



I'M NOT

FAT

I'M

HUSKY

LEARN ABOUT
PRAYER

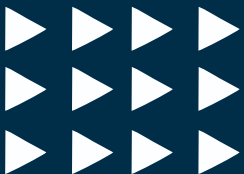
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“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”



INTRODUCTION

"I am not fat, I am Husky"

As a third-grader at Coquina Elementary, I experienced a moment that, while embarrassing at the time, taught me an invaluable lesson. It was a sunny afternoon, and I was walking home with a group of kids, including my older brother, Ray. Amidst our chatter and laughter, one of the kids turned to me and bluntly called me fat. I remember feeling a mix of surprise and defiance, armed with the assurance my mom had always given me. So, with the unfiltered honesty of a child, I retorted, **"I am not fat, I am husky."**



The response from the group was immediate. First, a brief, stunned silence, and then, an eruption of laughter. They teased me for the rest of the walk home, but I didn't understand why. After all, in my young mind, I was just stating a fact. The truth was, I was fat. She wasn't wrong.

When Ray shared the story with our parents that evening, even they couldn't help but laugh. It was the '90s, a time less concerned with political correctness or sparing feelings. Joining in the laughter, I realized something: what you don't know can indeed hurt you, but holding onto misconceptions can lead to even bigger troubles.

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This incident, seemingly trivial, was a turning point for me. It highlighted the importance of understanding and embracing the truth, no matter how uncomfortable. That's the essence of my journey with this book. I aim to guide readers through unraveling and understanding their Christian faith, encouraging them to embrace their beliefs without embarrassment. Through shared laughter and learning, my hope is that we can all grow in our faith and in our walk with God.

My brother Ray has always been someone I deeply love, respect, and look up to. My parents, undoubtedly, are the best I could ever wish for. So, when they laughed off a ridiculous response to a mean comment about my childhood weight, I realized that perhaps I could laugh too. As we embark on this journey through prayer, I hope you'll discover that some beliefs you once held true might actually be false. And in that revelation, I hope you find laughter too. I don't want anyone to harbor resentment towards churches, pastors, parents, or parishioners. Let's embrace laughter and use it to draw closer to God.

Prayer in the Christian faith is like a heartbeat: essential, rhythmic, and sometimes it speeds up when you're running late for church and can't find your other shoe. My prayer life is at an all-time high when my Tampa Bay Buccaneers are kicking a field goal!

It's that intimate conversation between the believer and our Heavenly Father, not just a religious ritual. It's personal and a practice that every Christian should be well trained in. Your confidence in prayer can lead to authentic courage in your life.

When you realise that the most powerful gift in your life isn't your money or your popularity, but instead how much of yourself you have surrendered to God, then you start to truly live. Prayer is the practice that makes it happen in your life.

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Now, prayer in the Christian circle is a bit like a Swiss Army knife - multifaceted and useful in every situation. There's adoration, where we cheer on God for being amazing; confession, like admitting you need to hide a body; and thanksgiving, where we're grateful for everything from sunshine to the invention of Wi-Fi. Supplication is when we ask for our personal wish list, and intercession is being the go-between for others, like spiritually getting their back. All of them are important.

The power of prayer isn't just about turning the world into a wish-granting factory. It's about the internal change it makes in the believer. Through prayer, we get a direct line to God, gaining insider tips, spiritual muscles, and the kind of peace that doesn't come from anything else. It's a workout for the soul, aligning our wants with God's To-Do list. In moments of joy, sorrow, or uncertainty, prayer is our go-to moment with a best friend.

The Bible, especially the letters of the New Testament, is like a tutorial on prayer. Jesus was all about that prayer life. His Sermon on the Mount is like a one-on-one training on prayer. Found in Matthew 6:5-15, it's a masterclass in talking to God, without the need for perfection because you are in the presence of Grace.

“Worship and intercession must go together; the one is impossible without the other. Intercession means that we rouse ourselves up to get the mind of Christ about the one for whom we pray.”

INTRODUCTION

Think of the Lord's Prayer, found in Matthew 6:5-15, as the best gift you never knew the full value of. The Lord's Prayer is known by most Christians but rarely used. We let it fall to a place of repetition in our lives. Or worse, we forget about it totally. Hey, no hard feelings there big dawg, we all have done it. But, let's choose to make a change. Let's take what Jesus said about prayer and use it to the fullest!

This book is a walk through of what Jesus teaches us. I take it line upon line and devote a chapter to each of the concepts Jesus talks about. I put each verse that we are going to be covering at the beginning of each chapter. Some chapters have questions for you to reflect on, some chapters don't. You will need your bible and a note pad. Make sure you highlight and write in your Bible so you have a living journal written by you and the Holy Spirit!

Alright, Let's jump into this!



Chapter 1

Heart Check

**BEFORE WE JUMP INTO PRAYING LETS GET
SOME THINGS STRAIGHT!**



The Model Prayer

5 “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

I have a rule that I NEVER break! That rule is "Never build on brokenness". This means I never put a leader into place that is coming out of an ugly church situation. I don't promote someone who is being toxic to other people. It's just bad business. Let's get healed, then let's move forward. Prayer isn't much different, but instead of healed, let's get our hearts right before we pray.

In the heart of Jesus' teachings, nestled within the Sermon on the Mount, lies a precious gem about prayer: Matthew 6:5- 6.

Here, Jesus unveils the true essence of prayer, contrasting the public displays of the hypocrites with the heartfelt sincerity of private communion with God. He says, "When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray publicly... But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen" (paraphrased).

THE TWO BIG IDEAS FROM THIS SCRIPTURE:

Sincerity Over Showmanship! Imagine if every conversation with your friends was a performance, a spectacle for others to admire. That wouldn't be genuine, would it? Similarly, Jesus emphasizes that prayer is not about impressing others or even ourselves. It's about honesty, about baring our souls to God in their raw, unpolished state. Prayer is the language of the heart, spoken not with fancy words but with genuine personal faith.


The Intimacy of a Private Space! Just as a secret garden offers a sanctuary away from the noise of the world, so does prayer in a private space. It's in these quiet moments, away from the distractions and demands of daily life, that we can truly connect with God. This isn't about physical location as much as it's about creating a mental and emotional space where we can be alone with God, free to express our deepest fears, joys, doubts, and dreams

But there's more to these verses than meets the eye. Let's delve deeper:

God's omniscience (all knowing) and omnipresence (present everywhere) is a big factor. These verses remind us that God isn't confined to public spaces or grandiose displays. He is as present in the quiet solitude of our rooms as He is in the grandest cathedrals. He hears every whispered prayer and sees every unshed tear. In acknowledging this, we find comfort in knowing that we are never truly alone.

Rewards of private prayer is for real! Jesus assures us that the Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward us. This isn't about material rewards but about the spiritual richness that comes from an honest, intimate relationship with God. It's about the peace that surpasses understanding, the strength to face trials, and the joy of being known and loved by the Creator.

The “reward” is often something that people get fixated on. It will be better than you can imagine but you have to trust God with the outcome of your prayer. He is not a ATM or a Dating App, He is the Creator of Everything. Above all else He is good. He has no sin in Him so He has no desire to see you fail, fall or live in pain. He is fully trust worthy.



Nothing tends more to cement the hearts of Christians than praying together. Never do they love one another so well as when they witness the outpouring of each other's hearts in prayer.

Get your Bible and

- » **Desiring God: Psalm 91:1:** Here, we are invited to dwell in the secret place of the Most High, a poetic expression of finding solace and strength in God's presence.
- » **Seeking God: Psalm 63:1:** David, a man after God's own heart, expresses an earnest longing for God, a desire to seek Him earnestly and intimately.
- » **The Example: Mark 1:35 and Luke 5:16:** These passages show Jesus Himself setting the perfect example of seeking solitary communion with God. In the stillness of the early morning or the solitude of the wilderness, Jesus found strength and guidance for His earthly ministry.

Time To Make it Happen

Finding Your Secret Place: Your secret place of prayer doesn't have to be a physical room. It can be anywhere you find peace and quiet – a corner in your home, a bench in the park, or even a quiet moment in your car. The key is to find a place where you can disconnect from the world and connect with God.

Consistency is Key: Like any good relationship, your relationship with God thrives on consistent communication. Set aside a specific time each day for prayer. Whether it's in the morning, during your lunch break, or before bed, find a time that works for you and stick to it.



Tips to Prayer Preperation

Be Yourself: Remember, God isn't looking for eloquence or perfection. He's looking for you – just as you are. Speak to Him in your own words, expressing your true feelings, thoughts, and desires. Remember, He made you. You are never more alive than in His presence.

Listen as Much as You Speak: Prayer is a two-way conversation. Spend time in silence, allowing God to speak to your heart through His Spirit, His Word, and the quiet stirrings of your soul. The listening will need to continue after you say AMEN. Have a heart that is expecting God to do something!

Make it a Journey: Each day with God is a step in a lifelong journey. Some days, you'll feel close to Him; other days, He might seem far away. But every step is an opportunity to grow, to learn, and to deepen your relationship with Him. It is common to NOT feel God's presence all the time. Its okay if you go through some seasons of feeling distance between you and God. You have to believe the truth and the truth is that He is always with you.

As we wrap up this chapter, remember: prayer is your secret rendezvous with the Almighty. It's in these hidden moments that the most profound transformations occur. Embrace the joy of your secret conversations with God and watch as they change your life in ways you never imagined!





Chapter 2

A Lighter Look and a Heavenly Father

**9 In this manner, therefore, pray:
Our Father in heaven,**

Hallowed be Your name.

10 Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts,

As we forgive our debtors.

13 And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.

Now let's break the Lord's prayer down so that we can understand it. Take Matthew 6:9, part of the Lord's Prayer, for instance.

*In this manner, therefore, pray:
Our Father in heaven*

This isn't just your average Sunday school recitation; it's like the template so that you can feel comfortable talking to God about anything. First thing we need to do is address who we are talking to and where they are.

Jesus is starting us in the exact place where we need to start everything that we do, with heaven in mind. He could have had us open the prayers with all of the struggles of our lives, but He instead, says let's focus on the Father that lives in Heaven. I love how the theologian Matthew Henry talks about how the prayer has two parts, the first part is heaven focused and the second part is human focused. We need to make sure we get everything in life in that order. When God's will and being becomes our priority, the rest of life falls into place.

The Power of Addressing God as "Our Father in Heaven" Jesus taught us that we can call the Creator of the Universe "Dad" – a revolutionary concept. While I won't delve into the use of the term "Daddy God," it's certainly a bold move to refer to God in such a familiar way. This sets Christianity apart from other faiths. Saying "Hallowed be Your name" is not just a fancy term for holy, it's a recognition that God's name is sacred and deserves all the respect and reverence we can give it.

When considering the connection between God and humanity, the name He has selected for Himself is "Father." Although He is all-powerful, He chooses not to be seen as a mere authority figure. In the same way, despite having the power to judge, He doesn't want to be primarily perceived as a judge. Even with His infinite wisdom, His role isn't solely that of a teacher. Instead, His ultimate wish is for us to view Him as our Father.

While the idea of a father figure is comforting, it can be challenging for some individuals. Not everyone has had a positive father figure in their lives. For those who have faced hardships and disappointment due to their fathers' failings, it's important to be able to express these feelings to God through prayer. You might find it beneficial to imagine a supportive father figure from a movie or TV show. I understand that this might seem unconventional, but bear with me. It can serve as a starting point for you to experience the love of the Heavenly Father without the pain associated with your biological father. Some people have found solace in visualizing characters like Carl Winslow from "Family Matters" or Jonathan Kent from "Smallville." Remember, this approach can ease the emotional burden of not having a positive father figure. As your bond with God grows stronger, the need for these visualizations will gradually fade away.

So, we've already talked about how the Lord's Prayer is pretty much the Swiss Army knife for believers. But let's dive a bit deeper, especially into this whole idea of calling God "Father." Now for my fellow believers that love calling God father, some of our fellow Christians might feel like we are heading down a road of being too comfortable with God and losing reverence for him. I get that, but breaking a religious stiffness is not the same as not having honor or reverence.

Let's face it, Jesus was a trendsetter. In the New Testament, He starts calling God "Father" in a way that's more personal than your Aunt's awkward stories at the Thanksgiving table. It's like He flipped the script from the Old Testament. Back then, God was the Father of the nation, but now, thanks to Jesus, it's like everyone's got VIP access to call God "Dad." It's like moving from being fans in the stands to having a backstage pass.

Enter the Protestant Reformation. Big names like Martin Luther and John Calvin start talking about God in a way that's like a spiritual family tree – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This isn't just about putting God in a neat, little theological box; it's about understanding that the Almighty God, the Big Boss of the universe, wants to be our Father. That's like finding out the CEO of the biggest company in the world wants to adopt you!

The child asks of the Father whom he knows. Thus, the essence of Christian prayer is not general adoration, but definite, concrete petition. The right way to approach God is to stretch out our hands and ask of One who we know has the heart of a Father

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship

Now, this part gets me every time. "Our Father in heaven" – talk about a phrase packed with meaning! It's like saying, "Hey Dad, who's also the King of Everything." It captures God's closeness and His majesty, all in four words. It's a reminder that we're chatting with a God who's both our loving Father and the ruler of the entire cosmos. Kind of puts things into perspective, doesn't it?

In conclusion, this whole "God as Father" thing in Protestant theology, especially in Matthew 6:9, isn't just a doctrine; it's a relationship status update. It's about knowing God as the one who's intimately involved in our lives and yet reigns supreme over the universe. It's a mystery, a comfort, and an adventure, all rolled into one. So, the next time you say "Our Father," remember, you're talking to the One who hung the stars and yet cares for each hair on your head. Now, that's what I call a Father's love!

Scriptures backs up Scripture

Certainly, here are five scriptures from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible that refer to God as "Father," excluding the Lord's Prayer. So, open your bible and highlight these scriptures!

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."

2 Corinthians 6:18: "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty." Galatians 4:6: "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'"

Matthew 6:26: "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

1 John 3:1: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him."

This way beats the famous "Luke, I am Your Father". I have literally been holding that joke in all chapter! LOL!

TIME TAKE A MOMENT AND THINK! HERE ARE SOME THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- How does it feel to call God your "Father in Heaven?" What does it reveal about your relationship with God? Take a moment to think about how this title can influence your daily walk with God.
- Notice how the word "our" is used instead of "my" in this prayer. How does this change your understanding of being part of the larger body of Christ? How can this affect your interactions with other believers and your prayer life?
- How has your understanding of God as a "Father" shaped your sense of security, love, and belonging on your spiritual journey? Take a moment to recall those moments when you've experienced God's fatherly care in your life.
- Since the prayer uses "Our" in "Our Father," how can you support and nurture the faith of others in your community? Reflect on how you can help build an inclusive and supportive environment that reflects the unity implied in this prayer.

Side note, I have fought the urge to write "Luke, I am your Father" this entire chapter!! LOL! On to the next chapter!





Chapter 3

| Hallowed Be Your Name

9 In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.

10 Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts,

As we forgive our debtors.

13 And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.

Revamping Reverence

Let's bring some heavenly wisdom into our daily lives! Take a moment to think on God's character, admit our imperfections, and honor His sovereignty over us. By adding a dash of reverence to our prayer routine, we can blaze a trail towards spiritual growth and develop a stronger bond with our Creator.

Understanding the meaning of "hallowed" and how to show respect in our prayers isn't just about leveling up our spiritual smarts. It's about getting closer to God and letting His holiness seep into every nook and cranny of our existence. So, let's join hands and start a prayer revolution, one that's overflowing with reverence, gratitude, and love for our Heavenly Father.

Hold up! What in the world does 'Hallowed' mean? Is it anything like Sleepy Hollow? Or, is it just like a donut, you know, all hollow in the middle? Hmm, I do love me some donuts! But, let's dive into the depths of this powerful word. Found in Matthew 6:9, 'Hallowed' is no ordinary word. So, let's roll up our sleeves and explore the profound meaning of this sacred term!

In our quest to understand 'hallowed', we look at the Greek word "ἁγιάζω" (hagiazō), which means 'to make holy'. It's like setting aside a precious family heirloom, treating it with utmost respect.

The Old Testament knows what's up, and in Leviticus 22:32

You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. I am the Lord who sanctifies you,

it gives us a clear look at how God feels about His name, reminding us that God's name is not just any old word – it's special, holy, and deserves our respect.

But the New Testament adds some extra power to the punch too. In 1 Peter 1:16, we're called to be holy, just like God. In other words, let's keep it holy, keep it pure, and keep it real!

When we say "Hallowed be Your name," we are giving reverence to the Almighty - the epitome of purity and perfection. Moreover, we acknowledge God's ultimate supremacy and authority as the Creator of the universe. The book of Isaiah 8:13 encourages us to recognize God's sovereignty. Let us pay homage to the divine force that governs our lives.

The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow;
Let Him be your fear,
And let Him be your dread

Isaiah 8:13

Why is God's holiness significant in our daily lives, you might wonder? Often, when people acknowledge God's goodness, they tend to presume they can treat Him however they please without consequences. However, if you desire a deeper connection with someone, you must treat them with respect. Mere words are not sufficient; our actions must align with our words. God delights in blessing those He can rely on. Demonstrating deeper respect is a clear indicator of trustworthiness. While we will explore the spiritual aspects further later on, it's essential to recognize that God is the creator and we are His creation, deserving of all the praise and respect we can offer. Consider God as your closest confidant, but with an added layer of reverence.

Martin Luther's Catechism invites us to invite God's holiness into our daily lives and teachings, making it our personal mission to spread the word. C.S. Lewis believed that experiencing God's holiness changes the way we view the world, guiding our everyday choices. Get ready to see life through a whole new, holy lens!

Check out what the author of the biblical book of Hebrews has to say.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire

Hebrews 12:28-29 NKJV

Hebrews 12:28-29 is not merely advice, but a divine guideline on how we should approach God - with profound reverence, acknowledging His omnipotence and awesomeness. From a theological perspective, this reverence stems from the concept of 'fear of the Lord,' which is a recurring theme throughout the Bible, emphasizing the importance of recognizing God's power and holiness. Theologians like St. Augustine remind us that prayer is an opportunity to understand and marvel at God's majesty and holiness.

The significance of prayer is not solely reliant on the words we utter, but instead, the attitude we convey, exemplifying humility, submission, and reverence. Additionally, reverence in prayer involves focusing on God's attributes such as His kindness, mercy, love, and power.

The Bible contains many examples of reverent prayers, such as Daniel's prayer, which is a beautiful instance of acknowledging God's righteousness and faithfulness.

Name Above All Names

We spent the last little bit kicking around how God is holy. That He is sully free of the brokenness of this world, so that makes him trustworthy. As a matter of fact, He is the only one that is fully trustworthy in your entire life. But we haven't even gotten to the good part yet, His Name. Look, this is a highly debated topic in Christianity, so let me give you the breakdown on it.

The Origin and Meaning of Jehovah.

The name "Jehovah" is a Latinization of the Hebrew יְהוָה (YHWH), which is known as the Tetragrammaton. This name is considered to be the proper name of God in the Hebrew Bible. The meaning of YHWH is debated among scholars but is often interpreted as "He Who Is," "He Who Causes to Become," or "I Am Who I Am," reflecting the concept of God's existence or eternal presence. This interpretation comes from the Bible, specifically Exodus 3:14, where God speaks to Moses from the burning bush and says, "I AM WHO I AM."



The pronunciation "Jehovah" comes from a combination of the consonants YHWH and the vowels of the Hebrew word which means "Lord" and was substituted by אֲדֹנָי Adonai Jews for YHWH in reading to avoid pronouncing the sacred name out of respect. The mix of these letters produced the form "Jehovah," which has been used in many English translations of the Bible and by various Christian denominations, though the more accurate representation of the Hebrew pronunciation is now considered to be "Yahweh".

But, don't miss the deeper point.

The deeper point is WHO he says He is. That name that is Holy is also so many other things. You must understand that God is timeless. That means He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. So, let's take a look at what the Old Testament and new testament has to say about this.

In the Old Testament, the name Jehovah (a rendering of the tetragrammaton YHWH) is combined with various descriptors to reveal different aspects of God's character and relationship with His people. These compound names often begin with "Jehovah" (Yahweh) and are followed by a term that highlights a specific attribute or way God interacts with the world and His people. Here are some of the well-known compound names of Jehovah found in the Old Testament:

NAMES OF JEHOVAH

Jehovah-Jireh (Yahweh-Yireh) : Meaning "The Lord Will Provide," this name is revealed in Genesis 22:14, where God provides a ram as a sacrifice in place of Isaac, illustrating God's provision for His people.

Jehovah-Rapha (Yahweh-Rapha): Meaning "The Lord Who Heals," found in Exodus 15:26. This name highlights God's power to heal physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Jehovah-Nissi (Yahweh-Nissi): Meaning "The Lord Is My Banner," this name is found in Exodus 17:15. It signifies God's protection and the rallying point or standard under which His people can gather.

Jehovah-Shalom (Yahweh-Shalom): Meaning "The Lord Is Peace," revealed in Judges 6:24. This name denotes God as the source of peace, indicating His ability to restore and to provide peace in times of conflict.

Jehovah-Tsidkenu (Yahweh-Tsidkenu): Meaning "The Lord Our Righteousness," from Jeremiah 23:6. This name points to God as the provider of righteousness to those who are in covenant relationship with Him, emphasizing His redemptive work.

Jehovah-Rohi (Yahweh-Rohi): Meaning "The Lord My Shepherd," found in Psalm 23:1. It portrays God as the Shepherd who guides, protects, and cares for His people as a shepherd cares for his sheep.

Jehovah-Shammah (Yahweh-Shammah): Meaning "The Lord Is There," from Ezekiel 48:35. This name highlights God's omnipresence, signifying that He is always present among His people.

Jehovah-Sabaoth (Yahweh-Sabaoth): Meaning "The Lord of Hosts," found throughout the Old Testament (e.g., 1 Samuel 1:3). This name emphasizes God's sovereignty over the heavenly armies and all of creation, highlighting His power and authority.

These compound names of Jehovah not only describe God's attributes and acts but also serve as reminders of His covenant relationship with His people and His faithfulness to His promises. They offer profound insights into the nature of God as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus makes a series of profound "I am" statements, which are significant because they echo the name of God given to Moses in Exodus 3:14 ("I AM WHO I AM"). These statements are a powerful assertion of Jesus' divinity and His role in the salvation and sustenance of humanity. Here are the seven "I am" statements made by Jesus in the Book of John:

THE SEVEN "I AM" STATEMENTS

I am the Bread of Life (John 6:35, 48): Jesus says, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." This statement highlights Jesus as the spiritual sustenance necessary for eternal life.

I am the Light of the World (John 8:12; 9:5): Jesus declares, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Jesus is presented as the source of truth and enlightenment, guiding away from darkness.

I am the Door (John 10:7, 9): Jesus proclaims, "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture." This metaphor illustrates Jesus as the only way to access salvation and security.

I am the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14): Jesus states, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." This depicts Jesus as the caretaker who sacrifices Himself for the protection and well-being of His flock.

I am the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14): Jesus states, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." This depicts Jesus as the caretaker who sacrifices Himself for the protection and well-being of His flock.

I am the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25): Jesus affirms, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies." This statement underscores Jesus' power over death and His promise of eternal life to believers.

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6): Jesus declares, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." This emphasizes that Jesus is the only path to God, embodying truth and life itself.

I am the True Vine (John 15:1, 5): Jesus says, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser." He further explains, "I am the vine, you are the branches." This illustrates the vital relationship between Jesus and His followers, highlighting the importance of remaining in Him to bear spiritual fruit.

These "I am" statements are central to John's Gospel, emphasizing Jesus' divine identity and mission. They provide deep theological insights into the nature of Christ and His unique role in the plan of salvation.

Yes, there are intriguing parallels between the "I am" statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John and the compound names of Jehovah in the Old Testament. These connections highlight the continuity of God's revelation and the fulfillment of His promises in Jesus Christ, emphasizing both His divinity and His redemptive work. Here's a comparison that shows some of the thematic parallels:

Jehovah-Jireh (The Lord Will Provide) and **I am the Bread of Life**: Just as Jehovah-Jireh signifies God's provision for Abraham, Jesus as the Bread of Life represents God's provision of spiritual sustenance and salvation for humanity.

Jehovah-Rapha (The Lord Who Heals) and **I am the Light of the World**: Light often symbolizes purity, truth, and healing. Jesus, as the Light of the World, illuminates the path to truth and healing, guiding us away from the darkness of sin.

Jehovah-Nissi (The Lord Is My Banner) and **I am the Good Shepherd**: A banner is a rallying point in battle, symbolizing protection and victory. Similarly, a shepherd protects and guides his flock. Jesus as the Good Shepherd signifies His protective care and guidance for His people, leading them to safety and provision.

Jehovah-Shalom (The Lord Is Peace) and **I am the Resurrection and the Life**: Jesus' resurrection is the foundation of the Christian hope for eternal life and peace with God. Just as Jehovah-Shalom represents God as the source of peace, Jesus' promise of resurrection and life offers ultimate peace and reconciliation with God.

Jehovah-Rohi (The Lord My Shepherd) and **I am the Door**: Both these titles emphasize guidance, protection, and the provision of needs. As the Door, Jesus is the entry point into the safety and security of God's fold, echoing the protective and guiding role of Jehovah-Rohi.

Jehovah-Tsidkenu (The Lord Our Righteousness) and **I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life:** Jehovah-Tsidkenu signifies God's provision of righteousness to His people.

Similarly, Jesus, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, embodies the path to righteousness and eternal life, offering Himself as the means through which we are made right with God.

Jehovah-Shammah (The Lord Is There) and **I am the True Vine:** Jehovah-Shammah highlights God's presence among His people, while Jesus as the True Vine illustrates the indwelling presence of Christ in believers' lives, fostering a close, sustaining relationship with them.

These parallels demonstrate how Jesus' statements in the Gospel of John reflect and fulfill the aspects of God's character and promises revealed in the Old Testament through the names of Jehovah. They show the consistency of God's character and His plan for salvation, bridging the Old and New Testaments in a profound revelation of who God is and His relationship with humanity. So when you pray, know that God's name has a deeper meaning because the name of Jesus is like no other name. Don't be afraid to say that name of God over the area that you are struggling in. Literally apply your faith to God's Name on who He is and that He does have authority over that area of your life. The name of Jesus has power to it.



The Name Of Jesus

The Bible portrays the name of Jesus not just as a name but as a symbol of authority, power, and divine importance. Through different scriptures, His name's power is highlighted, revealing its profound influence in prayer, healing, salvation, and spiritual battles.

Authority and Salvation

These parallels demonstrate how Jesus' statements in the Gospel of John reflect and fulfill the aspects of God's character and promises revealed in the Old Testament through the names of Jehovah. They show the consistency of God's character and His plan for salvation, bridging the Old and New Testaments in a profound revelation of who God is and His relationship with humanity.

Healing and Miracles

The Book of Acts provides numerous accounts of the early disciples performing miracles in Jesus' name, demonstrating His continuing work in the world through the Holy Spirit. Acts 3:6 offers a clear example: "Then Peter said, 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.'" This act of healing illustrates the immediate and tangible power that accompanies Jesus' name, signaling not only physical restoration but also spiritual authority.

Spiritual Authority

In the realm of spiritual warfare, the name of Jesus is depicted as supremely authoritative. Luke 10:17 recounts the return of the seventy-two disciples, who joyfully report, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." This indicates that the very mention of Jesus' name has the power to overcome demonic forces, providing believers with protection and authority in spiritual battles.

Prayer and Worship

Jesus Himself promises that whatever is asked in His name will be granted by the Father, as seen in John 14:13-14: "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it." This assurance encourages believers to pray in Jesus' name, expecting that their prayers align with God's will and purpose.

Philippians 2:9-11 reveals the cosmic significance of Jesus' name, prophesying a time when every knee shall bow at the mention of His name: "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This passage highlights the ultimate authority and lordship of Jesus, signifying the power of His name in every dimension of existence. The Scriptures collectively testify to the unparalleled power and authority vested in the name of Jesus. From salvation and healing to spiritual warfare and prayer, invoking His name brings divine power to bear on the lives of believers. It is a source of hope, strength, and salvation, deserving of reverence and worship. Through His name, the faithful access the breadth of God's grace, manifesting the kingdom of heaven on earth.

*Only when we understand the holiness of God
will we understand the depth of our sin*

Billy Graham

Go Highlight Your Bible!!

Jehovah Names and Scripture References:

Jehovah-Jireh (The Lord Will Provide) - Genesis 22:14
Jehovah-Rapha (The Lord Who Heals) - Exodus 15:26
Jehovah-Nissi (The Lord Is My Banner) - Exodus 17:15
Jehovah-Shalom (The Lord Is Peace) - Judges 6:24
Jehovah-Tsidkenu (The Lord Our Righteousness) - Jeremiah 23:6
Jehovah-Rohi (The Lord My Shepherd) - Psalm 23:1
Jehovah-Shammah (The Lord Is There) - Ezekiel 48:35
Jehovah-Sabaoth (The Lord of Hosts) - 1 Samuel 1:3 (and throughout the Old Testament)

"I Am" Statements in the Gospel of John and Scripture References:

I am the Bread of Life - John 6:35, 48
I am the Light of the World - John 8:12; 9:5
I am the Door - John 10:7, 9
I am the Good Shepherd - John 10:11, 14
I am the Resurrection and the Life - John 11:25
I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life - John 14:6
I am the True Vine - John 15:1, 5



Chapter 4

■ Your Kingdom

9 In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

10 Your kingdom come.

Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.

13 And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.

Being frank, if we were to assess humanity's management of the planet, the score wouldn't be very high. It's surprising how many individuals drive with their car's gas light on and delay flossing until the day before a dentist appointment. The abundance and nature of reality TV shows add to our leadership challenges. Perhaps it's time we all acknowledge that a change is needed, and let someone else take the lead.

For real, when we look at the brokenness and the pain in this world we have to wake up to life was meant to be better than this. That the world we are living in isn't going by design. We live in a fallen and sinful world. With disease and depravity found all over the world we know that this is not the way God designed the Earth to be run. He gave us dominion in the biblical book of Genesis, then we sinned and handed it over to Satan. Now we live in a counterfeit kingdom. How do we fix this? The answer is in the Lord's prayer

imagine a world where love, justice, and peace reign supreme - that's the Kingdom of God in a nutshell. At the heart of Christian theology, this concept shines brightly in Matthew 6:10, where we're taught to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven." This is not just a wish; it's a profound longing for God's rule over all creation.

That world you imagined is a kingdom not made of stone and gold but of virtues and values. The Kingdom of God, a key theme in Christian theology, symbolizes a place where God's principles of love, justice, and righteousness are the norm. It's not just external; it's an inner reality too. Remember Jesus' words in Luke 17:21, "the kingdom of God is within you"? That's the internal aspect of this holy kingdom.

The Old Testament shows us the different forms of government that Israel tries to use to keep order with the people. You see the family style rule with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but that ends in everyone being slaves. Then you get Moses who is more of a theocratical leader, Mo and God where calling the shots. The work was a lot for Moses, the people still lived in sin and it ends bad. Then you have the era of the Judges, that is just really war after war after war... sounds like my years in jr high school. Like the era of Judges, it was awful. Then we get the dynasty of kings, starting with Saul and David and Solomon. This was a bit better but ends in Israel getting wiped out and taken into slavery. Finally, Jesus hits the scene and gives us a clearer picture of a better way.

Jesus, as the much-needed King of this world, brings a kingdom that resides not only in our hearts but operates on entirely different principles compared to our current world. Explore what Apostle Paul communicates to the church in Rome for more insight.

17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)

The Apostle Paul eloquently addresses the church in Romans regarding internal strife. The disagreements revolved around food laws upheld by former Jewish members and the observance of specific days such as festivals and sabbaths. I will unpack this more in another book at another time my friend! The essence of the Kingdom of God/Heaven lies in embracing internal values, not in judgment and disputes over external matters. These values, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, unite us with the Kingdom of God.

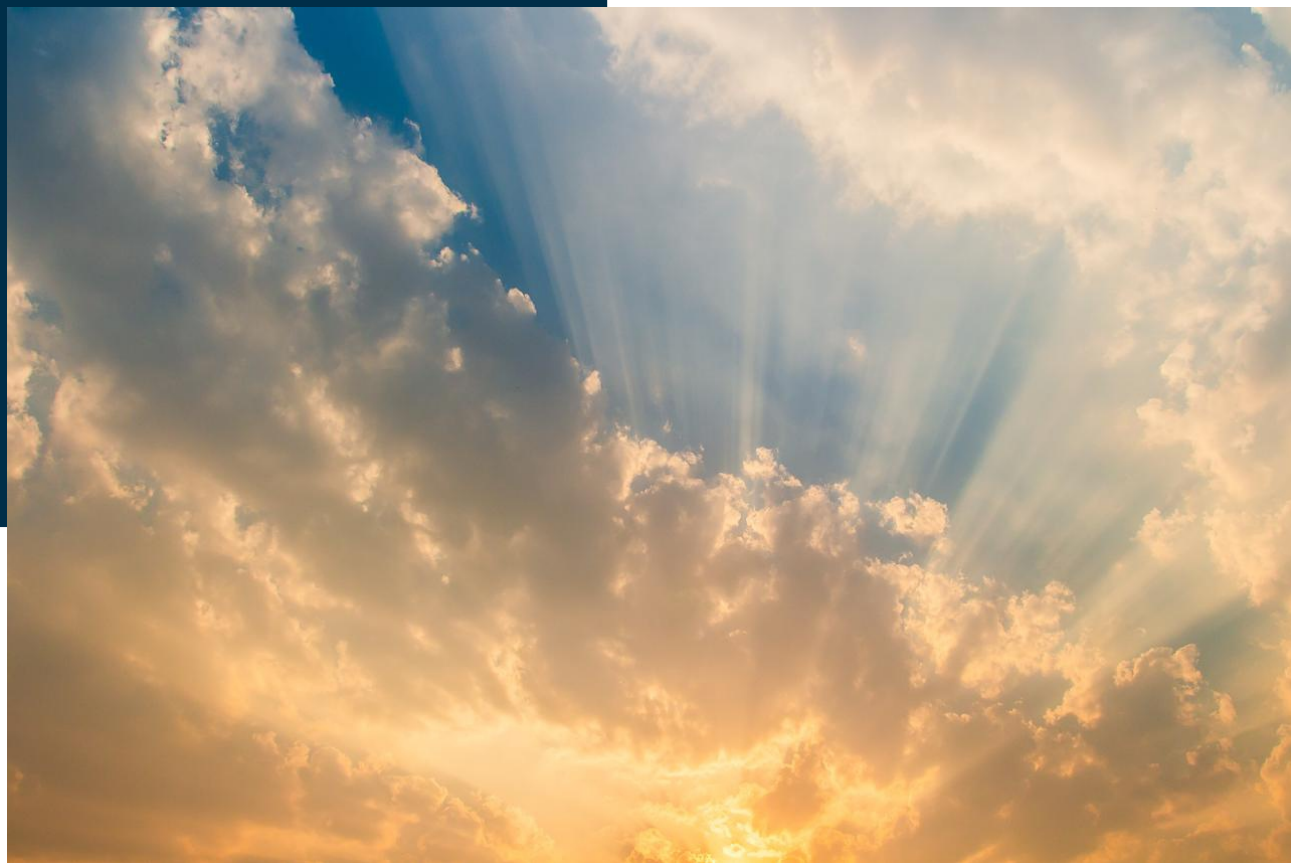
So when we pray, let's apply our faith to the reality that God is righteous and because of Jesus Christ, so are you. That means in God's kingdom your prayers are heard and that you are worthy to present your heart to God. That is a huge and important detail. Equally as important is that God is righteous so that if your prayer is a request to partner with sin, He won't do it. For example, you can't pray to be with someone else's spouse or that someone get hurt or sick. That is not in God's character, so He won't answer the prayer for that.

Next, let's understand that peace will be the indicator of what we need to do is. To often people mistake hearing from God is what makes you "feel good", that couldn't be farther from the truth. He is not the comfort zone Christian God. He is not interested in just making you happy, He is interested in seeing you grow. The peace of God is when we know what we need to do, having the courage to do it can be a whole different story.

The other side of the scripture and focusing on peace is that God is not the author of confusion or division. He looks for us when possible, to live peaceably with others around us. So, if you are a part of starting or contributing to strife, God isn't onboard with that. We serve the Prince of Peace, so we need to be Ambassadors of Peace in this world.

Last but not at all least is that we are called to have joy. Joy is a deeper sense of gratitude and happiness. It is greater than just a momentary burst of happiness but a sense of spiritual gratefulness and contentment. It is often a product of the long suffering that comes with the trials that come with building our character. Our heart is to have what the scripture says, a “joy in the Holy Spirit”. This is being satisfied in being with God and being God’s. That this world has nothing to offer you that is greater than your joy in the relationship you have with the Holy Spirit.

This part is super important! Just as the kingdom of heaven resides within you and operates differently from the world, it signifies freedom from the natural laws of this realm. This is why God is known as a miracle worker. His kingdom holds greater authority than the earthly one. When you pray for "thy kingdom come," you are acknowledging God's ultimate authority. He can grant you favor, heal illnesses, and bring financial miracles without needing validation from this world. We were born into a counterfeit kingdom, but let's proclaim the true Kingdom where we are united as family.



A person is standing in a forest path, looking out at a bright light. The path is surrounded by trees and foliage. The light is coming from the end of the path, creating a strong contrast with the dark forest. The person is wearing a brown jacket and dark pants. The overall mood is hopeful and contemplative.

Chapter 5

The End of Your Will

9 In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

10 Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.

13 And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.

To find God's will on a subject matter is the heartbeat of most Christians. It is also one of the most difficult things that we can do. I know that want to always be walking in God's will. We feel a pull on us, to do our own will here on Earth. Then we feel the pull to see other peoples will be done here on Earth. But Jesus teaches us that it is our job to be a part of bringing God's will to life here on Earth.

Most Christians make the big mistake of acting like God's will is just going to magically unfold around us. We just need to sit tight and inevitably every thing will just be fine. There is some truth to that, but it is far from being part of the design for the relationship that God wants with you. God wants to do life with you. So if we want to see God's will on earth then we need to walk in God's ways. God is sovereign and He can do all things but He doesn't want to trump your free will. Actually He chooses not to. We need to choose to walk in in His ways, and those ways are higher than our ways. In doing so we connect with heaven on a practical level. (Get Isaiah 55:8-9)

Let's break this down into our prayer life. When we pray, we connect with God spiritually. so let's start there. If you are married, pray for your spouse and pray for your kids if you are a parent. Let's focus on this for a second, with being a spouse or parent, we are praying for God's will to be done on earth. So, we shouldn't spend our whole time with God talking about all the ways He should fix our spouse or our kids. Instead let's ask God to work on our hearts and actions in these relationship. Remember, Jesus didn't tell us how to endure the cross for salvation, He took the cross Himself. To see God's will on Earth there needs to ownership of His will in our hearts. That look like us making changes in ourselves to match Heaven.

Here are some biblical people groups we are called to pray for: Leaders and authorities. One another. Missionaries and Evangelists. The sick. The Church. Our enemies.

Each area impacts us uniquely. Imagine if we all wished for something like my kids do – praying for a puppy and waking up to find it miraculously there. What if all our prayers were answered exactly as we wished? Would our relationship with God deepen or would our desire for personal happiness overshadow everything else? I believe you already know the answer to that question.

That's why we emphasize brief, self-centered prayers. Our prayers are often shorter than many celebrity relationships because our willpower diminishes rapidly. By concentrating on aligning with God's will for our families, churches, cities, and country, a stronger sense of Kingdom responsibility emerges, leading to longer prayers. This reveals the complexity of movements around us and their impact on us and those around us.

Looking at the various individuals Jesus engaged with during His three-year ministry reveals a diverse group, including His Family, disciples, both virtuous and corrupt religious leaders, the Roman authorities, children, Jewish and Gentile individuals, faithful women, tax collectors, and a multitude of sinners (that includes all of us, LOL).

In order to succeed in the world, he had to relinquish his human desires and cling to the will of the Heavenly Father. This principle is demonstrated in John 14 and exemplified in the Garden of Gethsemane

The Kingdom of Heaven

Remember what Romans 14:17 taught us

*for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but
righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*

Romans 14:17 NKJV

Begin by using this verse as a prayer guide for different aspects of your life. Picture a routine where you pray for peace with your enemies each morning; this act can gradually become a personal aspiration. Only then can genuine transformation within the Kingdom occur. It's amazing how God orchestrates everything. Let's dive deeper..

Romans 12:2 NKJV

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be
transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may
prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of
God.*

We exist in this world but are not defined by it. It's crucial to acknowledge that sin resides within us, and this world is influenced by evil forces that target our weaknesses. Keep in mind that we are born into a counterfeit kingdom. Therefore, we must shift our mind set from one that leads to destruction to one that brings life. Checkout Deuteronomy 30:19 ...

I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;

We are aware of the negative thoughts and habits that harm us. To overcome this, we must opt for life and embrace what God has planned for us. Although it may not always be simple, it is always beneficial. It's essential to transform our thinking to align with the teachings of the Word of God. Remember, having a negative thought is natural, but we can choose not to act on it or let it define us. By choosing life in our decisions, we will never look back with regret.

Romans 12:2 encourages us to "prove," which can also be interpreted as "examine" thoroughly until you understand the authenticity and truth of the matter or object. In this context, it suggests examining everything you do and seeking to align it with the will of God. With numerous options and stressful decisions in life, it is reassuring to know that God is present with us through it all.

He emphasizes that we should evaluate our choices based on the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. Is it morally sound and in line with our Christian beliefs? Does it meet the criteria of acceptability, considering potential consequences or timing issues? The term "perfect" in the scripture also conveys maturity. Is there wisdom in your actions? Do they align with God's intentions for the world? To follow Romans 12, it is essential to begin by renewing your mind, which starts with trusting God. While it may seem straightforward, it is crucial. Lets check out Proverbs 3.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths

The most significant leap of faith you can take is trusting in Jesus. Embrace the idea that during life's challenges, it's acceptable to proceed at a slower pace as long as you maintain trust in Jesus through prayer and in your heart. When you find yourself uncertain about God's will, find peace in refraining from making a decision. Conversely, when life demands a choice, ensure your prayers and heart convey your trust in God. Believe that He is guiding you in your decision-making process towards a positive outcome where His perfect will shines through.

Since the focus of this book is on prayer, take a look at this scripture:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"

Maintaining a continuous prayer practice can be challenging. Sometimes, a brief five-minute prayer session is all you can do. Here's a way to incorporate prayer throughout your day. If extended prayer sessions aren't your preference, that's perfectly fine. You can opt for shorter, more focused prayers. The important thing is to pray consistently in a way that suits you, as it will also resonate with God.

Launching Pad and Landing Pad

In my local church, we cherish a saying that resonates deeply with me: "We are a landing pad and launching pad for people." This phrase holds special significance for us as we are located on the Space Coast, with NASA right in our backyard. It beautifully reflects our role for the Kingdom of God. We uplift others in our prayers to Heaven (launch) and provide a place for Heaven to manifest here on Earth (land).

"Launching Pad" signifies that your prayers reach the Heavenly Father. Additionally, the Bible mentions that your angels stand before the Father, but that's a topic for another discussion. "Launching Pad" represents a place where the lost and broken can seek help, and your prayers for them are acknowledged and fulfilled! It's a space where marriages can mend, mental health can improve, and hope can flourish because our Heavenly Father listens to the prayers of His children!

Landing Pad signifies the channel through which divine healings can manifest via your prayers and touch. It enables the delivery of prophetic messages and the occurrence of miracles in our present time and space, not just for others but for us as well. We can witness a peace that transcends ordinary comprehension spreading into various aspects of our lives and through the chapters of our journey.





Chapter 6

| Give Us This Day

9 In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

10 Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.

13 And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever.

Amen.

The concept of divine provision is a highly debated topic within Christianity. Should one pray to win the lottery, or perhaps for more earthly possessions such as a new truck or boat? What does the scripture actually mean? Is Jesus instructing us to pray merely for the bare necessities of life? The ongoing debate often pits advocates of the prosperity gospel against proponents of the poverty gospel. To clarify, both extremes miss the mark. Jesus encourages us to pray for our needs, whatever they may be.

A common concern I've encountered during over a decade of ministry relates to the nature of our prayers for provision. It goes something like this: "God, if you bless me with abundant wealth, I promise to use it entirely for your purpose." This raises internal questions about greed and selfishness. How can we discern when our desires cross the line?

Fortunately, scripture offers guidance. Check out 1 Samuel 16:7:

But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'

This verse is reassuring—it tells us that God understands our intentions. If our requests stem from greed or selfishness, God, in His grace, will address these issues within us. However, it's more likely that our prayers simply reflect our legitimate needs.

Let's explore the scripture itself, Matthew 6:11:

"Give us this day our daily bread."

Here, Jesus doesn't merely suggest prayer; He models a declarative form of speaking directly to God. This isn't about making demands—it's about confidently presenting our needs, knowing that they are legitimate before our Heavenly Father.

Why is this significant? Because Jesus, throughout His ministry, spoke to elements and situations—be it the wind, the waves, or during His miracles—without a hint of hesitation. If the Son of God approached His Father directly, why should we hesitate?

Remember, the blessing comes from Christ's sacrifice, not from our perfection. My children don't beg for food, clothing, or shelter; these needs are naturally provided for.

Why, then, should we beg God for what He has already promised to provide? The issue often boils down to trust. The story of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17:8-16 illustrates this beautifully.

8 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 9 “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.” 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.” 11 And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”

12 So she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a [a]jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”

13 And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the Lord God of Israel:

‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.’ ”

15 So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. 16 The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke by Elijah.

God directed Elijah to a widow who would sustain him. Despite her own dire situation, she obeyed God's command through Elijah, and her meager supplies of flour and oil lasted throughout the drought.

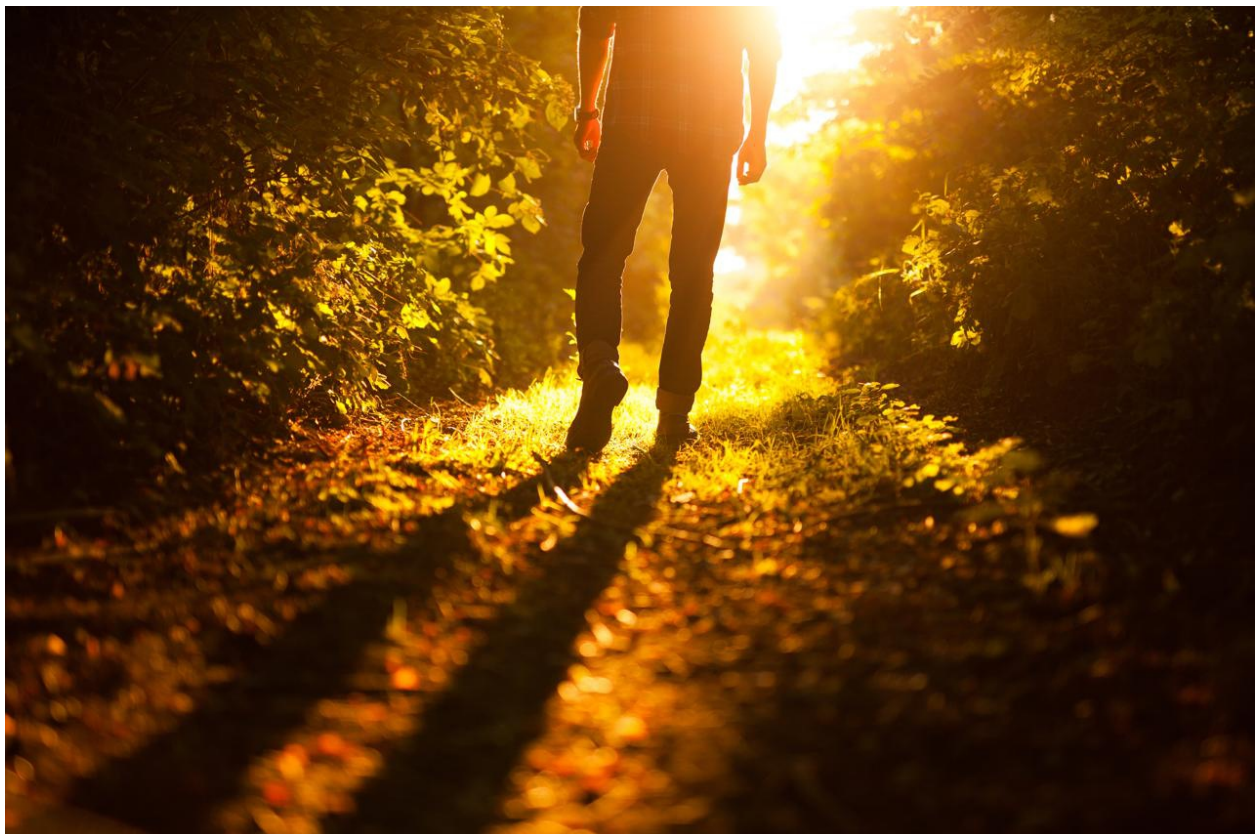
This story is a powerful reminder of God's provision. Both Elijah and the widow acted on divine instructions, underscoring the importance of obedience to God's words. It's crucial to align our actions with divine guidance, especially when it concerns our sustenance.

Faith Hunting

Allow me to share a personal practice that has significantly impacted my faith over the years. I communicate with God in prayer, divulging all my thoughts, both positive and negative. Once I reach the point of making a request, I express my anticipation that God will fulfill it. I write down the request and remain attentive throughout the day, knowing God will come through for me.

Over the past 15 years, I've sought assistance from many people to help bring church activities to life. I've prayed for volunteers to help with kids' church, sound equipment, and worship team drummers. As Jesus said, "You have not because you ask not," I make it a habit to ask people direct questions. Through this approach, I've often received unexpected positive responses, such as someone who used to play the drums and has been waiting for an opportunity to return to it.

Let's get real about our relationship with God. It takes work and dedication to keep the flame burning bright. You can't just swipe right and ghost Him like a bad date. By keeping your eyes on the prize, aka Heaven, and integrating God into your everyday life, you can keep the flame alive and make it a relationship that truly rocks!



However, there's another aspect of faith hunting that merits attention. I pay heed to what God instructs me to do. If I sense His voice, I act promptly and note it down. For instance, if He urges me to be generous, I listen and search for opportunities to help someone in need. Similarly, I hold kindness and encouragement close to my heart and mind as I go about my day.

It's not that I'm not already a kind and generous person, but my focus and intentionality stem from the belief that my Heavenly Father is at work in the spiritual realm.

Try this and watch how your life will change. Here is a look at faith and obedience in the context of “our daily bread”.

Just know that God does not want to have to war over your heart with money. He wants an honest and real relationship with you. Don't forget the bible says that he used to walk in the cool of the day with Adam and Eve. This is a sweet picture of how in the morning and evening He wants time with you. That also means he wants to supply you with all that you will need to have peace in those moments, while building a deeper and closer relationship with Him.





Chapter 7

Debt Free Living

9 In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

10 Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

**12 And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.**

13 And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever.

Amen.

The proverbial expression "easier said than done" appears to have been intended for the action of forgiveness. In the ensuing paragraphs, we will explore the impactful nature of forgiveness and the detrimental effects of harboring resentment. It's not surprising that forgiveness was included in Jesus' prayer, as it's a difficult endeavor that may require divine intervention to be realized.

God's boundless love offers an abundant supply of forgiveness for all. The ultimate sacrifice was made on your behalf, a testament to the profound love He has for you. It is with open arms that God welcomes you to seek His forgiveness. However, the question remains - can you extend the same grace and forgiveness to others, as a mark of true Christian character? True depth in Christianity is not defined by familiarity with contemporary worship songs, but rather by one's ability to forgive those who have wronged them.

Jesus shares a profound parable about the importance of forgiveness. In this story, a person is burdened with an enormous debt that they could never repay. However, unexpectedly, the creditor forgives the debt, leading to immense relief for the indebted person. However, the same individual later violently confronts someone over a relatively minor debt, failing to grasp the significance of the act of forgiveness. This story serves as a powerful reminder to all of us to avoid such behavior and to extend forgiveness to others, as we have been forgiven countless times in our own lives.

Coming to terms with the challenges that life throws our way is not always straightforward. Many of us have suffered abuse from those we trusted to protect us, betrayal from loved ones, and rejection from those we hoped would embrace us. The wounds we carry run deep. It's worth noting that several biblical characters also faced the difficult task of forgiving others. Each of them experienced forgiveness in a unique way, and their stories can provide valuable insights. Lets take a look at Joseph



Joseph:

So, get this: Joseph's life was basically the ultimate test of forgiveness. His own brothers sell him into slavery—yeah, seriously. Then, just when things couldn't seem worse, he gets thrown into jail for something he didn't do. But here's where it gets crazy: he ends up being this big shot in Egypt and then runs into his brothers again. You'd think he'd be all about revenge, right? Nope, he forgives them. Why? Because he figures out that everything that happened was part of a bigger plan. Unforgiveness will only distract you from what God has for you.

The act of forgiveness demonstrated by Jesus on the cross is awe-inspiring. Despite his immense suffering, he uttered the words "Father, forgive them," setting the bar high for forgiveness. It's now our turn to strive towards the same level of forgiveness, even though it may not come easily. With the help of God, we can find the strength to forgive those who have wronged us.

You need this more than you know. Science has jumped on the bandwagon too! Studies show that forgiveness can actually make you feel better, reducing stress, depression, and anger. It's like unloading a backpack full of bricks you didn't even realize you were carrying. In fact, forgiveness has been linked to a range of physical health benefits as well. Research has found that those who practice forgiveness have lower blood pressure, reduced risk of heart disease, and even a stronger immune system. It's not just about making peace with others, it's also about improving your own well-being. Of course, forgiveness is not always easy, especially in cases of deep hurt or trauma. But with practice and patience, it's possible to cultivate a mindset of forgiveness and reap the many benefits that come with it. So, the next time you find yourself holding a grudge, take a deep breath and consider the power of forgiveness.

Practical Steps: The Forgiveness Workout Plan Forgiveness is akin to therapy for your heart and mind. Kick off with a prayer stretch, recall how much you've been forgiven, and then make the choice to forgive. While you might have expected to start with those who owe you an apology, forgiveness actually begins with yourself. Remember, it's a process – you wouldn't run a marathon on your first day at the gym.

Nobody enjoys the person who brings up resolved issues from the past. I'm not suggesting you do that. Instead, consider what you've been forgiven for, for two crucial reasons.

Firstly, it serves as a reminder that we all have flaws and require grace. We've all caused harm, sinned, and fallen short in life. Recognizing this common ground can help you extend forgiveness.

Secondly, focus on the love and grace of our Heavenly Father. His love is so immense that He keeps the door open for us to seek forgiveness. Shouldn't we aim to do the same for others? He paid the price for our forgiveness, which should inspire us to forgive. Forgiveness may be painful, and we may need to work through challenges. If anyone understands pain before forgiveness, it's Jesus.

12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Colossians 3:12-13

Incorporating Colossians 3:13 into your everyday life introduces a profound essence of forgiveness comparable to vital nutrients: "Forgive as the Lord forgave you." This integration seamlessly weaves forgiveness into our daily practices, becoming an intrinsic part of our routines. It can be seen as an exercise that enables us to perceive the world through a lens aligned with Jesus. Forgiveness can be thought of as the "Leg day" of Christianity – occasionally challenging yet immensely gratifying with consistent application.

Now comes the challenging section of the chapter. During your prayer time, express to God the individuals you are choosing to forgive. While forgiving some may come naturally, others might require more effort or come with conditions. Make a note of these challenging cases. Seek guidance from Jesus to understand why you are facing such difficulties. Just as Jesus can address someone's doubt, He can also guide us towards genuine forgiveness.

We have begun discussing forgiveness here, but it should not stop here. Forgiveness should be a constant focus in your heart and prayers. It's normal to struggle with forgiveness and seek assistance. However, it's crucial not to give up on forgiving others completely. Doing so is like abandoning the search for a solution to what is harming us. Remember, you can do this as long as you trust in God to lead you through this journey.

Forgiveness doesn't imply returning to the way things were before an offense took place. It's crucial not to allow someone who has mistreated you physically or emotionally back into your life just because you've forgiven them. It's important to maintain a safe distance from hurtful individuals. Trust me, I understand that this is easier said than done; I'm sharing this chapter with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, reflecting on people from my own experiences.

If you have experienced sexual abuse in the past, it can leave an unforgivable wound. This trauma may have been inflicted by someone who was supposed to care for and protect you. Forgiving does not erase what happened or justify their presence in your life. Choosing to forgive is a reflection of your character, not a validation of their actions. This process may call for a level of spiritual guidance like never before from the Holy Spirit.

Remember, Christianity is a collaborative effort. It's not a solo journey. Consider reaching out to your pastor for a talk or seeking support from a Christian therapist. Joining a bible study group could also be beneficial. Whatever path you choose, always keep in mind the importance of forgiving those who have caused you pain.



Chapter 8

| Temptation



9 In this manner, therefore, pray:
Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
10 Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
13 **And do not lead us into
temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.**
For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever.
Amen.

We all struggle with temptation. It is something that will follow us to our grave but not past it. The important thing is that we learn to identify it and understand what we can do to not become victims of the draw of sin.

First, people ask if God is good then does He tempt us? Check this verse out James 1:13-14

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed

It is clear that temptation does not stem from God, as He has no part with evil and does not tempt anyone. Rather, temptation arises when one is lured away by their personal desires and enticements. This passage serves as a reminder, emphasizing that the responsibility for falling to temptation lies within ourselves. It is our own inclinations that guide us into the familiar territory of regrettable actions. So don't blame God for our down falls.

The Nature of Temptation

If you are going to break away from temptation we have to get to the root of it. Picture this: A garden, two clueless gardeners, and a snake. Welcome to Genesis 3:1-6, the first recorded "Oh Crap" moment. Adam and Eve had one job: don't eat the fruit. But temptation, all shiny and appealing, showed up. They chose to act on the temptation and humanity has suffered ever since. Check out what the Apostle Paul would write in 1 Corinthians about it.

13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Fast forward to 1 Corinthians 10:13, and we get a universal truth: temptation is not unique, and God always provides an exit ramp.

Examples of Temptation in the Bible Gotta start with the G.O.A.T, and that is Jesus. He goes toe to toe with satan and wins, but keep in mind Jesus was fully human in this moment. Check it out:

Satan Tempts Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. 3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,

6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

*'He shall give His angels charge over you,'
and,
'In their hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' "*

7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not [a]tempt the Lord your God.' "

8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

10 Then Jesus said to him, [b]"Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Matthew 4:1-11 showcases Jesus in the wilderness, turning down Satan's temptations with a deeper power, The Word of God. Likewise, if we are going to overcome the temptation we need to use the Word of God and The Spirit of God. We need to know what God has to say about our lives and the covenant that He has made with us. So when the devil tempts us we can counter the attack with the Word of God.

Then there's David in 2 Samuel 11, who sees Bathsheba and thinks, "Have to have it!" Spoiler alert: It didn't end well. They had an affair and she got pregnant. But, it gets worse, then David murdered her husband. WAIT, it gets worse. Then the baby dies. David is publicly shamed by the Prophet Nathan for this. When the bible says that sin leads to death, it isn't joking. These stories are like a divine reality show, teaching us the dos and don'ts in the game of temptation.

Overcoming Temptation

So, how do we say "Not today Satan!" to temptation? Ephesians 6:10-18 suggests suiting up in God's armor – think spiritual Kevlar. Psalm 119:11 advises us to keep God's word handy, like an emergency contact number. The trick is to know temptation's number and block it. Remember, this is a spiritual fight, so fight in the Spirit.

God's Faithfulness in Temptation

Here is the reality of it. Winning the fight is worth it. Just know, not giving in has much better results. Look at the promises we have from God when we overcome temptation.

*12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.
James 1:12*

and 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Romans 5:3-5

Remind us that every temptation survived is like a battle won for your future. It's the tough stuff, the "I can't believe I got through that" moments, that build our spiritual muscle and character. God's like the ultimate personal trainer, sticking with us through every heavy rep of life's challenges.

Learning from Temptation Cold hard facts from scripture:

11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Hebrews 12:11

Hebrews 12:11 tells us that no workout feels good at the time (heavy weights and long runs hurt!), but it leads to a harvest of righteousness. Overcoming temptation is not just about getting a reward; it's about leveling up spiritually. Every biblical hero who faced and overcame temptation is like a hall-of-famer we can learn from.

The Role of Prayer in Resisting Temptation Now, let's talk about our secret weapon: prayer. Revisiting Matthew 6:13,

*13 And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen*

It's not just a plea; it's a strategy. And in Luke 22:40, Jesus basically says, "Pray, so you don't stray." Prayer is our spiritual gym, building up resistance to temptation's heavy lifting. It is okay to tell your weak areas to God in prayer. Ask Him for help. Ask to see the way out or how to avoid it. Pray that you will know the right person to talk to for help also.

When you're tempted, the worst thing you can do is go around telling everyone what your struggles are in life. Too often I have seen men sharing deep lust issues in coed environments, that isn't the best way to do this. Trust that God is going to deliver you, and that he will send the perfect friend to help you beat temptation. I believe you should share your struggles but only in the proper environment.

Remove the lie.

This part is super important. You need to be bold enough to look into your heart and find the lie that you are believing. Somewhere you have seen or heard something that entices you, but it is a lie from the enemy. You need to identify it. Either through common sense and logic or by the power of the Holy Spirit. (I'll talk more about the Holy Spirit soon! My favourite part!)

When you have identified the lie, you need to replace it with the truth in the Word of God. The Bible is a weapon against the lies of the enemy!

The Role of the Holy Spirit Enter the Holy Spirit, as our personal instructor.

26 But the [a]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.

John 14:26

and

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Romans 8:26

As per John 14:26 and Romans 8:26, it's like having a divine guide inside us, showing us the steps when we're not sure which way to turn. Just like the early church in Acts, we've got a spiritual director for our life's routine, making sure we turn away from temptation. I hate to do this, but you will see more of the Holy Spirit in my next book "I'm Not Fat I am Husky: Speaking in Tongues". But let's continue with prayer!

In summary, those embarking on a new faith journey can compare mastering the skill of understanding and resisting temptation to navigating life's challenging waters. This involves staying on course through consistent prayer and relying on the unwavering principles of God's Word as your reliable compass. With God as your faithful guide, an incredible journey awaits. Navigate with confidence and avoid temptation along the way.



Application

During your next prayer session, include the following:

- Ask the Father to soften your heart to listen to His voice.
- Share your struggles with temptation with Him, focusing more on praising God and His power rather than dwelling on the sin.
- Request God to introduce a friend who can support you in living a liberated life.
- Seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in identifying the falsehood you believe and replacing it with God's truth.

“A day without prayer is a day without blessing, and a life without prayer is a life without power.” – Edwin Harvey



Chapter 9

| For Yours Is the Kingdom

9 In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

10 Your kingdom come.

Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.

13 And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

**For Yours is the kingdom
and the power
and the glory forever.**

Amen.

We're diving into Matthew 6:13, from the Lord's Prayer. It says, "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." Fancy, right? But what does it mean? Simply put, it's like saying, "God, You're the highest authority, you are Unstoppable, the credit for all things good belongs to you, forever and ever."

Let's start with some Bible references because the best teacher of the Bible is the Bible. First up,

1 Chronicles 29:11-12.
*11 Yours, O Lord, is the greatness,
The power and the glory,
The victory and the majesty;
For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours;
Yours is the kingdom, O Lord,
And You are exalted as head over all.*
*12 Both riches and honor come from You,
And You reign over all.
In Your hand is power and might;
In Your hand it is to make great
And to give strength to all.*

Here, King David basically says "God, then gives a huge amount of praise to who God is, what He can do and the magnitude of His authority". When we pray we should do the same thing. if you simply do this, you will see a huge change in your life.

In Psalm 103:19, it is written:

"The Lord has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all." According to the psalmist, God has a throne in heaven and governs everything! This signifies that all aspects, including politics, sickness, and finances, are under heavenly authority.

And Isaiah 46:9-10
9 Remember the former things of old,
For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like Me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things that are not yet done,
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,'

I love when He says He is God and there is no one like Him. He is the highest and ultimate one that we can put our trust in. He is holy, so he is not able to lie or be deceitful. He is the only person in all of creation that can be fully trusted. That is why in Proverbs he tells us not to lean on our own understanding but to put our trust in Him.

Placing trust in worldly matters rather than in God's abilities is a common tendency. Many people delve into numerous self-help books but often neglect committing to a regular Bible reading schedule and prayer routine. It is crucial to reach a point where faith in God's capabilities is unwavering and acknowledge His infinite power to achieve all things. Acknowledging that He is capable of anything implies that when breakthroughs occur, He should receive all the credit. One undeniable characteristic of God is His reluctance to share glory or praise with anyone.

Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: So, we've got Philippians 2:12-13,

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

In essence, Paul emphasizes the importance of hard work while acknowledging that it is God's strength that empowers us – likened to a spiritual energy boost. God has a specific plan within His will for you, constituting your purpose. As stated in the verse "both to will and to do," you will sense an inner calling when the Lord directs you towards something. This internal connection will prompt you to take action. This reflects the concept of working out salvation with reverence and humility. Remember, when you pray, God is seeking to ignite your purpose within you. While God initiates the purpose within us, it is our responsibility to fulfill it.

Then, in Deuteronomy 30:19-20, (this is review)

19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; 20 that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Can we talk about God is telling you to choose between life and death. You would think that choosing life would be a no brainer, but we are often scarecrows...people with no brains. First, how awesome is it that God is not trying to control you, he is giving you the freed to choose. How scary is it that you are responsible for your own actions.

It's astonishing how many people tend to attribute their marital, parenting, workplace, and relationship issues to God when they lead lives that contradict His teachings. They engage in watching inappropriate movies, listening to questionable music, showing disrespect, and gossiping, and then blame God for their chaotic lives. Just an observation.

Martin Luther, an old-school Christian influencer, likened free will to a car. We may be the ones driving, but God is the engine propelling us forward.

Acknowledging God's sovereignty in prayer is not about passively observing life unfold. It's akin to riding a tandem bike with God – you pedal while God steers. It involves placing trust in His plan, especially during challenging times when it seems like you're cycling uphill. Keep in mind that with God, you are always moving towards something extraordinary.

Final Thoughts.

Before you conclude your prayers with the Almighty, always express gratitude. Regardless of your emotions during prayer, trust that God is good and cares about what you've shared. Offer praise and thanks, maintaining a grateful heart regardless of the outcome. Be thankful for being heard and for the breath that enables you to speak. Reflecting on our imperfect lives, acknowledge the blessings. End the prayer with a moment of praise and gratitude, expressing love for the One who blesses you. Emphasize the importance of your relationship with God, recognizing our imperfections and the possibility of not receiving an immediate response. True relationships involve love and understanding, where both parties care for each other.

God the Father is real. We need to have a heart that treats him that way. That no matter what we do in this world as a career, or hobby or anything else that might define us, that we do it to the glory of God. Sometime we can forget to give God the credit for all that He has blessed us with. If that is you don't feel bad, just change the way you think, apply some of the concepts from this book to your life. Watch how your thought life will start to change, then praising God will become first nature for you.

I do have one more tip before we end this book!

Make a praise list.

I know this sounds crazy and maybe a little self focused. But, do it. Sit down and make a list of everything you are thankful for in your life and when you close out your prayer time thank God for all of those things. so you could write, your spouse, your kids (put each one of their names on the list), your job, your home, etc. Then when you think you are down with that make a list for each item on the praise list. Make a list of things that you love about your spouse, then each one of your kids, etc. this is sweet music to your heavenly Father's heart.

This is the perfect way to end a prayer...and a book!

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this book! Now go and get your quiet place and start praying! I can't wait to hear all the testimonies of what God is doing in your story! Just remember that you loved and your are powerful and you are not alone! Christianity is a team sport so press into God and bless others! I thank God for each and every person that are chasing after God with their whole heart.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



I am David Gammon, a child of God, a devoted husband to my lovely wife Nancy, and a proud father of four incredible children: David, Avery, Briella, and Alex. I serve as a Campus Pastor and a Young Adult and College Pastor, with over a decade of experience in ministry. My educational background includes degrees in theology and computer programming. I am a pastor on staff at East Coast Christian Center, a vibrant church situated in sunny Central Florida.