



Seven Theological Reasons Why Brief Prayers Are Exciting and Effective *A Devotional Series*

REASON 1: God is incomprehensibly thrilling

- **Biblical focus:** Exodus 34:6-8, Isaiah 45:18-25, Luke 11:11-12, John 17:5
- **Daily application:** Worship God!
- **Brief prayer:** Your glory is exalted above the heavens, O God!

Biblical insight: God is always the most exciting being. God alone is fully self-sufficient, inscrutably wise, entirely loving, impeccably pure, and the true source of every good thing in the universe. He is one God in three persons, each distinct from the other, yet perfectly united. He is by nature eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, fully present everywhere, and unchangeably good. He is forgiving, gracious, merciful, and just. God has revealed Himself to be a Father, not by mere analogy or likeness, but by nature. He loves to give good gifts to His beloved children.

Daily application: Because God is the most thrilling being in the universe, talking to Him in prayer is inherently exciting. Because God is a perfectly loving and all-powerful father who delights in giving good gifts to His children, we can be confident that all of our prayers are effective. Allow yourself to be in awe of God's goodness and greatness today. Take one aspect of God's nature listed above and praise Him both for who He is and for the good gifts He gives to His children through prayer.

Brief prayer: Holy Spirit, lead me to worship my Father in Heaven today because of Who He is and because He loves it when His children come to Him in prayer.



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REASON 2: We have been guaranteed unrestricted access to God

- **Biblical focus:** Hebrews 4:14-16, Matthew 27:51
- **Daily application:** Acknowledging God in simple ways as an expression of thankfulness
- **Brief prayer:** A specific prayer of thankfulness

Biblical insight: What Jesus accomplished on Calvary's cross is mind-blowing. By atoning for our sin and giving us His righteousness, Jesus placated the wrath of God against sinners. Not only have our sins been forgiven, but we have been granted unrestricted access to the throne room of God. Let that sink in. Once destined for eternal hell, the person now found in Christ owns an all-access pass into the Holy of Holies of Heaven itself! We can appear unannounced before God at any time for any reason to enjoy the presence of the One who sits on the throne. The torn curtain in the temple serves as the symbol that unlimited access to God is now available to all who are in Christ. Jesus passed through the heavens to serve as our Great High Priest so that we can appear before the presence of God without fear. Somehow, "Thank you" doesn't quite seem to cut it. But, giving thanks in worship should always be our response.

Daily application: The way we access the throne room of God is through prayer. Because we now possess unrestricted access to the Father, our prayer times can always be both exciting and effective. Our access does not depend upon the elegance of our words or the length of our prayers, but upon the worthiness of Christ. Every single prayer offered to God matters to Him.

Billy Graham once said, "When life is hard it's easy to focus only on the bad things and forget all about the good things God has given us. But God has blessed every one of us in ways we often overlook. A spirit of thankfulness is one of the most distinctive marks of a Christian whose heart is attuned to the Lord." Whether life is easy or hard, there is always an opportunity to thank God for who He is and for all that He has done for us through Christ. Take a moment to offer a brief prayer to God thanking Him for a specific way you see His glory revealed today.

Brief prayer: Father, thank You for making a way for us to know, love, and relate to You by pursuing us in love, removing the obstacle of our sin, and calling us into relationship with You.



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REASON 3: Jesus Himself intercedes for us as we pray

- **Biblical focus:** John 19:30, Hebrews 7:23-25
- **Daily application:** Because of Hebrews 7:25, we can confidently go to God at all times with everything
- **Brief prayer:** Give us humility and confidence to seek You at all times and in all things

Biblical insight: Jesus was resurrected from the dead, He ascended to heaven, and He now sits at the right hand of the Father. Jesus is seated at God's right hand because He completed His atoning work on behalf of sinners. On the cross of Calvary, Jesus cried out, "It is finished!" This simple phrase has great depth of meaning. Jesus' sacrifice of His own life in the place of sinners not only effectively ended his earthly ministry, but more specifically, completed His atoning work on behalf of His people. As our Great High Priest, Jesus did the unthinkable. The atoning sacrifice Jesus made to God on behalf of sinners was the offer of *Himself*! And yet, praiseworthy as this is, this act only fulfilled the first part of His responsibilities as High Priest. Priests also served the people by interceding for them in prayer to God. Because Jesus has been raised to eternal life, He can now intercede continuously and eternally for us as we pray!

Daily application: Perhaps you've heard that the right hand of the Father is the place of ultimate power, which it most certainly is, but have you ever considered that the right hand of the Father is also the place of closest intimacy? Jesus has the Father's ear as He continually intercedes for us. What joyful confidence we can have in prayer! The reason brief prayers are exciting and guaranteed effective is because as we pray, Jesus Himself is simultaneously praying to the Father on our behalf and aligning our will with His perfect will. It is good to be humble in prayer, but do you ever pray timidly or apologetically to God? What is something bold and biblical that you could pray about? Take a moment to pray that biblically bold prayer right now in the name of Jesus.

Brief prayer: I praise You that You have not only provided me with full access to Your throne room but that I can be fully confident of Your desire to answer my prayers because Jesus is interceding for me even now. Remind me that this is true even of the briefest prayers I offer to you in His Name.



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REASON 4: The Holy Spirit also intercedes for us as we pray

- **Biblical focus:** Romans 8:26, John 14:26
- **Daily application:** Even when we don't know what to pray, we should still pray
- **Brief prayer:** Lead me when I don't know what or how to pray, Lord.

Biblical insight: There is a popular outdoor apparel brand called *Life is Good*. And life is good, except when it's not, which can be often. In Romans 8:26, Paul makes a shocking admission that many of us have also felt on numerous occasions. In this verse, Paul says that sometimes we just don't know what or how to pray. Ever been there? To cut to the chase, where does that leave those of us who recognize our dependence upon God and have a desire to commune with Him?

We know that God the Father encourages us to pray and that Jesus ever lives to intercede for us. Let's add another powerful motivator to pray. Even when we don't feel like praying or know what to pray, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us to the Father. In Romans 8:26, Paul says that "...the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." The word translated as "groanings" is the same word used in Acts 7:34 to describe the groanings of God's people in Egypt before He delivered them. How encouraging is it to know that especially in our suffering and difficulties, the Holy Spirit desires that God's children receive mercy and grace. He talks to the Father about our situation with groanings that can be described as a deep longing.

Daily application: The reason brief prayers are exciting and guaranteed effective is because even when we don't know what to pray, the Father, Son, and Spirit are not only working together for our good, but all three members of the Triune Godhead are also encouraging us to pray! The importance of expressing our dependence upon God even when we don't know what to pray is exactly what Jehoshaphat did when Israel was about to be invaded by a great multitude from Edom. He prayed, "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You" (2 Chronicles 20:12).

This brief, wonderful prayer expresses tremendous trust in the LORD our God! He is more willing to receive prayers from us than we are willing to offer prayers to Him. Even if you are unsure about what to pray today, you can pray a version of Jehoshaphat's prayer. Your willingness to come to Him, even when you don't know what to pray, is in and of itself an expression of trust in God.

Brief prayer: Thank you, Holy Spirit, for interceding for me especially when I don't know what to pray. Spirit, please give me words to pray. O Lord, I love being in your presence at all times.



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REASON 5: Through prayer, God graciously gives us a powerful role in His plan of redemption

- **Biblical focus:** Ephesians 2:8-10, 1 Timothy 2:1-2, 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- **Daily application:** Lord, help me to walk in all the works You have given me to do (i.e. prayer)
- **Brief prayer:** Use me in the lives of others; Lead me to pray everything You desire

Biblical insight: Here's a thrilling question to think through: How much confidence would we have in life if we fully believed that God pre-planned the work we are to accomplish for His glory, provided us with a Helper to lead and aid us in this work, and were told ahead of time that God is already pleased with us?

This is exactly what God has done for every one of His followers. God has planned works for every believer to accomplish. Every Christian has been declared righteous and is therefore accepted in Christ forever. Every believer in Jesus has been given the Holy Spirit to lead him in truth. And every believer in Jesus has access to the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer. What an honor that God has chosen to work through His followers to minister to other people. While specific works will vary from person to person, one work that God has assigned to all believers in Jesus is to pray.

Daily application: God's word says to pray for all people everywhere across all spheres of life. We are also exhorted to pray continually. While it is certainly challenging to pray without ceasing, God's commitment to use us to accomplish His redemptive purpose by praying for others has unlimited potential. This is a huge reason why praying brief prayers is both exciting and effective. We can pray for every person we meet, at any time of day, as often as possible.

What an opportunity! Take a moment to pray briefly for at least one person today with this mindset: I know that God has given me what I need to do any work He plans for me. God has exhorted me to pray for any and all people because He loves to respond to the prayers of His people. Because I have nothing to lose and everything to gain as I pray, I can trust God with the results.

Brief prayer: Use me for Your redemptive purposes in the lives of others. Help me to respond to Your leading today by praying briefly for those You bring to mind. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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REASON 6: We will celebrate the impact of our prayers together

- **Biblical focus:** 1 Peter 1:13
- **Daily application:** Pray with intentionality whenever you are prompted by God
- **Brief prayer:** Give me eyes to see the greatness of what You are doing, Lord

Biblical insight: Many of us want to be a part of something bigger than ourselves and we all want our lives to matter. One of the reasons we encourage people to pray brief prayers with great regularity is because of the impact these prayers can have on others' lives and on our joy.

Peter Kreeft described the potential impact like this: "I strongly suspect that if we saw all the difference even the tiniest of our prayers to God make, and all the people those little prayers were destined to affect, and all the consequences of those effects down through the centuries, we would be so paralyzed with awe at the power of prayer that we would be unable to get up off our knees for the rest of our lives."

The apostle Peter says that in light of all that is true for us in Christ, we are to prepare our minds for action, be sober-minded, and set our hope on the grace that will be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. This is the biblical basis upon which we encourage you to be ready to pray for any person at any time.

Daily application: In order to prepare our minds for action in a sober-minded way, we need to think clearly and intentionally about our day. That's sound counsel, but the reason Peter gives us is nothing short of exhilarating. He asks us to set our hope on the grace that will come to us when Jesus returns.

One of the reasons that brief prayers are exciting and effective is because when Jesus returns and we see the ways God used all of our faith-fueled efforts, we will be overwhelmed at what God did through even the briefest prayers that we offered to Him in Jesus' name. What makes it mind-blowing is that we will be able to celebrate all that God did in and through us forever!

As you think about your day today, ask God to open your eyes to the greatness and grandeur of what He is pleased to do in response to every one of our prayers. Pray with anticipatory joy knowing that a day is coming that will cause us to celebrate God's response to your simple and brief prayers for the rest of eternity.

Brief prayer: Lord, give me excitement about the opportunity before me today to impact eternity through the brief prayers I offer in Jesus' name. Amen.



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REASON 7: God uses our time with Him in prayer to transform us

- **Biblical focus:** Numbers 6:25, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 John 3:2
- **Daily Application:** As we pray the words of God, we think like God and become more like Him
- **Brief prayer:** I love spending time with You. Make me more like Jesus through prayer

Biblical insight: One of the most surprising ways to grow in holiness is through prayer. Why is that the case? 2 Corinthians 3:18 provides the answer. As we spend time communing with God in His Word, we see the beauty of God revealed. As we behold the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another by the Holy Spirit.

One of the best ways to commune with God is to read God's Word and turn the verses into prayers. This has the potential to supercharge your prayer life because you are essentially praying God's words back to Him. As you go through this process, you begin to think more and more like God because you are reading and praying God's Word. As you think more and more like God you realize you are beholding His glory and are being transformed into His image.

Daily application: In his little book, *Praying the Bible*, Donald Whitney encourages believers in Jesus to pray through verses of the Bible. Today, read one Psalm or one passage from the Bible. Then, take just one verse from that Psalm, or one verse from the passage, and turn it into a prayer. Continue to think about just this one verse and pray about this verse in whatever way the Spirit leads you throughout the day. Through these brief prayers, you will be conformed more and more into the image of God's glorious Son, Jesus.

Brief prayer: I love spending time with You, Lord. As I commune with You in prayer, please make me more like Jesus each day.