareness or concern for "God present in thee." Yet gathering with others who worship the same Lord becomes sustenance and offers much joy. Out of your private moments with God, you enter familiar and beloved surroundings together with your brothers and sisters in Christ. There you allow others to put into words and music what you may not know how to express on your own. When your senses are dull and your faith drowsy, the prayers and praises of others can revive your spirit. "Faithfulness grows in the presence of people who practice discerning the One voice among the many and who by 'attending' to Jesus Christ find themselves transformed and marked as his followers."¹⁰

In liturgical churches—churches that use set forms and printed prayers—the prayer appointed for each Sunday is called the Collect. The Collect *collects* the prayers of all the worshipers assembled together, gathering them into one corporate prayer. In gathered worship you bring your personal prayers to join with the personal prayers of your brothers and sisters in Christ. Your one prayer thereby becomes magnified and strengthened by many voices.

Likewise, your private devotion nourishes gathered prayer and worship. "In earlier times," writes Marjorie Thompson, "the weekly prayers of the gathered community were nurtured by the daily prayers of faithful families and individuals, just as a river is fed by smaller streams. . . . It was at one time common practice to examine oneself through prayer and confession before participating in the Sunday service. If we spend half an hour assessing our life before God, either Saturday evening or early Sunday morning, we will discover a natural bridge between our personal prayer and common worship."¹¹

God Invites You to Come into His Presence

Whether private devotion or gathered prayer and worship, all are part of the same reality, a life-long commitment that Brother Lawrence called "practicing the presence of God." The psalmist called it "delighting in the Lord" (Psalm 37:4). In both private prayer and in gathered worship, you lay down your preoccupation with yourself and occupy yourself with God.

When you fill your mind and heart with God, you are acting on the open-ended, eternal invitation to “come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it” (Hebrews 4:16). Whether caught up in private preoccupation with the divine alone, or while gathered with like-minded believers, you reach out to the Lord only to discover his hands already stretched out to you. You kneel to pray, you lift your voice in songs of praise, and you open your hands to receive the bread and the cup—all at God’s invitation.

To worship God is to remember that he is worthy of your complete attention. God calls you as an individual to turn your thoughts to him, and he blesses the gathered prayer and praise of his followers with his presence. Jesus promised, “For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I am there among them” (Matthew 18:20).

—Jill Zook-Jones

NOTES

- ¹ Marjorie Thompson, *Soul Feast* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1995), 24.
- ² George Mueller quoted in Donald Whitney, *Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991), 71.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 68.
- ⁴ Jean-Pierre de Caussade, *The Sacrament of the Present Moment*, Kitty Muggeridge, trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 22.
- ⁵ R. D. Chatham, *Fasting: A Biblical-Historical Study* (South Plainfield, N.J.: 1987), 115.
- ⁶ Bill Hybels, *Too Busy Not to Pray* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 119.
- ⁷ Anthony Bloom, *Beginning to Pray* (New York: Paulist Press, 1970), 62.
- ⁸ Paul S. Fiddes, *Participating in God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 123.
- ⁹ Richard Foster, *Prayer* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 191.
- ¹⁰ Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster, *The Godbearing Life* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1998), 15.
- ¹¹ Marjorie Thompson, *Soul Feast*, 61.

Genesis

The Beginnings Book

Genesis records the beginning of the world, when God created the earth and everything in it. Genesis records the beginning of sin, when Adam and Eve took that first bite of forbidden fruit. It records the beginning of God's love relationship with his people, when he punished, but did not abandon, Adam and Eve after they sinned.

Genesis also records the first prayers of the Bible. Genesis 4:26 contains these remarkable words: "It was during [Enosh's] lifetime that people first began to worship the LORD." Adam and Eve's son Seth and grandson Enosh exhibited a loving reliance on God, in contrast with their son Cain's line, which was arrogantly self-sufficient. Noah survived the Flood because he was willing to follow God's instructions. His prayer and sacrifice of thanksgiving after the Flood prompted God's sign of the rainbow. Abraham, famous for his life of faith, prayed for God's help in several different life situations. These early men begin the long line of pray-ers in Genesis, with Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph following in close succession.

PRAYER IN GENESIS

Seth and Enosh worship God	4:26
Enoch enjoys a close relationship with God	5:23
Noah thanks God	8:18-20
Abraham prays regarding his childlessness	15:2-3
Abraham prays for a blessing on Ishmael	17:18
Abraham prays for Sodom and Gomorrah	18:22-33
Abraham prays for Abimelech	20:17-18
Abraham's servant prays for a wife for Isaac	24:12-14
Isaac prays for childless Rebekah	25:21
Jacob makes a vow to follow God	28:20-22
Jacob prays for safety	32:9-12
Jacob responds to God's call	46:2

Genesis 1

The Account of Creation

1:1-2 • O God, Creator Spirit, how marvelously you created the universe out of emptiness. How I praise you for your love and power!

CHAPTER 1 In the beginning God created* the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness. And the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface. ³Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴And God saw that it was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." Together these made up one day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be space between the waters, to separate water from water." ⁷And so it was. God made this space to separate the waters above from the waters below. ⁸And God called the space "sky." This happened on the second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky be gathered into one place so dry ground may appear." And so it was. ¹⁰God named the dry ground "land" and the water "seas." And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, "Let the land burst forth with every sort of grass and seed-bearing plant. And let there be trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. The seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came." And so it was. ¹²The land was filled with seed-bearing plants and trees, and their seeds produced plants and trees of like kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³This all happened on the third day.

¹⁴And God said, "Let bright lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. They will be signs to mark off the seasons, the days, and the years. ¹⁵Let their light shine down upon the earth." And so it was. ¹⁶For God made two great lights, the sun and the moon, to shine down upon the earth. The greater one, the sun, presides during the day; the lesser one, the moon, presides through the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set these lights in the heavens to light the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹This all happened on the fourth day.

1:20 • Praise God for the beauty and diversity of all the creatures he has made. Meditate on how God has made a place and function for each kingdom, phylum, genus, and species of plant and animal.

²⁰And God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind." ²¹So God created great sea creatures and every sort of fish and every kind of bird. And God saw that it was good. ²²Then God blessed them, saying, "Let the fish multiply and fill the oceans. Let the birds increase and fill the earth." ²³This all happened on the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, "Let the earth bring forth every kind of animal—livestock, small animals, and wildlife." And so it was. ²⁵God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to reproduce more of its own kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make people* in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life—the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals,* and small animals."

1:27 • Lord, I praise you for making me in your image so that I might know you, talk with you, and reflect your character.

²⁷ So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them and told them, "Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters over the fish and birds and all the animals." ²⁹And God said, "Look! I have given you the seed-bearing plants throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. ³⁰And I have given all the

1:1 Or *In the beginning when God created, or When God began to create.* 1:26a Hebrew *man*; also in 1:27. 1:26b As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *all the earth*.

grasses and other green plants to the animals and birds for their food.” And so it was. ³¹Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was excellent in every way. This all happened on the sixth day.

CHAPTER 2 So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. ²On the seventh day, having finished his task, God rested from all his work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from his work of creation.

⁴This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

The Man and Woman in Eden

When the LORD God made the heavens and the earth, ⁵there were no plants or grain growing on the earth, for the LORD God had not sent any rain. And no one was there to cultivate the soil. ⁶But water came up out of the ground and watered all the land. ⁷And the LORD God formed a man’s body from the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. And the man became a living person.

⁸Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had created. ⁹And the LORD God planted all sorts of trees in the garden—beautiful trees that produced delicious fruit. At the center of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. ¹¹One of these branches is the Pishon, which flows around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. ¹²The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. ¹³The second branch is the Gihon, which flows around the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The third branch is the Tigris, which flows to the east of Asshur. The fourth branch is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and care for it. ¹⁶But the LORD God gave him this warning: “You may freely eat any fruit in the garden ¹⁷except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die.”

¹⁸And the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him.” ¹⁹So the LORD God formed from the soil every kind of animal and bird. He brought them to Adam* to see what he would call them, and Adam chose a name for each one. ²⁰He gave names to all the livestock, birds, and wild animals. But still there was no companion suitable for him. ²¹So the LORD God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He took one of Adam’s ribs* and closed up the place from which he had taken it. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib and brought her to Adam.

²³“At last!” Adam exclaimed. “She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called ‘woman,’ because she was taken out of a man.” ²⁴This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. ²⁵Now, although Adam and his wife were both naked, neither of them felt any shame.

The Man and Woman Sin

CHAPTER 3 Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the creatures the LORD God had made. “Really?” he asked the woman. “Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?”

2:19 Hebrew *the man*, and so throughout this chapter. 2:21 Or *took a part of Adam’s side*.

1:28-30 • Ask God for the wisdom and will to be a good steward of his creation. Thank him for the animals, plants, and natural resources he has provided for your use.

2:7 • Thank God for breathing his life into you. Ask him to breathe his Spirit into you today.

2:18-24 • Contemplate the gift of intimacy God has made possible in marriage. Praise him for creating the family, and the fellowship and mutual support it can provide.

Genesis 3

²"Of course we may eat it," the woman told him. ³"It's only the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die."

3:5-6 • O Lord,
you know how I often aspire to be like you and take control over my own life and destiny. You and only you are God, the source of wisdom. Help me to listen to you and obey you.

⁴"You won't die!" the serpent hissed. ⁵"God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil."

⁶The woman was convinced. The fruit looked so fresh and delicious, and it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. Then he ate it, too. ⁷At that moment, their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they strung fig leaves together around their hips to cover themselves.

⁸Toward evening they heard the LORD God walking about in the garden, so they hid themselves among the trees. ⁹The LORD God called to Adam, * "Where are you?"

¹⁰He replied, "I heard you, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

¹¹"Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten the fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

¹²"Yes," Adam admitted, "but it was the woman you gave me who brought me the fruit, and I ate it."

¹³Then the LORD God asked the woman, "How could you do such a thing?"

"The serpent tricked me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you will be punished. You are singled out from all the domestic and wild animals of the whole earth to be cursed. You will grovel in the dust as long as you live, crawling along on your belly. ¹⁵From now on, you and the woman will be enemies, and your offspring and her offspring will be enemies. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

¹⁶Then he said to the woman, "You will bear children with intense pain and suffering. And though your desire will be for your husband,* he will be your master."

¹⁷And to Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse on the ground. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. ¹⁸It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. ¹⁹All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return."

²⁰Then Adam named his wife Eve,* because she would be the mother of all people everywhere. ²¹And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

²²Then the LORD God said, "The people have become as we are, knowing everything, both good and evil. What if they eat the fruit of the tree of life? Then they will live forever!" ²³So the LORD God banished Adam and his wife from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. ²⁴After banishing them from the garden, the LORD God stationed mighty angelic beings* to the east of Eden. And a flaming sword flashed back and forth, guarding the way to the tree of life.

3:22-24 • O God,
how I mourn the loss of the Garden of Eden—its beauty and bounty and peace and perfect communion with you. But I praise you because you have provided a perfect gateway back to paradise—through your Son, Jesus.

3:9 Hebrew *the man*, and so throughout this chapter. 3:16 Or *And though you may desire to control your husband*. 3:20 *Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "to give life."

3:24 Hebrew *cherubim*.

Cain, Abel, and Seth

CHAPTER 4 Now Adam* slept with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When the time came, she gave birth to Cain,* and she said, “With the LORD’s help, I have brought forth* a man!”² Later she gave birth to a second son and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain was a farmer.³ At harvesttime Cain brought to the LORD a gift of his farm produce,⁴ while Abel brought several choice lambs from the best of his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his offering,⁵ but he did not accept Cain and his offering. This made Cain very angry and dejected.

⁶“Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked him. “Why do you look so dejected? ⁷You will be accepted if you respond in the right way. But if you refuse to respond correctly, then watch out! Sin is waiting to attack and destroy you, and you must subdue it.”

⁸Later Cain suggested to his brother, Abel, “Let’s go out into the fields.”* And while they were there, Cain attacked and killed his brother.

⁹Afterward the LORD asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is Abel?”

“I don’t know!” Cain retorted. “Am I supposed to keep track of him wherever he goes?”

¹⁰But the LORD said, “What have you done? Listen—your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground! ¹¹You are hereby banished from the ground you have defiled with your brother’s blood. ¹²No longer will it yield abundant crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless fugitive on the earth, constantly wandering from place to place.”

¹³Cain replied to the LORD, “My punishment* is too great for me to bear! ¹⁴You have banished me from my land and from your presence; you have made me a wandering fugitive. All who see me will try to kill me!”

¹⁵The LORD replied, “They will not kill you, for I will give seven times your punishment to anyone who does.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. ¹⁶So Cain left the LORD’s presence and settled in the land of Nod,* east of Eden.

¹⁷Then Cain’s wife became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and they named him Enoch. When Cain founded a city, he named it Enoch after his son.

¹⁸ Enoch was the father of* Irad.

Irad was the father of Mehujael.

Mehujael was the father of Methushael.

Methushael was the father of Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech married two women—Adah and Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to a baby named Jabal. He became the first of the herdsmen who live in tents. ²¹His brother’s name was Jubal, the first musician—the inventor of the harp and flute. ²²To Lamech’s other wife, Zillah, was born Tubal-cain. He was the first to work with metal, forging instruments of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah.

²³One day Lamech said to Adah and Zillah, “Listen to me, my wives. I have killed a youth who attacked and wounded me. ²⁴If anyone who

4:1a Hebrew *the man*. 4:1b Cain sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “bring forth” or “acquire.” 4:1c Or *I have acquired*. 4:8 As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks “*Let’s go out into the fields.*” 4:13 Or *My sin*. 4:16 *Nod* means “wandering.” 4:18 Or *the ancestor of*, and so throughout the verse.

4:3-5 • Ask God to purify your heart and mind today so that what you offer him—your worship, your time, your gifts—will be acceptable and pleasing to him.

4:9 • Confess to God any resentment or envy you may harbor in your heart toward others who seem to have a more intimate relationship with God. Ask him to replace such emotions with the joy and peace of serving him in unity rather than in competition with others.

4:26 • Meditate on what it means to “worship the Lord.” Adore and praise God for his almighty, all-knowing, majestic, and loving presence.

5:2 • Ask God to deepen your understanding of how men and women complement each other and together reflect his image. Ask him to show you how to fulfill your role as a man or woman in your own unique way.

5:3-24 • Lord, only you know how many days and years you will give me. Help me to value each day as an opportunity to walk with you.

5:29 • Thank God that he did not leave humankind under the curse of fruitless labor and suffering, but that he promises to redeem and comfort his people instead.

kills Cain is to be punished seven times, anyone who takes revenge against me will be punished seventy-seven times!”

²⁵Adam slept with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth,* for she said, “God has granted me another son in place of Abel, the one Cain killed.” ²⁶When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. It was during his lifetime that people first began to worship the LORD.

From Adam to Noah

CHAPTER 5 This is the history of the descendants of Adam. When God created people,* he made them in the likeness of God. ²He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them “human.”*

³When Adam was 130 years old, his son Seth was born,* and Seth was the very image of his father.* ⁴After the birth of Seth,* Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵He died at the age of 930.

⁶When Seth was 105 years old, his son Enosh was born. ⁷After the birth of Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁸He died at the age of 912.

⁹When Enosh was 90 years old, his son Kenan was born. ¹⁰After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹¹He died at the age of 905.

¹²When Kenan was 70 years old, his son Mahalalel was born. ¹³After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴He died at the age of 910.

¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65 years old, his son Jared was born. ¹⁶After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷He died at the age of 895.

¹⁸When Jared was 162 years old, his son Enoch was born. ¹⁹After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁰He died at the age of 962.

²¹When Enoch was 65 years old, his son Methuselah was born. ²²After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived another 300 years in close fellowship with God, and he had other sons and daughters.

²³Enoch lived 365 years in all. ²⁴He enjoyed a close relationship with God throughout his life. Then suddenly, he disappeared because God took him.

²⁵When Methuselah was 187 years old, his son Lamech was born.

²⁶After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁷He died at the age of 969.

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, his son Noah was born. ²⁹Lamech named his son Noah,* for he said, “He will bring us relief from the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed.”

³⁰After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ³¹He died at the age of 777.

³²By the time Noah was 500 years old, he had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

4:25 Seth probably means “granted”; the name may also mean “appointed.” 5:1 Hebrew man. 5:2 Hebrew man. 5:3a Or his son, the ancestor of Seth, was born; similarly in 5:6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25. 5:3b Hebrew was in his own likeness, after his image. 5:4 Or After the birth of this ancestor of Seth; similarly in 5:7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26. 5:29 Noah sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “relief” or “comfort.”

Noah and the Flood

CHAPTER 6 When the human population began to grow rapidly on the earth,² the sons of God saw the beautiful women of the human race and took any they wanted as their wives.³ Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, they will live no more than 120 years.”

⁴In those days, and even afterward, giants* lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with human women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes mentioned in legends of old.

⁵Now the LORD observed the extent of the people’s wickedness, and he saw that all their thoughts were consistently and totally evil. ⁶So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them. It broke his heart. ⁷And the LORD said, “I will completely wipe out this human race that I have created. Yes, and I will destroy all the animals and birds, too. I am sorry I ever made them.” ⁸But Noah found favor with the LORD.

⁹This is the history of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless man living on earth at the time. He consistently followed God’s will and enjoyed a close relationship with him.

¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth had become corrupt in God’s sight, and it was filled with violence. ¹²God observed all this corruption in the world, and he saw violence and depravity everywhere. ¹³So God said to Noah, “I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. Yes, I will wipe them all from the face of the earth!”

¹⁴“Make a boat* from resinous wood and seal it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. ¹⁵Make it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.* ¹⁶Construct an opening all the way around the boat, 18 inches* below the roof. Then put three decks inside the boat—bottom, middle, and upper—and put a door in the side.

¹⁷“Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing. Everything on earth will die! ¹⁸But I solemnly swear to keep you safe in the boat, with your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁹Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—

6:4 Hebrew *Nephilim*. 6:14 Traditionally rendered *an ark*. 6:15 Hebrew *300 cubits* [135 meters] *long, 50 cubits* [22.5 meters] *wide, and 30 cubits* [13.5 meters] *high*. 6:16 Hebrew *1 cubit* [45 centimeters].

6:6 • Dear Lord, *the thought of breaking your heart is painful to me. I am sorry for hurting you with my sinful thoughts and ways. Please forgive me.*

6:9-12 • Ask God *to show you how to walk blamelessly with him. Ask him to teach you how to be a man or woman of peace and integrity in a violent and corrupt world.*

6:18 • Praise God *that he makes and keeps his promises.*



AN INTIMATE LOVE *relationship with God is the key to knowing God’s voice, to hearing when God speaks. You come to know His voice as you experience Him in a love relationship. As God speaks and you respond, you will come to the point that you recognize His voice more and more clearly.*

—HENRY BLACKABY, *Experiencing God*

into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. ²⁰Pairs of each kind of bird and each kind of animal, large and small alike, will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹And remember, take enough food for your family and for all the animals.”

²²So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

The Flood Covers the Earth

7:2-3 • Thank God for providing for you even in the hard times of life just as he provided for Noah and his family when the floods came over the land.

CHAPTER 7 Finally, the day came when the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I consider you alone to be righteous. ²Take along seven pairs of each animal that I have approved for eating and for sacrifice, and take one pair of each of the others. ³Then select seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that every kind of living creature will survive the flood. ⁴One week from today I will begin forty days and forty nights of rain. And I will wipe from the earth all the living things I have created.”

⁵So Noah did exactly as the LORD had commanded him. ⁶He was 600 years old when the flood came, ⁷and he went aboard the boat to escape—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. ⁸With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and other small animals. ⁹They came into the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰One week later, the flood came and covered the earth.

¹¹When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, the underground waters burst forth on the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. ¹²The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights. ¹³But Noah had gone into the boat that very day with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. ¹⁴With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of breathing animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds and flying insects of every kind. ¹⁵Two by two they came into the boat, ¹⁶male and female, just as God had commanded. Then the LORD shut them in.

7:16-23 • O my God, though there may be death and destruction around me, still you are faithful. I praise and thank you for being in control even in the midst of disaster, and I trust you to bring good out of these frightening times.

¹⁷For forty days the floods prevailed, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. ¹⁸As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. ¹⁹Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, ²⁰standing more than twenty-two feet* above the highest peaks. ²¹All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all kinds of small animals, and all the people. ²²Everything died that breathed and lived on dry land. ²³Every living thing on the earth was wiped out—people, animals both large and small, and birds. They were all destroyed, and only Noah was left alive, along with those who were with him in the boat. ²⁴And the water covered the earth for 150 days.

8:1 • Bless the Lord for remembering you and for keeping the promises he has made to you, even if you do not see them fulfilled right now.

The Flood Recedes

CHAPTER 8 But God remembered Noah and all the animals in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the waters, and the floods began to disappear. ²The underground water sources ceased their gushing, and the torrential rains stopped. ³So the flood gradually began to recede. After 150 days, ⁴exactly five months from the time the flood began,* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵Two and a half

7:20 Hebrew 15 cubits [6.8 meters]. 8:4 Hebrew on the seventeenth day of the seventh month; see 7:11.

months later,* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks began to appear.

⁶After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat ⁷and released a raven that flew back and forth until the earth was dry. ⁸Then he sent out a dove to see if it could find dry ground. ⁹But the dove found no place to land because the water was still too high. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. ¹⁰Seven days later, Noah released the dove again. ¹¹This time, toward evening, the bird returned to him with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Noah now knew that the water was almost gone. ¹²A week later, he released the dove again, and this time it did not come back.

¹³Finally, when Noah was 601 years old, ten and a half months after the flood began,* Noah lifted back the cover to look. The water was drying up. ¹⁴Two more months went by,* and at last the earth was dry! ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Leave the boat, all of you. ¹⁷Release all the animals and birds so they can breed and reproduce in great numbers.” ¹⁸So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. ¹⁹And all the various kinds of animals and birds came out, pair by pair.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and sacrificed on it the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose. ²¹And the LORD was pleased with the sacrifice and said to himself, “I will never again curse the earth, destroying all living things, even though people’s thoughts and actions are bent toward evil from childhood. ²²As long as the earth remains, there will be springtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night.”

God’s Covenant with Noah

CHAPTER 9 God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Multiply and fill the earth. ²All the wild animals, large and small, and all the birds and fish will be afraid of you. I have placed them in your power. ³I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. ⁴But you must never eat animals that still have their lifeblood in them. ⁵And murder is forbidden. Animals that kill people must die, and any person who murders must be killed. ⁶Yes, you must execute anyone who murders another person, for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God’s image. ⁷Now you must have many children and repopulate the earth. Yes, multiply and fill the earth!”

⁸Then God told Noah and his sons, ⁹“I am making a covenant with you and your descendants, ¹⁰and with the animals you brought with you—all these birds and livestock and wild animals. ¹¹I solemnly promise never to send another flood to kill all living creatures and destroy the earth.” ¹²And God said, “I am giving you a sign as evidence of my eternal covenant with you and all living creatures. ¹³I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my permanent promise to you and to all the earth. ¹⁴When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will be seen in the clouds, ¹⁵and I will remember my covenant with you and with everything that lives. Never again will there be a flood that will destroy all life. ¹⁶When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on

8:8-13 • Ask God for the faith to believe that he is with you today, regardless of how you feel or the circumstances of your life, even when there seem to be no signs of his presence on your horizon.

8:20-22 • Praise the Lord for his faithfulness in bringing about each season in its time. Thank him that you can count on the sun rising and setting every day.

9:2-3 • Thank you, O Lord, for giving us our food today. Thank you for green plants that grow and for meat to make us strong. Make us worthy to receive these gifts from your hands.

9:12-16 • Praise the Almighty God for the loveliness of the rainbow. Thank him for giving the rainbow as a sign of his eternal presence and steadfast promises to all life on earth.

8:5 Hebrew *On the first day of the tenth month*; see 7:11 and note on 8:4. 8:13 Hebrew *on the first day of the first month*; see 7:11. 8:14 Hebrew *The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived*; see note on 8:13.

Genesis 10

earth.” ¹⁷Then God said to Noah, “Yes, this is the sign of my covenant with all the creatures of the earth.”

Noah's Sons

¹⁸Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah, survived the Flood with their father. (Ham is the ancestor of the Canaanites.) ¹⁹From these three sons of Noah came all the people now scattered across the earth.

²⁰After the Flood, Noah became a farmer and planted a vineyard. ²¹One day he became drunk on some wine he had made and lay naked in his tent. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. ²³Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, walked backward into the tent, and covered their father's naked body. As they did this, they looked the other way so they wouldn't see him naked. ²⁴When Noah woke up from his drunken stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done. ²⁵Then he cursed the descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham:

“A curse on the Canaanites!
May they be the lowest of servants
to the descendants of Shem and Japheth.”

²⁶Then Noah said,

“May Shem be blessed by the LORD my God;
and may Canaan be his servant.

²⁷ May God enlarge the territory of Japheth,
and may he share the prosperity of Shem;*
and let Canaan be his servant.”

²⁸Noah lived another 350 years after the Flood. ²⁹He was 950 years old when he died.

CHAPTER 10 This is the history of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah. Many children were born to them after the Flood.

Descendants of Japheth

²The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

³The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁴The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim. * ⁵Their descendants became the seafaring peoples in various lands, each tribe with its own language.

Descendants of Ham

⁶The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim,* Put, and Canaan.

⁷The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

⁸One of Cush's descendants was Nimrod, who became a heroic warrior. ⁹He was a mighty hunter in the LORD's sight.* His name became proverbial, and people would speak of someone as

9:27 Hebrew *may he live in the tents of Shem*. 10:4 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 1:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Dodanim*. 10:6 Or *Egypt*; also in 10:13. 10:9 Hebrew *a mighty hunter before the LORD*; also in 10:9b.

9:23-24 • Thank God for your parents today and ask God to help you to honor them, affording them dignity and treating them with kindness and compassion.

10:8-12 • Almighty God, I want to serve you today. May my words and deeds honor your name and influence others so that your kingdom is expanded.

being “like Nimrod, a mighty hunter in the LORD’s sight.”

¹⁰He built the foundation for his empire in the land of Babylonia,* with the cities of Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh.

¹¹From there he extended his reign to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, ¹²and Resen—the main city of the empire, located between Nineveh and Calah.

¹³Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, ¹⁴Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Caphtorites, from whom the Philistines came.*

¹⁵Canaan’s oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites, ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. ¹⁹Eventually the territory of Canaan spread from Sidon to Gerar, near Gaza, and to Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha.

²⁰These were the descendants of Ham, identified according to their tribes, languages, territories, and nations.

Descendants of Shem

²¹Sons were also born to Shem, the older brother of Japheth.* Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber. ²²The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

²³The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

²⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah,* and Shelah was the father of Eber. ²⁵Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg—“division”—for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups and dispersed. His brother’s name was Joktan.

10:10 Hebrew *Shinar*. 10:14 Hebrew *Casluhites*, from whom the Philistines came, *Caphtorites*. Compare Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7. 10:21 Or *Shem*, whose older brother was *Japheth*. 10:24 Greek version reads *Arphaxad was the father of Cainan, Cainan was the father of Shelah*.

All the mighty men of God outside the Bible have been men of prayer. They have differed from one another in many things, but in this they have been alike.

—R. A. Torrey,
How to Pray

10:25 • Pray that you will be able to celebrate instead of censure the diversity of the people God has created.

God’s Promise to ANSWER PRAYER



A Rainbow of a Promise

Genesis 9:11-17

God speaks, and Noah listens. He always listens. So far, his listening helped him survive a flood by building a boat. Now God is speaking again, and his words are words of love. “Never again will there be a flood that will destroy all life” (Genesis 9:15).

Good news to Noah! Good news to us! God makes a promise and keeps it. Noah shades his eyes and looks at the first rainbow. He is dazzled by the shower of colors. It’s a sign of God’s promise, a signal of his love. *Never again.*

This God of flawless integrity made a promise and sealed it with his sign in the sky. And this is the God to whom we pray!

- For the next article on God’s Promise to ANSWER PRAYER go to *Genesis 25:21* (p. 33).
- The Prayer Path on God’s Promise to ANSWER PRAYER begins at *1 Kings 8:1-9:9* (p. 447).

PRAYER PROGRAMS

The Prayer Programs that follow are designed to lead you through seven days of reading and praying on various topics. Each of the thirty prayer programs include Bible passages as well as prayer prompts, prayer paths, and quotes from well-known writers to give you information, encouragement, and direction.

Prayer When Afraid	1676
Prayer When Angry	1676
Prayer for Your Children	1676
Prayer When Depressed	1677
Prayer When Disappointed.	1677
Prayer When Discontented	1677
Prayer When Faith Is Weak	1678
Prayer When Feeling Blessed.	1678
Prayer When Feeling Guilty	1679
Prayer When Feeling Joyful	1679
Prayer When Feeling Unloved	1679
Prayer When Grieving	1680
Prayer for Leaders	1680
Prayer When Needing Forgiveness	1680
Prayer When Needing Assurance of Salvation	1681
Prayer When Needing Encouragement.	1681
Prayer When Needing to Control Your Tongue	1682
Prayer for a New Home	1682
Prayer When Praising God	1682
Prayer When Seeking God’s Direction	1683
Prayer When Sick.	1683
Prayer When Struggling with Apathy	1684
Prayer When Struggling with Laziness	1684
Prayer When Struggling with Materialism	1684
Prayer When Struggling with Pride.	1685
Prayer When Struggling with Profanity	1685
Prayer When Suffering	1685
Prayer When Tempted.	1686
Prayer When Waiting for God to Answer	1686
Prayer for the World Situation	1687

PRAYER WHEN AFRAID

No matter what your age or situation, you can probably recall times when you've been afraid. Perhaps you're living in fear right now. Whether your fear is imagined or well founded, it can take control and make you whimper in its face, forgetting that these are the best times to take hold of your trust in God. Use the readings and prayer directions of the next few days to renew and revive your belief that God can take care of you.

Day 1: Read Matthew 8:23-27 (p. 1231). The disciples' fear is intense, serious, and not groundless. They have been in storms before and understand the very real danger they face. Jesus uses this opportunity to help them realize that times of fear are times for faith.

Day 2: Read the thoughts of Henri Nouwen (p. 1525). Ask God to change your heart, to give you a complete trust in his ability to protect you from your fears.

Day 3: God's words of encouragement to Abraham are for you as well. You can read them in Genesis 15:1 (p. 18).

Day 4: Read "To Commune with God," Psalm 23 (p. 719).

Day 5: Read Hebrews 13:6 (p. 1608), the believer's ultimate statement of confidence. It may be difficult for you to speak this with conviction, so pray it instead, asking God to help you make it true in your life.

Day 6: Read Psalm 56 (p. 751). Isn't King David amazing? He had plenty to be afraid of. Real threats to his life! But he used his fear as an opportunity to put serious trust in God. As you read this psalm, meditate especially on verse 3, repeating it and praying it in the middle of your fears.

Day 7: *Father God, I confess to you that I am a fearful person, that I have a hard time trusting you in the middle of my fears. Help me, O God, to learn to put my trust in you whenever my fears take hold. Thank you for your promise to be with me.*

PRAYER WHEN ANGRY

Flashing eyes, red faces, perhaps hastily spoken words—all are sure signs that you're angry. Controlled anger at injustice or abuse or hurt can be productive. Uncontrolled anger, however, is almost always destructive. The readings for this week will help you take a close look at anger and help you pray in the midst of it.

Day 1: Read Proverbs 29:11 (p. 868), and ask God to give you wisdom in handling anger.

Day 2: Pray the "Prayer for the Human Family" found on page 19, using it to diffuse your anger and redirect your thoughts.

Day 3: Read James 1:19-20 (p. 1612) for his instruction to be slow to anger. Use the words of the verse to ask God's help in controlling your anger.

Day 4: Read "Praying No Matter What," Jonah 2:1-10; 4:1-5 (p. 1165).

Day 5: Jesus' anger in Mark 3:1-6 (p. 1275) is an example for you of what well-directed and controlled anger looks like. Ask Jesus to help you properly direct and control your anger.

Day 6: Read Psalm 4:4 (p. 703). Note that the verse doesn't say not to be angry. It says instead not to let your anger control you. Pray that God will give you the grace to control your anger.

Day 7: *Father, I admit that my anger is usually with things that inconvenience me or irritate me. Help me to control and overcome that sort of self-defeating anger, Lord. May I be angry with the sort of things that anger you—hard heartedness and injustice. Help me to use that sort of "righteous" anger to produce good results and change in my world. Amen.*

PRAYER FOR YOUR CHILDREN

Most believing parents think of their children as their most precious possession. And nothing is more important to them than that their children grow up to follow the Lord. This seven-day prayer program is a small beginning to a lifetime of prayer for your children.

Day 1: Hannah portrays one of the greatest examples of all time of praying for and sacrificially giving up a child to the Lord. You can read about Hannah and her son Samuel in 1 Samuel 1 (pp. 352-353). Note especially verses 27 and 28.

Day 2: Read William and Nancie Carmichael's thoughts on praying for your children (p. 67). Spend faithful time in prayer for your children and God *will* hear. The answers may not always come as you wish (children do have minds of their own, after all), but he will hear.

Day 3: Matthew 19:13 (p. 1250) pictures a touching scene of children sitting on Jesus' lap as he prays for them. As you intercede for your children, ask Jesus to touch them and bless them.

Day 4: Read “Hannah’s Prayer,” 1 Samuel 1:1–2:11 (pp. 352-354).

Day 5: Read Acts 21:5 (p. 1444). This little verse illustrates a big point: praying *with* your children illustrates for them the importance of prayer in the life of a believer. Begin when they are young—not only praying for your children but *with* them.

Day 6: Proverbs 22:6 (p. 861) gives instruction on raising children. Part of proper teaching is done in prayer. Today, spend time in concentrated prayer mentioning each of your children, listing their specific needs, and asking God to give you grace and wisdom as you deal with them.

Day 7: *Father of me and my children, I bless your name for loving me and for loving them. I love them, Lord, sometimes so much it consumes me. Help me to realize that my children belong to you first of all. Then do what you must in me and in them so that we all live devoted lives for you.*

PRAYER WHEN DEPRESSED

When you’re discouraged or depressed, feeling like life is too hard to make it worth the effort, use these prayer possibilities to help guide you through the week. The circumstances of your life may not change, and your outlook may not be totally turned around; however, looking to God each day can begin to help you gain a new perspective and hope.

Day 1: Read Philippians 4:6-8 (p. 1548). What Paul is telling believers to do isn’t easy. But it does work! Ask God to help you “fix your thoughts” on good things when you struggle with depression.

Day 2: Read the words of Richard Foster (p. 859). How do you think prayer can help your situation? Your feelings about your situation?

Day 3: Read and claim for your life the words of Deuteronomy 31:8 (p. 266).

Day 4: Read “Praying When Life Is Confusing,” Psalm 13 (p. 711).

Day 5: Who is faithful to comfort the discouraged? Read 2 Corinthians 7:6 (p. 1515). How does that fact change how you might respond to your feelings? In your prayers today, ask God to help you trust him for comfort.

Day 6: Read the words David wrote when he was discouraged in Psalm 42:5-6 (p. 739), then use his words to express to God your own feelings of discouragement or despair.

Day 7: *Loving Father, I know you love me—even when I’m feeling down and discouraged. Those are often the hardest times for me to look to you. Give me fresh eyes to see you and to see my situation. Help me to trust you to rescue me.*

PRAYER WHEN DISAPPOINTED

Disappointment is a fact of life. Things don’t always turn out as you might wish. Life swings its hard fists at you. Whatever disappointment you face right now, use these readings and prayers to look it in the face and declare your victory over it through Jesus.

Day 1: Read the prophet Zechariah’s words in Zechariah 10:2 (p. 1203). Only one person will never disappoint. Praise him today!

Day 2: Read the words of Jimmy Carter (p. 641) on facing disappointment, then do as he says and never give up!

Day 3: Read Deuteronomy 34 (pp. 274-275) for the story of Moses’ disappointment. He was denied entry into the Promised Land, but he was not forgotten by God. As you read his story, review your own disappointments and look for God’s presence even in the midst of them.

Day 4: Read Abraham Lincoln’s disappointment in the conventional wisdom of the day (p. 1467). Ask God to teach you to depend on him alone.

Day 5: Rehearse in your mind the disappointments you’ve faced recently, then pray over them, using the words of Romans 5:5, telling God that you know your hope in him is not misplaced.

Day 6: Use the words of Psalm 22:1-5 (p. 718) to praise God that he never disappoints.

Day 7: *There are times, Father, when the instabilities of life overwhelm me. I’m disappointed again and again, in small and not so small ways. Help me, Lord, to learn to look at you and trust in you rather than people or things or circumstances. You alone will never disappoint.*

PRAYER WHEN DISCONTENTED

Discontentment plagues people of all ages. Comparison is the culprit. If you look only at what you have or at your situation without comparing it with others, you’ll likely be content with your lot. However, if you constantly compare yourself with others, you’ll invariably see yourself coming up short

GUIDE TO PRAYER PATHS

FINDING TIME to Pray

He Bends Down to Listen When I Pray!	Psalms 116	811
Consistency and Faithfulness	Acts 1:13-14	1407
“Arrow” Prayers	Nehemiah 2:4	635
Keep It Short and Simple	Matthew 6:7-8	1226
No Need for Words	Psalms 5:1	705
Get Away from It All	Mark 1:35-36	1273
Making Prayer a Way of Life	Acts 10:1-2	1423
All Night Long	Luke 6:12	1319
When You’re All Alone	1 Timothy 5:5	1573

God’s Promise to ANSWER Prayer

King Solomon’s Prayer	1 Kings 8:1–9:9	447
A Rainbow of a Promise	Genesis 9:11-17	13
God’s Perfect Timing	Genesis 25:21	33
Waiting for God’s Best	Genesis 30:1-22	39
Faith Takes Hold of God’s Promise	Isaiah 7:1-25	901
God’s Waiting Room	Hebrews 10:36	1601
The Promise-keeping Character of God	Hebrews 11:13, 39	1605
God Answers When We Obey	1 John 3:22	1637
The Prayer That’s Always Answered Yes	1 John 5:13-15	1639

GREAT PRAYERS of the Bible

The Lord’s Prayer	Luke 11:2-4	1333
Moses’ Prayer at the Burning Bush	Exodus 3:1–4:17	77
Solomon’s Prayer for Wisdom	2 Chronicles 1	569
David’s Prayer of Thanks for God’s Protection	Psalms 18	715
Jesus’ Prayer of Submission	Matthew 26:36-46	1265
Jesus’ Prayer of Forgiveness	Luke 23:34	1359
Paul’s Prayer for the Ephesians	Ephesians 1:15-23	1535
Prayer of Praise of the Redeemed	Revelation 19:1-8	1671

GREAT PEOPLE of Prayer

Moses: A Man of Prayer	Exodus 32:9-14; 33:12-23	115
The Israelites: A Cry for Deliverance	Exodus 2:23-25	73
Solomon: He Asks for Wisdom	1 Kings 3:1-15	439
Job: Understanding His Need for God	Job 1:20-21	669
David: Thanking God for Answered Prayer	Psalms 138	829
Daniel: The Process of Prayer	Daniel 9	1121
The Pharisee and the Tax Collector	Luke 18:9-14	1349
Early Church Believers: Courage to Preach	Acts 4:23-31	1413
Paul: A Life Centered on Prayer	Acts 9:11-19	1421
Jesus: Praying for Us	Hebrews 7:25	1599

IMPORTANT ELEMENTS of Prayer

The Disciples’ Prayer	Matthew 6:9-13	1227
Beginning from God’s Perspective	Isaiah 40:21-31	933
Rooted in a Relationship	John 15:7	1395
Praising God in Spite of Circumstances	1 Chronicles 29:10-15	565
Entering with Thanksgiving	Psalms 100:4	793
Confessing Sin	1 John 1:8-9	1635
Bringing Requests to God	1 Chronicles 4:9-10	529
Standing in the Gap	Ezekiel 22:30	1067

Never Give Up	Luke 11:5-10	1335
Believing with Expectance	Hebrews 11:6	1603

PERSISTENCE in Prayer

Hannah's Persistence	1 Samuel 1:1-2:11	355
Persistence in Poverty	Matthew 5:3	1223
Persistence in Asking	Matthew 7:7-11	1229
Persistence in Injustice	Luke 18:1-8	1347
Persistence in Suffering	Romans 5:3-5	1465
Persistence in Reconciliation	2 Corinthians 5:18-19	1515
Persistence in Failure	Hebrews 6:10	1597
Persistence in Confidence	2 Peter 1:3	1629

POSTURE & PLACES of Prayer

Anyplace, Anywhere, Any Position	Acts 16:13	1435
Bowing	Exodus 12:27	87
Prostrate	Numbers 20:6	201
Sitting	2 Samuel 7:18	405
Standing	2 Chronicles 6:12-13	573
Lying Down	Isaiah 38:1-3	931
Hands Uplifted	Lamentations 3:41	1037
In Private	Matthew 14:23	1243
Public	Acts 2:46	1409
Kneeling	Acts 20:36	1443

Prayers of PRAISE & ADORATION

A Scene of Praise to Jesus	Matthew 21:1-16	1253
Praise God at All Times and in All Places	Psalms 113	807
Praise Using Musical Instruments	Psalms 150	837
Praise for Salvation	Isaiah 12:1-6	907
Praise for Rescuing Us	Jeremiah 20:13	987
Praise for Providing for Our Needs	Joel 2:26	1143
Praise God for His Wise Plan	Matthew 11:25-26	1237
Praise for a New Birth	1 Peter 1:3-6	1621
The Sacrifice of Praise	Hebrews 13:15-16	1607

Prayers of REPENTANCE

God's Call to Repentance	Ezekiel 18:30-32	1061
The Repentance of the Israelites	Judges 10:15-16	327
David's Repentance for His Sin	2 Samuel 12:13	409
King Manasseh's Repentance	2 Chronicles 33:10-13	609
Job's Prayer of Repentance	Job 42:1-6	697
The Repentance of Nineveh	Jonah 3:5-10	1166
John the Baptist's Call to Repentance	Matthew 3:2	1221
Jesus' Call to Repentance	Luke 15:1-7	1341
The Lost Son's Repentance	Luke 15:11-21	1343
The Repentant Thief	Luke 23:39-43	1361

Prayers of THANKS

A Silent Thanksgiving	Luke 7:36-50	1323
Thanking God Each Morning and Evening	1 Chronicles 23:30	555
Thanking God for His Past Deeds	Psalms 107:21-22	803
Thanking God for His Goodness	Jeremiah 33:11	1005
Thanking God for Wisdom	Daniel 2:20-23	1107
Thanking God for Others	Romans 1:8	1459
Thanking God for Spiritual Gifts	1 Corinthians 14:18	1501
Thanking God for the Gospel	2 Corinthians 2:14	1511

Thanking God for the Memories	Philippians 1:3-6	1545
Thanking God for Everything	Ephesians 5:20	1539

Praying **EFFECTIVELY** for Others

Paul's Model Petition	Colossians 1:3-14	1553
The Attitude of Christ	Philippians 2:3-5	1547
The Sin of Prayerlessness	1 Samuel 12:16-23	367
Praying for Enemies	Matthew 5:43-45	1225
Praying for Those Who Hurt Us	Job 42:7-10	699
Prayer for All People	1 Timothy 2:1-4	1571
Praying for Our Leaders	2 Thessalonians 3:1-2	1567
Harvest Prayers	Matthew 9:35-38	1233
Earnest Prayer	James 5:14-18	1617
Help from the Holy Spirit	Romans 8:26-27	1469

Praying the **PROMISES** of God

The Song of Moses	Deuteronomy 32	269
I Am Your God	Psalms 50:7-15	747
I Am Your Redeemer and Protector	Isaiah 43:1-7	937
I Am Your Sustenance	John 6:48-51	1377
I Am Your Clarity	John 8:12-30	1381
I Am Your Comfort	2 Corinthians 1:3-7	1509
I Am Your Glory	2 Corinthians 3:18	1513
God's Gift of Faith	Ephesians 2:8-10	1537
I Am the Beginning and the End	Revelation 22:12-13	1673

Praying with **PASSION**

Jesus' Desperate Prayer in the Garden	Luke 22:39-46	1357
A Worthy Struggle	Colossians 4:12	1555
Comfort in Tears	Job 16:20	681
In the Family Way	Galatians 4:6-7	1529
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Praying with Honest Emotion	Psalms 88	783
Praying When Surrounded by Enemies	Psalms 143	833
Praying for God's Mercy	Lamentations 5	1039
Praying No Matter What	Jonah 2:1-10; 4:1-5	1165
Two Kinds of Prayers	Mark 5:22-43	1279
Praying When Life Is Confusing	Psalms 13	711
A Soul-piercing Cry	Matthew 27:46	1269

WHY Do We Pray?

Embracing the Divine Connection	Acts 12:1-19	1427
To Ask	1 Samuel 1:9-18	353
To Commune With God	Psalms 23	719
To Confess Sin	Psalms 51	749
To Give Thanks	Luke 17:11-19	1345
To Invite Miracles	John 11:1-44	1387
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