

MAY · JUNE 2020


Where in the
WORD are You?

JOURNEY

CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

Scripture & Prayer

**The Business of Scripture
and Prayer**

Richard Blackaby

Liberating Prayer

Neil Anderson

Practical Prayer

Cindi Wood



Your Prayer Journey

During this present coronavirus pandemic, we are urged to practice “social distancing.” Many have recognized in their increased time alone that instead of keeping their distance from God, they have found opportunity to draw nearer to God.

Imagine taking a walk with Jesus. If He were right by your side and invited you into a conversation, would you do all of the talking? Probably not. When He walked the earth 2,000 years ago and spoke to people, they were mesmerized by His wisdom and amazed by his authority and love. They listened.

According to Scripture, we are invited to engage in dialogue with God all the time. If you’re like me, you can probably think of times you seemed to be doing all of the talking. Thus, the question arises, “Why should we, who know so little, do all the talking in our conversation with a God who knows all things?”

Let us not forget that God has given us a medium by which we can hear His voice continually. It is called the

Bible. We do well to read the Word as we pray, and pray the Word as we read. The Lord may speak to us through dreams and visions and inner impressions. He may confront us by others and challenge us in the circumstances of life. But Scripture is the standard by which He speaks.

With this in mind, Scripture Awakening has designed a devotional journey to help you connect with God through His Word on a daily basis. Bible in 90 Days Plus (B90+) is a daily online feed of Biblical insight that will help you to understand God’s heart and mind as seen through the entire Bible. B90+ gives you the option of an overview mode, requiring just twelve minutes a day, and a full reading option, involving twelve pages a day. Both options have audio listening choices and video enhancements to support your digital journey.

As you read through this issue of Journey Christian Magazine, ponder

how prayer and Scripture can come together more fully to enhance your conversations with God. And remember to pray for us. You will discover in the next article that Susie Shields has need to step back from active ministry for a time. Please pray for her. She has been a blessing to each of us through the years and words cannot express our gratitude. One of our regular writers, Carole Anne Hallyburton, is stepping up to help fill in the gap. Please pray for Carole Anne’s ability to team up with Susie, to transition into her new role, and to find joy and good success in her work.

If you would like to be kept up-to-date about ways to pray for the ministry and outreach of Journey Christian Magazine and Scripture Awakening, sign up for our free electronic monthly prayer letter, Journey Prayer. You can sign up for Journey Prayer and B90+ at ScriptureAwakening.com.



WILLIAM P. CAMPBELL
Author, President, and Executive Director of Scripture Awakening.
Host of Beyond Words Radio.



In the Trenches

We often hear about soldiers praying an “in the trenches” prayer right before a big battle..you know, the one along the lines of “God, if you spare me tomorrow, I will follow you the rest of my days.” If you read your Bible, though, you likely know how theologically unsound this practice is.

But how many of us pray that same frazzled prayer at some point in our lives? Instead of promising God we will do this or that if He will do that or this, we need only to stand on His promises. Scripture tells us His promises are blessing, healing, prosperity, love, a sound mind, and the list goes on and on. But we have no right to dictate the terms of those promises. God’s responses are up to God and God alone—they won’t look the same for everyone. Ultimately, we need to adjust our thinking/prayers in the trenches of our big battles.

Just a few short years ago my sister-in-law, Barbie, was faced with a very deep trench. She had been a well-loved schoolteacher, and during her last year of teaching, she had some difficulty standing long-term and walking. This led to back surgery, but her symptoms only worsened. With retirement were hopes of travel, time with grandkids, and baking cakes for weddings and graduations. But this impairment dampened all her activities, so Barbie had another sur-

gery. Her expectations of returning to a nearly normal life were high.

Within a few months, however, Barbie went from performing normal activities to being confined to a wheelchair to losing all movement except her hands and her head. Her final diagnosis...ALS! Her doctor told her she had the most rapid onset of ALS of any of his patients. For her prognosis, there is no hope for improvement; only preparation for the progression of the disease and the ravages it brings.

I was worried about how she was doing mentally and spiritually. Barbie had a very strong Christian upbringing. She’d raised four children in a loving, Christian home. God and church were an integral part of her life. As I sat with her, I asked her how she was doing spiritually, fully expecting to hear anything from grief to anger. Barbie’s response inspired me.

“At first, I asked God ‘Why me?’ but I quickly realized ‘Why not me?’” This was the attitude she lived until she moved on to her heavenly home last year.

Now, I am in my own trench in the biggest battlefield of my life.

Barbie’s words ring true to me, giving me great perspective. Two months ago,

I was diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer that had spread into one lymph node. I had a double mastectomy two weeks ago with removal of several lymph nodes which in initial biopsy had no cancer—a hope I was glad to hold on to. But this hope was dashed as further pathology revealed all lymph nodes had cancer and required another surgery plus chemo and radiation.

Prayer for health and healing is not about what I can do for God (or the world, for that matter) but is about my attitude before God as I go through whatever situation I have to deal with. God heals. He can heal me instantly. And He might not. This does not change my situation or my faith. It is why David wrote the 23rd Psalm, “*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me...*” (verse 4 KJV).

I now live day to day making necessary adjustments. I may not be able to write for Journey each issue as before, but one thing I know is that prayer will get me through this, both my prayers and prayers on my behalf from all my Christian brothers and sisters.



SUSIE SHIELDS

JCM Executive Editor, Program Director Beyond Words Radio Administrator AWAKE! WNC.

Our Heritage: Prayer

It happened recently in a church in Asheville on a Saturday afternoon. In the center of a gathering of brothers and sisters in Christ sat two people: one with cancer, the other his wife. Those close to them laid hands upon their shoulders while others—many rows deep—placed their hands on those in front of them creating an unbroken chain to the two at the center. Why? Why would so many give of their time to lift the needs of these two to God? They did it because they have witnessed the power of prayer in the past and believe that prayer made a difference. They joined in conversation with God because they trust what Scripture says about prayer.

Since Adam and Eve talked with God in the Garden of Eden, people have had conversations with Him. They sought His heart and asked for God's touch on others or themselves. God moved powerfully through the prayer-cries in the Old Testament. When the Israelites were enslaved, the Lord told Moses, "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress..." (Exodus 3:7). Generations later, when the disciples watched Jesus pray and saw the intimacy He had with His Father, they asked Jesus to teach them about prayer. And their prayers took on new life.

Acts 2 records that believers *devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching*



and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers. Jesus taught the disciples what we know as the Lord's Prayer; they had witnessed Him praying to His Father as He broke the bread at Passover. These two prayers became cornerstones as the Christian faith spread.

In Colonial America, a student's day began with recitation of the Lord's Prayer. With the Bible as their main Textbook for reading and history, students learned many types of prayer—which helped their faith to expand.

That heritage of praying to God was reinforced in Paul's writings to the church at Ephesus when he wrote, *pray on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests (Ephesians 6:18).*

Centuries later, that's exactly what the group was doing on that Saturday afternoon in Asheville as they prayed.

The disciples and believers through the centuries realized that only through prayer could the heart of Jesus be heard, making it possible for them to follow the will of God. Prayer has both inspired and brought hope; it became a true source of strength and activated the power of God in people's lives.

Every time we pray the Lord's Prayer or other prayers from our heart, we are joining with the saints and our Lord in a magnificent heritage of talking with God. It becomes our blessing to pass the gift of prayer on to those we meet—and to future generations.



JANET JOHNSON

Pastor, spiritual mentor, author, and speaker, helping others experience God's love and wholeness. joyfilledjan1@gmail.com

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SA Media Group, LLC

EDITOR

Dr. William P. Campbell

MANAGING EDITOR

Carole-Anne Hallyburton

ART DIRECTION

Mark Lucas

WEBSITE

JourneyChristianMagazine.com

CONTACT US

512 North Grove St • Ste 202
Hendersonville, NC 28792
828-222-2382
publisher@journeychristianmagazine.com

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The Business of Prayer and Scripture

Richard Blackaby recently encouraged Christian leaders to prioritize prayer and Scripture for success in business in a recent interview with Rick Goossen, chairman of the Entrepreneurial Leaders Organization.

The first step in the process should be a “focus on Scripture, [the spiritual discipline of] spending time in God’s Word. Isaiah 55:8-9 says our ways are not God’s ways, our thoughts are not His thoughts. We assume that because we’re Christians we think the way God does, but we don’t. We’ve been immersed in the world. We think the way the world does. The only way to begin thinking the way God does is to immerse ourselves in His Word; to hold up every decision we make against it to see if it lines up.

Second is prayer. Prayer isn’t an activity; it’s a relationship. Prayer isn’t merely something you do. It’s a Person you converse with in a conversation, not a monologue. Many prayers are monologues—we do all the talking and rarely remain silent for God to speak. Of course, what you say is not nearly as important as what God says to you. You can’t tell Him anything He doesn’t al-

ready know; He can tell you all kinds of things you don’t know yet. As you develop the spiritual discipline of listening in prayer, it’s amazing what God will put on your heart—conviction and insight.

I meet a lot of high-level businesspeople who are embarrassed to admit they don’t know how to pray. They may have been Christians for years—highly respected in their churches—yet they find prayer to be boring; but when they learn what prayer is really meant to be, all of a sudden they realize it revolutionizes their entire business.

For example, you may need to pray for an employee who is causing difficulty; suddenly God reveals to you how to handle the situation. Prayer brings peace about taking certain steps; it brings you uneasiness when God alerts you to danger.

Spiritual leaders cannot be fully effective if they are not people of prayer. In order to develop healthy prayer habits, begin with carving out enough time for proper development. A lot of businesspeople confess that time is an obstacle. Prayer degenerates into a hurried, distracted activity; they get nothing out of it. You can’t rush in and out of the presence of almighty God and expect otherwise; prayer happens on God’s terms, not ours. My dad speaks of ‘unhurried time with God’; a practice of rising early enough to have ample time to spend with God in Bible study and prayer. In doing so, you have sufficient time for what God wants to teach you. A company CEO said to Dad, ‘Well, Henry, the problem is that you don’t know how busy I am.’ My dad responded by saying, ‘No, the problem is that you don’t know Who you’re going to meet.’

Convicted, the CEO began adding 30 minutes to each morning until he felt he wasn’t rushed in spending daily time with God. He eventually settled on rising at 4:00 a.m. each day. He said it revolutionized his business. He was amazed at how many times God put on his heart exactly what his priorities needed to be that day. He learned to connect what God told him in the morning with what he experienced throughout the day and experienced sharper focus.

I encourage people to read their Bible before prayer, so they are thinking Biblically before they begin to pray. So often when you’ve read something in the Bible and then pray, what you’ve just read begins to show up in prayer. Scripture alerts you to what you should pray. First you read His Word; then you talk to God. You’re reminded of how God speaks—what things are important to Him. Those things then begin to show up in your prayer life.



RICHARD BLACKABY
International speaker and President of Blackaby Ministries International.
www.blackaby.org



Liberating Prayer

In my early years of ministry, I struggled in prayer with tempting and distracting thoughts. How could someone spend hours in prayer with that kind of mental confusion? Why is prayer so hard when the Holy Spirit “intercedes for the saints” (Romans 8:27) and so does Jesus (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 11:25). Just serving God seemed to bear more fruit, so I was about to give up on prayer when the Holy Spirit guided me through Scripture one life changing night. I discovered that Paul couldn’t mention prayer without thanksgiving. “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving...*” (Philippians 4:6 NKJV). “*Devote yourself to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving*” (Colossians 4:2 NASB). “*Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks*” (see 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 NKJV; Ephesians 1:16; Philippians 1:3,4; Colossians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:2).

Discovering that truth brought to my mind Psalm 95:2 NASB: “*Come before His presence with thanksgiving.*” The Psalmist continued, “*Today, if you would hear His voice, do not harden your hearts*” (Psalm 95:7-8 NASB). I started that night trying to talk to God, but I finished late in the evening listening to God. All those distracting and tempting thoughts had been

allowed by God because many dealt with issues that were keeping me from having an intimate relationship with Him. So rather than harden my heart, I dealt with everything that came to mind in honest confession including lust, unforgiveness of others, and all the sins that so easily entangle us. God already knew all my sins so why not be honest with Him, knowing I was already forgiven?

Suppose a child is continuously asking for this and that, but the child has been naughty. Good parents don’t want to withhold any good thing from their children, but what is on the parents’ minds when that naughty little child keeps asking for treats? We are children of God, which is why Jesus instructed us to pray to our Father. If we have unresolved personal and spiritual conflicts and go to Him in prayer, we can be assured that is what He wants to talk to us about. That is when prayer is more about listening than talking. All God’s children are hearing from Him. It may not be what they want to hear, but it is what they need to hear if they care to have an intimate relationship with Him.

The insight God gave me that night was an essential

pre-requisite to developing “The Steps to Freedom in Christ,” which are being used all over the world to help people establish their freedom through genuine repentance and faith in God.

God is present in every ministry setting. When inquirers ask God to show them who they need to forgive, what they need to renounce, and so forth, God does. If they are listening and don’t harden their hearts, then God may “*grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth and they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been held captive to do his will*” (2 Timothy 2:25-26 NASB). David said it this way, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way*” (Psalm 139:23-24 NASB).

Adapted from *Liberating Prayer*, Anderson, Harvest House, Eugene, OR, 2012.



DR. NEIL T. ANDERSON

Best-selling author, Founder and President Emeritus of Freedom in Christ Ministries. FICM.org

Why Pray in Church?

It is an odd question, really.

Jesus said, “My house shall be a house of prayer!” (Luke 19:46 ESV). In some churches—we give very little time to prayer. It is not uncommon for a church service to begin with a praise team bounding onto the stage and informally shouting out, “Everybody on your feet for Jesus!” There is a sense of being in a kind of pep-rally. The music often continues for half-an-hour, more or less.

In fact, in many congregations, we seem to define ‘praise and worship’ as singing. But that is far too narrow a definition, and the result is a narrowing of worship itself. We are now fundamentally in need of worship reform. A few announcements are made. An offering is received, perhaps with a prayer. Another song follows along with a message from the pastor. And then we all rush out to a favorite restaurant.

Wouldn't you find it odd to go to your father's house and not speak with Him? At least, not directly. Your brothers and sisters are present. You have a grand celebration and reunion. It's fun. You sing together. Someone tells a story about the family. Everyone chips in to pay for the expenses of the gathering—but you don't actually talk to the Father who is supposedly present—somewhere! This happens every Sunday. We are in the Father's house, but we are not talking to the Father. Nor are we waiting for what He might say to us—personally or corporately. Our so-called worship is rushed. It is high-energy! It has become, in some places, a kind of Christian show to which we attend weekly.

There is little or no serious prayer! No repentance. No awe before God's holiness. No call to worship the transcendent God. There is no time for searing silence. In fact, we work to make people comfortable, avoiding conviction and arrest for sin. While forty-percent of the Psalms are laments, such tearful expressions of brokenness are squeezed out by a celebrative praise and worship narrative.

What Would Jesus Do?

In the first Jerusalem visit, after His baptism, Jesus went to the Temple and overturned the tables of the money changers. What audacity! What brass! He is throwing tables, scattering money, opening the cages of the doves, freeing the sacrificial animals. He is wild. He is threatening—no limp-wristed sissy. He is seriously challenging the Temple institution, its practices and policies, its protocol, and lack of Biblical integrity—He is being a prophet—the Prophet!

This was at the beginning of His ministry. Then, in the last week of His life, during His previous trip to Jerusalem, the week of His crucifixion,

He gave a repeat performance. That's probably one of the reasons He was crucified. The Temple leaders wanted no more such protests. His actions, at the beginning and end of His ministry, were a demonstration against a prayerless Temple and on behalf of reformation. “My house shall be a house of prayer for nations!” He was drawing from Isaiah 56.

The Temple leaders had repurposed the Court of the Gentiles—the one place a foreigner, an outcast, a sinner could come to inquire about the God of Israel. They had turned it into a money-making enterprise where they sold oxen and sheep, goats, and doves for sacrifices, at inflated prices. And where they exchanged foreign currency to purchase those sacrifices at exorbitant exchange rates. It was exploitation at its finest. It squeezed out the undesirable Gentiles and created a barrier, a financial barrier, between the common man, the poor and disenfranchised, and the altar. This was not acceptable to Jesus.

He not only wanted the Temple to be a house of prayer—He wanted it to be missional. He wanted prayer for the nations. He protested the self-interested worship, the self-absorbed focus, the absence of missional prayer. He protested the barrier that kept people from the altar—the ultimate symbol of prayer. And He called for an end to all, declaring, not one stone will be left on another! Forty years later, the Romans destroyed the Temple.

What About Your Church?

If Jesus showed up at your church—would He protest over the absence of prayer? Over barriers to the altar? Over our lack of concern for others and our acute self-interests when we do pray?

There are sounds worldwide of a coming reformation of the Church. They are unmistakable. God is going to soon demand that worship as entertainment come to an end. That true churches become houses of prayer for the nations. In several ways, this means a new model for corporate worship.

1 It demands more profound reverence, the acknowledgment that the God with whom we are meeting is a holy God. We must not take God or communication with Him for granted.

2 It means a perennial call to repentance, recalibrating and recentering our lives in order to be more authentic examples of Christ to a watching world.

3 The nations—the missional task before us—must be brought to the fore of our worship gatherings.

4 We must redefine prayer, seeing it, as “at its heart, worship; at its edge, mission.” That means a fresh grasp of the true meaning of worship—*worth-ship*; the recentering of God's priorities, what He cares about in our lives and in our world. This requires a new level of values-centered worship, more reflective worship. Our current model is busy. In liturgical churches, it is often rote and routine. In non-liturgical church-

es, it is informal, lacking depth and reverence. In Pentecostal churches, emotion is confused for spirituality. In all cases, style replaces substance.

5 This demands more exposure to the Scripture in worship. Scripture is the means by which we hear God most clearly. It is crucial that we hear from God not only as individuals but that we hear from God corporately.

6 In most Evangelical-Pentecostal congregations, we have virtually no means by which we attempt to hear from and respond to God prayerfully. Such a response should not only involve repentance but clearly stated goals for re-direction; what does God expect of us? It is our “walk” by the enabling of Scripture and the Spirit.

7 The offering has become a time to collect money, but should actually be the time when we give ourselves and our church bodies to God—sins and hurts, problems and possibilities, liabilities and potential.

8 There must be missional prayer for the lost, not only for physical needs, healing, help—but for salvation.

9 Every message is a call to action. No exposure to God's word, to worship, to preaching or teaching should leave us the same. We are to be changed “from glory to glory.” Line-on-line and precept-on-precept, we are incrementally changed. Every message should involve a response if it is genuinely from God. That may be an open altar call, a carefully prepared litany (a response to God's Word through the pastor), an orchestrated and directed response in which congregational elders or deacons respond to God on behalf of the congregation. There is something magic when we hear one another pray, especially if the prayers come from our hearts, and if they move us toward God and away from sin and the world. Such prayers should be first-person prayers. We often hide the “we” of prayer. “We have sinned” impugns others; “I have sinned” is transparent, owning the dilemma. “We want to be closer to You” is not nearly as compelling as “I want to be nearer to you, God!”

10 No service is complete without pastoral prayer and blessing. Pastors should model prayer. Congregations need to hear their pastor pray—for them. Charles Spurgeon shared his pulpit with many preachers, but he never allowed another to pray for his congregation. That was his privilege and duty. At a city-wide event, he was asked to preach. He declined and asked instead to pray. This is a great privilege now abandoned by pastors—the role of intercessor!



P. DOUGLAS SMALL

P. Douglas Small is the President of Project Pray and founder of the Praying Church Movement.

The Miracles of Praying God's Word

The act of praying Scripture opens a new and exciting avenue in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

I remember so well where I was and what I was doing when that theory turned to reality for me. Barely out of college and new to my first job in the “real” world, I found myself running ahead of schedule that morning. So, I sat in our ladder-back rocker and opened my Bible before heading out the door.

My heart was heavier that day than anyone knew: fresh from a battle with breast cancer, my mother was now undergoing diagnostic tests of a thyroid nodule. We had prayed so hard, leaned so heavily on God, and praised Him with all our might through her treatment, and again when her breast cancer was cured. But were we spiritually up to another battle like that at this moment?

Honestly, I didn't know, because—as prayer warriors can attest—this thing of fighting battles with the weaponry of prayer...it's not easy; it's a 24/7 calling that leaves a soldier dirty, scarred, exhausted, half-dead.

Thankfully, our Commander gives us sustenance exactly when our souls are most depleted of resources. On the morning in question, my Bible fell open to Psalm 71, written at a time when David's back was against a proverbial wall. Without thinking, I began to fold Mom's name into his plea:

*In you, Lord, my mother has taken refuge;
let her never be put to shame.
In your righteousness, rescue her and deliver her;
turn your ear to her and save her.
Be Mom's rock of refuge,*

*to which she can always go;
give the command to save her,
for you are Mom's rock and her fortress. (Psalm 71:1-3)*

On and on I read through the Psalm. It became so much more than a prayer offered on my mother's behalf; it morphed into a prayer through which I felt the comfort, truth, and promise of an omnipotent and divine Healer who eventually gave us a good report from the thyroid tests.

Five spiritual miracles resulted from that impromptu prayer session all those years ago:

- Scripture took on a new value—a new meaning—in my life. The Word of God became precious to me all over again as I read them, prayed them, carried them in my heart and meditated on them throughout the day.
- The anxiety that met me when I crawled from bed that morning began to dissolve. I don't know why that surprised me; Philippians 4:6-7 invites us to approach Him in prayer when anxiety strikes and promises that when we pray, God's peace guards our hearts, spirits, and minds.
- Moments when I had previously struggled to find the “right” words to pray became moments my spirit was showered with hope. God supernaturally provides for us in those times through the presence of Holy Spirit (see Romans 8).



- God honed my intercessory skills. They grew and changed my prayer life dramatically. I learned to pray with confidence instead of guarded optimism. Soon, in fact, I began using “Scripture prayers” for other people; my dad during recovery from bi-lateral knee replacement surgery, for example; and even our beloved Shih Tzu, Gizzy, as we dealt with his renal failure and death.
- Praying Scripture caused the Word of God to become incredibly personal and intimate to me. Taking verses from the Bible and placing a name inside it—even if it's your name—causes a passage to gain new and personal meaning for the person who prays it.

But the best miracle by far has been the fact that through these five results of praying Scripture, Jesus has drawn—and continues drawing—me closer and closer to His side, deeper into personal relationship with Him. And especially in life's darkest, most tedious moments, the closeness of that relationship makes all the difference to a frazzled spirit.



CAROLE ANNE HALLYBURTON (BA, MA) is a Christian educator and the Managing Editor of Journey Christian Magazine.

Using Scripture to Pray with Form and Freedom



T rue spiritual growth is impossible apart from the practice of prayer. Just as the key to quality relationships with other people is time spent in communication, so the key to a growing relationship with the personal God of heaven and earth is time invested in speaking to Him in prayer and listening to His voice in Scripture.

As central as these twin disciplines of prayer and Scripture are to our spiritual life, most believers in Christ are frustrated by hit-or-miss approaches to both. As a result, their time in prayer and the Word can become unsatisfying, routine, and even boring. It is no surprise, then, that most people spend a minimal amount of time in either of these disciplines and fail to develop intimacy with the One for Whom they were created.

The problem with prayer is heightened by the fact that people often succumb either to the extreme of all form and no freedom or to the opposite extreme of all freedom and no form.

The first extreme leads to a rote or impersonal approach to prayer, while the second produces an unbalanced and undisciplined prayer life that can de-

generate into a litany of one “gimme” after another.

In my *Handbook to Prayer*, I offer a guide to help believers combine both form and freedom in their everyday practice of prayer. You don’t need the handbook to follow its approach, though. Simply use the following seven components, coupled with relevant Scriptures, during your regular prayer time.*

Adoration: Praise and worship God for who He is. Sample passages to use: Psalm 34:1–3; Psalm 33:1; Psalm 71:14–17; Psalm 100:1–5.

Confession: Acknowledge your sins, asking the Spirit to search your heart and reveal any areas of unconfessed sin. Acknowledge these to the Lord and thank Him for His forgiveness. Sample passages: Matthew 6:12; Psalm 51:1–4, 7–13; Psalm 19:12–13.

Renewal: Ask the Lord to bless you with growth in intimacy and righteousness, and appeal to His grace to make this happen. Sample passages: Hosea 12:6; Romans 5:3–5; Romans 12:12; Galatians 6:9.

Petition: Present requests on behalf of your own needs, including special concerns and your day’s activities. Each weekday, rotate among prayers in these areas: (1) growth in holiness; (2) growth in wisdom; (3) spiritual in-

sight; (4) relationships with others; (5) faithfulness as a steward; (6) family and ministry; and (7) personal concerns, including spiritual warfare with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Intercession: Present requests on behalf of others’ needs, including their physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. Rotate throughout the week among the following areas: (1) churches and ministries; (2) family; (3) other believers; (4) evangelism (non-believers in your life); (5) government; (6) missions/missionaries; and (7) world affairs.

Affirmation: Agree with God’s will and submit to it, regardless of your feelings. Sample passages: Matthew 6:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:8–11; Romans 8:15–16; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20.

Thanksgiving: Thank God for what He has done, is doing, and will do. Sample passages: 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Psalm 91:1–2, 14–16; Psalm 27:1; Malachi 4:2.

*Although their order is intentional, these components need not come in this same order every time you pray.



KEN BOA

Dr. Boa is an author, speaker, and president of Reflections Ministries. www.KenBoa.org

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About B90+

An Interview with the Author

Scripture Awakening staff member David Winkle interviewed the author of B90+, Bill Campbell, to help people learn more about this new resource and why they will find interest in using it. You can hear the full interview at: BeyondWordsRadio.org.

David: Why Bible in 90 Days Plus (B90+)? What's the new program all about?

Bill: The Bible in 90 Days has made significant impact on hundreds of thousands of people's lives through the years, and all over the world. However, more and more, people have been asking us to provide an online version; hence B90+. This online version enables people to carry the program with them all the more easily, whether on their phone, computer, or any device that accesses the Internet. This is possible because of the incredible Scripture Awakening staff team, Mark Lucas, our Communications Director, and *many other gifted people* have come together to generate this product.

David: It seems like a perfect time to introduce an online Bible reading program—the pandemic has many people isolated and looking for good use of their time.

Bill: We have been developing B90+ since late last year and had no idea of how much more useful it would be to people with the pandemic. That said, we believe offering this program online will impact more lives, pandemic or not.

David: I can imagine that this new Bible study resource will appeal to all ages and even younger folks. How about people in other countries?

Bill: Yes, Bible in 90 Days had limited accessibility for people in other nations because of the shipping costs. For example, a person from Australia would pay as much for the shipping costs as they did for the actual product. Now Bible in 90 Days will be accessible immediately, for free.

David: Free? That's nice...but is there a hitch?

Bill: We wanted to be sure everyone could access B90+ and not be limited by costs. People who use B90+ will be encouraged to make donations to help sustain this program for those who otherwise could not afford it.

David: What if people don't want to use B90+ right now, but would like to donate to help this outreach grow and impact others?

Bill: Scripture Awakening is seeking to raise funds for this very purpose. Those who are interested can learn more about our "90n90" opportunity at ScriptureAwakening.com

David: Tell me more about B90+...what does it look like and how does it work?

Bill: Those who subscribe to B90+ will receive a daily email that will guide their read through the Bible. Participants will be led to read, reflect, and respond to daily Scripture readings. Subscribers will have 2 options: to read one "overview chapter" of the Bible each day, and use the commentary, or choose the traditional "full reading" (12 pages) of the Bible. Either way, participants will be encouraged and challenged each day with Biblical truths and practical insights. Each lesson can be read or listened to through an audio recording. A short video summary is provided to introduce each day's reading and coaching tips and impact ideas will help readers keep on track and apply what they learn.

David: How long does it take each day?

Bill: Those who choose the overview option will need about 12 minutes a day. Reading the entire Bible in 90 days, covering 12 pages a day, takes 45 minutes to an hour a day.

David: Is there a small group option?

Bill: Yes, we find people learn and grow best if they meet weekly with friends to discuss what they're learning: whether in

The screenshot shows the B90+ website interface for Day 1. At the top, it says "Where in the WORD are You?" and "B90+ WITH BILL CAMPBELL". There are icons for "watch video", "about B90+", and "listen audio". The main heading is "B90+ • Day 1" with a sub-heading "The Dark Underside" and a small image of a kettle. The text reads: "My wife recently warned me about a new electric teapot she had purchased. It looked just like the one we place daily on our gas stove, but it could only be used on an electric base on an adjacent counter. The obvious difference between the two teapots was the dark plastic underside on the electric version. One morning I got up before dawn to do some writing. Keeping the lights dim and not being fully awake, I placed the kettle with the dark underside on a gas burner. A minute later I smelled burning plastic and looked over to see the base of the tea kettle engulfed in flames. I grabbed the smoldering pot by the handle and stuck it under the kitchen faucet. That was the easy part. It was much more difficult to clear the smell of burning plastic out of our house and to explain my blunder to my wife. I had overlooked the dark underside. Fortunately, my wife forgave me, and our son gave us a new and very different-looking electric tea kettle for Christmas. The gift reminded me of the opening chapters of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, where the dark underside of humanity is revealed, and God steps in to provide a better option." Below this is a "Coaching Tip" box: "Pray before you read. Ask the Lord to give you insights to inspire your day and to impact your life." There are sections for "Read" (with options for Full Reading: Genesis 1-15 and Overview Chapter: Genesis 3) and "Reflect" (with a "BLY B90" icon and text about the opening chapters of Genesis).

person or online. It can be most helpful for those engaged in B90+ to also purchase the regular B90 Bible, Participant's Guide, and weekly videos to supplement their group experience. For those who have used the videos before and would like another option, we will be offering free podcast recordings of Bible experts to coach us as we read.

David: When does B90+ begin?

Bill: B90+ begins on May 4. However, a person can sign up any day after that as well.

David: Is there a follow-up to B90+?

Bill: Yes. As people engage in the 90-day Bible program, they will learn more about what's next and how to continue the journey of spiritual growth through Scripture.





Practical Prayer

Women are busier today than ever before. For the believer, all of God’s power is available to tackle every detail of daily life. Take a moment to let Paul’s words, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, strengthen you right now:

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 1:18-20)

Notice two facts about God’s Power:

1. As God’s daughter, you have everything you need to live victoriously because Jesus lives inside of you.
2. Connecting with God in heartfelt love and worshipful prayer will help you appropriate His power.

As we grow our hearts of love, God will impart His strength to us in all the practical details of our busy lives—and that kind of love is grown through relationship!

Just as you strengthen earthly friendships by talking and listening, your prayer-talk with Jesus is where depths of love and power are experienced. As you deepen your relationship, you will come to realize the practicality of God and His guidance in the details of your life.

As a young wife and mother, I learned how to pray in a practical way that still shapes my prayer language. Here are the steps I followed in order to experience God’s love and power as I move through each busy day:

1. I created a **DETAIL BOOK**. This was simply a small composition book dedicated to recording the ordinary—and sometimes insignificant—details of my busy days. On the inside cover, I wrote a prayer dedicating all the particulars of each day to *The Lord of my Details*.
2. Each night I recorded the specifics of the next day. These ranged from errands to be run after my teaching day to parent conferences, phone calls, and things on

the home-front that needed to be addressed. Anything I could think of—I wrote it down.

3. Every morning after worshipping God and thanking Him for being involved in my life, I prayed over each detail I’d recorded the night before. I committed everything to Him, asking for strength and power to carry out my day in His power and for His glory.

With this practice in place, I began experiencing a power I’d not previously known during my busy days.

Prayer is so much more than simply talking to God. It’s loving Him with a whole heart and inviting Him to be a part of every detail of the life He has given you. Within that kind of love, you will experience some genuine God-sized power!

For in Him we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28)



CINDI WOOD
Author of best selling Frazzled Female series.
www.FrazzledFemale.com



Why Should We Teach Our Children to Pray?

Teaching our children to pray has always been important in our home. Specifically, my husband and I have tried to express to them the importance of prayer each day. To the outside world, we may seem crazy, but we feel that prayer is the foundation to their lives in Christ.

Our family is making the move to West Virginia, where my husband will become the pastor of a small church. Through this stressful time, I have heard my children pray for safe travels, good weather, and health. These words are precious to me but how much more precious are they to our Lord?

For us as parents, it is second nature to pray. But why should we teach our children to learn to pray?

The simple definition of prayer is talking to God. Our children learn that if they have a problem or concern, they can bring it to God. Through prayer, they can talk to God. He wants to hear from children just as He does the grown-up Christians. Through conversations with God, all ages become closer to Him. Our children specifically need to know that

the closer they are to God, the more clearly they can see the path He has made for them.

God knows the completeness—good and not-so-good—of who we are. Even so, He desires to hear from us. Our prayers are the acknowledgement that our lives are completely dependent upon him. The world we live in typically says that the quality of our lives is dependent upon what we do. Teaching your child to pray and rely on God can change his or her understanding of that.

Our children should learn to pray because it is imperative that they know their words in prayer are powerful. As they grow in their own faith, so will the maturity of their prayers. They will begin to see the power of prayer when they witness the answer to prayer.

Jesus prayed for the sick to be healed—and it was so. Our children should learn that their prayers can be just as powerful.

In Matthew 19:14, “*Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’*” God wants our children to come to Him. The way for them to do that is through prayer.

Teaching our children to pray is important; but more than that, it is what God calls us to do as parents. It is our responsibility to lead our children to the Lord. We can’t leave this responsibility to the church, Sunday school teachers, or friends. Talk to your children about prayer. Let them hear you pray and give them the opportunity to pray.



ASHLEY HOOKER

Freelance writer, stay-at-home mom, and supportive wife of her husband/pastor.



Pray with Your Partner

All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
(2 Timothy 3:16-17 NHEB)

Think of prayer as the thread that binds the unity of your love. Prayer is like a window into your mate's heart and life. By weaving prayer into your everyday life, God hems your lives together, "stitch by stitch," prayer by prayer.

Daily

Each day, we share our prayer requests and pray as a family; then we pray as a couple, usually privately as we hug good-bye for our day's responsibilities. We will hug and pray for each other before we kiss and send each other on to the path God has for each of us. Over each meal we share, we pray grace, then kiss each other. It is a romantic ritual that has added passion and power to our 40-plus year marriage. Most days after dinner, we will stroll hand in hand and have a prayer walk. The advantage of

a prayer walk is that you get closer to God, your mate, and thinner—at the same time. Each night before drifting off to sleep, we curl up in each other's arms and pray thanksgiving and praise over the day God has given us. We commit any questions, drama, or hurts to our Father in Heaven.

Weekly

We bring to our Monday morning *Marriage Meet Up* a verse or a few verses to pray over each other, our marriage and the planning meeting for our marriage and family. Typically, these verses come across our path naturally. We may have heard them in a sermon, gleaned them from a message we taught, a quiet time devotional or Bible study, or we may have encountered them on Christian radio, podcasts, in magazines, or books. At other times, we will search the internet on a subject of interest to gain strategic Biblical insight. In our experience, the verse(s) we each bring to the *Marriage Meet Up* has become a stable foundation for the meeting, a healing balm to some turbulent circumstance or stressful situation we might be going through. The Word may be the best gift you can give your mate that week.

Yearly

We each select a *Word of the Year* and a *Verse of the Year*. We make a poster,

or have it engraved on mugs, or place the verse on a refrigerator magnet or key fob. We commit to praying that verse for each other all year, either in our daily quiet time or when we see the prayer prompt. Sometimes we set it as the password for our phone or computer, or as our phone wallpaper. Some years, we opt to have the same Word and Verse of the Year. You can download a *Couple's Your Best Year Yet* goal and prayer sheet at www.love-wise.com.

Your Marriage Meet Up

In our book, *Marriage Meet Ups*, we share more ways to weave prayer into marriage. For example, often people have an "our song." We also have an "our verse." It was inscribed on our wedding gifts to each other: "*We love because He [God] first loved us*" (1 John 4:19). You might begin or deepen your prayer life together by taking a prayer walk and talking about possible "our verses." When you select one, buy or have something made with that verse on it and hang it in your home as a prayer prompt for your love and marriage.

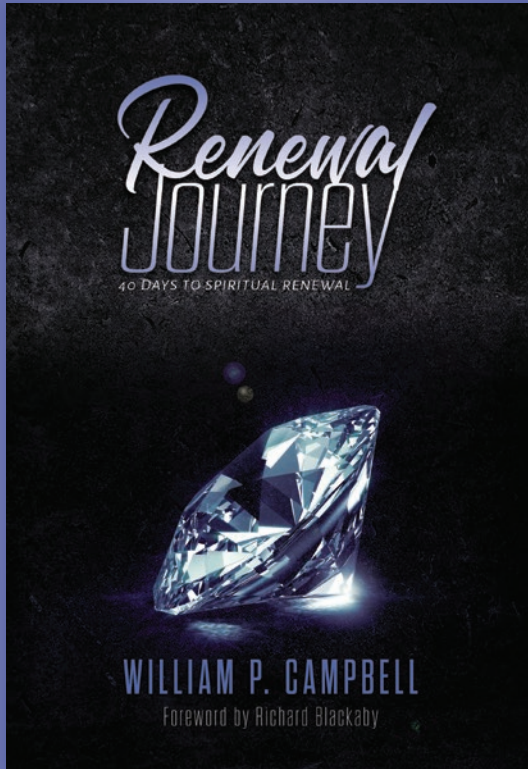


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Prayer: a Precious, Personal Provision!

What do you think of when someone mentions prayer? For some, prayer may feel elusive, formal, intimidating, awkward, and even a plea heavenwards that seems unheard. For others, prayer may feel intimate, clarifying, purposeful, strengthening, a source of hope and peace. And for most individuals, prayer can stir a mixture of thoughts and feelings at one time or another over the course of one's relationship with God. If you would like to strengthen prayer in your relationship with God, here are some practical points to prayerfully consider:

- **Prayer is a means of communication in a relationship with God.** God invites us to pray: *Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know* (Jeremiah 33:3). God is relational; He desires to have a close, personal relationship with you. How? It begins by being in a “right” relationship with Him. This is possible for everyone who invites God’s Son, Jesus Christ, to come into his or her heart. Romans 3:23 states that everyone has sinned and is separated from God. Because God loves mankind, He made a way to reconcile us to Him through the sacrifice of His Son on a cross. For all who invite Jesus to come into their hearts in faith through prayer (see Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2: 8-9), God will forgive their sins and invite them into a personal relationship with Him.
- **Prayer is an avenue through which God reveals His will.** As we read God’s Word and invite Him to guide and direct our steps (Psalm 32:8), He speaks to us through prayer, the Bible, other believers, and circumstances. For all who pray to invite Jesus into their hearts, God sends a “Helper”—His Spirit. John 14:26 states, *“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”* As we draw near to God through prayer, trusting in and waiting on Him, His Spirit reveals His will to us.
- **Prayer lightens our load.** God invites us through prayer to cast our anxieties and burdens before Him, and to leave them there (see 1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 55:22). He doesn’t intend for us to carry the weight of the world as we move through life.
- **Prayer transforms us from the inside out!** As we draw near to God, He draws near to us (James 4:8). We draw near by reading His Word, taking Him at His Word, and thanking Him for His provisions like forgiveness, grace, and the fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5). He tenders our hearts and gives peace as we pray with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6-7), confess sin (1 John 1:9), seek Him above all else, and praise Him (Matthew 6:33). 1 Timothy 1:17 states, *“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever.”*

What a precious, personal provision that God offers us to cultivate a relationship with Him!



PATTY STUMP
Licensed Christian counselor,
author, and speaker for
women’s events.

Pray About Everything!



Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

— Philippians 4:6-7 NLT

As I write this devotional tonight, the President of the United States is on television warning the country—and the world—about the Covid-19 virus. He is asking for calm as the virus burns around the world. Public events have been cancelled. The NBA has suspended its season indefinitely. Many state governors have announced new safety measures as well. Even a Covid-19 world-wide conference has been cancelled because of the virus!

How should we respond? How do we control the fear in our own hearts? How do we offer peace to our family and friends? Paul instructed the Philippians (and us, of course) not to “worry about anything” and instead to pray about everything. The results? God's peace beyond our understanding. He goes on to say that God's peace

“guards our hearts and minds” as we live in Christ.

By the time you read this, I have no idea where we will be in this crisis. Hopefully, it will be on the decline and things will be looking up again; if not, we will need to be praying more than ever. “Looking up” should be our daily response as we seek God's healing and provision, then thank Him for all He has done. And we will be putting our trust exactly where we always say it should be—completely in Him. One thing I do know as I sit at my keyboard and write these words—God is not worried and He is fully in control.

Jesus gives many warnings in Luke about changes in the earth, the skies and the seas—of earthquakes, famines, and plagues (perhaps like this current virus). “So when all these things begin to happen, stand and look up, for your salvation is near” (Luke 21:28). Do we cower in fear? Surely not! Our expected position and

posture are made perfectly clear by Jesus: we are to stand and look up!

He tucks this warning into the end of Philippians: *Keep alert at all times. And pray that you might be strong enough to escape these coming horrors and stand before the Son of Man* (Philippians 4:36 NLT).

So as we seek Him together I leave you with a prayer found in the last verses of the book of Jude. I have always found these words encouraging because He is able to do what I know I can't do.

Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen (Jude 1:24-25).

Yes and amen!



TIM BRYANT

Tim is the Vice President of The Daniels Group. www.itwasonmymind.blog



Prayer, Evangelism, and COVID-19

How can we share our faith when states are on lockdown and personal contact is prohibited? Evangelism is still very possible—and even more necessary—when we are confined to our homes.

People are more willing to talk about spiritual things in times of crisis. After September 11, 2001, church attendance soared with people searching for meaning and hope. But now, during COVID-19, even the church doors are closed. Where will they find that hope? From Christians. From us.

Beth made a routine visit to her bank right after she heard about the epidemic. When the teller asked her what she thought, Beth didn't hesitate. "I am thankful God is on the throne, and I praise Him for taking care of it."

The bank teller's shoulders dropped. As a believer, she was distraught as she watched people withdraw large amounts of money out of their accounts in fear. What could she say? But Beth urged her to be an encouragement to every person who walked into that bank.

As believers, we are called to share the hope that Jesus has given to us—the hope of eternal life. We are the Church in our neighborhoods and local communities. And in this age of technology, we don't have to sit down with someone in person to share the Gospel. We can do it digitally—over the phone, on social media, by sending a letter, or using text or Facetime—the opportunities are endless.

During a visit to the United States several months ago, a Chinese woman visited a church in Houston, Texas, where she made the decision to follow Jesus. When she returned to China, she began sharing her new faith with her friends and family. And as the COVID-19 epidemic increased and quarantines imposed, she continued to share Christ via text. Many of her family and friends have come to Jesus

because she reached out using technology during this time of crisis.

First, pray. Ask God for opportunities to share His love with others. Then invite a friend to "meet" you for coffee over a Facetime video chat. Go for a walk and check in with your neighbors. Give someone in your family a call and ask, "How are you doing?" Send a text and let a coworker know that you are praying for them.

People will wonder how we can remain calm or have hope in a time like this. And often, these simple acts of compassion open doors for us to share the greatest hope we have: Jesus Christ.

Don't be afraid to step out in faith and share Jesus in a new way. God has given us some incredible tools during this time of crisis. Let's use them to share the hope that we have with others! May God bless you as you do!



REV. JOHN B. SORENSEN, D.D.
President/CEO of Evangelism
Explosion International.
www.evangelismexplosion.org

Is Prayer Really of First Importance?

Jinja, Uganda Africa, 8:00 a.m. My computer crashed. I couldn't send a single email. I was in a funk. Cut off from the world. No communication. No "Geek Squad." No one I knew around me could define what an "smtl.aol.error" message meant.

I tried everything I knew. Nothing worked. I tried the same things over and over and got identical, disastrous results. Around 10:00 p.m., I had an epiphany...I prayed!

I confessed that I'd assumed I could fix the glitch much better than God could and never even thought to pray. I passionately teach,

**"Pray first! Act second!
If you really believe God
answers prayers, even in
small affairs, you'll pray!"**

I'm supposed to do what I teach! It's sometimes much easier to *teach* than it is to *do*.

I awoke the next morning from a good night's sleep. My mind clear, I prayed again; God led me to a solution within 30 minutes. Pridefully, I noted to myself I'd learned my lesson and would never repeat that mistake again.

Three days later, the power went out in our tiny apartment at 8:30 a.m. I notified the power company. We went to town. Power was on in town. We bought meat and milk, assuming the power was back on at home. We returned only to put the meat into a freezer that had no power.

Lunchtime came; no power. I called the power company again, this time a little more agitated. We went out to dinner, hoping the power would be repaired by the time we came home. We returned to a dark home; no power, no fans, no freezer. We went to bed sweating, and as I prayed, I realized—*again*—that I'd not asked for God's help. So, I confessed the same sin I had committed just three days earlier.

The Israelites weren't the only ones to forget what God can do just days after God acted miraculously on their behalf.

Students and church members aren't the only ones who say they believe prayer is a first priority while in church yet forget to pray while living life for real.

I'd like to say this has never happened again and that I've learned my lesson once and for all, but that would be a lie. God in His grace has been pa-

tient and persistent in teaching me the power and the priority of prayer.

Prayer isn't there as a "servant genie" to fix our computer and power problems. The point of these pathetic examples of a pastor's behavior isn't that God can and will fix every annoying problem you have in life.

The point instead is this: prayer reminds us of our dependence on God for everything.

We pray because we recognize our thoughts, actions, ideas, emotional reactions, and next breaths are dependent upon God's efforts, not our own.

When we say prayer is of first importance and we don't pray first, we testify that we really don't believe what we say.

Maybe I'm the only one who has ever failed in this way, but I suspect not. Is prayer of first importance to you in life? What do you do first when life goes wrong? Do you pray?



BILL NEWTON

Pastors a start-up church, writes, and serves on 3 boards. US Naval Academy graduate & Harvard MBA.

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Thankful for you in Christ,

William Campbell
Founder & President
Scripture Awakening

90n90

