

*SECTION ONE: The following Section One was written by **Pastor Ivan French**, Pastor Emeritus of Pleasant View Bible Church, Warsaw, Indiana. (Used with his permission)*

POINTERS FOR MY PRAYER LIFE

Since prayer is hard work, and since, because of its high importance, Satan opposes a serious practice of prayer with all his might, there must be a strong motivation to pray. The following are some of the reasons why a Christian must take prayer seriously.

1. PRAYER IS A BASIC EXPRESSION OF THE NEW LIFE OF THE REGENERATE MAN/WOMAN.

Romans 8:9, 15 – ⁹You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*”

Galatians 4:6 – Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “*Abba, Father.*”

If a person is truly saved, he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. If he is indwelt by the Spirit, he will at least want to pray.

2. THE SCRIPTURE ASSUMES THAT THE CHILD OF GOD WILL PRAY. THERE IS NO ARGUMENT OR RATIONALE FOR PRAYER GIVEN IN SCRIPTURE.

Genesis 18:16-33 – ¹⁶When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. ¹⁷Then the Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham, what I am about to do? ¹⁸Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.” ²⁰Then the Lord said, “The outcry against Sodom

and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.”

²²The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. ²³Then Abraham approached Him and said: “Will You sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will You really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ²⁵Far be it from you to do such a thing to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from You! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

²⁶The Lord said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”

²⁷Then Abraham spoke up again: [Abraham continues to intercede for Sodom, asking if there would be 45 ... 40 ... 30 ... 20 ... 10].

³³When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, He left, and Abraham returned home.”

(How did Abraham know that he should pray?)

Matthew 6:5-7 – ⁵”And *when you pray*, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

(Note “when you pray . . .” It is assumed that they would pray.)

Luke 18:1-8 – Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

(It is assumed that the elect will “cry out to Him.”)

3. CHRIST OUR LORD COMMANDED US TO PRAY. THEREFORE, TO PRAY IS A MATTER OF OBEDIENCE.

Matthew 9:38 – “Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

4. CHRIST OUR LORD TAUGHT US HOW TO PRAY. THEREFORE, TO PRAY IS TO HEED HIS INSTRUCTION.

Matthew 6:5-18 – ⁵”And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who

sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

⁹“This, then, is how you should pray:

“ ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread. ¹²Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

¹⁴For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

¹⁶When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

5. CHRIST OUR LORD SET THE EXAMPLE IN PRAYER. THEREFORE, TO PRAY IS TO “WALK AS HE WALKED” (I John 2:6).

Luke 3:21 – When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened . . .

Luke 5:16 – But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 6:12 – One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray and spent the night praying to God.

I John 2:6 – Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

6. THE APOSTLE PAUL EXHORTED BELIEVERS TO PRAY. THEREFORE, TO PRAY IS TO HEED APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY.

Romans 12:12 – Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Ephesians 6:18 – And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

7. THE APOSTLE PAUL REQUESTED PRAYER FOR HIMSELF. IF THAT SPECIALLY ENDOWED APOSTLE NEEDED PRAYER ON HIS BEHALF, HOW MUCH MORE DO WE!

Romans 15:29-33 – ²⁹I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ. ³⁰I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. ³¹Pray that I may be

rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, ³²so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed. ³³The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

8. THE APOSTLE PAUL PRAYED MUCH FOR OTHERS. THEREFORE, TO PRAY IS TO HEED THE APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE.

Romans 1:9 – God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you . . .

9. PRAYER IS GOD'S ORDAINED WAY OF APPROPRIATING HIS OWN OMNIPOTENT RESOURCES AND GETTING HIS WORK ACCOMPLISHED. The fact that God has commanded us to pray infers that He has programmed prayer into His divine order.

10. PRAYER IS THE HIGHEST ACTIVITY OF SERVICE THAT A CHRISTIAN CAN RENDER. Prayer can be engaged in by every believer, the range of its influence is unlimited, and its result is nothing less than the power of God in action.

II Corinthians 1:8-11 – ⁸We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, ¹¹as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

Philippians 1:19 - . . . for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

11. TO PRAY IS PLEASING TO THE LORD WHO SAVED US. Surely we want to please the One who has done so much for us.

Proverbs 15:8 – The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.

12. TO FAIL TO PRAY IS SIN. (P.T. Forsyth said that the greatest sin that a Christian can commit is to fail to pray.)

I Samuel 12:23 – As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right.

13. ONE OF THE BY-PRODUCTS OF PRAYER IS JOY IN THE LIFE.

John 15:11 – “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

John 16:24 – “Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”

John 17:13 – “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.

14. THE POWER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH LAY IN THE FACT THAT IT WAS A PRAYING CHURCH. In the book of The Acts, prayer is mentioned 30 times in the 28 chapters.

“The church of the Acts was small, but powerful.
The church in America is large, but powerless.”

FOR A SERIOUS PRACTICE OF PRAYER . . .

1. Have a determination. A serious practice of prayer usually begins with personal self-discipline, then becomes delight.
2. Have a time. Find that time in your schedule when there is the smallest amount of interruption. Early morning is usually best.
3. Have a place. However humble it may be, a place where you regularly pray will become sacred to you (and to others).
4. Have a Bible. Communion with God usually begins with a time of listening to Him speak through His Word.
5. Have a ministry. This will involve:
 - ❖ Having a person, project, or place where you regularly focus your prayers. It should be a ministry apart from the ministry in which you are directly involved.
 - ❖ Having a prayer list by which you are guided in your daily intercessions.

“A time of prayer clears the mind, warms the heart, sharpens the perspective, lifts the spirits, renews the confidence, appropriates Divine power, and establishes a conscious relationship with Almighty God.”

- Ivan H. French

Pastor French is the author of The Principles and Practice of Prayer, which is now in its second printing and is a premier resource on the subject of prayer.

SECTION TWO *SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ABOUT PRAYER*

By Rafe Refior (Paul D. Refior)

1. GOD IS SOVEREIGN . . . SO THEN WHY PRAY?

- a. John MacArthur wrote, “The exact relationship between God’s sovereignty and our prayers *is a mystery*, but it is clear that somehow God’s Word and our prayers are co-laborers in achieving God’s will.”
- b. Ponder about the meaning and impact of God existing from eternity past to eternity future (God’s eternitude).
- c. God’s thoughts are higher than our thoughts and God’s ways are higher than our ways. [See below, and illustrations]

2. GOD IS TOO BIG !

- a. We are stuck in now-time, while God is eternal (**Ps. 90:2** – “**Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**” So God is at all times with us, but we cannot be at all times when God was, and will be (all at once !).
- b. We are little. God is infinite (1 Kg. 8:27).
- c. We are only right here. God is everywhere (Ps. 139:7-21). So wherever we are God is, but we cannot be at all the other places where God is.
- d. We are weak. We are maxed out at one (1) man-power of strength. God’s power is unlimited. Zero power plus one (1) man-power compared to God’s all-power that is never expended and never reduced by anything. Wow!
- e. Our thinking ability is so much lower than God’s intelligence, that it is a joke to compare the capacity of human logic, human intelligence, and human ways to those of our Creator. **Isaiah 55:8-9**. “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Also Ps. 147:5; 86:11)

So... God is **too big** for us to box Him into our little brains, or for the eternal God to be crammed into our system of cause and effect logic.

3. **GOD’S GRACIOUS PROVISIONS AND SOLUTIONS**

- a. The transcendent God gave to us HIS REVELATION of so much as He chose to reveal of Himself. But what God revealed was PARTIAL. There is general revelation in our conscience and in the universe/nature. And Gods special revelation was revealing His ways, His thoughts, His standards and requirements in **THE BIBLE**. Even though God’s chosen revelation is partial, what God did choose to reveal to us is perfectly right, and 100% true and God decisions about what to reveal and what not to reveal were perfect. (See John 21:25; John 17:17; Hebrews 1:1; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20,21; John 17:17; Revelation 22:18,19). [Discussion of “Time-stamped Truth”].
- b. Also the incomprehensible God spoke to us **BY HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST** (Hebrews 1:1-4). Such condescension is beyond amazing. He is our salvation.

4. **WHICH MEANS:**

- a. That the unknowable God can be known – but only as God chose to reveal Himself through general and special revelation.
- b. One can have a personal relationship with God and be saved from the penalty for sins only according to God’s only way – which is by coming in faith to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and by God’s grace being regenerated (John 14:6; John 10:7-9; Acts 4:12; Luke 13:24; John 1:120).
- c. The Bible is God’s Word ... 100% accurate and true. We must believe and apply and obey all of God’s truth in the Bible.
- d. God will teach his children (born-again Christians) the meaning of His revealed Word. These truths are spiritually discerned. [See illustration of the LAMP].

5. **THEREFORE, GOD IS NOT TOO BIG FOR** his children (God helping us) to:

- a. Read His Word (the Bible)
- b. To accept what God has revealed in His Word
- c. To know that 100% of God’s Word is true (and not use our editing scissors on any parts of the Bible).
- d. To obey what we do know and understand
- e. To do what God commands and instructs even when we do not know or fully understand how God does or accomplishes something

- f. To exercise faith that the parts of God's being and God's truth that He chose NOT to reveal to us through general or special revelation are securely left with God, without any demand or anxiety or frustration on our part. Because God knows, it is okay. Because God chose not to answer any specific question, it is O.K. We can peacefully leave that in the "God is TOO BIG," while we rejoice, live and apply that which is in the "God is NOT too big."

APPLICATION TO PRAYER

- God is sovereign ←→ God answers prayers
- Illustrations

6. SOME OF THE REASONS WHY WE PRAY.

- a. God commands us to pray.

Luke 18:1 – "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up."

Matthew 9:38 – "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

1 Thessalonians 5:17 – "pray continually ..."

1 Timothy 2:1 – "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone ..."

Ephesians 6:18 – "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

- b. Prayer works! God hears and answers prayers! This is the "effectual miracle."

James 5:16b – "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

Numbers 11:2 – "When the people cried out to Moses, he prayed to the LORD and the fire died down."

John 14:13 – "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father."

- c. Prayer is a high and holy family privilege.

Philippians 4:6 – "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Hebrews 4:16 – “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

- d. Prayer is the amazing opportunity to participate in God’s outworking of His plan.
- e. Prayer is vital to Spiritual warfare.

James 4:7 – “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

1 Peter 5:9 – “Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”

Ephesians 6:12,18 – “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ... And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and request. With this in mind, be alert, and always keep on praying for all the saints.”

- f. Through prayer we gain perspective and a spiritual compass.

Psalms 139:23-24 – “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Psalms 13:3 – “Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death ...”

- g. Prayer is a necessary preparation for events and decisions of life.

Psalms 32:8 – “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.”

- h. Prayer is a joyful and exhilarating opportunity which establishes an optimistic outlook and mindset for the day.

Psalms 68:3-4 – “But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful. Sing to God, sing praise to his name, extol him who rides on the clouds ...”

Psalms 16:11 – “You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

John 17:13 – “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.”

Through prayer we appropriate God’s strength, security and peace.

Psalm 16:8 – “I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.”

Psalm 18:1-3 – “I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.”

Psalm 3:8 – “From the LORD comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people.”

- i. During prayer our desires and will become conformed to God’s desires and will.

Matthew 6:9-10 - “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed buy your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’”

I John 5:14-15 – “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him.”

- j. We engage in co-laboring with other believers when you pray with and for them.

Romans 15:30 – “I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.”

- k. In prayer we open our hearts to listen to God.

1 Samuel 3:10 – “The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times. ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’”

- l. Prayer is engaging in worship and adoration.

Psalm 42:1,2 – “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” [Also, many other Psalms].

- m. During prayer we open our life and conscience for the Holy Spirit to reveal sins and then through repentance and forgiveness to be clean in fact and even to feel clean.

Psalm 51:1-4 – “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.” (Also I John 1:9).

- n. We can set our minds on the reality of what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us and others at the Cross of Calvary, and what the risen Lord is doing for us every minute of every day now.

Romans 8:34 – “... [Jesus Christ] who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”

Hebrews 7:25 – “Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”

- o. Prayer is a part of the dynamic process of nurturing our spiritual growth and development.
- p. Through journaling we can make a record of what God teaches us through His Word, God’s answers to prayers and His blessing, and our spiritual growth.
- q. By praying we enter into the very Heavens and bask in the presence of the Lord.
- r. In a mysterious way, when we meet at the throne of Grace, we increase our understanding and even relationship with people for whom we are interceding, and their needs and visions.
- s. During prayer we learn more about our inner-being and who we are.
- t. Because God is a living, involved, prayer-answering Father, in prayer we receive solutions and directions to our specific questions and problems.
- u. When we intercede we are involved in the ministry of God as He works in situations and in the lives of people about which and whom we pray.

* * * * *

- 7. Discussion about the place of prayer before and during a revival.

8. The finished work of Jesus Christ at the Cross (John 19:31) and the race/tasks we are to finish (including the ministry of prayer)

Acts 20:24 – However, I consider my life worth nothing to me if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.

SECTION THREE – **SERIOUS ORGANIZATION FOR SERIOUS PRAYING**

See the separate “Fill in” work sheets to create your own prayer notebook.

Below is a part of Rafe’s Prayer Book and Prayer List that are not in those work sheets:

THIS VERY DAY

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ NO unconfessed sin or compromise | ✓ Be a useful and fruitful vessel for honor |
| ✓ Choose the way to escape temptation | ✓ Make NO provision for the flesh |
| ✓ Honor God with 100% of actions, etc | ✓ TODAY’S schedule |
| ✓ Filled & controlled by the Holy Spirit | ✓ People today....BE a friend |
| ✓ Vows re Bible, Prayer & holiness | ✓ Evangelism x 4 - Today |
| ✓ Priorities, Invest Your Creative Energy | ✓ Today’s DIET & Work Out |

For WISDOM TODAYI COMMIT TODAY TO YOU, LORD

RAFE , God Helping, Strive To Be:

- 1. Wiser than Solomon - because you have and obey the Bible truths
[Holy Spirit indwelling, James 1; 1 Cor. 2; Matt. 7:24; Ps 119:97-100]***
- 2. An excellent, effective, romantic and thoughtful Husband, and
an involved and caring father (“counselor when asked”) & grandpa***
- 3. Mature - as if you are 15 years older in age [as if 73 years mature]***
- 4. Disciplined in your Bible Study and in your Prayers***

5. *An Example to family & to all, of a Christian man and of a Believer*
6. *Creative and overflowing with imagination*
7. *A man of great vision - coupled with the knowledge of
Practical implementation as God provides and directs*
8. *A God-pleaser as a godly and courageous Leader [NOT a man-pleaser]*
9. *Controlled, taught, convicted, guided and filled by the Holy Spirit*
10. *A strong Rock - because of your firm foundation upon THE Rock*
11. *Constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of your Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ*
12. *A faithful and initiating friend & an effective mentor & a good listener*
13. *Fully obedient to God's Word – from the heart - no matter what;
Taking hold of God's Word and instruction; Not letting it go;
Never straying from it*
14. *Fully dependent upon God, with unwavering faith (WAIT for God's time)*
15. *Taught and given understanding of Bible truths directly by your God
(Your "Morning Sabbath")*
16. *Overflowing with love, compassion, caring, kindness, grace and mercy*
17. *Content, Patient, Refreshed, totally at Peace and always Joyful*
18. *A man who walks with your Heavenly Father and who walks
in His Ways (always in and at the center beam of God's will)*
19. *Being Conformed more and more every day to the Image of your Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ*
20. *A man of absolute Integrity, Ethics, Character and Morality*
21. *A bold and dynamic Evangelist and Ambassador for your God*
22. *Always an Encourager and a Helper and a Giver to others*
23. *Spiritually Discerning and highly Perceptive of the truth*
24. *Always Thankful ... My Lord's Sacrifice & Ministries... for all things*
25. *Always "Under law toward Christ"... "Temperate in all things"...
..." Disciplining your body to bring it into subjection" (to God)
1 Corinthians 9:13-27.*
26. *A Giver – Overflowing with generosity*
27. *HALLOWING God, and having a reverent FEAR of the Lord*
28. *Taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ*
29. *Walking with wise men ... not being a companion of fools*
30. *Being a Soul-Winner and Evangelist and an Ambassador
for Christ*
31. *Having a merry heart, a joyful spirit and a cheerful countenance*

.... ALL BY GOD'S GRACE AND BY HIS ENABLEMENT !!!

