

Growing Through Prayer



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The Purpose of Prayer

- **Grow In loving relationship with God**

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.

Matthew 22:37, 38 (NIV)

- **Grow Into the Image of Jesus**

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

II Corinthians 3:18 (NKJ)

- **Grow In living faith**

The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20b (NIV)

- **Grow God's Kingdom on earth**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6:9b, 10 (NIV)

Scripture Versions Used

The Amplified Bible (TAB)

New International Version (NIV)

New King James (NKJ)

New Living Translation (NLT)

What Is Prayer?

Prayer is communication between God's living Spirit and the living spirit of a born again child of God.

Ephesians 2:4, 5 (NIV)

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgression—it is by grace you have been saved.

I Timothy 2:5 (NLT)

For there is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus.

John 1:12, 13 (NLT)

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn! This is not a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan—this rebirth comes from God.

I Corinthians 2:14 (NIV)

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

All who believe in Jesus are reborn of God's Spirit and can talk with God.

The Holy Spirit's Help

After Jesus ascended back to heaven, the Holy Spirit came to live in the heart of every believer to give divine help to do God's will on earth.

John 14:26 (NKJ)

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Romans 5:5b (NIV)

God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.

Romans 8:26b (NLT)

For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed with words.

Luke 17:21b..., Romans 14:17b (NIV)

The kingdom of God is within you... and it is of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit establishes the Kingdom of God in our hearts and helps us to live in it, even on earth.

Come to Jesus

The questions that truly matter in life are all answered by these words—Come to Me. If I will simply come to Jesus, my real life will be brought into harmony with my real desires.

Oswald Chambers

Matthew 11:28, 29 (NKJ)

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

John 6:37b (NIV)

Whoever comes to Me I will never drive away.

John 7:37b (NKJ)

If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJ)

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Come with holy awe to the God of the universe who loves you and waits to hear your voice.

Behold God's Presence

You can sense God's presence when you quiet your heart and mind, closing out all the worldly distractions and drawing close to Him.

Norma Bonds

Psalm 46:10a (NIV)

Be still, and know that I am God.

James 4:8a (NKJ)

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Psalm 95:2a (NKJ)

Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving.

Psalm 16:11 (NLT)

You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.

Psalm 27:4 (NKJ)

One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.

God is not a concept. He is a divine Person whose glorious presence we can "behold" within our hearts.

Rooted In God

Prayer is like the root system of a tree—unseen but vital—supporting the tree as the storms of life come against it, all the while supplying nutrients to cause the tree to flourish.

Norma Bonds

Ephesians 3:17 (NLT)

I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love.

John 15:5 (NKJ)

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Psalms 1:3 (NIV)

He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Romans 11:16b (NIV)

If the root is holy, so are the branches.

Through communion with God in prayer our hearts become rooted in God's holiness, love, joy, peace, and strength.

Listening to God

To have God speak to the heart is a majestic experience, an experience many people miss, if they monopolize the conversation and never pause to hear God's responses.

Charles Stanley

Revelation 3:20 (NKJ)

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Psalms 27:8 (NLT)

My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me." And my heart responds, "LORD, I am coming."

John 10:27 (NLT)

My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

Isaiah 50:4b (NLT)

Morning by morning he wakens me and opens my understanding to his will.

God speaks to our hearts by His Spirit, in line with His Word. His voice comes as a clear revelation or understanding, a "silent whisper", "a knowing deep within," or even audibly.

Pray in Agreement with God's Word

God's will, truth, wisdom, commands, and promises are written in His Word. You may pray for whatever you desire within the guidelines of God's Word.

John 15:7 (NKJ)

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

II Corinthians 1:20 (NIV)

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

James 3:17 (NIV)

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

John 1:14 (NIV)

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

God's Word is everything Jesus is. To agree with God's Word is to think like Jesus thinks.

Receiving Grace

Faith is the avenue through which we pray and believe God. Grace is the avenue by which we receive God's answers to our requests as a free gift.

Ephesians 2:8 (NIV)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

Hebrews 4:16 (NIV)

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

James 4:6b (TAB)

God sets Himself against the proud and haughty, but gives grace continually to the lowly—those who are humble-minded enough to receive it.

James 1:17 (NKJ)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

II Corinthians 9:8a (NIV)

God is able to make all grace abound to you.

Every good thing that comes into our life is a gift of God's love and grace.

Ask God

If you ask and receive not, let the Word and Spirit teach you to pray aright, but do not let go of the confidence He seeks to waken: Everyone who asketh, receiveth.

Andrew Murray

James 4:2b (NIV)

You do not have, because you do not ask God.

Matthew 7:7 (NKJ)

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Philippians 4:6 (TAB)

Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything by prayer and petition (definite requests) with thanksgiving continue to make your wants known to God.

James 1:5-6a (NLT)

If you need wisdom--if you want to know what God wants you to do--ask him, and he will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking. But when you ask him, be sure that you really expect him to answer.

The fault is in us—not in God—when we don't receive what we ask for.

Hindrances to Prayer

Sin and doubt hinder our prayers to God and hinder God's blessings to us.

Psalm 66:18 (NKJ)

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.

James 4:3a (TAB)

Or you do ask God for them and yet fail to receive, because you ask with wrong purpose and evil, selfish motives.

James 1:6-8 (NIV)

But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

I John 3:21, 22 (NIV)

If our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

If we truly desire to obey and please God, we can rely on the Holy Spirit to convict our hearts when we sin.

Faith In God's Power

Only God can move mountains, but faith and prayer move God.

E. M. Bounds

Matthew 17:20b (NIV)

I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, "Move from here to there" and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Matthew 9:29b (TAB)

According to your faith and trust and reliance (on the power invested in Me) be it done to you.

Galatians 5:6 (NIV)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

True faith pleases God, because it trusts in His goodness and power, and is inspired by His love.

Believe God

*Believing embraces and pleases God.
Unbelief is a rejection of God.*

Acts 16:31 (NIV)

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.

John 6:28, 29 (NIV)

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

Matthew 21:22 (TAB)

Whatever you ask for in prayer, having faith and really believing, you will receive.

Romans 15:13 (NKJ)

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 13:58 (NKJ)

(Jesus) did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Hebrews 3:12 (NIV)

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

Continue to pray. Continue to believe.

Rest In God

To rest in God means to hand over each activity and each situation in your life to Him and to learn the habit of trusting Him to work for you.

Ann Orthlund

Psalm 37:7a (NKJ)

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret...

Psalm 37:5 (TAB)

Commit your way to the Lord—roll and repose each care of your load on Him; trust (lean on, rely on and be confident) also in Him, and He will bring it to pass.

I Peter 5:7 (TAB)

Casting the whole of your care—all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all—on Him; for He cares for you affectionately, and cares about you watchfully.

Psalm 116:7 (NKJ)

Return to your rest, O my soul, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.

Hebrews 4:3a (NIV)

Now we who have believed enter that rest.

When we worry, fret or get impatient, we're not believing or resting in God.

Childlike Trust

*Things change and miracles happen,
not because of the might of our faith,
but the simplicity of our trust.*

Jack Hayford

Proverbs 3:5, 6 (NIV)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own
understanding; in all your ways
acknowledge him and he will make
your paths straight.

Psalms 56:3 (TAB)

What time I am afraid, I will have
confidence and put my trust and
reliance on You.

Psalms 37:3 (NKJ)

Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His
faithfulness.

Psalms 71:5 (NKJ)

For You are my hope, O Lord GOD.
You are my trust from my youth.

Matthew 18:4 (TAB)

Whoever will humble himself,
therefore, and become (trusting, lowly,
loving, forgiving) as this little child, is
greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

*God wants us to trust Him with the
humble confidence of a child.*

Defeat the Devil

Real prayer includes both a submission to the Lord and a resistance against Satan. Both of these are accomplished as we draw near to God. All real spiritual victories must be won in the spiritual realm, and only prayer can invade that realm.

Dick Eastman

James 4:7 (NIV)

Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

II Corinthians 10:4 (NIV)

The weapons we fight with are not weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

Mark 16:17a (NKJ)

And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons.

Galatians 5:1 (NIV)

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

The devil can no longer keep us enslaved to sin, unless we let him.

God's Angels

Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouses of God's infinite grace and power. All that God is and all that God has is at the disposal of prayer.

R.A. Torrey

Psalm 91:9-12 (NLT)

If you make the LORD your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your dwelling. For he orders his angels to protect you wherever you go. They will hold you with their hands to keep you from striking your foot on a stone.

Hebrews 1:14 (TAB)

Are not the angels all (servants) ministering spirits, sent out in the service (of God for the assistance) of those who are to inherit salvation?

Psalm 103:20 (NKJ)

Bless the LORD, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word.

Psalm 34:7 (NKJ)

The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.

God makes His mighty angels available to His children.

Support Others In Prayer

When we pray for someone, we “sponsor” them with the resources of heaven. Prayer is God’s means of His children enforcing the victory that Christ won for us on the cross.

Jack Hayford

Ephesians 6:18 (NLT)

Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere.

Colossians 1:9b, 10 (NLT)

We ask God to give you a complete understanding of what he wants to do in your lives, and we ask him to make you wise with spiritual wisdom. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and you will continually do good, kind things for others. All the while, you will learn to know God better and better.

Ephesians 3:16 (NLT)

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will give you mighty inner strength through his Holy Spirit.

The greatest thing we can do for anyone is to pray for them.

Pray for lost souls

The key to the missionary's difficult task is in the hand of God, and that key is prayer—not work.

Oswald Chambers

Matthew 9:37b. 38 (NLT)

The harvest is so great, but the workers are so few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send out more workers for his fields.

1 Kings 18:37 (NIV)

Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.

Psalms 126:5, 6 (NLT)

Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy. They weep as they go to plant their seed, but they sing as they return with the harvest.

James 5:16b (TAB)

The earnest (heart-felt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available, dynamic in its working.

When we pray for the salvation of lost souls, we join our hearts with the passion of God's heart.

Pray for our Nation

Prayer preserves peace, blessings, and goodness in a nation.

II Chronicles 7:14 (NKJ)

If my people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Proverbs 14:34 (NIV)

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.

I Timothy 2:1-4 (NIV)

I urge, then first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Psalms 33:12a (TAB)

Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) is the nation whose God is the LORD.

God spares nations from destruction through prayer.

Pray for Healing

Jesus died on the cross to pay for the healing of our spirit, soul, and body.

Exodus 15:26b (NIV)

I am the LORD, who heals you.

Psalm 30:2 (NLT)

O LORD my God, I cried out to you for help, and you restored my health.

Psalm 147:3 (NIV)

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

James 5:15a (NIV)

The prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up.

Acts 3:16 (NIV)

By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through Him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

1 Peter 2:24b (NIV)

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

Jesus died to buy our healing.

Confidence In the Promiser

Delayed answers to prayer are not only trials of faith, they also give us opportunities to honor God through our steadfast confidence in Him, even when facing the apparent denial of our request. Charles Spurgeon

Hebrews 10:35, 36 (NIV)

So don't throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Romans 4:19b, 20a (NKJ)

Abraham did not consider his own body, about 100 years old. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief.

Hebrews 11:11 (NKJ)

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

Focus on the faithfulness of God, Who always keeps His promises to those who believe. Stop thinking about and talking about how impossible and terrible your problems are.

Wait for God's Time

We must be prepared to wait on God's timing. His timing is precise, for He does things at the very time He has set. He will never be even five minutes behind "the appointed time."

Robert Hall

Daniel 10:12b (NLT)

Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer

Isaiah 40:31 (NKJ)

But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 30:18 (NKJ)

Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him.

God's greatest blessings come to those who expectantly and joyfully wait for Him.

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