

PRAY 360



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360

Just like the circle of a compass has four points along three hundred sixty degrees this book will guide you in praying in four directions:

UPWARD

Exalt God

INWARD

Examine Yourself

OUTWARD

Intercede for Others

FORWARD

Engage the Future

The GOAL of this
book is for you to
PRAY MORE
not read more.

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wrestle

The goal of this book is for you to pray more, not read more. Let me clarify. I do want you to read the book, but only as a tool to help you pray. With that in mind, each brief chapter contains a short description leading up to a one-sentence prayer that you can take with you through the day.

These sentence prayers are a key that will unlock a deep conversation with God. All of them are directly from Scripture. They are real prayers, prayed by real people.

Some call this type of short, sentence prayer “a breath prayer” because you can say them in a single breath. Not only that, they are designed to flow through your lips as naturally and as often as you breathe, all through the day.

The Bible says that we are to “pray without ceasing”. In the same way that you breathe without ceasing, you

should pray without ceasing. That doesn't mean that prayer should be thoughtless, easy or shallow. No way, these are prayers that you hang onto. They are short, but they pack a punch. Often times, the most effective prayer rings the bell for a wrestling match with God. That's exactly what we learn from Jacob's prayer in the book of Genesis.

After much hardship, Isaac's wife Rebekah delivers twin boys. Esau is born first; Jacob immediately after, grasping the heel of his brother.

As was custom, the first-born son would receive the birthright and blessing from their father. However, Jacob tricks his brother into exchanging his inheritance rights for a bowl of soup (another great story found in Genesis 25-27).

Jacob's name literally means, "he deceives". His name becomes his identity. For fear of his own life, Jacob runs. For twenty years, Jacob tried to shake off his past and start fresh (there's a lot that goes down during that time, read about it in Genesis 28-31).

When he can't run any longer, he decides to go home. This journey home is about so much more than a simple change in location.

He's desperate for a fresh start. A new beginning.

One fateful evening on the long journey back to his hometown of Canaan, Jacob had an encounter that

changed his life forever. It was there that Jacob wrestles with an angel. The wrestling match lasted all night. Near daybreak and at the point of exhaustion, Jacob utters a prayer that resulted in a new name, a renewed identity, and powerful blessing.

Jacob's prayer,

“I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

Not your typical prayer. It was short, frank, and on the surface seemingly selfish. Here's what we can learn from it. Jacob ran from his problems and tried to fix his life by taking matters into his own hands, but that didn't work. He was unable to find what he so desperately needed. Jacob knew that there was only one way to find true freedom. It couldn't come from within. It could only come from God.

Powerful prayer begins with our need for God to show up. He is looking for us to look to Him. If you want to see the power of God in your life there must be desperation for it.

Jacob expects God to answer him and he won't let go until he gets an answer. Jesus shares a story of a persistent widow who just wouldn't give up (Luke 18). Powerful prayers are persistent.

That night God answered Jacob's prayers. He gives him a new name, Israel which means “he struggles with God.” The next day, in a miraculous turn of events,

Jacob meets his brother (Esau), who welcomes him with open arms. A new day has dawned. A new chapter written.

Make this your prayer.

Now, I don't think you literally need a new name, but I do pray that through the prayers in this book you will find a new or renewed identity in Christ.

I pray that your desperation for God will result in a spiritual wrestling match suitable for heaven's UFC highlight reel. I pray that your prayers will get raw; no holds barred - and that you will learn more about God (and yourself) as you pray through the day.

I pray that you keep praying until God gives you an answer.

Begin this journey by praying Jacob's prayer in Genesis 32:26, Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

“God, I won’t let you go unless you bless me.”

Let God know that the stakes are high and you are stepping up to the plate. Be bold and say, “Hey God, get use to this voice. I won’t let you go. I need to hear from you. I’m not giving up. I will not relent. I’m going to hang on and call out until I experience what Jacob experienced - a life-changing encounter from the true and living God!”

UPWARD

EXALT GOD

1

teach me

If you want to get it right, then go to the source. That's exactly what the disciples did. They noticed that Jesus prayed with power. His prayers produced results.

Obviously, the disciples knew how to pray. Prayer was part of their upbringing. It was a cultural norm. They knew the mechanic of prayer. This was instilled into them at an early age. But when Jesus prayed, they noticed that something very different was happening. And they wanted it. So, they went to the source.

After Jesus had finished praying, one of the disciples approached him and asked, "Lord, teach us to pray."

The disciple's prayer is our prayer.

Start this experience by asking, "Lord, teach me to pray."

The great thing about this prayer is that Jesus immediately answered it.

The answer changed the disciples lives and it can change your life too.

Jesus taught them a powerful model for prayer. It's called the Lord's Prayer and it's found in Matthew 6:9-13.

“OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME,
YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE,
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE ALSO HAVE
FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION,
BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE.

FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER
AND THE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN.”

As you begin this journey, start with the basics. Ask God to teach you to pray. Ask him to teach you what it means to engage in a conversation with Him. Invite the Spirit to tune your ears to the sound of His voice. For some of you, this is old-hat. You know how to pray. Dig a little deeper and you'll find that prayer is like a muscle. The more you exercise it, the stronger it grows. Rely on a collection of memorized prayers to be recited before a meal or bed and you'll experience atrophy.

Ask God what might happen in your life if you spend the day inhaling and exhaling a conversation with Him.

Today's prayer is found in Luke 11:1, 'One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray."'

“ Lord, teach me to pray.”

Give me the faith to approach you in prayer. Give me the ears to hear your voice. Help me to go beyond speaking words.

Help me make prayer a way of life. Where I'm in constant communication with you and I'm continually aware of your presence at work around me. Teach me to pray in such a way that aligns my first thoughts with your thoughts. Teach me what it means to speak with you, not at you. May all of my thoughts, actions, and experiences become an opportunity to commune with you.

2

with me

I asked my kids what they would bring if they were stuck on a deserted island. Once I broke the news that there would be no electricity or wifi, they conceded that their iPod wasn't the best choice. They finally landed on two items: duct tape and matches. Not a bad choice for primitive survival.

Let me ask you, "If you could only have one thing to bring with you through life, what would it be?" Impossible question, I know.

Moses had one request when God instructed him that it was time to lead his people into the Promised Land.

Moses prayed, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us.”

In other words, Moses was saying there is one thing that is non-negotiable. He had one ‘must have’ for the journey. It was the presence of God.

Moses prayed, “Go with us.”

Keep in mind that Moses was effective at prayer. He had a place set apart where he would carve out long periods of time in prayer. He clearly heard God’s voice. He conversed with God. Moses is a prime example to us that God is ready, willing, and available to meet with us through prayer.

Moses relied on prayer. It was his primary connection with God. Moses knew that there was one thing that set his people apart. It was the presence of God.

The same is true for us. God with us is our identity. We can probably make it through life without duct tape and matches, but without God’s presence we are shipwrecked on a deserted island.

Today’s prayer is found in Exodus 33:15, ‘Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us.’

“God, go with me.”

God, be present in the first thoughts that stir in my mind in the morning. Allow your presence to clarify what I see, translate what I hear, and inform how I act. I will not go through this day on my own power and strength. I need your presence through every moment of today.

God, go with me.

INWARD

EXAMINE YOURSELF

3

mercy

One day Jesus was hanging around a group of people who were confident about their prayer life. Confident might be an understatement, they were arrogant. They looked down on everyone around them and scoffed at their inability to pray as effectively and fervently as them.

Jesus huddles up with these guys, puts his arm around them and tells them a story about two people who prayed. One is an eloquent and beautifully worded exhortation about their holiness in comparison to the awful sinners all around. The other prayer comes from a tax collector who would not even lift his eyes toward heaven as he pleaded for God's mercy.

Of course, the humble, repentant prayer is the one that God honors. The prayer that is entirely dependent on God.

Ultimately, that is what God is looking for in us. He wants us to rely on Him. To trust Him. To depend on Him.

On a personal level, the message in this simple prayer is that God is a God of mercy and grace. It doesn't matter where you have been or what you have done. God runs to the prodigal. God defends the adulteress. God gives grace to the tax collector. His grace is amazing and it's available to you.

Today's prayer is found in Luke 18:13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

“God, have mercy on me,
a sinner.”

Let your prayers travel deep within your soul today. Shine light on those secret sins tucked far away in the closet of your heart. Reject the thought that says there are many people in this world with sin much worse than yours.

As true as that may be and as comforting as it is to think about how far you've come in your relationship with Jesus, God wants to deal with you and your heart. It may hurt to go there, but it will be worth it to experience God's mercy -again and again.

God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

4

restore

Psalm 51 contains the raw, honest, and emotional prayer of King David. It was penned just after Nathan came to David and confronted him about his adultery with Bathsheba and, consequently, the murder of her husband Uriah.

Obviously, this was a dark time in David's life. He had sunk to an all-time low. With blood on his hands and regret in his heart, he had nowhere else to turn. The weight of his sin was crushing him.

David's last resort is to return to his first love and cry out for God's forgiveness. He echoes yesterday's prayer as he seeks the mercy of God for the mess he is in (and the mess that he is). David repeatedly begs God to work on his behalf to restore him. He never suggests that he can do anything to make this right.

Instead David relies entirely on the power of God to redeem. He humbles himself completely recognizing

that only God can make things right.

The entire chapter is powerful as David pleads; purge me, wash me, blot out my transgressions, create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me, cast me not away, restore to me the joy of my salvation, uphold me with a willing spirit. With each sentence David is acknowledging his need for God. Every breath begs for God's intervention.

David needs the claws of this sin to loosen its grip on his heart. To that end, he prays a profound prayer not only for forgiveness, but also for a new heart. He wants it gone. Delete and empty the recycle bin.

Is that even possible? A pure heart? Without any remnant of the cancer of the past? Humanly speaking, no, it's not possible. But with God all things are possible.

God not only forgives, but he also renews.

The apostle Paul writes, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Today's prayer is found in Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a pure heart, O God."

“Create in me a pure heart,
O God.”

Invite the cleansing power of God in your life. Confess your sins, ask for forgiveness, but then take it a step further. Ask God to make you new. To create a new heart within you. To give you a fresh start. A new beginning. So you can experience, once again, the joy of your salvation.

OUTWARD

INTERCEDE FOR OTHERS

5

send me

God is always looking for people who will put their faith in action. In fact, Jesus gave us a clear commission to go and make disciples, teaching them all that he has commanded. He wants workers in the harvest field, not consultants in an ivory tower. The way God builds his kingdom is by employing people who will respond to God's call in their life. The big question is whether or not we will rise up to the call.

One of my favorite passages of scripture is Acts 4:13 which reads, "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."

There is nothing particularly exceptional about the faithful people of the Bible. What is exceptional is that these men and women were willing to take God up on His offer to serve, to step out in faith, and to follow

his call. They were ordinary human beings, but they let God do extraordinary things in their lives.

Isaiah's prayer is a clear reminder of the importance of following God's call in our life. In this section of the prayer guide your prayers are focused outward. You are praying for people that need to know God personally.

Who are those people? List their names.

Will you share the gospel with them?

Far too often, we miss opportunities to share the gospel, because we don't want to cause a stir or we don't feel equipped. Remember, "God doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called". He wants us to echo the prayer of Isaiah and declare that we are available and willing to go and do whatever we are asked.

Don't pass off your calling to someone else. God has created good works for us to do (Ephesians 2:10), and it is our responsibility to do them.

Today's prayer is found in Isaiah 6:8, 'Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"

And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"'

“Here I am. Send me”

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Romans 10:14 (NIV)

6

know him

The ‘real thing’ makes a big difference. Ask any die-hard Coke drinker to substitute their soda with bargain basement cola and you can expect a mutiny. Why? Because they don’t want a bland substitute, they want the real thing.

When Paul encountered Jesus on the Damascus road it radically changed his life. He met Jesus personally. He went from knowing about God and following the rules of God to actually encountering the true and living God. It changed his life.

He experienced the real thing. From that day forward he would not settle for any substitute. He would not allow good works to replace his relationship with Jesus. He would not allow cultural food choices to replace his relationship with Jesus. And he would not allow religious rituals to replace his relationship with Jesus.

His burning desire was to know Christ and to make him known (Philippians 3:10). He wanted the real thing.

Not only that, he wanted the people in his churches to experience the real thing, too.

He didn't want them to settle for anything less than a personal encounter with Jesus. With this in mind, he prays a short, but powerful prayer over the church at Ephesus. He prays that God would make himself known to them. Specifically, he prays for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.

The sole purpose of this prayer is so that the people of the church would know him better. And in their 'knowing God better' their life would experience a similar and radical transformation that Paul had experienced. He was praying for them to experience the real thing.

True spiritual transformation is always the result of an encounter with God. We can do a lot of good things in our own lives and under our own power, but spiritual transformation only occurs through the work of the Spirit of God. That's the real thing.

As you pray for your friends and family remember to pray for them to experience the real thing. It takes a lot of the pressure off of your shoulders when you rely on the fact that it's God's responsibility to bring spiritual transformation.

Your responsibility is to do all you can to introduce them to the person of Jesus.

Today's prayer is found in Ephesians 1:17, 'I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.'

“I pray that _____
may know you (better)”.

Intercede on behalf of someone that you know and love to receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so they may know him better. Then watch what happens when they get to know him in a real and personal way.

FORWARD

ENGAGE THE FUTURE

7

success

Sometimes we need a miracle to make it through. Like finding a needle in a haystack, there are times where we are faced with an impossible task that can only be complete with the help of God. Have you ever felt that way? Abraham's servant, Eliezer, did.

Eliezer was faced with an impossible task. He was to go to the town of Nahor and find a wife for Abraham's son, Isaac. There are just so many ways that this could go wrong.

Would he find the right woman? Would she be available? Does she like long walks on the beach? Where was ChristianMingle.com when he needed it? How could he possibly be sure that she was the one?

Picking a wife for your master's son is difficult on so many levels. There is no doubt that he was overwhelmed with the gravity and scope of the task. Have you ever felt that way? Overwhelmed with the task at hand. Perhaps

you have a large decision to make or a looming deadline at work and the weight of it seems oppressive, even claustrophobic. Have you ever looked at your calendar or to do list and thought, “Impossible, how in the world am I ever going to accomplish this today?”. We all have. What’s the solution when you are faced with an impossible task? Begin with prayer.

No matter how you slice it, Eliezer was in a tough place. So, he did the only thing he could do, he prayed, “Lord, make me successful today.”

Where do you need to ask God for success? Is it a mountain of tasks that is standing in your way. Maybe you’re faced with the challenge of living out your faith in a hostile work environment.

Perhaps you are breaking free from an addiction. Or need success in standing up from under the weight of a temptation.

Whatever it is, ask God to make you successful today.

Today’s prayer is found in Genesis 24:12, ‘Then he prayed, “LORD, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham.’

“Lord, make me successful today.”

This just might become one of the most powerful sentence prayers in your arsenal. It's a simple prayer that will remind you that God cares about the details of your day and he promises to walk with you as you face an impossible task.

By the way, Abraham's servant was successful. He found a willing wife for Isaac named Rebekah. God answered his prayer for success. He will answer your prayer, too.

8

strength

Nehemiah's task was to lead the people to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem. He was just an average guy, not a priest or a prophet. He served the Persian king as his cup bearer before setting out to rebuild the city walls.

Nehemiah felt God leading him to do something that was believed impossible - rebuild the walls around Jerusalem.

Under Nehemiah's leadership, the work was divided and delegated. Each family was charged with building a section of the wall directly in front of their house.

As you might expect, the opposition from Israel's enemies rose to a new level when they began to rebuild and it peaked when they were on the home stretch of the construction process. Nehemiah knew that they must press on and stay the course.

He prayed a simple prayer, “Now strengthen my hands.”

The result of Nehemiah’s prayer was that he overcame the opposition from outsiders and kept the moral of his people intact. The wall was completed in a miraculous 52 days. The people were encouraged, renewed, and excited about their future. Through it all he never gave up.

Today’s prayer is found in Nehemiah 6:9, ‘They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed.”

But I prayed, “Now strengthen my hands.”’

“Now strengthen my hands.”

Life can certainly feel overwhelming at times. If you’ve ever felt like there was too much work to do and not enough hours in the day, then it’s time to pray

Nehemiah's prayer. If you are on the home stretch of an important goal and you don't have the energy to finish the final ten percent, then it's time to pray Nehemiah's prayer. If you are obeying God's will for your life and you begin to face opposition that threatens to derail your progress, then it's time to pray Nehemiah's prayer.

This simple prayer reminds us that our strength isn't found in ourselves, it's found in God. Ask Him for the strength to not only survive today, but to thrive!

Psalm 28:7 (NIV) The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.

FAITH

A DISCIPLE'S PRAYER

faith

Prayer is an essential discipline in a believer's life. Effective prayer is a daily, hourly, minute by minute and moment by moment conversation with God.

The prayers in this book are intended to help you engage in that ongoing conversation with God. Each time one of the sentence prayers come to your mind, allow it to unlock a deeper conversation.

**As you pray, your faith will be stretched.
After all, prayer is an exercise in faith.**

It takes faith to believe that God hears your prayers and will answer them.

We stand, in faith, on the foundation of Scripture that declares that God hears and answers our prayers (Psalm 116:1). Every prayer is heard by God who is actively at work in this world.

It's one thing to ask God to do something for us, but what about when He asks us to do something for him? That takes faith.

It takes faith to listen to God's voice above all the other voices that are demanding to be heard. It takes faith to follow the narrow road of Jesus, when the popular, widely traveled road is far more welcoming.

When we encounter the words and responsibilities of Jesus it always requires faith, faith, and more faith.

That's exactly how the disciples felt in Luke 17. Jesus had just shared with them his thoughts on temptation, sin, and forgiveness. The disciples were so rocked by what they heard they uttered a prayer that rings true for us today.

They prayed, "Increase our faith!"

It seems fitting that the final prayer in this journey is one that asks God to increase our faith. Faith that God is listening to our prayers and the faith necessary to respond in obedience to what He has to say.

Today's prayer is found in Luke 17:5, 'The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"'

“Increase my faith!”

“Our praying, however, needs to be pressed and pursued with an energy that never tires, a persistency which will not be denied, and a courage which never fails.”

~ E.M. Bounds

“God does nothing but by prayer, and everything with it.”

~ John Wesley

“Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work.”

~ Oswald Chambers

“Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts.”

~ Mother Teresa

The ten one-sentence prayers found in the book

1. I won't let go until you bless me.
2. Teach me to pray.
3. Be with me.
4. Have mercy on me, a sinner.
5. Create in me a pure heart.
6. Here am I, send me.
7. That _____ may know you (better).
8. Make me successful today.
9. Strengthen my hands.
10. Increase my faith.