

THE ONE YEAR BOOK OF
Praying through the Bible

CHERI FULLER

The ONE
YEAR[®]
BOOK OF
PRAYING
through the
BIBLE

365 DEVOTIONS



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Dedicated to the memory of
F L O P E R K I N S ,
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The One Year Book of Praying through the Bible

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And most of all, thank you to the Living Word, Jesus, for giving his life for us that we might know him and for gifting us with the precious Word of God.

INTRODUCTION

Seventeenth-century French writer François Fénelon once said, “Listen less to your own thoughts and more to God’s thoughts.” When my heart reconnected with God in a renewing, enduring way when I was in my late twenties and I stopped listening to my own thoughts and focused on God’s thoughts, I grew by leaps and bounds in my appreciation for the Bible, his love letter to us. Day by day as I studied and read his Word, I was amazed at the truth and grace it contained.

When I began reading through *The One Year Bible* each year, I found countless verses I could pray for my children, my husband, my own life, and those I regularly interceded for. The Bible began to shape my prayers, and I discovered that it was the best prayer manual of all, showing us how to pray and what to pray, and most of all through the Holy Spirit, providing constant inspiration for our prayers.

As I prayed God’s Word, I was filled with confidence and faith in God’s ability to answer and to act because I wasn’t praying out of my own understanding or imagination but out of the Lord’s heart and his intentions and desires for us, his people. As I prayed God’s Word, fear, doubt, and discouragement left, and his peace renewed my heart and mind. I discovered the Bible contained promises concerning God’s plans for our lives, for our children and loved ones and the body of Christ, the provision he has available and what he has in store for us both in this life and in the life to come. He wants us to pray these promises and verses, meditate on them, and trust in the Author’s ability to move on our behalf.

What great gifts God has given us in the Bible and prayer! What a gracious invitation the Lord offers to bring our deepest concerns, our greatest needs to the One who cares for us affectionately and watchfully. And what an incredible supply of power is released when we pray. Prayer is meant to be our *first resource*, not a last resource, and it is our lifeline in uncertain times, in the best of times, and in the worst of times. Prayer is

the greatest influence we can have on our children's lives and the best resource God has given us for making a difference and shining his light in our homes, our neighborhoods, our schools, our world. Watchman Nee, a classic prayer theologian said, "Our prayers lay the tracks on which God's power can come."

In *The One Year Book of Praying through the Bible* each devotional highlights a passage from that day's reading in *The One Year Bible* and contains a devotional thought, a prayer drawn from those verses to act as a springboard for your communication with God, and an insightful quote by a classic Christian.

Because *The One Year Book of Praying through the Bible* is meant to be used as a companion book to *The One Year Bible*, you may choose to read both at the same time of day. However, if doing so seems like more of a time commitment than you're prepared to make all at once, consider reading *The One Year Bible's* daily reading in the morning and *The One Year Book of Praying through the Bible* in the evening to help you go deeper into a portion of what you read in the morning. Another option is to read the devotional in the morning and then *The One Year Bible* in the evening to cement the idea and context of your morning reading in your mind.

In whatever way you approach your reading, as you read and pray through *The One Year Bible* and this devotional, I pray that you will be drawn closer to your Savior, that you will hear his voice and experience his presence and power in your life. As you pray along with the prayers of Paul, Isaiah, Hannah, Nehemiah, Jesus, and others from the pages of the Bible, may your heart be filled with hope and faith and your prayer life soar. As you pray prayers for help and prayers of praise, as David did in the Psalms, may God empower you to enjoy and worship God in new ways. May your life be increasingly yielded to the Lord so that he can live through you and love others through you. And as God's Word shapes your prayers, may you know him, follow him, trust him, and serve him with joy—not just for this year but for a lifetime!

Cheri Fuller

Fruitful Trees

This psalm, in which the wicked are contrasted with the godly, never fails to lead me to prayer—both for others and for myself. It is also the source of an ideal prayer for the new year—that we would delight in doing God’s will, that his Word would be continually in our thoughts, and that we would bear fruit in the year ahead and in each season of our lives. None of this happens apart from God’s Spirit and power working within us. But fruit bearing is the inevitable by-product of opening our hearts and lives to the power of his life within us. As we abide in Christ and his Word, our roots to go down deep in Christ, keeping us close to him, just as the roots of trees planted along the riverbank sink into the water source so that their leaves stay green and don’t wither. And when we pray, the Spirit releases this wonder-working power that draws us to God, roots us deeper in him, and causes our faith to mature. Be assured of God’s promise that as you draw near to him today and each day in the year ahead, he will draw near to you (James 4:8).

LORD, by your Spirit, draw me to the river of your love. Cause my roots to go deep into your streams of water, and make all that I do prosper. Give me the desire to read your Word and to meditate on it day and night. Most of all, empower me to do what it says. And for the fruit that is borne in the year ahead, I will give you all the glory!

A MAN WITHOUT PRAYER IS LIKE A TREE WITHOUT ROOTS. Pope Pius XII (1876–1958)

They delight in doing everything the Lord wants; day and night they think about his law. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season without fail. Their leaves never wither, and in all they do, they prosper.

Psalm 1:2-3

The One Year Bible readings for today are **Genesis 1:1–2:25; Matthew 1:1–2:12; Psalm 1:1-6; and Proverbs 1:1-6.**

Revering God

Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Only fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Proverbs 1:7

As we look at the state of the world around us, at what has happened in the past and what we may face in the year ahead, there is much to fear: Will a sniper terrorize our community as has happened in other areas? Will the bottom fall out of the economy? Will my job be jeopardized? Will there be violence at my child's school? Fear about possibilities like these can consume us, producing increased stress and even illness. But today's verse tells us that there is only one thing to fear—God himself. This fear is not an unhealthy fear that leads to cringing and hiding as Adam and Eve did after they had disobeyed God. Rather, it is a humble and honest recognition of God's beauty, sovereignty, and preeminence so that worshiping and serving him take first place in our lives. It is a healthy reverence that leads to intimacy and an understanding that the power of God residing in us by his Spirit is greater than the power of our fears or of our enemy Satan. A deep sense of awe about who God is leads to the true knowledge and wisdom we desperately need for our lives today and in the year ahead.

LORD, develop in me a deep reverence of you that leads to life, wisdom, and greater intimacy with you. Open my heart to be teachable and to receive correction and discipline willingly. Grant that I would fear you, Father, and not my circumstances in the present or the what-ifs of the future. May I be so filled with your love that faith would replace my fear.

WHILE WE MUST NEVER ON THE ONE HAND LOSE THE FREEDOM TO ENTER BOLDLY AND JOYFULLY BY FAITH INTO GOD'S PRESENCE DURING OUR LIVES ON EARTH, WE MUST ALSO LEARN HOW TO REVERE GOD IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. . . . INTIMACY CANNOT OCCUR WITHOUT RESPECT.

John White

The One Year Bible readings for today are **Genesis 3:1–4:26; Matthew 2:13–3:6; Psalm 2:1-12; and Proverbs 1:7-9.**

God Is My Shield

Have you ever felt as if someone was out to get you? as if you were surrounded by people who meant you harm in some way? When David wrote this psalm, he was crying out to God as he raced from the palace, pursued by enemies loyal to his son Absalom, who was trying to overthrow David's kingdom by force. As David prayed this God-centered prayer, he was exercising his confidence that in this situation the Lord would reveal himself as a shield and protector, as David's "glory and the one who lifts my head high." In the midst of hearing others telling David that there was no hope, that all was lost, he had hope. But the source of his hope wasn't in his mighty warriors or in the ability of another army to protect him. His hope was in God's character. Though David was surrounded by foes on every side, he knew that God heard him when he cried out to him. He was confident that God was his shield of protection, that he watched over David and would deliver him.

LORD, you are my shield and my eternal protector. When I am in danger or distress, help me trust in your character. Be my glory and the lifter of my head this day. Lift my gaze and my heart from everything on this earth to you, who reign over all. Thank you for answering me from heaven and acting on my behalf when I cry out to you. May you be glorified in my life.

THE ARMOUR IS FOR THE BATTLE OF PRAYER. THE ARMOUR IS NOT TO FIGHT IN, BUT TO SHIELD US WHILE WE PRAY. PRAYER IS THE BATTLE.
Oswald Chambers (1874–1917)

O Lord, I have so many enemies; so many are against me. So many are saying, "God will never rescue him!" But you, O Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts my head high. I cried out to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy mountain.

Psalm 3:1-4

The One Year Bible readings for today are **Genesis 5:1–7:24; Matthew 3:7–4:11; Psalm 3:1–8; and Proverbs 1:10–19.**

Safe in Him

You can be sure of this: The Lord has set apart the godly for himself. The Lord will answer when I call to him. . . . Many people say, "Who will show us better times?" Let the smile of your face shine on us, Lord. You have given me greater joy than those who have abundant harvests of grain and wine. I will lie down in peace and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, will keep me safe.

Psalm 4:3, 6-8

In this psalm David proclaimed his faith in God's ability to answer him when he called and to protect him even when he was pursued and slandered by his enemies. David's experiences with God had taught him that he did not have to wait to praise God until he was enjoying "better times." Though David was weary and may have been spending the night in a cave as he fled his enemies and didn't know the outcome of the danger he was in, his trust produced joy that was greater than the joy experienced by those celebrating a great harvest. And he could then lie down in peace and sleep because he knew God alone would keep him safe. What situation or problem could steal your sleep and your peace and joy? Call on the living God, who will answer when you call to him. And remember that you can close your eyes and rest because God's eyes never close. The One who never sleeps cares for you personally and watches over you.

LORD, thank you for setting apart each of us to know you and for answering when I call to you. Let the smile of your countenance shine on me this day. Grant me joy in Christ and peace in your presence, even before a turnaround or harvest comes. And when the night falls, grant me to "lie down in peace and sleep," for you alone keep me safe.

TALK TO HIM IN PRAYER OF ALL YOUR WANTS, YOUR TROUBLES, EVEN OF THE WEARINESS YOU FEEL IN SERVING HIM. YOU CANNOT SPEAK TOO FREELY, TOO TRUSTFULLY TO HIM.

François Fénelon (1651–1715)

The Favor of the Lord

This psalm is called the Inheritance Prayer and expresses a twofold blessing: First, we are recipients of great favor and a great inheritance. Second, the righteous—those in right standing with the Father by virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection—are the Lord’s own inheritance. Because we belong to him and are his heirs, God blesses our lives with deliverance, direction, and continual access into his presence. Because of his unfailing love for us, we can enter his throne room and receive his grace. When we ask him to tell us what to do, he will show us which way to turn and will always lead us on the right path. To top it all off, he encompasses, or encircles, us with the shield of his love, which means that he covers us with his favor and with the approval that he bestows on the righteous. This is a wonderful thing to petition the Lord for, on behalf of your loved ones and for your own life. Pray these verses today and in the days ahead, not only before job interviews and decisions, but for business relationships and daily encounters in ministry and life.

FATHER, thank you for the gift of being able to enter your house and worship at your temple every day. I ask you to lead me down right paths and to show me which way to turn. Thank you for protecting me from my enemies. You and you alone deliver me from them! Thank you for surrounding me with the shield of your love and favor.

MEASURE NOT GOD’S LOVE AND FAVOR BY YOUR OWN FEELING. THE SUN SHINES AS CLEARLY IN THE DARKEST DAY AS IT DOES IN THE BRIGHTEST. THE DIFFERENCE IS NOT IN THE SUN, BUT IN SOME CLOUDS. Richard Sibbs (1577–1635)

Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I will never pray to anyone but you. . . . Because of your unfailing love, I can enter your house; with deepest awe I will worship at your Temple. Lead me in the right path, O Lord, or my enemies will conquer me. Tell me clearly what to do, and show me which way to turn. . . . For you bless the godly, O Lord, surrounding them with your shield of love.

Psalm 5:2, 7-8, 12

The One Year Bible readings for today are **Genesis 11:1–13:4; Matthew 5:1-26; Psalm 5:1-12; and Proverbs 1:24-28.**

JANUARY

6

enemies

Praying for Our Enemies

[Jesus said,] “You have heard that the law of Moses says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:43-45

There are times when others will misunderstand, mistreat, or persecute us, and it’s hard not to respond to such treatment by retaliating or rejecting those who act that way toward us. That would be the way the unredeemed world naturally reacts. But Jesus says in these verses that we are to offer a radically different response: we are to love and pray for our enemies; in other words, we are to respond with the energy of prayer instead of the energy of hate.

This approach upholds a basic foundation of our faith—that God is love, that his love is for all people, whether friend or foe toward us, and that he desires that not one would perish but that all would come to eternal life. When we pray for our enemies, we are not only partnering with Christ in his redemptive purposes but also becoming more like our Father in heaven. Ask God to give you a specific Scripture verse to pray for your “enemies” whenever they come to mind. Instead of dwelling on a negative thought about them, displace the negative thought. Praying God’s heart for someone will soon produce a reflection of his love in your own.

LORD, please fill my heart with compassion for [insert name(s)]. Help me to pray for these people and to bless, not curse, them. I can do this only as I look to you as my example. Thank you for dying on the cross for me so that I could be reconciled to the Father. Let my heart respond to my enemies, even as your heart was poured out on their behalf.

NEVER CEASE LOVING A PERSON AND NEVER GIVE UP HOPE FOR HIM, FOR EVEN THE PRODIGAL SON WHO HAD FALLEN MOST LOW COULD STILL BE SAVED. THE BITTEREST ENEMY AND ALSO HE WHO WAS YOUR FRIEND COULD AGAIN BE YOUR FRIEND; LOVE THAT HAS GROWN COLD CAN KINDLE AGAIN. Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855)

The One Year Bible readings for today are **Genesis 13:5–15:21; Matthew 5:27–48; Psalm 6:1–10; and Proverbs 1:29–33.**

The Value of Private Prayer

Jesus is our pattern and example for prayer, not only in giving us the Lord's Prayer but also in the way he practiced prayer himself during his life on earth. He often left the multitudes and his disciples and went apart to pray alone with his Father in heaven. He didn't just flash an eloquent prayer heavenward to impress his followers; he spent solitary, extended times talking and listening to God. In this passage he exhorts us to do the same. Jesus tells us not to pray like the Pharisees, whose goal was to impress others with their prayers, but to get alone with God and to "shut the door" behind us. That means setting aside our work and tasks, separating ourselves from family, from a spouse, and even from our prayer partners at times, in order to have intimate conversation with our Father in heaven. Then God, who sees and knows all secrets, promises to reward us.

LORD, my heart longs to hear your voice just as Jesus did. Help me to draw away from this frantic and busy world to be alone with you. Open my eyes to see what you want to show me, my ears to hear what you desire to tell me. Then and only then will I know what to pray in secret as I respond to your heart.

FROM THREE TO FOUR EACH MORNING—THAT IS MY HOUR. THEN I AM FREE FROM INTERRUPTION AND FROM THE FEAR OF INTERRUPTION. EACH MORNING I WAKE AT THREE AND LIVE AN HOUR WITH GOD. IT GIVES ME STRENGTH FOR EVERYTHING. WITHOUT IT I WOULD BE UTTERLY HELPLESS. Toyohiko Kagawa (1888–1951)

When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I assure you, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly. Then your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you.

Matthew 6:5-6

The One Year Bible readings for today are **Genesis 16:1–18:15; Matthew 6:1-24; Psalm 7:1-17; and Proverbs 2:1-5.**

asking

Keep Asking

*[Jesus said,]
“Keep on asking,
and you will be
given what you ask
for. Keep on
looking, and you
will find. Keep on
knocking, and the
door will be opened.
For everyone who
asks, receives.
Everyone who
seeks, finds.”*

Matthew 7:7-8

God is seeking people who will give themselves to earnest, persevering prayer. In these verses Jesus instructs us not to pray just once or twice for what we desire but to repeatedly come to him in the same way the persistent widow in Luke 18 did—to ask and keep on asking, to look and keep on looking, to knock and keep on knocking—and we will receive, find, and experience the opening of doors. If we could simply kneel down, ask for what we want, instantly get what we prayed for, and then run back to our own pursuits, our spiritual life and interaction with God would be superficial and minimal, and we would experience little growth. It is in the places where we have to persevere in prayer that we learn persistence in prayer, receive the most blessing, see our faith growing stronger, and most glorify God. It is when we persist in prayer that God prepares a person or works behind the scenes in the problem we are praying about.

Is there something about which you sense that God wants you to persevere in prayer until the answer comes? Write it down, and seek him today and every day until it's done!

LORD, thank you for your promise that those who ask receive and that when we seek, we will find. Grant me the grace to persevere, to keep on asking, seeking, and knocking until the answer comes. Thank you for the power and grace of your Spirit, who gives me the strength to persevere in prayer even when I am at my weakest moment and ready to give up.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO BEGIN TO PRAY, NOR TO PRAY ARIGHT; NOR IS IT ENOUGH TO CONTINUE FOR A TIME TO PRAY; BUT WE MUST PATIENTLY, BELIEVINGLY, CONTINUE IN PRAYER UNTIL WE OBTAIN AN ANSWER. George Müller (1805–1898)

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