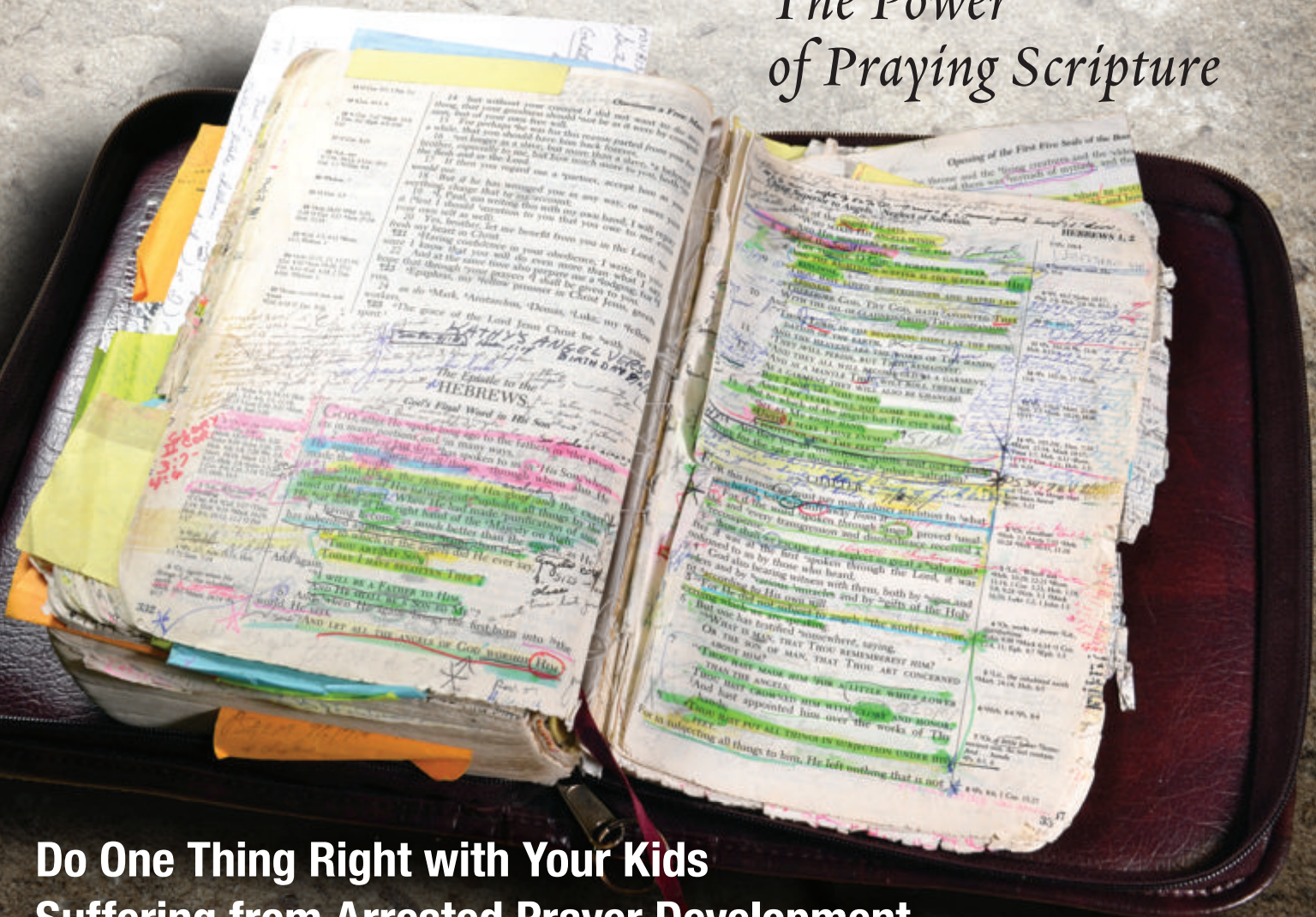


PRAYERCONNECT

Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer

SOLID FOUNDATION

*The Power
of Praying Scripture*



**Do One Thing Right with Your Kids
Suffering from Arrested Prayer Development
Don't Hold Back: PRAY IT OUT LOUD**

CAN PRAYER SAVE AMERICA?

C O N F E R E N C E

Times are troubling. Economic uncertainty, political anger, moral decline . . .

What should believers do? **Pray!**

Come to a *Can Prayer Save America?* event near you and learn to:

- Pray God's purposes for our nation
 - Seek revival for your church
- Pray more effectively for yourself and those you love

2012 Conference Dates and Locations:

Cartersville, GA March 16–17
Little Rock, AR April 20–21
Brownsburg, IN September 28–29
Denver, CO October 19–20

Earlybird Registration Cost:
\$35 per person, \$50 per married couple
(free resources and lunch included)

*(Register early, as rates go up to
\$50 per person, \$75 per couple
two weeks prior to each event.)*

For more information or to register:

www.ONECRY.com

ONECRY
A Nationwide Call for Spiritual Awakening

A OneCry Initiative

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

David Kubal
President,
Intercessors
for America



John Borschein
Vice Chairman,
National Day of
Prayer Task Force



Dave Butts
Chairman,
America's National
Prayer Committee



Jonathan Graf
Publisher,
Prayer Connect
Magazine



S P O N S O R S

LIFE ACTION
MINISTRIES





PRAYERCONNECT

March/April 2012 | Vol. 2, No.2

SOLID FOUNDATION

The Power of Praying Scripture, p.11

Features

35 If Two of You

What It Really Means to Agree in Prayer
By David Chotka

38 31 Ways to Pray for Your Teen

Focus Your Best Parenting Efforts on Prayer
By Bob Hostetler

12 The Scripture Prescription

Overcoming Arrested Prayer Development

By Dana Olson

Plus: The Scripture Prescription at Church; A Jazz Pianist Learns to Pray

18 Blessing, Power, and Grace

Inviting into Our Lives Everything that God Has Ever Planned

By Cheri Fuller

Plus: 9 Compelling Reasons to Pray the Word

24 Declaring Prayer

The Formidable Force of Praying the Word Out Loud

By John T. Maempa

Plus: How Jesus Used Scripture in His Greatest Battle

31 A Bible Study

Praying Scripture

By Sandra Higley



Departments

5 Publisher's Note

Why I Don't Pray

7 News & Events

- Thousands Pray for Miami
- Prayer Leaders Meet
- Arizona's Mountaintop Experience
- "Come Alongside" Prayer Ministry
- Prayer Calendar

42 Surf's Up

Want to Socialize?

43 Tips & Tools

- Prayer as Awareness of God's Presence
- What One Thing?
- How High Are Your Gates?
- Consistent Prayer for Your Church Kids
- Effective Evangelism: Triplet Praying

46 Prayer Leader

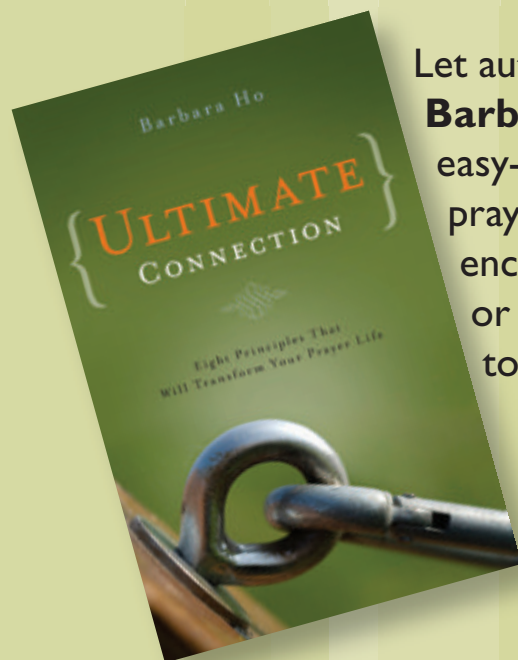
An Active Prayer Room Can Fuel Your Church

47 Classics

No Substitute for Obedience



Do you long for the **ULTIMATE CONNECTION?**



Let author
Barbara Ho's
easy-to-understand
prayer principles
encourage you
or your small group
to experience
more of a
prayer connection
with Jesus.

"Ultimate Connection deals with real life issues and stumbling blocks in our desire to have a fulfilling prayer life. It is a practical tool for anyone struggling with the repeated condemning thoughts, I can't pray, or God doesn't hear my prayers. In 8 simple principles, Barb Ho clearly lays out the path for our ultimate connection with our Creator, God."

— Susan Lana Hafner, OneTouchAwakening, Inc.

Retail Price: \$10.99
PrayerShop.org Price: \$9.99

(Use code UC1211 to receive \$1.00 off each book at PrayerShop.)

Available through your local Christian bookstore
or online at **www.prayerShop.org**.



CONTACTUS

Business and Shipping Address

PRAYERCONNECT

3525 S. 3rd St. | Terre Haute, IN 47802
812.238.5504 | prayerconnect.net

Article Submissions

We are looking for general articles, ideas, and news stories on what God is doing as a result of prayer. As a start-up magazine, we are primarily looking for newly written pieces that have not appeared in other publications. Writer's guidelines are available by emailing Carol Madison at editor@prayerconnect.net. For news stories, we recommend emailing first to see if we have an interest in reporting on the event or item you wish to write about. Send your submissions to:

Carol Madison
Prayer Connect Submissions
4300 West 98th St. | Bloomington, MN 55437
editor@prayerconnect.net

Subscriptions

Prayer Connect is a bi-monthly publication, available in Church Prayer Leaders Network (CPLN) Membership (\$30 per year), Print (\$24.99 per year) or Digital (\$19.99 per year) formats. Both CPLN and Print subscriptions include access to the Digital version. To subscribe, go to prayerconnect.net. We also have multiple copy discounts available for individuals or churches who want to purchase copies for a prayer team or small groups:

prayerconnect.net
Joanne Telle
800.217.5200 or 812.238.5504

Permissions

Jonathan Graf
jong@harvestprayer.com | 812.238.5504

Reprint Permissions

If you are making copies for your small group or for church use, you have blanket permission to make up to 100 copies without asking for permission (as long as the copies are not sold or in a for-sale product). Please include the phrase: "Copied from *Prayer Connect* (Issue #). Used with permission." Contact us to gain permission for all other uses, including posting articles on the Internet. We do encourage you to put links on Facebook and Twitter to articles that are open to the public at prayerconnect.net.

Advertising

If you would like information on placing an ad in *Prayer Connect*, or if you have concerns or questions about our ads, please contact:
Prayer Connect, 3525 S. 3rd St., Terre Haute, IN 47802
advertising@prayerconnect.net | 812.238.5504

Need a Speaker for Your Prayer Conference or Event?

There are a number of gifted speakers associated with *Prayer Connect*. Jonathan Graf regularly ministers in churches of varying sizes. Carol Madison is also available to minister in the area of prayer for revival and community transformation. Our parent organizations, Harvest Prayer Ministries and the Church Prayer Leaders Network, have many speakers associated with their ministries. You can find their contact information at the respective emails or websites.

Jonathan Graf | jong@harvestprayer.com
Carol Madison | editor@prayerconnect.net
harvestprayer.com | prayerleader.com

Sponsored by

America's National Prayer Committee
Denominational Prayer Leaders Network
International Prayer Council

Published by

Church Prayer Leaders Network
Harvest Prayer Ministries
PrayerShop Publishing

The mission of **PRAYERCONNECT** is

1. To encourage and equip believers toward a deeper walk with Jesus Christ through prayer—our experiential connection to God.
2. To resource prayer leaders and pastors with tools to help them motivate, disciple, and mobilize believers in churches to be a part of an army that seeks to pray the purposes of God for churches, communities, and the nations.
3. To be a unifying force between prayer ministries, community transformation groups, and churches.

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

Jonathan Graf
jong@harvestprayer.com

Editor

Carol Madison
editor@prayerconnect.net

Art Director

J. Bridget Rennie

Subscriptions/Orders

Joanne Telle

Previously in Prayer Connect

The January/February 2012 issue is still available for purchase in single or bulk copies.

Articles by David Bryant, Nancy Leigh DeMoss, Claude King, and Doug Small give a broad perspective on principles of revival. You will also find information on OneCry, a national movement of prayer for spiritual awakening in our nation. If we pray and seek the Lord, there is hope for a Christ-centered revival. Order at prayershop.org.



Why I Don't Pray

For the past 17 years, I have been in the “prayer mobilization” business. I am deeply involved in encouraging, equipping, and challenging both individual believers and churches of the need to pray more and grow in prayer.



The primary weapon we have as a believer is prayer. I believe that. I fully buy into Oswald Chambers' famous statement, “Prayer does not equip us for greater works. Prayer is the greater work.” I often teach on Matthew 11:12, that the Kingdom of God is forcefully advancing—and the forceful people who lay hold of it, do so through prayer.

But during the past two to three years, I prayed less than at any time in my 17 years of prayer mobilization. Thankfully, since *Prayer Connect's* first issue launch in July 2011, God has been doing a new work in me, reinvigorating my desires to connect with Him. But during the last few months I have been analyzing why I went through such a lull. I think it has something to do with why many believers—and especially churches—do not work much on improving their passion for prayer and experience of prayer, even when they have statements in their core values affirming prayer as primary.

I think there are four main reasons why most believers or churches do not pray much. The first three reasons: Many are not truly converted; many are not surrendered, and a lot of believers are disappointed with God.

The fourth reason relates to the truth that when we pray—serious prayer—we are doing what Matthew 16:18-19 implies: *“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*

We are entering a battlefield, going after the gates of hell. Prayer is attacking Satan's domain. We are binding and loosing, bringing heaven to earth. And he hates it.

So what does he do? He attacks. He comes after the person of prayer or the praying church far more than anyone else, because they are a threat. And that takes a toll on pray-ers.

For the past six to seven years, my wife and I, our family and lives, have experienced unrelenting attack. And I got tired. So I pulled back some and was less aggressive in my Kingdom praying. But I can't stay there any longer.

There are beaten-down churches and believers who raised the bar on prayer, but got so attacked that they have lessened their efforts. *It is easier, things seem to go more smoothly when we don't pray so aggressively*, they reason. But we can't stay there if we want to be Kingdom people and churches. We must pray.

Without our aggressive prayers, our people will stay in bondage and under strongholds. The lost don't get saved. Communities will stay in Satan's control. God has called us to be forceful people who lay hold.

Send me your comments: jong@harvestprayer.com.

Jonathan Graf



www.prayershop.org

Visit the Largest Prayer-Only
Store on the Internet

We're Everything Prayer!

- Corporate Prayer ■ Bible Studies/Small Groups ■ Personal Prayer
- Intercession ■ Prayer Guides ■ Spiritual Warfare ■ Prayer Ministry Teams
- Church ■ Women ■ Children ■ Youth ■ Men ■ Conferences
- Prayer Evangelism and ■ 24 other categories

Join the CPLN
and save 20-40% on all products

*Take an
Additional
15% Off One Order*

Use Code PCPS1211
at Checkout to Receive
Discount

www.prayershop.org

Sponsored by



CHURCH
PRAYER LEADERS
NETWORK



Harvest Prayer
MINISTRIES



PRAYERSHOP
PUBLISHING



Thousands Pray with Hope for Miami

Some might argue that Miami is an improbable place for revival. The city has long been a drug capital with intensifying gang activity. Murders are far too common. Now Miami rivals Los Angeles as a hub for pornographic production and distribution. High rates of unemployment are accompanied by a simultaneous rise in theft and robberies. Gambling, though illegal, is pervasive. Abortion, even among Christian teens, is a major challenge. Corruption is prevalent.

But there is a reason to rejoice. For two consecutive years, thousands of believers have gathered to pray. On a rainy weekend in December 2011, about 20,000 people prayed in unity. They marched. They sang. A hundred choreographed worshipers from dozens of congregations led in praise. Prayerful pleas were offered in English, Spanish, Creole, and Portuguese. Waving American, Christian, and Israeli flags, the crowd moved past security, carrying signs saying, "In God We Trust!" Others declared, "Viva Cristo!" "One Church—Many Congregations!" and 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Pastors Prepare the Way

Sixteen years ago, pastors began to earnestly pray together, going away annually for three days. Nick Woodbury of Latin American Mission calls these "powerful prayer times, tearful and passionate, resulting in unity and spawning regional pastoral prayer groups." More than 500 pastors have attended these summits, conducting prayer missions in Miami, and witnessing seamy establishments closed and adverse zoning issues favorably reversed—all otherwise inexplicable interventions of God.

The most recent citywide prayer gathering in December was possible because



of the pastors' leadership. In addition to the pastors, other civil dignitaries participated.

The mayor of Miami, Carlos A. Gimenez, commended the role of faith for its motivation "to do right, to love, to serve, to be humble," and for the hope of "a spiritual revival."

Also in attendance were Ramon Rodriguez, mayor of Medley; Congressman David Rivera; Pastor Alberto Delzabo of the Hispanic Ministerial Association, and Rose Titus, a longtime city leader.

Repentance and Hope

One of the highlights of the prayer time was the moment when Doug Small of Project Pray, called for repentance. "If you are physically able," he urged, "go to your knees." Quiet came to the gathering, a stillness, as the mood changed. An estimated 80 percent of the throng knelt. One leader commented on the spontaneous moment, "I sensed what was about to happen. We were going to repent. It was powerful and reverent. I dared not lift my head."

Another observer said, "Everyone was stirred. I cried. Others were wiping tears. It was moving." As thousands were on their knees before the Lord, collectively they prayed: "We repent—we have sinned. We have failed to be the light we

were called to be. We have failed to offer the quality of witness with our own lives so needed by the city and the world . . . Forgive us, Father."

Doug Small noted the significance of the gathering. "Miami is a world-class, gateway between two continents. If 'awakening' were to come—the nation would notice," he said. "The ripple effect would rumble throughout South America. Corrupt activities—the drug trade, human trafficking, prostitution, and vice—would be interrupted. But none of that will happen or be sustained without repentance and change in the church. In the prayer tent, where 70 counselors prayed for needs, 207 attendees made commitments to follow Christ."

For Pastor David Vega of Mission Miami, the highlight was thousands of people, from different denominations, cultures, and diverse languages, standing shoulder to shoulder, declaring their love for Jesus and concern for the city. "It was remarkable," he said. "We want to see the spiritual transformation of Miami, and if that is going to happen, then Christian people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, different denominations, must gather for prayer!"

DOUG SMALL is president of Alive Ministries: Project Pray.

Prayer Leaders Meet to Encourage Each Other

Prayer leaders of national prayer ministries, as well as leaders of the prayer movements of several denominations, met in Orlando, FL, in late January 2012 to encourage each other through relationships and reports of God at work in the nation. The Denominational Prayer Leaders Network (DPLN) and the National Prayer Committee (NPC) meetings were hosted at the Cru headquarters (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ), with Vonette Bright of Cru bringing a warm welcome to her prayer colleagues.

Dave Butts, NPC chairman, encouraged leaders to share reports of advances in prayer ministries, including greater cooperation in prayer for spiritual awakening through OneCry and the National Day of Prayer. Both of these movements recognize the need in the

United States for a greater urgency of unified prayer. OneCry (onecry.com) launched in February 2012, with many ministries and denominations calling for prayer for spiritual awakening. National Day of Prayer (nationaldayofprayer.org) is sponsoring “The Summons” in October 2012, designed to call leaders from all states to Washington, D.C., to pray with concern for the state of the nation prior to the elections.

Jonathan Graf, publisher of *Prayer Connect*, reported on the launch of the new prayer magazine, which is sponsored by both the NPC and DPLN. He invited prayer leaders to support the publication through promotion and contribution of articles for future issues. Leaders enthusiastically embraced the new prayer magazine, recognizing the

need for a unified voice to foster greater prayer.

The National Prayer Committee will host its next meeting on the National Day of Prayer, May 3, in Washington, D.C. Many of the NPC prayer leaders will also gather at the World Prayer Assembly May 14-18 in Jakarta, Indonesia, with other international prayer leaders eager to see spiritual awakening in all nations of the earth (worldprayerassembly.com).



PHOTOS BY GARY BURNS



National prayer leaders pray in unity for a fresh work of God.

Arizona's Mountaintop Experience

For more than a decade teams of intercessors have climbed mountaintops around Arizona to usher in the New Year at sunrise. With Micah 4:2 in mind—“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD”—intercessors consider this a literal mountaintop experience and a fantastic way to start off the year by honoring God and praying over the land.

The call for mountaintop prayer

began publicly in 2000, but some intercessors have been doing this on their own for 20 years or more. Certainly Arizona's warmer climate and many accessible hilltops facilitate this tradition, but some participants choose high places not so easily scaled. One participant set out hours before sunrise and braved sub-zero temperatures and blizzard conditions to snowshoe four-and-a-half miles up





the highest point of Arizona, near Flagstaff, in time for sunrise—Humphrey's Peak at 12,633 feet!

Biblical High Places

More than 700 Bible passages speak of mountaintops, hilltops, and "high places" where vision, warfare, sacrifice, authority and many other powerful concepts are illustrated. Every year Arizona Call to Prayer desires to honor God and lift up His name over Arizona. This ministry receives many testimonies of moving experiences and answers to prayer.

A typical mountaintop prayer schedule begins with a team assembling at the base of the mountain and then hiking up to the top together, allowing for personal time with the Lord for about 20 min-

utes prior to sunrise. Just before sunrise everyone regathers in time for the blowing of the shofar precisely at the official sunrise time as determined by the U.S. Naval Observatory website (7:32 a.m. in Phoenix, Arizona, on Jan. 1, 2012).

It is inspiring to hear the shofar sound at daybreak on a mountain, and sometimes participants even hear another shofar in the distance. After the shofar sounds, a simple communion is celebrated, followed by short prayers and petitions for good government, healthy families, and other blessings and declarations over the land.

In recent years the New Year's mountaintop prayer event has spread to locations in California, New Mexico, Texas, and even a few cities along the border in

Mexico. Isaiah 42 speaks of the "coastlands" as partners with those praying on the mountains:

Let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains. Let them give glory to the LORD and declare His praise in the coastlands. The LORD will go forth like a warrior, He will arouse His zeal like a man of war. He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry. He will prevail against His enemies (vs. 11-13, NASB).

To join in this call to prayer in January 2013 or for more information, go to bridgebuilders.net.

GUY CHADWICK is director of Arizona Call to Prayer, a ministry of BridgeBuilders, Int'l.

A "Come Alongside" Prayer Ministry Launches

A new prayer ministry, Parakletos, was launched February 2012 by longtime missionary and pastor, Richard LaFountain. Based on the Greek word *parakletos*, which means "one called alongside to



help," the mission is to provide personal mentorship to churches, and especially pastors, in developing a passion for prayer and God's presence.

LaFountain has pastored multiple churches toward becoming healthy, life-giving churches with a prayer foundation. These churches have been revitalized by seeing healings, souls saved, and people passionate about fostering the presence of the Lord in their midst. LaFountain has also developed a number of powerful resources on personal prayer and spending time with God, used by thousands to deepen their prayer lives.

Mentoring Possibilities

Parakletos offers a number of levels of mentorship. First, LaFountain is available to speak for a prayer weekend at any church, but with the idea that he will maintain an ongoing relationship with the church to help the prayer leader and pastor continue developing

prayer. On a deeper level, LaFountain will personally mentor 20 pastors a year in the areas of personal disciplines, personal prayer life, sermon planning and development, and vision development and casting in their churches.

While run by LaFountain, Parakletos, is under the spiritual covering of Harvest Prayer Ministries and works alongside the Church Prayer Leaders Network (CPLN). "We are excited to have such a man of prayer as Dick LaFountain join our ministry team," says CPLN president Jonathan Graf. "Dick is highly recognized within his own denomination as a 'pastor's

pastor' who develops leaders and congregations with a passion for prayer. I strongly recommend Dick, especially to young pastors who want to do ministry under the power of the Holy Spirit. Look into being mentored by Dick."

For more information on Parakletos, go to ministrytoday.org and prayertoday.org. To contact LaFountain, email him at parakletos@harvestprayer.com.

Prayer Calendar

Seek God for the City
February 22 to April 1
waymakers.org

National Day of Prayer May 3
nationaldayofprayer.org

Global Day of Prayer May 27
globaldayofprayer.com

For more information on these prayer events, go to the event website.

WE START FIRES



Leviticus 6:13

Gathering, training, and sending Intercessory Missionaries
to build the global house of prayer in the nations...

JOIN THE *PRAYER CORPS*.

EHCPrayerCorps.org



SOLID FOUNDATION

The Power of Praying Scripture

Decades ago, she prayed a very bold prayer. Evelyn Christenson asked the Lord to let her teach the world to pray. She had a moment of thinking perhaps the prayer was not right, but then the Lord confirmed that *He* was the One who put that prayer on her heart.

When Evelyn passed away in November 2011 at age 89, it was clear that God had granted her request. She was the author of several best-selling books on prayer, she traveled internationally to teach principles of prayer, and even today her material is broadcast by radio into various countries of the earth.

God granted me the privilege of sitting under Evelyn's mentorship for the last few years. Not only did I experience her passion for prayer, but I also heard often of her love for God's Word. The two were inseparable. All of Evelyn's deep and impassioned prayer life flowed out of the rich truths she discovered daily in Scripture. As you can see by her Bible, pictured on our cover, Evelyn treasured the Word and let it saturate her life.

She understood the power of praying God's Word.

MY OWN JOURNEY

A few years ago the Lord convicted me about how much I *did not* know of His Word. My prayer life was rooted in my own thoughts and desires, but rarely did it flow out of my interaction with Scripture.

However, during an intense season of prayer, God impressed upon me to turn to His Word in a dramatic way. I unplugged the distraction of my television, and for the next several weeks I learned to pray Scripture. I started in Genesis and began praying my way through the Bible. God spoke to me and profoundly changed my heart. I fell in love with Jesus as He revealed Himself to me through His Word.

God answered my prayers in an amazing way during that season. But even after God had captured my heart, I continued praying through the Bible, book after book. Daily I read passages and then prayed back to Him the truths I discovered.

As I prayed through the Old

Testament, I began embracing repentance, obedience, holiness, and fear of the Lord. When I embarked on the New Testament, my longing for the manifest presence of Jesus Christ through revival and spiritual awakening started consuming my prayers. After three years, I finally prayed the ultimate invitation, "Come, Lord Jesus," at the end of Revelation.

SATURATED IN THE WORD

Both Evelyn and I discovered a foundational truth to prayer. When on your knees in prayer, keep God's Word in one hand as you extend the other hand in worship of God and His great mercies.

In this issue, many faithful pray-ers and students of Scripture will share their experiences of the power and authority of prayer grounded in God's promises. May you discover the joy of saturating your prayer life with the Lord Himself as revealed by the Holy Spirit through His rich and treasured Word.

—Carol Madison, editor, *Prayer Connect*

Holy Bible

champagne and was going to
kill one of the sponsors for calling
him "swifey". We then
to the very house.
at home, where we
Brown of the "Charles"
first mate and
I reply for you
very soon left.
bolted to the
to dozens of
bottles of Beau
finished an
music for
ladies. He
and Del
11 years
dissect
the last

clerk, they had kicked off their
climber little fellow for and
substituted something small
They are beautiful finished
heather and very fine
can't walk. A small ball
down to the
there the
beautiful
le can't

Rx

PATIENT NAME:
ADDRESS:

DIRECTIONS:

God's
prescription
for Arrested
Prayer
Development

SIGNATURE:

DATE:



THE SCRIPTURE PRESCRIPTION

Overcoming Arrested Prayer Development

TODD FELT HELPLESS. HE SAT IN HIS TINY apartment, staring through the dirty window at the partly cloudy day outside. The call had taken him by surprise.

“Son, there’s no reason for you to be shook up by this—you’ve got so much to do with your youth work and studies—but Mom has a lump on her breast, and we thought you should know. Her appointment to get it checked out is next week. Your sister’s nearby, so you don’t need to feel like you have to come. Wait until we know more.”

By Dana Olson

His dad's voice sounded the same as always, but with those last words, out came a deep sob. "Please, Todd, just pray for us. Please pray. You know how to pray."

Todd hadn't moved from his chair in the hour since the call, hadn't cried either. *This must be what shock feels like*, he thought. His mother . . . cancer . . . his dad's rare emotion . . . what must his sister be feeling? The stream of thoughts repeated in his mind, but what haunted him most were his father's words: "You know how to pray."

Suddenly a very plain, unadorned thought hit Todd hard: *I don't know how to pray*. Though all alone, Todd blushed red with the realization. It embarrassed him. He was a seminary student, youth worker at a small church, graduate of a well-known Christian university, raised in a good church by committed Christian parents, yet he was *at a loss to know how to pray!*

A CASE OF APD

Todd steered his old red pickup through the traffic and across the city to his old university. He searched high and low, finally discovering a lone parking spot in a packed lot. An odd mix of emotions hit him as he passed through the doorway and into the halls: familiarity and weirdness, home and "you don't belong here anymore." He knew right where to go, past the philosophy department office and into the Bible department hallway. He knocked gently, and a familiar voice responded, "Come in."

More of Todd's notes from Dr. Warren:

THE POWER OF PRAYING THE TRUTH

An example of Scripture praying in the Bible:

- Acts 4, the church responds to persecution by praying Psalm 2:1-2.
- It gave them boldness and confidence that God was in control!

Responding to temptation with Scripture:

- Jesus Himself answered the temptations of Satan with truth from God's Word.
- "It is written . . ." Jesus said again and again. We can say, "It is written!"

When faced with a grave threat:

- Jehoshaphat echoed the prayer of

Solomon in calling upon the Lord for help.

- Compare 2 Chronicles 20 (Jehoshaphat) with 2 Chronicles 6 (Solomon).
- We can echo the prayers of Jesus, Paul, Hannah, the kings, and more.

As a school of praise and lament:

- The Psalms can teach us to rejoice and adore—and to lament and cry out.
- David was amazingly blunt and honest with God as he prayed.
- Learning to praise ("Your greatness is unsearchable") and complain ("Where are You, oh God?").

God's Word is an extraordinary textbook and model for building a praying life—incomparable!

"Dr. Warren, thanks for taking time. So good to see you."

"Todd, I'm delighted you called."

They shook hands firmly, then Todd sat in the ancient upholstered chair, where hundreds of students had sat before him. Todd spent many hours as a student in that chair, exploring the mind of his favorite professor, getting advice and perspective. That's what Todd needed now.

The two caught up quickly. Then Dr. Warren shifted the conversation. "Now, tell me why you've come."

It didn't take long for the former student to lay the circumstances before "the good Doctor" as Todd often called him. Before he was done, he found himself overcome with emotion, his head in his hands.

"Here's the hard truth, Doc. I don't know how to pray. I mean, I pray every day, several times a day. But really, beyond 'God bless the food and thanks and please give us a great youth night,' I don't know *how to pray*." Todd said the last three words slowly, deliberately, even harshly.

He looked up now to the pondering

Dr. Warren. "I understand completely. I've been where you are," he said.

"Believe me, one can write books on theology and Bible commentaries and scholarly articles—and still not have the foggiest notion how to pray."

"But Doc, you *do* know how to pray. You prayed with us in class, here in your office, even in the hallway! You are one of the godliest men I know. Something must have changed."

"It did. And I'm going to tell you what it was. You have a very common condition, rampant in the church. I once had it. It's called APD."

Dr. Warren smiled, then turned serious. "Arrested Prayer Development. APD. Arrested development is the termination or interruption of a normal development process.¹ It's common in many disciplines, such as psychology, physical therapy, and speech. Arrested *Prayer* Development is the termination or interruption of a healthy, growing prayer life."

"Yes, that's me all right," Todd admitted. "But what do I do about it?"

"It's very simple, Todd. I won't even

charge you for it,” Dr. Warren said playfully. “You need the Scripture Prescription.”

Todd had a small notebook with him and he wrote the words down as Dr. Warren said them.

The Bible is God's prescription for APD. The way to break through in your prayer life is to pray Scripture. Read Ephesians 6:17-18. Take the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, praying in the Spirit. What God has brought together we ought not separate—the Bible and prayer. Pray the Bible!

“Church history is full of examples of great people of faith whose lives were revolutionized when they began the

discipline of praying the Bible,” Dr. Warren continued. “Martin Luther. George Müller. Hudson Taylor. Taylor’s children would wake up in the night and find him reading the Bible and praying by candlelight. Müller said he struggled to keep his mind on prayer until he learned to pray with his Bible open. He would read, then pray, read, then pray. Müller realized that letting the Bible set the agenda led into all kinds of prayer, such as exaltation, confession of sin, making various requests, thanking God, and the like.”

Dr. Warren’s office was now a classroom. “Understand, Todd: *This is what changed my prayer life.* I was where you are now for a long time. I felt stuck in a giant rut. ‘God bless the missionaries. God bless my family. God help me. Thanks for the food.’

“Then, from reading about Christians of the past, and their prayer lives, and also reflecting on my study of the Bible, there it was. So obvious, I had to try it. Soon I was praying with God’s Kingdom agenda in mind! I was praying God’s will as God gave it to me. More than that—as I prayed Scripture I was getting to know God personally. He spoke to me through His Word as never before! The Scripture Prescription is the way to overcome Arrested Prayer Development.”

Todd looked up from his notes to see Dr. Warren’s eyes almost dancing. He couldn’t help smiling. “Tell me what to do.”

As the teacher spoke, his student continued to scratch the words onto the page.

The Scripture Prescription at Church

Since returning to pastoral ministry two years ago (after more than 20 years in local church prayer mobilization), we have taken steps to teach our entire congregation to pray Scripture. Only time will tell of the Kingdom impact, but here are the steps we’ve taken:

1. We publish a daily Bible reading guide with “think about it” questions and prayer points. Our goal is to help people spend time in their Bibles and learn to pray Scripture on a daily basis. (Unfortunately, studies show that most Bibles are rarely opened and seldom read.)
2. When our Faith Groups meet (home cell groups), instead of Bible study, they talk about these daily readings. Because all are reading the same passages and praying the same prayer points, groups can discuss things such as, “At work there are some people who are really hard to love; that’s what I found most challenging in 1 John 3,” or “I just don’t get why that passage led to praying for persecuted Christians.” After talking it over, the groups pray insights from the Scriptures together. All our Faith Group leaders have been taught the simple method of praying the Bible, which is

demonstrated in “The Scripture Prescription” article.

3. Our weekly prayer meeting is now called “Praying God’s Word.” The first half is spent discussing a passage of Scripture (lately we’ve been in Ecclesiastes, which can be tough). Then the second half of the time we pray what we found in the Bible. We also pray from our church’s daily prayer list.

4. As a leader, I take opportunities to model praying Scripture for people. Sometimes I pray from a passage during our worship time. I will conclude my message by praying a prayer based on the passage I preached. Even in counseling, I will guide individuals to Scripture and encourage them to pray it back to God.

Given time, we believe our church family can all learn to pray God’s Word. We hope to have an army of more than 400 Christians equipped to pray, using “the Scripture Prescription.” God help us!

—DANA OLSON

A daily Bible reading with prayer points is posted at prayerconnect.net. View it there or have it emailed to you each day.

- *Don't make this complicated! Keep it simple. NOT reciting memorized portions (the Lord's Prayer).*
- *Choose a book of the Bible.*
- *Read a few verses each day (a paragraph or literary unit).*
- *Reflect on what you've read, jotting a few notes as thoughts come to mind.*
- *Ask, "Lord, how should I pray?"*
- *Read the verses again, slowly, chew on them.*
- *Then PRAY!*

"As you do this, Todd, it may seem awkward at first. It was for me. But, I can't stress this enough, keep on doing it! Don't stop. Make it a daily habit. A few verses a day, read-reflect-pray. And like

taking a medication day after day, over time a whole new world of prayer will open up to you. You will be amazed."

A GREATER KINGDOM AGENDA

Todd reviewed his notes early the next morning, sitting at his simple kitchen table. He fondly thought of Dr. Warren's big bear hug when Todd left the office. "God will heal your mother, Todd, on earth here, or in glory forever. Either way, I am excited for you because you're going to learn to pray in a way that can transform your life, and all those you influence, for years to come."

Todd had already been reading in

1 John, so that's where he turned. But instead of reading for a few minutes and then praying briefly for the day as he normally did, today he tried Dr. Warren's method. Here is what he wrote down in the notebook for that day:

- *1 John 3:16-18*
- *Jesus is our great example of love.*
- *What does it mean to "lay down our lives for the brothers"?*
- *Pray for persecuted Christians who are laying down their lives today for Christ.*
- *Help me be generous with others—don't let me "walk on by."*
- *Why are we tempted to talk about love but not really live that way?*

He read the passage twice, reviewed the notes he had jotted, reflected for a few moments, and then prayed. After praying through these thoughts, a couple specific examples came to mind of people he really needed God's help to love. He prayed for them by name. Then he prayed for his mother's health, his dad and sister, and a few other items he kept on a list.

Afterward, Todd had a clear realization: With his old way of praying, he would not have prayed about loving the difficult people in his life. He would not have prayed for persecuted Christians, and he probably wouldn't have thanked God that Jesus laid down His life for him. Praying the Bible had pushed him to pray with a greater Kingdom agenda, to pray specifics he wouldn't have thought of otherwise.

It was a start for Todd. Day after day he continued. Some days the praying came quickly and easily. Other days it felt painful! But Todd didn't stop. First, 2 and 3 John, then Ezra and Nehemiah in the Old Testament, then back to Jude and Revelation. Todd prayed through them all.

PRAYER FOR REAL

"Todd, thanks for your call. How's your mother doing?"

A Jazz Pianist Learns to Pray

I had spoken at this large, suburban church the year before. My text was Ephesians 6:17-18 regarding the sword of the Spirit and prayer. I ended the message by inviting people to their knees, following along in their Bibles as I prayed through a section of the Sermon on the Mount. I exhorted them to consider praying through Scripture, a few verses a day, on a daily basis.

Now I was back in this Rocky Mountain city, and standing before me was the church keyboardist. I was familiar with this gifted musician because I had been a guest at one of her jazz concerts. She played an awesome "Sweet Georgia Brown"!

I thanked her for attending our Concert of Prayer that evening. I was truly blessed and thankful for her response:

I came tonight to tell you how your message last year impacted me. I was raised in the kind of church where the only prayers prayed were read out of the bulletin. I knew nothing about personal prayer. I wandered far from God. Eventually, the ministry of this church helped me come to Christ.

But I still had no idea how to pray. What do you say? What do you talk about? Then last year, you challenged us to pray Scripture. I went home and told the Lord, "I'll pray through the Psalms if You'll help me to pray." And so I did. I prayed through the Psalms.

And I'm here to tell you, *it changed my life.*

The Scripture Prescription can help you overcome Arrested Prayer Development, too! Give it a try. It's known to change lives.


—DANA OLSON

"Thanks for asking. She had surgery, and is doing fairly well. There is follow-up treatment. I spent Christmas there, and it was a special time for our family."

"And how's your prayer life, my friend?"

"Doc, that's why I called. I can't thank you enough. It's awesome. Praying God's Word has completely changed my prayer life. It's been several months now, and I'm sure I've got a lot more to learn, but wow, I can pray for an hour and not even think about it. And when I'm praying with others in my small group— or with our church staff, or the youth— consistently things I've been praying in the Bible will come out of me. Our pastor even said, 'Todd, you pray with such insight and depth, please tell us about it.'"

"As a result, I got to teach the Scripture Prescription to our staff. I'm teaching our youth council leaders, too! Doc, I'm not saying it's perfection every day. But you were so right. Over time my prayer life has gotten healthier and my walk with God deeper. My walk with God is so much more intimate, and personal, and *real!*"

Todd could hear Dr. Warren's smile in his voice: "Whatever you do, don't stop battling APD. This prescription has changed you, and it can change your youth group, and your church. Thanks be to God!" 

¹Thanks to Dr. Ned Stringham for his explanation of arrested development, many years ago. Also, seed ideas for this method of praying Scripture were discovered long ago in the powerful sermon, "The Power That Wields the Weapon," by Dr. John Piper.



DANA OLSON is senior pastor of Faith Baptist Fellowship, Sioux Falls, SD. He directed Prayer First, the prayer mobilization ministry of Converge Worldwide (BGC), for 13

years. He is chairman emeritus of the Denominational Prayer Leaders Network. This story is a compilation of prayer experiences. Dana's use of the name Dr. Warren is a tribute to his friend and mentor Dr. Warren Wiersbe.



Praying Scripture
BACK TO GOD

The Apostle Paul, more than any New Testament writer, wrote "So-That" Prayers. He prayed a Spiritual Truth, "So-That" a Practical Reality would occur. Today, CTM has captured these for you in an easy to use, easy to carry 25 card assortment

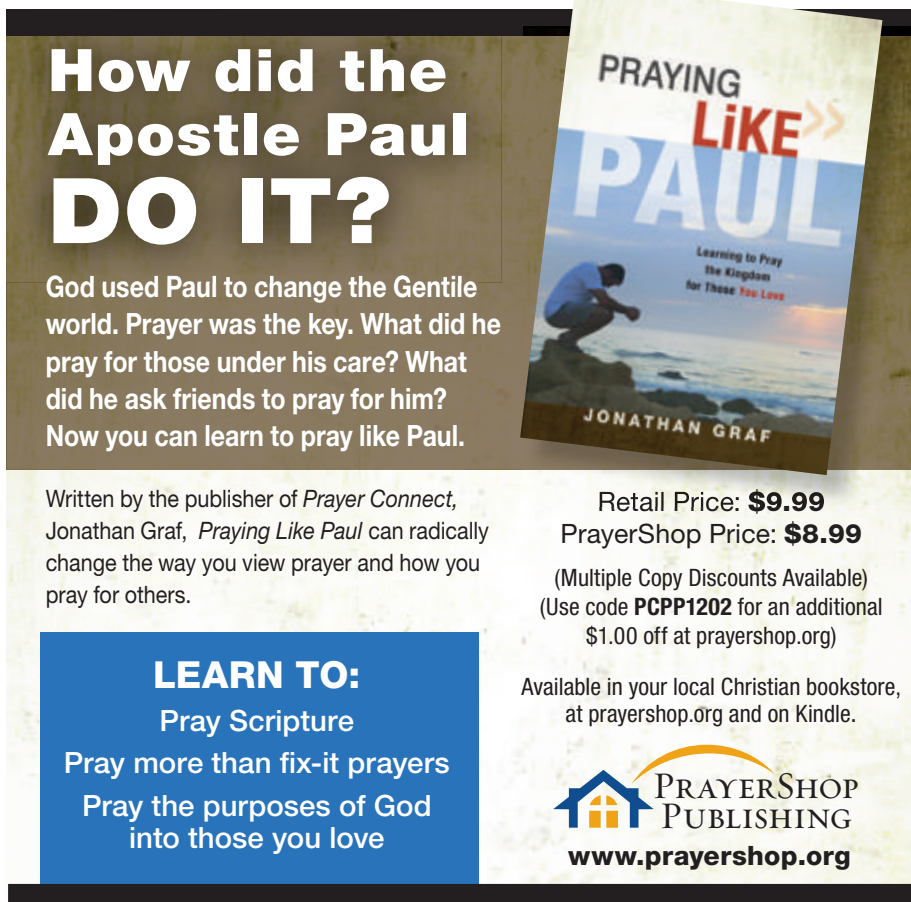
So-That
PRAYER

TO ORDER:
VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
www.CTMPrayer.org/12

**COMMON
THREAD
MINISTRIES**

mark@ctmprayer.org • 404-606-2322

Size:
3.5" X 2.5"
Price \$7.00 packet



How did the Apostle Paul DO IT?


God used Paul to change the Gentile world. Prayer was the key. What did he pray for those under his care? What did he ask friends to pray for him? Now you can learn to pray like Paul.

Written by the publisher of *Prayer Connect*, Jonathan Graf, *Praying Like Paul* can radically change the way you view prayer and how you pray for others.

LEARN TO:
Pray Scripture
Pray more than fix-it prayers
Pray the purposes of God into those you love

Retail Price: **\$9.99**
PrayerShop Price: **\$8.99**
(Multiple Copy Discounts Available)
(Use code **PCPP1202** for an additional \$1.00 off at prayershop.org)

Available in your local Christian bookstore, at prayershop.org and on Kindle.

 **PRAYERSHOP
PUBLISHING**
www.prayershop.org

Inviting into our lives everything
that God has ever planned





BLESSING, POWER, & GRACE

ST. AUGUSTINE ONCE BLAMED HIMSELF FOR all the lost time trying to find God's will when, from the very beginning, he could have found it by praying the Word.

Throughout our years of marriage, my husband and I have found that praying biblical prayers is a way to invite God's blessing, power, and grace into our lives. Many years ago, in our 20s, when we recommitted our lives to Christ and began a daily walk in His Word, I began praying biblical prayers for our marriage, for my husband Holmes, and for our three children.

By Cheri Fuller

Daily as I would read the Bible, I'd notice a special verse and I'd put a date by it—"For Holmes 5/88" or "For our marriage, 10/95." Then I'd write the verse on my current index prayer card or in a journal and pray it, often many times.

One of the first passages God led me to—as if He took a big highlighter and said, "This is what I want for Holmes"—was Psalm 1. So I wrote his name by it,

and over the years I have prayed it scores of times for him: "Lord, may Holmes be a man who delights in your Word and meditates on it day and night—so he will be like a tree planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit in every season of his life. May his leaves never wither, and may he prosper in all he does" (see vs. 1-3).

A few years later, in a search at the library to find the meaning of his name,

I discovered *Holmes* means "from the river" or "with roots going into the river." I didn't know this at the time I began praying Psalm 1, but God knew my husband was going to go through very trying times in his business life—and He wanted his roots to sink deep into the soil of Christ's love, feed on the truth of Scripture, and drink from the River of Life. When Holmes later suffered through several years of serious depression and seasons of financial drought as a builder, I continued to pray these verses for him. I've seen the fruits of those prayers and God's faithfulness.

USE THIS ISSUE TO DISCIPLE YOUR PEOPLE

TO PRAY GOD'S WORD

MOVE THEM AWAY
FROM VIEWING PRAYER
AS A FIX-IT TOOL.

Give it to your small group

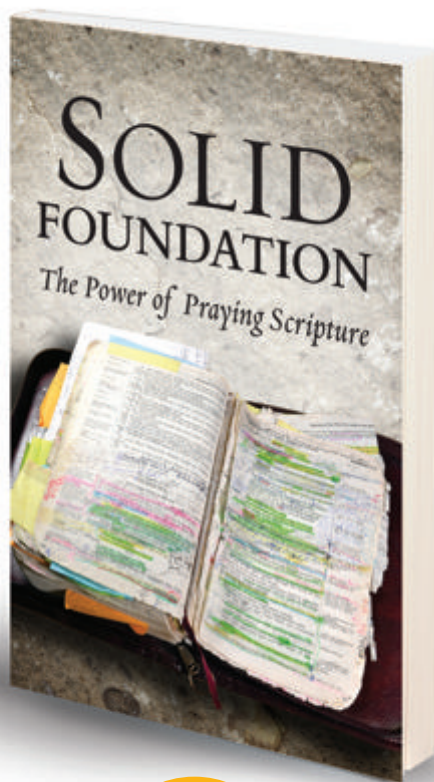
PrayerShop Publishing has put just the theme articles of Solid Foundation into a small 48-page, 4 x 6 booklet to make it affordable for every church to put into the hands of their people.

Multiple Copy Discounts:

- 1 copy: \$2.99
- 2-9 copies: \$1.99
- 10 – 24 copies: \$1.49
- 25 – 99 copies: \$.99
- 100 or more copies: .59

SHIP IN EARLY APRIL

www.prayershop.org



GOD KNOWS OUR CHILDREN

God can show us how to target our children's needs with just the right Scripture, even when they live away—on campus or across the world. I had prayed and prayed for our college son Chris (second oldest), but needed new direction from the Lord. So I asked Him to reveal a special verse that would be right in line with His heart toward our son.

One night soon after, I had a dream. In it, Chris was standing beside me, holding a Bible and pointing out a verse as if to say, "That's me, Mom." The verse was Acts 17:28: "For in him we live and move and have our being." I sensed the Spirit saying that this is the truth about our son and I should pray that he would realize who he is in Christ. For many years since, I've prayed Acts 17:28 for Chris—when he was in medical school, serving in Iraq as a battalion surgeon saving Marines' lives, and as a father and husband in medical practice. As the Spirit continues to point me back to this verse, He reminds me to remember that He is the One who began a good work in Chris and He will complete it (Phil. 1:6)!

I've never run out of scriptural prayers to pray—especially when praying our three children through childhood and adolescence, college years, marriage, and

continued on page 22

9 Compelling Reasons to Pray the Word

By Kim Butts

Years ago, I was taught how to pray the Word of God—and it revolutionized my prayer life. It is the ultimate prayer manual written by God Himself. The Bible always makes His will clear to us through the written Word. Anything the Holy Spirit makes known to us will always be in agreement with God's revealed Word.

Praying the Word sets people free! Wouldn't you like to pray with complete confidence and assurance that the Lord God Almighty will hear and answer the Kingdom-advancing prayers that are on His heart?

Following are some reasons why praying Scripture can empower your prayer life individually and corporately. As you incorporate the Word into your prayers, you will pray with greater boldness and effectiveness because you will be interceding in God's "good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom. 12:2).

PRAYING SCRIPTURE IS POWERFUL BECAUSE . . .

1. It reveals God's will for His Kingdom: What is on God's heart? We need to discover the will of God through His revealed Word and pray it for the sake of His Kingdom! Here are just a few things that are on the heart of God:

- He wants us to love one another (John 13:34-35).
- He wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:1-4).
- He wants us to pray for workers to be sent into His harvest field (Matt. 9:37-38).
- He wants unity in the Body of Christ (John 17:20-26).

2. Praying the Word gives us confidence and power in our prayers: When you pray Scripture, you can be confident that it is powerful! "If you believe, you will receive whatever

you ask for in prayer" (Matt. 21:22). It is much easier for me to believe in God's Word as I pray than to depend solely upon what is in my own heart, which can sometimes be selfish and not focused upon the plans and purposes of God.

3. The Word of God gives us a beautiful, full, rich vocabulary of prayer: Pray Psalm 145 back to the Lord. As you do, focus all of the words back on Him as a prayer of praise! Then, as you pray through this psalm and others, write down words and phrases that speak of God and His character. Doing so will help you learn ways to describe Him so that your prayers don't wither from repetition.

4. The Word of God helps us to keep our prayer lives fresh and exciting: "For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Have you experienced dry seasons in your prayer life? Applying the vocabulary of Scripture to your prayer life will enliven it!

5. His Word reminds us to stay focused upon Him in prayer: "But my eyes are fixed on you, sovereign LORD . . ." (Ps. 141:8). In good times or bad, we need to have our eyes fixed and focused upon the Lord. Take everything to the Lord prayerfully, asking Him to take charge and work His will in every situation that arises. Be sure that prayer is always your first response, not your last resort.

6. Praying the Word of God and hearing it prayed, builds our faith in God's ability to hear and answer: "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ"

(Rom. 10:17). When we hear the Word of Christ, it builds our faith. When we pray the Word of Christ, it demonstrates our faith in what He will do.

7. Praying the Word of God protects us from sin: "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Ps. 119:11). We can use Scripture in our prayer lives if the Word is hidden in our hearts, reminding us of righteous living.

8. Praying the Word boldly strengthens our witness to unbelievers: "For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people" (1 Peter 2:15). As you begin to pray bold prayers from the Word of God and He begins to answer, those who doubt or are uncertain of who Jesus is, will have to take another look.

9. We should pray Scripture so that God is honored and glorified! "All your works praise you, LORD; your faithful people extol you. They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom" (Ps. 145:10-12, emphasis added). Whenever you pray Scripture, you bring glory and honor to the Father! The "so that" prayer makes every prayer a Kingdom prayer—a God-honoring prayer that touches the heart of the Father!

When you pray God's will for your life and the lives of others, be prepared to be yielded and obedient if He should ask you to be the answer to the prayers you pray!

KIM BUTTS is the cofounder of Harvest Prayer Ministries (with her husband Dave) and the author of *The Praying Family: Creative Ways to Pray Together*. She and Dave are coauthors of *Revolution on Our Knees: 30 Days of Prayer for Neighbors and Nations* and *Pray Like the King: Lessons from the Prayers of Israel's Kings*. These books are available from prayershop.org.

now praying for their children. A verse I prayed continually during my seven-year journey of prayer for our oldest son was Ephesians 1:17-18: *Lord, open the eyes of his heart and give him spiritual wisdom and understanding so he will grow in the knowledge of You. I pray that his heart will be flooded with light so he can understand the wonderful future You have for him.*

Justin did not appear to be walking in the light at the time nor did he seem spiritually inclined. In fact, he was enamored with the world and all it had to offer from high school through his first two years of college. As I continued praying Ephesians 1:17-18 and other verses for him, I gathered other mothers, concerned about their teens, to pray in agreement together each week. When my spirits flagged, God seemed to say, “Persevere in prayer and trust Me.”

Then one summer day after his sophomore year at University of Okla-

WHEN WE PRAY GOD’S WORD...

WE BREATHE THE LIFE OF JESUS INTO THEM AND INTO OUR HEARTS.

homa, when I was driving him across the city to get his overheated car stuck on the highway, he turned to me and said, “You know, Mom, I’ve been feeling so empty and lonely, being so far from God and trying to do everything on my own. I know that God hasn’t moved; I have. But what I want more than anything is to have an intimate relationship with Christ, to really know Him.”

Justin has never looked back and has been following the Lord ever since. Watching this devoted husband and father of two, who now also prays God’s Word for his own children, I have been constantly encouraged by the Lord’s faithfulness and grace in Justin’s life and family.

As I discovered more of the treasures of God’s Word and promises, one of my favorite prayers is based in 1 Peter 5:7: “Lord, thank You for inviting me to cast all of my cares upon You! Here’s what I am burdened and worried about today . . .” And then I roll my concerns, workload, and anxieties upon the Lord. Praying this verse on countless days has brought more peace into my heart than anything else I can think of—and certainly more than any stress relief the world might offer.

not only for ourselves and our children, but also for friends, family, and sisters and brothers in Christ that we’ve had the opportunity to pray for in healing services, conferences in other countries and in our own community. Each time, I’ve been filled with faith and hope, in the best of times and the worst of times.

Praying God’s Word transformed my spiritual life and did something else: It got my focus off the problems or situations and onto the One who could help us, transform us, and—when needed—restore us. I knew praying Scripture wasn’t an overnight quick fix, but my confidence in the Lord increased as I grew to trust Him to fulfill His promises in His way and time. And I was assured—even when the answers were long in coming—that He who said He is able to keep safe what we entrust to Him will do more than we can ask, think, or imagine, because of His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Eph. 3:20-21).

You, too, can find the blessing of praying God’s Word for your family and personal life. When we pray God’s words and then love those around us through prayer, we breathe life—the life of Jesus, the living Word—into them and into our hearts. Who among us doesn’t need more of Christ in our lives and His blessing in our family?


BREATHING THE LIFE OF JESUS

In his book *Pierced by the Word*, John Piper said that our general prayers “become powerful when they are filled up with concrete, radical *biblical goals* for the people we are praying for.”

We just celebrated 42 years of marriage and can look back on praying hundreds and hundreds of biblical prayers,

IT TAKES A LITTLE PRACTICE

While it may not come naturally for you to pray biblical prayers, it takes only a little practice to become comfortable with using God’s Word as a powerful prayer prompt. For instance:



**2012
ELECTION
Prayer Guide**

**BE NATION
CHANGERS!**

*Pray God’s purposes
for the U.S. elections.*

This Scripture-based,
non-partisan guide is
available in packs of 50
or online at

[www.prayerconnect.net/
Resources/Prayer-Guides.](http://www.prayerconnect.net/Resources/Prayer-Guides)

www.prayerconnect.net

- Take the verse in which Jesus said, “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid” (John 14:27, NLT). Then pray it back to God in your own words and from the sincerity of your heart. For example, “Thank You, Jesus, for Your matchless gift of peace. I receive Your peace in my mind and in my heart so I won’t be troubled or afraid.”
- When we pray for someone who is suffering or in need, the Bible is full of compassionate prayers. Recently I was struck by reading Psalm 79:8 when a friend had major surgery and I prayed it right back to God on her behalf: “Let your tenderhearted mercies quickly meet Janet’s need, Lord.” I sent that prayer to her via text message in the hospital, and she received it when she got out of

the recovery room. That prayer for God’s tenderhearted mercies echoes from my spirit whenever anyone I know is in the ER, in personal distress, or in physical pain.

- Pray God’s attributes. A verse such as Psalm 46:1 assures us that God will be our “refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (NKJV). We can call upon God’s very nature and character when we pray it back to Him: “Lord, You said You will be our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. I ask You to let me experience Your sustaining grace, strength, and power so that problems won’t weigh me down.”

HIS WORD UPHOLDS THE UNIVERSE

How incredible it is that through Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, heaven’s windows

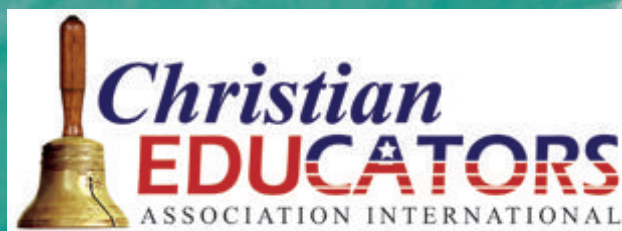
are opened and each of us is given access to Almighty God, who hung the stars and moon in the sky and upholds the entire universe by His very Word!

What a marvelous gift God has given us in the treasure of His Word to guide and shape our prayers. In it we can discover His will for our marriages, families, ministries, and all areas of our lives. Even more, when we *pray* His Word, we are asking that all He’s planned in heaven will come into our lives on earth! **PC**



CHERI FULLER is a popular speaker and award-winning author of more than 40 books, including *The One Year Book of Praying Through the Bible*, *When Mothers Pray*, and *A Busy Woman’s Guide to Prayer*. As executive director of Redeeming the Family, Cheri has been a frequent guest on national radio and TV. Her passion is to encourage women and inspire people of all ages to impact their world through prayer (cherifuller.com).

*Partnering with you
in prayer to positively impact
education in America.*



A professional association for educators
called to serve in public or private schools.

www.ceai.org

1.888.798.1124





DECLARING PRAYER

The Formidable Force of Praying
the Word Out Loud

ANYONE WHO ACCEPTS JESUS CHRIST AS LORD and Savior soon learns that the Christian life is not without opposition. Evil spiritual forces opposed to the work of Christ are active in our world. Constant opposition comes from an enemy who, though usually unseen, is very real.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:12, “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” These forces are pervasive and powerful, and must

By John T. Maempa

be taken seriously. We can be thankful, however, that God equips us with the ability to both protect ourselves from, and do battle against, the enemy of our soul.

Our principal weapon in the battle is the Word of God. Immediately following his alert to believers in Ephesians 6, Paul instructed his readers to “put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand” (v. 13). Paul then described the pieces of armor to be worn—the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the footgear representing readiness for battle, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation.

Notably, each piece of armor is for defense or protection from the “flaming arrows of the evil one” (v. 16). Then Paul instructs his readers to take the “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (v. 17)—the only weapon for offense in the Christian soldier’s armament.

Without breaking stride, Paul adds in verse 18, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.” Clearly, there is a vital relationship in spiritual warfare between wielding the Word and praying Spirit-led prayers. Prayer, coupled with the Word, is a formidable force.

DECLARE SCRIPTURE WITH POWER

Because God’s Word is alive, dynamic, and powerful, as Hebrews 4:12 describes, we can wield it boldly in warfare prayer. While our enemies, Satan and his forces, cannot read our thoughts, they can hear our declarations in prayer. And while we do not pray *to* our enemies, we certainly can direct prayer *at* them, declaring the truths and promises of Scripture.

I am intrigued by war documentaries, particularly those that focus on the various kinds of weaponry used, especially during World War II. Among the most amazing displays of military power

were the naval bombardments used to “soften” enemy beachheads. Positioned miles from shore, the great guns on the naval warships would hurl round after round of explosive projectiles, breaking down enemy fortifications and allowing foot soldiers to move onto the beachheads, press inland, and take territory for freedom.

In much the same way, strategic intercessory prayer, enhanced by praying Scripture, can be directed at the strongholds of the enemy in spiritual warfare. Just as David cried out, “May God arise, may his enemies be scattered; may his foes flee before him” (Ps. 68:1), we can openly and boldly declare God’s Word when confronting the enemy. As we do so, the strongholds are broken.

But why declare Scripture audibly?

DECLARE SCRIPTURE BY VOICE

Declaring Scripture aloud sharpens our focus. For example, when I pray for my own healing or for the healing of others, I often declare the familiar words of 1 Peter 2:24: “By his wounds [stripes] you have been healed.” When praying for provision, I declare Matthew 6:33: “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Praying Scripture aligns our prayers with God’s Word. As we pray God’s promises and truths back to Him, He is pleased to respond with His grace and favor. Of course, we must be careful that we pray Scripture *to* God and not *at* Him, expecting Him to answer simply because we have used His Word in our prayer. God will not be manipulated. However, when we declare His Word in sincerity, He is pleased to answer.

Declaring Scripture audibly in prayer also helps to confirm God’s Word in our hearts and minds and strengthens our trust in His promises. Beth Moore, in her book, *Praying Scripture: Breaking Free from Spiritual Strongholds*, relates this

personal perspective: “In praying Scripture, I not only find myself in intimate communication with God, but my mind is being retrained, or renewed (Rom. 12:2), to think *His* thoughts about my situation rather than mine” (p. 8).

Indeed, as we pray God’s thoughts, we are greatly strengthened and encouraged despite the circumstances we face.

Praying Scripture aloud is much more than just whistling in the dark when we’re afraid or in difficult circumstances. As we boldly declare God’s Word in sincerity and truth, God releases power that provides deliverance, victory, and freedom in the spiritual realms. There is tremendous power in God’s Word; there is tremendous power in prayer. When combined, there is nothing Satan and his forces can do to destroy us.

APPLY THE SEARCHLIGHT

As noted earlier, Hebrews 4:12 describes the Word of God as “alive and active,” and “sharper than any double-edged sword.” God’s Holy Word is much more than words on paper; it is living and dynamic, and able to reveal what lurks at the core of our being. The writer adds that the Word “judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

In order for our prayers to be effective, we must regularly apply the searchlight of God’s Word to our own lives. We must pray as did David, “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23). As we pray God’s Word in our times of communion with Him, the Holy Spirit will direct His piercing light to reveal things that displease God and hinder our relationship with Him. Much of the time our thought life is where the greatest problem lies.

continued on page 28

How Jesus Used Scripture in His Greatest Battle

By Thomas E. Trask

IF YOU ARE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS, IT IS VERY important for you to understand that you are in a battle, and that battle is against the forces of the devil and the powers of evil. These powers are very real. Jesus knew this as He encountered Satan.

Yet Jesus was victorious, and He left us with instructions to experience that same victory over Satan. In His greatest moment of battle, Jesus called upon the authority of the Word of God.

The account of how Jesus defeated Satan is found in Luke 4:1-14. It should first be noted that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit *before* being tempted: “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan” (Luke 4:1, KJV). We also read in verse 14, “Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.”

This is a crucial lesson in the matter of spiritual warfare: We are no match for Satan, who, “as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8, KJV). In this account, Jesus shows us that we cannot defeat Satan on our own. We must be filled with the power of the Spirit—just as Jesus was.

CONFRONTING DARK POWERS

Billy Graham has preached the gospel throughout the world and encountered many direct conflicts with the power of Satan. In his book, *Storm Warning*, Dr. Graham writes about a direct confrontation with the enemy during two of his crusades.

One night in Nuremberg, Germany, we were holding a crusade in the same stadium . . . Hitler used to stage his infamous rallies. It was difficult to sit in that place and hear in the echoes of memory the

masses shouting “Sieg, Heil!” . . .

One night, as I sat on the platform, Satan worshippers dressed in black assembled just outside the stadium doors. Using ancient, evil rites, they tried to put a hex on the meeting. The rumor of their presence spread, Christians prayed, and in answer to those prayers, nothing came of the incident.¹

Dr. Graham goes on to relate another incident, this time in Chicago, when 300 Satan worshippers tried to force their way into a youth night at McCormick Place. Instead of accepting the police offer to handle the intruders headed toward the stage, Dr. Graham interrupted the choir and encouraged the Christian youth to pray for the Satan worshippers, show love to them, sing to them, and gradually ease them back toward the doors.

Dr. Graham was blessed to watch hundreds of students begin praying, sharing their faith, and lovingly surrounding those who meant harm. God’s Spirit began to move in the place and confound those who were intent on disruption.

SPEAKING OUT THE TRUTH

When it comes to defeating Satan, the power of the Word of God is far superior

to this enemy of the soul. Jeremiah 23:29 (KJV) states, “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”

When Satan initially tried to tempt Jesus (Luke 4:3), Jesus spoke out loud to Satan by quoting Scripture. “It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” (v. 4, KJV).

In the second temptation crafted by Satan, Jesus again gave us some wonderful words of instruction. First, He said, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” He used the principle also stated in James 4:7: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Then Jesus again quoted Scripture to Satan: “For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Luke 4:8, KJV).

It is interesting to note in Jesus’ third temptation, Satan tried using Scripture (although wrested from context) to tempt Jesus. Again Jesus uses Scripture: “It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (vs. 12, KJV). Christ’s victory over Satan came as a result of Jesus speaking out the truth of the Word of God.

When one speaks the Word of God out loud, it serves as a reminder of how powerful the Word is—and it changes not. The Scripture is true: “Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4, KJV). We are assured of winning the battle, for in Romans 8:37 (KJV) we read, “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

So we are victorious!

¹Billy Graham, *Storm Warning*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 147-149. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

DR. THOMAS TRASK is chairman of the Global Prayer Initiative of Convoy of Hope and the former general superintendent of the Assemblies of God.

EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF WIELDING BOTH THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT AND PRAYER.

Our mind is a battleground on which the enemy easily prevails if we do not fill our thoughts with God's Word. While many thoughts we entertain originate with us, the enemy is also able to inject thoughts that are impure, untrue, and unholy. Paul instructed in 2 Corinthians 10:5 that victory in our spiritual battle is achieved when we "demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." Taking those thoughts captive requires intentional effort on our part as we counter Satan's attacks. We can successfully resist and reject unwholesome thoughts as we focus upon Jesus Christ and His Word and fill our minds with things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy (Phil. 4:8).

FILL THE ARSENAL

In view of this, it is important that we commit Scripture to memory. Then, in those times of testing which sometimes come when we do not have access to a printed copy of God's Word, the Holy Spirit can help bring to our mind what we have stored in memory and do effective, victorious battle against the enemy. In so doing, we follow Jesus' example when He encountered Satan in the Wilderness Temptation (Matt. 4:1-11). As each temptation was placed before Him, Jesus responded with Scripture. The end result was that "the devil left him, and angels came and attended him" (vs. 11).

Here are some Scriptures put to prayer that pertain to specific issues or circumstances we might face. Fill your spiritual

arsenal with these and other passages. Experience the power of wielding both the sword of the Spirit and prayer.

Anxiety or Worry

Thank You, oh God, for inviting me to cast my cares and burdens upon You. Thank You for sustaining me by Your great power. Please help me to stand and not fall in this time of worry and care (Ps. 55:22).

Help me, oh God, to be anxious about nothing. In the face of this test and trial, I bring my request for help to You with a thankful heart. Thank You for the awesome peace You give me even when it doesn't make sense to be at peace (Phil. 4:6-7).

Guidance and Wisdom

Father God, I thank You for ordering my steps and guiding me in the way I should take. I look to You again today for Your guidance and direction (Ps. 37:23).

Oh God, I really need wisdom today to make a right decision. You promise that if I lack wisdom, I can ask of You and You will give it generously—realizing I don't always know what to do. Please grant me Your wisdom today. Thank You for the marvelous help You provide (James 1:5).

Healing

I need Your healing touch today, oh God. Your Word declares that Your Son Jesus bore my sins on the cross so that I might receive Your

salvation, and that Your wonderful gift of salvation includes the blessing of Your healing touch. Thank You for sending Your Son to die on the cross not only for my sins, but for my healing as well (1 Peter 2:24-25).

As I come to You in prayer for healing, oh God, I am so grateful that Your Word declares that the prayer offered in faith will make me well; that You will raise me up. I trust in that promise today (James 5:15).

Spiritual Warfare

Help me, oh God, to be self-controlled and on the alert for the enemy Satan who prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he can destroy. Help me resist him by standing firm in my faith just as many others have done (1 Peter 5:8-9).

In my walk with You, oh God, may I always be in submission to You and resist the devil. Help me to stay close to You and know the power and protection of Your presence day by day (James 4:7-8).

As you fill your spiritual arsenal with verses like these and many others, you will be well prepared to counter Satan's attack, demolish strongholds, receive help and healing, and live in victory. Remember, "The prayer of a righteous man [and woman] is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). **PC**

Note: A daily audio "prayervotional" is available at prayer.ag.org. Each day, a Scripture selection is shared followed by a prayer based upon that selection. This also can be heard by calling 1-800-4-PRAYER and selecting the Scripture and prayer for the day.



JOHN T. MAEMPA is director of the Office of Prayer and Spiritual Care for the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, MO.

61st ANNUAL OBSERVANCE THURSDAY, MAY 3RD

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

ONE NATION • UNDER GOD

“BLESSED IS THE
NATION WHOSE
GOD IS THE LORD”

PSALM 33:12

WWW.NATIONALDAYOFPRAYER.ORG

NATIONAL
DAY OF
PRAYER



Let It Begin In Me

TURN//

in humble repentance
from every sin God
reveals to us

PRAY//

with urgency for
spiritual recovery
and awakening

UNITE//

with other believers in
spreading the hope
of revival

ONECRY

A Nationwide Call for Spiritual Awakening

To learn more about OneCry and to join the movement, visit



www.onecry.com

OneCry is a partnership led by Life Action Ministries

©2011 OneCry: A Nationwide Call for Spiritual Awakening. All rights reserved.



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

A Bible Study *by Sandra Higley*

This Bible study is formatted for small group open discussion. If you use this study by yourself, we suggest that you journal your answers to the discussion questions.

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

Matthew 21:22 tells us that if we believe, we will receive whatever we ask for in prayer. Yet how many times have we prayed—desperately and in earnest—only to experience disappointment? If prayer is an actual weapon of warfare with divine power (2 Cor. 10:3-5), why don't we see more answers?

The word for power in those verses is *dunatos* (our word *dynamite* comes from this root word). Other places in the New Testament

dunatos is translated *possible*: “With God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). God invites us repeatedly to partner with Him to do the impossible—so what’s the catch?

The key to praying powder-keg prayers is simple: pray God’s will. God is looking for men and women of radical faith who will ask for His will to be done on earth—right here, right now.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

You can be bold and tenacious when you are praying God’s will. Prayers in sync with His heart will not be denied. Based on 1 John 5:14-15, what gives us confidence as we approach God?

To pray God’s will, you have to know God’s will—and that’s simple, too. He has already revealed Himself to us in His Word. *Praying Scripture is praying His heart.*

Obviously, we won’t know, this side of heaven, how all of our prayers were answered. But generally speaking, do you think your current prayer life is effective? Why or why not?

Describe your greatest struggles when it comes to prayer.

Cheri Fuller speaks of God’s Word as the ultimate guide to shape our prayers because in Scripture we discover what He wants for every area of our lives. Praying God’s Word means we give up our desires—our control—in exchange for His. Read Isaiah 55:8-9 and discuss what giving up control feels like to you. Do you fear it?

According to Thomas Trask, when it comes to defeating Satan, the power of the Word of God is unbeatable. He cites Jeremiah 23:29. Read this verse as well as the following passages and discuss why praying God’s Word is fundamental to powerful prayer (Ps. 33:4, 119:105; Prov. 30:5-6; Isa. 55:11; John 6:63, 15:7, 17:17).

Declaring Scripture aloud sharpens our focus, confirms God’s Word to our hearts, and strengthens our trust, according to John Maempa. He says that the spoken Word releases power that provides deliverance, victory, and freedom. How do Proverbs 18:21a and Mark 11:23 confirm this?

In his article, Dana Olson talks about a common condition rampant in the church: *Arrested Prayer Development*. His prescription for this ailment consists of reading a few verses each day, reflecting on what you’ve read, and then asking the Lord how to pray, based on those verses. How might this method alter the way you pray now?

ACTION STEPS

Ready to give it a try?

Use the following Scriptures to shape prayers for your own life or for individuals the Lord brings to mind: Ephesians 1:17-19, 3:6-18; Colossians 1:9-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, 3:5; 2 Timothy 2:22-23; 1 Peter 1:22. **PC**

SANDRA HIGLEY is the author of several Scripture prayer guides in bookmark form, including *Prayers of Repentance*, *Partnering with God in the Struggle over Sin*, and *Life-Giving Prayers for Your Church*. You can order them from navpress.com.

THE REWARDS OF PRAYER ARE GREATER THAN THE ANSWERS



"I learned the real goal of prayer is my desire to please Him."

"I am now inspired to pray as never before!"

"I learned the dynamics of prayer."

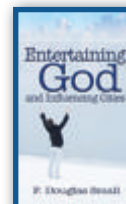
"I came away with useful, practical information and have an understanding of the 'workings of prayer' better now than ever before."

"I learned how to structure my prayers - to make an appointment with God with many intercessions."

Schedule Your

School of Prayer

- ◆ Enriching Your Personal Prayer Life ...
- ◆ Praying thru the Tabernacle ...
- ◆ Heaven is a Courtroom ...
- ◆ The Prayer Encounter ...



Transforming Your Church into a House of Prayer with 8 DVD sessions (Book - \$14.99; Both book and DVD \$39.99)... *Prayer—the Heartbeat of the Church* (Book, DVD, Devotional Guide, 6 DVD Sessions - \$25.00) ... *Prayer—Entertaining God: Influencing Cities* (Book - \$14.99; with DVD and CD - \$30.00) ... *Wet Eyes and Caring Hands* ... \$14.99 ... *Intercession—the Uncomfortable, Middle* ... \$12.99

All five books - \$60.00

All Products Listed - \$99.99



IF TWO OF YOU...

BY DAVID CHOTKA



A young single mom named Tammy started coming to our church at the end of the summer of 1996. She was very new to the “things of God,” but wanted to help out somewhere in the church. She became a helper in Sunday school, “herding children” while the teacher concentrated on teaching the Word. It was perfect for her and for the teacher. Tammy knew the children and could help with them, while at the same time she could also learn more of the Bible.

At a training seminar for teachers and helpers one Saturday morning, Tammy showed up with a patch on her eye, obviously in terrible pain. She explained that she had been decorating her home for Halloween on the previous Thursday

What It Really Means to Agree in Prayer

evening, and in a moment of revelation, realized that the decorations were primarily focused on the occult—things God condemned in the Bible. She suddenly understood that God was not pleased with that, and so she determined to take the objects down quickly. One decoration was attached to a wooden shutter by a tack with a string—and she gave it a strong yank. The tack immediately dislodged and landed in her eye.

It takes no imagination to know that Tammy screamed in pain. The damage

When the name and reputation of God Himself is at stake

was done. All the peripheral vision from that eye was gone, and her forward sight, marred by a scratch across the cornea, was terribly impaired. The doctor said she lost all of her side vision, and he couldn't be sure what could be recovered with her forward sight. Her vision was blurry and extremely sensitive to any kind of light.

It was a strange turn of events. This happened because Tammy believed she was obeying the Lord's command not to be involved with the occult.

AN AGREEING MOMENT

Brent (an elder), his wife Barb, another elder named Ralph, and my wife and I listened to her story. We were all people of prayer, and more specifically, Brent, Ralph and Barb were lead-teachers of our prayer ministry. We realized that God's reputation was at stake in this matter. When someone in the group spoke up and said, "God wants to heal Tammy's eye," the five of us sensed an increase of the presence of God. His compassion began to well up inside of us.

"Tammy," Barb said, "may we pray for God to heal you?"

"Oh, please!" Tammy replied.

Our numbers had increased by now with more people walking in for the seminar. So 14 of us gathered around our friend, placed our hands upon her, and began to beseech the Lord that this attack on Tammy's new faith would not have its full effect. We prayed for God to heal and restore her eye. The manifest presence of the Lord was very tangible and palpable, while each of us in turn asked the Lord for mercy on this new believer.

"What's happening while we are praying, Tammy?" I asked.

"Fiery heat is flowing into my body and going into my eye!" she said. "The pain is subsiding!"

"Do you want us to keep praying?" someone asked.

"Oh, please!" she said.

And so we prayed for 20 minutes—until the pain completely vanished. Suddenly the intense presence of the Lord lifted, and we knew we were done. Tammy kept the patch on her eye, but all the pain and sensitivity to light disappeared. We had just experienced powerful agreement in prayer with each other.

Of course, as anyone would, Tammy went to the doctor to determine how to adapt to the damaged eye.

The doctor removed the patch. His jaw dropped.

"Doctor," she said, "what's wrong?"

"Wrong?" he said. "Why there's nothing wrong." In astonishment, he repeated, "There is absolutely nothing wrong!"

He checked her vision and found she had 20/20 vision straight ahead, with 100 percent peripheral vision on the sides.

"What did you do between Thursday and now?" he said.

"Well, on Saturday morning, 14 people asked the Lord Jesus to heal my eye," she replied.

The doctor declared that he didn't know about Jesus, but that he knew for sure there was no longer anything wrong with her eye.

We invited Tammy to testify to the rest of the church about what the Lord had done. We were all as astonished as the doctor. The Lord healed her eye through the prayer ministry of two or three who agreed that this must be done.

If two of you agree . . . it shall be done.
So says the Lord.

CONDITIONS TO AGREEMENT PRAYER

It is a promise that is familiar yet astonishing. These words of Jesus have caused

many seasoned prayer leaders and intercessors to reorder their prayer lives in a moment of revelation. It is that moment of understanding that Jesus really means what He says—and we must take seriously His astonishing words and start standing on the Word. If you have a heart to pray, you are familiar with this promise:

"Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered in My name, I am there in their midst" (Matt. 18:19-20, NASB).

But what does it really mean? All of us can testify of times when we thought we had agreed and it *wasn't* done.

And so we have this tension—knowing the fear of the Lord, standing on and insisting on the completion of a God-honoring promise, and not knowing what prevents the answer.

This promise is vast beyond human imagining, and we know it. We also know we must embrace its realities and live it out, for it is the Word of the Lord.

Let's be clear: *It is imperative that we pray together.* Praying alone in the hidden place was a common practice of the Lord Jesus Christ—and most intercessors do this. Praying together, however, is something Jesus requires us to do in order to see the unlimited power of God released and to "open earth to heaven."

There are conditions in this expansive promise. Most of God's promises work this way: God initiates; we respond. Please note that the text does not say "two or more" (as a justification of the need to gather for a public worship). Rather the text says "two or three," referring to an ancient Hebrew legal principle. For a "fact to be established" there needed to be "two or three witnesses" (see Deut. 17:6, 19:15; Num. 35:30, and its New Testament applications in Matt. 18:16; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28).

The Lord had just taught that sin issues being corrected needed two or three witnesses. Then He extended that to indicate that “the fact” of His presence is guaranteed by the intentional gathering of two or three. To paraphrase the teaching of the Lord, “to agree in prayer that anything on earth will be done, two or three of you must ‘establish a fact’—first, the fact of the presence of Jesus among them, and then the fact of the urgency of the prayer need before the God who hears.”

Two or three must agree that God’s reputation is at stake and something must be done for God’s glory!

THE POWER OF THE NAME OF JESUS

Here then is what is required: There must be two believers in the Lord Jesus who have determined to ensure their lives belong completely to the Lordship of their Savior. This is what it means to “pray in the name.” The name of Jesus is not merely a string of syllables uttered like a magic charm. The name is the character, nature, personality, and presence of God Himself.

Within God’s character lies the key to God’s power. It must be made clear then that to “gather in His name” is to do far more than merely meet in a room with some ideas about what might be helpful. Rather, it is to enter into the character of Jesus Christ Himself, *and to do this together*. Sin issues must be dealt with, confessed, and surrendered. Nagging troubles and doubts must be taken to the cross of Christ and left there. Sharing life together around the things of God must take center stage.

Once it is clear that two (or three) believers are “in Christ” singly and “in Christ” together as far as they are aware, the second condition must be met: *They must jointly discern what God wants done; they must be “agreed”!*

All must be utterly convinced *God* wants something done. This is not merely something a couple of people think

would be useful. Jesus’ power doesn’t flow around what is merely “nice.” Jesus’ presence, power, and promises are manifestly present to a mutually submitted gathering of focused believers who make God’s glory their only agenda. This is what it means to “gather in His name.”

Jesus’ power is released through profound unity between the pray-ers. Without this kind of agreement, we have no power in our prayer together. The best this can do is kindle the faint hope that perhaps our single prayers might be effective when we say them aloud with someone else in the room.


AN URGENT APPEAL

Our asking and agreeing together must not merely be an asking after some need. Rather, our asking must be an urgent appeal to the Lord of the universe that God Himself must intervene around an agreed issue for the Lord’s glory. It is filled with urgency that this prayer must be answered—because the name and the reputation of God Himself is at stake.

Those who utter this prayer together must be prepared to do anything or sacrifice anything in their power to be a part of the answer. And if it is beyond their resources, they must surrender anything that God asks of them to see it done.

This is “the prayer of agreement.” It is mutual submission around the Word of God, in the presence of the Spirit, through the name of Christ the Lord—for the glory of God! Our corporate praying reflects this magnificent reality.

Brent, Ralph, and Barb prayed this way for Tammy—and God heard their prayer.

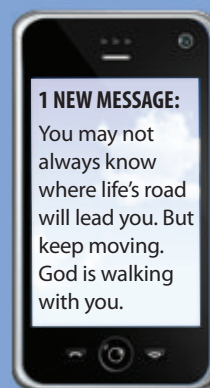
God has called us to agree. And when we do, God will hear our prayer too! 



DAVID CHOTKA is lead pastor of Spruce Grove Alliance Church (AB, Canada) and part of the Alliance Pray! Team with the Christian & Missionary Alliance, Canada. His book *Power Praying* is available at prayershop.org.

HIS WORD DELIVERED!

What better way to reach today’s mobile generation than via text message? Now you can receive daily scripture and devotionals on any cell phone!



Content Created by:

NAVPRESS 

 **YOUTH FOR CHRIST**



RAISE FUNDS FOR YOUR CHURCH

Greater Texting donates to a Partner Church everytime someone subscribes to receive daily devotionals. It’s a great way to reward your supporters with valuable Christian content.

Becoming a partner ministry is FREE and Greater Texting will provide you with materials to reach out and instruct your supporters on how to donate and subscribe. To sign up visit: greater texting.com/partners Or call: 800-230-3428

GREATERTEXTING.COM



31 WAYS *to Pray*

By Bob Hostetler

He had been raised in a Christian home and had come to faith in Jesus Christ at an early age. He was baptized at a church camp, and had even survived being a preacher's kid. But early in his high school years, my wife and I could sense him slipping away—from us and from God.

We did our best, of course, to steer him away from dangerous friendships. We watched him struggle with depression. We tried to love and encourage him as much as we could. But every effort failed—and sometimes seemed to make matters worse.

So after a couple years of proving our inadequacy as parents, we stopped trying. Instead, we focused our best efforts on praying. I scheduled a weekend prayer retreat at a retreat center about an hour from home. I took with me only my



Focus Your Best Parenting Efforts on Prayer

for Your Teen

Bible and one other resource: a 31-day prayer calendar I had devised years ago and had used since my children were small.

For three days I focused my prayers on my son. I prayed as I knelt in the spartan room provided for me. I prayed as I lay prostrate in the prayer chapel on the retreat center grounds. I prayed as I walked wooded paths, ate simple vegetarian meals, and rocked in a chair on the porch. By the end of the weekend, I had prayed my way through many Bible verses and had compiled a brand-new list, tailored to the needs of my teenage son.

I have since realized that many parents of teenagers—even those not in the desperate straits I felt myself in—might profit from a 31-day prayer plan for their teenagers. I hope the following 31 ways to pray will help you in that holy task:

- 1 Salvation**
First and foremost, Lord, let my children know and experience that salvation that comes by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8).
- 2 Self-control**
God, help my children to “think clearly and exercise self-control” in all they do (1 Peter 1:13, NLT).
- 3 Protection from peer pressure**
Lord, strengthen my children against peer pressure, that they may always stand strong against enticements to do wrong (Prov. 1:10).
- 4 Constructive friendships**
Father, lead my children into constructive friendships; lead them away from “bad company” (1 Cor. 15:33).
- 5 Honesty and integrity**
God, help my children walk blamelessly, do what is right, and speak truth in their hearts (Ps. 15:2-5).

6 Protection from irreversible mistakes

Lord, I know my children will make mistakes, but please save them from decisions that cannot be reversed and mistakes that cannot be corrected. Let them be among the righteous who may fall seven times but always rise again (Prov. 24:16).

7 Ability to study hard and learn well

God, teach my children to study hard and learn well in both their schoolwork and their study of Your Word (2 Tim. 2:15).

8 Healthy independence

As my children become more independent, in preparation for adulthood, let it always be a healthy independence, and never rebellion (Prov. 17:11).

9 Protection from unbiblical standards

Father, protect my children from unbiblical standards of beauty, conduct, and speech (2 Tim. 2:22).

10 Strong sense of identity

Help my children develop a strong sense of identity that is rooted in the knowledge of who they are in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10).

11 Strong sense of belonging

God, give my children a strong sense of belonging to their family, church, and to the Kingdom of God (1 Peter 2:9).

12 Strong sense of ability

Lord, please instill in my children a strong sense of their own gifts,

talents, and abilities, based on the strength You give them in Christ (Phil. 4:13).

13 Strong sense of responsibility

Father, make my children wise and responsible servants, who fulfill their promises and take care of their responsibilities (Luke 12:42).

14 Protection from sexual temptation

Lord, may my children “flee youthful lusts” and remain sexually pure in thought, word, and deed (2 Tim. 2:22, KJV).

15 Godly influences

Let men and women of godly character cross paths with my children and become their trusted counselors and mentors (Prov. 1:20-33).

16 Protection from loneliness

God, protect my children from the pain of loneliness, and teach them to find comfort in Your companionship (Ps. 23:4).

17 Protection from popularity

Lord, please protect my children from the pursuit of popularity and from the dangers of “too many friends.” Let them stay close, instead, to the Friend who sticks closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24, NASB).

18 Single Master

Let my children make Jesus Christ their Lord and Master early in life and serve only Him, all their days (Luke 16:13).

19 Godly mate

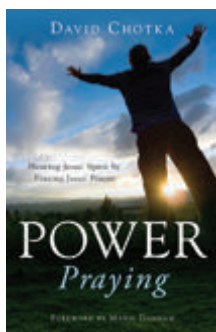
Father, lead my children to the mate of Your choosing (Gen. 2:24).

20 Life mission

Lord, instill in my children a

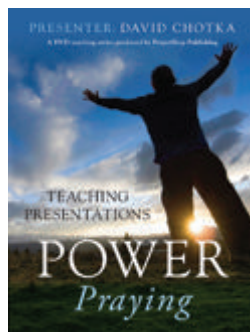
“TEACH US TO PRAY”

Words that have forever changed history.
Let them change you and your church!



Book

Retail Price: \$15.99
Our Price: **\$12.99**



DVD

Retail Price: \$25.00
Our Price: **\$22.50**

Power Praying is the most unique treatment of the Lord's Prayer available today. This powerful 8-week study will challenge you to truly pray and live “your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.”

With its Teacher's DVD Pack, complete with 8 presentations to stimulate group discussion, *Power Praying* is a great resource for group study.

Multiple Copy Discounts Available

Use Code PP1211 at PrayerShop for an additional \$1.00 off each book purchased.

Available through your local Christian bookstore or
at www.prayershop.org.



www.prayershop.org

strong and clear purpose to fulfill Your plan for their lives (Deut. 13:4).

21 Protection from depression

Deliver my children from discouragement and depression during their turbulent teenage years (Ps. 25:16-17).

22 Commitment to the Church

God, give my children a strong and lasting commitment to the Body of the Christ, the Church (Ps. 122:1).

23 Compassion for the less fortunate

Please give my children soft hearts and compassionate spirits for those who are in need (Matt. 25:31-46, James 1:27).

24 Protection from others

Please protect my children from bullies, daredevils, false friends, and even from the mistakes of foolish friends (Ps. 59:1-2).

25 Godly work ethic

Lord, please nurture in my children a strong, godly work ethic that will serve them well as they enter the workforce (1 Thess. 4:11).

26 Belt of truth

Arm my children, Lord, with the belt of truth; teach them to know truth from error in all they do (Eph. 6:14).

27 Breastplate of righteousness

Lord God, arm my children with the breastplate of righteousness; grant that they may make the right decisions, wherever they go (Eph. 6:14).

28 Readiness to share the gospel of peace

Father, let my children's feet be fitted with the readiness that comes from the

gospel of peace; teach them to share the good news with those around them (Eph. 6:15).

29 Shield of faith

Arm my children, Lord, with the shield of faith, with which they can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one (Eph. 6:16).


30 Helmet of salvation

Fit my children, Lord, with the helmet of salvation; let the assurance of their salvation accompany them in all they do (Eph. 6:14).

31 Sword of the Spirit

Lord, arm my children with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Let them love Your Word and hide it deep in their hearts (Eph. 6:16, Ps. 119:11).

Neither of my children are teens anymore. Both are committed followers of Jesus. And my son is now the worship leader in the church that my wife and I helped start when he was still in high school. God has abundantly answered my prayers for him.

I pray that He will do the same for you, as you commit to doing the one thing I believe I did right as a parent of my teenage children: *pray*. 



BOB HOSTETLER is the author of 27 books, including *American Idols: The Worship of the American Dream* (Broadman & Holman). He and his wife Robin helped cofound Cobblestone Community Church in Oxford, OH, where he serves in a teaching pastor role.

Start Your Day Praying the Word

Join Thousands Praying the Same Daily Scriptures

The daily Scripture prayer-guide used by
FAITH BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP AND AUTHOR DANA OLSON

is now available at

www.prayerconnect.net/blog/scripture-prayer

View it at Prayer Connect or sign up to have it
emailed or RSS-fed to you.

PRAYERCONNECT www.prayerconnect.net



Want to Socialize?

A lot of people are taken with social networks these days. Facebook is a huge success because it allows people to reconnect with high school and college friends and keep up with friends and family like never before. Not surprisingly, ministries and organizations have jumped into this social network technology and phenomenon for prayer purposes. There are thousands of prayer opportunities within Facebook.

A few ministries have tried to tap into this social networking craze by establishing their own prayer social networks outside of Facebook. Three worth checking out are: *prayerplanet.net*, *praynetwork.org*, and *getamericapraying.com*. Prayer Planet and Get

add people to your prayer list—and they can add you. When you type in a prayer or request, it goes to those on your list. When they pray, a notice comes to you. You can also send a prayer post to only one person on your list.

Because this site has a singular focus, it is very user friendly. It has a simple setup that allows you to receive your friends' prayer posts in different formats: Instant Messenger, email, or SMS. Another nice feature: no advertising or other information blocks on your page.



Get America Praying

Getamericapraying.com is sponsored by Intercessors for America. Its primary use is to network and link praying people and prayer groups within regions and

communities. You are encouraged to start a prayer group in your area. There are plenty of public prayer groups all over the country to join.

You can also form a private intercessory prayer

to pray for America. When you sign up, you will see how many are praying at any given time of the day or night. IFA's desire is to coordinate 24-7 prayer for the United States. In addition, you can sign up for some prayer initiatives (such as First Friday).

Get America Praying has member profile pages where you can put a photo and information about yourself and those in your groups. Your personal pages are kept free from ads, but you will see ad links for IFA materials and resources.

Pray! Network

Praynetwork.org is the social network that functions most like Facebook. You can make up a profile page and invite people to be your friend. Of the three networks listed here, *Pray!* has the most options to make your page your own. You can upload photos and video clips, write blogs, and post messages for all or only some to see. Its privacy settings also allow you to control what you see.

Pray! Network launched in 2010, is now approaching 3,500 members. You can see blog/article links and join groups such as prayer leaders or CryOut America. The site's interactive features include instant chat messaging. **PC**



The Role of Networking

Besides the obvious benefits of having social networks devoted to prayer, groups that are on Facebook seem to grow the quickest. For example, Pray Every Day, a Facebook group launched in March 2011 by Dean Ridings (author of the *Pray! Prayer Journal*), today has more than 17,000 members. Find it at *facebook.com/prayerjournal*.

America Praying are designed primarily to set up prayer groups and send prayers and requests back and forth. *Pray!* Network is much closer to Facebook in its functionality.



Prayer Planet

Prayerplanet.net primarily focuses on setting up a group of people who will pray for each other. As a user, you have a home page, where you can post a photo of yourself. You can then

group that allows you to send out requests only to the people you've invited to join your prayer team.

Another unique feature is the national prayer map, where you can see a red symbol for individual intercessors, yellow for prayer mobilizers, blue for prayer groups, and orange for community prayer watches (only first names of individuals are listed). You can also sign up on IFA's Prayer Wall, and pick a specific time and day when you promise



What's Not to Like?

Here are some prayer pages on Facebook we encourage you to "Like." (Add *www.facebook.com* before the / on each address.)

Prayer Connect /*prayerconnect*
Harvest Prayer Ministries

/harvestprayer

OneCry Revival Voices /*theonecry*



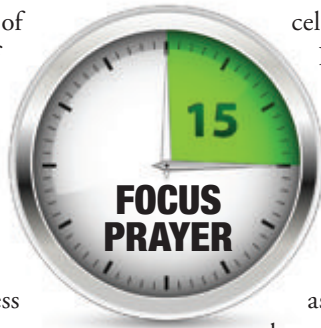
Prayer as Awareness of God's Presence

Most of us learned to pray in segmented blocks of time: morning quiet times, meal time, and bedtime prayers. Others have regular rhythms of prayer at various times of the day: morning office, noon prayer, vespers, or compline. All of these are valuable to our spirits and are important practices, yet they still leave gaps in our awareness of the presence of God.

Is it possible to narrow the gaps of “unawareness” of God’s presence so that every moment from mundane daily activity to intentional times of prayer—and

everything in between—we can make space for God in our hearts? Here are some ways to practice such wakefulness:

- Set the alarm on your watch or cellphone at regular intervals.



Begin with once per hour and work your way to once every 15 minutes. When the alarm goes off, take a few seconds to focus on being aware of God’s presence—the God who lives within you. Don’t ask Him for anything. Simply be aware that He is your companion in this moment. With this discipline you will soon find your thoughts turning toward God even without the alarm.

- Fast for a meal or longer, asking God to make you aware of His presence and draw you closer to Him with every hunger pang.
- Find Scriptures that place you in the presence of God, Scriptures such as Psalm 16:11: “You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” Meditate on these passages throughout the day, memorizing them and allowing God to manifest Himself in their practical application to your life.

KIM BUTTS is cofounder of Harvest Prayer Ministries.

What One Thing?

As a prayer team, we pose this question to our congregation each January: *What one thing would you like to see God do in your family in the coming year?* We invite families to discuss their one request, and then write it on an index card.

When the cards are returned, we simply take a church directory and cut it apart. We place family photos and names on each card, with the request on the back. The cards are then placed in a box in our prayer room, where at various times people will grab a stack of cards, pray through them, and then return them to the back of the file (to ensure rotation of the cards).

Each time a card is prayed over, that person initials and dates the card. We pass out the cards in our mid-week prayer gathering. Our staff prays over them during their weekly staff prayer times. The elders regularly pray over cards as a part of their meetings.

By the end of the year, most cards had been prayed over at least once a month—often more than that. We then

mail all the cards back to people, with a note that their prayer requests were lifted to the Lord often in the past year.

A Welcome Surprise

Our church averages almost 300 in attendance—and last year 60 cards were filled out by families and individuals (a pretty high percentage considering the average family size). Some families had forgotten about their prayer requests over the course of a year. They were surprised to receive the cards, and then rejoiced to look back and see how God had answered. People were greatly encouraged that so many different prayer warriors had taken their requests seriously by faithfully praying for them.

After a year, we start with blank cards and a new invitation to offer a new family prayer request: *What one thing may we pray on behalf of your family?*

MIKE RICHARD leads the prayer team at Hillside Church, Bloomington, MN.



How High Are Your Gates?

While speaking at a Church Prayer Leaders Network conference, David Bryant (of Proclaim Hope) taught attendees how to declare Scripture over situations that are troubling in life. He encouraged them to pray out of Psalm 24.

First, Bryant explained the significance of the phrase “lift up your heads, O you gates” (v. 7, 9). When building a temple to their god, ancient peoples believed an intimidating sign to outsiders was to make the gates to the temple as high as possible and the headplate or mantle of the gate as large as possible. They believed that the bigger the headplate or “head,” the more powerful their god.

So that adds a significant meaning to the declaration of the phrase. What the psalmist might be saying is, “Lift up your heads, gates, because you aren’t big enough for our God! The King of glory can’t pass through those puny gates, so open them wide.”

Turn Scripture to Prayer

How does this translate into a great prayer idea? Bryant encouraged participants to insert into the phrase whatever wall, stronghold, or circumstance was weighing them down—and declare it. For example, one might pray, “Lift up your head, you gate of doubt; be lifted up you ancient door of uncertainty. Let

the King of glory come in.” Or “Lift up your head, oh gate of fear; be lifted up you ancient door of anxiety. Let the King of glory come in.”

The group then together, out loud and all at once, started declaring what gate they needed to see opened. It was a powerful time of each person declaring that Jesus Christ was bigger than any problem. He was going to enter the circumstances of their lives. It built their faith!

You can lead groups in this exercise of turning Scripture into prayer, or use it in your own personal prayer time when you feel you need an extra measure of faith or a reminder of the awesomeness and power of God.

Consistent Prayer for Your Church Kids

Many churches are getting more serious about seeing their kids prayed for. One of the most effective ways is to assign adult intercessors to each child in the church, using information cards as prayer reminders.

A few years ago, the church I was going to at the time set up a prayer card program. I took a card of a four-year-old boy named Jonathan (my name). After church one day, about six months later, I introduced myself to him. I shook his hand and told him I was praying for him. His mom was especially blessed by our connection. Today, nine years later and living a thousand miles away, I still have that card in my Bible. I pray whenever I see it.

Designing a Prayer Card

Here is a simple way to get you started in praying more effectively for the children of your church. Using a digital camera, take photos of each child and develop an information card, using 5.5 x 8.5 card stock paper. Add important facts (child’s

name, number of siblings, school name, etc.). For older children and teens, you might include other facts such as their dreams and desires. Don’t write anything a child or parent might be uncomfortable having others see.

After these prayer cards are completed, give them to adults to pray. If possible, make an announcement about the program in church services, the bulletin, etc. If you can have some platform time, make sure adults know why the church believes this is important to do.

Set up a sign-up table in the foyer of the church, where adults can pick up the cards. Keep a master list so you know which adult is praying for which child. You may want to add the phone number of each intercessor so that the church can call him or her if anything significant (such as an emergency health need) comes up in the life of the child. Keep setting up the table each week until all the cards are gone.

Instruct Sunday school teachers and



PHOTO BY PAUL CHUA

other children’s leaders to inform you when new kids come to church so that you can make cards for them as well. I also recommend making new cards—with a new sign-up each year (allowing people to sign up again for the same child if they prefer). And if appropriate, encourage the adults to make contact with the children through a note in the mail or a greeting in the hallway.

JON GRAF is publisher of *Prayer Connect*.



Effective Evangelism: Triplet Praying

A long-espoused form of evangelism praying is called “triplet praying,” as promoted by long-time prayer leader Evelyn Christenson. (Her Bible is pictured on the cover of this issue of *Prayer Connect*.)

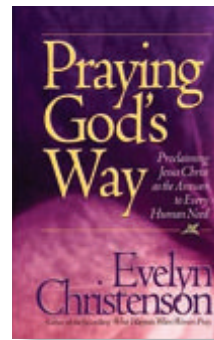
Throughout her years of ministry, Christenson taught and wrote about praying for the lost through her books *Praying God's Way* and *A Study Guide for Evangelism Praying*. Her stated mission was “to transfer souls from the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of Light through prayer and evangelism.”

Triplet praying is a simple and effective way to consistently bring family and friends before the Lord, praying for their salvation. Based on Jesus’ declaration that He is present “where two or three come together in my name” (Matt.

18:20), triplet praying encourages three people to commit to pray with each other for 15 minutes each week for three people each (total of nine on a triplet list).

To form a triplet, find two other people in close proximity to you (neighborhood, office, Bible study, school, church, etc.). The key is for three people to find a way to conveniently get together once a week to pray for a short time—and to stay consistent. Fifteen minutes a week is an easy time commitment if you include simple logistics for getting together. If you are unable to be physically present in the same place, three-way calling is also an option.

By staying focused on the salvation of the nine people on your triplet



list, you can keep your prayer times purposeful and concise. And when someone on your list accepts Christ, have a time of rejoicing—and then add a new person to the list!

Determine in advance the period of time praying together (such as

six months or one year), and then decide at the end of that time whether to re-up for another period of praying together.

Used throughout the world by many people and churches over the years, triplet praying is one the most effective and easiest ways to pray evangelistically. You can order materials from *unitedprayerministries.org*.

Fresh ways to pray.

Get equipped to pray with promise for others.

Practical prayers in a portable format.

Only \$2.00 each. Significant quantity discounts.



Six different titles by Steve Hawthorne:

Blessings
What Would Jesus Pray?
Open My City
Prompts for Prayerwalkers
The Lord is Their Shepherd
Light from My House



WayMakers
 Preparing God's Way by Prayer

The “Ways to Pray” series of 16-page booklets helps you put words to the prayers forming in your heart for others. Each booklet puts select scriptures at your fingertips next to simple, freshly-worded prayers springing directly from biblical promise. The pocket-sized format makes it easy to pray openly where you work or live.

Order at
www.waymakers.org
 or call 800-264-5214.

An Active Prayer Room Can Fuel Your Church | By Esther Leonard

At Mountain View Church we believe the prayer room is the boiler room, the furnace, and the nuclear power plant of the church. Because of this, we keep it fueled and ready.

Naturally there are many questions about establishing a specific, designated room in your church for prayer. Why would a church have a prayer room? How big should it be? Who will maintain it? How creative does it need to be? How do we get people to use it?

The answers are harder to come up with than the questions. At our church we have addressed these questions and many others around the issue of prayer with one answer: "It's not our problem to solve. The prayer room is *one way* we encourage people to enter into God's most Holy Presence."

If our questions revolve around whether people are excited about it or how many are lining up to get in, then we will find ourselves discouraged. Just as we can't create revival, we can't create a prayer culture that all will embrace.

Creative and Ever-changing Prayer Room

We are committed, however, to our church's passion to be a "house of prayer for all the nations." So let me offer a few suggestions for establishing a prayer room in your church:

1. Pray for people to receive a God-glorifying, Jesus-given, Holy Spirit-empowered passion to pray.
2. Put passionate service into your prayer room preparation even if you and a few prayer leaders are the only ones who will use it. Remember, we are doing this for God. It needs to be excellent and creative.
3. Throughout the course of a year, resources in the room should regularly change to track the sermons and follow national and international days of prayer. Resources should also focus on revival, evangelism, missions, etc. As your church changes, your prayer room should also change to match the emphases.
4. Be creative in setting up the prayer room. Recruit a team of people who will help resource it so there is variety and clear instruction on what to do when you enter the room. Encourage prayers of praise, prayers of repentance, prayers for the lost, missions, youth, preaching, Sunday services, the world, and finances. Be sure to include a children's section so they can come with their parents and not be bored.
5. Faithfully use the prayer room yourself and invite your staff, leadership, and ministry leaders to use it as well. Model your enthusiasm for making use of the room by inviting others to join you.
6. Preach about the power of the prayer room in Sunday messages and other teaching opportunities.
7. Offer prayer room "open houses" to give people tours and entry into a prayer experience. This means the room must be clean, organized, and always ready for guests—just like your home.
8. Communicate often that the prayer room is not only for the super-spiritual or those who are mature in their faith. It is crucial that intercessors be sensitive when speaking of "great joys and spiritual experiences" in the prayer room. Avoid using prayer jargon that intimidates most people.
9. Use the prayer room only for personal prayer or specific prayer meetings. Try not to let it become a meeting room for various groups in the church. Instead, reserve it as a special place for individuals to pray at any time.
10. Have a sign-in book so you can track real numbers—not just what you *think* is happening. This will keep you encouraged and provide accountability to you, your staff, and leadership about the actual use of the room. People track what they value. Thus, if we value the prayer room we will track its use.
11. Enjoy the room. Make it fun. God is not a hard, difficult Lord and Leader. It is fun to hang out with Him!

Prayer is not a ministry of the church that we delegate to a few or pass on to a select group. The priesthood of all believers is the center of everyone's life and calling. It is the intimate communication part of our relationship with God—connecting our lives and our hearts. We can never delegate this to an individual or a committee.

Each follower of Jesus is to have his or her own personal lifeline of communication with Jesus as our Leader, spending time each day interacting with our Savior. And the prayer room is one intentional way we are blessed to do this. **PC**



ESTHER LEONARD serves as prayer coordinator at Mountain View Community Church in Fresno, CA—a Mennonite Brethren Church that she and her husband Fred (lead pastor) founded in 1994.



No Substitute for Obedience | By A. W. Tozer

Have you noticed how much praying for revival has been going on of late—and how little revival has resulted?

Considering the volume of prayer that is ascending these days, rivers of revival should be flowing in blessing throughout the land. That no such results are in evidence should not discourage us; rather it should stir us to find out why our prayers are not answered.

Everything has its proper cause in the Kingdom of God as well as in the natural world. The reason for God's obvious refusal to send revival may lie deep, but surely not too deep to discover.

I believe our problem is that we have been trying to substitute praying for obeying; and it simply will not work.

A Waste of Words

A church, for instance, follows its traditions without much thought about whether they are scriptural or not. Or it surrenders to pressure from public opinion and falls in with popular trends which carry it far from the New Testament pattern. Then the leaders notice a lack of spiritual power among the people and become concerned about it.

What to do? How can they achieve that revitalization of spirit they need so badly? How can they bring down refreshing showers to quicken their fainting souls?

The answer is all ready for them. The books tell them how—*pray!* The passing evangelist confirms what the books have said—*pray!* The word is echoed back and forth, growing in volume until it becomes a roar—*pray!*

So the pastor calls his people to prayer. Days and nights are spent begging God to be merciful and send revival upon His people. The tide of feeling runs high and it looks for a while as if the revival might

be on the way. But it fails to arrive and the zeal for prayer begins to flag. Soon the church is back where it was before, and a numb discouragement settles over everyone. What has gone wrong?

Simply this: *Neither the leaders nor the people have made any effort to obey the Word of God.* They felt that their only weakness was failure to pray, when actually in a score of ways they were falling short in the vital matter of obedience. "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15:22).

*God will not
accept praying in
lieu of obeying.*

Prayer is never an acceptable substitute for obedience. The sovereign Lord accepts no offering from His creatures that is not accompanied by obedience. To pray for revival while ignoring or actually flouting the plain precept laid down in the Scriptures is to waste a lot of words and get nothing for our trouble.

Joyous Necessity of Obedience

It has been quite overlooked in recent times that the faith of Christ is an absolute arbiter. It preempts the whole redeemed personality and seizes upon the individual to the exclusion of all other

claims. Or more accurately, it makes every legitimate claim on the Christian's life conditional, and without hesitation decides the place each claim shall have in the total scheme.

The act of committal to Christ in salvation releases the believing man from the penalty of sin, but it does not release him from the obligation to obey the words of Christ. Rather it brings him under the joyous necessity to obey.

Look at the epistles of the New Testament and notice how largely they are given over to what is erroneously called "hortatory" matter. By dividing the epistles into "doctrinal" and "hortatory" passages, we have relieved ourselves of any necessity to obey. The doctrinal passages require from us nothing except that we believe them. The so-called hortatory passages are harmless enough, for the very word by which they are described declares them to be words of advice and encouragement rather than commandments to be obeyed. This is a palpable error.

The exhortations in the epistles are to be understood as apostolic injunctions carrying the weight of mandatory charges from the Head of the Church. They are intended to be obeyed, not weighed as bits of good advice which we are at liberty to accept or reject as we will.

If we would have God's blessing upon us, we must begin to obey. Prayer will become effective when we stop using it as a substitute for obedience. God will not accept praying in lieu of obeying. We only deceive ourselves when we try to make the substitution. **PC**

A.W. TOZER (1897-1963) was an American pastor, magazine editor, and author of more than 40 books, including the Christian classics *Pursuit of God* and *The Knowledge of the Holy*.

Start with a Complete Set

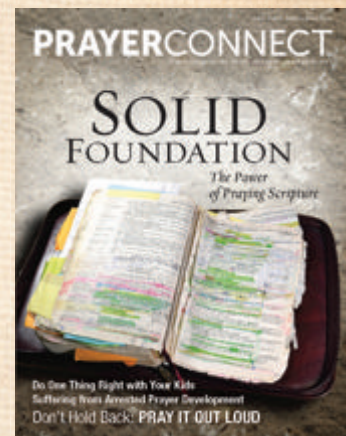
GET EVERY BACK ISSUE OF PRAYER CONNECT



PREMIERE ISSUE
CAN PRAYER SAVE
AMERICA?



ISSUE 2
FRESH FIRE:
Hope for a
Christ-Centered Revival



Issue 3
SOLID FOUNDATION:
The Power of Praying
Scripture

COVER PRICE: \$6.00
PRAYERSHOP PRICE: \$5.00

www.prayershop.org
Click on "Prayer Connect Magazine"
"Back Issues"
812-238-5504

Multiple Copy Discounts:

5 - 24 copies: \$4.00 each
25 - 99 copies: \$3.50 each
100 - 499 copies: \$3.00 each
500 - 999 copies: \$2.50 each
1000 or more copies: \$2.00 each
(Free shipping in U.S. on orders over \$30)

Prayer Connect and PrayerShop Publishing are ministries of Harvest Prayer Ministries
