

Praying Your Life into Order Spiritually

Your Spiritual Life Determines the Rest of Your Life

By Dr. Ronnie Floyd

The growth of our spiritual lives will never outpace our intentional commitment to prioritize it every day. Our spiritual development impacts every other area of our lives—and we cannot delegate that growth to anyone else.

During my college years, over Christmas break, my brother asked me to build a barn for him. He is a much more gifted carpenter than I, but he was trying to help me out. I needed the money. But building barns was neither my passion nor within my skill set.

I accomplished the task, but in a few years the barn began to lean and eventually became unsafe. My brother would have been better off building the barn himself than delegating something to me I could not properly do.

Just as my brother should not have expected me to build a barn, you and I cannot expect someone else to build our spiritual lives for us. No one else can construct our daily walk with God. It has to be intentional, purposeful, and personal. Each one of us is accountable to do it ourselves.

The wisest decision we can make each day is this: I will walk with God today. What the Bible says about Enoch has always challenged me. This statement is simple yet profound: “Enoch walked with God” (Gen. 5:24, esv). Could God write this about your life and mine today? If not, why not? What stands in our way? Who is standing in our way?

In reality, no one and no thing stands in our way. The

decision is ours. Remember these truths:

1. God wants to walk with us! Getting our lives in order spiritually and practically begins with the decision to make it our number-one priority.
2. God wants to have a meaningful relationship with us daily. He never puts us on hold, and we never have to stand in line.
3. He does not delegate our spiritual growth to one of the angels who serves Him. He is always waiting on each of us to come to Him.
4. Bringing our lives into spiritual order requires a strategy.

Let me highlight a few ways to be intentional in our commitment to prioritize our spiritual lives:

Reading the Bible Daily

The Bible is God's Word. It's what God says to you and me, and to all people. Thus, we need to read the Bible every day.

When the Bible speaks, God speaks. His voice through His Word cannot be minimized. But we can maximize its impact in our lives if we truly understand that what He says lives forever—and put His Word into practice! Through the years, I have witnessed thousands of Christians who live out their faith. Almost without exception, those who read the Bible daily are set apart from the others.

Former trucking magnate J.B. Hunt told me that the Bible was his road map for life. It showed him how to live the way he wanted to live—for God. Hunt drove trucks all over America even before he and his wife Johnelle began their Fortune 500 transportation company (one of the largest in the country). While he lived on the road, the map of our country became important to him. It led him to his desired destination.

But Hunt began his day reading the Bible. It would take him at

least 18 months to read through the Bible once, but he read through the entire Bible several times in his life. It was his road map leading him to his desired spiritual growth. If an extraordinarily busy and wealthy man like J.B. Hunt knew he needed to read the Bible and make it a priority each day of his life, surely his example can inspire us to do the same.

This imperative daily discipline helps us become spiritually fit. We cannot be all God wants us to be if we do not read the Bible. It is impossible.

Praying Our Life into Order

Think of it this way: We can go to God anytime, anywhere, about anything. Through Jesus Christ, we have direct access to God.

Since we can go to God anytime, anywhere, and about anything that's going on in our lives, why not choose to talk to God daily—and often? Create your own system of prayer or adopt someone else's. If nothing else, make a list of things you are concerned about in your own life, your family, your church, your career and business, your future, your finances, your country, and concerns you have for other people. Pray for them each day and look for God to walk into those situations personally and powerfully. God answers prayer! God steps into the life of the person who prays. He can do more in a moment than you can in a lifetime. Each of us needs divine intervention.

Living an orderly life requires praying our lives into order. This is why I keep my prayer list in the Notes app on my iPad. My list changes continually as I watch God respond to my prayers. And I can easily change my list because of the technology's simplicity. Find what works best for you, and just do it!

Praying with Fasting

Consider adding periodic times of fasting to your prayer life. Fasting is abstaining from something with a spiritual goal in mind. When we talk about fasting, most people think of fasting from food. Not everyone is physically able to fast from food, but that is not an excuse to refrain from fasting. We can fast (or abstain) from social media, television, or something else with the goal of drawing aside and talking more intimately with God. We can fast for a portion of a day for a certain number of days. Or we can fast completely for a period of time. Fasts typically last one, seven, 21, or 40 days.

However you choose to fast, use the time you would have spent during that particular activity (meals, social media, etc.) to communicate with God.

Use this time of fasting to pray extraordinarily. What does that mean? Whatever is normal for you, strive to at least double it. If you normally pray for five minutes a day, pray for ten. If you normally pray for 30 minutes a day, pray for an hour a day. The number of minutes is not important—just pray more. Pray extraordinarily.

Spend time talking to God and listening to Him. Effective communication involves speaking and listening. Prayer is no different. It involves talking to God and listening to what He is saying to you. If we only talk and do not listen, we are missing half of the equation. Let God do something new in your life by listening to Him.

Disciplining Ourselves, Being Intentional

Discipline is doing the right thing even if you do not want to do it or feel like doing it. I am convinced that many Christ followers choose a lesser quality of spiritual growth because they take the path of least resistance. I am not talking about resistance against the evil one. I am talking about resisting our greatest enemy—ourselves!

Regardless of the way we feel or what we desire, we can choose

to be intentional about our spiritual growth. Many people hear words like discipline and intentional and think we're talking about salvation by works. Of course, salvation by works is unbiblical, but that's not what I mean here. Salvation is by grace through faith. But, in the Bible, faith is always connected to a life of discipleship. There is an intimate connection between discipline and discipleship—you can see it in the two words! God saves us by His grace, but once we are saved, He wants us to cultivate our relationship with Him by taking intentional and disciplined actions.

The following are some personal actions we can discipline ourselves to take intentionally:

- I will develop my spiritual life daily.
- I will release my life to God daily.
- I will read the Bible daily.
- I will talk to God daily.

These intentional and necessary actions are key to spiritual fitness. This is what it means to live intentionally. In God's strength you can do this. So begin taking these actions today to enjoy a successful, godly life.

Understanding God Is Waiting for Us

God is waiting to walk with us and talk with us through His Word daily. He is waiting for us to take responsibility for our own spiritual growth. God can do anything, anywhere, at any time, with anyone.

In every way and through every phase of life, He can bring our lives into order.

DR. RONNIE FLOYD has served as senior pastor of Cross Church (a multicampus church) in Northwest Arkansas since 1986. He was president of the Southern Baptist Convention for a two-year term, and is now the president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force. His website is ronniefloyd.com