

PRAYERCONNECT

Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer

PRAYER

101

BACK TO BASICS

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HEAVENLY TRANSACTIONS



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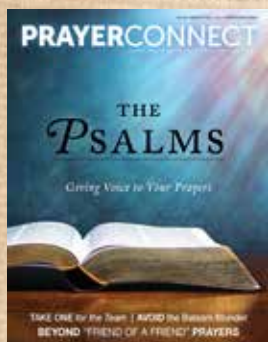
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Need a Speaker for Your Prayer Conference or Event?

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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Jesus reminded His followers that they *will* have trouble in this world (John 16:33). There is turmoil on every level, from personal to national to international.

Yet Jesus did not leave us without hope. This is the time to “Let Prayer Arise.” This issue on “Hope for a World in Turmoil” and other back issues can be ordered at prayershop.org.



PUBLISHER'S NOTE



The Value of a Good Prayer Resource

I became a believer in Christ when I was fairly young—six years old. As a pastor's kid, I had a great upbringing in the faith, filled with lots of opportunities for spiritual growth.

But it was not until I was 30 years of age that I began a meaningful prayer life. All those intervening years, I knew how to pray, but it was not a part of my daily walk. I was what I call a “crisis pray-er.” I prayed when I, or someone I cared about, had a need.

When I was 30, the Holy Spirit changed my prayer life dramatically through a powerful resource—A.W. Tozer's book *The Pursuit of God*. That book gave me a deep hunger for God, which transformed my prayer life.

As people of prayer, we should not underestimate the value of a good resource to stimulate, inspire, challenge, or equip us—and those we are leading.

I recently heard of a church that started praying through a prayer guide, *Pray the Word for Your Church: 31 Prayers That Seek God's Purposes and Power*. After the people of this small church (with fewer than 100 people) started praying through the guide, they began seeing, among other blessings, an unusual number of new salvations.

In Issue 10 of *Prayer Connect*: “Living in the Upper Room,” author-pastor Fred Leonard wrote about the importance of providing the people in our churches with what he calls “on ramps” to prayer—continual opportunities to get involved in prayer. The church he pastors (Mountainview Community in Fresno, CA) offers two prayer initiatives each year. And they provide a prayer guide/resource for 21–40 days of prayer that helps everyone pray together according to the same theme.

Every prayer initiative births a passion for prayer in another handful of people. Each prayer elective in a Sunday school class or small group gives opportunity for more people to grow deeper in their prayer lives. Whenever a church puts a Scripture-based guide into the hands of its people—encouraging them and reminding them to use it—people grow in prayer. Kingdom things happen.

One time I had the opportunity to speak at the same church two years in a row—on almost exactly the same weekend. The second time, a young woman came up to me before the service began and thanked me for what I had shared the previous year. She also thanked me for my book, *The Power of Personal Prayer*, that she had purchased. She said one of the truths I had shared in my message the previous year (a truth developed further in the book) had revolutionized her prayer life. She was now praying more specifically, and she told me how much that has meant to her.

Don't ever forget the power of a well-placed and well-used prayer resource. It will bring dividends!

—Jonathan Graf





Awaken the Dawn Draws Thousands

Tens of thousands of Christians from every state in the U.S. assembled on the National Mall the first weekend in October to sing and worship in dozens of tents and pray for a “spiritual shift” in America.

“America’s Tent of Meeting” was sponsored by Awaken the Dawn (*awaken-thedawn.org*) and several other partner organizations for the purpose of focusing on Jesus and to pray for a nation in crisis. The event began Friday night with a call to repentance from the main stage where park police estimated 30,000 people were in attendance, according to an event organizer.

“I see Awaken the Dawn as part of a bigger story that God is telling,” said Michael Beardslee of Phoenix, AZ, in an interview with *The Christian Post* outside the New Mexico prayer tent. “There is a story that the enemy is telling in our nation, and he likes a lot of attention and he gets the attention a lot of the time,” he said. But it’s God’s story

that will prevail, he added.

Beardslee has been praying and fasting for revival to sweep the nation for the past 20 years.

He was inspired by the vision of Awaken the Dawn, calling people from all 50 states to come and worship on America’s front yard in front of the Capitol, and he took time off work to make the journey with his parents.

Tens of thousands more attended over the course of the weekend, with various evangelistic equipping sessions and round-the-clock prayer in the tents until the event concluded Monday morning. Fifty prayer tents (one for each state) and eight regional tents were stationed all along the National Mall grounds. Speakers included Mike Bickle of the International House of Prayer, Francis Chan of We Are Church, Heidi Baker of Iris Global, Shawn Bolz of Expressions 58, Nick Hall of PULSE, and several others.

The vision for all 50 states to gather around the worth of Jesus and exalt



Him, as articulated by The Prayer Furnace’s David Bradshaw, was what inspired Christy Holt to make the trip to Washington from Pensacola, FL, to participate. “I came because there is unity when all gather together. . . . With our country and the mess that it’s in and the disunity, I thought ‘Lord Jesus, thank You that somebody got a vision of unity and of what that would look like.’”

Lewis Hogan, founder of United Cry, calls Awaken the Dawn a historic gathering. “Something was released over the nation that we are going to see the fruit of going forward,” he says.

—Adapted from *The Christian Post* (*christianpost.com*).

Floyd Is New President of National Day of Prayer

Dr. Ronnie Floyd, senior pastor of Cross Church in Springdale, AR, is the new president of the National Day of Prayer (NDOP). He also continues to pastor Cross Church, which has a membership of more than 20,000.

As president of the National Day of Prayer, Dr. Floyd oversees the national operation of mobilizing individuals, churches, denominations, and organizations to unified public prayer for America throughout the year. It culminates annually on the first Thursday of May, when the whole country observes the National

Day of Prayer.

“Without a shadow of a doubt, prayer has always been at the heart of our nation’s founding and history,” says David Butts, chairman of the NDOP board. “The mission of the National Day of Prayer is to mobilize our nation to unified public prayer for America. Our heart is to see a mighty spiritual awakening in America.”

“As we step into a new phase of carrying this mission and legacy, I believe we couldn’t have found a man more passionate or dedicated to prayer and spiritual

awakening than Ronnie Floyd,” Butts says.

“America’s greatest need today is to experience the next Great Spiritual Awakening, [and] we know that no great movement of God ever occurs that is not preceded by the extraordinary prayer of God’s people,” Floyd wrote in a letter to his congregation. “The National Day of Prayer mobilizes unified public prayer for America.” His life mission is to help usher in America’s next Great Spiritual Awakening, with prayer being the driving catalyst of this spiritual movement.

Thousands Gather in Ukraine to Praise Jesus

The streets of Kiev were filled with songs of praise and thanks in September 2017 as estimates of 500,00 evangelical, Ukrainian Christians gathered to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

"Many traveled from all four provinces there just to be a part of that celebration, to thank God for the freedom to worship, to thank God for the freedom to preach the gospel in their country, and to celebrate God's faithfulness," Sergey Rakhuba with Mission Eurasia told Mission Network News.

The gathering came after Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko signed an order recognizing the anniversary of the Reformation.

"It was so exciting to see on the screen of my computer where I was watching young people with so much joy.



They glorify God in the midst of their capital. This was the same place where they were protesting just a few years ago, fighting for their freedom." Rakhuba adds that young people are the key to spreading Protestantism in Ukraine.

Ukraine may still be in the middle of a war with Russia, but it is growing by leaps and bounds spiritually. "Ukraine is struggling politically, economically, but Ukraine is striving today spiritually, pleading to God to bless that nation," Rakhuba says.

Prayer for Israel Has Large Facebook Following

The Jerusalem Prayer Team Facebook page is one of the largest on the worldwide social media platform, with more than 28 million members. Its mission is simple—to mobilize millions of people every day to pray for the peace of Jerusalem as directed in Psalm 122:6.

The Jerusalem Prayer team is an initiative of the Friends of Zion Museum, founded by author Mike Evans. Evans says The Jerusalem Prayer Team allows Christians to act as a "weapon of peace" against the growing anti-Semitism movements creeping up on college campuses and political arenas across the world.

"It's Christians, especially in America, who form the firewall against anti-Semitism that so easily creeps into the international

social and political conversation," Evans told *Charisma News*. "It's especially encouraging that the younger generation is standing with Israel and employing social media in spreading the message. Together, we are 'waging peace' against the violence and hatred that seems perpetually aimed at Israel and her people."

Friends of Zion is in the process of opening their Heritage Center which will unite Christian Zionists across the world. The museum will be a multimedia experience designed to bring the stories of Christian Zionists from around the world who help protect Jewish people from persecution and participated in the re-establishment of the nation of Israel.

—Taken from Breaking Christian News (breakingchristiannews.com).

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Christians Rise Up in Venezuela

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro insists he will hold an assembly to rewrite the country's constitution—despite a vote where 98 percent of more than seven million voters rejected making constitutional changes.

The country's evangelical Christians are speaking out, asking God to restore unity and prosperity to the nation. Opposition parties say a constitutional assembly is just an attempt by the socialist president to impose a dictatorship in Venezuela. Many are at a breaking point after suffering for months from food shortages and heavy-handed government control.

The crisis has motivated Venezuela's churches to action. Leading up to the vote, public plazas around the nation echoed with the prayers of Christians.



"I believe the church has awakened to how difficult the Venezuelan situation is, and that each of us Christians needs to become active in this process of change," explains Hugo Diaz of the Movement for the Defense of the Constitution.

Many Venezuelan Christians believe their country will prosper only as people look to God, not politicians, for solutions. "We have been fasting before the Lord, asking Him to turn the heart of

the people to Him. We had this idea to participate in this activity because it's not a matter of giving support to any political party," says Pastor Jose Rivero of Alliance Youth Leadership. He says the government should submit to the authority of God and the constitution.

With possible economic sanctions and more hardship ahead, Christians are stepping into the conflict to pray and shine a light of hope in the midst of economic and political upheaval. Evangelical Council of Venezuela spokesman Juan Maraver urged Venezuelans to take heart.

"This is your hour. This is your time," he said. "While many are seeing chaos, while many are seeing that Venezuela has no solutions, that restoration will take a long time. God says: 'I will raise you up. I will bless you!'"

—Reprinted from CBN News (*1.cbn.com*).

Judge Upholds Congressional Prayer

Congress will continue opening sessions in prayer after a challenge to the tradition by an atheist. A federal court ruled against the lawsuit brought by Daniel Barker, co-president of the Freedom from Religion Foundation.

Barker argued he was denied the opportunity to give an opening invocation in Congress while other guest chaplains were allowed to do so. U.S. District Judge Rosemary M. Collyer said in her decision that House rules didn't allow Barker to lead the prayer because he had left his faith.

Collyer also pointed out opening prayer has been a part of Congress for more than two centuries and it doesn't conflict with the establishment clause according to the United States Supreme Court.

House Speaker Paul Ryan was quick

to applaud the decision.

"Since the first session of the Continental Congress, our nation's legislature has opened with a prayer to God. Today, that tradition was upheld and the freedom to exercise religion was vindicated. The court rightfully dismissed the claims of an atheist that he had the right to deliver a secular invocation in place of the opening prayer," Ryan said.

"Recently, especially following the return of Majority Whip Steve Scalise, this institution has been reminded about the power of prayer. I commend the District Court for its decision, and I am grateful that the People's House can continue to begin its work each day as we have for centuries: taking a moment to pray to God," Ryan concluded.

Scalise also responded to the decision on Twitter, saying, "Our rights come from God, so it's only fitting

that the House begins each day united in prayer."

—Taken from CBN News (*1.cbn.com*).

Prayer Calendar

Weekend of Prayer to End Slavery and Trafficking
January 11–13, 2018
facebook.com/weekendofprayer

Seek God for the City
February 14–March 25, 2018
waymakers.org

Collegiate Day of Prayer
February 23, 2018
collegiatedayofprayer.org

THEME INTRODUCTION

PRAYER

101

BACK TO BASICS

A few months ago, on a beautiful fall day in Minnesota, my church tried something new—and perhaps a bit unusual for us. We hosted an all-day “Drive-Thru Prayer” event in our church parking lot, designed to bless others in our community. We posted several “May We Pray for You?” signs at the entrance to our church, and positioned some of our most engaging people along our busy street to smile and wave at drivers.

We had no idea what response to expect, but we prayed we would have at least one or two success stories. We waited an hour and a half for the first “taker.” A man in a large black pickup truck pulled in between our parking cones and said, “This is the coolest thing I’ve ever seen!” He wanted prayer for his recent back surgery and his wife’s health issues.

After that, the cars began pulling through more frequently. By the end of the day, 20 cars had driven into our lot to ask for prayer—all people with no previous connection to our church. These people related a variety of concerns and were touched that someone was willing to pray for them.

In advance I had given some training to our intercessors so we were all on the same page in the way we approached the cars, interacted with people, and prayed for them. But I told our intercessors that all our guidelines could be summarized into two basic instructions:

1. Pop a breath mint before you approach a car.
2. Don’t be weird.

I trusted the Spirit to guide our prayers as we listened to people’s requests. But I also wanted to remind our intercessors that in this situation, the basics of prayer were the most important.

PATTERNS OF PRAYER

We are witnessing so much growth in the prayer movement in our churches and across the nation. New prayer initiatives and strategies are on the increase, especially as pastors and intercessors grow in their sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. The Lord has led many to explore things like spiritual mapping, 24/7 worship, healing prayer, or prayer for revival and spiritual awakening. While many intercessors are implementing new approaches that God is revealing, we also observe patterns of prayer practiced throughout history. It’s always good to come back to the basics and review general prayer principles that have served the Church well over the centuries.

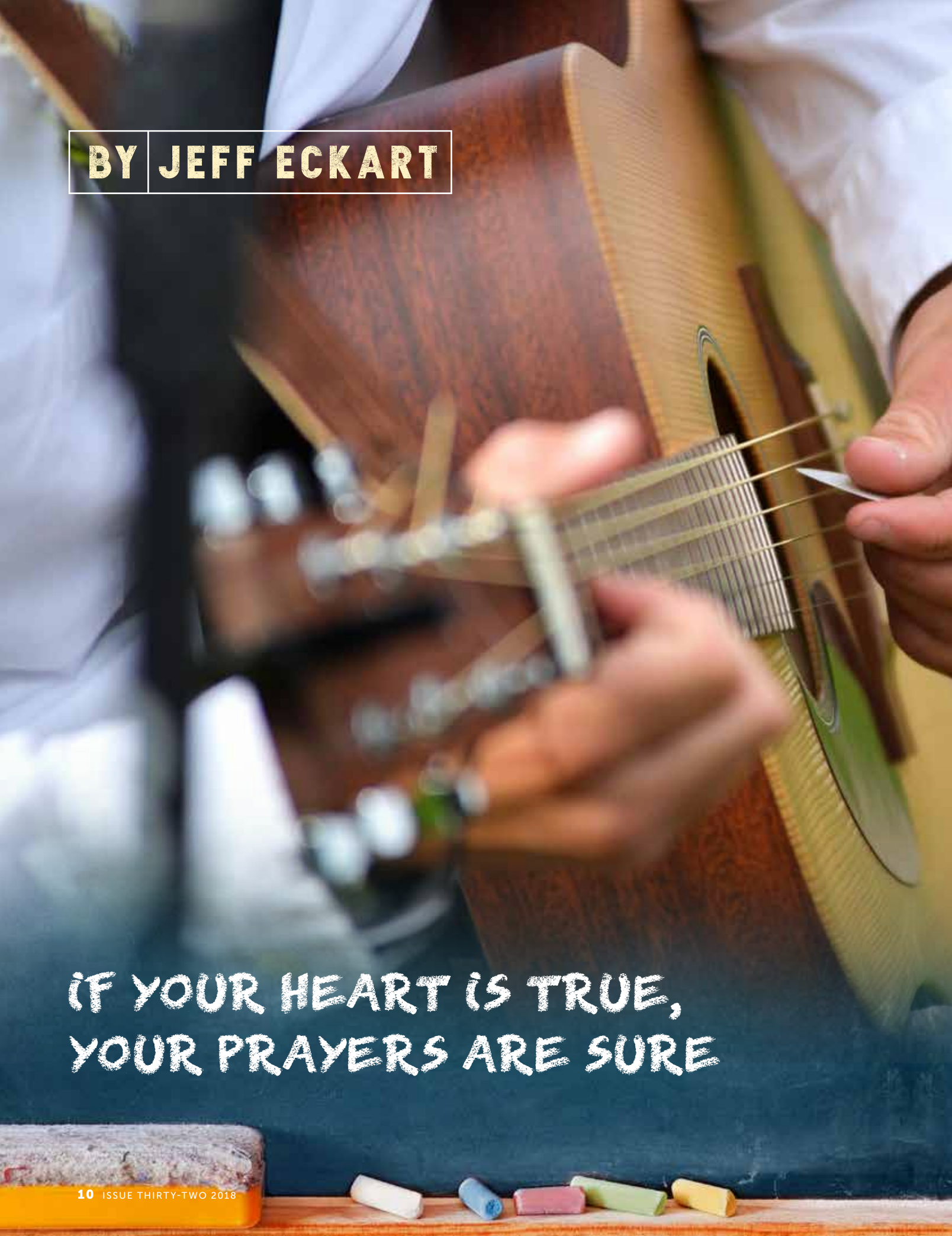
In this issue, Dr. Ronnie Floyd reminds us of the most basic principle: prayer demonstrates our dependence on God. Floyd outlines the way understanding scriptural truths will shape

appropriate prayer for various situations. As Jeff Eckart addresses prayer basics, he hearkens back to his early years of learning to play the guitar. His confidence grew as he mastered the basics of chords, meters, keys, and transitions. He encourages our readers not to worry about “getting it right” but instead to keep practicing prayer and growing in confidence. Barbara Ho points out that we tend to overthink or complicate prayer. She shares some basic concepts that can help increase effectiveness in prayer.

During our “Drive-Thru-Prayer” event, I told our intercessors one more thing—perhaps the most basic of all: Our role is not to fix things. Our role is to bring people and their concerns to Jesus. He is the One who heals, restores, delivers, and gives hope.

Sometimes we need reminders of the simplest things.

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect* magazine.



BY JEFF ECKART

IF YOUR HEART IS TRUE,
YOUR PRAYERS ARE SURE



YOU CAN'T

Get It Wrong

When I was a sophomore in college, I borrowed my older brother's guitar and took it with me to school. A friend shared five basic chords with me, and in my spare time I began to pick up the basics and play. Within a few days I was learning songs. Two years later I was standing in front of hundreds of people, leading worship with a guitar. This random hobby became my paid profession when I was hired as a worship leader.

I went from playing solo to leading bands with several musicians playing various instruments. Then I began to write and perform my own music. As my proficiency grew, I traveled the country, playing, and eventually recording a live worship album.

I remember someone saying, "The guitar is one of the easiest instruments to learn but one of the hardest to master." I've found this to be true.

PRAYER INSECURITIES

Could the same be true of prayer? Is it easy to learn but hard to master? Have you ever felt any insecurity about prayer? Have you wished you

knew more, wanted to pray more, hoped you were "getting it right"? Sometimes I still feel this way!

When we feel these insecurities, it's good to remember that we are not alone. I have learned that even people we would label as "prayer warriors" have these same feelings at times.

So, rest easy. We can feel inadequate yet pray with increasing priority, power, and purpose. Our confidence, knowledge, and proficiency can grow when we remind ourselves of a few prayer basics.

I've found many parallels between learning to play an instrument and learning to pray. Let's look at three of them.

START WHERE YOU ARE

My early guitar songs were simple—basic meters, transitions, keys, and other components. But *it was still music*. As I progressed, my proficiency grew. I became more adept at complicated pieces of music. Every stage of my growing musicianship built upon the previous one. My repertoire expanded exponentially. My confidence grew with time and experience. And I gained a growing sense of authority over the guitar.

Jesus taught His disciples to start simply, too, when He taught them about prayer. He helped them understand that they approach God as their Father. In Luke 11:2 (which we know as the Lord's Prayer), Jesus' first word in His instruction about prayer is *Father*.

Jesus opened new doors of understanding for them—and for us today. Let this truth sink in: Our Creator isn't a distant and indifferent figure but rather a near and caring Father. We are God's children. And loving parents are aware of their child's level of communication. Good parents know that their three-year-old won't communicate in the same way as their 23-year-old.

Pray where you are. Play the “song” you know how to play at this moment. Pray to the best of your ability now. *It is still prayer*. As you learn and grow in your practice of prayer, you will look back from time to time and see your progress.

Don't worry about getting it perfect.

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Issues 2-19 and 26-32 all have short Bible studies based upon the theme.

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Just pray in the present. Pray in the knowledge you have now, knowing and trusting that this knowledge will grow. Remember Paul's words to the Corinthians, “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1 Cor. 13:11–12).

My guitar playing was a little rough around the edges in the beginning, but my skills grew as I continued to practice. And, yes, this is true for prayer. Our prayer lives and abilities increase as we continue to pray.

In my early days of following Christ, my prayers were rough around the edges, too, but I was doing my best then, just as I'm doing my best now. My knowledge, life experience, and ability to hear the Spirit's leading has been growing. And the purpose and clarity of my prayers have been changing.

Don't feel overwhelmed, thinking you should be more confident when you pray. Play the song that you can play today, and remember that your song will get better with practice. Your Father understands.

EXPAND YOUR REPERTOIRE

I have the privilege of interacting with middle-school and high-school students with our prayer ministry called Claim Your Campus, and with adults through America's National Prayer Committee and the National Day of Prayer. Through these relationships, I have found that all ages and stages can struggle at times with what to say when they pray. Recently, our organization conducted national research, surveying more than 3,000 adults and students about prayer. We gained some interesting insights.

We asked, “Which of these would you like to understand most about prayer?” Here are their top two responses:

1. Am I saying the right things?

(49.85 percent)

2. Why doesn't God seem to answer?
(38.81 percent)

Both responses speak to the idea that people want to make sure they are “getting it right” with the effectiveness of their prayers.¹

When I was learning to play the guitar, the more chords I learned, the more songs I could play. I also learned to play songs in various keys, and even modulate between them. My practicing, combined with my increasing knowledge, allowed me to expand my repertoire. I found it exciting to learn new rhythms, patterns, and tempos. Slow and fast, upbeat and reflective, simple and complicated—all became possible with more time and effort.

Approach prayer as an adventurous, eager musician would. Try new things when you pray. Try praying through the Psalms, and let the various psalm types guide you in the many ways of expressing yourself to God. God uses information to bring revelation. Our prayer repertoire expands with time and training. The more we pray and learn, the more we understand that, just as in music, prayer has many genres: confession, thanksgiving, listening, private, public, intercessory—to name a few.

Don't be afraid to expand your repertoire. If you haven't prayed in public before, give it a try. The next time you are in a Bible study or worship gathering and there is an opportunity to pray out loud, go for it.

Have you knelt in prayer, or taken some form of humble physical posture when you've prayed? If not, try it. Have you ever sat silently or meditated on a passage of Scripture, asking God to speak to you personally? Have you written out a prayer? Try “playing a new song” in prayer and broaden your communication with God.

GAIN CONFIDENCE

As I practiced the guitar, my confidence also grew. I remember getting up the

courage to invite my girlfriend (who is now my wife) to hear me play two songs I had learned. My stomach tied in knots when I first stood in front of our congregation and led worship. I made plenty of mistakes. But over time, my confidence in my abilities grew. I felt less and less scared. And I felt more and more secure.

In my prayer life, too, I have experienced (and learned from others) the joy of a growing confidence. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." We can have confidence when we pray.

But unlike our musical analogy, that confidence isn't based on who we are or what we know. It is rather based on who He is and what He has done. The more I pray, the more I am reminded of this truth: *God* can make me bold and confident when I pray. I am His child, and you are too! We have been given the right to ask, and to ask with boldness.

This boldness isn't based on our abilities, but rather on God's past track record. I have a statement in my prayer journal: *Faith is the memory of God's faithfulness.* We can be bold because we know He is able and willing to help in our time of need!

When you pray, are you recalling God's faithfulness? Do you remember the great things He has done for you? Is your confidence growing?

KEEP LEARNING

What amazes me about prayer is that we can learn it from the time we learn to speak as small children, yet we can practice it in every stage of our lives throughout mature adulthood. Like learning the guitar, learning a simple prayer "song" can begin with simplicity. Yet further down the road of faith, we can pray more fully expanded "songs" of praise, thanksgiving, and intercession to our loving Father.

The longer you follow Christ and practice prayer, the more you will grow in this spiritual discipline. The way you pray now will be different than it was

when you first began following Christ. And it will look different five years from now as you continue to follow Him.

Prayer may be easy to learn and hard to master. But as we keep our hearts true to the Father, we can rest assured that He will "tune" His ear to us (Ps. 116:2). And perhaps in this journey we will discover exciting, different ways to bring new passion to our prayer lives. **PC**

¹Find these results and more about our research at NeverTheSame.org/podcast.



JEFF ECKART is on the executive board of the National Day of Prayer and America's National Prayer Committee. He founded *Never The Same* (neverthesame.org), a national youth ministry organization, and Claim Your Campus, which unites students in prayer on their school campuses. Learn more at jeffeckart.com.

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BY DR. RONNIE FLOYD

SCRIPTURAL PRAYERS FOR ALL SITUATIONS



ONE SIZE

Doesn't Fit All

Many years ago, when my wife Jeana was diagnosed with cancer, it was a wake-up call for us. At that time we had two young boys, a large and growing church, and a great life. But when cancer struck my 35-year-old wife and led to surgeries, ruthless chemotherapy treatments, and additional radiation treatments, our lives turned upside down.

This crisis did not drive us *away* from God but *to* God. It changed both of us and shaped our life together.

On the overcast morning of her initial diagnosis, I remember walking into our home, getting on our knees together, and crying out to God. I don't remember the exact words we prayed, but they were not processed and refined. Honesty before God, with fear we had never

known before, poured out of our hearts. Fears and tears eventually turned into faith and peace.

NEVER THE LAST OPTION

When this crisis unexpectedly entered our lives, we chose prayer. We depended on God, not just this time, but again and again when fear would stop us in our tracks. Even after the surgeries and treatments, and even when the reports became encouraging, we still had moments of doubt and fear. In each of those times, prayer became our first choice, not our last option.

Prayerlessness must not prevail. Each follower of Christ needs to pray with confidence, and each church needs to pray with power. As we depend on God personally and collectively, we will grow in our walk with the Lord daily.

I believe this is only possible when we stand on God's Word as we pray, knowing that God has given us prayer as a means of communication with Him. God's Word has given us multiple illustrations that one kind of prayer does not fit all instances.

PRAYER IS GROUNDED UPON DEEP THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS

The foundation of a building often goes much deeper than what's on the surface. We see the concrete of the structure. Yet, deep below lies the evidence of work that took hours, days, and weeks. The bigger the structure, the deeper and broader the foundation must be.

The same principle applies to prayer. Beyond what we see with our human eyes, the depths of God's Word contain deep theological truths that shape our lives and perspectives.

We can pray with confidence, built on God's character:

1. Sovereignty of God. God is over all, in all, and through all. God is supreme in rank and rule in this universe and beyond. He is God. He has no beginning or ending. God is involved in the affairs of this world and the details of our lives.

2. Trinity of God. God is One in three divine persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As Father, He knows our needs and cares for us deeply. As Son, He died for us to be saved from our sin. As Holy Spirit, He empowers us to live the Christian life. We pray to the Father in Jesus' name and do so in the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. Power of God. God is all-powerful. God is able! When we believe in the power of God, we realize we can go to God about anything. We believe that God can do more in a moment than we can do in a lifetime.

Just as laying the underpinnings strengthens the foundation of physical structures, knowing these deep theological truths strengthens our confidence in the power of prayer.

Because I believe the Father loves me,

I talk to Him in the name of Jesus Christ His Son and present my requests in the power of the Holy Spirit. I do so knowing God can do anything, anytime, anywhere, with anyone. I am confident that nothing is impossible with God.

FIVE SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES YOUR PRAYERS CAN STAND ON

God loves us so much that, in His Word, He demonstrates innumerable ways He desires us to pray to Him about specific things and situations. These illustrations remind us that one-size prayer doesn't fit every circumstance. Here are five examples He gives us:

1. Battles. Have you ever gone through battles (challenges, obstacles, conflicts with people) when the outcome appeared devastating? Has an impending attack led to personal defeat or setback?

This is exactly the situation recorded in 2 Chronicles 20. King Jehoshaphat and the people of God were surrounded by their enemies, facing inevitable defeat.

Then the Spirit of God came upon a man named Jahaziel. He declared these words from the Lord to the people of God and to King Jehoshaphat: "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's" (2 Chron. 20:15).

After that amazing command and promise, Jahaziel gave these orders to God's people:

- Go down against the enemy.
- You do not have to fight this battle.
- Position yourselves.
- Stand still.
- See the salvation of the Lord.
- Do not be afraid or discouraged.
- God is with you.

King Jehoshaphat and all the people knelt to honor God, they prayed, and they worshiped the Lord. The next morning, while the Israelites continued



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worshiping God, He sent a state of confusion among their enemies, which caused them to fight against each other and destroy themselves.

Scriptural principle for today: Give your battles to God. They are not yours but His. Always remember: He is with you.

2. Miracles. Do you need God to do something in your personal life, family, business, career, school, church, or nation that only He can do? Simply put, do you need a miracle?

Not one of us can dictate to God what He should do. He is sovereign. Yet He has given us the privilege of talking to Him about what we need, what we desire, and what we know only He can do.

After the people of God entered the Promised Land, they had to take the land from their enemies. Joshua 10 tells us the joint forces of the five Amorite kings were strong and mighty.

Standing in front of all the Israelites, Joshua called out to God, asking Him for a miracle so they could gain complete victory. What Joshua asked God to do, only God Himself could do. Here is Joshua's bold request:

"Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon."

And this is God's astounding response:

So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a human being. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel! (Josh. 10:12-14).

Joshua knew only God Himself, the Creator of the universe, could stop the sun and the moon. Yet this leader had the courage and faith to boldly ask God to do it. And He did. The sun stood still. The Lord fought for Israel, giving them victory.

Do you need a miracle? Do you need God to do something you know only He can do?

Scriptural principle for today: God, the Creator, stopped the sun and the moon in their tracks in answer to one man's prayer. Always remember: He can do anything. With courage and faith ask God to do a miracle in your situation and to bring Himself glory through it.

3. Healing. Our bodies are decaying even as we read these words. Although fitness can enhance our lives, only God determines our years. Sometimes we get sick. Some people get sick and learn they



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in trouble?

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are going to die. Each of us will die—sometime.

King Hezekiah got sick—terminally ill, in fact—according to 2 Kings 20. The prophet Isaiah told him to get his house in order because he was going to die. When Hezekiah faced this grim reality, here is how he responded:

Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, “Please Lord, remember how I have walked before you faithfully and wholeheartedly and have done what pleases you.”

And Hezekiah wept bitterly (2 Kings 20:2–3, CSB).

As Isaiah was about to leave the courtyard, God told him to go back and deliver another message to Hezekiah: “I have heard your prayer and seen your tears,” God said. Then He promised, “I will heal you” (2 Kings 20:5).

Isaiah applied a lump of pressed figs

to Hezekiah’s infected skin, and the king recovered. God not only kept His promise and healed Hezekiah, but He added 15 years to the king’s life!

Scriptural principle for today: God will ultimately heal all of His followers in heaven. There are times on this earth when we become gravely ill and God heals us because His purpose for our life is not yet complete. Always remember: God can heal you here, but He will one day heal you completely in heaven.

4. Others. Do you desire to pray for other people effectively? Oftentimes, we only pray for others when they are in a crisis. But how can we pray daily for our pastors, church leaders, friends, family members, and others?

The apostle Paul told the Christ followers in Colossae that he had not stopped praying for them. Then he told them he was praying for them to walk

worthy of the Lord, bear fruit, receive strength, and endure with patience in their walk with Christ. He wrote, “We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col. 1:9, CSB).

Scriptural principle for today: Pray for others to be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in everything, to have God’s perspective and understanding, and to be able to integrate their lives biblically, spiritually, and practically. Always remember: God expects us to pray for each other.

5. Open Doors. Paul also encouraged Christ’s followers in Colossae to pray for him. He wrote, “Pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should” (Col. 4:3–4).

This is a powerful request. Scripture details other times in Paul’s life when God closed the doors or told Paul he did not need to go where he had wanted to go. Note that Paul wanted open doors in order to advance the gospel, not for personal gain.

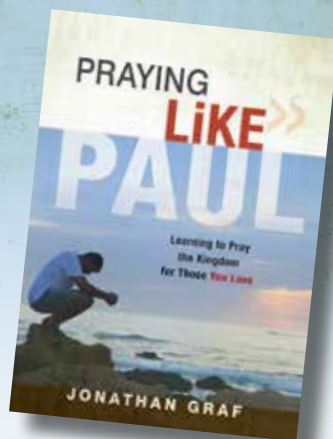
Scriptural principle for today: Ask God to open doors for you and your future so you can advance the gospel more effectively. Always remember: Deepen your walk with God, and He will broaden your influence.

HOW DID THE APOSTLE PAUL DO IT?

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

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

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STAND STRONG

Whatever your situation may be, talk to God about it. Search His Scriptures. Stand on His Word when you pray. By faith believe that God can do more in a moment than you can do in a lifetime.

Always remember this basic principle: When we pray, we depend on God. When we do not pray, we depend on ourselves. ☞



RONNIE FLOYD is president of the National Day of Prayer and senior pastor of Cross Church, which has five campuses in northwest Arkansas and southwest Missouri.



**CALLING ALL PASTORS, CHURCHES,
DENOMINATIONS, AND MINISTRIES TO JOIN US IN
FORWARDING UNITY IN OUR NATION BY MOBILIZING
UNIFIED PUBLIC PRAYER FOR AMERICA**

MOBILIZING UNIFIED PUBLIC PRAYER FOR AMERICA

The National Day of Prayer mobilizes unified public prayer for America.

"Our vision is to be a multi-church, multi-denominational, multi-ministry, multi-generational, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual movement of prayer for America."

Therefore, I am asking you to become part of our task force for the National Day of Prayer and help us mobilize millions of people to pray for America on Thursday, May 3, 2018. There are three ways you can join us:

- Participate in an existing observance of the National Day of Prayer in your community.
- Create a new observance in your community that will mobilize more people to pray for unity in America.
- Begin to pray now for Thursday, May 3.

Engage with us, pray with us, and get involved!
Save Thursday, May 3, 2018, on your calendar for the National Day of Prayer.

"We are calling all pastors, churches, denominations, and ministries to join us in praying and forwarding unity in our nation on Thursday, May 3, 2018."

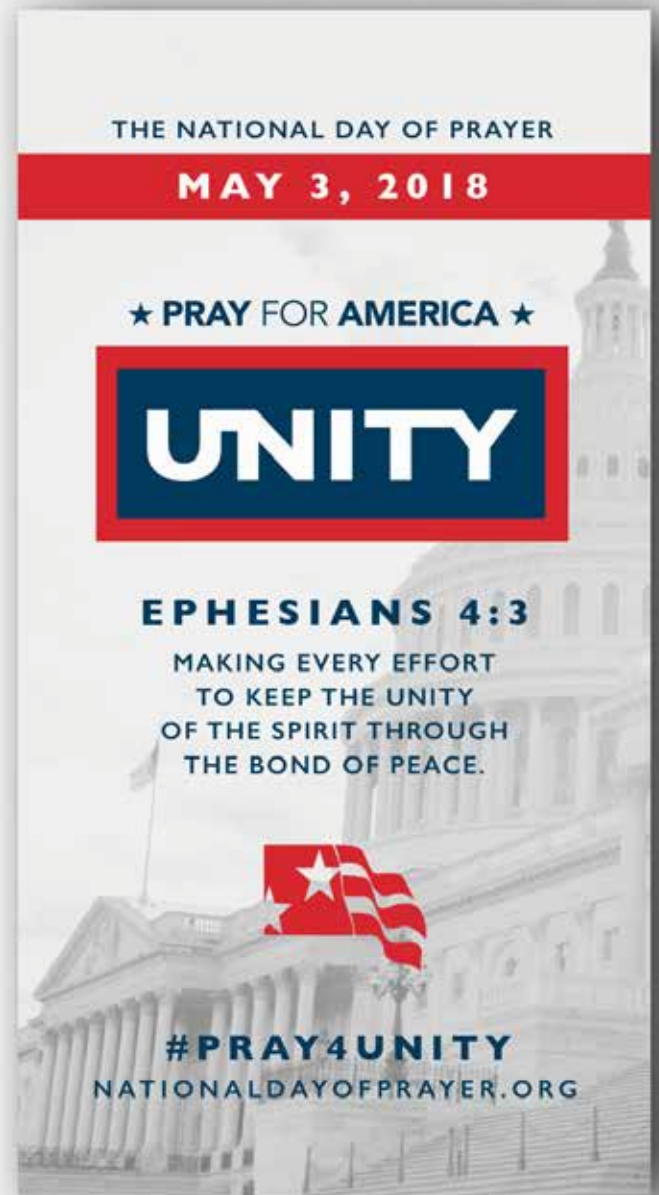
This year, we also celebrate the 30th anniversary of Congress and President Ronald Reagan amending the 1952 law, and establishing the National Day of Prayer as *The First Thursday of May*.

"This is encouraging because we know that no great movement of God has ever occurred without the extraordinary prayer of God's people."

Now is the Time to Lead and Pray for America,

Dr. Ronnie Floyd

President, National Day of Prayer Task Force
Senior Pastor, Cross Church



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a maroon top, is shown in profile, looking out of a window. The window is covered in raindrops, and the background outside is blurred. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

BY BARBARA HO

REMINDERS OF SIMPLE TRUTHS

BACK TO

the Basics

I had invited my Sunday school class and their families over for a BBQ/pool party on a Sunday. As the week progressed, the weather forecasts looked worse and worse. The thought of 30 people crammed into our house on a rainy day was not pleasant.

This happened while I was writing this article about the basics of prayer. As I worried about the situation, God spoke to me: “Why not live out the words you’re writing?”

“OK, Lord,” I said, and I prayed this simple prayer: “Lord, please keep the rain away on Sunday.”

You guessed it. Not a drop of rain. Not even a cloud in the sky. God answered my prayers and the outdoor gathering blessed our guests through the joy of relationships.

ARE YOU EFFECTIVE?

In James 5:16, God makes this great promise: “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

But what *is* effective prayer? And what would

you say if I asked you whether *your* prayers are effective? How do you even measure whether your prayers are serving their purpose?

The truth is, prayer doesn’t make a difference; it makes *the* difference. It impacts not just our relationship with God but also the world we live in.

With that in mind, why do so many Christians struggle with prayer? It’s often on the top of our to-do list, yet on the bottom of things we successfully accomplish. Why is that?

One way we limit our prayer life is by complicating it. We tend to overthink it. But we don’t have to be Bible scholars to understand prayer. God intends every person to have a vibrant intimate relationship with Him—and prayer is a major part of that.

BASIC TRUTHS TO PRAY BY

The following are some basic truths that have helped me pray in confidence. When I pray according to these truths, I know my prayers are effective and powerful.

1. Effective prayer rises out of the make-it or break-it question, Who is God? An effective, transforming prayer life is not so much based on how we pray or our position in prayer—or even the words we use. It’s based on our understanding of the One we’re praying to.

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that “without

faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” We will not pray in faith to a God we do not believe is capable. It’s that simple. Either we believe Him to be the God described in the Bible or we don’t. And the depth

of our prayer lives will reflect that belief. It is foundational.

Do you believe Him to be the all-knowing, all-powerful, Creator God? Or is He just a limited being who is sometimes dependable but often not. Is He able when you’re not? Can He use you—with all your imperfections and limitations? Can He, when you can’t? Is He, when you’re not? Does He not only exist, but will He reward you when you “earnestly seek Him”?

Our answer is more than important—it’s essential. We pray out of our belief and understanding of who we know God to be.

This deep-rooted belief is the solid-rock foundation. Our prayer lives are built on it.

2. Effective prayer expresses our thoughts, feelings, needs, and desires to God. We find this truth in a story in Mark 10:46–52. One day as Jesus entered the city of Jericho, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus called out to Him. Jesus’ disciples brought the man to Him, and Jesus asked Bartimaeus an interesting question: “What do you want me to do for you?”

Wasn’t that obvious? But Jesus told him to verbalize his request.

“Rabbi,” he said, “I want to see.” And the Bible says Jesus then healed him.

The apostle James later wrote, “You do not have because you do not ask God” (James 4:2). How many of our prayers have gone unanswered because they were never really asked?

But doesn’t God know what we need, what our thoughts are, and how we feel? Why do we need to tell Him things He already knows?

There’s something freeing about putting into words the thoughts and feelings in our minds and hearts, expressing them to God. When we verbalize our thoughts and concerns to the Lord, several things happen.

• *Speaking out to God draws our focus to Him.* When we say out loud what is in our hearts, we’re more likely to look to

MENTORING IN THE BASICS

A few years ago, after viewing the movie *War Room* (which featured an older woman mentoring a younger woman in prayer), I felt convicted. What was I doing to pass on a legacy of prayer? I told the Lord I was open to what that might look like, then had a thought: *six women for six months*. I noted the idea as perhaps being from the Lord—and waited on Him.

A couple weeks later, I walked through the foyer of my church and greeted two younger women. One of them said, “Carol, we were just talking about you. We were wondering if you would mentor us.”

That was my cue! Within a few weeks, we arranged for six women to be a part of a prayer-mentoring group for six months. I am now mentoring my fourth group—a total of 24 women in my church who have learned some principles of prayer based on my personal experiences and training over the years.

Here are some of the basic topics we cover:

- Prayer personalities: Not everyone prays the same way. How has God wired you?
- Praying Scripture: The Bible is our go-to prayer book.
- Contending in prayer: Jesus instructs us to persevere in prayer (Luke 18:1–8). But there are also times when we must “contend” with urgency and fervency.
- The power of fasting: Why do we fast? What are some biblical examples?
- Paul’s prayer life: The importance of thankfulness, love, warfare, and other prayer principles.
- Listening prayer: How do we quiet ourselves to hear God’s voice—especially through His Word?
- Prayer life of Jesus: He is, after all, the greatest Intercessor ever!
- Obedience in prayer: Learning to pray bold prayers and being willing to obey as God leads.

If you take on the challenge of mentoring others in prayer, consider some of the basics you’ve learned that have been helpful to you. Ask the Lord to remind you of stories illustrating ways He has directed and answered your prayers. Others will find tremendous encouragement in the ways God has worked in your own prayer life—if you just share it!

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect*.

Him for the answers. Our eyes shift from our problems and challenges to the Lord, who can solve them. This shift can bring peace and calm, not to mention answers to prayer.

- *Speaking out to God deepens our relationship with Him.* I've been married more than 35 years, and I'm thankful that, even though my husband usually knows how I feel and what my thoughts are, I can share them freely. I know he's always there to listen and give me needed support. The same is true in our relationship with the Lord. God longs for an intimate relationship with us. He created us for that. Not only can we bring our concerns to Him, but we can also share our thoughts and deepest feelings. And we can be sure He never gets tired of hearing from us. He's always there to listen.
- *Speaking out to God also opens the door to faith.* It takes faith to express a need. I would never request something of someone I didn't believe could help me. I wouldn't walk up to people on the street and tell them of a financial need of mine. Why would I waste my time? Lifting our requests to the Lord confirms our need for His intervention. It takes faith to speak it out.

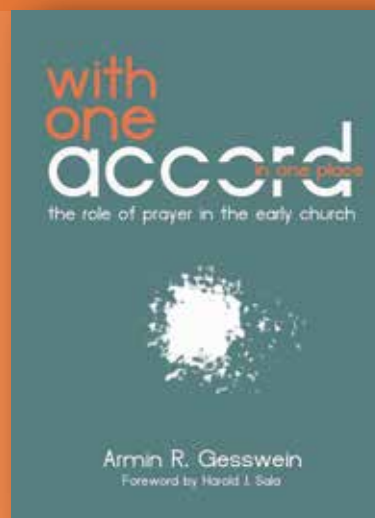
3. Effective prayer is listening to, and hearing from, God. I was recently reminded of how often Jesus spoke with God while He was on earth. It was typical of a son conversing with his father. The Holy Spirit brought to my mind the reality of John 17:23: "Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them *even as you have loved me*" (italics added).

Can you imagine that? Our heavenly Father loves us as much as He does His Son Jesus. And the way Jesus conversed with His Father is the very way we *can* and *should* talk with Him. After all, He is our heavenly Father.

Do you hear from God? I don't

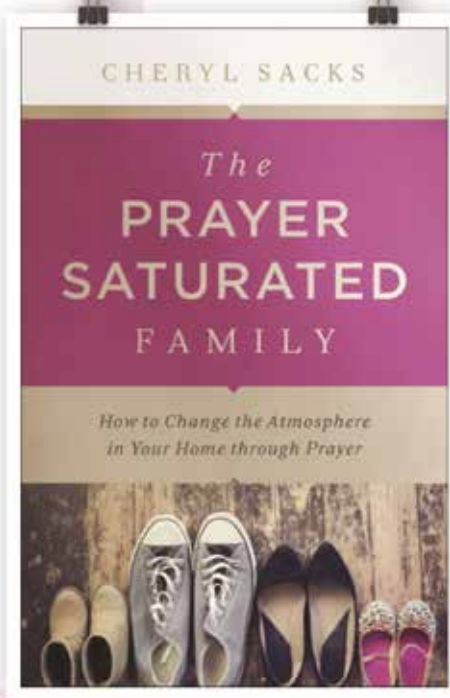
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mean in a general way, but in a personal, intimate way?

Do you want to hear from Him more? He longs to speak to you.

In more ways than I can write, I've heard God speak through His Word, through a *still small voice*, and through others. And I've learned that it's important to listen and then receive by faith the truths God is telling me. It's like

learning to play an instrument. The more we practice, the more our skills improve. The same is true when hearing and listening to the Lord; the more we learn to listen, the more we will recognize His voice. It just takes practice.

4. Effective prayer includes speaking the Word of God in prayer. It's like reminding God of His promises. No, God never forgets—but we do.

If I'm facing a difficult situation, I may speak out Romans 8:28: "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." I'll thank God that not only will He get me through this difficulty, but He will also work it for good in my life. I trust Him to turn this hardship into an actual blessing.


Or when I'm interceding for someone, I'll stand on a passage from the Bible that relates to that person's situation. Does that person need comfort? Our God is "the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3).

Is someone struggling with guilt—often praying for forgiveness? I may speak out Hebrews 10:22, which reminds us to "draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience."

God's Word is true. Do we know God's Word well enough to speak it out as we pray? If we're ignorant of the truths and teachings of the Bible, we will be limited in our prayer life. The Word of God brings wisdom into our prayers. It directs us *how* to pray. It reveals the truth about the One we're praying to.

IT MATTERS

Simply put, our prayers can—and should—be powerful and effective. We should not hesitate to ask God—whether we're praying for a sick friend, asking Him to meet a financial need, or keeping the rain away from a BBQ/pool party.

If it matters to you, it matters to God. When we pray, He breathes life into whatever we're facing. 

Do you long for the ULTIMATE CONNECTION?

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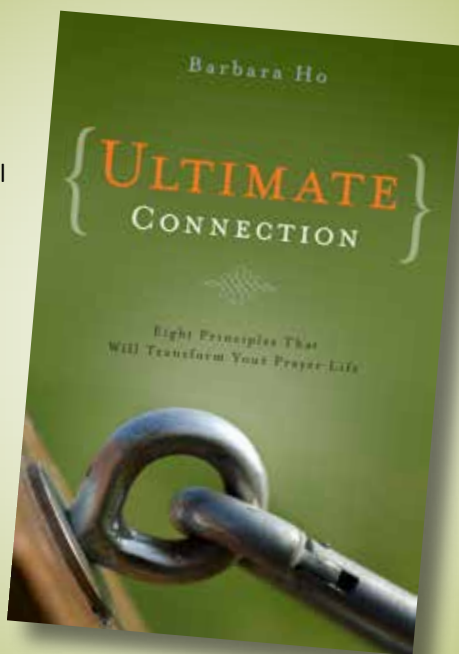
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— Susan Lana Hafner,
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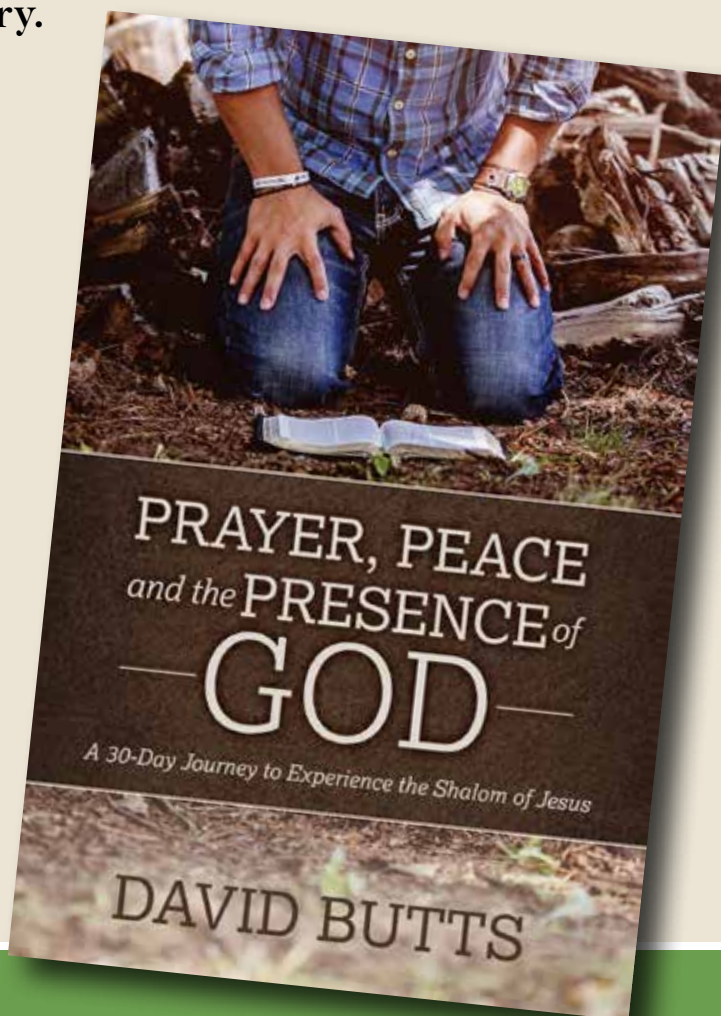
BARBARA HO and her husband Dan minister in a church in Houston, TX, and are active in missions work in Ukraine. She is the author of *Ultimate Connection*, available at prayershop.org.

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As believers, we are supposed to walk in Christ's peace day by day. But when the trials, struggles, and stresses of life come upon us, many of us do not experience that peace. Instead, we look at our circumstances and worry.

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BIBLE

Study

BACK TO BASICS

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.

I was only in my mid-20s when a friend from church startled me with a question: “Will you mentor me in prayer?”

I have no idea why she thought I could help her. I was by no means a prayer warrior myself. However, I wanted to be more effective in prayer—and I knew there was more than I had experienced.

So I told her, “I am no prayer expert, but I’d love to learn with you. Want to try to learn together?”

We started by reading books about prayer. Great books about prayer. But that didn’t make us more effective. We bought prayer journals and journaled our requests, leaving plenty of empty space for where we hoped to record answers. But honestly? That didn’t help us much either.

It wasn’t until we set aside regular time—every Tuesday night—to actually pray together that things changed. That’s when we started to grow more confident and effective in prayer.

The articles in this issue of *Prayer Connect* provide inspiration and great ideas about prayer. But there is no way to truly become effective at prayer except by doing it. So I hope you will do this Bible study, let the Holy Spirit encourage you through God’s Word, then actually set aside some time and *do it*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

When we feel as if we don’t pray enough, our usual response is to treat the symptom. We want to pray more, so we try harder and exert greater self-discipline. However, that approach rarely helps. We need to address the root issue. We need to see our own weakness and God’s strength. Dr. Ronnie Floyd says, “When we pray, we depend on God. When we do not pray, we depend on ourselves.”

What do the following Scriptures tell you about self-reliance versus God-reliance? Proverbs 3:5–7; Jeremiah 9:23–24; John 5:19; John 15:1–17; Philippians 4:13.

In what specific situation do you need to rely more on God and less on yourself?

How will that affect the way you pray?

Barbara Ho points out that confident prayer comes from knowing and understanding who God really is. After each of the Bible references, write what the verses say about God.

Exodus 34:6–7:

Psalm 25:8:

Jeremiah 32:17:

Acts 17:24–28:

Romans 11:33:

Ephesians 2:4:

1 John 4:8:

Which attribute of God do you need most right now? How can meditating on this aspect of God give you more faith and confidence in prayer?

Jeff Eckart encourages us to expand our prayer repertoires by trying new things when we pray. One of his suggestions is to learn different ways of expressing ourselves to God by praying the Psalms. Read the following psalms and list the insights, encouragement, or fresh ideas for prayer they give you. Psalm 19; Psalm 27; Psalm 42; Psalm 51; Psalm 91; Psalm 100; Psalm 131; Psalm 145.

ACTION STEPS

Eckart suggests other things to try as you experiment with increasing your prayer repertoire. Put a check by one or two that you will try in the next week or so. Plan to share about your experience with a friend, family member, or your small group.

- ☐ Pray through some psalms.
- ☐ The next time someone asks, “Who’d like to pray?” be the one to volunteer.
- ☐ Vary your prayer posture. Try kneeling, standing with arms raised, or lying prostrate on the floor.
- ☐ Meditate on a portion of Scripture and write down what you sense God is saying to you.
- ☐ Write out your prayers.
- ☐ Try singing your prayer song to God—improvise and make a “new song” to Him.

Choose one of the five areas of prayer that Dr. Floyd discusses in his article: battles, miracles, healing, intercession for others, open doors. Then spend a week especially concentrating on praying those kinds of prayers every day. Write your area of focus below. One week from now, record anything you notice about your experience in praying with this focus.

In her sidebar, “Mentoring in the Basics,” Carol Madison writes about her experience in mentoring others in prayer. Why not ask God if there’s someone He’d have you mentor? Or, if you don’t feel prepared to mentor someone else, perhaps there is someone who would like to grow in prayer with you. You can grow together! Not sure where to start? You could choose from the topics Madison suggests in her article. **PC**

CYNTHIA HYLE BEZEK is a regular contributor to *Prayer Connect* and the editorial director for Community Bible Study (communitybiblestudy.org).

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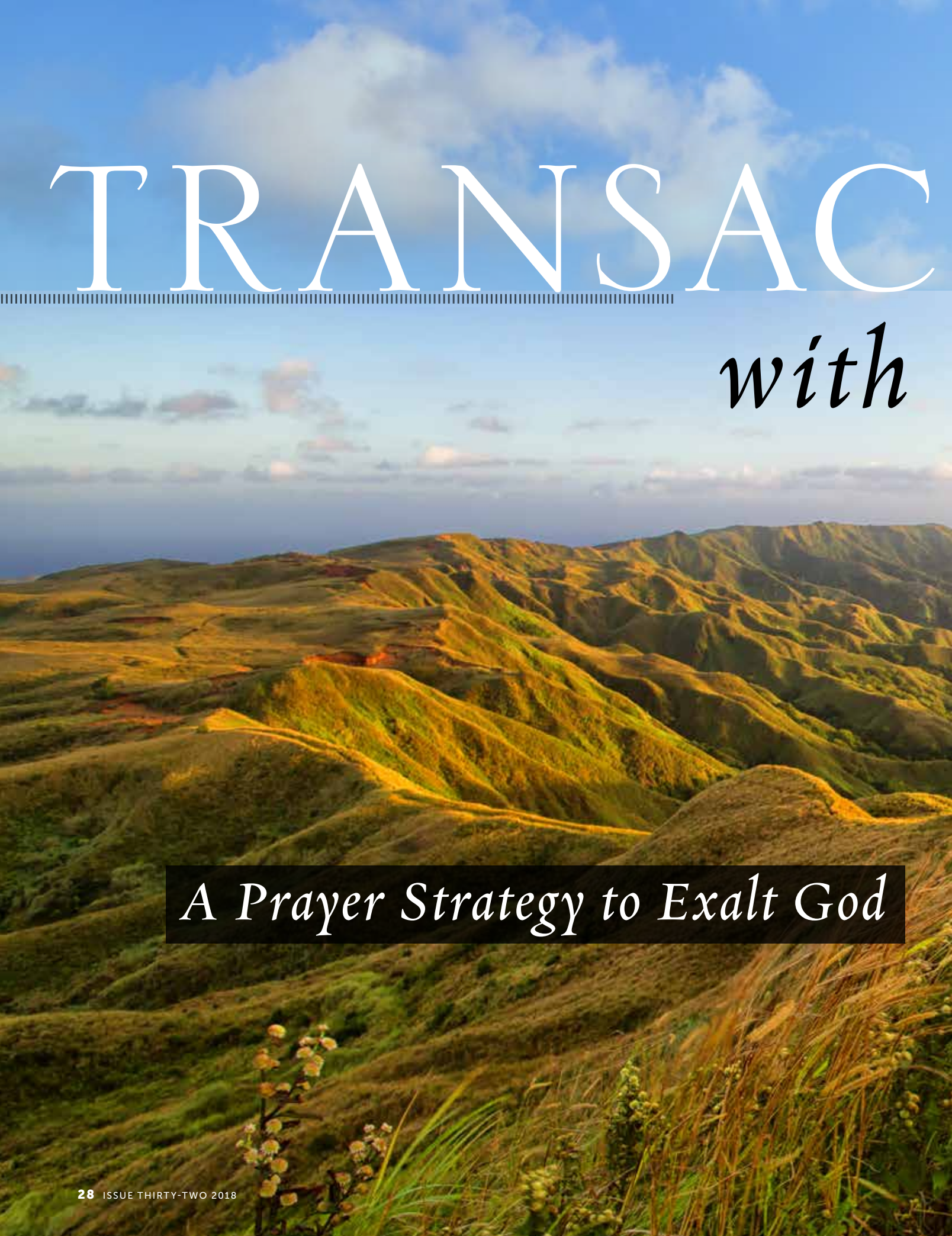
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A Prayer Strategy to Exalt God

TIONS HEAVEN

IN 2013, I made my third visit to Guam—an island known as “Where America’s Day Begins.” As a U.S. territory, Guam’s western location on the International Date Line makes it the first to experience a new day in the United States.

Our objective was to climb arguably the tallest mountain in the world and pray strategically for the nation of Guam. It was a daring assignment because of safety issues, but I believe our obedience allowed us to experience a powerful transaction with heaven.

Through this experience, the Lord solidified for me a prayer strategy I call the RDTP Prayer Strategy (Repentance, Declarations, Thanksgiving, and Praise).

Praying in the High Place

Since 2009, I have felt the Lord’s leading to organize a “Soulcheck” every year and a half in places such as the Reliant Arena in Houston, TX, and the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue, WA. A Soulcheck is a 12-hour gathering of the Body of Christ in sacrificial worship (meaning no one is paid and no offering is taken).

Worship expressed in different languages and forms reflects the multicultural, multigenerational, and multid denominational nature of the Church.

I visited Guam to prepare the island for what I called “Soulcheck Guam: A Fiesta for Jesus.” Guam holds monthly fiestas for various “religious saints.” (Idol worship is strong.) But I knew there had never been a Fiesta for Jesus in Guam’s history.

During prior visits, I was told about Mount Lamlam—the highest place in Guam—considered, by some, the tallest mountain in the world. The reason for this claim is that the deepest point on the earth (The Challenger Deep) is approximately 35,893 feet below sea level. Mount Lamlam, with its elevation of 1,334 feet, connects to The Challenger Deep via the Mariana Trench. The combination of this depth and elevation is 37,227 feet. Mount Everest, although fully above sea level, is 29,035 feet (numbers vary according to different sources).

Our recognition of this as a “high place” was significant for our prayers. Historically, God instructed and blessed those who destroyed the high places and idols. Consider

BY NATASHA MILLER

Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18:3–7, Josiah in 2 Chronicles 34:1–7, and Gideon in Judges 6:24–26.

With that understanding, I issued an invitation to the Guam island church leadership to climb the mountain with me and exalt God higher than any other thing (Ps. 99:9; Isa. 42:12). I sensed the Lord was going to allow us to replace the idol worship of Guam—a focal point of the island’s activities—with the exaltation of God. This climb to the high place was to represent spiritual preparation for the physical worship of God at Soulcheck Guam.

But I believed He was not guiding us to directly address the demonic principalities, powers, and rulers in that spiritually dark nation. He was revealing a different strategy that called for humility and obedience.

Seeing God’s Affirmation

In the early morning hours, we gathered at the base of Mount Lamlam. We wanted to avoid the onslaught of the hot sun and evade the moist morning ground. I once saw a friend fall while climbing—and I have fallen myself—so I wanted to ensure we were climbing in the safest way possible. I was grateful my weather app predicted a hot, dry day.

One of the Chamorro elders (indigenous people of Guam) handed me a bullhorn. I called out a couple of directions, everyone signed waivers related to the potential dangers, and then we began the ascent, single file. When we neared the top of Mount Lamlam, the weather was perfect: sunny with a light breeze.

Once everyone safely gathered at our destination, printouts of Psalms 51 and 23 were passed out. We read in unison Psalm 51—a song of *repentance*. First we read the psalm “as is,” and then we read it again, integrating *Guam* into it. For example, we prayed together, “Have mercy on [Guam], O God.”

The minute we *repented* on behalf of Guam, the weather changed. The beautiful day turned dark and dangerously cold.

Rain pelted us. The wind pushed and pulled our bodies and turned the rain into a weapon. The paper in my hand melted away with the moisture. I had to scramble for another printout and keep it dry inside my backpack. My body shivered, bombarded by the rain and wind. I was concerned that people would start running down the mountain for shelter. But no one moved. We stood our ground.

After we finished Psalm 51 and our repentant prayers on behalf of Guam, someone began waving a white flag, and together we shouted, “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.”

At that point, in unison again, we *declared* the truth of God’s Word in Psalm 23: “The LORD is [Guam’s] shepherd. . . .”

In another dramatic shift, we sensed a sudden atmospheric peace—Jesus making Himself known. The rain stopped, the clouds disappeared, the sun came out, and we soaked in its warmth. The wind began cuddling us instead of attacking us. Joy filled our hearts, and *thanksgiving* began pouring out of our mouths. We thanked the Lord for receiving our repentance, and we believed that He would manifest the full meaning of Psalm 23 in Guam.

Immediately after we sensed God’s peace reigning over creation, one of the nationally recognized Christian Chamorro singers arrived at the top of the mountain. He took out his guitar and began leading our group in *praise*. We worshiped and praised the Lord with all we had. It was a glorious day.

No one had taken the time to count the participants, but God protected each one of us—no falls! And later, when we counted the number of “waivers” the people had previously signed, we had 51. Exactly 51 believers repented for Guam through the inspiration of Psalm 51! What a wonderful affirmation God gave us in response to our acts of obedience on the mountain!

A couple months later, Soulcheck Guam: A Fiesta for Jesus, was a powerful, amazing 12 hours of worship and prayer in which we could deeply and

tangibly feel God’s presence. Hundreds responded to the gospel message and to personal ministry. We fed approximately 3,000 people and didn’t run out of food. And Jesus was honored and exalted in the nation!

Learning a New Way

I believe the Lord allowed us to feel both the physical and spiritual impact from our prayer strategy on Mount Lamlam so we could learn an effective way to pray for people, cities, and nations—and ultimately share the gospel. A few years later, as I reflected on our experiences, I understood more about what I now call the “RDTP Prayer Strategy” (Repentance, Declarations, Thanksgiving, Prayer):

1. Repentance. This is key in spiritual warfare. Our repentance locks the door to the kingdom of darkness and opens the door to the Kingdom of Light. The locking and unlocking mechanism of repentance relies on agreement.

Breaking agreement with the demonic locks the door to the kingdom of darkness. Establishing agreement with heaven does several things: it opens the door to the Kingdom of Light, it creates realignment, and it begets restoration—restoring our intimacy with the Lord and His manifest blessing.

Scripture gives us numerous repentance examples of God’s people, such as Daniel, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, and the prodigal son. God heard them all, whether they were repenting on behalf of a nation (Dan. 9:1–19), on behalf of others (Neh. 1:4–11), or on their own behalf (Matt. 3:2, Luke 15:11–32). He heard and answered according to His promise: “if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

The act of repentance nullifies curses and pours out blessings. Repentance frees us from captivity. It enables us to rebuild, to receive the Kingdom of

God via Jesus Christ, and to restore our inheritance.

2. Declarations. Once repentance opens the door to the Kingdom of Light, declarations from God's Word can flow effortlessly from our hearts on behalf of those needing repentance. With satanic activity closed off, the declared Word quickens the manifestation of God's presence. It can bring us into alignment with Him.

Jesus Christ as a man lived in perfect alignment (agreement) with Father God (John 5:19–20). What Jesus declared (John 12:49) came to pass immediately—healing, casting out demons, and other supernatural events. His open door to the Kingdom of Light allowed God's Kingdom to manifest itself.

For us, however, a lack of faith often prevents that manifestation, precisely because faith in Jesus is what brings it about. Thus, faith is a necessary component.

"Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" (Heb. 11:1).

3. Thanksgiving. When we then confidently give thanks for something we are waiting to receive, our thanksgiving releases faith. Giving thanks empowers those declarations until they are established. This is why Paul speaks so often of giving thanks in all things (1 Thess. 5:18).

4. Praise. When we have repented, declared His Word, and given thanks, praise allows us to refocus on God and be filled anew by the Holy Spirit. Like a candle on a cake celebrates a birthday, praise celebrates the Lord and His presence. Praise refreshes and creates a sparkle in people's eyes. It is the perfect way to end an intense spiritual transaction.

Breakthrough Strategies

Whether we're praying for a wayward child, for friends, or even for enemies, we

have a powerful breakthrough strategy. Engaging in this process—*repenting* on their behalf, *declaring* God's Word and truth over them, *thanking* God for the breakthrough, and then *praising* Him—can change our own hearts and our family's destiny.

On a larger scale, like the people near the International Date Line, we can be among the first to experience a "new day." Exalting God in the "high places" can change our cities, our nations, and our world—one act of obedience at a time. **PC**



NATASHA MILLER, who graduated with a master's of divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, currently teaches and leads worship and intercession through various churches and ministries. She has launched Natasha Ministries and released her first book—*Whisper Your Secrets: A Devotional Journal*—to help others come to know and experience God.

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Weep

THE POWER OF TEARS

AND TRAVAIL

IN PRAYER

BY JOYCE GODSEN

ing in Intercession

I remember hearing, as a child, a popular old ballad with the adamant advice never to cry out loud, always keep everything inside, and be sure to hide your feelings. This trendy philosophy, combined with my family upbringing, produced in me the stoic ideals of composure and levelheadedness in all situations and circumstances.

Both of my parents were medical professionals: my father, an obstetrician/gynecologist, and my mother, a Ph.D. social worker and psychotherapist. I watched as my mother and father were called into work at all hours to meet needs and save the lives of many people in crisis. My parents' voices of calmness and reason helped others through turmoil and pain.

Their professional poise and composure carried over into our home life and transferred readily to my sisters and me. We

were not people of drama. Our family's attention and interests focused on serving others—from an objective viewpoint—during their traumatic situations.

So I developed a “we haven't got time for the pain” mindset.

Keep It in Check

I had very little understanding of what it meant to endure sorrow and suffering as a Christian. It's not that we were immune to troubles and problems; on the contrary, we suffered more than our fair share of injustices and tragedies. The way my family handled these things, however, made me question the value of weeping and tears. I did not learn how to endure hardship as a spiritual discipline and had no time for weeping and mourning in travail with Christ.

I often heard, “You’re not going to change anything by crying.” My father’s typical response was, “Stay calm. Be logical.” My mother’s was, “Be still. Trust God.” Out of this, I developed my own coping mechanism: “Detach. Shut down all emotion. Keep a stiff upper lip. Move on.” Unfortunately, this approach offered little logic and produced even less trust in God.

I learned how to go through life’s hard experiences objectively, realizing we live in a sinful, broken, and fallen world. I could handle pain—or so I thought—until my mother died in my early adulthood.

If there was ever an occasion to cry, it would have been when my mother’s life was taken by a medical error in the hospital. But I had too much training that told me, “Be stoic. Be brave. Look for the silver lining behind every dark cloud.”

I could thank the Lord that my mother was with Him in heaven and no longer suffering in the hospital. But at first it was very difficult—scary even—to shed tears for my own grief and loss.

Turning Point of Tears

During the week following my mother’s death, the details of funeral planning provided a measure of distraction that seemed to bring some comfort. I was busy, detached, and thought I would just keep moving on.

But the Holy Spirit began to work within me and prepared me for a turning point. The Lord was not going to allow me to continue living apart from Him anymore. I had put my faith in Jesus as a child, but until my mother died, I only knew how to live my life from my head. I knew I loved Jesus, but this knowledge had very little connection with this Lord living in my heart. I had very little head and heart connection in general. I could pray for others but not for myself. *Why not?* I wondered.

I did not know what I needed. I did not know how I felt. In my efforts to detach from pain and suffering by being

a so-called “productive person” in the professional world, I had become too focused on others at the expense of my own personal relationship with God. Something had to change.

It happened the very moment I began talking with God about my mother’s death. I felt a burst of heat radiate within my chest. I could not stifle or control the sensation. It spread upward through my throat and pushed its way forcefully out of my mouth. I cried, then sobbed, and tears began to flow.

As I prayed and gave voice to my pain, grief, and sorrow, God began showing me a new way to face trials. He wanted me to cultivate a different mindset as I learned how to pray for His will and His Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. During that time, the Lord showed me clearly that there is a beautiful, powerful, meaningful place for weeping in our prayers.

Invitation to Travail

Scripture invites us to “cry out loud” before our heavenly Father as Jesus did. The shortest verse in the Bible (John 11:35) confirms it: “Jesus wept.” In that moment, before the miracle of Lazarus’s resurrection, the perfect Son of God experienced travail.

What is *travail*? The dictionary gives us some definitions:

1. Painfully difficult or burdensome work
2. Pain, anguish, or suffering resulting from mental or physical hardship
3. To suffer the pangs of childbirth
4. To toil or exert oneself.

Jesus told His disciples that going through travail produces great blessing, just as the pain of labor during childbirth yields to great joy:

“Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to

a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy” (John 16:20–22).

Jesus spoke these words about grief and joy as He faced the reality of His upcoming crucifixion. Was He saying these things also as a comfort and reminder for Himself? While we may never know the answer, I find it interesting that Jesus taught His disciples about the ways anguish and travail produce great joy—*directly before* He went through His own unfathomable suffering.

This truth continues to be important for followers of Christ today because it can mean the difference between a hopeless, powerless, stoic prayer life and the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous that produces great change, makes an impact, and brings blessing out of otherwise “lost” situations.

Joy Comes in the Morning

We see this principle again in Jesus’ prayers in Gethsemane: “He began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death’” (Matt. 26:37–38). Throughout this passage, we witness Christ’s travail—the toil and exertion of strength He employed to submit to the will of the Father.

In Jesus’ humanity, He surely wanted to avoid such a horrible death—as any of us would (see v. 39).

He knew, however, that out of His suffering, something magnificent would be born. Out of His death would come life more abundant. By His wounds, humanity would be healed. Weeping would endure for a night, but joy would come in the morning (see Ps. 30:5). Scripture had foretold it. He knew all would be well.

Yet in the hours that preceded His death on the cross, Jesus connected with the gravity of the moment, as He did when Lazarus died—mourning, weeping, holding nothing back.

As Christ's disciples, we will have days when we too will suffer. He taught us, "A servant is not greater than his master." If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (John 15:20).

Too often, however, when problems and trials arise, we quickly take action, attempting to remedy the situation in our own human strength and by our own means. As problem solvers and prayer warriors we may occasionally forget that the will of God involves momentary suffering and persecution.

Instead of embracing our cross, we may want to fight it or flee from it or subtly sidestep it if we can. We may even employ our faith to totally deny our suffering.

We know that God's will is to bring us through trials and make us overcomers. So rather than giving ourselves permission to weep and mourn, we bypass that step. We hold back our tears and resolve to move forward with praise and thanksgiving in anticipation of our victory.

Importance of Tears


In the years following my mother's death, I have grown closer to Christ and have learned from Him more about the importance of allowing my tears to flow during prayer. He doesn't demand me to be a "happy little camper" all the time when I talk to Him. That was not the example He left us.

Jesus wept. And when He did, He wasn't "having a nervous breakdown," as stoics might believe. On the contrary, He was revealing a secret. He showed us how to be more intimate and real with God. David knew this secret: "My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise" (Ps. 51:17).

Weeping plays a powerful role in

intercession, too, as we connect with the Father's heart.

Contrary to that song from my childhood, our God not only gives us permission to "cry out loud"—He invites us to do it, to cry out loud *to Him*. In this vulnerable intimacy with Him, He can comfort us, remind us that He is with us, and assure us that He is working within

us. He is giving birth to something wonderful and new. 



JOYCE GODSEN was raised in New York City, and by age 15 was playing violin in the New York Youth Symphony. In 2009 she moved to Iowa, where she teaches, writes, and ministers in song by performing in churches, bars, and coffee shops.

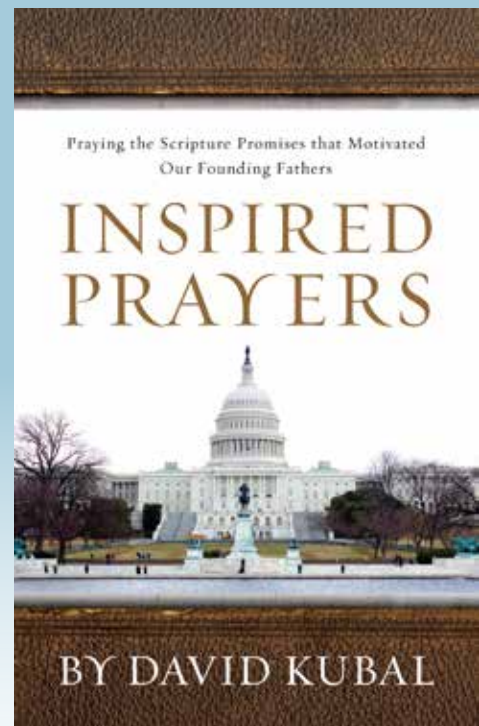
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How to Pray for the World

How can we pray for the world? To wrap our hearts and heads around the whole world—that's too big!

Yet Paul writes, "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for *all people*" (1 Tim. 2:1, italics added). And Psalm 67:1–2 gives us the ultimate reason to pray for God's grace and mercy in our world: "So that [God's] ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations."

One way to pray for the world is to watch or read the news *with God*, and then pray over the news. When you view the news from God's perspective, you may weep in sorrow. You may become angry over injustice. You may feel compassion for people facing tragic circumstances.

Bob Pierce understood this when he wrote, "Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God." If you keep your heart sensitive, you can pray for the situation and people the way God wants you to pray.

When I think of national or global situations, I remind myself that "those" people are just like me. They have the same needs and thoughts and feelings as me. They are asking the same questions

of life I ask. They wrestle with the same fears and struggles I face. Remembering that, I can identify with their plight better.

Though they may live in a different culture, speak a different language, come from a different ethnic background, or think of life very differently than I do, we all share our humanity equally from the one Creator God. If I grew up where they grew up in the life circumstances they encountered, and with the education they received, I would probably think and act like them. And God loves them.

I also think of Christ's Church, which is not typically featured in the news. As I wonder what God is doing in building His Church from every nation, tribe, people, and language, I pray for God's Kingdom to come in His Church and among His people. Eternal values are more important than temporal needs, yet meeting temporal needs can lead people to embrace eternal values.

In praying for the world in the news, here are some prayer points:

- for salvation, healing, provision, wisdom
- for peace in the current situation
- for sin patterns to be broken
- for the welfare of believers
- for believers to speak out boldly for Christ
- for the freedom of the gospel
- for humane and just leaders
- for justice and freedom
- for the glory of God to be revealed
- for people to be redeemed
- for the growth of the Church.

The Bible tells us to pray, and the news tells us what to pray for!

DAVID J. SMITH is senior pastor at Queens Christian Alliance Church in New York City.

Praying God's Word in Crisis

Hurricanes. Earthquakes. Fires. Floods. In our nation and around the world, we have witnessed epic disasters devastating cities and nations. Intercessors for America has developed a downloadable prayer guide: "Praying God's Word in Times of Crisis." This prayer

guide, which can be used by individuals or small groups, features specific prayer points and Scripture references. Prayer points include praying for human life to be spared, for no price gouging, for relief organizations, for sensitivity to what God

might be saying through crisis, and other needs specific to crisis situations. You can download the prayer guide by going to ifapray.org.

PRAYING GOD'S WORD IN TIMES OF CRISIS

**In times of disaster, crisis, or emergency, God is with us.
Pray His word as He meets us where we are.**

Give thanks to God in every circumstance. He is always good. (Phil 4:4) (Ps 34:1-3) (1 Thess 5:18)

Pray for people to reach out to God in times of crisis, see their need for God, and be saved. (Lk 3:16-17)

Pray for human life to be spared. (Ps 34:4-7) (2 Cor 1:10)

Pray that people would ask God about the situation—"Is God telling us something?" (1 Sam 3:10)

Pray that citizens would help each other prepare before the crisis and clean up after. (Mt 5:42) (Mt 25:3)

Pray for peace for residents who are hopeless, scared, alone, or mourning. (Ps 23)

Pray that there would be no price gouging or scams, but instead generosity.

Pray for first responders—for their safety and families—they often have crises.

Pray for wise decisions by local government about aid, evacuation plans, safety, enforcement. (1 Tim 2:1-2) (Pr 19:8)

Pray for law enforcement who keep the peace, rescue, assist, and comfort residents. (Mat 5:9)

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Resource

After-service Prayer for the Sick

One way to minister through prayer to the sick is to periodically invite those suffering to come to a place where you can pray for them specifically. When I was co-directing the prayer ministry at Willow Creek, we did this monthly, after each communion service. The pastor would announce that anyone desiring prayer could come to a designated room after the service. When people gathered, a pastor or elder would pray over those in the room as a group. Those who wanted more specific prayer could stay and pray with one of the Elder Prayer Team members.

When praying with the sick this way, I found these tips to be helpful:

- *Guide the conversation.* When people launch into long, detailed accounts of their situations, I gently ask them what they want God to do for them. This returns the focus to God and sets the stage for prayer.
- *Set clear expectations.* Ask people whether they also want to pray or only receive prayer. If they want to pray, suggest how you will proceed (for example, they can open and you will close).
- *Keep it brief and vertically focused.* The people I prayed with weren't looking for a long, spiritual-sounding recounting of their circumstances in my prayer. I find that brief, focused prayer for God's intervention in their lives lifts them out of their discouragement and into God's presence. Before I begin praying, I will also let the person know what I will be praying for—especially if they also want to pray.

ANDREW WHEELER served in the prayer ministry of Willow Creek Community Church in Illinois for ten years.

Will You Pray with Us?

We appreciate your prayers for the staff of *Prayer Connect*! You are valued and strategic partners in our ministry.

- Our *Prayer Connect* editorial staff (Dave and Kim Butts, Jon Graf, and Carol Madison) will interact and pray with other national prayer leaders the end of January at meetings with the America's National Prayer Committee in San Antonio, TX. Pray for great connections that will lead to more theme ideas, writers, advertisers, and subscribers. Pray also for a refreshing time for the team as they enjoy friendships with other prayer leaders.
- New websites have launched for Harvest Prayer Ministries, *Prayer Connect*, and Church Prayer Leaders. Pray that the sites will be effective tools in sharing resources and growing the prayer movement. Pray for Jon Graf as he manages content for the sites.
- Pray for continued good health, protection, provision, and spiritual strengthening for the *Prayer Connect* staff.

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Effective Prayer for the Sick | By Andrew Wheeler

We pray for the sick in our churches for many reasons, such as compassion, obedience, and our desire to see God honored. But perhaps no reason is as compelling as Jesus' words: "Whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matt. 25:40; for context see vv. 31–46). Ministry to the sick, including prayer, is one key way to serve Jesus Himself.

Some intercessors struggle with prayer for the sick (I'll use the term *sick* to refer to any physical or emotional impairment, short-term or long-term). Prayer over health challenges, more than other kinds of prayer, tends to involve detailed accounts of difficulties. This can turn the focus of the prayer onto the illness and away from God.

Keys to Keeping on Target

So how can we pray effectively for the sick and mobilize this type of prayer in a church setting?

1. Keep It Vertical. "Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come" (Matt. 6:9–10).

So begins Jesus' model prayer. His prayer includes petition for physical needs (daily bread). But He begins with a vertical focus, and His focus remains vertical. This is the best framework for our prayers for the sick, too.

Later in the same chapter, Jesus urges us not to worry about life's necessities but instead focus on seeking God's Kingdom (vv. 25–34). Jesus was speaking specifically about food and clothes, but the principle applies to health as well. Health-related prayer, when it emphasizes the illness and the difficulties, can amount to spiritualized worry.

One antidote to this worry is Kingdom-focused prayer. Paul wrote to the Philippians that he expected to be set free. But his primary concern was for Christ to be exalted, whether by Paul's

life or his death (Phil. 1:20). He recognized the ways God was advancing the Kingdom through his imprisonment.

2. Keep It Focused. "Your will be done" (Matt. 6:10).

We may not know God's will regarding specific healing, but we do know several things He can produce in us through trials—qualities of joy, perseverance, and maturity (James 1:2–4).

Similarly, Paul wrote to the Philippians that he had learned to be content in all circumstances (Phil. 4:11–13). Praying for the hurting person's contentment (and other growth) in the midst of their health crisis keeps us on track in praying God's will. This doesn't preclude praying specifically for healing, but it frames that prayer in a context of seeking the will of God.

3. Keep It Short. "When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words" (Matt. 6:7).

Those who came to Jesus for healing didn't recount their illnesses at length. Jesus knew leprosy, blindness, lameness, and other infirmities when He saw them. And our Father knows every detail of the illnesses we bring to Him. Not needing to recite long litanies of the difficulties frees us to focus our prayers on Him.

4. Keep It Thankful. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Phil. 4:6).

Thankfulness is another antidote to worry. Paul's instructions tie thanksgiving to the petition, not to the answer. We can pray thankfully, knowing by faith that God hears and answers—even if we haven't seen the answer yet.


Mobilizing Prayer for the Sick

Sufferers can become consumed by their health issues, focusing their lives not on God but on their own needs. Mobilizing prayer for the sick is one way the church can share their burdens (Gal. 6:2), redirect their focus, and encourage their spiritual growth.

Here are some ways to mobilize church prayer for the sick:

1. *Small Groups.* Small groups are the best place in most churches for the practice of confession of sin and praying for healing (James 5:16). Train small group leaders to pray and lead their groups in prayer for the sick among them.
2. *Prayer Team.* Train your church's prayer team to pray for the sick.
3. *Prayer Invitations.* Set aside a regular time for prayer leaders and pastors to pray with the sick.

When we pray for the sick, we participate with God Himself in the work of intercession. The Holy Spirit intercedes with perfect wisdom beyond words (Rom. 8:26–27). Jesus Himself is also interceding along with us (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25).

Let's join in! 



ANDREW WHEELER served in the prayer ministry of Willow Creek Community Church for ten years and co-directed the prayer ministry at Willow Crystal Lake. He is the author of *Together in Prayer*, published by IVP.



A Dynamic of Prevailing Prayer | By Arthur Wallis

There are conditions of prayer to which God has pledged Himself to respond. The New Testament contains several of these principles, and any one of them, if obeyed, will ensure that the prayer prevails. The first requires that we pray in the position of abiding.

What Is Abiding?

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7, KJV). The Lord Jesus had told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would come to them. "At that day," He said, "ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20).

The Father was His whole source and sphere of life. [Jesus] had not come of Himself, but had been sent by the Father (John 7:28). He had no teaching or words of His own, but spoke the words given Him by the Father (John 7:16). He could do nothing of Himself, only what He saw the Father doing (John 5:19). His very life depended on the Father (John 6:57). He ever sought, not His own will or glory, but the Father's (John 5:30).

To abide in Christ is to maintain in principle the same relationship toward Him that He maintained toward the Father. This means firstly, *a life of submission* in which we gladly consent to the limitations of "that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2). We accept a bondage which we find to be perfect freedom. We pray, "Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free."

Then it must be also *a life of renunciation* of ourselves, our abilities, our resources. We have to come to the place of weakness and emptiness that His

strength may be made perfect in us. He is the vine, we are the branches. The vine has everything, the branch has nothing. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself . . . no more can ye" (John 15:4).

Finally, abiding involves *a life of faith* which looks to Christ for all, and finds its all-sufficiency in Him. Alongside the statement of Christ, "for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5), we must put Paul's triumphant declaration, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

The Saviour revealed that His was a life of faith in dependence on the Father, when He said, "I live by the Father" (John 6:57). But He also declared, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19), and this requires the **same attitude of faith that possessed Him**.

His Words Must Abide in Us

As well as abiding in Him, the condition requires that His words abide in us. These He had earlier described as "spirit and life" (John 6:63), that is full of divine energy and life-giving power. It is impossible to embrace those life-giving words without experiencing their spiritual and moral force.

Christ had to say of some, "my word hath not free course in you" (John 8:37, ASV). They rejected both Him and His message, to their own eternal disaster. Others accepted the message joyfully, but did not allow it to root fully in their hearts, so that the new growth withered in the hour of persecution; or they allowed it to be choked by worldly cares, and so to become unfruitful. These received the Word, but did not allow it to abide in them.

There were those, however, who allowed His Word to make its home

in their hearts, to take deep root, and to spring up in spiritual fruitfulness. His words had already begun to abide in them, doing their quickening and fertilizing work.

To Live Is Christ

There may be different grades or degrees of abiding according to our spiritual understanding and development. The principle, however, does not change. When we can say from the heart, "To me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21), we are surely abiding in Him, and this gives us a position of authority with God in prayer.

So long as we fulfill the condition, as it is revealed to us, the Lord is pledged to answer whatever prayer we offer. So long as we abide in Christ, and His words abide in us, He can safely trust us with a blank cheque drawn on the bank of heaven.

In His holy humanity the Saviour's prayers were never refused by God, because He was ever abiding in the Father. "Father," He prayed, "I thank Thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always" (John 11:41–42). Seeking neither His own will nor His own glory, but ever the Father's, He had only to ask in order to receive.

We shall be trusted in the same way when we fulfill the same condition. When the Father knows that it will be in His interests and for His glory that a certain petition is fulfilled, He cannot but respond to it. Such petitions ever flow from the life that abides in Christ. **PC**

ARTHUR WALLIS (1922–1988) was an itinerant Bible teacher and author, with a special emphasis on revival, prayer, and the work of the Holy Spirit. This article is adapted from his book *In the Day of Thy Power*.

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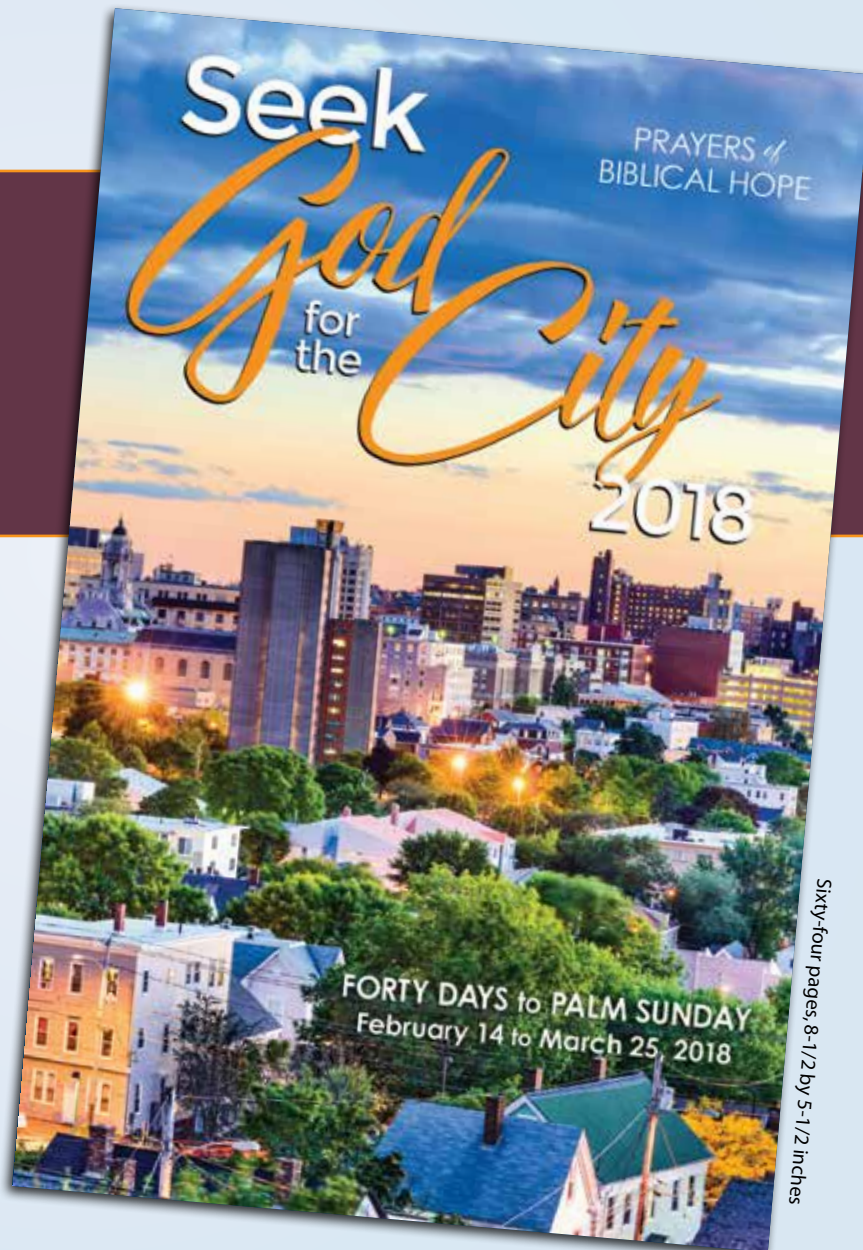
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