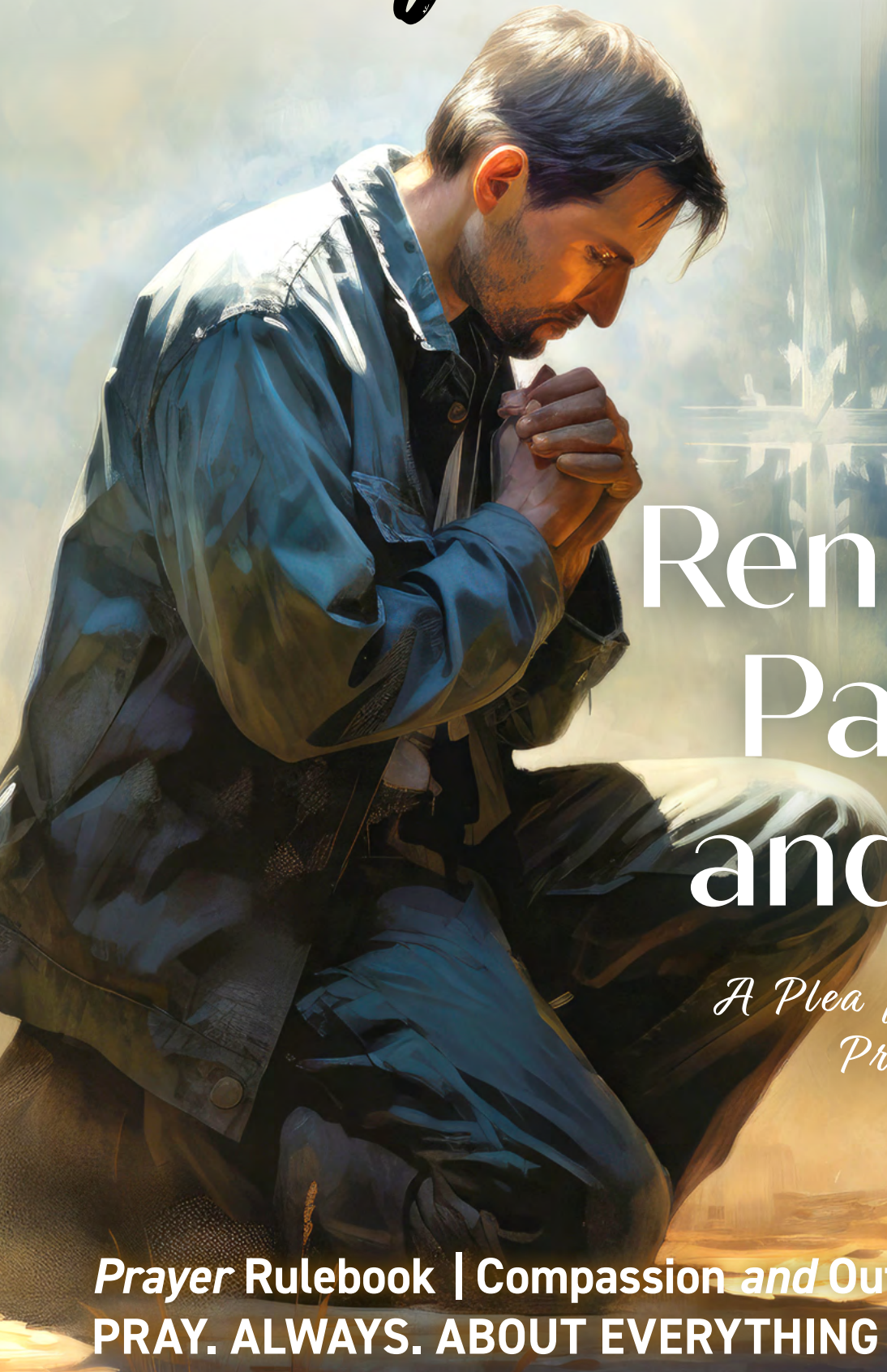


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PrayerCONNECT

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Need a Speaker for Your Prayer Conference or Event?

A number of gifted speakers are 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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The mission of **PRAYER CONNECT** 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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Want Help with Prayer?

Even though I grew up in the church and became a follower of Jesus at a young age, I did not really practice regular prayer until I was a young man of 30 or so. Oh, I could pray. I knew how. But it was only important when I or a close friend experienced a crisis. That's where many believers are when it comes to prayer—we are crisis pray-ers!



For the past 28 years, God has placed a burden on my heart for the average believer who struggles to have a dynamic prayer life—believers like me. Believers who know they *should* pray more, but just can't seem to get into the practice of regular, meaningful prayer. They represent a majority of people in virtually every church.

Can you imagine what the Kingdom could do if this majority learned to pray and became dedicated to praying for God's purposes to be fulfilled in their lives, their church, their community, and their world? *Revival!*

Prayer Connect Refocus

Over the past few years, God has been moving us at the Church Prayer Leaders Network to increase our focus to encourage, equip, and disciple everyday believers in prayer—while still encouraging and resourcing prayer leaders, pastors, and churches.

It started a few years ago with a new training website, love2pray.com, which seeks to help believers in their personal prayer lives. In May of last year, we released a very practical prayer discipleship book, *The 21 Most Effective Prayers of the Bible*, by Dr. Dave Earley, designed to help people understand biblical prayer and its purposes.

We also released a new, expanded version of one of our bestselling products, *Solid Foundation: The Power of Praying Scripture*, a little book that has inspired and taught tens of thousands how to pray God's Word back to Him.

Now, with this issue of *Prayer Connect*, we are refocusing a bit to include more content designed to inspire and equip “everyday believers” in a congregation to pray. Besides the theme section, there are four sections I think you will find helpful:

- Pray the Word: Power of Praying Scripture
- Pray for Our Nation: Focused Prayer for America
- One Cry: United Prayer for Revival and Awakening
- Tips & Tools: Ideas to Stimulate Prayer

We also added a new subscription type “Church Digital Bulk,” which allows churches that sign up to email a PDF of each issue of *Prayer Connect* to their entire congregation. Perhaps you're enjoying this issue because your church has subscribed!

Since this is the first issue of our refocused *Prayer Connect*, we encourage you to help us send it far and wide by emailing the PDF of this issue to your friends. Make sure your pastor and elders see it, too.

Help us encourage and equip everyday believers to grow in prayer!

– Jonathan Graf

Previously in



We know the common ways that God speaks through prayer and His Word. But at times, God also speaks through dreams and visions. It's biblical and still relevant for today! “God Stills Speaks: The Role of Dreams and Visions” and other back issues are available at prayershop.org.

Turn a Verse into Prayer | By Jonathan Graf

In my life, the #1 method of prayer has been praying Scripture or praying God's Word back to Him. It brings the most power, the most comfort and peace, and the greatest results.

It is extremely simple to do. While there are multiple ways to insert verses of Scripture into your prayers, here is the simplest way. I demonstrate using Psalm 91, a great prayer to pray for yourself or someone who is in distress.

Let's Begin

The Psalm begins (I am using New King James Version):

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty
I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."

If I want to pray that, I basically flip the personal nouns and pronouns and pray: "I am dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. I will abide in Your shadow, Oh God. I will say of You, Lord, that You are my refuge and my fortress. Father, God, in You will I trust."

You can use strong declarative statements like "I am . . ." or "I will. . ." Or if you are not comfortable with that, pray, "Help me to dwell . . ." or "Help me to abide under Your shadow. . ."

If you are praying this for a friend, simply insert his or her name into the Psalm: "Lord, help Susan to dwell. . ." You can also feel free to change any wording in the Psalm to fit the specifics of your situation.

I promise that as you pray this way

your heart will be infused with strength, comfort, and confidence. You can use this same method with any passage in Scripture.


Keep Praying

Here is the rest of Psalm 91 with nouns and pronouns changed. Why not pray it today for yourself or someone else? If praying for someone else, just insert the person's name wherever you see "me" or "my." Then put this into practice using other Psalms or any passage of Scripture.

¹ I will dwell in the secret place of the Most High
I will abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
² I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."
³ Surely He shall deliver me from the snare of the fowler, And from the perilous pestilence.
⁴ He shall cover me with His feathers, And under His wings I shall take refuge; His truth shall be my shield and buckler.
⁵ I will not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day,
⁶ Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.
⁷ A thousand may fall at my side, And ten thousand at my right hand; But it shall not come near me.
⁸ Only with my eyes shall I look, And see the reward of the wicked.

⁹ Because I have made the Lord, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, my dwelling place,
¹⁰ No evil shall befall me, Nor shall any plague come near my dwelling;
¹¹ For He shall give His angels charge over me, To keep me in all my ways.
¹² In their hands they shall bear me up, Lest I dash my foot against a stone.
¹³ I shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent I shall trample underfoot.
¹⁴ "Because I have set my love upon You, therefore You will deliver me; You, O Lord will set me on high, because I know Your name.
¹⁵ I shall call upon You, Lord, and You will answer me; You will be with me in trouble; You will deliver me and honor me.
¹⁶ With long life You will satisfy me, And show me Your salvation."

Get Connected

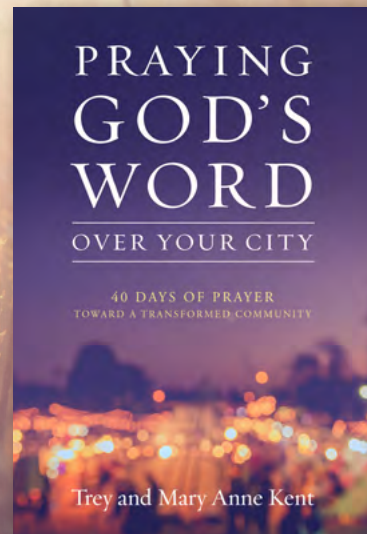
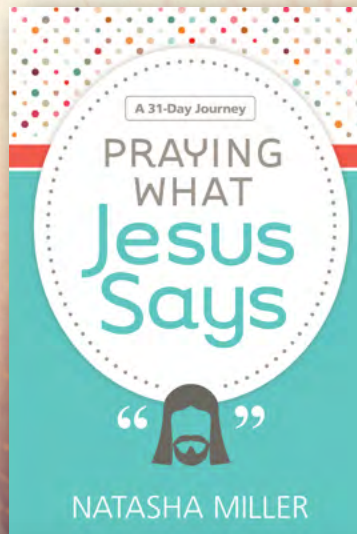
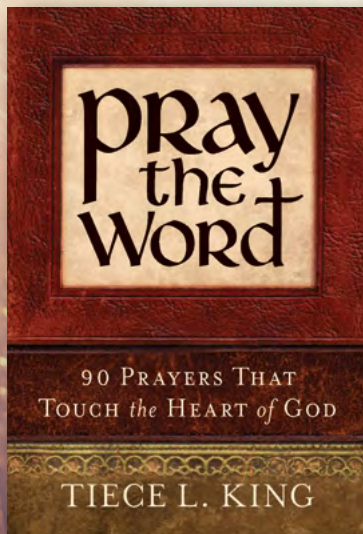
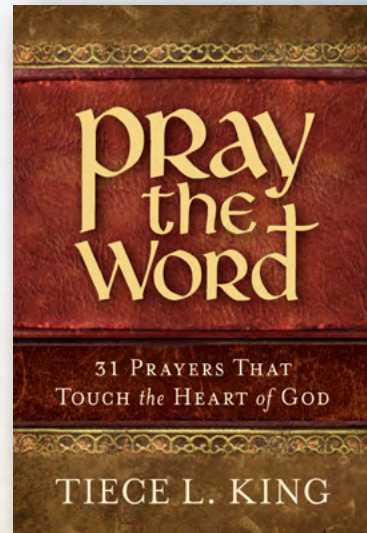
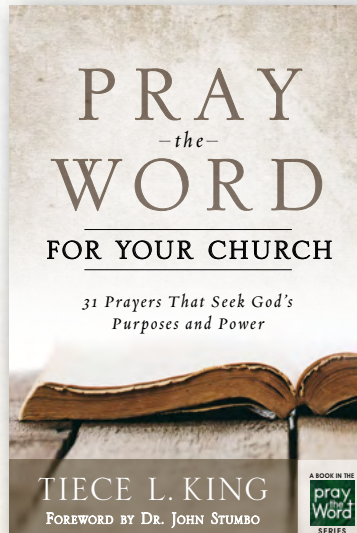
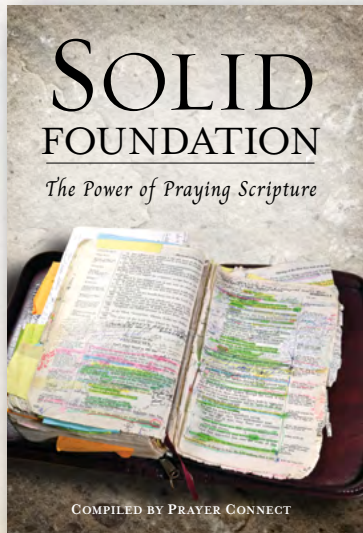
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JONATHAN GRAF is the director of Love2Pray and the president of Church Prayer Leaders Network. He has a heart to help individuals connect with Jesus through prayer.

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Open Doors | By Gloria Robles

Many Christians are surprised to find out that the Bible urges all of us to pray especially for our nation. *The Message* makes it very clear why:

Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well so we can be quietly about our business of living simply, in humble contemplation. This is the way our Savior God wants us to live (1 Tim. 2:1–4).

In following this admonition, even those who feel inadequate, unqualified, or inferior may find themselves in positions of access or influence.

Whitney Thorn is a wife and mother who was raised in a Christian home. Prayer was a part of her life, but for most of this time, her prayers were self-focused. She rarely read the Word. But Whitney's mother, who is an intercessor with a passion for the nation, influenced her daughter to greater prayer.

A few years ago, Whitney began to read the Bible daily, pray, and fast. She shifted from simply praying to intercession that put others before self and God's agenda above her own.

At that time, Whitney's children attended a Christian school that intended to "incorporate culture change" (code for LGBTQ ideals, Critical Race Theory, and evolution).

"I remember praying a dangerous prayer," Whitney says. "I cried out to Him, 'God, there is so much deception. Will You please use me?'"

Whitney met with the school leaders. With boldness and love, she spoke the truth from God's Word about why it

was not permissible to allow any of these ideologies in a Christian school. She fervently prayed for the parents and leaders of the school.

Whitney shares how God answered: "Many families met with the principal to take a stand against corrupt teachings. The principal required the science department to remove everything from the curriculum that was against the biblical truth of creation."

As Whitney continued to pray, listen, and obey, God opened more doors for strategic intercession. Affluent friends invited her to a \$5,000-per-plate dinner for Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. Whitney joked to her friend, "It's too rich for me, but I'd love to help in any way." A few days before the event, Whitney and her sister Kacy signed up as servers.

Whitney and Kacy interceded throughout their time at the event. When Kacy took a photo with DeSantis, she told him, "We are praying for you." She thanked him for fighting for Florida's freedoms.

Whitney says, "If you truly mean it when you pray for God to use you, He will answer. God will open the door, but you must obey."

Recognizing Prayer Burdens

Often when we commit to prayer, we will find there's a next course of action if we are willing to step out in faith. What began for Whitney as faithfulness in prayer opened the door of opportunity.

We see God doing this throughout Scripture. He can do this for any believer who is willing. Sometimes we pray and wait for God to act, but He may be waiting on *us* to act.

Every prayer warrior has something that moves him or her to pray, often to tears. For some, it's family, for some it's a national issue, for others it can be revival. Whitney's prayer burden led her to cry out to the Lord in desperation for His help. You can take steps into prayer action:

- *Identify your prayer burden.* It's the thing you find yourself most passionate about in prayer. Write it down and ask the Lord how He can use you to make a difference.
- *Seize the opportunity.* Whitney volunteered to be a server at a dinner. She just wanted to pray in the vicinity of the man who makes crucial decisions concerning her state. God opened the door for her, even though she was lacking in experience. In Scripture, action often follows prayers.
- *Don't despise the day of small beginnings.* By serving tables, Whitney ended up speaking with her governor face to face. Daniel was a captive who ministered to four different kings. It's said that God uses ordinary people because He can't find any other kind.
- *Be obedient.* The smallest acts of obedience can produce great fruit and miracles. God can accomplish great things through you.

You might not meet a famous governor or have opportunity to tell a key leader that he or she is prayed for by name. But will you obey God's urging to pray for the nation and our leaders? **PC**

INTERCESSORS FOR AMERICA (ifapray.org) has mobilized prayer for this nation for 50 years. Gloria Robles is a contributing writer for IFA.

Renewed Passion and Zeal

*A Plea for Fervent and
Prevailing Prayer*

My nephew called me as they loaded my brother into an ambulance.

“He fell about 15 feet from a scaffolding and hit his head. He’s conscious now, but it looks bad.”

I was one of my nephew’s first calls. He knew we needed to ignite a fervent prayer movement on behalf of his father.

After extensive X-rays, the hospital in Marquette, MI, determined the need to airlift him to Green Bay, WI, to deal with his trauma. In the time it took to assess him, I had texted friends and sent out a request through our church prayer email list of about 150 people. Fervent prayer was set into motion and spread like wildfire as people kept forwarding the request.

When you deal with such an urgent need, you are consumed with the immediate. Suddenly, I didn’t care if I met a writing deadline or kept an appointment. All my energy and emotion were poured into intercession—and inviting others to join me.

The need for fervent and prevailing prayer is often ignited by personal tragedy. But should we not pray in the same way for a desperately broken nation and world? Should we not be consumed with crying out to God in sustained prayer for His mercy?

In This Issue

Bill Elliff describes this kind of prayer as a “Divine Exception.” It is unusual prayer that brings dramatic reversals and spiritual breakthroughs.

According to Kie Bowman, a recent

survey shows that most Americans do indeed pray in quick spurts. But most do not pray with any urgency that moves the hand of God. He writes about the need for relentless persistence and outrageous faith.

Donna Gaines looks at the prayer life of Jesus and how He employed persistent and fervent prayer. She writes that if we could understand the reality of the spiritual realm and the warfare that envelops us, we would battle more intensely. If Jesus prayed with fervency and tears, so should we!

Spectacular Answers

God answered prayers for my brother in spectacular ways. Although he had surgery to replace shattered bones around his eye socket, he did not suffer major brain trauma. He broke eight ribs, but

had no other significant skeletal damage.

We took a family caravan to Green Bay when he was released from the hospital. Because there was a winter storm on the way, we booked ourselves into a hotel while we waited to get on the road toward home in Minnesota.

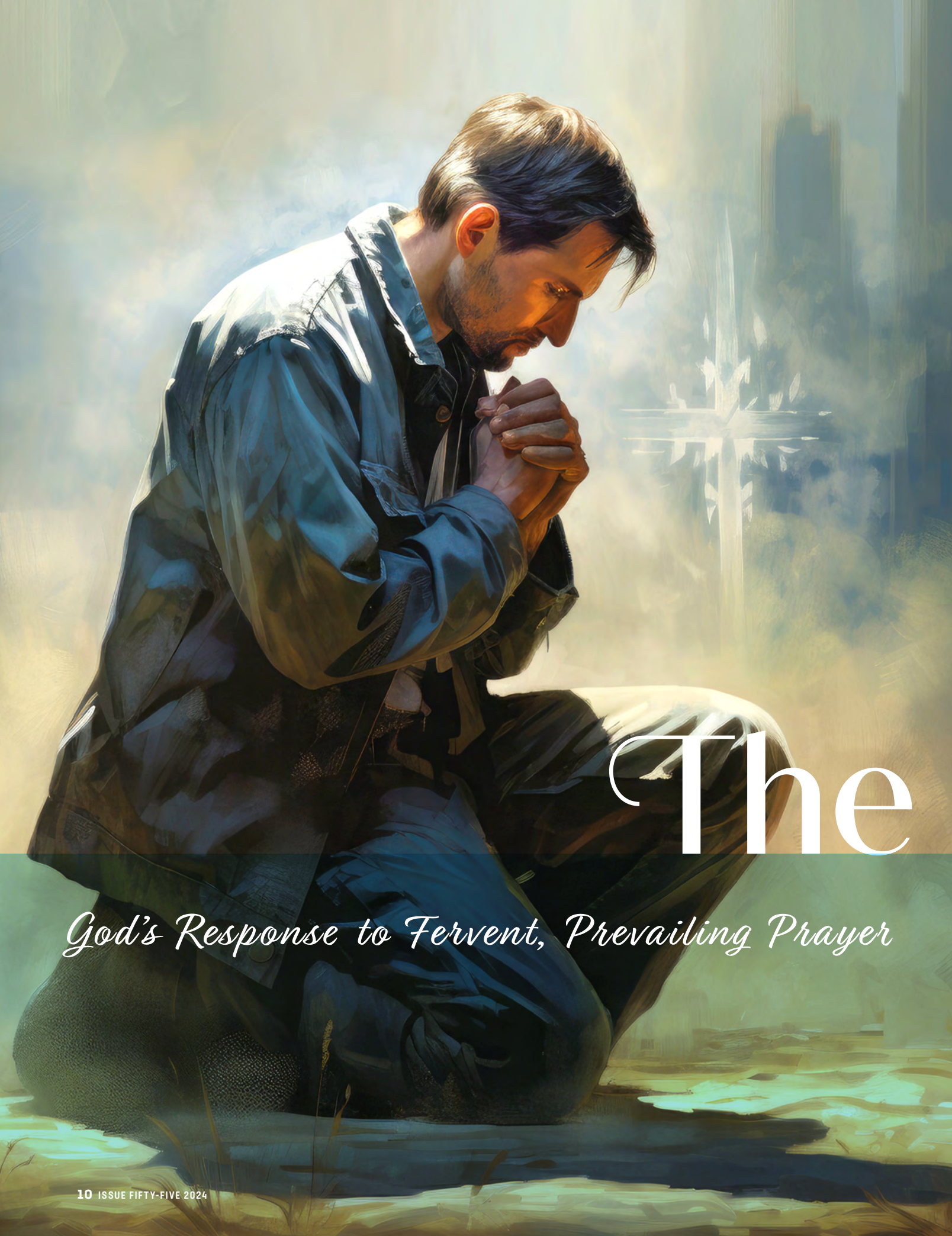
At the breakfast buffet the next morning, a woman who was staying at the hotel commented on my nephew’s t-shirt that said “Marquette, MI.” She was also from Marquette, and so was curious about why we were in Green Bay. She could not contain her surprise as she looked at my brother while we told her the story about his fall and recovery.

Get this—she was the X-ray technician in Marquette who took all the pictures of my brother’s broken body! And now we were eating breakfast at a table next to her in Green Bay. A God-moment.

She looked at my brother and could not believe he was the same man that she had cared for just a few days earlier. She testified to the power of urgent and fervent prayer!

May we embrace a renewed passion and zeal for prayer that yields spectacular answers. Let’s step up and persistently ask God to pour out His Spirit in our day. **PC**

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect* and author of *Prayer That’s Caught and Taught*.



The

God's Response to Fervent, Prevailing Prayer

By Bill Elliff

What do you do when you don't know what to do anymore? When the rising tide of moral degradation in the nation seems unstoppable? When the church seems to be lifeless and ineffective in reversing the cultural freefall? When our churches or families of churches seem to be declining year after year?

Or, more personally, what do you do when your child has become a prodigal and nothing seems to touch him or her? When those you love are caught up in a lifestyle of horrible immorality or gender confusion? When you are in a serious financial crisis? When you cannot seem to overcome a habit that is destroying your life and the lives of others? When you've been deeply hurt and you cannot seem to forgive? When someone you love is lost and headed to an eternity without God, and your best words can't persuade him or her?

Do we devise a new program? Look to a new agenda? Mount a campaign?

Or do we return to the means that God

has ordained—the only practice that will bring dramatic reversals and spiritual breakthroughs?

Light, religious measures will not solve overwhelming problems. These are moments that call for persistent, fervent prayer. Prayer that moves God.

Prayer that brings a Divine Exception.

Early, Insurmountable Problem

The days surrounding Pentecost were stunning for the early believers (Acts 2). Lives were instantly transformed. People miraculously healed. A plan of generosity had been embraced so that there was “no more need” in the large movement of new believers.

And the gospel was advancing. Anyone would surmise that the lightning-speed growth of the church would soon dominate Jerusalem—and perhaps the whole world. It seemed that the mission given by the ascending Christ could be accomplished in a matter of a few years.

The great enemy of God, though, would not allow this to be. Opposition began to grow. The new believers encountered a rising tide of serious persecution that threatened their future. And it was aimed at their leaders.

Divine Exception



Our common tendency is to seek human solutions to Divine-sized situations.

It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. So Peter was kept in prison (Acts 12:1–5a).

Everything was going so well, but suddenly something threatened the glory of those early, effortless days. James was killed and Peter was imprisoned. Herod was so paranoid that he tasked four squads of the toughest soldiers in the world (16 men!) to hold Peter. He was placed in prison and chained to a guard on his left and right.

Imagine these early believers' fears. Picture them huddled in their houses, wondering what was happening. Feel their hopelessness. James was gone. Now Peter is in jail and they had good reason to believe they would be next. They'd witnessed the merciless killings by their oppressors for years. It could all fall apart.

It seemed there was nothing that could be done. Nothing.

Your Dilemma

We might be surprised to view heaven at such a moment. God allows things to happen in this world (and sometimes causes them) to shut us up to Him alone. To bring us to such desperation

that we have nowhere to turn except Him. Ask Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Joshua about their impossible problems. The barren Hannah, Daniel in the lions' den, and his friends in the fire.

One of my mentors, Manley Beasley, often said, "Needs are God's messenger boys, telling us that He has an answer." If we respond rightly, we will see the glory of God and the world will be amazed. But our common tendency is to seek human solutions to Divine-sized situations.

I always imagine heaven's throne room at such moments. I envision the Father turning to His Son and saying with a knowing smile, "Watch this!"

The Divine Exception

A conjunction in the English language is used to connect two thoughts.

*"She told her husband to get milk on the way home **and** he heard her."*

But there's another type of conjunction that is common. It's an oppositional conjunction. It connects two or more parts of a sentence but offers an oppositional thought.

*"She told her husband to get milk on the way home **and** he heard her, **but** he forgot to do it!"*

God's vocabulary is filled with oppositional conjunctions.

- *And you were dead in your transgressions and sin . . . **but** God, being rich in mercy . . .* (Eph. 2:1, 4, ESV).
- *Indeed he was ill, near to death. **But** God had mercy on him* (Phil. 2:27).
- *. . . our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. **But** God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us . . .* (2 Cor. 7:5–6).

The story of Paul's imprisonment contains one of these oppositional conjunctions that is priceless and important:

*So Peter was kept in the prison, **but** prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God* (Acts 12:5, NASB 1995).

What changed everything in the midst of a hopeless situation? The church decided to pray. In response to their fervent prayer, God intervened. There was a Divine Exception to a helpless, hopeless situation.

But this was not light prayer. This was no “and help Sister Susie’s sore toe and, by the way, help ol’ Peter in prison” kind of intercession. Adverbs are used to indicate the type of prayer that engaged them. And it gives us the key to the kind of praying we must use in our current crisis.

Personal Prayer

Generic prayers are often useless. “Lord, bless all the missionaries” may be heard by God, but prayers by name for individuals, pleading with the Lord for specific needs and answers indicate that we are seriously engaged. These believers prayed by name for their friend.

So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God.

And God heard their cry.

Prevailing Prayer

This was not a “one and done” prayer.

So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God.

“Was being made” indicates continual action. Perseverance in prayer was needed in this occasion (and in most). We grow faint in prayer and this is why Christ warned us so often. He asked Peter, “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” as He persevered in prayer in the garden (Matt. 26:40). Jesus told them the parable of the persevering widow “to show that at all times they ought to pray and not

become discouraged” (Luke 18:1, NASB). *ALL times.*

S.D. Gordon, in his book *Quiet Talks on Prayer*, writes:

Prayer is warfare . . . it is a fiercely contested conflict. And the enemy yields only what he must. He yields only what is taken. Therefore, the ground must be taken step by step.

Prayer must be definite.

He yields only when he must. Therefore, prayer must be persistent. He continually renews his attacks, therefore the ground must be held against him in the Savior’s name.

Great dilemmas call for great prayer. Persevering problems call for



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persevering prayer. We might wonder at this requirement from God, but our frustration with this indicates we misunderstand one of the great purposes of prayer.

Prayer is not just about getting things, it's about *God getting you*. God longs for you, more than you long for your own children. He designed you to walk in unceasing communion with Him.

He allows problems—often overwhelming situations—to draw you to His side and teach you how to live with Him in intimacy. He wants you to know His love and see His gracious, providing care. He wants you to see the perfection of His timing. To understand His sovereignty. To grasp the precision of His ways. To train you to live in dependency upon Him.

Only in persevering, continual prayer do we experience the depth of this intimacy. Only there do we come to know Him as we should and as we can.

Intense Prayer

Fervently can be translated as “zealously, unceasingly, intently, with unflinching intensity.”

So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God.

Fervently is not a word that could be used for most of our praying, which could explain the smallness of our faith, the weakness of our compassion, and the infrequency of our results.

Hannah is a priceless example as she prayed so fervently that the aged prophet thought she was drunk.

She, greatly distressed, prayed to

the LORD and wept bitterly. She made a vow and said, “O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head.”

Now it came about, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli was watching her mouth.

As for Hannah, she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she was drunk. Then Eli said to her, “How long will you make yourself drunk? Put away your wine from you.” But Hannah replied, “No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD” (1 Sam. 1:10–15).

Look at the words and phrases that describe her praying: *Distressed, wept bitterly, made a vow, continued praying, oppressed in spirit, I have poured out my soul before the Lord.*

Does this describe your praying? The praying of your church? If not, it may explain why we see little response to our prayers.

Responsible Prayer

Imagine getting a frantic call from a neighbor that robbers have broken into their home. You call the police and run down the street to their house. To your amazement, when you arrive you see two police cars with multiple officers causally leaning on their cars. You hear screams from inside the home, but the policemen are doing nothing.

This would never happen in our

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nation because our policemen and women are incredibly committed in their task to protect and to serve. They accept their responsibility with amazing faithfulness, regardless of the cost.

Does the church do the same? People are being terrorized by the enemy. He has come to steal, kill, and destroy—and He is good at His evil task. The attack on our nation's children is epidemic, as the enemy invades their minds and brings such moral confusion that they don't even know if they are a boy or a girl anymore. He is on the attack in every home in your neighborhood, every student at every school in your city, every church, every business.

And where is the church? Are we standing with arms folded, merely observing?

*... but prayer for him was being made fervently **by the church to God.***

There is much we can do, but the one thing that can change everything is fervent prayer “by the church to God.” Prayer brings God into the equation to accomplish this amazing feat.

Somehow in the last decades, many churches have come to believe they can accomplish God's mission without prayer. The New Testament Church didn't believe that. Paul wouldn't dream of that preposterous idea.

And of course, Christ Himself accomplished His task by unceasing prayer. All-night prayer. Fervent prayer. Prevailing prayer. He knew it was His responsibility to pray and He fulfilled it fully. And so must we.

The Divine Exception

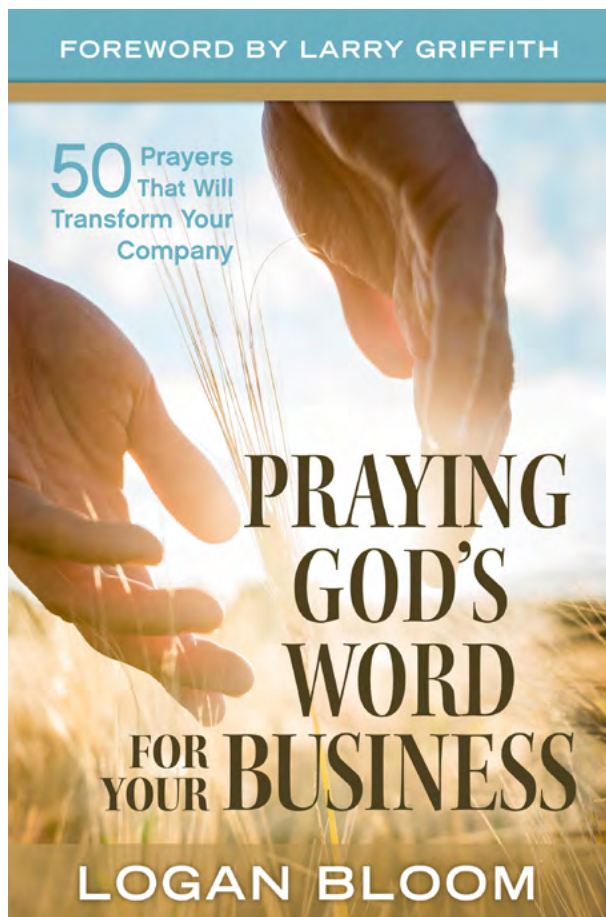
No one dreamed what God would do in response to the humble believers' fervent

prayers. In fact, when God answered their prayers for Peter, they were amazed! Read the story in Acts 12. One night as they were praying, Peter's chains fell off, an angel gave him a personal escort out of prison, and he headed to the home where “many were gathered together and were praying” (vs. 5). The poor little servant girl came to the door, saw Peter, and closed the door in his face in her excitement!

God had done something beyond their imagining. The church—and even a watching world—was amazed at this Divine Exception. **PC**



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Relent

Fervency and Practicality in Prayer

By Kie Bowman

David Brainerd, praying in the deep winter snow until it all melts 12 hours later from his body heat, is an example of fervency. Fervency is Leonard Ravenhill habitually rising to pray in the middle of the night for hours at a time. A church in Austin, TX, is led to pray 24/7 and has maintained that schedule non-stop for almost two years—that's fervency in prayer.

People may see these as exceptional and impractical examples because they require extraordinary commitment. Not many believers will ever pray for 12 hours in the snow. Only a few churches will dare to pray 24/7 for years.

Fervency in prayer is about praying daily, praying passionately, praying in faith, and praying without competing distractions. So, in light of the exceptional examples of fervency in prayer mentioned in Scripture and the obvious examples in history, is it still possible for ordinary Christians to pray with fervency?

The answer is yes, but fervent prayer is never ordinary!

Are We Praying Fervently?

An astounding number of people pray. A 2023 survey found that 61 percent of Americans pray.¹ Still, in spite of its popularity, prayer remains a challenge. Lifeway asked pastors what they need most, and 72 percent said they need help with the consistency of their prayer life.²

If pastors are struggling with consistency in prayer, it is likely their parishioners are too. A closer examination of the avalanche of numbers easily identifies a key misunderstanding about the discipline and fervency of daily or frequent prayer.

For example, it is simple to analyze who is praying and how often they pray, but it is harder to measure how intensely they pray. Fortunately, the latest research gives us a clue. Of the 61 percent of people who pray, 61 percent pray while driving their car! Think about that. During one of the most attention-demanding activities in our lives—driving—people are praying. In fact, more people report praying while driving than while in church.

Is there something wrong with praying while we drive? Aren't we supposed to pray without

Lessly Pursuing God

ceasing? Of course, praying while we go about our daily activities, including in the car, is desirable—even expected.

That kind of prayer, however, falls short of the standard of Jesus, who said, “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Matt. 6:6). If the average person is praying while distracted by anything that simultaneously demands their attention, they have not yet discovered the meaning of fervency in prayer. It is impossible to be fervent in prayer while focused on other things. There must be a better way.

Remember Hannah. She is one of our role models for both fervency and practicality in prayer. We can all learn practical lessons from Hannah to increase our passion and fervency in prayer.

Desperate Prayer Moves God

Leonard Ravenhill once said, “God doesn’t answer prayer, He answers desperate prayer.”

Hannah was desperate. She lived more than a thousand years before Christ in the time of the judges. Her husband, his other wife and her children, and Hannah made an annual pilgrimage to

Shiloh where Israel gathered in those days for prayer, worship, and sacrifice. Hannah wanted children, and her husband’s other wife added to her frustration by constantly provoking her about it.

Year after year while the family was at Shiloh, Hannah fasted and fervently prayed for a child. God heard her prayer, and eventually Samuel—the last judge and first prophet of Israel—was born to her in direct answer to fervent prayer (1 Sam. 1:10–20). Hannah knew she would never have her own children without a miracle. Her prayer rose from a passionate desperation.

Fervent prayer almost always carries a spirit of desperation—a settled belief that if God does not do it, it will not get done. Desperate prayer is not motivated by a lack of faith. Instead, it is massively dependent upon answered prayer—and nothing else—as the solution to our current dilemmas.

Think, for instance, of George Whitefield praying for revival. His diary from his days at Oxford records that he often spent “whole days and even weeks” on his face before God in prayer. His desperation to experience revival was eventually realized in the First Great Awakening in America.

God still does extraordinary things in response to extraordinary prayer.

Fearless Prayer

Hannah also ignored other people’s opinions of her highly intense commitment to prayer. Her husband tried to console her with his affection, but it was not enough (1 Sam. 1:8–11). Later, the old priest at Shiloh saw her praying with such quiet intensity he concluded she was drunk (vs. 12–16). But she corrected his misperception and testified that she was fervently praying for a miracle (vs. 15–16). True, she did not want to be judged as “a worthless woman” (vs. 16), but she did not mind persisting in prayer

How to Develop a Prayer Passion

By Wesley Duewel

The most important measure of prayer is not its length or its depth; not its beautiful words—but its intensity. It is not necessarily a matter of how many hours you pray, but how intensely you pray when you do.

Learn to pray with passion:

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you His love, passion, and zeal.
2. Welcome and cherish any drawing of the Spirit to prayer.
3. Read and reread Scripture accounts or accounts in deeply spiritual books of how God called people to prayer and answered their prayers.
4. Keep deepening your own prayer life by faithfulness in your prayer habits and your prayer commitments.
5. Take several major prayer concerns or burdens on your heart and make them the special focus of your prayers: for special needs such as pornography, drugs, or child abuse. They may include a particular nation—India, China, Indonesia, Cuba, or another one God places on your heart. You cannot pray at length for everything, but you can ask God to guide you to several special prayer concerns.
6. Keep a listening ear for any special prayer assignments that God might give you as a temporary urgent prayer need. There may be a special need on a particular day or hour for your prayer. As far as possible, go to prayer for that need immediately. Use every free moment possible until God lifts from your heart the prayer concern. Your prayer passion will be greatly increased as you obey this call from the Spirit.

Whether short or long, let your prayer be fervent.

Excerpted from *Mighty Prevailing Prayer*, by Wesley Duewel, pgs. 76–79.

regardless of other people's prejudices.

Fervent prayer seems to disregard its surroundings or social norms in favor of a passionate fellowship with God. Contemporary Christians are often too easily offended by even the slightest social ridicule. The fear of other people's opinions is the opposite of a bold witness.

As Billy Graham reminds us, "God Himself is the power that makes prayer effective. When prayers are answered and we glorify God, this is a strong testimony for the power of prayer in the name of Almighty God. The unbelieving world watches how we live our lives. They may laugh and make fun of our commitment to Christ, but it pleases the heart of God to see His followers living in obedience to Him no matter the consequences."³

Relentless Persistence in Prayer

Charles Spurgeon once offered this pastoral observation: "He who prays much will pray more, and he who prays little will pray less." One of the truths most frequently taught in Scripture concerning prayer is the necessity of persisting in it. Hannah apparently prayed for years for her miracle (vs. 3–11).

Fervency in prayer is not measured in a single half-hearted prayer but in repeated requests over days, weeks, months, or even decades. Prayer persists by believing that God's delays are not the same as God's denials. Your persistence in prayer will be determined by how much is at stake if God does not answer.

Persistence in prayer may be one of our biggest devotional challenges. That is why Jesus spoke to it specifically (Luke 18:1–8) and why Paul insisted upon it (1 Thess. 5:17). The late Tim Keller admitted to struggling with consistency in prayer. In order to discipline himself, he adopted a plan to pray five times a day.⁴

How you develop your commitment to persist in prayer will be determined

by your circumstances, but no one can be described as fervent in prayer without persistence.

Outrageous Faith

Hannah expressed incredible faith. When did she start to believe that if she prayed God could give her a child? Did Hannah have a godly mother who filled her young heart with stories about Sarah, who miraculously gave birth at 90 years of age (Gen. 18:9–14)? Did Hannah learn at an early age about Rebekah, who could not have children but conceived as a result of prayer (Gen. 25:21)?

We may never know exactly how Hannah came to believe, but she exhibited outrageous faith in the face of her painful circumstances. As a godly Jewish woman, she knew the stories of God's miracles in the lives of other women. Did those biblical stories give her faith to pray with an outrageous trust in God? How could it be otherwise?

Fervent prayer is always baked in the live coals of God's Word. As Warren Wiersbe said, "We live on promises, not on explanations."


Fervent prayer believes that the God who moved in the past is the God who can hear my prayer today. If you want your prayer life set on fire, turn to Scripture. Read about who God is and what He can do. Perhaps then you will start to pray with the fervency of Hannah. Maybe you will believe what A.W. Tozer said:

Anything God has ever done, He can do now. Anything that God has ever done anywhere, He can do here. Anything He's ever done for anyone, He can do for you.

You may think you cannot pray with fervency because you are not a biblical character like Hannah. But remember, we know almost nothing about Hannah except that she fervently prayed—and her prayer changed history.

What will the future say about us if we fail to pray fervently? What miracles

await if, like a young wife named Hannah who lived 3,000 years ago, we choose to pray fervently?

Isn't it time to find out? 

¹Michael Foust, "61 Percent of Americans Pray, Poll Shows: It's More Common Than People Expect," <https://christianheadlines.com/contributors/michael-foust/61-percent-of-americans-pray-poll-shows-its-more-common-than-people-expect>, accessed 12/5/23.

²Aaron Earls, "U.S. Pastors Identify Their Greatest Needs," <https://research.lifeway.com/2022/01/11/u-s-pastors-identify-their-greatest-needs>, accessed 8/27/23.

³"Answers," 1/7/21, <https://billygraham.org/answer/how-should-i-respond-when-co-workers-mock-my-faith>, accessed 8/27/23.

⁴Tim Keller, "How Tim Keller Seeks to Pray Without Ceasing," 10/22/19, accessed 8/27/23.



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He is the coauthor of [City of Prayer](#).



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Prevailing

With Fervent Cries

A decorative background featuring large, stylized, light-colored floral and leaf motifs. The motifs are rendered in a soft, muted green or beige tone, creating a subtle, elegant pattern behind the text.

By Donna Gaines

As I look back at almost 40 years in ministry, I remember times that God allowed me to experience His presence in tangible ways. Each time, it was when I was calling out to Him in fervent prayer. The best way I can describe those moments is that God pierced the temporal with the eternal. I knew without a doubt that I was in His Presence.

One of our earliest experiences was when our son Grant began bruising excessively when he was only 22 months old. His pediatrician said he had a dangerously low platelet count and made an appointment for tests at the Children's Hospital. One of the possible diagnoses was leukemia.

The deacons of our church came to our home, anointed Grant with oil, and fervently cried out to the Lord in prayer on his behalf. One of our deacon's wives stayed up all night praying for him.

Before sunrise the next morning, my husband, unable to sleep, opened his Bible where he had been reading the day before. The words of Exodus 14:13–14 seemed to jump off the page:

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

He wrote the verses on a blank business card and took it with us to the hospital the next day. The Lord answered our prayers. Our son did not have leukemia. He was diagnosed with a blood disorder that he eventually outgrew. God spoke when we cried out to Him in prayer.

Years later when my husband was 42 years old, he was diagnosed with Myasthenia Gravis, an auto-immune disease that causes extreme weakness and can attack various systems in the body. He experienced severe fatigue and double vision. During testing they discovered he had a tumor on his thymus gland just below his sternum that had to be removed. He was facing surgery the next day.

Prayers of Jesus

The Lord did not promise to heal my husband, but He did promise that He was enough for whatever I faced.

That night, I knelt by the chair where I routinely met with the Lord and cried out to Him as tears coursed down my cheeks, “Lord, I need my husband. Our four children need their father.”

At that moment, I became tangibly aware of His presence. He impressed these words upon my heart: “I Am. I Am your husband and your children’s father.”

The Lord did not promise to heal my husband, but He did promise that He was enough for whatever I faced. I would not have experienced that intimate moment with My Father if I had not turned to Him in fervent prayer.

Passionate Intensity

What does it mean to pray *fervently*? *Strong’s Concordance* defines *fervent* as “tense, resolute, and eager.” *Merriam-Webster* defines it as “having or displaying a passionate intensity—very hot, glowing.”

In the New Testament the word *fervent* is found only four times. It is used twice in relation to prayer. Luke described Jesus’ fervent prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: “And being in agony, He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground” (Luke 22:44, NASB).

Luke also described the fervency of the prayers of the Christians in Jerusalem when Peter was miraculously released from prison: “So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God” (Acts 12:5, NASB 1995).

Both examples speak of intense, passionate, white-hot prayer!

Warfare Reality

Prayer is communing and communicating with God. It is also spiritual warfare. When we pray, we engage in a spiritual battle. Indeed, our prayers make a difference in the unseen spirit realm. Things happen when we pray that would not have happened if we had not prayed.

If we could embrace and comprehend the reality of the spirit realm and all that is at stake, we would pray more fervently and battle more intensely on behalf of people who are lost, hurting and in spiritual bondage.

Jesus is our prayer example. I encourage you to write the letter “P” in the margin of your Bible each time you read that Jesus prayed. You will be surprised and greatly encouraged and instructed by our Lord’s prayer life.

Interestingly, the only thing Jesus’ disciples asked Him to teach them was to pray (cf. Luke 11:1). His personal prayer life was so vital and powerful that the disciples wanted to pray as He did. His example included:

- Jesus often slipped away into the wilderness to pray (Luke 5:16).
- He prayed all night before He chose His disciples (Luke 6:12).
- Jesus discerned God’s will through prayer. After a long day of ministering to people, Jesus woke early to go away by Himself to pray (Mark 1:35). When His disciples came

looking for Him, they were ready to go back into the village where they had been so well received. But Jesus said, “Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for” (Mark 1:38). Jesus was not moved by the acceptance of man, but by the will of His Father.

- Jesus’ fervent prayer life is also vividly described in Hebrews 5:7:

In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death and He was heard because of His piety (NASB).

Jesus saw and understood the spirit realm. He also comprehended the goodness and power of God the Father. Consequently, Jesus prayed with fervency and tears. How much more should we?

Our spiritual enemy Satan is very real. We will not be victorious against him without prevailing prayer, which requires fervency and discipline. God has given every Christian spiritual armor for the battle (Eph. 6:10–18). We appropriate the whole armor of God for prayer: “With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints” (vs. 18, NASB).

God’s Ways and Timing

Fervency does not mean that your prayers will always be answered according to your will. Quite often, fervent prayer is what prepares us for God’s will. My husband and I have cried out to the Lord with tears and loud cries over a rebellious child, a difficult ministry transition, and other seemingly hopeless circumstances. In all these situations, the Lord met us through His Word and His Spirit in His timing.

God often uses times of fervent prayer to call us to a new area of ministry. After tutoring students in the inner

city of Memphis for four years, I began crying out to the Lord on behalf of the children of our city. Memphis has one of the highest child poverty rates in the nation. As I prayed over our city, the Lord strongly imprinted on my heart: “This is your city, these are your children. What are you doing about it?”

I said out loud, “Lord, it feels absolutely overwhelming.”

But I knew immediately that I was to recruit churches to adopt inner city schools and focus on literacy and the gospel to break the generational poverty cycle. Thus, the Lord birthed a non-profit—ARISE2Read.org—that seeks to help children read proficiently by the third grade while also putting an after-school Bible club on the campuses of the schools we adopt. This fall, we will be in more than 40 elementary schools in

Shelby County. Our children have been averaging a three-grade-level sight word fluency increase each year!

I don’t know what you are currently struggling with, but the Lord does. He knows every detail, and He has given us prayer as the primary means by which we enter the spirit realm to do battle. He welcomes us into His Presence and invites us to come and “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” (Heb. 4:16).

White-Hot Prayer

What is your need? Ask the Lord to give you a word from His Word—and then believe and cling to it as you pray and stand on His promise. He is always at work. Our job is to believe, stand firm against the schemes of the devil, and pray fervently for His Kingdom to come

and His will to be done. If we want the light of the gospel to penetrate the darkness and change our families, churches, cities, our nation, and world, we must pray fervently.

Jesus modeled prayer for us. He has given us the vehicle of prayer through which His will is accomplished in our lives. Pray like you believe that God is not only listening but also desires to move on your behalf.


Fervency reveals our faith and dependency. It is time for us to leave apathy behind. Engage fervently in the battle with passionate, white-hot prayer—and see what God will do! **PC**



DONNA GAINES is a Bible teacher and author of four books. She is also the founder and president of the board of [ARISE2Read](http://ARISE2Read.org). Her husband Steve pastors Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, TN.



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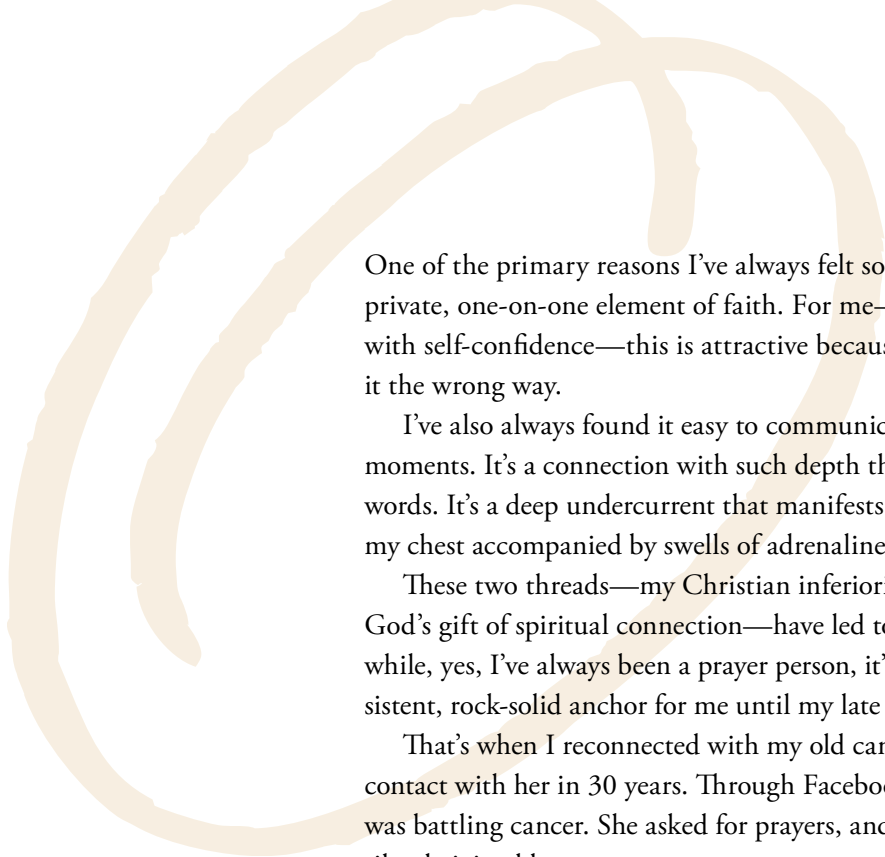
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How I've
Learned There
Are No Rules



The Prange



One of the primary reasons I've always felt so drawn to prayer is that it's a private, one-on-one element of faith. For me—someone who has struggled with self-confidence—this is attractive because no one can tell me I'm doing it the wrong way.

I've also always found it easy to communicate with God during quiet, still moments. It's a connection with such depth that it's difficult to explain with words. It's a deep undercurrent that manifests itself in a physical tightening of my chest accompanied by swells of adrenaline.

These two threads—my Christian inferiority complex combined with God's gift of spiritual connection—have led to a lifetime of praying. And while, yes, I've always been a prayer person, it's not something that was a consistent, rock-solid anchor for me until my late 40s when God blew up my life.

That's when I reconnected with my old camp pal, Dana. I hadn't had any contact with her in 30 years. Through Facebook, I learned that her son Parker was battling cancer. She asked for prayers, and as that was my "thing," I silently joined her prayer team.

Surprising Urgency

While following through on an online prayer request was a normal occurrence for me, Dana and Parker were different. From the very beginning, I felt drawn in and totally committed in a way that I knew didn't make sense. My prayers for them had an urgency—an emotional resonance—that didn't fit the distance that separated us.

When Parker relapsed, I was inspired (after further prayer) to write to him and his mom at the Ronald McDonald house in Memphis. Then Parker passed away at only 15 years old.

Devastated for Dana—as any fellow mom would be—I hit my knees again and asked God what I was supposed to do next. The message was clear, "Keep writing the letters and keep praying."



BY AMY DAUGHTERS

Rulebook

I needed to pray for her prayers. To lift up all the things she couldn't.

And that's what I did. And then Dana began writing back, sharing about her deep, profound, and never-ending grief. We communicated for two years via handwritten letters exclusively, developing an unbelievable bond that transcended what an in-person relationship might have offered in that moment.

While I learned so much from Dana, one of the biggest takeaways was that I couldn't really do anything for her. My endless words, my updates, my attempts to entertain, my care, and even my repeated reminders that I was praying

for her added up to, at best, a well-meaning distraction. And so, to make a difference, I leaned even harder into God and His promises.

These prayers—the non-stop ones for Dana and her family—meant something more. I had to get this right because it was all I could do for them, this precious family that I now believe God had implanted in my flawed human heart.

Prayer Questions

It led to an "Aha!" moment: Though I had previously delighted in the covert nature

of prayer where nobody could review my performance, was I even doing it right?

Does God listen more when we get down on our knees to pray? Or are our prayers more powerful in church? Or is it better when we have a quiet time set aside every day?

Are the prayers of a group more powerful than those of an individual? What about the actual wording? Are we supposed to say the same thing over and over again? Or are we required to come up with something new every time?

What about the order of prayer expressions? Do we confess, then ask God for help—or is it better to offer thanks first, ask for forgiveness, and then make our requests known?

Searching for some sort of "Prayer Best Practices," I found that many Mormons like to pray together as a family every morning and evening, that devout Muslims pray five times a day, and for those of the Jewish faith the number is three.

And where the Catholic Church has more than a dozen common prayers that can be said verbatim, the United Methodist Church encourages both formal written and spontaneous prayers. The further I delved into the subject I found that, even among Christian churches, there are as many approaches and as much variety as there are denominations.

Prayer could be intercessory, or meditative and contemplative, or seasonal. There were even "listening" prayers.

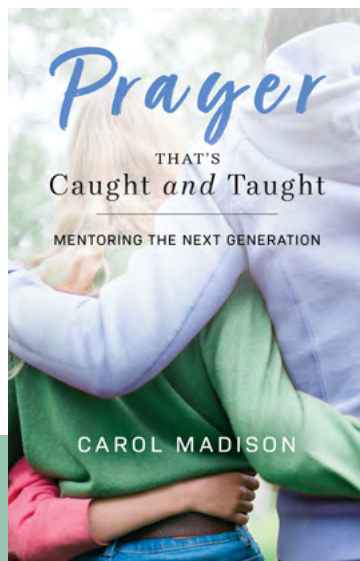
Which was the best way to garner God's attention?

Minute by Minute

Eventually, Dana and I reunited in the physical realm. That meant not only could I imagine the depth of her grief via her handwritten words, but now I could also see it in her body language, in her

Wanted: Intercessors to Mentor the Next Generation in Prayer!

Here is a 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 learn about prayer principles and how to practice prayer.



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facial expressions, and in her tears—with my own eyes.

I was introduced to her husband Jim and their four daughters—Parker’s dad and sisters. They were also hurting, mostly invisibly and each with his or her own unique set of circumstances and challenges. The need for getting the prayers “right” was compounding.

Perhaps most critically, I began to understand that Dana’s relationship with prayer had been impacted in a way that couldn’t be gauged. How was she supposed to pray when the most important prayer request in her life wasn’t answered?

I needed to pray for *her* prayers. To lift up all the things she couldn’t.

As our story got out, I began receiving a bunch of prayer requests from a bunch of other people living very real lives. The sheer volume, and even more so, the critical importance of each of these prayers meant that not just one approach was going to “get ‘er done.”

It all added up to a profound realization: *prayer is a minute-by-minute thing for me.* While I was still going to have time set aside each day for prayer, God and I were going to literally communicate all day. About everything.

While sometimes I would still get down on my knees, other times I prayed while doing the dishes or driving or even speaking to another human being. Sometimes I would be in church, reciting just what I was supposed to say, while other times I’d be in my pew silently praying my own prayers. And where sometimes I would have lots of new words for God, other times I would just pray the same thing repeatedly.

And sometimes the prayers—especially for Dana—would be so deep, so guttural, that there would be no words at all.


God Is There

The common denominator, the only element that really mattered, was that God

was going to be there in all the moments.

I couldn’t get it wrong. Not because nobody could see it or comment on it, but because it was the Holy Spirit running the entire show. While it felt unscripted, it wasn’t. The difference was, I wasn’t the one directing the program—He was.

It set me free, not just as a prayer person, but as a believer. I wasn’t an inferior Christian. I was just a regular,

flawed, sinful, hopeful, human being in a relationship with an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving God who gets me. 



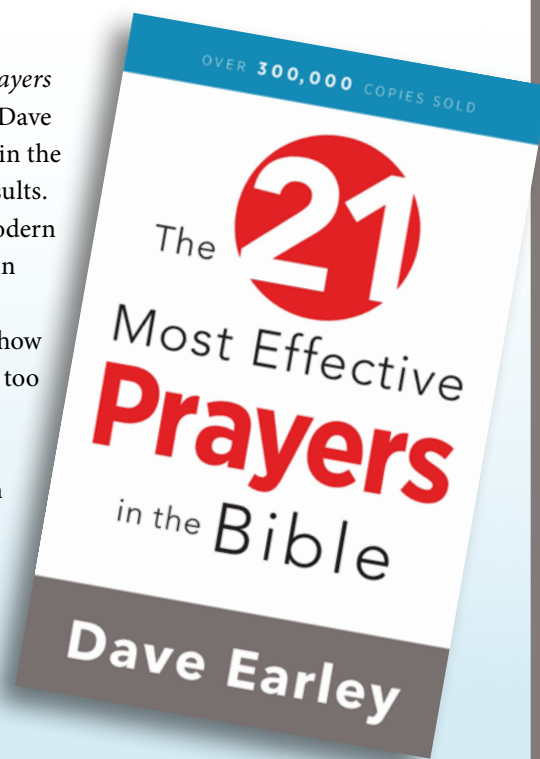
AMY DAUGHTERS is a freelance writer on topics from football to emotions (amydaughters.com). She is the author of *Dear Dana: That Time I Went Crazy and Wrote All 580 of My Facebook Friends a Handwritten Letter*. She and her husband live in Tomball, TX.

Learn from Prayers in the Bible

That God Said “Yes” To

In *The 21 Most Effective Prayers in the Bible*, author pastor Dave Earley explores 21 prayers in the Scriptures that brought results. He shares personal and modern examples of these prayers in action and offers practical advice and instruction on how you can pray these prayers too . . . and see results!

A great resource for believers who struggle with prayer. Designed for entire congregations to pray through together.



In the Upper Room with Jesus

On Passover of Holy Week (now Maundy Thursday), Jesus sent Peter and John to an upper room to prepare for the Passover meal. Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter, believed to be the day Jesus observed His final Passover meal with His disciples by humbly washing their feet.

In the same way in this Easter season, Jesus calls us, too, to prepare for Him an upper room—in our soul. He says, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me” (Rev. 3:20).

A Maundy Thursday Reflection

Whether as an individual or in a group, you can use the following reflections to prepare your heart this Holy season as we await the joy of Jesus’ resurrection. On this Maundy Thursday, He says to you and me:

- “Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?” (Luke 22:11). *Is there in me an upper room for Jesus, a heart-place set apart to be with Him?*
- “Make preparations there” (Luke 22:12). *Is my upper room cleaned and warmed by the Holy Spirit’s fire? Is the*

table set for two?

- “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you” (Luke 22:15). *Do I also come with anticipation, eager to dine with Christ?*
- “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me” (John 13:8). *Have all my sins been washed away, forgiven through faith in Jesus’ substitutional sacrifice?*
- “This is my body, which is for you. . . . this cup is the new covenant in my blood” (1 Cor. 11:24–25). *Do I remember anew that He died for not just the whole world, but for me?*
- “Will you really lay down your life for me?” (John 13:38, to Peter). *Is my entire life laid at His feet?*
- “Do not let your hearts be troubled. . . . believe also in Me” (John 14:1). *Do I give Jesus my deepest concerns, trusting that He will care for them?*
- “[The Father] will give you another advocate to help you . . . the Spirit of Truth. . . . [He] will be in you” (John 14:16–17, 16:13). *Am I honoring His Spirit in me by listening to the truth He speaks?*
- “I am the vine; you are the branches” (John 15:5). *Do I realize Jesus as my vital Source of soul-health and fruitful living?*



- “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7). *Do I wholly align myself with His will, then freely ask?*
- “Protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me” (John 17:11). *Do I take Jesus Christ as my protection from the world, the flesh, and my enemy, Satan?*
- “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). *Am I deep into the Word, allowing the Holy Spirit to apply its purifying truth?*
- “I pray . . . that all of them may be one” (John 17:20–21). *Am I living in unbroken fellowship with other believers?*

Jesus calls us to reserve this soul-space for Him always. Here He will meet with us by His Spirit. Here He will speak and listen, counsel and advocate, and intercede. Here He will reveal Himself as more than we could possibly ask or imagine—if we will keep for Him this upper room.

Meet Him there.

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

See You at the Polls

In a recent local election, my city of 90,000 people faced an unusual opportunity. The redrawing of district lines meant that the positions of mayor and all city council seats were up for election (as well as three school board

seats). In all my years of exercising my civic right to vote, I don’t ever recall such potential for upheaval.

My church immediately started praying. As a leader of our weekly House of Prayer, I emphasized our

need to bathe the upcoming elections in intercession. I wondered if other churches were also praying.

Our prayer team decided to create a strategy of praying onsite at all 31 precincts in our city before the elections. We

figured that over the course of a month, we could dispatch intercessors to each precinct multiple times to pray.

One of our prayer team members jokingly suggested “See You at the Polls” as a name for our prayer initiative. We all laughed—and then said, “Hey, wait. That’s a great name.”

I pulled together a list of the 31 precincts/polling places and addresses. I was surprised to discover that of the 31 polling sites, 26 were churches. I had a new awareness of how central the church is to the civic discourse of our city!

I realized this was not only an opportunity to pray at all the precincts, but it was also a wonderful bonus to pray onsite for most of the churches in our city.

I developed a document that described our strategy and included just three simple prayer points. I knew that intercessors needed only a few

prompts—and then would take it from there. The prayer points:

1. Pray that the people in the churches in our city will engage in their right to vote.
2. Pray that God will favor this city with people who will govern according to biblical principles.

I also added a request that comes from our police chief who embraces the power of prayer:

3. Pray in agreement with our police chief that churches in our city will “preach righteousness from their pulpits.”

We brought a map of our city to our weekly House of Prayer and invited people to adopt two or three polling sites. We encouraged them to drive into the parking lots, spend a few minutes

praying for the elections, and then pray for God’s blessing on that church.

I contacted other churches and invited them to join our prayer initiative. I gave them the same simple prayer points and list of precincts and addresses. Although I didn’t track the number of people involved, it was encouraging to envision our city saturated with prayer during the month before our elections.

Our focus was on the unusual circumstances of our local elections, but we will employ this strategy again when it comes to our state and national elections in November 2024. Churches play a key role in every city when it comes to placing people in governmental leadership—if they are mobilized to be centers of both voting and praying.

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect* magazine.

Pray. Always. About Everything.

Every year when I send my kids off to school, I give them notes with tips and “Mom advice” for the new school year. Some of these tips have been, “Say hello to someone new,” “Bring a smile to the room,” and “Work hard at whatever you are trying to accomplish.”

But included in every note is: “Pray. Always. About Everything.”

It doesn’t matter what the situation, running it past God is always a good move. If you need to make a big decision or even a little decision—*pray*. If something seems questionable or sketchy—*pray*. It can be long and methodical or a quick little, “Guide me, Lord.” Either way is fine.

Pray. Always. About Everything.

I include these words at the end of every message of encouragement that I email to my older college kids and I say it when they are leaving on a trip.



My hope is that the words will pop into their minds when they are at a crossroads, whether it’s “Am I dating the right person?” or “Should I spend the extra money or save it?”

Sometimes we get wrapped up in our own thoughts and then stress about how we can handle making these decisions on our own. But we don’t have to. God already knows the plan, so why not ask Him to guide you in the right direction?

Pray. Always. About Everything. And remind others to do the same.

JESSE NEVE is an author from Minnesota who writes for family publications.

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Compassion and Outrage | By Bob Bakke

While I was writing this article, Hamas unleashed 1,500 terrorists from Gaza into the south of Israel.

They murdered, abused, raped, and kidnapped unarmed Jewish revelers and the residents of nearby kibbutzim—raining thousands of missiles on civilian neighborhoods. Hardened Israeli soldiers and first responders could not believe the grotesque slaughter in Hamas' wake. So many dead. So many are yet to die.

The camera lens made us eyewitnesses to revolting images. Global tensions are thick. By the time you read this, who knows what evil will have played out. World war? Maybe Jesus will have returned.

Prayer Clues from Jesus

When humankind degrades itself, how should we pray? Does Jesus give us clues? What about revival? Personally, Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus in John 11 helps me.

The town of Bethany was grim when Jesus arrived. Lazarus was dead. Jesus' enemies were conspiring to kill him. Lazarus' sisters met Jesus with such pathetic and brokenhearted disappointment that Jesus Himself wept.

John tells us that Jesus was “deeply moved in the spirit” (vs. 33). “Deeply moved” is the verb *embrimaomai*, describing fervent anger. It's combined with *pneumati*, “in spirit”—or “to the core of His being.”

Jesus was also “troubled,” John writes. Raymond Brown translates this “shuddered.” Jesus was so angry that He trembled. But there's more. The Greek indicates that Jesus was stirring Himself up to this anger—a conscious gathering up of divine potency and holy indignation.

In his book, *The Dust of Death*, Os Guinness argues that Christians need these two things:

1. the compassion of Christ, and
2. the outrage of Christ.

Guinness points to John 11: “John [states ‘deeply troubled’] twice in his account of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus. This deep emotion is usually interpreted in relation to the verse ‘Jesus wept.’ . . . Weeping, or sorrow [however], does not exhaust what is meant by Jesus being ‘deeply moved,’ for Jesus knew that Lazarus would be alive and standing beside Him in a matter of moments. Where is the sorrow in that? . . . the root meaning of *embrimaomai* is to ‘snort in the spirit.’

“It was used by Aeschylus to describe Greek stallions before battle, rearing up on their hind legs, pawing the air and snorting before they charged. Similarly, Jesus ‘snorted in the spirit’: He was moved deeply in the sense of a furious inner anger. Entering His Father's world as the Son of God, He found not order, beauty, harmony, and fulfillment, but fractured disorder, raw ugliness, complete disarray—everywhere the abortion of God's original plan.

“Standing at the graveside, He came face to face with a death that symbolized and summarized the accumulation of evil, pain, sorrow, suffering, injustice, cruelty, and despair. Thus, while He was moved to tears for his friends in sorrow, He was also deeply moved by the outrageous abnormality of death” (pg. 385).

Outrage to Prayer

What did Jesus do with His outrage? He channeled it into prayer. He lifted His head and hands and prayed for everyone

to hear. Then, with three thunderous words—“Lazarus, come out!”—Jesus cried out. Revival came. Death was transformed. Unspeakable love led to divine outrage funneled into prayer and answered by Triune power bestowing life and glory.

Jesus so loves the world that He is outraged by our ruin. Whether it's news from Gaza, catastrophic earthquakes in Afghanistan, hundreds of churches burned in India, or the trafficking of children, our love should produce praying that eclipses the serene and beatific and, instead, looks and sounds like war—a gritty, furious, passionate battle to conquer evil and to save the dying—flowing from the heart of Christ.

For the Next Generation

This is how we intend to pray on February 29—the Collegiate Day of Prayer (collegiatedayofprayer.org). The broadcast, hosted at Baylor University in Waco, TX, will lead millions of us in crying out to God for 22 million students and 4,300 college campuses across America.

Many campuses are spiritual war zones where the godless conspire against Christ; where faith is assaulted and truth is mocked. Millions of students are casualties.

We cannot be unmoved by this. Grieved by how Gen Z is abandoning Christianity and compelled by the love of Jesus and His readiness to revive that which is dead, let's answer the call. We are raising up an army to respond.

Let's get ready for battle. Come fight for this generation. Come pray. **PC**

ONECRY (onecry.com), is a nationwide cry for revival and spiritual awakening. Bob Bakke is a producer of Collegiate Day of Prayer and missions strategist/media producer for OneCry.

Will God grant us one more nation-shaking,
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Will we experience one more Great Awakening that
results in a massive spiritual harvest of souls?

Will the Church be revived to live in the fullness of
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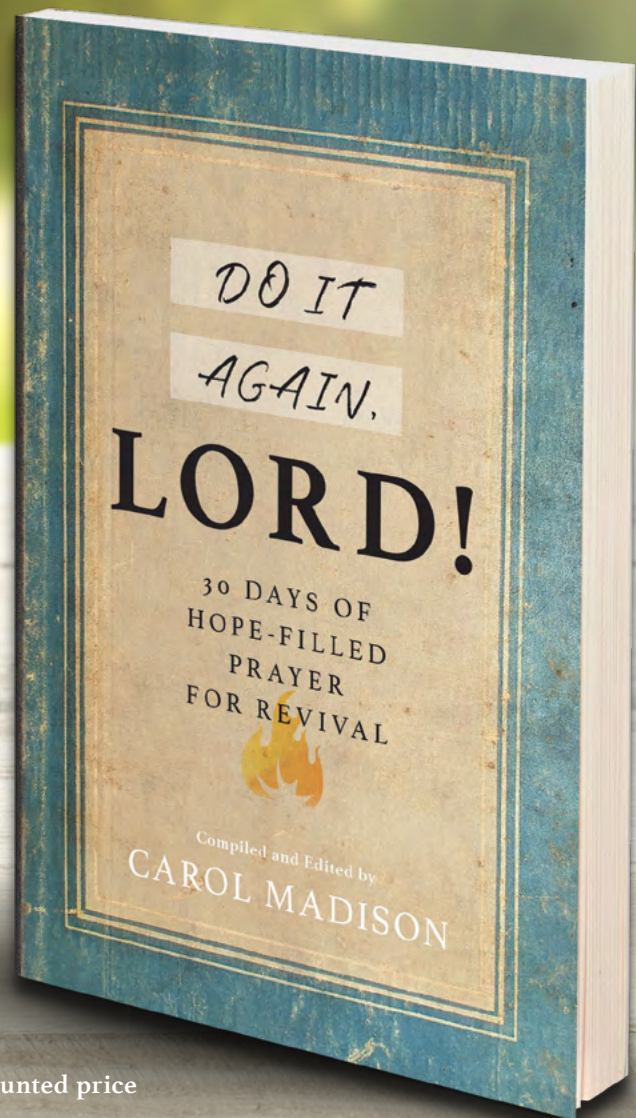
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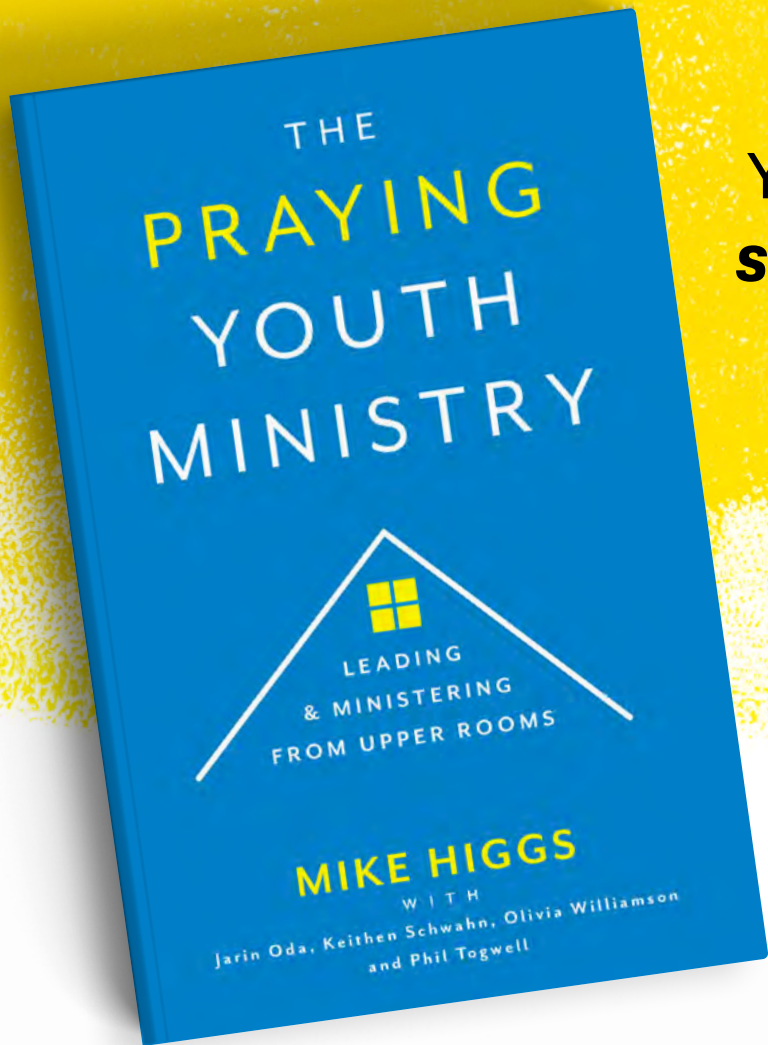


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