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# PRAYERCONNECT

May/June 2014 | Vol. 4, No.2

## The Power of Praise

Touching Heaven, Transforming Earth, p.11

### 12 The Spiritual Benefits of Praise

Reorient Your Earth-Bound Perspectives

By Joseph Winger

*Plus: What Do You Mean By That?*

### 18 Forget Why You Came

Moving from Anxious Groaning to Joyful Ruling

By Jason Hershey

*Plus: Finding Words for Extravagant Worship*

### 24 A Heart Shift

When Your Prayers Become About Him

By Justin Hoepfner

### 29 A Bible Study

Praise in Prayer

By Sandra Higley

## Features

### 32 Can We Really Pray Without Ceasing?

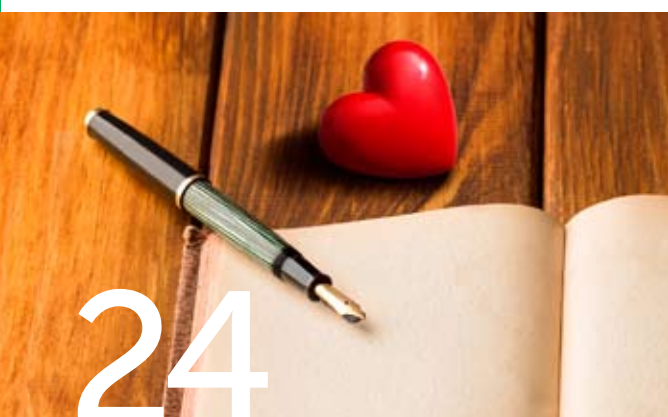
Your Disposition Determines Endless Fellowship

By Kathy Wenrich

### 38 Balanced, Strategic Prayer

Using the Lord's Prayer to Unify Your Group

By Andrew Wheeler



## Departments

### 5 Publisher's Note

I Got You!

### 7 News & Events

- Onething Draws Young Adults and Leaders
- New York City on Brink of Awakening?
- Thousands of Commitments Through *My Hope*
- War-torn Liberia Experiences Hope in Miraculous
- Moms Ready for Powerhouse Prayer
- Prayer Calendar
- National Day of Prayer Raises One Voice

### 31 In One Accord

The One Needful Thing

### 43 Tips & Tools

- Get Email Reminders to Pray-Care-Share
- Make It Simple for Them
- Will You Pray with Us?
- Lord, Do It Again!

### 45 Surf's Up

One Nation Under God

### 46 Prayer Leader

Motivating and Mobilizing Evangelistic Prayer

### 47 Classics

Praying in the Name of Jesus





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## **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.

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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.

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## Previously in Prayer Connect

Desperate prayer—when “help” is your heart cry—is a sign of spiritual health. God welcomes the kind of prayer that acknowledges our need for

Him. The March/April 2014 issue of *Prayer Connect* affirms that those who desperately seek God will grow in their trust and intimacy with Him. Order this and other back issues at [prayerconnect.org](http://prayerconnect.org).



# PUBLISHER'S NOTE



## I Got You!

When my granddaughter Gabrielle was three years old, she lived with us for a time. Many times in the evening she played near me while I sat in my chair working on my computer. She would often interrupt me, wanting attention (which Grampy, of course, gave her).

She loved to play a game where she backed into my chair, wanting me to wrap my legs around her. Then she would try to get away. But when she did this, she would say something a little odd—like she did not quite understand the concept of the game.

“I got you, Grampy,” she would say.

“No, Gabrielle, I got you,” I would reply.

“No, Grampy,” she would insist, “I got you.”

On and on it went.

But as I thought about it, she really was correct. She had me! She had my full attention. I dropped everything I was doing to focus totally on her. Smart girl!



## A Benefit of Prayer

When I think about it, this is one of the benefits of prayer. We often come to God needing something—dare I say it—“wanting His attention.” But, we get God Himself. And God loves that.

“Call to me,” the Father says, “and I will answer” (Jer. 33:3).

“Come near to God,” James tells us, “and he will come near to you” (James 4:8).

As intercessors who desire to pray for God’s purposes on earth, we sometimes lose sight of this incredible promise of prayer. No matter what we pray about or when we pray it, we have God’s attention on us—His gaze, His love, His joy, His comfort and peace.

Often we come to Him in prayer, frustrated and concerned about situations, but we leave feeling peace and contentment. Why? Because we have spent time in God’s presence. Like a child sitting on his or her father’s lap, or a granddaughter contented in the arms of her grandfather, there is a sense of safety and protection. Everything is all right.

When too many of my prayers quickly move into the asking part (something that happens a little too often), I find I need to step back and take some time to just sit in His presence. Those times bring perspective, hope, and peace. Paul had it absolutely spot on when he told the Philippian believers, “The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (4:5–7).

I want to encourage you, intercessor. Don’t neglect those times. It really is the ultimate benefit of prayer. We may pray about stuff, but we get God Himself!

—Jonathan Graf

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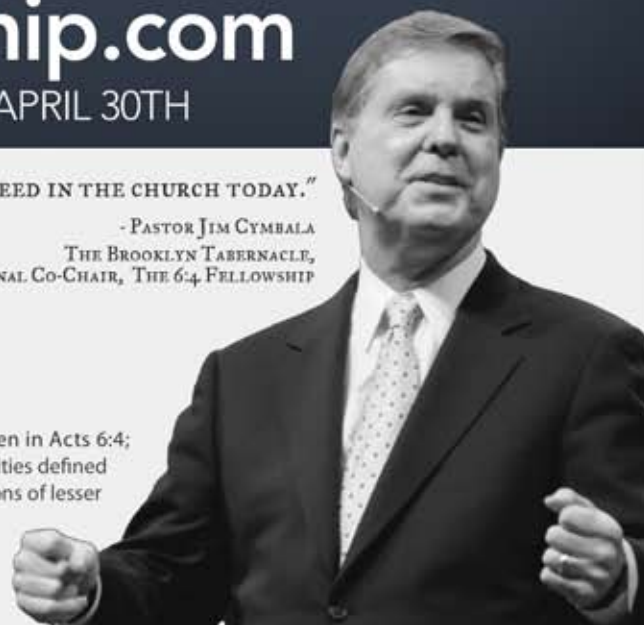
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## Onething Draws Young Adults and Leaders

**M**ore than 30,000 young people gathered for the Onething 2013 conference, December 28–31, at the Kansas City, MO, Convention Center. Hosted by the International House of Prayer (IHOP), the focus was on prayer, worship, and connecting their passion for Jesus with His mission in the world. The emphasis on 24/7 prayer and equipping of young adults through IHOP has impacted the prayer movement in the U.S. and internationally.

The IHOP leadership also invited several hundred “older” leaders in the prayer and mission movements to participate in a summit that focused on mobilizing a global prayer and worship



Photo by Dana Deserio

movement. The group suggested the following goals by 2020–2025:

- 100 million intercessors for the completion of the Great Commission
- 24/7 prayer and worship in 4,000 zones of the earth
- 24/7 prayer and worship in all 50 U.S. states
- 50 million young adults involved

in 2,500 U.S. campuses and 5,000 campuses worldwide

- prayer mobilized for Bible translation in all remaining languages (less than 2,000 now without it)
- prayer mobilized for one billion new people to come to Christ and be discipled
- resource 4/14 Window movement and Back to Jerusalem movement with 24/7 prayer.

The International House of Prayer in Kansas City hopes to convene annual gatherings of prayer and mission leaders to continue the process of prayerful deliberation so that more tributaries of the prayer and mission movements can flow together more closely.

Taken from *International Prayer Connections* ([ipcprayer.org](http://ipcprayer.org)).

## New York City on Brink of Awakening?

**T**wenty years ago, Eric Metaxas recognized the desperate need for a spiritual awakening in Manhattan. The cultural commentator, thought leader, and author compared the city to a spiritual ghost town.

Yet, over the recent decades—particularly this last one—New York has seen a surge in evangelicalism. Some cultural experts believe the Big Apple stands on the brink of another Great Awakening.

Gregory Thornbury, president of The King's College, compares this rise in Christianity to the great Wall Street revival of 1857. He comments, “I would say there is a very special moment of spiritual renaissance happening in New York City right now.”

### The Roots of the Renaissance

While it may seem to onlookers that the spiritual renaissance in New York City has just started, it has roots that reach several decades deep.

In 1969, shortly before Jim and Carol Cymbala came to lead The Brooklyn Tabernacle, B.J. and Sheila Weber sensed a need in the city for evangelical, like-minded businessmen to come together for encouragement and growth. So they founded New York Fellowship. Incorporated in 1984, New York Fellowship grew beyond the meeting of businessmen and extended its reach into the city.

New York also had other evangelical pioneers like the late David Wilkerson, whose heart was pierced for the gang members and drug addicts of New York.



He moved there in the 1960s and began Teen Challenge, a ministry that is still considered successful today.

These ministries and others gained momentum and flourished over the next two decades.

As the 1980s came to a close, Tim Keller planted Redeemer Presbyterian, hailed as one of the most vital congregations in New York City.



The King's College opened its doors in the Empire State Building in 1999. (The school is now located in the financial district.) Because of the growth of that school and several other Christian colleges in Manhattan, thousands of young people are flooding the churches there.

In 2001, New Yorkers saw the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center. "These events focused hearts on New York City," says Metaxas. "This caused a lot of people to move to the city and start churches and other ministries."

A post-September 11 New York City saw the emergence of many new churches representing a wide variety of theological and worship styles. More parachurch organizations also popped up.

"Now, there are so many churches in town, I don't know the names of all of them," says Metaxas. "I am convinced

we are on the verge of some kind of faith renaissance in New York City that will blow a lot of minds."

## What's Next for NYC?

While much has been accomplished spiritually in New York City, there is still a lot to be done. Even still, patience and prayer are required, according to Metaxas. "New Yorkers have to see things from a long-term point of view," he explains. "This 'renaissance' isn't happening overnight, so we have to continue to prepare the ground for friendship evangelism. And, friendships take time."

Since New York City is a center of influence in terms of media and entertainment, Metaxas also asserts that a spiritual change inside New York would have a ripple effect outside of New York. "If we could see changes in places like

New York and Los Angeles, we could see changes across the whole country."

As someone shaping the next generation of believers, Thornbury is eager to see young Christians continuing the work in New York City. "I see the church in New York City becoming a prophetic witness that seeks the welfare of the community. I also envision more young believers relocating here, doing a work in the city, and having a heart for the metropolis."

He continues, "Historians will be able to tell us a generation from now whether or not—technically speaking—this era in New York City fits what missiologists and sociologists would call a 'revival.' But it's clear that God is on the move here."

**JOY ALLMOND** is a web writer and a contributing writer to [crosswalk.com](http://crosswalk.com). You can follow her on Twitter @joyallmond. This article is adapted from [religiontoday.com](http://religiontoday.com).

## Thousands of Commitments Through *My Hope*

More than 110,000 people have indicated they made a commitment to Jesus Christ during the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's *My Hope America* campaign in 2013. As a result, plans are underway to continue *My Hope* in 2014.

While the project reached a pinnacle last November when Billy Graham marked his 95th birthday with the broadcast of his video message "The Cross," stories continue to come into the ministry about how the program impacted lives.

"We will never be able to know *all* of the numbers, but we do know that God did a mighty work and that He changed hearts all over the country," says Franklin Graham, president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

### 2013 Results from *My Hope*

Last November, more than four million households tuned in to watch "The Cross" on Fox News Channel, Christian cable networks, and more than 100 local television



stations across the nation. Millions of others connected online through the website, YouTube, Facebook, and other avenues. In addition, it was shown in churches, living rooms, bookstores, coffee shops, prisons, rescue missions, and even drive-in theaters and aboard cruise ships.

More than 26,000 churches across the United States officially registered for the project, making it the largest U.S. outreach in the 64-year history of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

### Future Plans

As a result of the project's impact, plans are underway to continue this effort. Many churches and individuals hosted

viewings of "The Cross" around Easter. It also aired on a number of Christian networks and local affiliates during Easter week. "Pastors have told us again and again that the program is Spirit-anointed," says Graham.

The program is available for viewing online at [myhopewithbillygraham.org](http://myhopewithbillygraham.org), or individuals and pastors can order a free DVD by calling (877) 247-2426. "Our plan is to do *My Hope* each year for the next five years—we want the week of my father's birthday (November 7) to be Evangelism Week across America," continues Graham. "We want to continue to produce powerful evangelistic programs and material that churches and individuals can use to reach the lost around them for Christ."

The *My Hope* campaign was launched last year through a strategic prayer effort focused on prayer for revival.

**DAN WOODING** is founder of ASSIST Ministries. Reprinted from [assistnews.net](http://assistnews.net).





## War-torn Liberia Experiences Hope in Miraculous

**M**ilton Blahyi was a satanic high priest, cannibal, warlord, and mass murderer in the Liberian civil war. He admits to being personally responsible for the death of more than 20,000 civilians. He and his men fought naked to obtain “spiritual protection.” Dedicated to satanic worship from his early childhood, he sacrificed humans on a regular basis as the high priest of his Krahn tribe.

One day, with the blood of a child who had just been sacrificed still on his hands, he claims Jesus Christ appeared to him saying, “My son, why do you live

as a slave?” Jesus called on this warlord and murderer to repent.

After a series of miraculous circumstances, Blahyi bowed his knees before Jesus Christ. Joshua—as he calls himself since his conversion—later turned himself in to the Liberian war commission and confessed his crimes. Due to the special Liberian situation, his obviously changed life, and his positive influence on society, he was not convicted.

For more than ten years, he has been working as a pastor and evangelist, ministering especially to former child soldiers. He seeks to establish reconciliation

with his former victims and their families. Joshua’s heart is to reach his fellow Africans who are still living in darkness as he once did, including those who are still sacrificing human beings and practicing cannibalism.

The International Prayer Council has issued many calls to prayer on behalf of this nation over the years. The war-torn country still has so many open wounds and bleeding hearts—the message of the true Healer is urgently needed. God still reaches into even the darkest places!

Taken from *International Prayer Connections* ([ipcprayer.org](http://ipcprayer.org)).

## Moms Ready for Powerhouse Prayer

**M**oms In Prayer International will host a prayer powerhouse October 17–19, 2014, in Dallas, TX, when about 3,000 women—prayer



Eventually, thousands of dedicated intercessors joined with Moms in Prayer.

Today, moms and grandmothers, aunts and any women will

ing to intercede on behalf of children and schools gather to pray for one hour each week in groups throughout every U.S. state and in more than 140 countries.

“Prayer sometimes feels like we’re not ‘doing’ anything,” admits Nichols, who will be the featured speaker at the celebration. “I believe Satan has us thinking that being spiritual means being productive. He doesn’t want us to cross over the invisible line into powerful, intercessory prayer. If he can keep us thinking that being on the productive side of the line is doing great things for God, then we will secure few blessings for our family, schools, community, and nation. But if we recognize the line and cross over it to be intercessors, God will move heaven and earth to answer our prayers, and we will begin to see great victories.”

To join the Dallas *Festival of Joy*

celebration or to learn more about a simple but powerful method of prayer, go to [momsinprayer.org](http://momsinprayer.org).

**SHARON GAMBLE** is USA national director for Moms in Prayer International.



### Prayer Calendar

**National Day of Prayer**  
**Thursday, May 1**  
[nationaldayofprayer.org](http://nationaldayofprayer.org)

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**Prayer for Children at Risk**  
**Weekend of June 7–8**  
[viva.org](http://viva.org)

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**Global Day of Prayer**  
**Sunday, June 8**  
[globaldayofprayer.com](http://globaldayofprayer.com)

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**Call 2 Fall**  
**Sunday, June 29**  
[call2fall.com](http://call2fall.com)

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**Cry Out America**  
**Thursday, September 11**  
[awakeningamerica.us](http://awakeningamerica.us)

warriors with Moms in Prayer and other women who would love to join them—gather to celebrate God’s mighty power through prayer. This unique event will be a “taste of heaven,” bringing together women from around the world in worship and thanksgiving.

Moms in Prayer (formerly Moms in Touch) traces its roots back to one mom. Thirty years ago, Fern Nichols sent her sons off to public school with an overwhelming burden for them. “Lord, will they make wise decisions?” she cried out. “Will You protect them from worldly values?”

She asked God to give her one other mom willing to pray with her for their children and for their school. God answered beyond what she could have imagined. He brought a few moms—and then more—to pray for a neighborhood school.



## National Day of Prayer Raises One Voice

On May 1, 2014, the 63rd annual National Day of Prayer (NDP) will take place. Millions of Americans will unite at more than 42,000 locations from coast to coast to pray. The theme this year, selected by Shirley Dobson (chairman of the NDP Task Force), is “One Voice, United in Prayer,” based on Romans 15:6: “. . . so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Dobson emphasizes the need for a national and united prayer movement. “Today, we face extremely difficult times and daunting challenges, from economic turmoil to the threat of terrorism to moral confusion and decline. It behooves us, then, to once again honor the precedent established by presidents and leaders

throughout our history—that of proclaiming reliance on an Almighty God and calling citizens to come before Him on behalf of our nation.”

A nation can be punished by the actions of its leaders, observes John Bornschein, NDP vice chairman. He cites 2 Samuel 4, and then adds that a nation can also be punished with poor leaders because the hearts of the people are evil (2 Kings 17:1–23). “In the same way, a nation can be blessed with good leadership because the people honor God,” says Bornschein. “We can honor the structure of leadership that God has ordained, and we can do this even if we do not agree with all the decisions those in authority



Anne Graham Lotz is the 2014 Honorary Chairman.

are making; that’s just all the more reason to pray for them. The action of prayer is healthy for a home and a community.”

The National Day of Prayer Task Force launched an unprecedented prayer campaign in the summer of 2013. Staff members boarded a specially decorated bus and

visited more than 400 communities in 33 states. Dion Elmore, NDP director of public relations, describes the purpose of the bus tour: “City after city, we engaged people with the challenge to *Pray for America*, and asked the question, ‘What are the greatest prayer needs in your community?’ The number one answer that we received, over and over again, was unity. ‘Please pray for unity!’”

The NDP Task Force seeks to encourage and mobilize God’s people to approach the Almighty—not only for personal concerns, but also for the needs of the nation, leaders, and fellow citizens. As Dobson explains, “We envision an outpouring of God’s Spirit across the land in response to the millions of petitions that are raised heavenward on America’s behalf.”

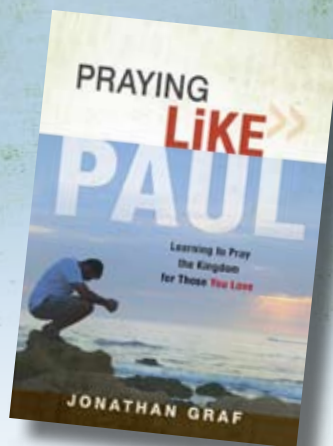
The 2014 National Observance of the National Day of Prayer will be broadcast live from the Cannon House Office Building in Washington, D.C., on the NDP website—Thursday, May 1, from 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. (Eastern time). Speakers include the 2014 Honorary Chairman Anne Graham Lotz, Dr. James and Shirley Dobson, Congressman Robert Aderholt, Vonette Bright, The Honorable Bob McEwen, Congressman Mike McIntyre, Don Moen, Chaplain Father Patrick Conroy, Dr. Dick Eastman, David Butts, and John Bornschein.

For more information, go to *[national-dayofprayer.org](http://national-dayofprayer.org)*.

## HOW DID THE APOSTLE PAUL DO IT?

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# The Power of Praise

Touching Heaven,  
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Including praise in my prayers is not something that comes naturally to me. I tend to begin my prayers by acknowledging God and His greatness, but then quickly move into intercession. After all, there are so many situations that need our prayers! I confess I don't have an expansive praise language.

In October 2012, I responded to a call from the National Day of Prayer Task Force to travel to Washington, D.C., for three days of prayer. "The Summons" was an invitation to pray on behalf of our nation. The organizers of the event had no idea how many people would show up. Would it be hundreds, or just a handful of people? On the day everyone arrived, it turned out to be exactly 300—a perfect-sized "Gideon's Army."

We dispersed throughout the city to pray at key sites. We spent one day praying through several Congressional offices. Other days, we prayerwalked around the Mall and stood in front of the many memorials or significant buildings.

During an afternoon of free time, I sensed God wanted me to pray around the Washington Monument. I wasn't to stand in front of it—I was to prayerwalk around it eight times. I don't know why—it's just what the Lord led me to do.

Across from the Washington Monument is the Ellipse—and then directly beyond that is the White House. Planted right in the center of the Ellipse was a prayer tent, literally in the "backyard" of the White House, outside its protective gates. This was "David's Tent," a vision given to Jason Hershey for 40 days of 24/7 worship prior to the 2012 elections (see his article on page 18).

As I stood at the foot of the Washington Monument and prepared to take several long laps around it, I could hear the worship music coming from David's Tent. I was amazed that I could understand every word of every song. The glories of the Lord clearly blared from the loudspeakers toward me and all the other tourists.

Think about that. I was listening—along with everyone else in a several-block radius—to continuous praise. Non-stop. 24 hours. Forty days. Right outside the White House. Only God could orchestrate such a thing!

In that moment, it was obvious the Lord was not asking me to intercede. He was asking me to worship. And so I did as I walked around the Monument. I sang several songs in unity with my brothers and sisters in Christ who were worshiping in the nearby tent. My heart focused entirely on God's glorious strength and power as the Overcomer—and not on the desperate needs in our nation.

## Heaven Here on Earth

In this issue, you will read from Joseph Winger about how praise has a way of bringing a "little more of heaven" to earth. He explains how he experienced praise as a weapon against darkness—and the difference praise produces in his prayers. Jason Hershey writes about getting so caught up in praise of our glorious Lord that you might actually forget why you started praying in the first place! And Justin Hoepfner adds his personal experience of learning to shift his prayers beyond petitions, supplications, and thanksgiving to pure worship.

I'm still developing my praise language—and I find Scripture and worship songs work as excellent prompts. Perhaps this issue will encourage you, as well, to expand your expressions of prayer to greater praise.

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect*.



# *The* Spiritu Benefits

“

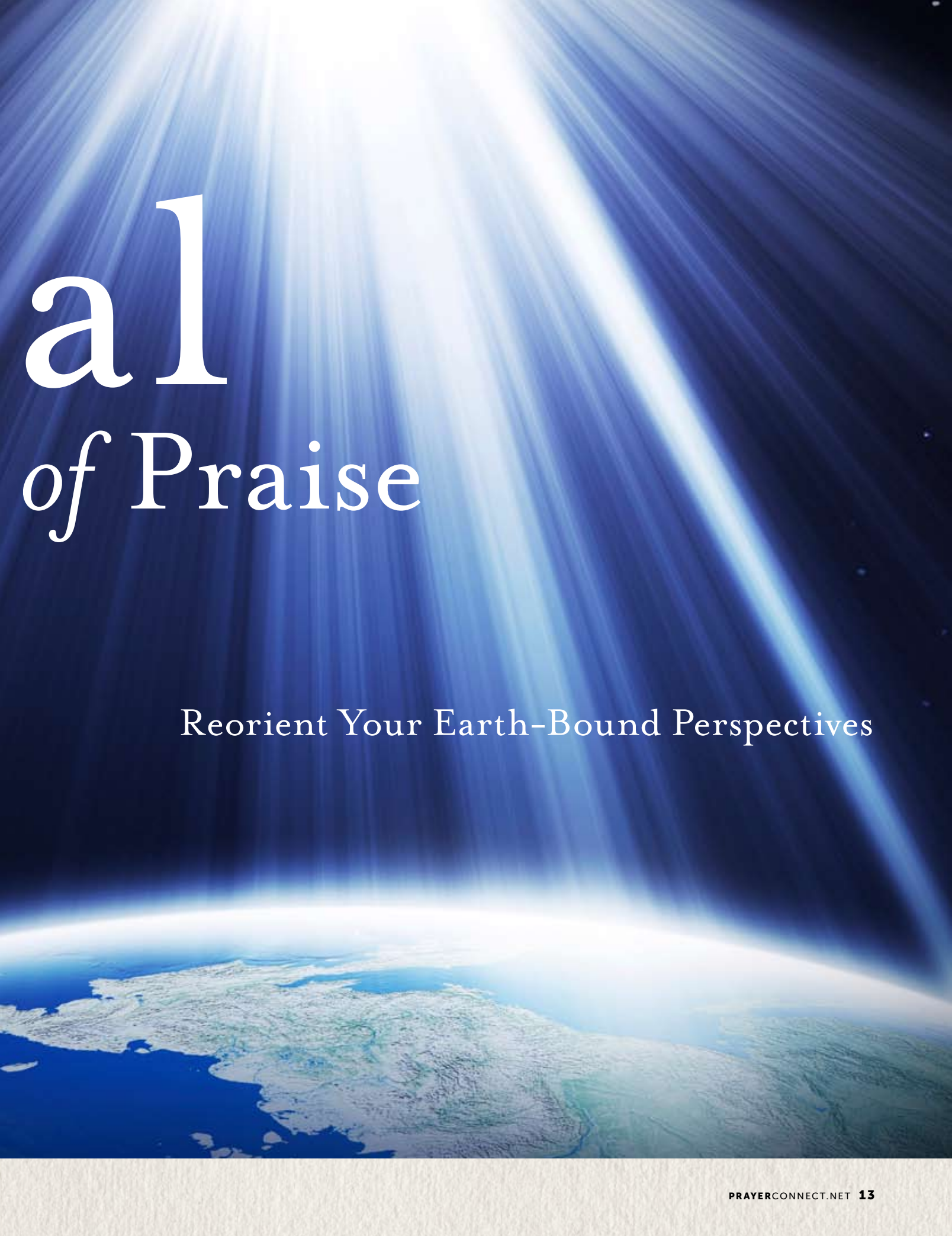
What’s wrong with you? Can’t you see what’s happening? This place is ready to explode! Gather the team and pray!” exclaimed the normally unflappable medical doctor standing at the entrance to our make-shift clinic.

Deep in a dense Haitian jungle, our little American team was offering medical care, prayer, and the gospel to desperate people, some of whom had walked three days, carrying sick children to our tiny clinic. After laboring for almost 12 hours, our team was exhausted. Navigating the jungle in the dark could get dangerous, so we had to leave before sunset.

As we started packing up the clinic, about 60 people still stood in line without seeing the doctor or nurses. They refused to be denied. A small riot began to take shape. A blur of voodoo rituals, curses and machetes was all I recall as mob violence escalated around us.

*by Joseph Winger*





# al of Praise

Reorient Your Earth-Bound Perspectives



Forces of darkness become confused and flee because of the simple, sincere praises of God's people.

The terror in the doctor's eyes and voice jolted me to attention. At that moment, I realized that hostility and impending violence transcend all cultures and languages! The thought that kept flooding my mind was, "We could all be killed and no one would even know about it for days!"

I yelled, "Father save us! What are we to do?"

The Holy Spirit immediately spoke to me, "Praise with all of your heart."

I grabbed our guitarist and yelled, "Follow me. We've got to sing praises with all of our hearts!" He and I marched around the area singing every praise song we could think of in both Haitian Creole and English. Miraculously, we observed

the power of praise in a tangible way. After circling the area and lifting high the praises of God for the third time, the atmosphere literally shifted.

The doctor later reported that the very moment we began to sing praises, God told him what to do: briefly meet with each remaining family and dispense vitamins, bandages and topical treatments. As he did so, the hostility immediately diminished and the voodoo activity ceased as God's presence filled that part of a remote, steamy jungle.

### Praise Sets God's Will in Motion

In intense, life-threatening situations, our natural response is to pray. But this time, the Holy Spirit directed me not only to pray, but to praise. That day, prayer with praise brought a little more of heaven into that isolated plot of the earth.

I cannot forget this testimony of praise touching heaven and affecting earth. Praise happens in heaven (Rev. 19:1). When we come into alignment with this key activity of heaven, here's what happens on earth: It is as if His Kingdom comes and His will is set in motion on earth as it is in heaven. Forces of darkness become confused and flee because of the simple, sincere praises of God's people.

We see this truth of praise routing God's enemies in Jehoshaphat's battle in 2 Chronicles 20. "And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon . . . so that they were routed" (2 Chron. 20:22, ESV).

David's praise also underscores this truth. ". . . David would take the harp and play it with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him" (1 Sam. 16:23, NASB).

The New Testament gives us an exceptional illustration of the power of praise. Praise actually reversed a difficult situation. "But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened" (Acts 16:25–26, NASB).

Is this just a unique historical example or does this story indicate a timeless principle of the power of praise breaking into our world?

While I was polishing this article, I received a call from a godly brother who was going through a seriously tough time at his job. If anyone had a right to complain, this brother, like Paul and Silas, certainly did. He had reason to forget about praise. I sent him a segment of this article, and his response addressed a major reason most of us don't engage in a life of praise.

With his permission, here are his insights: "My grumbling and complaining really needs to stop. It's a symptom of a bigger issue (lack of trust maybe? entitlement?). I think praise is definitely the antidote. I spent time writing down some of the things I am grateful for last night . . . it is encouraging. And guess what happened today? I received positive feedback on the project that I had been working on for some time."

Praise altered the course of his challenging circumstances.

### The Difference Praise Makes

In addition to being a weapon against darkness and making a difference in our

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circumstances, praise produces four key differences in us.

*First, a heightened awareness of His manifest presence best invades our world through praise.* He inhabits the place where praise is offered. “But You are holy, O You Who dwell in [the holy place where] the praises of Israel [are offered]” (Ps. 22:3, AMP).

*Second, praise helps orient our limited, earthbound perspectives toward eternity and His greatness.* Years ago I heard someone say, “Don’t make anything bigger than Jesus.” When we praise Him, many of the things that overwhelm us are overshadowed by His immensity and majesty. We are exhorted in the Psalms to “magnify” the Lord. To *magnify* is simply to make something bigger. So, in my simple mind, magnifying the Lord means to declare that He and His abilities are huge and vast—much bigger than my problems.

Psalms 145 is a great passage to motivate our praise as it explores the marvelous nature and character of our Father. This psalm beautifully reveals the attributes of the Lord weaving in and out of each other as He cares for creation.

Psalms 145 is the only psalm entitled “A Psalm of Praise.” Verse three says, “Great is the Lord and highly to be praised; and His greatness is [so vast and deep as to be] unsearchable” (AMP). The greatness of the Lord is unfathomable. None of us can understand its depths as we praise Him. We can explore His traits our entire lives and never see a limit to His immeasurable greatness!

*Third, as we praise Him, we come to know Him better.* We will know His attributes better as we praise Him as the answer to our needs. For example, if I need wisdom, I can tap into His wisdom as I praise Him for being wise (Col. 2:2–3). If I have fear, I can praise Him as my security and deepen my relationship with Him as the One who makes me live confidently (Ps. 27:1–3). Whatever situation you face, think of God’s specific attribute that you need

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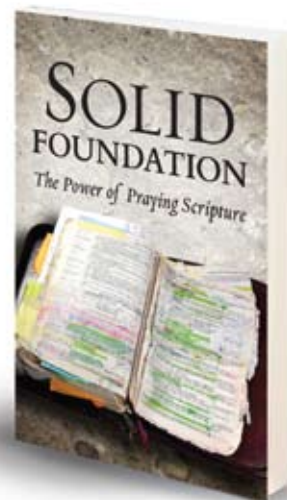
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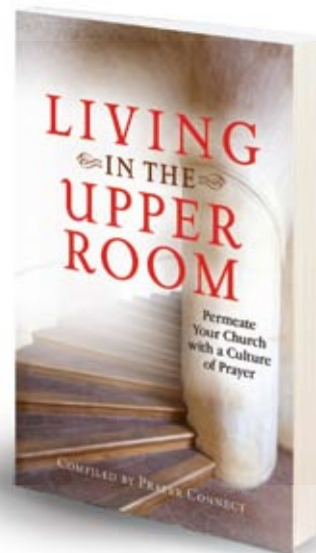
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# What Do You Mean By That?

By Keith Gaddis

**W**hen we pray, we find ourselves using various phrases and words to express our praise to God. But there is often much more meaning to the words than we understand. What are we really saying to the Lord when we pray things like, “I put my faith and trust in You, sovereign God,” “I praise Your name and I bless You, Lord,” or “I magnify Your name and exalt You above all things”?

Each of these words has a much richer and deeper meaning. Understanding this can enhance your praise-prayer language.

**Faith:** Faith is trust in, or reliance on, God who is Himself trustworthy.<sup>1</sup> Faith is, in general, the persuasion of the mind that a certain statement is true (2 Thess. 2:13). Its primary idea is trust. A thing is true, and therefore worthy of trust.<sup>2</sup>

**Trust:** The Hebrew word meaning “trust” (*batah*) signifies the type of relationship that exists between two people. It means that each person can depend on the other person to follow through on what he or she promises, and that the other person will handle his or her heart with care.

In worship we tell God that we trust Him because we have learned that He will always do what He says He will do, and He will always handle our hearts with care, looking out for our best interests.

**Praise:** Praise can mean a variety of things:

- To speak of something in favorable terms—“to praise, to speak well of.”
- To speak of something as being unusually fine and deserving honor.
- To speak of the excellence of a person, object, or event—“. . . a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God” (Luke 2:13).
- To speak of a person in terms of that individual’s greatness—“For they heard them speaking with strange sounds and praising God’s greatness” (Acts 10:46, GNT).
- To express honor, with a possible implication of acknowledging the nature of someone or something—“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles” (Rom. 15:9).

Psalm 63:3 (NKJV) declares, “. . . my lips shall praise

You,” in a context of adoration toward the power, glory, and sanctity of the Lord.

**Bless the Lord:** So many word studies on “bless” turn out to refer to kneeling, the bodily position of humility before Him. Although it appears the definitions of *bless* and *praise* are very close, *bless* seems to indicate a profound root of humility as demonstrated by kneeling or bowing before God. For instance, the word for *bless* is used in 2 Chronicles 6:13 as “he kneeled down upon his knees” (KJV).

When we bless the Lord in worship with our words, it is not a trivial statement, but one that comes from the humility of knowing our place before Him.

**Magnify the Lord:** To *magnify* something is to make it larger and greater. In Psalm 34, the psalmist made the Lord greater than anything else or anyone else—exalting and lifting Him up. To *magnify* is to set something on a pedestal. The psalmist did this so that all could see Him.

In worship when we magnify the Lord, we are lifting Him up, exalting Him, and saying to everyone, “Isn’t He incredible, isn’t He magnificent? See this matchless One. Join with me in celebrating and worshiping Him!”

**Exalt:** Raising or lifting up on high our Lord in what we say or what we do.<sup>3</sup>

**Glory:** The quality of God’s character that celebrates His beauty, power, or honor; a quality of God’s character that emphasizes His greatness and authority. God’s moral beauty and perfection of character and presence.<sup>4</sup>

So use these words as confident expressions of your love, praise, and honor of the Lord. Knowing their deeper meanings can only enhance your praise and worship of our great God.

<sup>1</sup> Achtemeier, P.J., *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, Society of Biblical Literature, 1985).

<sup>2</sup> Easton, M.G., *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893).

<sup>3</sup> Manser, M.H., *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Youngbook, R.F., Bruce, F.F., Harrison, R.K., *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1995).

**KEITH GADDIS** holds a Doctor of Worship Studies from Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies. He served in pastoral ministries for 20 years and is currently on staff at Associated Psychologists and Community Christian Counseling in Terre Haute, IN.



to deal with the challenge—and then praise Him for that attribute. Your understanding of Him in that area will increase as you praise Him.

*Fourth, praise has transforming power to release grace.* In Isaiah 61, we see the Holy Spirit's dramatic ministry through the promised Messiah to His people. Through Isaiah God contrasts a list of negative traits with blessings. In verse 3, He offers a garment of praise in exchange for a spirit of despair. Praise can actually lift off a heavy cloud of depression and infuse us with a faith-filled attitude.

There are times I have struggled with heaviness, and praise released a grace of faith into my soul. My praise ignited my faith and trust in God in spite of the circumstances surrounding me and my oppressive outlook.

We must decide that we will cease letting circumstances dominate our perspective and attitude. This can happen

best when we incorporate praise into our daily disciplines.

## A Life of Praise

Notice these scriptural insights to believers about living a life of praise:

- *Praise is a choice and sometimes a sacrifice:* "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Heb. 13:15, NKJV). Every morning, one of the first things I do is read Psalm 34. I let this psalm set my heart in motion to bless and praise the Lord. A key verse in the psalm that sets the tone for my day is, "I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Ps. 34:1, ESV).
- *Praise is an accurate assessment of His love:* "Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise

You" (Ps. 63:3, NKJV).

- *Praise is an activity that we can grow in:* "But I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more" (Ps. 71:14, NKJV).

Saturate your prayers with praise.

Watch what happens. You will find your faith focusing more on the One with the answers instead of being consumed with your pressures and problems. Most assuredly, praising will change something in you, it will push back the forces of darkness, and quite possibly something dramatic may just happen in your circumstances! **PC**



**JOSEPH WINGER** is senior pastor of Boulder Street Church in Colorado Springs, CO. He was also the director of a Leadership Institute in Guatemala and the international director of prayer mobilization for Every Home for Christ.

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# For

Moving from Anxious Groaning to Joyful Ruling



# get Why You Came

Let's face it. We have our prayer lists. *Things* are urgent. Yet we all know prayer has to be more than a 9-1-1 call to the Omnipotent Ambulance. Crying out to the Lord and calling upon Him in our time of need is part of the great grace God has given us. However, prayer is about intimate relationship, not just perpetual emergency calls. Nothing keeps our prayer lives honest quite like our attitude toward spending time just *praising the Lord!*

In the fall of 2011, God impressed upon me this vision for the coming election year in 2012: "Do like King David. Put up a worship tent in the Capitol with continuous praise 24/7 for 40 days."

Miraculously, God opened a door for us to set up a tent, radiating His praise on the White

by Jason Hershey



By Dave Butts

# Finding Words for Extravagant Worship

**Y**ears ago I went to a conference where I learned something so significant about how to worship God that it completely changed my prayer life. Up to that point, when I thought about praise and worship, I automatically believed it to be corporate in nature—a practice that was done on Sunday morning surrounded by other Christians. Suddenly, after years of routine, I was being challenged biblically to make praise a regular part of my personal prayer life.

What happened next is now a humorous story embedded in my memory. I began to pray: “Lord, I praise You. I worship You. Lord, I praise You. I worship You. Lord—I don’t know what else to say!” It was a frustrating situation that awakened me to my inability to worship God through prayer.

My basic problem was that I lacked a vocabulary for praise. I was so used to praise being something that was sung using a book or a screen in the presence of others that I didn’t even know what to say.

So I “cheated.” I turned to Psalms and began to use the portions that dealt with praise and worship as the text for my own prayers. It wasn’t long before I realized the freedom that praying through the psalms of David gave me. It gave me ways to express my heartfelt love for the Lord that stretched my prayer life beyond its limited boundaries. It wasn’t cheating but, in fact, probably the best way for me to learn to bring prayers of praise into my own lifestyle.

## The King and His Kingdom

David says of himself, “I am a man of prayer” (Ps. 109:4). Reading Psalms leaves no doubt as to the accuracy of that statement.

David was known as a warrior king. But this fascinating warrior was also a poet, musician, and spiritual journalist. His prayers and songs make up the largest part of the Book of Psalms.

Through the years, millions have been led passionately

into the presence of God through the simple words of David’s prayers. Psalm 145 (see page 22) is a Kingdom prayer that is ultimately about two things:

### 1. **Worshipping God.** Psalm 145 is a psalm of wholehearted, enthusiastic, nothing-held-back praise!

This hymn to the Great King extols the Lord for His mighty acts, for His awesome glory, and His benevolence to His people. King David’s praise is lavish and all encompassing. His deepest worship is expressed in this magnificent prayer of praise!

Praise is an important element of prayer. It is communicating to God how we feel about Him. It is the kind of prayer that pleases the heart of God immensely. The uniqueness of Psalm 145 is that we can pray it verbatim to our Father, knowing that every word contains His perfect will, plan, and purposes. Psalm 145 gives us an expanded, descriptive vocabulary with which to give the King of the universe the praise He so deserves and delights in.

### 2. **The Advance of the Kingdom of God.** The testimony of praise can result in the salvation of the lost. Praise is an acknowledgment to the nations of who God is! This is a psalm of testimony to all creatures on the face of the earth, “so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom” (Ps. 145:12, emphasis added).

One important purpose of praising God is so that others will know Him and give Him glory! Praise extolling the Lord’s Kingdom gives Him glory and serves as a testimony to others. This honors Him and brings the lost into the Kingdom, which also brings Him glory!

Everything David wrote in Psalm 145 points toward the glory of God’s Kingdom. It gives a path to the unsaved through the praises of God’s people. We are the guideposts on that path. Our testimony takes unbelievers step by step into His Kingdom.

**DAVE BUTTS** is cofounder of Harvest Prayer Ministries with his wife Kim. This excerpt is from their book *Pray Like the King*, available through [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).



House Ellipse and in view of our president's back porch. We got a permit from the National Park Service to hold continuous worship, day and night, for 40 days right up until election day in November.

At first, it seemed counterintuitive to how I felt. My heart was heavy and I wanted to lie on the ground and moan because of the condition of our nation. But I knew it was time to rise up and praise the Lord!

## Caught Up

Stunning. Absolutely beautiful. The most heart-stopping, attractive, gorgeous Being in all of existence. The One of color, poetry, romance, and music. The One of power, might, and strength. The One of care, compassion, and kindness. The One who is the faithful provider, the cloaking protector, and the giver of every good gift. The One who is the revealer of mysteries. God is love. Holy is He!

He is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer. He is my strength and my song. Oh, and by the way, He's a singer. Have you heard His songs? Oh, my! And His eyes are piercing—like a stream of boiling water into a pile of snow. They melt me. This is how I feel when I get caught up in worshipping and praising my God.

The power of praise is God Himself. Looking at God—and meditating on who He is and His wonderful Kingdom—yields a natural reaction to praise the Lord. It's as easy as eating.

Gazing at the beauty of the Lord leads us into greater closeness of relationship. He is so attractive. When we see Him, there is a gravitational pull that draws us in and makes us praise Him even more. Isn't that what this is all about? Redeeming the great dream of Eden? God and man walking together?

## Praise from the Heart

The power of praise is the realigning of our priorities. Prayer is all about Him and for His glory. Psalm 27:4 says, "One thing I

ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple."

If we come to the Lord for any other reason, praise has a way of ironing that out. We forget why we came when we lose ourselves around His throne.

Value obligates. My little four-year-old

girl Avella is the sweetest package of cute you'll ever see. She's "worthy" of those hugs and kisses. I don't need to work up the desire to do so! The bottom-line truth of why we praise the Lord is simply this: *Because He is worthy! Jesus is so amazing!*

Praise is unto and for the Lord. As David would say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." All praise must be Jesus-centered.

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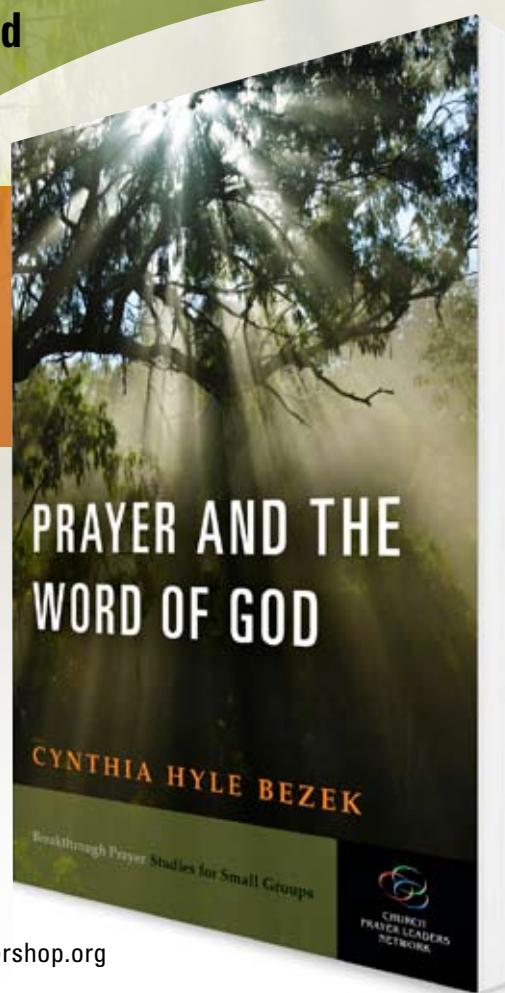
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The way we lose ourselves in praise is to make it about God and not us. The purpose for praise is not our spiritual high of peace and joy, or even answers to prayer, though those are great rewards. Praise is primarily for Him. Don't you just want to make the heart of the Lord swell with delight?

As a young man, my life's goal changed the day I came to the revelation that God had opened Himself up to be emotionally affected by me. He grieves when I sin. He is blessed when I praise Him. Though His love for me

is unconditional, His degree of pleasure or grief over me is directly related to my heart toward Him.

When I praise Him, *from the heart*, I know it blesses Him. This is also a great reward and purpose for praise. Let's make the heart of the Lord swell like never before! Let's be a generation that ministers to Him.

### Puny Little Giant

When you get caught up in who God is, you forget all else. That big Goliath in our

lives turns into a little twerp as you see the Omnipotent One standing in the heavens towering above that puny little giant! The great hymn by Helen H. Lemmel says it best: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His Glory and Grace."

When we get drawn into His Presence, suddenly our prayer lists don't seem as desperate. Instead, we see them *in faith* as answered prayers!

Praying in faith is Intercessory Prayer 101. I have a personal prayer rule: "Don't pray something out unless you actually believe it's going to happen!" Praising the Lord and meditating on who He is opens not only the possibility of good coming forth (that's called "hope"), but praise launches us into the assurance of what we hope for, that place of faith. Praise is the knockout punch to unbelief.

As we pray, we want to be sure we are praying from a place with the heart of the Lord for people or a situation, rather than praying from a place of our anxieties over something. "Do not be anxious about anything" (Phil. 4:6). "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts" (Ps. 139:23). Praise shifts us from a place of anxious groaning to joyful ruling in prayer.

It's no wonder that Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" as the entry door of everything in His school of prayer. Prayers and songs of praise open the door and put everything else into perspective.

### Tuning Fork

In the fall of 2011, Jesus met me in this verse: "Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous" (Ps. 118:15). I had to ask myself, "Then why does it sound like despair and defeat coming from my tent?" Years of contending, fasting, and prayer in Washington, D.C., had taken its toll. I was spiritually grumpy at this "moral decline." This was my repentance moment, when I changed

# Psalm 145

## A Psalm of Praise of David

- <sup>1</sup> I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name forever and ever.
- <sup>2</sup> Every day I will praise you and extol your name forever and ever.
- <sup>3</sup> Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.
- <sup>4</sup> One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.
- <sup>5</sup> They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works.
- <sup>6</sup> They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds.
- <sup>7</sup> They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.
- <sup>8</sup> The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.
- <sup>9</sup> The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.
- <sup>10</sup> All your works praise you, Lord; your faithful people extol you.
- <sup>11</sup> They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might,
- <sup>12</sup> so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
- <sup>13</sup> Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does.
- <sup>14</sup> The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.
- <sup>15</sup> The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.
- <sup>16</sup> You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.
- <sup>17</sup> The Lord is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does.
- <sup>18</sup> The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.
- <sup>19</sup> He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.
- <sup>20</sup> The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.
- <sup>21</sup> My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name forever and ever.



my mind. *I am changing my tone!* I decided. Praise broke through.

A rally began in my soul. God gave me eyes of faith. Many years of solemn assemblies has got to mean something to the God of heaven. The remnant in America is not small. God answers humility, prayer, repentance, and seeking His face by healing lands. There comes a time in any prayer journey when you just have to receive your answers to prayer *in faith*, and begin to praise the Lord for it.

I decided, in faith, "I'm praising the Lord for the revival of America!" I may have been a bit early, but hey, people celebrate Christmas in November, knowing for sure that Christmas is coming.

The Lord impressed upon me, "It's time for the joyful assembly, like Hebrews 12:22," which says, "But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in *joyful assembly* . . ." (emphasis added).

It was out of this repentant "tone change" that God gave me the dream of David's Tent DC as a response to my question, "How do I intercede for America?" David brought the ark of the Presence into his capital city, put it under a tent, and hired more than 4,000 musicians and singers to minister to the Lord continuously around the ark. This praise tent inspired me.

It was a miracle when the National Park Service gave us a 40-day permit on the White House Ellipse, a prime location that we didn't even ask for! This indicated to me that God is truly jealous for praise! Like David, we set up a 24/7 worship tent for 40 days prior to the elections. "Just Praise for 40 Days" was our motto. We were joined by 166 different worship teams. An estimated 20,000 people cycled through that worship tent for what ended up being 1,000 hours of continuous praise rockets to heaven. One of the primary anthems of the tent was the hymn, "Come Thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing Thy

grace; streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise."

"Just Praise for 40 Days" caused my heart to rise. I would get lost in the beauty of Jesus and all His wonderful attributes. By the end of the 40 days, it was really hard, in my humanity, to get overjoyed or depressed depending which candidates won the elections. My emotions were anchored by a deep joy that is beyond anything this world could add or detract.

Praise does that. It's hard to be depressed when you are lost in the presence of Jesus. The urgency of all things happening in the U.S. in 2012 were overshadowed by who God is.

## Rally Caps!

Let's rise like super-fans when their team is down in the ninth inning. Normal fans will just pack up their bags and leave the ballpark early to beat the traffic. But

super-fans use a whole different strategy. They turn their hats inside out and backwards to make rally caps. They cheer their team on to victory. Super-fans take a purposeful posture of changing the tone from defeat to victory, even before the victory has fully manifested. This is the power of praise.

Let's praise the Lord! Let's cheer for Him big time. He will come and bring a great victory. Jesus always wins, even in the tenth inning. Let's be super-fans of our victorious King!

Praise is no longer just a way into "real prayer." Oh, no! Praise is making a comeback with Jesus in the center. **PC**



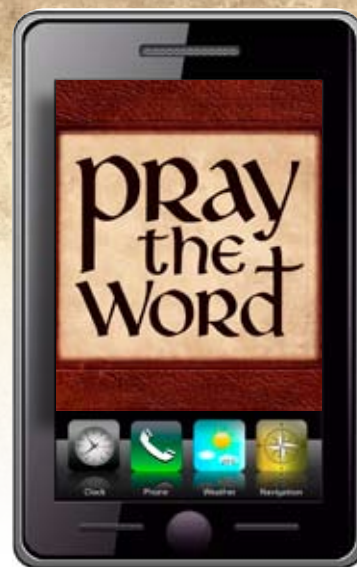
**JASON HERSHEY** has served as director of Youth With a Mission DC since 2005 and founded the Washington House of Prayer in January 2012. He and his wife Kimberlee are full-time intercessors in Washington, D.C.

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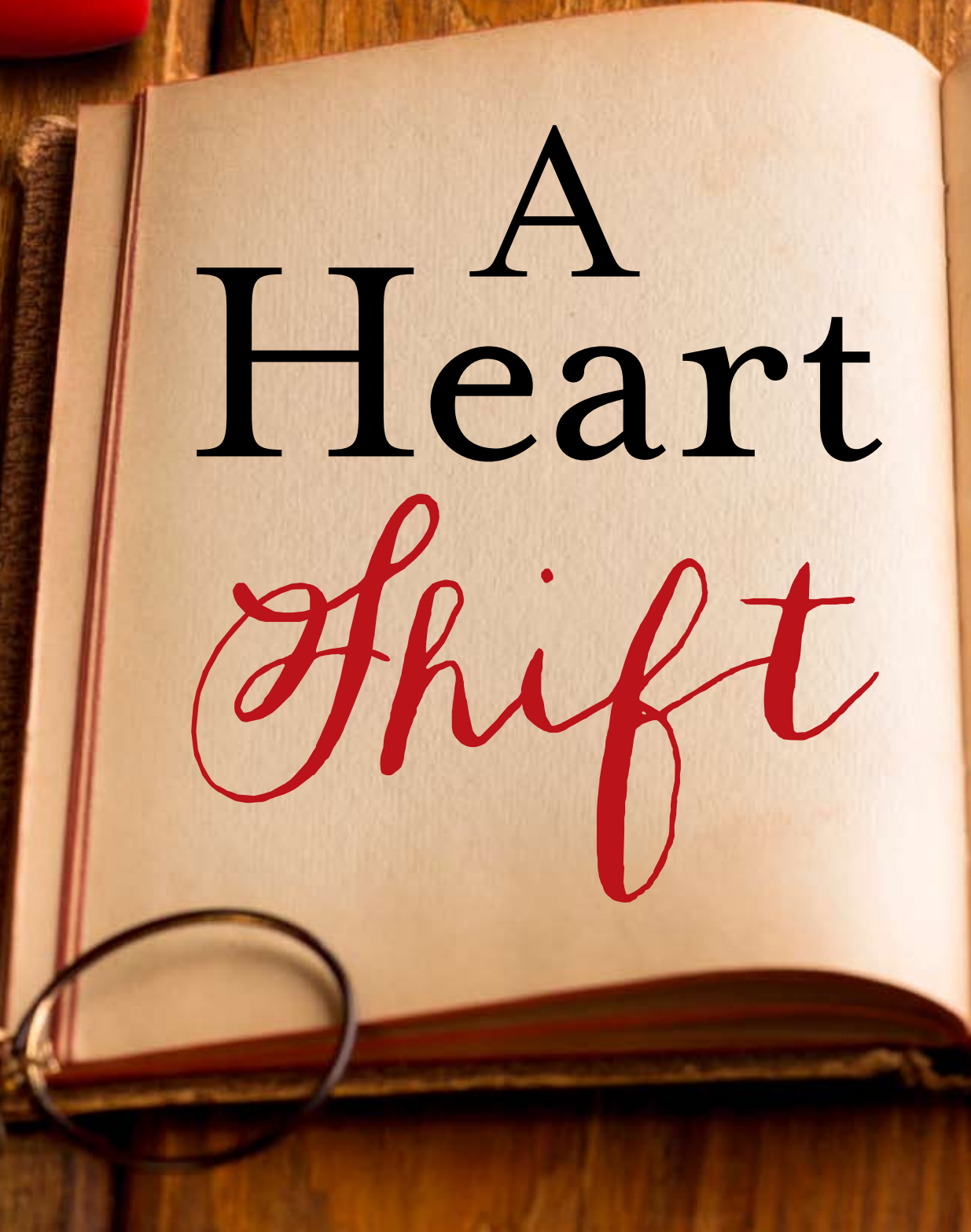
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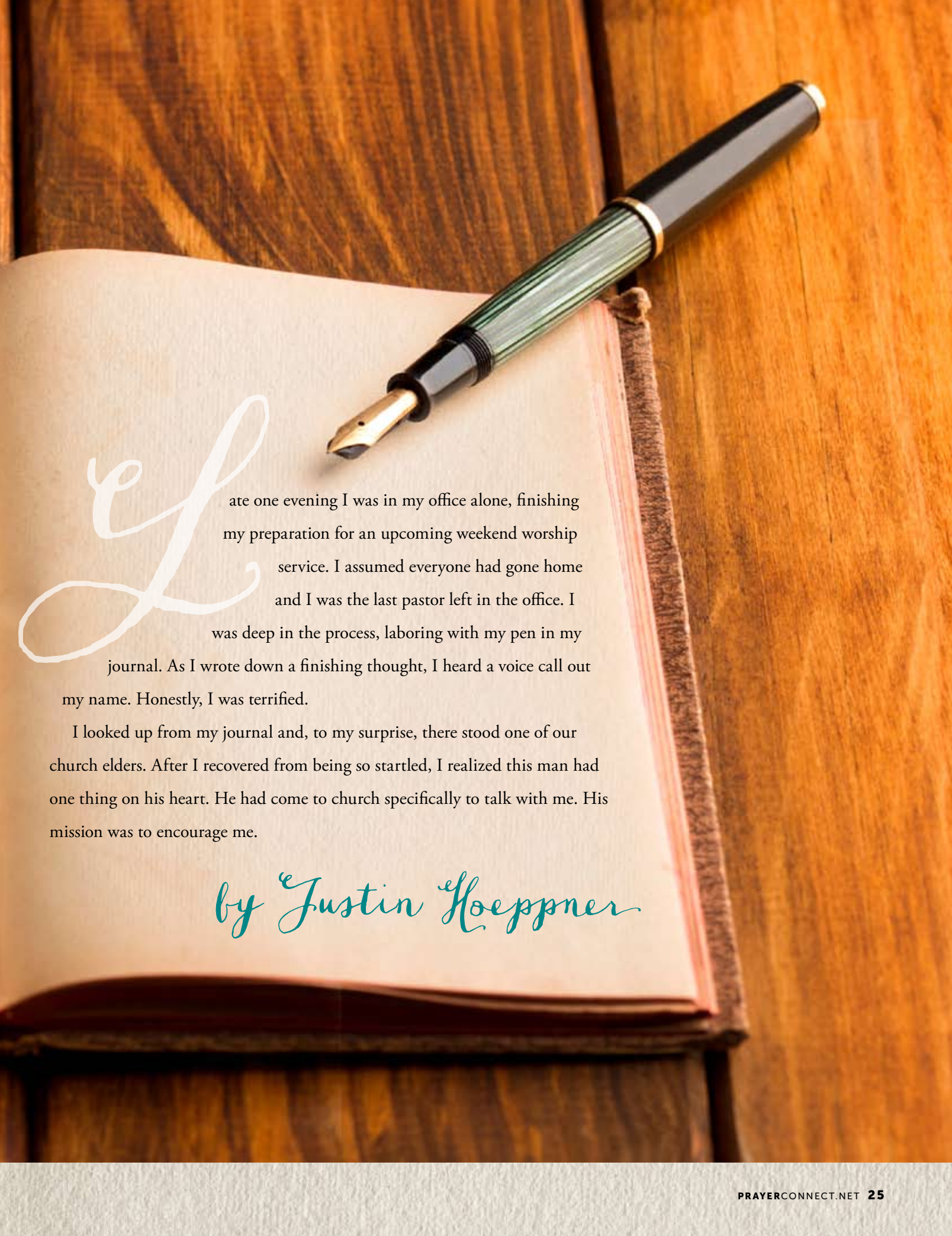


When Your Prayers Become About Him



# A Heart *Shift*





L

ate one evening I was in my office alone, finishing my preparation for an upcoming weekend worship service. I assumed everyone had gone home and I was the last pastor left in the office. I

was deep in the process, laboring with my pen in my journal. As I wrote down a finishing thought, I heard a voice call out my name. Honestly, I was terrified.

I looked up from my journal and, to my surprise, there stood one of our church elders. After I recovered from being so startled, I realized this man had one thing on his heart. He had come to church specifically to talk with me. His mission was to encourage me.

*by Justin Hoeppner*

He spoke nonstop for about three minutes. I was overwhelmed with the words he shared. I felt so deeply spiritually strengthened that I almost could not take it all in. Then, just as quickly as he showed up at my office door, he ended the conversation and went on his way. What happened next transformed me.

I sat at my desk in the darkened church office and wept. His words had a deep impact on me. All I wanted to do was to cry out with thanksgiving to God. I was so grateful for the encouragement and how it connected with things only God and I knew about my own heart.

Yet, strangely, as I tried to open my mouth and share my words of thanksgiving with God in prayer, I stopped in my tracks. I was thrown into internal conflict. I began to dialogue with myself instead of with God. Yes, God knew exactly what I needed to hear. Yes, the words the man shared were incredibly powerful for me and they strengthened my heart. Yes, I was thankful for how God had nourished my soul with such encouraging words.

But something began to shift inside of me. As I processed *what* God had done, I began to ponder *why* God allowed this to happen to me. I wanted to get to the true heart of the transaction that had just taken place.

The gratitude deep within me started to transform my desires. I wanted to pour thanksgiving out to God, but my desire began to shift toward knowing God more deeply through what He had just done.

I was beginning to learn what it means to desire to worship and adore God through adding praise to my prayers. It was a powerful experience.

## Going Beyond What's Natural

It becomes apparent rather quickly when we pray that certain expressions within our prayers flow out of us more naturally



raise reorders  
my heart, placing  
God as first.

than others. In fact, our prayers can become so common, it is possible to pray without even thinking about what we are saying.

We do not have to look too deeply into our prayers to recognize that they often center on our present circumstances. We probably all agree that the content of our prayers should represent the current state of our hearts. It is right to offer prayers of petition and supplication to God that reflect our desires, wants, and needs.

We are reminded in Philippians that we must not hesitate to bring our requests to the Lord, with an underlying emphasis of thanksgiving: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (4:4–7). And 1 Peter 5:7 reminds believers to “cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

We should also pour out thanksgiving for what He has already accomplished. This is right to do in our prayers. God desires this heart response from us. But as we continue to grow in our prayer lives, we begin to recognize that there are forms and expressions we may be missing in our interactions with God. Maturity means seeking to add more expressions—beyond petitions, supplications, and thanksgiving—to our communication with God.

## The Culture of Communication

Each of us has a specific way we communicate with God. We have adapted a “culture” within our own prayerful communication to God.

As a pastor, I share in corporate times of prayer regularly. As I listen to prayers throughout each week, I recognize certain forms in my own prayers and in the prayers of others. I am the type of guy who wants to get to the heart of everything. I strive to know the “why” in any situation. So, I listen intently to the prayers of those around me to understand how those individuals see and understand God. It also helps me understand where their prayers are coming from.

In each of our own specific forms of conversational prayer etiquette, we develop strong patterns. These patterns become the defaults in our prayers—and they can also be the limiting factors for our continued maturation as a prayerful people. These patterns can become more about us connecting with ourselves than establishing a deeper connection to God.

## The Journey of Prayer

Praying and learning to pray is a journey. When we grow in our faith, our prayers must grow with us. It's not that there are mature or less mature prayers; it's more that our prayers should mature with us as we mature in Christ.

As I learn more about God, I should see my communication with Him start to shift and change to reflect what I



know. The more I experience God, the more I should talk to God *about Himself*. My prayers become more about Him and less about me.

In many ways, the content of our prayers is limited to our knowledge and experience with God. As we grow in knowledge and experience, so, too, our prayers should grow in depth of expression. This opens the door to prayers of praise, worship, and adoration.

### Praise in Our Prayers

That night in my office, I was filled with deep gratitude for how God had nourished my soul. But I also came to recognize that often my thanksgiving to God was explicitly “me-centered.” For the most part, I was communicating how I was blessed by God—and how that was good for *me*. But I also recognized, in a fresh way, that every action of God was for the purpose of me

knowing Him more. Through every action of God, He discloses more of who He is.

It is essential, then, that we as God’s people take our prayers of thanksgiving for the works of God even further than simply giving thanks. We need to take them into adoration. To adore God is an action that takes our eyes completely off of us and puts them wholly onto who He is. Praise reorders my heart, placing God as first.

I have come to believe that essential to our continued growth within our prayers, we must look deeper into the heart of God’s actions on our behalf. I believe when we begin to understand *what* God’s heart is, we begin to understand *who* God is. This leads us into greater knowledge of God that releases us to praise and adore Him in our prayers.

This is the prayer of Paul for the church at Ephesus: “I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the

God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength. . .” (Eph. 1:16–19).

When we praise and adore Him, our eyes turn from ourselves and onto Him and who He is. The real power of adding praise into our prayers is that it helps us see God for who He is and not only for what He does. **PC**



**JUSTIN HOEPPNER** is worship pastor at Coast Hills Church in Aliso Viejo, CA.

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# Praise in Prayer

A Bible Study *by Sandra Higley*

*Note: This Bible study is formatted for small group open discussion. If you use this study by yourself, we suggest you journal your answers to the discussion questions. Also, please use suggested translations where indicated. Biblegateway.com is an excellent source for translations you may not have on hand.*

e were sitting on the steps of Prambanan, a ninth-century Hindu temple to the destroyer god (Shiva), located on the island of Java, Indonesia. My prayer partner and I had received specific instructions from the Lord that on this prayer journey we were to magnify the Lord and spiritually desecrate pagan altars by taking communion at each designated spot.

Hearts pounding wildly in our chests, we sat there with wine and bread, ignoring the piercing gaze of the Hindu worshipers around us. The oppression was tangible. Suddenly, it came to us that we should praise Jesus in song—aloud. This was different from God’s leading at similar sites—those had been quiet, covert assignments.

Singing softly at first, we were surprised at how the music carried through the entire compound. A tangible peace settled over us as we exalted the name of Jesus in that place. Then, something amazing happened. A quiet young man—a national—appeared next to us. He whispered to us in broken English that he was a believer. We soon discovered that he was also part of our denomination and personally knew my brother who was a missionary many miles away!

Marveling at God’s plan, we took communion in one accord with this precious brother who was risking exposure and endangering himself by doing so. Praise had broken

through the oppressive darkness around us and unleashed God’s plan to accomplish His purpose!

## Discussion Questions

Dr. Joseph Winger speaks of praise as it touches heaven and affects earth. “Praise happens in heaven. When we come into alignment with this key activity of heaven, here’s what happens on earth: It is as if His Kingdom comes and His will is set in motion on earth as in heaven. Forces of darkness become confused and flee because of the the simple, sincere praises of God’s people. . . . Praise alter[s] the course of [our] challenging circumstances.” Read Revelation 5 aloud as a group. Now look up the following and note how the concept of Revelation 5 is played out in each of these passages:

Psalm 8:2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1 Samuel 16:23, NASB: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 Chronicles 20:22, ESV: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Acts 16:25-26, NASB: \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Winger encourages us to develop a life of praise. What observations can you discover about praise in the following passages? (Ps. 22:3, 63:3, 71:14, NKJV; 145:12; Isa. 61:3; Heb. 13:15, NKJV)

Sometimes we think of “enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise” (Ps. 100:4) as a precursor or warm up for the more important prayer to come. Read Psalm 100 and then honestly assess your thoughts about praise. How do you (or *do* you?) incorporate praise into prayer? Do you use it as a way to get God’s attention before asking something of Him? Does it serve as something that seems more polite than rushing at Him with important items of business? Does praise seem difficult for you?

Jason Hershey admonishes, “At first, [praise] seemed counter-intuitive to how I felt.” He adds, “My heart was heavy and I wanted to lie on the ground and moan . . . but I knew it was time to rise up and praise the Lord!” He says, “Looking at God—and meditating on who He is and His wonderful Kingdom—yields a natural reaction to praise the Lord.” How can focusing on who God is rather than focusing on the problem you are bringing to Him alter the way you pray?

Lack of a praise vocabulary is a basic problem when it comes to voicing worship, according to Dave Butts. We typically think of worship in the context of what we do on Sunday morning. “I was so used to praise being something that was sung using a book or a screen in the presence of others that I didn’t even know what to say,” Dave recalls about his struggle to praise on his own. Scripture offers a wealth of triggers for launching praise. Have each member of your group take one of the following passages and use it as a template. Turn it into a personalized praise on paper. In every instance where God did things for

Israel or the authors of the passages, replace it with something He has done for you personally. Come back together as a large group and take turns reading your praise results. (Ex.15:1–18; 1 Chron. 29:10–20; Nehemiah 9; Ps. 34, 103, 145, 150; Isa. 51:15–16; Col. 1:15–20; Rev. 19:1–16)

Justin Hoeppepner observes that each of us communicates with God in a specific way—we adapt a culture of communication that reflects our knowledge and experience with Him. He believes these patterns can become more about us connecting with ourselves than establishing a deeper connection with God. Take a few minutes to consider any patterns you see in your own prayer/praise communion. Have you seen any shifts or changes based on your “God experience”? If you answered “yes,” are these changes positive or negative changes? Do they suggest more faith, more awe, more gratitude, more understanding? Or do the changes indicate discouragement or hopelessness?

If you answered “no,” what does that tell you?

## Action Steps

“The power of praise is the realigning of priority. Prayer is all about Him and for His glory,” Hershey teaches. “My life’s goal changed the day I came to the revelation that God has opened Himself up to be emotionally affected by me. He’s grieved when I sin. He is blessed when I praise Him. Though His love for me is unconditional, His degree of pleasure or grief over me is directly related to my heart toward Him.” Spend some time in individual prayer, asking God to reveal the truth of this statement to your heart. How does the thought of God making Himself vulnerable in this way influence you?

Journal your response to Hershey’s question: “Don’t you just want to make the heart of the Lord swell with delight?”

**SANDRA HIGLEY** is an intercessor, author, and editor. She currently works as an editor for David C Cook Ministries in Colorado Springs, CO.





## The One Needful Thing | By Brad Bush

**F**rom the day of Pentecost, there has been not one great spiritual awakening in any land which has not begun in a union of prayer, though only among two or three; no such outward, upward movement has continued after such prayer meetings have declined. —A.T. Pierson

A study of revivals from the day of Pentecost until today reveals certain characteristics that define these outpourings of the Spirit, both leading up to the revival and during it. The most consistent and prominent among them is prayer. Prayer is almost universally acknowledged as the one thing you need in revival.

Have you ever wondered why?

Let's apply one of the most widely quoted portions of Scripture regarding revival prayer—from 2 Chronicles 7:14.

*If my people, who are called by my name.* All true prayer for revival begins in the new birth (John 3:6–9; Rom. 8:14–15). The same Holy Spirit who gave you a new heart gives you the ability to pray. Only a child of God will be motivated to pray for an outpouring of the Spirit.

*Will humble themselves.* All true prayer for revival is the expression of humility (Ps. 10:17; James 4:6–10). It is an expression of need, desire, and dependence. Self-sufficient, self-important, and self-satisfied are not characteristics of people praying for revival.

*And seek my face.* All true prayer for revival comes from seeking the face of God (Hos. 10:12; Heb. 11:6). This reminds me of the 12 disciples in John 6:67–68 when asked by Jesus, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” Those praying for revival can paraphrase Peter’s response, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the authority to pour out the Spirit

according to Your promise!” Seeking the face of Christ for revival is our only hope.

*And turn from their wicked ways.*

All true prayer for revival comes from a heart that has come clean with God (Isa. 55:6–7; Ps. 66:18–20). Let’s face it, holding on to known sin while attempting to pray for revival from the Holy Spirit is going to be hard. People who truly pray for revival are not likely to be willfully harboring sin. The Holy Spirit will see to that!

### Expressed in Partnership

All revivals are relational. Revival is the presence of God poured out in the person of the Holy Spirit. It permeates and penetrates the *hearts* of those who are lost without Christ by regenerating them, and restores a first-love fervor for the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom among His saints.


Prayer is like that, as well. It is an intimate *heart* communication between the Lord and His followers. It is premised on the character of God and on the promises in His Word. The movements of the Holy Spirit guide it in the intimate recesses of the redeemed soul.

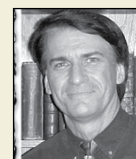
Redeeming hearts, reviving hearts, responding to believing hearts—prayer for revival begins with something as intimately personal as prayer for something as deeply relational as revival. That is why the interplay of asking and receiving is so integral to prayer for revival. It is rooted in relationship and expressed in

partnership between the Lord and His people.

During the Welsh Revival in 1904, an evangelist visited the meetings. He stood up and said, “Friends, I have journeyed into Wales with the hope that I may glean the secret of the Welsh Revival.” Evan Roberts, leader of the revival, instantly rose to his feet. With an uplifted arm toward the evangelist, he replied: “My brother, there is no secret! Ask and ye shall receive!”

Jesus Christ models this unique relationship between prayer and the outpourings of the Holy Spirit. Two ministries of our ascended Lord continue to be prayer and revival. He is our *Intercessor* and our *Reviver*—the One who baptizes His Church with His Spirit (Heb. 7:24–25; Acts 2:32–33). His earthly ministry began in the context of prayer and the outpouring of the Spirit: “And as He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him . . .” (Luke 3:21–22). It continued with His disciples, “After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit . . .” (Acts 4:31). And it continues with us today.

In the mid 1950s, there was a popular song titled “Love and Marriage.” The first line of the song went like this, “Love and marriage, love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage. This I tell ya brother, you can’t have one without the other.” Prayer and revival are like that. Prayer *is* the one needful thing. 



**BRAD BUSH** is pastor of Maple Ridge Community Church in West Lafayette, IN, and director of the International Revival Institute. Learn more at [international-revival.org](http://international-revival.org).

A close-up photograph of two hands cupped together, releasing a spray of water droplets. The hands are positioned in the center, with water being poured from the right hand into the left. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting foliage. The lighting is bright, creating a high-contrast scene with many small, glistening water droplets suspended in the air. The overall mood is fresh and natural.

# Can We



# REALLY

# PRAY?

## without Ceasing ●

Your Heart  
Disposition  
Determines  
Endless  
Fellowship

After an abusive, unfaithful relationship, I found myself completely disillusioned. I tried dating again, but was frustrated with the egocentric behavior I encountered. It left me bitter and doubtful about the opposite sex. When I detected a shift in my thoughts toward my father—the most loving and gentle daddy in the world—I knew I needed help. I turned to my mother, hoping her many years of experience in biblical counseling would bring me the calming peace she always managed to exude.

As she poured cups of hot coffee, I began to share my heart. It didn't take long for her to detect that my negative feelings had begun to include—*gasp!*—God. Mom's always-first reaction in any situation—prayer—was as natural to her as breathing. Prayer wasn't something she did; it was something she lived.

Her response to this crisis was no different. As she led me to the throne, I poured out all my pain, humbly seeking forgiveness for harboring discontent and ill will toward those who had hurt me.

BY KATHY WENRICH



# PRAYER WASN'T SOMETHING SHE DID; IT WAS SOMETHING SHE LIVED.

## Quiet Confidence

Mom let me exhaust myself as I unloaded all my burdens. She then prayed a simple yet powerful prayer, asking God to fulfill the desire of my heart: a godly man who would love and protect me. A few weeks later I met and soon married God's answer to my mom's faith-filled prayer. We will celebrate our 32nd wedding anniversary this year.

Over the years, I've pondered my mother's quiet confidence in prayer. The Bible tells us to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17, NKJV)—obviously something my mom embraced as a lifestyle. But I'll have to admit that verse troubled me. How can anyone pray all the time when we have life duties like working and caring for our families, not to mention sleeping and eating?

Wanting to embrace a prayer relationship with God as meaningful as my mother's, I found myself steeped in guilt

over the message of that verse. Certainly I was not able to live up to it, yet it was in the Bible so I knew it was God's desire.

Fueled with the knowledge that condemnation was not from God (Rom. 8:1), I started to seek answers. God's Word gently led me to understand that prayer in its purest form is simply communion with the Holy Spirit. Praying without ceasing is not us speaking words on a continuous basis. It is us communing with God non-stop. When we stop fellowshiping with God, it damages our relationship and cuts off our ability to receive from Him. Prayer should be an *attitude* we remain in, which includes and seeks God first in all that concerns us.

An attitude is a disposition. It can be positive or negative. The word *disposition* is described as "the predominant or prevailing tendency of one's spirit." So to be in an attitude of prayer is to have the prevailing tendency to keep the lines open to commune with God at any given moment.

That was the secret my mom discovered. Prayer was natural to her because her attitude was to keep her line of communication open and available. There was never a moment she didn't feel welcomed by God or know that He was listening.

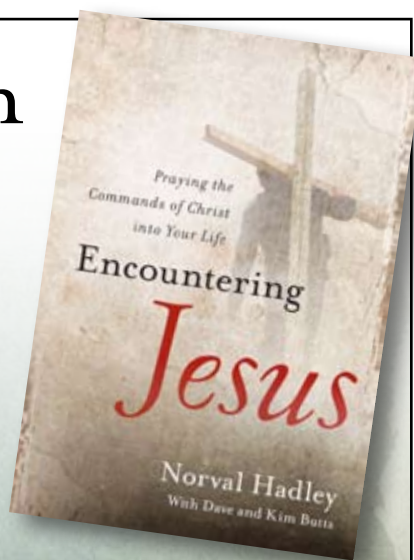
## Sin Hinders and Destroys

If praying without ceasing involves an attitude of open communion, what can cause us to fail? We find some insight in 1 Peter 4:7: "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers" (ESV).

What does it mean to be self-controlled? The Greek word translated here for self-control is *enkrateia* which means "possessing power, strong, having mastery or

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possession of, self-governing.” *Vincent’s Word Studies of the New Testament* adds that it means “holding in hand the passions and desires.” It suggests we are to have a defense against disobedience and lusts of the world that destroy our ability to fellowship with God. Too often, we regard the invitation to boldly approach God’s throne (Heb. 4:16) as *carte blanche* to ignore iniquity in our lives, yet sin will always hinder our prayers. Psalm 66:18 is clear: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear” (NKJV).

How does sin destroy our ability to fellowship with God? Notice that the verse does not say *if* we sin, God will not hear our prayers. In that case, God would not answer any of our prayers. Romans 3:23 tells us that we have all sinned and come up short of God’s glory. When David said, “If I regard iniquity [sin] in my heart, the Lord will not hear me,” he was speaking of sin that we love and refuse to

put down, sin that has taken up residence in our hearts and controls our mind, will, and emotions.

Living with deliberate, unconfessed sin in our hearts will eventually cause us to make our own will an idol that we bow to in thoughts and actions. Jesus said to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind (Luke 10:27)—that leaves no room for self-fashioned idols.

## Welcomed Gift of the Holy Spirit

When we accept Christ as our personal Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us, and sin no longer has dominion (power) over our souls (Rom. 6:14). However, we must exercise the authority given us to subdue sin, not allowing it to master us any longer (Rom. 6:22). John G. Lake once said, “Sin is that peculiar

thing in the life of man which dims the consciousness of man so he cannot comprehend God. When sin is removed, the veil over the soul of man is gone.”

As we allow the Holy Spirit to unveil and transform us through the washing of the Word (John 15:3), we begin to possess the mind of Christ, applying the righteousness of God in a practical way (Heb. 4:12; Matt. 5:6).

If we allow ongoing sin in our lives, in essence, we are taking advantage of God’s grace. He paid too high a sin-cleansing price for us to allow it to reign in His place. Imagine someone selling everything he owned to purchase a lavish new home for you completely debt free, beautifully furnished with lifetime maintenance, yet by choice you continue to live homeless in the impoverished lifestyle from which your benefactor rescued you. This is a perfect picture of what happens in our souls when we choose to live in the

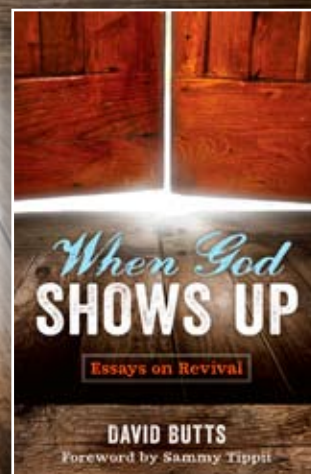
# Revival...

## What is it?

## Do we need it?

“Revival is not strange or mystical,” writes Dave Butts in his new book *When God Shows Up*. “It is simply the church waking up to the presence of Christ in her midst.”

In this series of essays, Butts shows us what true revival is, how the church needs it, and how to effectively pray for revival. If you hunger for more of God’s presence in your church, read *When God Shows Up*.



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bondage of sin rather than the freedom and provision of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 24:3–4 states, “Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.” No sin can abide in the presence of God. The psalmist is telling us that

when we enter the Lord’s presence, our souls cannot be divided between God and fleshly idols. To give place to anything that usurps His throne in our lives is forfeiting the ability to have an open flow of communion.

For clear, two-way communication with God, we need to unveil our hearts and free them from anything that would

hinder Him from hearing us, as well as our ability to hear His voice.

## Character of Our Thoughts

The other key element in 1 Peter 4:7 is to be sober-minded. Sober-mindedness is a clear understanding that you are powerless to manage without the help of God. Sober is the opposite of intoxicated. A sober mind comes as a result of allowing the principles of God’s Word to permeate your decision-making and thought process. A mind controlled by the intoxicating passions of this world is full of pride and self-reliance. Pride is sin and will always block fellowship with God (James 4:6).

Our lives will manifest the character of our thoughts. When our minds are focused on Christ, faith and power will infuse our thoughts and actions, and our heart’s desire will be to abide in the presence of and in fellowship with the power source.

My mother’s open line of communion with God—living prayer that never stopped—gave her confidence to ask in faith. She knew she could talk to God or hear from Him in any situation and in any place. Praying without ceasing was a natural consequence to her close, personal relationship with her Heavenly Father. Her reward was the ability to exercise authority to bring change.

That nonstop prayer relationship with our Father is available for all of us to enjoy. If we allow the Word to transform our minds and attitudes so we remain in constant fellowship with God, we will attain that self-controlled, sober-mindedness that makes our prayers effective and fervent. They will be full of passion and reliance on the One who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. **PC**

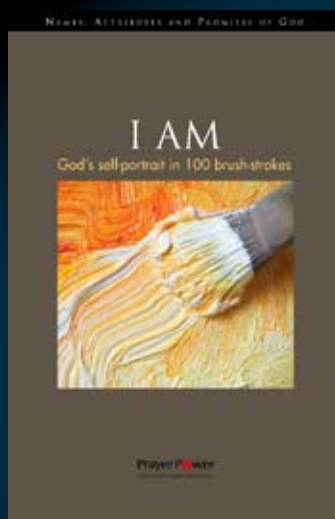


**KATHY WENRICH** is the director of the ministry of helps at Church for All Nations in Colorado Springs, CO.

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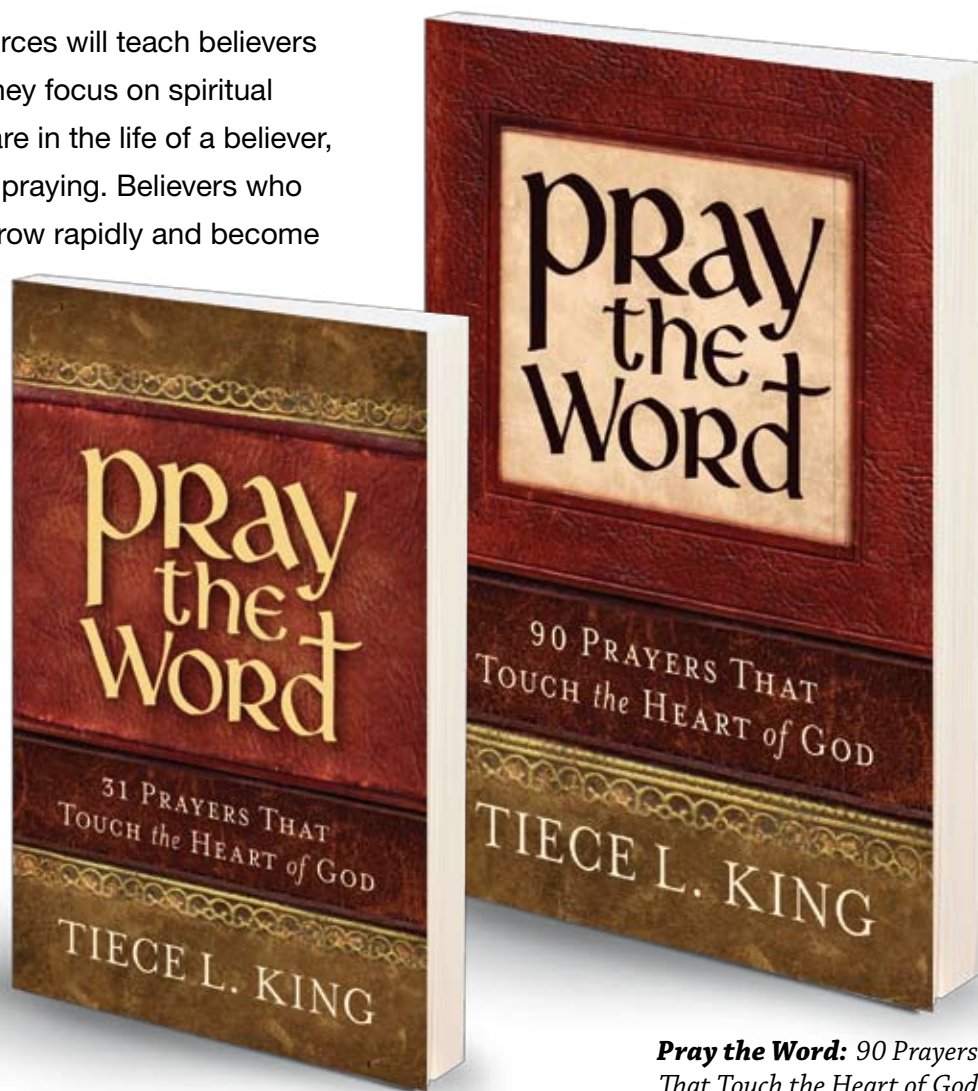


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THE KINGDOM.  
POWER, AND T  
FOR EVER.

By Andrew Wheeler

Pr





## Using the Lord's Prayer to Unify Your Group

How do you pray for your church? Do you scan the weekly bulletin and note the events, trying to remember to pray for each one? Do you look for the list of people who are sick or in the hospital and in need of prayer? When you pray for your church, what dominates your prayers?

Our church has a team of four to six people who pray before our weekend services. Sometimes, we pray with great synergy, building effortlessly off each others' prayers and covering the church effectively. Other times, we can be a bit unbalanced, focusing on surface issues

and neglecting to pray deeper Kingdom prayers for our congregation.

Martin Luther's consistent answer when asked how to pray was, "Use the Lord's Prayer." The Lord's Prayer provides a great outline for balanced, strategic prayer. Our pre-service prayer team has begun using this prayer as an outline for our prayer time.

Following Luther's example, we begin each segment of our prayer time by quoting a phrase from the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9–13). We then use that phrase as the theme for that segment of prayer.

# Balanced, Strategic Prayer



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### Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed Be Your Name.

God is more than just “my Father.” He is “*our* Father”—the Father of all in our church. Jesus’ prayer was always meant to be more concerned with the needs of the community rather than with my personal needs (although my needs are certainly part of the church’s needs). As a result, using this prayer to pray for our church is fitting.

The opening petition recognizes a balance in our relationship with God. He is “our Father,” an intimate, personal relationship made possible through Jesus’ death on the cross. At the same time, He is “in heaven,” while we are on earth. We are meant to be intimate, but not familiar, with this God who is at once our Father and also the Lord of the Universe. This is an important context for prayer, reminding us that prayer is not about us, but about God.

Our team uses this sentence as our primary worship time, praising God for His attributes and expressing our desire to honor Him in our prayer time, in our weekend services, and in our lives.

### Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven.

These two petitions can be synonymous, but we think of them as two different areas for prayer to help us pray more completely. We think of God’s Kingdom coming to the lives of unbelievers and of His will being done in the lives of believers.

Praying for God’s Kingdom to come includes prayer for our church’s outreach and missions efforts. We pray that as we preach God’s Word, it will draw seekers to Himself, that His love and grace will be apparent to the community through our outreach initiatives, and that lives will be changed for eternity. We pray for fruit from the missions initiatives of our church. Sometimes we pray for specific unsaved neighbors and family in this segment.

God’s will is done in the lives of His

people as we reflect His glory, grow in the character of Christ, and bear the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. His will is done in our church as we live in unity, grace and love, and as we meet one another’s needs and encourage each other in spiritual growth. At this time, we pray for spiritual formation in the lives of our congregation. Sometimes, we pray in line with the current sermon series.

Although we try to keep all our prayers biblical, this is when our praying becomes most overtly scriptural. We pray for church members, using passages such as the vine and the branches (John 15), the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:13–26), the love chapter (1 Cor. 13), Paul’s exhortation to humility in Philippians 2, and “transformation” passages such as Colossians 3. We also pray for our church collectively here, often using some of the prayers of Paul (Eph. 1:15–19, 3:16–21; Col. 1:9–14; Phil. 1:9–11).

### Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread.

As we turn to personal requests, we try to remember that the first half of the prayer provides the context for our requests. So we ask God to meet our congregation’s needs, knowing it is His will to provide, and we ask Him to care for us in ways that honor His name (recalling the first request of the prayer is “hallowed be Your name”).

Two thoughts guide our petitions here. First, we admit we cannot provide for ourselves. We depend on God for our sustenance. We trust Him to care for us because He is a loving and gracious God as He meets our needs (Matt. 6:25–34).

Second, we trust God is answering because He promises He will. His answer may not be what we envisioned—but it’s His answer. By turning our church’s needs over to God, we give Him the freedom to respond in ways that honor Him and provide the greatest benefit. Like Paul responding to God’s refusal to remove his “thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor. 12:7–10), we accept and rejoice



## We rejoice in God's answer because it is **His** answer.

in God's answer because it is His answer.

Our team uses this segment to pray for specific needs we know of in the congregation—people who need healing, help finding a job, or overcoming an addiction, etc. We pray for God to meet these needs, but we also pray for Him to be honored as a result.

If we've received prayer requests from the congregation, we pray over those. My personal favorite prayer is to pray Jesus' words in John 9:3 over them—that the work of God may be revealed in their lives as a result of God's intervention.

### **Forgive Us Our Debts, as We Have Forgiven Our Debtors.**

Since sin is a universal condition, forgiveness is a universal need—both forgiveness for our own sins and a spirit of forgiveness toward those who have sinned against us. Forgiveness does not

come naturally, however; we need God's supernatural work in our hearts to produce forgiving spirits.

Our team prays in a few different ways here. We don't tend to use this time for personal confession (though we could), but more for confession on behalf of our congregation. Corporate confession isn't that common in church anymore, and needs to be approached with humility so that we do not become judgmental. We ask God to forgive us for times when we approach His throne casually or carelessly, for our failures to obey His Word (again, focusing on the sermon series when applicable), for times when we fail to see the needs around us, etc.

We also pray for sensitivity to sin for

our congregation (Psalm 51), for contrite spirits and for God's forgiveness. Finally, we pray for a spirit of forgiveness among our people—for humility (Phil. 2:5–8), for the maturity to not easily take offense (James 1:19), and for the willingness to take the initiative in confession and reconciliation (Matt. 5:23–24).

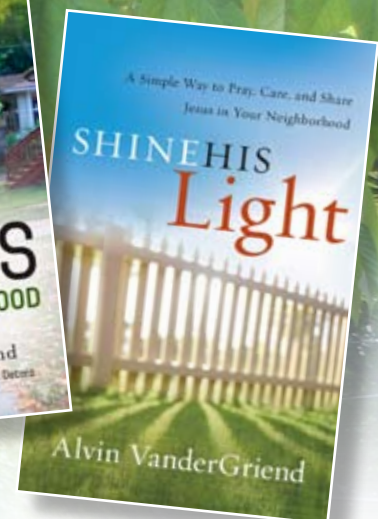
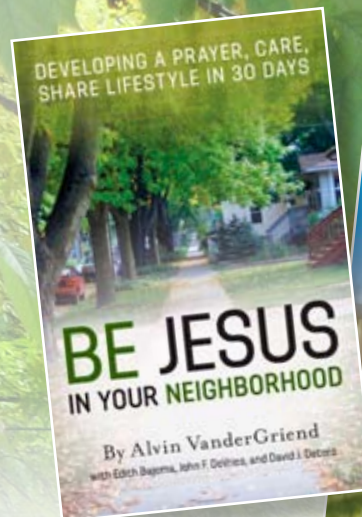
### **Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from Evil.**

This wording can seem odd at first because we know God does not tempt us. There are a couple of ways to think of the first petition in this segment—that God would lead us *away* from temptation by giving us discernment to make the right

## Inspire Your People to Pray for the Lost

MOST PEOPLE NEED GENTLE reminders and encouragement to faithfully pray for the salvation of neighbors and coworkers. *Be Jesus in Your Neighborhood* and *Shine His Light* are two complementary books that encourage people to make “prayer, care and share” a lifestyle.

*Shine His Light* will inspire people of the possibilities and *Be Jesus in Your Neighborhood* is a 30-day devotional to equip and motivate them to pray for, care for, and share Jesus with those around them.



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decisions and that He would lead us away from trial (the word used for “temptation” is also used for “trials” in James 1 and elsewhere). So, here our prayers focus on guidance and protection.

In this segment, we first focus on individuals or groups in the congregation; second, we focus on the church as a whole (and especially on our leaders). We often pray for our youth, knowing the many temptations they face and the potentially life-altering decisions they might be making. We pray for God’s wisdom; for Him to protect their paths, and to keep them from situations, decisions, and relationships that could lead them down harmful roads. If there are others in our congregation facing different crossroads, we tend to pray for them here.

For our leaders, we pray for wisdom in decisions regarding the direction of our church. We also pray for wisdom in their personal lives and for God’s

protection of them and their families. Finally, we pray for protection over our church and its ministries.

### **Yours Is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory Forever.**

This doxology isn’t included in every version of the prayer, but it fits the prayer’s spirit, returning to the idea of God’s Kingdom and moving the focus back from us to God.

Because God is King, He is sovereign. He answers our petitions as He chooses. We come to Him not with demands, but with requests. God does not “owe” us the answers we seek—He’s our King, not our servant. What He grants, He grants out of His grace, not out of obligation.

Because God is all-powerful, we can trust Him to do what is best for our church. He “is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according

to his power that is at work within us” (Eph. 3:20). Because His thoughts and His ways are higher than ours, those answers often take different forms than we imagine. But God’s answers are never “less” than we ask—they are always “more.” If He doesn’t answer as we envisioned, it’s not because He is powerless. It’s because He is wise and gracious.

Because the glory belongs to God, our prayers are ultimately prayers for God’s glory. Our desire should be first and foremost that God will glorify Himself as He answers our prayers. Whether we pray directly for God’s Kingdom to come or whether we pray for personal needs, we are praying for God’s glory.

### **Heeding Jesus’ Words**

While Scripture offers many models for prayer—and no model completely represents all that Scripture teaches about prayer—we have found the Lord’s Prayer to be a well-balanced format. Interestingly, using this format has often resulted in more silence during our prayer times. We listen more to each other and to the Holy Spirit as we pray, resulting in greater unity and cohesion in our prayers.

We’ve also found that the newer members of our group participate more meaningfully because they are comfortable with the format and expectations. We don’t use this format every week, but even when we don’t use the outline, our prayers tend to be more focused and balanced because of the practiced model.

Though a few of us have been praying together for several years, we find that we’re growing in serving the congregation in prayer as we heed Jesus’ words, “This is how you should pray.” **PC**



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**ANDREW WHEELER** co-directs the prayer ministry of Willow Creek’s regional campus in Crystal Lake, IL, where he leads the pre-service prayer team. He is a featured blogger on the *Pray!* Network and the author of *Together in Prayer*, available from [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).





## Get Email Reminders to Pray-Care-Share

**P**raying for your neighbors and loved ones just got easier with a new website that will send you a daily or weekly reminder to pray. Sign up at [praycareshare.com](http://praycareshare.com) and list the first names of five to ten people you are committed to pray for—with the hope that as you pray, you will have opportunity to care for them in ways that will open doors for you to share Christ with them.

When you sign up, you will receive

a regular reminder with the names on your list and a sample prayer for them to know Jesus Christ more fully. The email reminders will help you be more intentional and consistent in your prayers. Your email address will not be used for any purpose other than these email reminders.

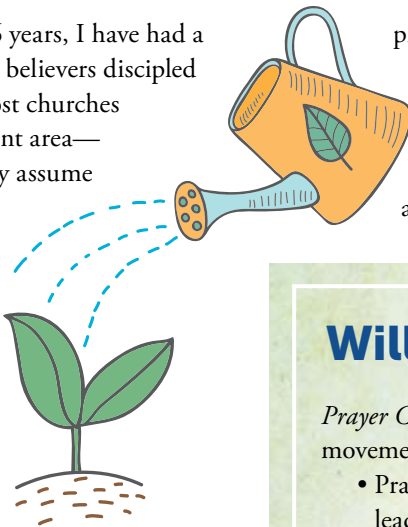


You can choose to stop receiving the reminders at any time.

Be intentional in your prayer life by making a list of those who need to experience the salvation of Jesus Christ. The [praycareshare.com](http://praycareshare.com) site was developed by LOVE2020, an initiative of the Mission America Coalition.

## Make It Simple for Them

**F**or the past 16 years, I have had a burden to see believers disciplined in prayer. Most churches neglect this important area—perhaps because they assume prayer growth will just happen in the life of a believer. It typically does not. We need to be intentional about discipling others in prayer if we want to see believers grow.



provide little nudges, visual aids, and other means to remind people to pray, find that more people stick with it—and grow as a result.

**3. Nonthreatening Accountability.** In this busy world, it is easy to let things slip. If you want to disciple people effectively in prayer, find ways to add simple accountability to your prayer discipleship. Encouraging people to

One of the most significant truths I have learned is that good prayer discipleship needs to be simple (more simple than you would think) and basic. Most people are unsure of themselves when it comes to prayer—praying alone or with others. These people (many believers in your pews) need the following:

**1. Prayer Guides.** Most guides feature Scripture-based prayers that help people learn to pray God's will and heart, and get them praying more biblically than simple fix-it prayers.

**2. Motivational Reminders.** Beyond convincing people of prayer's importance, these provide encouragement to keep at it. Churches that regularly

### Will You Pray with Us?

*Prayer Connect* magazine is devoted to encouraging the growth of the prayer movement. We hope you will lift us up in prayer about the following:

- Praise the Lord with us for 1,000 new subscriptions from the prayer leaders of the National Prayer Committee and Denominational Prayer Leaders Network. Praise Him also for increased advertising sales. We have desperately needed these financial blessings—and please pray that the Lord will continue to provide.
- Pray that writers will submit stories of answered prayer for our November/December issue on *Lord, Do It Again!* Ask the Holy Spirit to inspire people to share stories that will encourage our readers to keep praying with hope and faith. (See page 44 for description.)
- Pray for the health and strength of our editorial and design staffs. Some travel extensively; some are dealing with issues of aging parents.
- Pray that pastors and prayer leaders will use the magazine effectively to encourage their churches to become houses of prayer.

Send us an email and let us know if you are praying—and if you are hearing or sensing anything from the Lord ([editor@prayerconnect.net](mailto:editor@prayerconnect.net)). Thank you for keeping us in your prayers!



meet with one or two other people for five minutes to pray following a church service each week can help provide this accountability.

**4. Meaningful Topics.** People will pray more if they are asked to pray for something important to them. That is why most people gravitate toward

personal-needs praying. You can also provide powerful topics that relate to ministry items in your church or community. As these topics give them a good Kingdom agenda to focus prayer on, their prayers will become less needs-centered.

Most people need something in their

hands that will teach them and help them pray more effectively. That is why books such as *Prayers That Avail Much*, *Patterns for Prayer*, and *The Common Book of Prayer* are popular. They give people scriptural thoughts to direct their prayers.

**JONATHAN GRAF** is publisher of *Prayer Connect*.

## Lord, Do It Again!

**D**o you have a powerful story of answered prayer that you believe can encourage others? Do you know of someone who has experienced healing, or perhaps the return of a prodigal, or the reviving of a church? Have you been encouraged by a story that has increased your faith and hope in prayer? We are looking for stories that

will remind people of God's faithfulness and His power to work in seemingly impossible situations.

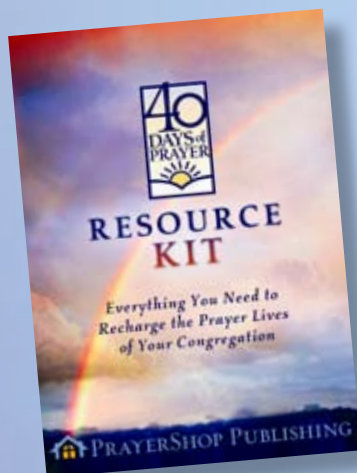
### A Special Issue

We plan to publish stories of answered prayer in our November/December 2014 issue. Articles should be 500 to 1,200 words, sent to [editor@prayerconnect.net](mailto:editor@prayerconnect.net)

by June 1. You need to have firsthand interaction with the person and his/her story—and we need to verify it through your pastor or another ministry leader.

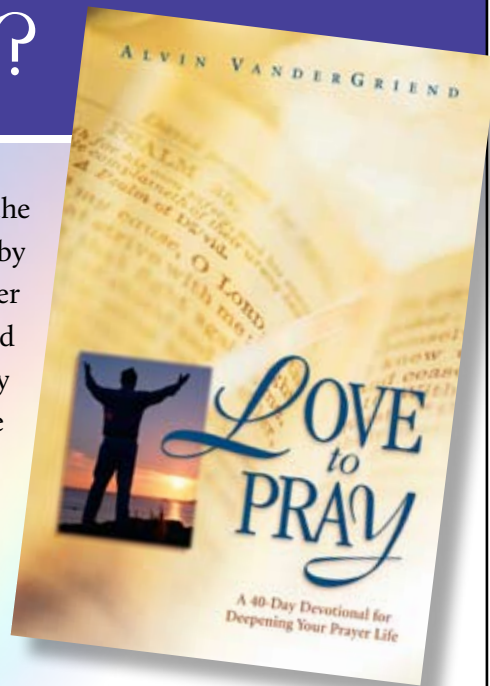
We know God has worked powerfully throughout Scripture and in history. But we are looking for current stories of answered prayer that will stir people's hearts to pray, "Lord, do it again!"

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## One Nation Under God

**M**any believers struggle with the upheaval and crises happening in our nation and throughout the world right now. But we can stand firm in our faith knowing that Almighty God is in complete control of everything happening around us. If you have any doubt, read Psalm 2:1–6 (MSG):

Why the big noise, nations? Why the mean plots, peoples? Earth-leaders push for position, demagogues and delegates meet for summit talks, the God-deniers, the Messiah-defiers: “Let’s get free of God! Cast loose from Messiah!” Heaven-throned God breaks out laughing. At first he’s amused at their presumption; then he gets good and angry. Furiously, he shuts them up: “Don’t you know there’s a King in Zion? A coronation banquet is spread for him on the holy summit.”

The issue is not *who* is serving as our president in the White House. Scripture reveals God places rulers in their positions of leadership: “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God” (Rom. 13:1, NASB).

Clearly, God has a plan for those He has placed in authority, whether they know it or not—and even if they are not Christ-followers. He selected them and positioned them for His purposes. Even if their intentions are evil and they think they are in control, God still is the One who truly governs.

As we celebrate the founding of our nation on July 4, let’s remember to pray. Obedient intercessors who seek the face

of God will have the most influence in the movement of the hand of God in the midst of the nations. If we humble ourselves, repent, and seek God, we have assurances that God will hear our prayers on behalf of our nation (2 Chron. 7:14).

Here are several good websites and resources with insightful, purposeful prayers for our president and those in leadership positions. It does not matter whether or not we agree with their political positions or decisions. It only matters that we are obedient to Scripture by lifting them up before God (1 Tim. 2:1–2).

### Pray USA

Pray USA ([prayusa.com](http://prayusa.com)) is an initiative of the Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit organization established to preserve the Judeo-Christian heritage of our nation and protect American religious liberty. The mission of Pray USA is to connect and provide resources to elected leaders and citizens who are praying for our nation, states, and communities.

### Presidential Prayer Team

Since 2001, the Presidential Prayer Team ([presidentialprayerteam.com](http://presidentialprayerteam.com)) is a national ministry dedicated to a focused mission of encouraging, inspiring, and practicing prayer on behalf of our president, leaders, and Armed Forces. They also seek to be a catalyst in the development of a robust prayer lifestyle by providing help through email, web, mobile phones, and other communication tools.

Included on the site is a 24-hour prayer watch with an updated stream of news and current events. You can also post prayers for our nation on the Prayer Wall, or pray in agreement with others.


### Intercessors for America

Intercessors for America ([ifapray.org](http://ifapray.org)) exists to inform, connect, and mobilize a network of those who pray and fast for America. They desire to see God’s purposes for America fulfilled through sustained prayer and Spirit-led obedience. They have a great bookmark, *30 Ways to Pray for People in Authority*, available at their store on [getamericapraying.com](http://getamericapraying.com).

### Prayer Force One

Prayer Force One ([prayerforceone.com](http://prayerforceone.com)) is a national Christian ministry that seeks to unite America’s praying majority on behalf of the country. You cannot technically “join” Prayer Force One, but you are asked to join together in prayer. One of the unique features of this site is a prayer tour of the White House.

### Call 2 Fall

Call 2 Fall ([call2fall.com](http://call2fall.com)), scheduled for Sunday, June 29, 2014, is a simple call for congregations to get on their knees in repentant prayer during worship services. The Call 2 Fall declaration reads: “I will answer God’s call to fall on my knees in humility and seek His face in repentance so that He might forgive my sins and heal our land.” 

### What’s Not to Like?



Here are some prayer pages on Facebook we encourage you to “Like.” (Add [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) before the / on each address.)

#### Prayer Connect

[/prayerconnect](https://www.facebook.com/prayerconnect)

#### Harvest Prayer Ministries

[/harvestprayer](https://www.facebook.com/harvestprayer)

#### Pray the Word

[/praytheword](https://www.facebook.com/praytheword)

## Motivating and Mobilizing Evangelistic Prayer | By Elaine Helms

While working as a church prayer coordinator and as a national prayer leader, I learned that Christians do not automatically pray for the lost. Many are lulled into complacency, believing that everyone lives in a safety zone until they choose to follow either Jesus or the devil. Scripture, however, does not validate that. Rather, because of Adam's sin, we are all born in captivity to the devil.

Therefore we need to give believers a biblical foundation about the condition of those without Christ. We must address the *why* before the *how to*.

### Condition of the Lost

Jesus says in John 12:46, "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness." Paul says in Romans 5:8 and 18: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people."

### Condition of the Christian's Heart

In Romans 9:1–3, Paul says, "I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit—I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race."

With this verse in mind, we have to ask, "Do we feel that kind of grief? Do we care enough to pray for the lost? When was the last time we lost sleep, staying up all night weeping before the Lord, asking

God to draw our family members, neighbors, and/or friends to Jesus?"

### Discovering Lost People

Before we can pray for the lost, we must discover lost people around us. One method for raising awareness is to hand out index cards. Ask members of your prayer group to write numbers on the card. Then, make a list: #1, the name of their neighbor to the right; #2, the name of their neighbor on the left; and #3, the name of their neighbor across the street. Typically, people do not even know their neighbors' names. This exercise can help Christians see their neighborhoods as a mission field.

Other questions to ask: Who do we see regularly at the grocery store, dry cleaners, or favorite restaurant? Does that cashier know Jesus? What about the waitress who serves you? Ask them if there is any way you can pray for them; their answer will give you insight about their spiritual condition.

Once we allow God to give us a heart for lost people, we can begin to pray using specific strategies:

- **Prayerwalking:** One method of evangelistic prayer is prayerwalking. Praying on site will give us insight about our neighbors and their needs. In nice weather, people may be in the yard and you can engage them in conversation. If we offer to pray for our neighbors and they give a request, we then have a reason to go back to follow up with them. When neighbors know you are a praying person, they will find you in a crisis.
- **Prayer Triplets:** Prayer triplets are three friends joining in agreement to pray for three lost people each, with accountability to faithfully pray. Choose people who live near you or

who you see weekly at Bible study, church, work, or in your neighborhood. Your prayer time can be as short as 15 minutes, allowing each one to lift up the three people for whom they are praying.

- **List Praying:** In preparation for an evangelistic outreach, it is a great idea to make a list of people you will commit to pray for regularly and invite to attend the event. *My Hope America* and Mission America's *LOVE2020* are both tools to encourage Christians to live a prayer-care-share lifestyle. We pray with a list, show kindness when possible, and get to know them. As God gives us the opportunity, we can share the gospel and/or show a video gospel presentation followed by our testimony and invitation.

### Praying for the HEART

The goal of evangelistic praying is for the lost person's heart to be changed by the saving power of Christ. The acrostic HEART is a memory jogger. Pray for him or her to have:

- A receptive HEART (Luke 8:8,15)
- EYES that are open (Matt. 13:15; 2 Cor. 4:3–4)
- God's ATTITUDE toward sin (John 16:8)
- RELEASE to believe (2 Tim. 2:25–26)
- A TRANSFORMED life (Rom. 12:1–2). **PC**



**ELAINE HELMS** is the director of *churchprayerministries.org* and is the author of *Prayer 101, What Every Intercessor Needs to Know*. She was the Southern Baptist prayer coordinator 2000–2010 and prayer coordinator for *My Hope America* with Billy Graham 2012–2013.





## Praying in the Name of Jesus | By Samuel Chadwick

**T**he most incredible things are promised to prayer. The Old Testament abounds in promises and examples. Deliverance and help, guidance and grace were assured to those who called upon God and committed their way unto Him. Nothing was too hard for the Lord, and nothing was impossible to those who prayed.

There is no limit to the possibility of prayer, and the Old Testament confirms and attests to the promises by examples and demonstrations of its power. Our Lord speaks with the same illimitable speech. His Word is, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7–8).

### Whatsoever Ye Shall Ask in My Name

The promise to prayer reaches its climax in the Upper Room on that memorable night of revelation and tragedy. Jesus declared Himself to be the basis of prayer. They were to pray in a new way. They were to pray in His name, and they would be heard for His sake: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13–14).

What extraordinary promises these are that are pledged to prayer in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They abound in universal and unconditional terms. All things, whatsoever ye ask! Prayer reaches its highest level when offered in the name which is above every name, for it lifts the petitioner into unity and identity with Himself.

### In the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ

To pray in Christ's name means something more than adding "for Christ's sake" to our petitions. The name expresses personality, character, and Being. The Person is in the name. Prayer in Christ's name is prayer according to the quality of His Person, according to the character of His mind, and according to the purpose of His will. To pray in the name of Christ is to pray as one whose mind is the mind of Christ, whose desires are the desires of Christ, and whose purpose is one with that of Christ.

Our Lord demanded importunity and a forgiving spirit of all who prayed. In the prayer in the name, all conditions are unified and simplified in Him. Sincerity is tested in the name. Motive is judged in the name. Prayer is proved in the name. Prayer is sanctified in the name. Prayer is endorsed by the name, when it is in harmony with the character, mind, desire, and purpose of the name. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:21–22).


### For the Sake of the Name

We are heard for His sake. He is the petitioner. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. He told His disciples He was going

to the Father, and that He was going to pray on their behalf, and whatever they asked of the Father in His name the Father would do it. Not for their own sake, but for His sake they would be heard.

When I was in Leeds, a man came a long way to look at a factory in which he was interested. He wrote to the firm, and his request was politely declined. He went to the company and presented his card. It was returned, and he was refused. No argument could get him beyond the little shutter in the outer office. He told his disappointment to a friend, who suggested I might be able to help him. He came to see me. I gave him my card, and wrote to the head of the firm. Next day, he presented his request, and handed in my card, and immediately every door opened to him. His petition was granted, but not for his own sake. The head of the firm saw me in him.

In some such way, we pray in Christ's name. He endorses our petitions and makes our prayers His own, and "the Father hears Him pray." We are not heard for our much speaking, nor for our loud shouting. Neither are we heard for our fine phrasing, nor our much weeping. Neither are we heard for our good works, nor for our self-denials. Prayer in His name is heard for His name's sake.

In the secret sanctuary of the inner chamber, we ask, seek, and knock in His holy name, and present our prayers in the sure confidence of His wonderful and glorious word. 

**SAMUEL CHADWICK** (1860–1932) was born in the industrial north of England and grew up working long hours in the cotton mill. Even as a child, he would rush home from the mill for five hours of prayer and study. He became known as a great Wesleyan Methodist preacher, author, and principal/lecturer at Cliff College.





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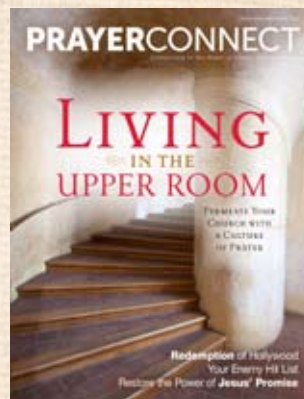
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