



*Thoughts + Scriptures
for a weekend of prayer*

A Rough Schedule of the Weekend

1. Friday PM / In Prayer Room

2. Saturday AM (Pre-Breakfast) / In Prayer Room

BREAKFAST - BRUNCH

3. Saturday AM 2 (Post-Breakfast) / Individual Time

FREE TIME

4. Saturday afternoon (Pre-Dinner) / In Prayer Room

DINNER

5. Saturday PM / In Prayer Room

6. Sunday AM / Communion / In Prayer Room

FRIDAY EVENING

Large Group Discussion: Colossians 1:3-23.

How should we pray tonight based on this passage?

Praying for Our Spiritual Needs.

Scriptures: Psalms 37, 42, 63; John 7:37-39

SATURDAY MORNING 1

Large Group Discussion: Ephesians 1:3-23

Pray using this passage.

- Give thanks for something you see here.
- Ask the Lord for something you see here.
- Ask the Lord for help
- Pray what Paul prays for ourselves and others

Praying for Our Future

- A decision that needs to be made
- Direction for the future
- A calling the Lord may have on your life
- Redirection if the Lord desires

Scriptures & Thoughts for prayer:

- Philippians 4:6-9 – Do we worry about our future?
- Ephesians 1:3-23 – Do we let these things shape our desires for the future?
- Romans 8:26-30 – Does our ultimate destiny (v.29) shape our prayers for the future?
- Philippians 1:9-11 – “the things that are excellent” are “the things that really matter”

SATURDAY MORNING 2

Praying for people in our lives:

Other believers (see Paul's prayer on page 9, and pages 12-14)

Non-Believers (see pages 15-16)

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Praying for our Young Adults Group

SATURDAY EVENING

Prayer for Missionaries (See pages 11-14)

Prayer Requests for Julianne Heilman, ministering in Entebe Uganda with Calvary Chapel Entebe

"I have a few requests:

1. I have two more months of this year of ministry (the school year runs from Feb to Nov). Please pray that I have the energy to finish this year out well, both with the Primary school and the adult vocational school. I am feeling pretty worn out physically and spiritually.

2. Pray for wisdom and courage to take on the leadership role that I need to take on with the vocational school. I need to prepare as much as possible for next year before I come back in December. I will be more of the lead director and that is huge for me, yet somehow I am excited to jump in and be used of the Lord in this. (But there are still times when I feel like I am twelve years old and wonder what I am doing in Africa.)

3. The Lord has been challenging me to live beyond my emotions and feelings, in the sense that I live in peace and rest with Him as my joy, no matter what is or is not happening in my life or in the ministries I am involved in.

4. For the Lord to provide deeper and more close friendships with my Ugandan friends here, and with the young girls of the primary school and church.

5. And lastly, a praise that the Lord has blessed me by consistently providing for my financial needs over these past 11 months, and prayer that He will continue to work through His people in this way."

Prayer for Ben and Emily Spector, serving the Lord in Chakovec, Croatia.

1. Pray for continuing language studies, that they will continue to progress and be able to freely communicate that gospel. Ben has begun teaching in Croatian.
2. Pray for the church in Chakovec. For the believers to be strengthened, for more people to be saved, and for Ben and Emily's ministry with the youth group there.
3. Ben and Emily are looking to move to the capitol city (Zagreb) and begin a church plant there, sometime in the near future. Pray for wisdom and God's leading in terms of timing and methods for the move and the work.

SUNDAY MORNING

COMMUNION

Scriptures: Offering our members to Him / Romans 6:4-14, 12:1-2

Pointers for Prayer Meetings

If we're going to take the weekend to pray (or any other time) you should be able to get the most out of it. There's really only one key point: Remember why we are gathering together.

In Matthew 18:20 Jesus said it this way: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them"

The verse before he speaks about meeting together for prayer. So there is something special about praying together. Jesus invites us to do it, and He invites us to "agree" as we do it (verse 19), and also to know that as we gather and agree, He is present with us in a unique way. So from these verses, I'd say *the purpose of our prayer meetings is to "gather," to "ask," and to "agree."* With that in mind, here are some pointers to help make sure we're on track.

1. **Don't pray long prayers.** i.e. Instead of one 10-minute prayer, pray five 2-minute prayers. Let other people take their turns in between your requests.
2. **Let people hear you.** Sometimes shy people pray quietly, but if those around can't hear you, they can't "agree" with you in prayer.
3. **Avoid wandering.** When you're alone in your room, you should always feel free to take as much time as you need to work everything out with God. But when you're with others, it's better to get to the point in your prayers. Also, avoid long pauses that make people wonder if you're done praying or not.
4. **Be focused on the topic at hand.** We'll decide beforehand on some specific things to ask for together. Use the time to ask God for the requests. This way you'll be fulfilling the command of Christ to "ask" and "agree." It also helps everyone stay mentally involved, even when they aren't the one praying out loud, and you can all "strive together" (Philippians 1:27) for the things the Lord lays on your hearts.
5. **Don't use prayers to teach.** Sometimes we get excited about truth when we're praying, which is great, but we should remember to be asking God for things and seeking Him in prayer, not simply talking to the people around us with our eyes closed.
6. **Don't be afraid to agree out loud.** Not that we should be shouting amens out of habit, but it is good to undistractingly let your agreement be known as someone else is praying.

Some Verses on Prayer

Jesus' teaching on Prayer

Matthew 6:5-15, 7:7-11

Mark 1:35

Luke 6:12, 11:9-13; 18:1-8; 21:36; 22:39-43

John 14:3, 15:7, 15:16, 16:23-24

Paul's Prayers

Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21

Philippians 1:3-4 & 9-11

Colossians 1:9-14

1 Thessalonians 1:11-12

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Philemon 4-6

Prayer in Israel's History

Joshua 7:1-13

2 Chronicles 6:12-7:3; ch. 20

Daniel 9; 10:2-5 + 12-14

Prayer in Acts

Acts 1:23-26; 2:1-4, 2:21-24; 4:23-31; 6:1-7; 8:14-17; 9:10-15; 10:1-11, 30-35; 12:1-9; 13:1-4; 16:20-26; 27:21-26

More on prayer

Isaiah 55:6-7

Jeremiah 33:1-3

Psalms 50:9-15

Ephesians 6:17-20

Philippians 4:6-7

Colossians 4:2-4

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Romans 12:10-13

1 Timothy 2:1-4

Jude 1:20-21

1 Peter 4:7

Revelation 5:8

Psalms 66:16-20

James 5:13-18

The Two Pillars of Prayer

The two pillars of a healthy prayer life are:

1. A sense of my own inability: "without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).
2. A sense of God's ability: "with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

The first without the second leads to self-focus and despair.

The second without the first leads to inconsistency and self-glorification.

The lack of both leads to pride and self-dependence.

The remedy if we lack either? Get close to Him! Closeness to God keeps us knowing and feeling how *big* He is. Closeness to God keeps us knowing and feeling how small we are. There's No pride in front of *Him*.

May God grant us to feel both His power and our weakness, and pray!

Remembering Who We Pray To...

- "Is anything too hard for the LORD? (Gen 18:14)
- "Has the LORD's arm been shortened? (Num 11:23)
- "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." (Luke 18:27)
- "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?" (Jer 32:27)
- "...with God nothing will be impossible." (Luk 1:37)
- "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. (Job 42:2)
- "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You." (Jer 32:17)

Praying for Missionaries

Pray for open doors, and for the ability to speak clearly.

“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.” Colossians 4:2-4

Pray that the word of the gospel would spread quickly and be lifted up in people’s eyes.

“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you.” 2 Thessalonians 3:1

Pray for boldness, especially in tough circumstances.

“Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Ephesians 6:17-20 (Paul wrote this from prison.)

Pray for deliverance from evil and acceptance by other believers.

“Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.” Romans 15:30-32

Pray for a greater trust in God’s strength, for God to get the glory.

“For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.” 2 Cor 1:8-11

Pray faithfully.

“Brethren, pray for us.” 1 Thessalonians 5:25

What the New Testament Church Prayed For

Download:

By John Piper

They called on God to vindicate his people in their cause.

And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? (Luke 18:7).

They called on God to save unbelievers.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved (Romans 10:1).

They called on God to direct the use of the sword.

Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying through all prayer and supplication on every occasion . . . (Ephesians 6:17-18)

They called on God for boldness in proclamation.

Pray at all times in the Spirit . . . and also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:18-19)
And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness (Acts 4:29).

They called on God for signs and wonders.

And now Lord . . . grant your servants to speak thy word with boldness . . . while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of thy holy servant Jesus (Acts 4:30). Elijah was a man of like nature with ourselves and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit (James 5:17-18).

They called on God for the healing of wounded comrades.

Let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise him up (James 5:14-15).

They called on God for the healing of unbelievers.

It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery; and Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him healed him (Acts 28:8).

They called on God for the casting out of demons.

And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer" (Mark 9:29).

They called on God for deeper sense of his power within them.

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers . . . that you may know . . . what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe (Ephesians 1:16,19).

What the New Testament Church Prayed For

They called on God for miraculous deliverances.

So Peter was kept in prison; but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church . . . When he realized [he had been freed], he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying (Acts 12:5,12).

But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake (Acts 16:25-26).

They called on God for the raising of the dead.

But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, rise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up (Acts 9:40).

They called on God for wisdom.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him (James 1:5).

They called on God to establish leadership.

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they believed (Acts 14:23).

They called on God to send out reinforcements.

Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest (Matthew 9:38).

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off (Acts 13:2-3).

They called on God for the success of other missionaries.

I appeal to you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints (Romans 15:30-31).

They called on God for the encouragement of togetherness.

[We are] praying earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith? (1 Thessalonians 3:10).

They called on God for a mind of discernment.

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ (Philippians 1:9-10).

They called on God for a knowledge of his will.

... we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding (Colossians 1:9).

What the New Testament Church Prayed For

They called on God to know him better.

[We have not ceased to pray for you to be] increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10; cf. Ephesians 1:17).

They called on God for power to comprehend the love of Christ.

I bow my knees before the Father . . . that you may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge (Ephesians 3:14,18).

They called on God for a deeper sense of assured hope.

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers . . . that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:16,18).

They called on God for strength and endurance.

[We have not ceased to pray for you to be] strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy (Colossians 1:11; cf. Ephesians 3:16).

They called on God that their faith not be destroyed.

I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren (Luke 22:32).

Watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man (Luke 21:36).

They called on God for greater faith.

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24; cf. Ephesians 3:17).

They called on God that they might not fall into temptation.

Lead us not into temptation (Matthew 6:13).

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41).

They called on God that he would complete their resolves.

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call, and may fulfil every good resolve and work of faith by his power (2 Thessalonians 1:11).

They called on God that they would do good works.

[We have not ceased to pray for you that you] lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work (Colossians 1:10).

They called on God for protection from the evil one.

Deliver us from evil (Matthew 6:13)

Praying for Non-believers

Praying according to the scripture helps us keep our prayers biblical and fresh.
(*In no particular order...*)

Ask God to make them alive, that they would be born again.

Ephesians 2:4-5

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

James 1:18

Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Ask God to open their heart

Acts 16:14

Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us*. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.

Ask God to open their eyes

Psalms 146:8

The LORD opens *the eyes of* the blind; The LORD raises those who are bowed down.

Acts 26:18

To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

John 9:39

And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

Ask God to remove the veil that hides Christ from them

2 Corinthians 3:16

Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Ask God to give them an inner vision of Christ's Glory

2 Corinthians 4:1-6

...But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Praying for Non-believers

Ask God to reveal Himself to the person

Galatians 1:15-16

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called [me] through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,

Luke 10:22

All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and [the one] to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

Pray for the person to believe the gospel

Acts 11:21

And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

Ask God to have mercy on them

Romans 9:10

So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

Titus 3:5-7

...not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Pray for them to receive Jesus

John 1:12-13

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Ask God to turn them to Himself

Psalms 80:3

Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

Deuteronomy 30:10

if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, [and] if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Ask God to awaken them spiritually

Ephesians 5:14

... "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."

How to Ascertain the Will of God: Prayer, Scripture, Circumstance

by George Müller.

1. I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people generally is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.
2. Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If so, I make myself liable to great delusions.
3. I seek the Will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.
4. Next I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's Will in connection with His Word and Spirit.
5. I ask God in prayer to reveal His Will to me aright.

Thus, through prayer to God, the study of the Word, and reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge, and if my mind is thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly. In trivial matters, and in transactions involving most important issues, I have found this method always effective.

Turning Scripture into Prayer for Your Church

An illustration from Paul's letter to the Colossians.

- 1:3-4 Give thanks for good things going on with Christians you know.
- 1:9-12 Pray for full maturity in those you know.
- 2:1-3 Pray for encouragement and unity in the church.
- 2:4 Pray that no one would be deceived by false teaching.
- 2:5 Rejoice about the good things in the church in general.
- 2:6 Pray for growth and strengthening in the church.
- 2:16 Pray for no judgment and no condemnation.
- 2:20 Pray for freedom from legalism.
- 3:5-9 Pray for people to put sin to death.
- 3:10-11 Pray for total unity in view of racial diversity.
- 3:12-14 Pray for humility, patience and forgiveness in the church.
- 3:16 Pray for the word of God to richly dwell in those in the church.
- 3:18-21 Pray for spiritual, mature marriages and home lives.
- 3:22-25 Pray for a good witness in the work world.
- 4:2 Pray for a vibrant prayer life in the church.
- 4:2-4 Pray for the missionaries the church supports.
Pray for the pastors and other leadership.
- 4:5-6 Pray for a strong witness to the world.

Things that Mess Up Prayer

Here's a list of things that are mentioned in scripture as hindering or ruining both our ability to pray and our prayer's ability to have power with God.

1. "Regarding" or "cherishing" sin in my heart. (Psalm 66:18)
2. Oppression of the poor and lack of attention to justice. (Proverbs 21:13, Isaiah 58:1-59:3)
3. Violence. (Isaiah 1:15-17, Isaiah 59:1)
4. Refusal to listen to God's revealed will. (Proverbs 28:9)
5. Asking for things simply to satisfy my lusts. (James 4:3)
6. Refusal to forgive others. (Mark 11:25)
7. Mistreating my wife. (1 Peter 3:7)
8. Doubting when I ask. (James 1:6-8)
9. Refusal to reconcile and agree with the body of Christ. (Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 18:19)

Why Does Prayer Work?

Thoughts from Andrew Murray on why prayer is possible at all:

...And so there was in the very Being and Life of God an asking of which prayer on earth was to be the reflection and the outflow. It was not without including this that Jesus said, "I knew that Thou always hearest me." Just as the Sonship of Jesus on earth may not be separated from His Sonship in heaven, even so with His prayer on earth, it is the continuation and the counterpart of His asking in heaven. The prayer of the man Christ Jesus is the link between the eternal asking of the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father and the prayer of men upon earth. Prayer has its rise and its deepest source in the very Being of God. In the bosom of Deity nothing is ever done without prayer—the asking of the Son and the giving of the Father.

One of the secret difficulties with regard to prayer—one which, though not expressed, does often really hinder prayer—is derived from the perfection of God, in His absolute independence of all that is outside of Himself. Is He not the Infinite Being who owes what He is to Himself alone, who determines Himself, and whose wise and holy will has determined all that is to be? How can prayer influence Him, or He be moved by prayer to do what otherwise would not be done? Is not the promise of an answer to prayer simply a condescension to our weakness? Is what is said of the power...of prayer anything more than an accommodation to our mode of thought, because the Deity never can be dependent on any action from without for its doings? And is not the blessing of prayer simply the influence it exercises upon ourselves?

In seeking an answer to such questions, we find the key in the very being of God, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity. If God was only one Person, shut up within Himself, there could be no thought of nearness to Him or influence on Him. But in God there are three Persons. In God we have Father and Son, who have in the Holy Spirit their living bond of unity and fellowship. When eternal Love begat the Son, and the Father gave the Son as the Second Person a place next Himself as His Equal and His Counselor, there was a way opened for prayer and its influence in the very inmost life of Deity itself. Just as on earth, so in heaven the whole relation between Father and Son is that of giving and taking.

These quotes are in Fred Sanders' book *The Deep Things of God*. Sanders goes on to explain a little more what he sees in Murray's thinking:

Crucial for Murray was to resist the urge to think of some will of God that is antecedent to the Son and the Father, or some decision that was made behind the back of the Trinity, in the oneness of God that is not already triune. There is no such God, so there is no such divine will. The divine will is Trinitarian and is worked out according to the asking-and-granting structure revealed in the Son: This may help us somewhat to understand how the prayer of man, coming through the Son, can have effect upon God. The decrees of God are not decisions made by Him without reference to the Son, or His petition, or the petition to be sent up through Him. By no means. The Lord Jesus is the first-begotten, the Head and Heir of all things: all things were created through Him and unto Him, and all things consist in Him. In the counsels of the Father, the Son, as Representative of all creation, had always a voice; in the decrees of the eternal purpose there was always room left for the liberty of the Son as Mediator and Intercessor, and so for the petitions of all who draw nigh to the Father in the Son.

How to Pray Using Scripture (By Kevin DeYoung)

Sometimes it's the simplest things that make the biggest difference. For many years I've used the 3 R's I learned from Ben Patterson to pray through Scripture. This simple tool has helped me pray the Bible more than any other single strategy. I've used in my devotional times and have employed it often in leading others in prayer.

1. *Rejoice*
2. *Repent*
3. *Request*

With every verse in the Bible we can do one (or more likely, all three) of these things. We can rejoice and thank God for his character and blessings. We can repent of our mistakes and sins. We can request new mercies and help.

Right now I just flipped opened my Bible and landed at Psalm 104. Verse 1 says "Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty." How might you pray through this verse? Well, at first blush you might see nothing more to do than praise God. "Dear Lord, you are very great. You are clothed with splendor and majesty. Amen." But try that again with the 3 R's.

Rejoice – O Lord, you have richly blessed me more than I deserve. What a privilege that I can call you my God. Thank you for making me a little lower than the angels and crowing me with glory and honor too.

Repent – Forgive me for being blind to your splendor and majesty. Though you are very great, my circumstances and disappointments often feel greater. I'm sorry for being so ungrateful and taking your blessings for granted.

Request – Give me eyes to see as you are. Tune my heart to sing your praise. Help me see your glory in the world you've created, in the people around me, and in the face of Christ.

Obviously, some verses lend themselves to prayer more easily than others. The Psalms are particularly prayer-worthy. But with the simple strategy of Rejoice, Repent, Request there shouldn't be a verse in the Bible that can't be used as a prompt to pray.

Selections on Prayer from *Classic Christianity* by Thomas Oden

Jesus Praying, and Praying In Jesus Name:

The essence of the Mediator's intercession is: "I pray for them" (John 17:9). His sacrifice is the objective basis upon which his advocacy before the Father occurs, Thus "if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 2:2).

Jesus' Ministry of Intercession: Christ's eternal intercession is something that only the eternal Son can do. The principal feature of the picture of Christ "in session" (that is, "sitting at the right hand of God") is his intercessory ministry for humanity in the presence of the Father. "He prays for us, as our Priest; He prays in us, as our Head; He is prayed to by us as our God". "He entered the Most Holy Place once and for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12). In Him we have an Advocate, an intercessor who speaks to the Father on our behalf (1 John 2:1). He is qualified to intercede for us because he is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15). He bears in heaven the marks of the wounds he received from us (Luke 10).

The intercession for the faithful in which Christ was once engaged in earth (John 17) continues until the last day in the heavenly sphere. "In Him and through faith in Him we may approach God with freedom and confidence" (Ephesians 3:12). Christ is "a priest forever" (Hebrews 5:6).

The Faithful Pray in Christ's Name: He offers the prayers of the faithful to the Father. This is why Christians call upon the Father in the name of Christ. "My Father will give you whatever you ask in my name" (John 16:23-26). Christ meditates and enables the appropriation of his merit to the faithful (John 11:2).

The effect of his intercession is to increase faith's joy, trust, and capacity for devotion. "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" (Hebrews 4:16). "Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:25), for this intercession Christ entered not "a man-made sanctuary," but "he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence" (Hebrews 9:24-25).

Christ interceded not only for those most responsive to grace, but for sinners, following the pattern of the suffering Servant who "made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12). Christ's intercession is for all sincere penitents (typified by the unmeritorious thief in Luke 23:12). Christ intercedes for all humanity. Those who have chosen not to believe have voluntarily elected not to enjoy the effect of his intercession. Christ intercedes especially for the church for "those you have given me" (John 17:9, 24). He intercedes not only for the immature in faith that they may be brought fully to repentance and faith (Luke 13:8), but also for believers that they may be kept ever more deeply rooted in faith (John 17:8-

11). He intercedes for those in union with the community of faith (John 17:21) and in union with Christ himself (John 17:13-18), that they might be made holy (John 17:19). Likewise the Christian community is called to intercede for all sorts and of conditions of humanity: "I urge, then that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone" (1 Timothy 2:1),

Believers become intercessors by virtue of their participation in Christ. Christ's intercessors by virtue of their participation in Christ. Christ's intercession enables, engenders, and makes acceptable the worship of the people of God who "are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5) Hence the whole people of God and not clergy alone are called "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" (1 Peter 2:9).

The Church's Intercession for the Salvation of Humanity:

The intercession of the whole church for the whole of humanity has always been a crucial act of Christian prayer. It is a commended act of piety to pray for the salvation of all, even though the scriptures hold that some by their recalcitrance [rebellion or defiance] will not open themselves to the saving grace offered to all. Nonetheless Jesus said, "I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:16)

Special Revelation in the History of Israel:

In History of revelation, God does not merely speak to himself but to ordinary human beings- particular human beings, persons with names like Abraham, Isaac, Miriam, Amos, Naomi, Jeremiah, Paul, John, and Mary.

In prayer humans speak and God listens. In revelation God speaks to human hearers. In this way scripture and prayer feed the dialogue between humanity and God.

From Credo ("I believe") to Amen:

The ancient prayer of the church sums up the whole range of classic Christian teaching: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen" (Revelation 21:6; 22:13).

The *amen* (meaning "truly, certainly") to which we come at last in the ancient baptismal creed is more than a period. It is an act of whole body-soul unity, of trust, of confirmation. As the creed begins with "I believe" (credo), it ends with, "Yes, so be it," "verily," "I confirm it" (amen), Jesus Christ himself is personally God's own "Amen" (Revelation 3:14). "For no matter how many promises God had made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God" (2 Cor 1:20)

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