

# PrayerCONNECT

Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer


*Our Father in  
heaven, hallowed  
be your name,  
your kingdom  
come.*

**FRESH WAYS TO  
EMBRACE JESUS'  
TEACHING**

*the Lord's  
prayer*

**Prayer Leader *Struggles* | RECLAIM a Generation  
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# PrayerCONNECT

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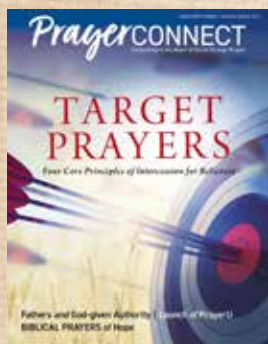
Vitally Alive and Thriving  
By Sandy Mayle





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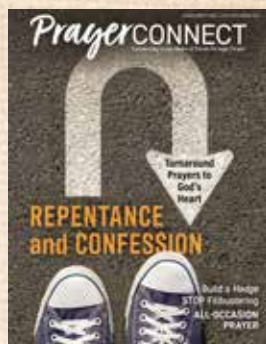
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### Need a Speaker for Your Prayer Conference or Event?

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, and mentoring the next generation in prayer. The Church Prayer Leaders Network also has many speakers associated with its ministries. You can find contact information at the respective emails or websites.

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

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## Previously in



Our most hopeful prayer is that the glory of God will be displayed throughout the earth! “Prayer for the Glory of God” highlights the ultimate answer: a greater revelation of Christ. Order this and other back issues at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).

## Lay Hold of the Kingdom

**M**y wife and I travel back to her hometown in Lancaster County, PA, once or twice a year. It's a long, 11-hour drive. When we first come into western Pennsylvania on I-70, there is an interesting stretch of road I like to call “the chute.”



It's a 35-mile or so stretch of road that has a cement barrier in the middle, with virtually no shoulders on the sides. Hills and mountains rise on both sides of the road, making it feel like you are in a chute. It is one of the scariest and probably most dangerous stretches of four-lane road anywhere (although I have never seen signs of an accident in the 30-plus years I have driven it).

Why so scary?

Since there are no shoulders or center median space, state troopers cannot pull over the speeders. So, it is not patrolled. And the drivers know it. The result? Instead of obeying the 50- or 55-mile-an-hour speed limit, drivers go 70–80 miles per hour! And you had better drive that speed, too, or you are in trouble.

### Full Throttle

In Matthew 11:12, there is a powerful truth spoken by Jesus: “The kingdom of God has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it” (NIV, 1978). And how do forceful men/women lay hold of it? Primarily through prayer.

A little later in Matthew, Jesus had an exchange with His disciples. He asked them about people's opinions on His identity. The answers varied. Then He asked, “Who do you say I am?”

Peter responded, “You are the Christ!” (Matt. 16:16, ESV).

Jesus praised Peter for his bold answer: “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” Jesus added, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:18–19).

Gates are a defensive weapon, so that verse is speaking of believers (the Church) attacking the gates of hell through prayer—binding and loosing what God tells them to bind and loose!

Every time we pray for a lost neighbor, we pound those gates. Every time we pray for transformation in our community, we pound those gates. Every time we pray for revival and spiritual awakening, we pound those gates!

Like driving in “the chute,” advancing the Kingdom of God is not for wimps! We need to “full throttle” it to keep up with God's plans to grow His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Are you laying hold of the Kingdom of God through prayer? Are you going “full throttle” to see His Kingdom advance?

— Jonathan Graf



# Are You Thirsty for More of God?

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—DR. MICHAEL L. BROWN

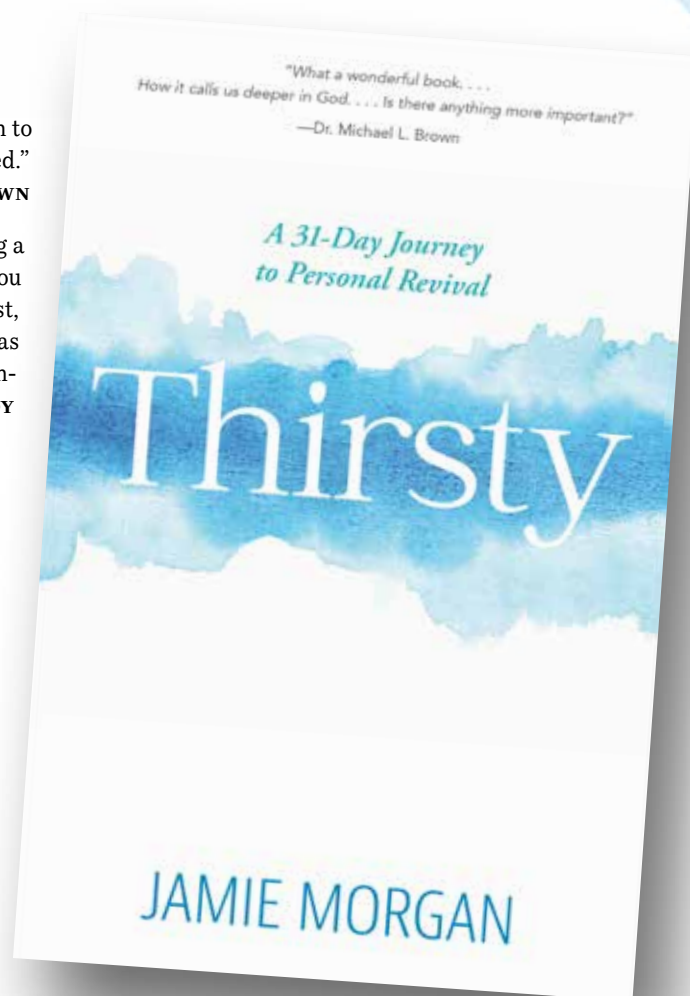
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## Hollywood Singer Prays with Congress Members

**S**teve Amerson is known as the vocalist behind some of the most influential music in movies, like “Star Wars: Rogue One,” “Beauty and the Beast,” and “The Patriot,” among many others.

But he’s also a voice of hope for Democrats and Republicans in Congress—a quiet source of peace and prayer and a minister to leaders on both sides of the aisle. It’s an effort that began in 2014 as a simple move to bring worship services back to the U.S. Capitol.

“There used to be worship on Sunday mornings in the [U.S.] Capitol from 1800 to 1869,” Amerson says. “Thomas Jefferson would ride his horse from the White House to the Capitol to participate in these services.”

Amerson says these worship events would feature pastors from different churches who came to preach. The church services ceased in 1869, but they returned in 2014, after a 145-year absence.

“In 2014, I was approached by someone who said, ‘Hey we’re going to re-up these services in the Capitol,’” Amerson recalls. He was told they didn’t have a budget but would love for him to come and start leading worship. The singer immediately agreed and began heading to Washington, D.C., twice a month. Not long after, supporters stepped in to help cover the costs of his trips.

Something else was birthed from the incredible effort that continues today: Amerson started directly ministering to members of Congress.

“I typically would fly into Washington, D.C., on Tuesday afternoon, and the service was not until Wednesday night,” he says. “And so I thought, ‘Well, what am I going to do with Wednesday?’”

It didn’t take long for Amerson to come up with a plan. One day, he started walking around the halls of Congress. As he passed doors with familiar names, he started popping in, introducing himself,



and leaving business cards.

“I would write a note, ‘I’m praying for you,’ and I’d leave my card in the office,” he says.

Amerson says he jots down a unique, handwritten note to each representative or senator whom he approaches on his various trips to Washington.

“Each trip, I write 200 notes, and I walk about 10 to 12 miles delivering these notes,” he says. His efforts have opened doors and inspired lives on both sides of the political aisle.

**BILLY HALLOWELL**, taken from Faithwire ([faithwire.com](http://faithwire.com)).

## Atheists Demand End to Congress Presence at National Prayer Breakfast

**A**theist activists are calling on Congressional members to halt participation in the National Prayer Breakfast, a decades-old, annual tradition attended by the president and other high-ranking officials from both parties.

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), an atheist activist group based in Madison, WI, reportedly reached out to every member of Congress who sponsored the event and urged them to abandon future plans.

“Are we really still doing this. . . ?”

FFRF co-president Annie Laurie Gaylor says in a statement. “Year after year, scandal after scandal, and still not a single prayer has been answered.”

The breakfast, which unfolds on the first Thursday in February each year, is a time for the president to share his faith and for members of Congress to display rare bipartisan agreement on matters of spiritual significance.

“Members of Congress who sponsor or attend the event in their official capacity unfortunately and perhaps

inadvertently are sending a clear message that their office endorses the event’s religious message, in violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment,” the statement reads.

The National Prayer Breakfast dates back to 1953, when the tradition was launched by then-President Dwight Eisenhower. It has expanded over the years and remains one of the most popular annual events in Washington.

**BILLY HALLOWELL**, taken from Faithwire ([faithwire.com](http://faithwire.com)).

## Native American Tribes Experience Revival

In some respects, the plight of Native Americans hasn't changed. They face troubling issues ranging from substance abuse to a massive COVID-19 impact, to an alarming number of missing and murdered women.

"There's a lot of broken areas, broken communities, and our communities are rampant with drugs," Donna Stands-Over-Bull (from the Crow Reservation in Montana) told CBN News.

Yet, in the midst of the suffering, Stands-Over-Bull and her husband Russell say God is on the move. "We can feel and sense the rumblings of revival, and when I say revival I mean people's hearts turning back to God," she shares.

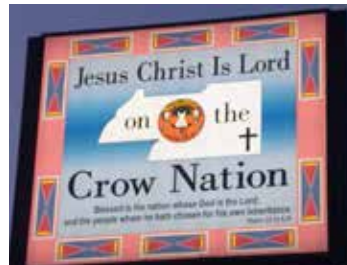
"We've been having healing revivals over the online church. God's been healing people through social media. People are giving their hearts to the Lord," explains Russell Stands-Over-Bull.

The senior pastors of Arrow Creek TV e-church say God called them to start the online fellowship in 2018.

"We couldn't comprehend what that would look like, but God put it on our hearts, and we began to establish Arrow Creek TV," Russell says. "And millennials started coming to the church, and I'm so proud of my congregation. We've got the best. We've got five continents represented."

"We probably represent the biggest church in the Indian community throughout the U.S.," he continues.

Leaders of the Crow Tribe have even put up a sign which boldly proclaims that "Jesus Christ Is Lord on the Crow Nation." It also has a Scripture that reads, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he



hath chosen for his own inheritance" (Ps. 33:12).

In addition, the southeast Montana tribe passed a 2013 legislative resolution

"to honor God for his great blessings upon the Crow Tribe and to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord of the Crow Indian Reservation." They also fly the flag of Israel next to the sign.

"The Scripture says that as we stand with Israel, we are a blessed nation, so we held that," Sharon Stands-Over-Bull says. "And so today, there are ministries throughout the reservation, and people have been saved and healed and shouting the victory."

MARK MARTIN, taken from CBN News (*cbn.com*).

## Fewer than Half of American Adults Pray Daily

Less than half of American adults pray daily as church membership continues to decline and the ranks of the religiously unaffiliated swell, according to a study published by the Pew Research Center.

Data from a nationally representative group of respondents found that 45 percent of U.S. adults say they pray daily compared to 58 percent who reported doing so in 2007 and 55 percent who said they prayed daily in 2014.

Some 32 percent said they seldom or never pray, which is close to the 29 percent of U.S. adults who identify as "nones"—people who describe themselves as atheists, agnostics, or "nothing in particular," the study says.

The nation's share of religious "nones" is now six percent higher than it was five years ago and ten percent higher than it

was a decade ago. Christians now only make up a collective 63 percent of the adult population. When the Pew Research Center began measuring religious identity in 2007, Christians outnumbered "nones" 78 to 16 percent.

The decline in the number of Christians was mostly concentrated among respondents Protestants. Their numbers declined by ten percent in the last decade and four percent in the last five years.

Some 58 percent of white Protestants identify as born-again, while 66 percent of blacks did so. Black evangelical Christians were the most faithful churchgoers, with 70 percent of them attending services monthly, compared to only 56 percent of white evangelical Protestants.

LEONARDO BLAIR, taken from The Christian Post (*christianpost.com*).

### Prayer Calendar

**21 Days of  
Back-to-School Prayer**

**August**

[reclaimageneration.com](http://reclaimageneration.com)

**Cry Out America  
Sunday, Sept. 11**

[facebook.com/cryoutamerica](https://facebook.com/cryoutamerica)

**See You at the Pole  
Wednesday, September 28**

[syatp.com](http://syatp.com)

**Day of Prayer for Peace  
of Jerusalem  
Sunday, October 2**

[daytopray.com](http://daytopray.com)



# the Lord's prayer

## FRESH WAYS TO EMBRACE JESUS' TEACHING

My childhood church was not liturgical in its practices. We memorized lots of Scripture in Sunday school and were always challenged to recite passages to earn a Bible camp scholarship. So, I know at one time I memorized The Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6.

But we did not regularly recite it. It wasn't until I started attending another church during college that I heard The Lord's Prayer spoken in unison as a congregation. I suddenly realized I might need to brush up on it if I didn't want to stumble during that portion of the service!

### Prayer of Agreement

Even though it was not my experience as a child, The Lord's Prayer is almost universally recited among people of various Christian perspectives. It's a prayer we can agree on—except for that awkward moment when we pause ever so slightly at the “forgive us our trespasses, debts, or sins” options.

You can be in almost any group of unrelated people, and at least a few will know and can recite The Lord's Prayer with you. Many of the truckers in Canada during their recent protests took time to start their day by reciting it together. You hear it at funeral services

or as a common prayer before the start of a meal. It's a go-to prayer that can quickly unify a diverse group.

But often the prayer is simply recited—and not actually prayed. When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He first warned them about babbling on in their prayers or reciting the same words over and over again, thinking that might be the key to having their prayers answered.

I don't think He meant for the disciples to be armed with a quick prayer they could invoke in any situation. I believe His intention was to pack a lot of theology into memorable phrases to help guide the disciples to pray from hearts tuned to His Spirit and in alignment with His Father. His desire was for them—and for us—to dig deeper into the ways of the Kingdom through prayer.

### In This Issue

And that's the point of this issue. The theme articles are designed to take you on an exploratory journey. They will encourage you to dig deeper, look further, and incorporate even more understanding into your prayers.

David Chotka starts this exploration by demonstrating how revolutionary this

prayer would have been to the disciples. There was a familiarity or personal tone to His prayer that would have shocked His listeners. Chotka focuses on the profound statement of the seemingly simple words: “Our Father.”

Dennis Fuqua writes from his own experience as one who prays The Lord's Prayer faithfully. He breaks the prayer into smaller segments and offers more depth, meaning, and relationship between the parts. And he points out that when we really understand this prayer, we will live it out as an example to others.

Our theme section is closed out by Jody Mayhew, who highlights the often-overlooked part of the prayer: *forgiveness*. Jesus included forgiveness because of the tremendous power in living without offense.

I still momentarily hesitate on the trespasses, debts, or sins part of The Lord's Prayer. But I know Jesus wants us to learn fresh ways to incorporate His teaching into our prayer lives. He invites us to explore the riches of a Kingdom prayer! **PC**

**CAROL MADISON** is editor of *Prayer Connect*, author of *Prayer That's Caught and Taught*, and director of prayer ministries at Hillside Church of Bloomington, MN.



# revolution teaching

We say it without thinking much about it.

In fact, we say the words as a rote memory prayer to close the Wednesday prayer meeting or the small group time. If you are in a liturgical tradition, it is likely that you say it every time you gather for worship. In fact, if you are a believer at all, you have probably uttered these words:

*Our Father, in heaven, hallowed be  
Your Name . . .*

Yet when Jesus said it, every heart in earshot snapped to attention. When they heard Jesus pray and call God “Father” in the way that He did—using the homespun word a child would use to address his dad—they would have been perplexed at first, and then concerned. You see, they would have had to choose one of three ways to respond:

1. *Follow Him*—as He had to be the Messiah,

2. *Test Him*—to determine whether He might (or might not) be the Anointed One, or

3. *Kill Him*—as a heretic who falsely dared to lay claim to the Messianic role.

In fact, Jesus’ family showed up to “get Him out of Dodge.” They were concerned that He had utterly lost His mind (see Mark 3:21). In an early healing account, the text tells us that the leaders in the temple had had enough of this “blasphemy”:

For this reason [the Jews] tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God (John 5:18).

Yet we pray it regularly, and don’t give it much thought.

BY DAVID CHOTKA



Our Father in  
heaven, hallow  
Mary  
be your name  
kingdom  
done

PRAYING INTO THE  
“OUR” OF OUR FATHER

# *Not one single person* in all the flow of Hebrew history, had dared to call God by that name.

## BOLD DECLARATION

Intrigued by texts like the John 5 and Matthew 6 passages, diligent scholars in the last century decided to investigate the phenomenon around this title for God.

In 1962, an eminent German New Testament scholar published a summary of his extensive research on the title used by Jesus for God in almost every prayer—"Father" ("Abba" in the Lord's native Aramaic). That scholar, Joachim Jeremias, spent years examining every extant prayer in the history of Judaism, in all the Hebrew Scriptures, in the Rabbinic literature, the Dead Sea scrolls, the commentaries, the Targums, and comments in what was known as the Mishnah.

After thoroughly examining every kind of Jewish literature, this scholar discovered a singular truth: that before Jesus of Nazareth arrived on the scene, no one, *not one single person* in all the flow of Hebrew history, had dared to call God by that name.<sup>1</sup>

To clarify, before the arrival of our Lord into the flow of human history, there were 14 biblical texts that pointed to God using the imagery of God as "Father,"<sup>2</sup> though most of those instances were analogies, and a few passages that implied God was the father of Israel. Here is a typical one:

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him. . .  
(Psalm 103:13).

Here the compassion of the Lord is

compared to a father's care, yet God is not directly called "father." There are a few places in which God is addressed as "the father of the nation," or as the father of Israel as a people together. Yet in all of these, there is a collective understanding, not that God was the dad to a person, but that God caused the nation to be born—the Creator of the collective group of people that God called Israel.

And then Jesus showed up and called God "Father."

## THE ANOINTED ONE

Now, anyone in the time of Jesus who prayed this way was staking out a claim that He was in fact the Messiah—the One spoken of in scattered texts throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, Psalms 2 and 89 respectively, whose future actions were summarized in Ezekiel 37: This would be One from the line of David, who would raise up a mighty, resurrected army of all Israel's righteous dead, who would see them infilled with the Spirit. This One would retake the land of Israel from any conquering power and would reign in equity and justice on the throne of His father David.

This was in harmony with texts which foretold that there would be an "anointed one" born of the line of David. God would raise up a Messiah, an Anointed One. Here is a portion of Psalm 89:19–20, 25–29:

Once you spoke in a vision,  
to your faithful people you said:  
"I have bestowed strength on a warrior;  
I have raised up a young man from  
among the people.  
I have found David my servant;

with my sacred oil I have  
anointed him. . . .  
I will set his hand over the sea,  
his right hand over the rivers.  
He will call out to me, 'You are my  
Father,  
my God, the Rock my Savior.'  
And I will appoint him to be my  
firstborn,  
the most exalted of the kings of the  
earth.  
I will maintain my love to him  
forever,  
and my covenant with him will  
never fail.  
I will establish his line forever,  
his throne as long as the heavens  
endure."

When Jesus (born of David's line) called God "Father," He was laying claim to that role! Christian faith holds that He was in fact the One. Historically, in the Gospels the response was varied:

1. Some followed Him.
2. Some tested Him.
3. Some killed Him.

Then God raised Him from the dead, setting our future into motion.

## OUR INVITATION TO OUR FATHER

We know He was the Messiah—and could call God His Father. But why did He tell *us* to pray, saying, "Our Father"?



Pay attention to the first word—“our.”

Romans 8:12–17 tells us that when we are born of God, the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit, and tells us that we are born of God. The experience of that union is that we cry out “Abba, Father.”

The “our” in “Our Father” does not merely refer to us “thinking pleasant thoughts of being attached to all Christians everywhere.” The “our” refers to the believer being co-joined to Jesus’ very being. His Spirit is imparted and becomes our indwelling Spirit. And Jesus’ Messianic privilege of calling God “Father” gets imparted, transferred over to us!

Jesus prayed “My Father.”

We, joined to Him, say “Our Father.” That means “Jesus and me in holy union, crying out to God together.”

What belonged only to Jesus has now been conferred, conveyed over to us.

The “our” means “my inner spirit being merged with the very Spirit that belongs to Jesus the Son.” Because we have received the Spirit of the Son Jesus, we have received the ability of God the Son to call God “Father” by obtaining entrance into His relationship with God.

The believer saying this prayer begins by affirming this declaration:

“I dwell in Him and He dwells in me! Together, we address God as ‘Our Father.’”

Two astonishing benefits flow through that inconceivable union:

1. We receive Jesus’ very ministry—the extension of His calling to us, to win a lost world to saving faith, and
2. We receive Jesus’ very Spirit, *who then prays through us “with groanings too deep for words”* (Rom. 8:26, ESV) to reshape the earth into the image of Jesus Christ our Lord!

The Lord’s Prayer is a summary of Jesus’ magnificent teaching, a rallying cry that commands us to enter into His relationship with God to pray into everything that was central to His mission.

It is an incredible prayer. **PC**

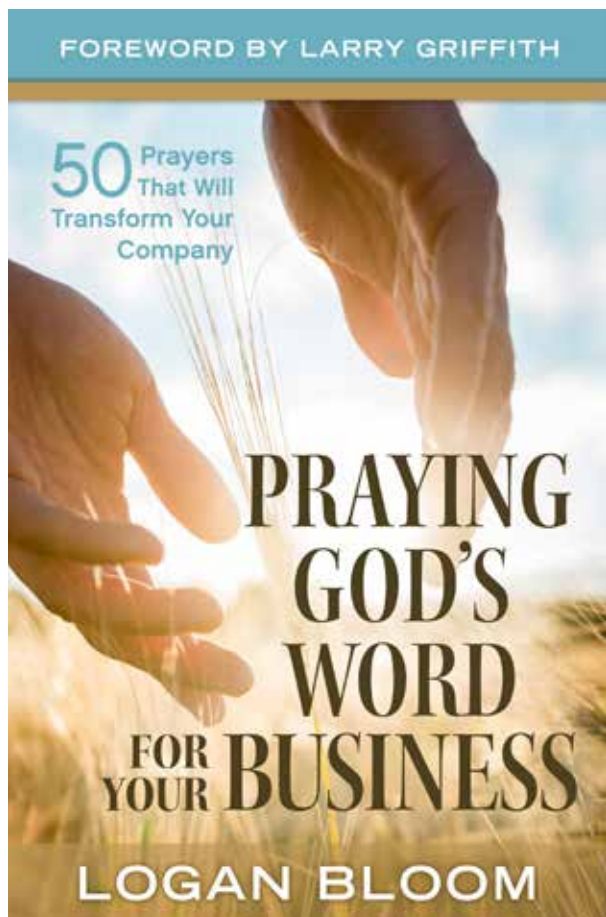
<sup>1</sup>“We can say quite definitely that there is *no analogy at all* in the whole literature of Jewish prayer for God being addressed as Abba.”

Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (SCM Press: Norwich, Great Britain, 1967), p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>See Deuteronomy 32:6; 2 Samuel 7:14; 1 Chronicles 22:10, 28:6; Psalm 68:5, 89:26, 103:13; Isaiah 9:6, 63:16, 64:8; Jeremiah 3:4, 31:9; Malachi 1:6, 2:10.



**DR. DAVID CHOTKA** is the founder and director of Spirit-Equip Ministries ([spiritequip.com](http://spiritequip.com)) and serves as the chair of Alliance Pray! (C&MA Canada). He is a published author, conference speaker, and a prayer mobilizer. David has served as a lead pastor for 30-plus years and has written extensively on The Lord’s Prayer (see *Power Praying*, [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org)).



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# here's how you

I am more in love with my wife now than the day I married her. Logging lots of time together, seeking to understand her, and listening carefully to her will do that.

And I am more in love with The Lord's Prayer now than when I first took it seriously. Logging lots of time together, seeking to understand it, and listening carefully to it will do that, too.

I grew up in a church where this prayer was often part of the service, so I heard it over and over. In Sunday school, I got points for memorizing it. I heard a few sermons about it. But I never really *listened* to the prayer. It was not until I was an adult that I began to listen and then pray it.

After I had pastored for a few years, I knew I wanted to pray more and pray better. The Lord pointed me directly to The Lord's Prayer and challenged me to actually do what He said to do—"Pray like this."

Now, many years later, I continue to

do so on a regular basis. It is the passage of Scripture that has shaped my life more than any other passage. You may be very familiar with it, but let's listen to it together from Matthew 6:9-13:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be  
your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one."

## THE BACKBONE

Take a fresh look at these old words. Read them over slowly. Now, let's look at each part of the prayer.

Some of the old catechisms see six requests here because they merge the last two (lead and deliver). That works, but let's separate them and go with seven.

BY DENNIS FUQUA



on earth as it  
is in heaven  
give us today our  
daily bread

*pray*

THE “YOUR” AND “US”  
RELATIONSHIP



There are two key pronouns that shape the two portions of this prayer. There is a “Your” portion and there is an “us” portion. The first part states God’s big desires. The second part states our big needs.

Did you notice that the “Your” portion comes before the “us” portion? Some of us think that prayer only has an “us” portion. But this prayer teaches us that it is right to pray about God’s desires before we pray about our needs.

In fact, later in this same chapter, Jesus says we are to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness [God’s desires], and all these things [our needs] will be given to you as well” (Matt. 6:33). That is a great summary of the two parts of this prayer.

There are 14 words (seven pronouns, three nouns, and four verbs) that form the backbone of this prayer: “Your name, Your Kingdom, Your will . . . give us, forgive us, lead us, deliver us.” These are the

seven topics the Lord told us to pray.

So, I believe Jesus had in mind that we, His followers today, would pray through these seven topics regularly. I hope you don’t see this as a legalistic thing but rather as an invitation. It’s an invitation to join Him in what He is doing in the world today.

As I have prayed this way for years, I find it never grows old. Each line is worthy of many hours of meditation.

## A LITTLE EXPANSION

As we look at the three “Your” requests, I suggest that the phrase immediately following the third request (“on earth as it is in heaven”) can apply equally to each of them. It’s quite clear that heaven is already experiencing each of these things. Heaven does not have these problems, earth does.

So, let’s take a quick look at each

of the first three requests and how we can pray them. These themes are not limited to Jesus’ instruction here in this prayer. They can be seen all throughout Scripture. Let’s expand these lines so we can pray from them.

**1. Let Your name** (Your identity, character, nature, reputation) **be hallowed/holy** (be distinct, revealed, revered). This line is not simply a statement of praise, it is Jesus’ first and most important request—that people on earth will know that our heavenly Father is unique. There is no one like Him! Pray that God will be known for who He really is.

**2. Let Your Kingdom** (Your rulership, government, reign) **come** (be established, expanded, embraced, understood). On many occasions Jesus explained what the Kingdom of God is like. It will come fully in the future, but He instructed us to pray that it would come in significant ways right now.

**3. Let Your will** (Your desires, plans, purposes) **be done** (be known, accepted, accomplished). This line does not instruct us to pray whatever we’d like, followed by the phrase “if it is Your will.” From Scripture we know much about God’s will. This line instructs us to pray for *His known will* to be done here on earth.

## PERSONALIZE IT

With these brief expansions in mind, I have found four key words that, when added, can help me pray these first three requests of The Lord’s Prayer in a more powerful and personal manner.

The first word can be equally applied to the end of each request. It is the preposition *through*. It works like this:

- Father, let Your name be holy today on earth as it is in heaven *through* me.
- Let Your Kingdom come today on earth as it is in heaven *through* me.
- Let Your will be done today on earth as it is in heaven *through* me.



**Dennis Fuqua**

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**LIVING PRAYER**  
the Lord's Prayer, Alive in You  
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The next three words are unique to each line. Praying them would look like this:

- Father, let Your name be holy *to* me today so it can be holy *through* me.
- Let Your Kingdom come *in* me today so it can come *through* me.
- Let Your will be done *by* me today so it can be done *through* me.

Let the Holy Spirit expand and apply each of these lines as you pray.

## THE “US” PART

Now, let’s turn our attention to the “us” portion of this prayer.

**1. Give us** (we simply come and ask **today** (right now) **our daily bread** (that which we need, physically, emotionally, spiritually, relationally—we need Your *provision*). Jesus wants us completely dependent upon Him all the time.

**2. Forgive us** (we need Your *pardon*, release us from the penalty we deserve) **our debts** (our sins, that which we owe You) **as we forgive** (as we also release, remove the penalty from) **our debtors** (those who sin against us). Granting and receiving forgiveness is essential to all healthy relationships.

**3. Lead us** (we need Your *direction*) **not into temptation** (any substitute for finding fullness in Jesus). When we follow the Lord’s leadership, He is glorified, our lives go better, and His Kingdom is expanded.

**4. Deliver us** (we need Your *protection*) **from the evil one** (the accuser, the father of all lies). We dare not assume our spiritual protection or that of our loved ones. We should follow Jesus’ instructions to pray that the influence of the evil one will be restricted.

## FRESH WAYS TO PRAY

This prayer has shaped my life more than any other passage of Scripture. One time as I was praying through each of these seven requests, I prayed through the first three in a manner I

mentioned previously. When I came to the fourth request, for some reason I prayed it like this: “Give me what I need for this day so that Your name will be seen as holy through me.”

I paused, sensing that what I just prayed fit perfectly with God’s desires. So, I prayed the line again and added “so that Your Kingdom will be more advanced and established here in my world as it is in heaven.” Again, I sensed this was right on track with God’s purposes.

This launched me into a new understanding of The Lord’s Prayer. I saw that the first and second parts of the prayer are not independent of one another. It seems there really is no “us” part after all! What seems to be the “us” portion is really designed to be the means by which the “Your” portion is accomplished.

I am convinced the best way to pray the requests of the second half is to tie them into the first half. How can we do that?

The two boxes in the graphics offer ways to see the relationship between these two halves in prayer. Begin with the numbered requests on the top of each box. Use the transition words “by” or “so that.” Then use a lettered statement from the bottom of each box to finish your prayer.

This will give you 24 fresh ways to pray from this prayer. For example, “Lord, let Your Kingdom come *by* giving us our daily bread.” Or, “Lord, please give me what I need for this day *so that* Your will is accomplished.”

1. Let Your name be holy
2. Let Your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven
3. Let Your will be done

BY

- A. Giving us our daily bread
- B. Forgiving us of our debts
- C. Leading us not into temptation
- D. Delivering us from the evil one

1. Give us our daily bread
2. Forgive us our debts
3. Lead us not into temptation
4. Deliver us from the evil one

SO THAT

- A. Your name will be holy
- B. Your Kingdom will come
- C. Your will be done


Pray in this way, but don’t be satisfied with only praying these short phrases. Let the Holy Spirit expand each line. If you let Him, you will find many marvelous ways to pray from these simple words.

## PRAY AND LIVE

As I have prayed this prayer for many years, I find it is the best model prayer I could hope for—and it has spilled over to become the curriculum for my life. As I pray this way, it is clear I should also live this way.

I desire to treat His name as though it is holy—and to live in such a way that He will be seen here on earth as He really is. I want His Kingdom to shape me and my world. I am committed to His will rather than my will because of this prayer. I have grown in my dependence upon Him and my awareness that only He can supply what I really need. I am more forgiving and more aware of the cost of my forgiveness. I increasingly allow Him to lead me in paths of righteousness. And I have seen more and more of His excellent deliverance.

My hope—and more importantly, Jesus’ hope—is that you grow in your love for this prayer by logging time with it, listening carefully to it, seeking to understand it, praying it, and living it.

It’s how Jesus wants us to pray. 



**DENNIS FUQUA** pastored for 25 years in Washington state before becoming director of International Renewal Ministries. His writings and contact information are at [lppress.net](http://lppress.net).

# forgive all offense

Our first session began with worship, each woman responding as the Lord led. I waited expectantly for a prayer of thanksgiving; a song of humble surrender or grateful, exuberant praise.

Silence. Nothing happened.

Forty women gathered for a prayer summit—a four-day worship and prayer experience—just sat there. I have facilitated hundreds of prayer summits across the world in the last 22 years, but none quite like that gathering in the Pacific Northwest in the fall of 2019.

We responded to an invitation to worship a holy God . . . with nothing. It was a silence we all felt. Not a holy and reverent silence, but troubled. It persisted until we closed the evening session.

As I engaged the Lord in prayer the next morning, with my own Moses moment (“If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here,” Ex. 33:15), I heard two sentences from the Lord:

- The whole world is offended right now.
- Offense interrupts worship.

He had my attention. We had deliberately stopped the prior evening, and the Spirit was engaging us with a matter of great importance in the Body of Christ.

## THE ISSUE OF OFFENSE

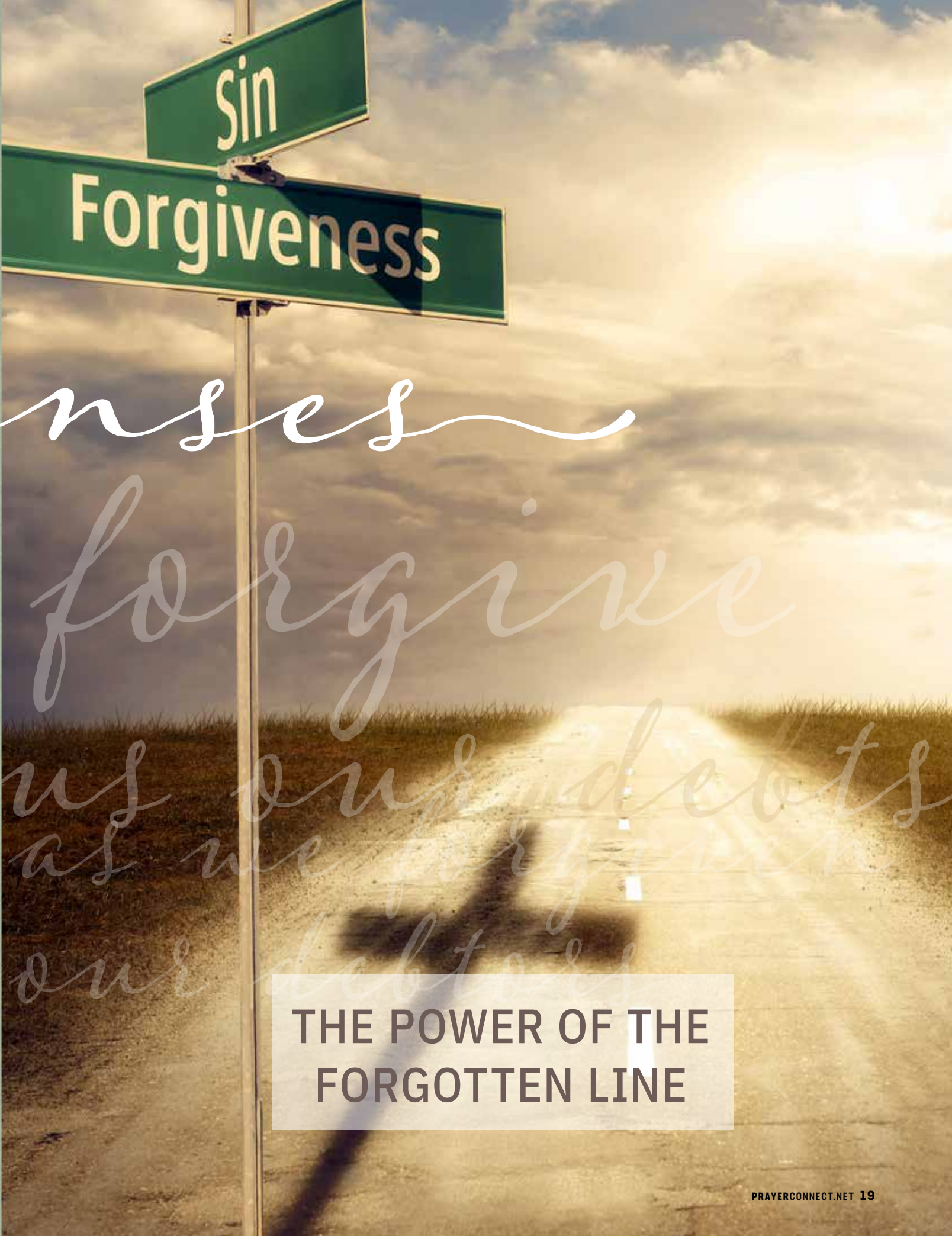
The core issue is right there in The Lord’s Prayer—the training manual for the people of God. In the middle of this prayer are words that can unlock prison doors and set captives free. It’s often the forgotten line of the most powerful prayer:

“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matt. 6:12).

This is not a command with a threat, but an invitation with a promise—an opportunity.

BY JODY MAYHEW





Sin

Forgiveness

uses  
forgive  
us our debts  
as we forgive  
our debtors

THE POWER OF THE  
FORGOTTEN LINE

When we gathered after breakfast, I shared what I heard about the importance of dealing with offense. I then sent the women out for a time alone. I gave them Matthew 18 as their Scripture meditation and released them with two questions to ask the Lord: *Am I offended with anyone? Do I find anyone to be offensive?*

We were to ask and listen for whom ever He might bring to our minds. Then, without defending ourselves, we were to agree with what God said.

When we came back together, we came as debtors, all 40 of us. We spent the rest of the morning confessing and repenting.

## EXPOSE OUR HEARTS

Until we asked for the Spirit to expose our hearts, we were unaware of the obstruction we faced when we attempted to worship. We needed to, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (Prov. 4:23).

Our offenses are like a beaver dam that grows one stick (offense) at a time, until the flow of water is reduced to a trickle. As we endeavor to remove our offenses by seeking forgiveness for our debts as we forgive our debtors, we will breach the barriers to the flow of life in the church.

I believe the Lord always prepares us in one season for the season to come. The

hostility over recent elections revealed the extent to which our hearts had become divided. It was the precursor to the contentious season of COVID that was to follow.

The prayer summit, taking place just prior to the pandemic, was our opportunity to re-order our hearts and allow the cleansing work of forgiveness to begin before we were battered by the storms of the next two years. In the final session of the summit, we challenged ourselves to an “offense-free” year.

## IMAGE BEARERS

As God’s creation, we are to bear His image and likeness. We reflect His nature as Spirit and Love. But all that changed at the fall of man in Genesis. Separated from our Creator because of sin, humanity owed a debt it could not pay and lost the ability to reflect His nature in the world.

But in Christ, the debt of sin is paid. We regain the ability to reflect His character. The question is, *will we?* We have received His forgiveness and mercy. Will we display the mercy extended to us, in our relationship with others—and forgive as we have been forgiven (Matt. 18:21-35)?

In The Lord’s Prayer, there is some disagreement about what is being forgiven. Sins? Debts? Or is it trespasses? If we use the term “debt,” we understand our sins of omission. If we use the term “trespass,” we see where a violation of relationship has occurred. Most translations use the term “debt.” Matthew 18 helps us draw that conclusion.

In the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt. 18:23-35), Jesus teaches about unforgiveness by comparing it to an unpaid loan. The story captures the state of our hearts when, having received mercy for our debt of sin, we turn to our own debtors with hard hearts. We instead stand as accusers. Like the servant in the story, when we fail to give what we have received (namely forgiveness), we surrender ourselves to the influence of

# Bringing Heaven to Earth

No matter how long I teach on prayer, I don’t think I’ll ever plumb the depths of the teaching of Jesus on prayer that we call The Lord’s Prayer. It is simple but packed with practical guidance for effective prayer.

The focus of this prayer is the heart of Jesus’ other teaching as well—the Kingdom. Jesus’ lifestyle and teaching all pointed toward the Kingdom of God: “Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

Those simple, familiar words should both motivate and populate our prayers. As I hear those words I am motivated to pray for the advance and eventual triumph of the Kingdom of God over all other pretenders. I know I will someday see Jesus crowned as King of kings and Lord of lords—and I want to see Him acknowledged as such in the here and now of everyday life.

As Kingdom praying dominates my daily prayer life, I find I shift from the “gimme” prayers that used to be pervasive, and now I want more than ever those things that please the Lord. The prayers seem to be “bigger” and less selfish. Even if the prayers deal with my own needs, they are now couched in terms that deal with Kingdom values.

Perhaps a good place to begin is to ask the Lord what is happening in heaven that He wants to occur on earth. That is, after all, the way He phrased this prayer for us.

From Scripture it appears that heaven is, most of all, a place overwhelmed by an awareness of the Presence of God. The continual worship seen in heaven is the natural response to the Presence of God. Praying for an increased awareness of the Presence of God brings heaven to earth and can result in an amazing revival for the Church!

**DAVE BUTTS** is president of Harvest Prayer Ministries ([harvestprayer.com](http://harvestprayer.com)) and chairman of America’s National Prayer Committee.



the one who has come to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).

Understood in this way, forgiveness is a vital practice in the church. More than that, it is essential for life in the Spirit.

The New Testament often uses the human body as a metaphor for the people of God. Have you noticed, as you consider the various systems of the body, that each has a cleansing element? If we suffer kidney failure, our body is not able to cleanse itself. Without treatment, sepsis is inevitable. The same is true if our immune system is compromised.

It is similar among the community of believers. Giving and receiving forgiveness helps cleanse the body. This is especially important if we have been hurt.

If we are injured, we know we need to cleanse the wound so infection won't set in. When we apply antiseptic and cover the area, we expect it to heal. If left exposed, there is danger of infection.

Bearing offenses is like that. Sometimes our hearts are damaged through betrayal, rejection, and abandonment. Left unattended, the injury will, over time, begin to deform us in the ongoing grip of the offense. It is no longer just a wound. It has become part of us as we try to compensate for the pain. We develop a spiritual "limp."

Unforgiveness can limit the mobility of individuals and whole churches.

## STEPS TO FORGIVENESS

Grace is the applied work of the cross of Jesus in our lives. Forgiveness reflects this when we cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He heals our souls. This means that forgiveness is not a mechanism in the church and not a checklist—it is a continual rhythm of asking for and granting forgiveness.

Take a few moments to consider the state of your relationships, and even your attitude toward what is playing out on the world stage. Here are five keys that will help unlock forgiveness.

First, ask:

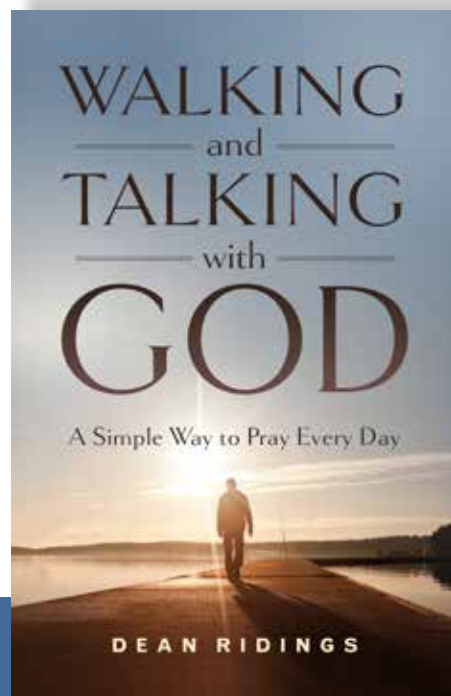
- **Conviction:** Allow the Holy Spirit to bring thorough conviction concerning the state of your heart regarding any sin and how it has affected those around you. The Holy Spirit is given to us to convict concerning sin and can indicate what needs to be confessed.

- **Confession:** Confession means that we come into agreement with God. We admit our sin and the way our sin has affected others. Confession of our sin to God brings about forgiveness. James 5:16 says that when we confess our sins to another, we can pray for healing.
- **Contrition:** Take a position of

# Develop a Walking-and-Talking Relationship WITH GOD

*Walking and Talking with God* will deepen your relationship with God through prayer as it moves you from praying just for your own needs to focusing on God's purposes for everyone in your world. It will teach you a simple way to pray every day and help you remove the barriers to prayer in your life.

While helpful for anyone, it is great for believers who struggle in prayer and want to grow in intimacy with the Father and for new believers who are just getting started with prayer.



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humility before God and the one whom you have offended. You are asking for mercy to be extended to you.

- **Receive:** Forgiveness is a gift. It is not something that can be worked for or earned. We must receive it as a grace bestowed and a response of love.
- **Repent:** Repentance begins when we turn from our wrong actions to a Savior who will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Then, grant:

- Take a full account of the pain and loss incurred through the sin of another.
- Invite the God of all comfort to address the state of your heart—the thoughts and feelings you are experiencing. Too often we jump to the “have to” forgive and try to accomplish

it in our own strength. In 1 John 4:19, we acknowledge, “We love because he first loved us.” We extend love, having first received it. This is a critical step to walking in forgiveness.

- Acknowledge that the one who sinned cannot remove the offense and you cannot erase the event. But *you can* forgive the offense.
- When you choose to grant mercy, you reflect the nature of the Father toward you—displaying compassion and love, not estrangement and withdrawal.
- Full forgiveness means we no longer hold others responsible for this sin and give up our “right” to future offense. Be prepared to ask God repeatedly to forgive an offense no matter how many times it comes to mind.
- Forgiveness and reconciliation are different matters. Forgiveness is a spiritual transaction that can be completed between you and the Lord. Reconciliation is accomplished when both parties can approach one another with cleansed hearts. There are times when reconciliation is not feasible. It is not possible to reconcile with another’s sin or judgment.

As forgiven people, Christian community is not about our perfection, but our common commitment to Christ. When there is conflict among brothers, Jesus holds the one who is sinned against just as responsible to take action toward restoration as the offender. This is in stark contrast to retaliation, which is a deliberate action fueled by a defensive attitude.

## RELEASING POWER

The Lord’s Prayer declares, “Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

So, how is His will done in heaven? The triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit—operates in a Holy Oneness that accomplishes His will.

At the close of His earthly ministry,

Jesus appealed to His Father for His disciples, “that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you” (John 17:21). Jesus desired to see us restored to our original design, our oneness reflecting His will on earth. Anything that breaches oneness opposes His will.

Restored to our true identity as “image bearers,” we are to display to the world the quality of mercy we received from the Father.

From the cross Jesus said, “Father, forgive them.” And then, after the resurrection, He told His disciples, “If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven.” Do you see the picture? With His last breath He offers forgiveness. Then He comes to the disciples and breathes on them, saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit”—and sends them to forgive others in the Spirit’s power (John 20:22-23).

Today, we share that same commission—to move out into the world under the banner: *we forgive as we have been forgiven*. May we exercise the power of “the forgotten line.” **PC**



**JODY MAYHEW** is the women’s representative for International Renewal Ministries and Founder of Abide Ministries. She also developed Sonship Studies, a small-group interactive exploration of the Scriptures. She and her husband blog and offer podcasts at [tween2worlds.us](http://tween2worlds.us).

## For Further Reading

Check out some additional articles on blogs and websites related to “The Lord’s Prayer” at [prayerleader.com/issue-49-extras](http://prayerleader.com/issue-49-extras):

- “A More Powerful Way to Pray the Lord’s Prayer,” by Rachel Dawson
- “The Lord’s Prayer: Our Father Who Art in Heaven,” by Crosswalk editorial staff
- “A Simple Way to Pray Every Day,” by Nick Aufenkamp



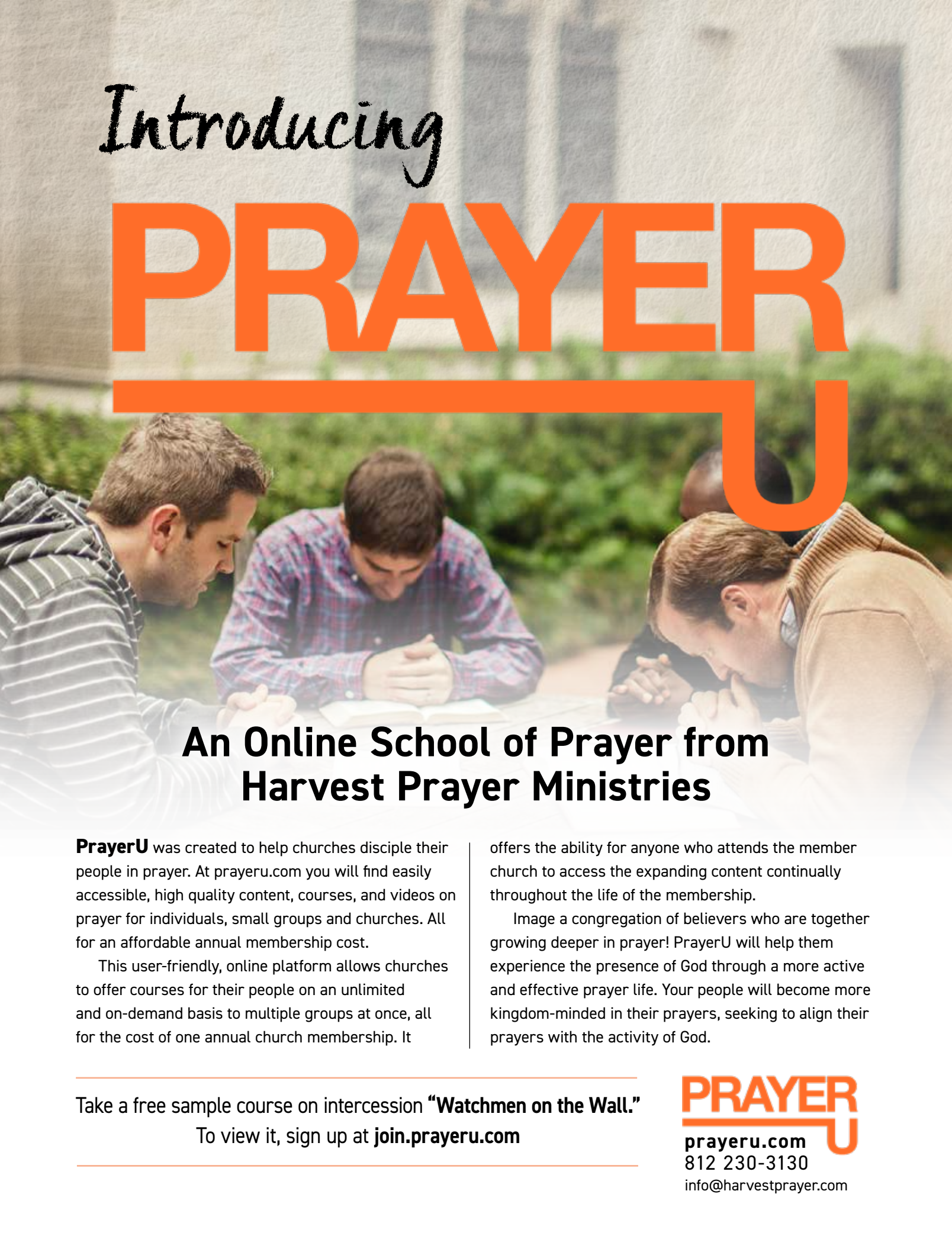
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A background photograph showing four men kneeling in prayer outdoors. They are in a line, with their heads bowed and hands clasped. The man on the far left is wearing a grey and white striped hoodie. The man next to him is wearing a blue and red plaid shirt. The man on the far right is wearing a tan sweater. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a building.

# Introducing

# PRAYER

# U

## An Online School of Prayer from Harvest Prayer Ministries

**PrayerU** was created to help churches disciple their people in prayer. At [prayeru.com](http://prayeru.com) you will find easily accessible, high quality content, courses, and videos on prayer for individuals, small groups and churches. All for an affordable annual membership cost.

This user-friendly, online platform allows churches to offer courses for their people on an unlimited and on-demand basis to multiple groups at once, all for the cost of one annual church membership. It

offers the ability for anyone who attends the member church to access the expanding content continually throughout the life of the membership.

Imagine a congregation of believers who are together growing deeper in prayer! PrayerU will help them experience the presence of God through a more active and effective prayer life. Your people will become more kingdom-minded in their prayers, seeking to align their prayers with the activity of God.

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# Organic

VITALLY ALIVE AND THRIVING





# Prayer

**F**or years I've followed a specific pattern of intercession for my three sons, and eventually their families. Long ago the Lord called me to spend a half-hour, three times a week, interceding for them: the oldest son and his family on Monday, the middle on

Wednesday, and the youngest on Friday.

On a recent morning, I felt an unusual burden for one son. As I prayed earnestly for him, God pressed an unexpected message to my heart:

*I'm the only Savior. Your structured prayers have been good and you have been obedient in them, but it's time for something different.*

What did He mean? Had I come to consider my faithfulness to my prayer patterns as the vital

key to my family's reclamation or process of spiritual formation? Was I mistakenly taking on myself the responsibility for their souls' well-being? Had the half-hour become legalistic and stifling rather than fostering intercession? Whatever the reason, God wasn't quite finished speaking.

*Organic prayer.*

Those two words were repeated in my spirit over the following days, with a mental image of what looked like the offshoot of a vine, vitally alive, vividly green, and delicately tendrilled.

*Organic prayer.*

The phrase and the picture sent me to the dictionary and the Bible in an effort to understand what the Lord was saying. As I studied and meditated in His presence, God began to reveal how He was calling me to pray.

## WHAT IS ORGANIC PRAYER?

I learned that "organic" is a multi-faceted word,

**By Sandy Mayle**

and that many of those facets apply to the kind of intercession God intends.

## 1. Organic prayer is *elemental*.

- *It's simple and basic.* "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Eph. 6:18). As the Holy Spirit seeds His longings deep into the root of the need and the heart of the matter, organic intercession springs up. It surfaces anytime and anywhere, often outside the boxes we've built (established times and topics). It's not a rejection of structured intercession—it easily occurs within those times and styles—but also sprouts a Spirit-germinated prayer response to overheard remarks or a news report or a conversation with a distraught friend.
- *It's powerful.* "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and

effective" (James 5:16). Not in itself or because of the intercessor's earnestness or righteousness, but because his or her prayers are offered through right standing with Christ, and in His name.

2. Organic prayer is *alive*. The righteous person's plea is "[dynamic and can have tremendous power]" (James 5:16 AMP). Like a gardener's glove laying lifeless, it "fills with life" when the Holy Spirit fills it with Himself, takes it up, and uses it for His purposes. When full of the Spirit, our organic prayer shares common characteristics of living things:

- *It breathes.* It breathes in the Spirit and breathes out petitions and pleas.
- *It feeds.* As our intercession feasts on the Word, it gains the energy of faith to declare truth and claim promises.
- *It grows.* As God shines His light on a

need, organic prayers germinate and rise up, stretching up to the Light, sending out shoots and tendrils, wrapping under and over the lost or lacking, lifting them to the Father.

- *It goes.* Living prayer has "locomotion." It goes places. Not under its own power but borne by the Spirit. Our free-range requests can "go" anywhere God can reach—and that is everywhere! Overseas missionaries. Persecuted believers. Prime ministers, supreme leaders, presidents, and kings. And closer to home, struggling pastors. New believers. Estranged family members. Unbelieving spouses.
- *It responds.* Vital intercession engages spiritual senses that virtually hear God's heartbeat, see His perspective, and feel the needs around us. Over time, Spirit-stimulated prayer becomes an almost involuntary response.
- *It yields.* Organic prayer is productive. It bears fruit. God moves in response to requests He's initiated, in the way He knows is best—even if we do not see the harvest in our lifetime.

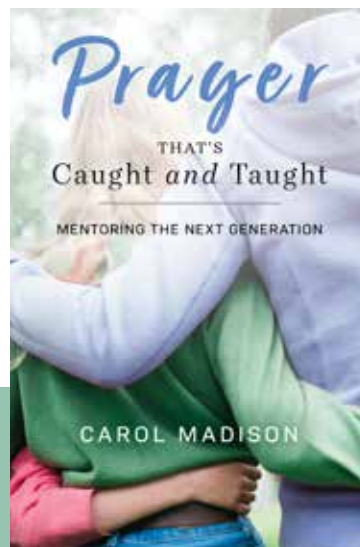
3. Organic prayer is *naturally sourced and grown*. Organic intercession isn't rote or self-manufactured. It arises from a God-aligned sense of need, as though the Spirit taps the heart and whispers, *Pray*. This isn't an exotic or hothouse species of intercession—just ordinary supplication seeded into a holy heart by the Spirit to affect His answers by His power.

It often springs up from the pure, rich soil of the Word—soil loamy with promises and fertilized with faith; soil uncontaminated by the pesticide of doubt, unpopulated with the weeds of selfishness, and untouched by skewed theology. Our requests bow to the Gardener's desires and plans, saying, "May your will be done" (Matt. 26:42), and readily submits to His pruning. Reshaping. Training. Transplanting. Propagating.

# WANTED:

## Intercessors to Mentor the Next Generation in Prayer!

**Here is a new dynamic tool to help you mentor others.** *Prayer That's Caught and Taught* by Carol Madison, the editor of *Prayer Connect*, provides Scriptures and information on 9 key aspects of prayer that need to be taught. She offers a format to easily teach each aspect, but also allows you to insert your own prayer experience stories into the informal lessons. Those you are mentoring both learn about prayer principles and how to practice prayer.



Available through [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org)  
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800 217-5200





The enemy of our souls considers organic prayer an invasive species from another world—and in a way, it is! It adapts to the harshest environments. It hardly resists the parasites of presumption, the cutworms of empty repetition and the blight of monotony. And once established, it can be impossible for Satan to eradicate. Through the Spirit, our persistent prayers reclaim lost ground, break up hard soil, even spread and thrive to God's glory.

## GIVE ME MORE

As I begin this adventure with organic prayer, it's taking a bit of adjustment, something like breaking in new shoes. A little uncomfortable in places at first (*this just doesn't feel normal*) and unnatural (*wouldn't God be more likely to answer if I prayed longer and harder?*). Yet I've seen new buds forming—unexpected

opportunities to reach out to that son for whom I'm burdened.

Around the time God called me to this new type of intercession, I went on a long-planned personal retreat. Later, looking over those retreat notes, I noticed part of a conversation with Him I'd forgotten—a request from Him so gracious and so poignant I wonder how I could have forgotten. I'd written down what He seemed to say to me that day:

*Can you give Me more to answer?*

*Can you ask and keep on asking?*

God was pressing the invitation: *More. Give Me more.*


Our God desires more organic prayers. More Spirit-prompted pleadings. He is eagerly anticipating those requests because He longs and loves to answer.

And still the Holy Spirit reminds me that God alone is the Savior. It's not about the length or intensity of my pleas.

Instead of trying to earn His response or twist His arm, the Spirit reminds me to come simply and earnestly (and yes, sometimes intensely and at length) to the Father and offer faith-fortified petitions full of the Spirit and effective for His Kingdom—appeals that above all seek, without apology, His will. Requests that will prove, by His power, to be effective for His Kingdom.

So, even now He's seeding this willing heart. Germinating vital prayers. Infusing them with vigor, tending and shaping, encouraging them to fruitfulness.

Raising them in the power of the Spirit.

*Organically.* 



**SANDY MAYLE** is a freelance writer from Pennsylvania and a frequent contributor to *Prayer Connect*.

## You Don't Have to Be a Super-Spiritual Saint to Have a Meaningful Prayer Life

In an easy-to-understand and encouraging way, author Jonathan Graf presents the keys to a dynamic prayer life. Whether you are a new believer or one who has struggled with prayer for years, *The Power of Personal Prayer* will help you grow more passionate and effective in your prayer life.

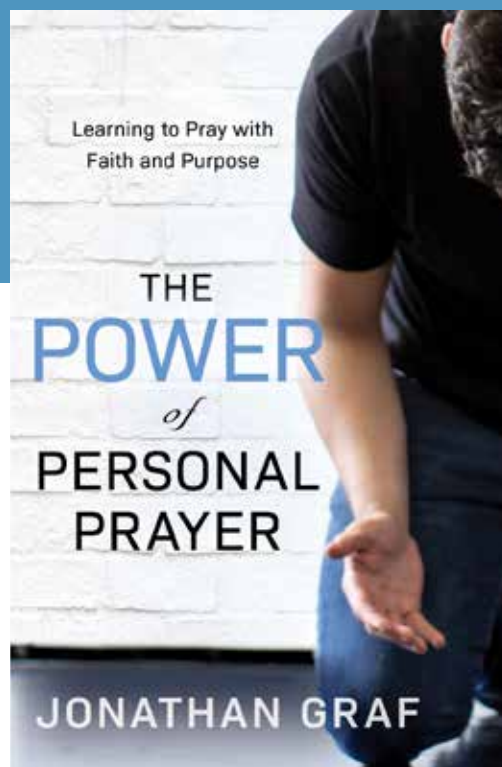
"Whether you are experiencing a new interest in prayer or have devoted yourself to intercession for many years, this book is filled with helpful insights." —PHIL MIGLIORATTI, THE REIMAGINE NETWORK

"Having served with Jon in the national prayer movement the past ten years, I can assure you that no one is more in touch with [prayer's] personal dimensions. His inspiring and insightful chapters will equip any Christian with fresh tools for a fulfilling personal prayer life."

—DAVID BRYANT, PROCLAIM HOPE! AND CHRISTNOW.COM



The new, revised edition of this practical book is now available wherever you purchase your Christian books.



## Linger Beyond “Grab-and-Go” Confessions

As Christians, we’re called to confession and repentance. To keep short accounts with God. After all, if we say we have no sin, we’re kidding ourselves. But if we confess our sins, He forgives us and purifies us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8–9).

So often, I treat confession like I’m just flying through the drive-thru window at a fast-food stop. Throw a few things at the order taker, grab the forgiveness, and drive on. “Hey, I don’t have a lot of time, and I’ve got to get to the meat of my prayer time—the asking!”

But what if I stopped? What if I lingered? What if I took confession seriously, like God does?

This isn’t about guilt or shame. God doesn’t have any condemnation—none—for those who are in (believe in, abide in) His Son, Jesus (Rom. 8:1). The Son has set us free, and we’re free indeed (John 8:36).

Our drive-thru confessions show just how cheaply we take the sacrifice of Jesus. We’re forgiven and free, but does that give us a license to sin?

That’s not what Paul says: “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so



that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” (Rom. 6:1–2).

Dr. Gregory R. Frizzell has written a book that can help us go deeper in confession—*Returning to Holiness: A Personal and Churchwide Journey to Revival*. Regarding the importance of personal confession, he says:

... growing numbers are realizing that profound cleansing and holiness are not the foreboding terms of legalism, but the essential language of a love relationship with Holy God (1 John 3:3, Heb. 12:14).

In the book, he identifies seven categories of sin (knowing there is overlap):

- sins of thought
- sins of attitude

- sins of speech
- sins of relationships
- sins of commission (what we do)
- sins of omission (what we don’t do)
- sins of self-rule and self-reliance.

In each section, he asks questions that trigger confession, as the Spirit leads. Of course, the Word of God is the primary way the Spirit works in convicting us of sin. But this book lists questions that help us look carefully and completely at various categories of sin—places where we might just race right by.

Remember, the goal is conviction through the Holy Spirit. It’s not shame and blame and accusation, which comes from the enemy. “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death” (2 Cor. 7:10).

So next time you’re tempted to “grab and go” through confession, take a few extra minutes. Stop. Linger. Eat more fully from the buffet of God’s grace in the gift of confession. And be filled again.

**JOAN SHERMAN** is editorial assistant for *Prayer Connect* magazine.

## Three Ways Your Church Can Pray Your Kids Back to School

In just a few days, children and youth in our nation will head back to school. While this is an exciting time and offers a fresh start for many students, the school environment can be filled with stress, peer pressure, feelings of insecurity, and all too often, violence.

One of our greatest callings as the Church is to stand in the gap for our children. God looks for people who will step up in this way: “I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land . . .” (Ezek. 22:30).

As godly parents and leaders—and members of Christ’s Kingdom—we can stand in the gap for our children to defeat hopelessness, addictions, discouragement, and perversion. We can pray a hedge of protection around our children and ask the Lord to prosper them (spiritually,



mentally, relationally, and academically).

It has never been more apparent that we are in a spiritual fight for the hearts and minds of our children. The new school year is an opportune time to commit to standing with this generation in their life's battles, holding up their arms, and interceding for their God-given destinies.



Here are three ways your church can link hearts to pray for your children—our church's most precious resource.

**1. Set aside a weekend service.** Pastors can set aside time in a weekend service to pray for schools in your area. Pray for your children and young people, educators, and the school year. This could also be a churchwide prayer meeting with every age participating. Ask God's blessing over students and pray for empowerment to succeed and prosper throughout the school year.

**2. Mobilize prayerwalking teams.** On a Saturday before school starts, organize multiple churchwide prayerwalks near different school locations. Prayerwalking or driving near and around a school helps engage hearts to pray with more fervency and focus for the needs of the teachers and students. You may be surprised at how many people will want to participate. Your group can comprise as many—or as few—intercessors as you like.

**3. Get everyone involved.** Students love praying for their schools and friends. Include prayer times in their youth gatherings. Pastors can ask congregations to pray together as

families for their children's or grandchildren's schools throughout the school year. Encourage them to select one or more schools and pray specifically for that school, its issues, students, teachers, administrators, and district leaders.

You can pray in unity for the most pressing needs our students and teachers face by using *Reclaim a Generation*, a

21-day prayer guide ([reclaimageneration.com](http://reclaimageneration.com)).

Thank you for standing in the gap for this generation!

**CHERYL SACKS** is the bestselling author of The *Prayer Saturated* book series and the new *Reclaim a Generation*. You can learn more about Cheryl and her husband Hal's work at [prayersaturated.life](http://prayersaturated.life) and [bridgebuilders.net](http://bridgebuilders.net)

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## Reclaim a Generation

**T**he Lord has a great plan for this emerging generation—they will take the gospel into every sphere of influence and contend for the cultural keys to our nation, bringing reformation and revival to the land. At the same time, our enemy is actively at work, strategizing how he can destroy our children.

It's time for us to stand with this generation in their life's battles, interceding for the preservation of their destinies. It is time to reclaim a generation!

*Reclaim a Generation* is a new 21-day prayer guide for schools, designed to cover this emerging generation with strategic intercession. Cheryl Sacks, national prayer leader and bestselling author, has put together timely research, Scripture, and prayerful insights into a daily plan. This summer is a great time to mobilize your congregation to pray in advance of the start of schools.

Here is a condensed version of two of the daily prayers:

### Gender and Sexuality

Sexuality, once an educational responsibility of parents, has moved not just into the mainstream of education, but to the *extreme*. Not only are today's students being exposed to extremely graphic, sexually themed material in some districts in the name of "sex ed," but they are also being exposed to pressure to accept and embrace transgenderism.

It is no surprise that student sexual activity, pregnancies, pornography use, sexually transmitted diseases, gender dysphoria (confusion about sexual identity), and homosexuality continue to explode among our young people. Our students are being pressured into sexual activity at

younger and younger ages by peers, the culture and media, and now even by the schools themselves as these graphic sex-ed courses push their way into more and more districts.

Our children need our prayers for protection and purity and the preservation of their innocence. School teachers and administrators need wisdom and courage to push back against immoral guidelines and curriculum that promote these ideologies and behaviors.

**Let's Pray:** Lord, there is a spiritual agenda to destroy the innocence and purity of our children, and to corrupt them and lead them down the wrong path with regard to their God-given sexuality and identity.

God, as we face these enemy forces that would lead our students into sexual sin, we declare that You have promised to preserve the godly inheritance of parents and our nation—and that heritage is our children. We take authority in Jesus' name over every wicked spirit that brings these messages of corruption, perversion, and immorality to our precious children.

### Taking Ground: Reclaiming Truth and Values

This week, we will pray for the support systems that instill truth and values in our students, as well as provide for their academic instruction and social/emotional learning and growth.

Truth, in our culture, is under assault. In fact, it has been said, in the face of the constant barrage of untruths and half-truths that have infiltrated and dominated our news, schools, entertainment, and academia in recent years, that we actually live in a "post-truth era."

Our children are our most vulnerable population when it comes to the truth. They are dependent upon us to protect their minds and hearts from that which would direct their spirits and intellects away from the Lord and toward ungodly and destructive philosophies and worldviews.

**Let's Pray:** Father, thank You for Jesus' promise that the truth will set us free. We pray for our children, that You will place people around them who will help them walk in the truth. We pray for teachers and parents, for discernment to recognize deception and false ideologies, and the faith and courage to push back against the sources and fight for truth.

We also pray for administrators and school board members, that they would be gatekeepers of truth in their school districts, and that the lies of the enemy would not get past them. Put godly people in these positions, Lord, to serve Your purposes and defend Your truth in our classrooms.

### God-Given Destinies

Our prayers matter. Your prayers matter. Through prayer, we can reclaim a generation from the enemy's efforts to sow fear, deception, and disunity. Through prayer, we can invite God's Holy Spirit onto our school campuses. Through prayer, we can exercise our authority in Christ, and declare and release God's power over the lives of our students, launching them into their God-given destinies.

You can order *Reclaim a Generation* from [reclaimageneration.com](http://reclaimageneration.com). This 21-day prayer guide will help focus your church on one of the most precious commodities in your community—the children and youth of this emerging generation. **PC**



## When a Prayer Leader Struggles | By Betsy Lee

**A** prayerful Christian is a powerful Christian,” said Billy Graham. The opposite is also true: a prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian.

Imagine my surprise then when I discovered that even prayer leaders struggle with prayerlessness.

I remember attending a training weekend for a national campus ministry. I couldn’t wait to meet people in ministry and learn about their exciting prayer lives.

I was stunned when I heard this comment over and over again: “Prayer?” they said, looking a little sheepish. “To be honest I don’t pray much. I have staff to lead, students to recruit, funds to raise.”

I found this astonishing until I became a prayer leader myself—leading a prayer ministry no less!

### Are You Staying Connected?

Jesus said, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for *without Me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5 NKJV, emphasis added).

*Nothing?* Really?

As prayer leaders we all know the importance of having a regular devotional time—of staying connected to the Vine. But we get busy. We get distracted. Prayer slips down the priority list.

To our peril.

### Abiding, Not Striving

Prayer is the constant current of communication that flows between heaven and earth, keeping us in close contact with God.

If we don’t stay connected to God through prayer, we try to manufacture

that fruitfulness on our own and produce nothing—just as a branch, disconnected from a tree, lifeless and dead, produces nothing.

How do we stay connected to God so that His power flows through us? Jesus said to abide in Him. *Abide* means to rest, to remain, to dwell in one place. *Striving* we understand. But abiding?

Have you ever heard the branch of a tree grunting and groaning to produce fruit? Not likely. Fruit comes in the fullness of time as the sap, the life of the tree, feeds the branches. It’s a natural, relaxed process, the way our spiritual lives should be.

### The Cost of Self-Effort

When we stop abiding in Jesus, we begin to rely on self-effort. This is not only unproductive; it is tiring. Without the reservoir of strength that prayer provides, we can become exhausted from serving others and susceptible to burnout.

My husband gets irritated with me when I let the gas tank in our car run dangerously close to empty before I fill it up. He warns me that this can eventually damage the car. The same is true of us.

Running on empty is not good for your physical or spiritual health!

If we do not take time to soak in God’s presence to nourish our bodies and souls, we can become demanding, brittle, and short-tempered.

### Spiritual Warfare

One reason it is absolutely essential for a prayer leader to stay connected to Jesus, is for protection—not only for yourself, but also for your family and ministry as well.

When we enter the arena of prayer, we become engaged in spiritual warfare,

the constant battle waged between the unseen powers of good and evil, darkness and light (Eph. 6:12). Just as a soldier would not step onto a battlefield without protection, a prayer leader must also be protected.

We can pray for spiritual protection daily by putting on the full armor of God (Eph. 6:10–18), a way to stand in Jesus’ strength, not our own. In addition to praying for our own protection, ask others to pray for your protection too.


### Recover Your First Love

Jesus told His disciples to stay connected to Him not only so they could be fruitful in ministry, but also so they could experience His love and joy in a deeper way (John 15:9–11).

I remember being a young mom, passionate about leading prayer in my church and juggling the needs of my family. One day a prayer picture popped into my mind. I saw my one-year-old daughter standing up in her crib, her eyes wide with excitement when I entered the room. She was so happy to see me!

In prayer, I heard Jesus whisper, “You used to love Me like that. You couldn’t wait to jump in My arms and spend time with Me. You’ve lost your first love.”

That pricked my heart. It was hard to hear. But it was true.

A prayerful Christian is not only a powerful Christian, but one who knows the depths of God’s love and pursues a growing intimacy with Him. 



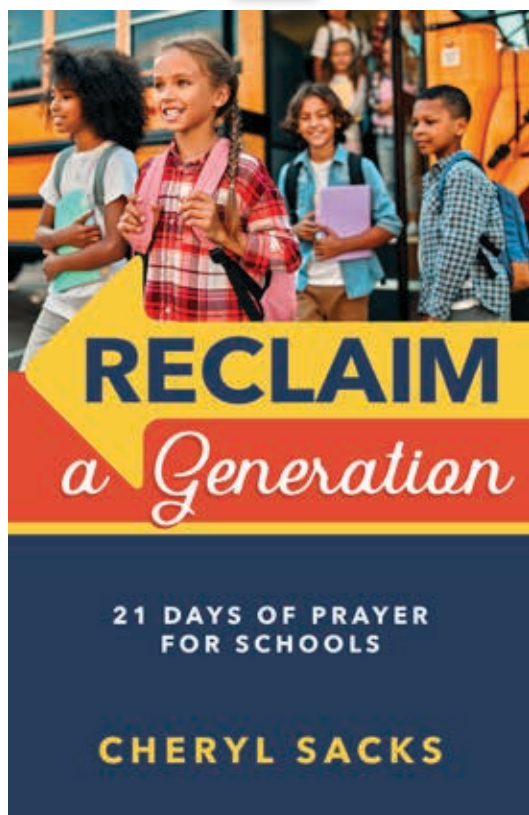
**BETSY LEE** was the founder and president of Prayer Ventures for 25 years. She is the author of several books, including two on prayer. Follow her on Facebook or Instagram @betsyleettravels.

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