

We need to pray according to God's Word, and we need to simply pray God's Word.

Review

- Hearing the Word, reading the Word, and memorizing it.
- Dr. Gray's method of immersive reading.
- Biblical meditation as in Joshua 1:8.
 - Biblical meditation is not about emptying your mind.
 - Reading, pondering, and reviewing.
 - Praying through the text.
 - Benefits of biblical meditation, as seen in Joshua 1 and Psalm 1.
 - Encountering God in the text.
- My opinion: the Bible norm is to meditate and pray through a portion of Scripture each day. Avoid turning time in the Word into something religious and pressure-packed.
- The real question is: *What is the fruit of my time in the Word?*

1. Why do we pray using the Scriptures?

- There are many ways we can pray, whether for ourselves or for others.
 - Spontaneous prayers.
 - Prepared (composed) prayers.
 - Using a personal prayer list.
 - Problem: we don't always pray intelligently, or wisely.

- Praying in tongues is a help, but God wants our whole being—spirit, soul, and body—to be engaged with Him in prayer. To pray with intelligence and understanding, and to pray effectively, I need to pray according to God’s Word.
- We need to pray according to God’s Word, and we need to simply pray God’s Word.

1.1. Pray the Word because it shows us to Whom we are praying.

- The Bible reveals who God really is. Let’s not pray to a God we’ve invented!
- The Bible reveals what God is like.
- The Word reveals God’s character, which gives me confidence to pray.
- It teaches me about God’s holiness, and what He expects of us.
- It teaches me true doctrine about God, which is important to my prayer life.

1.2 The Word also tells me what I need.

- We don’t know ourselves the way God knows us.
- Scripture also tells me what God desires.
- Scripture tells me how to be in relationship with Him, and worship Him.

1.3 The Word also produces faith – faith in the moment, and faith over the long term.

- When praying has become tiresome or dull, the Word can quicken us again.
- The Bible tells me God’s Will. “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14).
- We can always just throw ourselves upon God’s mercy when we pray, but knowing God has promised to do something gives me a solid hope.

1.4 The Word also shows me what God is inviting me to!

- God can do far more than we can ask or even imagine – *according to the power that works in us!*
- He says, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and [hidden] things, which you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3).
- God is preparing us to reign as kings with Him in the ages to come. The way we prepare for that now, in this age, is through prayer and obedience.

Only those who pray the Word can be truly deep in prayer. Jeanne Guyon: reading the Scriptures was like “a bee skimming the surface of a flower,” but praying the Scriptures was like the bee “penetrating into the depths of the flower to remove the deepest nectar.”

2. Praying through the Word in general.

1. Invite the Spirit to open up the Word to you. “Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things [God’s amazing and miraculous works] from Your law” (Psalms 119:18).
2. Ask the Spirit to help you pray, to lead you and guide you in prayer.
3. See God in the text. What does the passage say about God?
4. See yourself. Does the passage say something about you?
5. Does the passage reveal something that God desires from you? Is it calling for a response from you?

6. Come into agreement with God and submit to His purposes. Agree (even out loud) with what God or the writer says there. Do, and pray into, what God is saying.

An example: praying through Psalm 100:1-3

1 Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands!

- Come into agreement with the Psalmist.
- Pray into the call to all nations.
- Pray for a specific nation to receive the Gospel?
- Pray for a release of joy?
- Also, be sure to see what God is teaching.

2 Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing.

- Prayer about how you've been serving Him.
- Begin to sing in His Presence yourself.

3 Know that the LORD, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

- A very fruitful one to be sure.
- Agree with the Word here.
- Pray for people to know these things.
- Pray about being a sheep, and confess those things back to Him.

3. Pray the promises of God.

1. Learn the Bible's general promises concerning prayer and its conditions.

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7); “Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (see John 16:23-24).

God doesn't just say that we can pray, He *invites* us to pray. “Let us... come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:14-16).

2. Let specific promises encourage you to pray for various needs.

- If you need a healing, learn the promises related to healing and pray them.
- Faith isn't evenly distributed in my life; we can develop faith in a particular area.
- Only the Word can reveal those truths to us and minister that grace to us.

4. Reminding God like a watchman.

“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isaiah 62:6-7).

- A watchman sees God's vision and hears and prays in accordance with God's heart.
- “True prayer begins and ends at the throne of God.”

- A watchman goes to see what God is saying. “I’m going to set myself on the tower and watch to see what He will say to me...” (Habakkuk 2:1 para.).
- Decide to pray out of what God is saying.
- Don’t pray like Jonah. The stance of an intercessor must be the stance of mercy.

We are called to be a people who make mention of the Lord or, perhaps more accurately, a people who remind the LORD. We are called to remind Him of what He said He would do.

Serving as *mazkirim*

The *mazkirim* were officials with the important job of reminding the king of things he needed to do. This meant they had two important job qualifications:

- They obviously had to know what the king had said.
- They had to be bold enough to speak up in the king’s presence and remind him when he seemed forgetful, or if he wasn’t moving fast enough.

See how Jacob prayed as he was re-entering the Promised Land:

“O God [of my fathers], the Lord who said unto me, ‘Return to your country, and to your kindred, that I may do you good,’ ...deliver me, I pray you, from the hand of my brother... **you said**, ‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude” (from Gen. 32, emphasis added).

The great men and women of God didn’t see this as disrespect. They saw it as faith! By the way, in modern Hebrew, *mazkirim* means secretaries!

5. Praying the Apostolic Prayers of the New Testament.

What we've said about praying the Word may hold even more true when we talk about praying the apostolic prayers of the New Testament. The Spirit made a deliberate point to include them in Scripture.

1. They reveal God's will for my life. When we pray them, we know we're praying God's Will. I can use them to pray His will for others, too.
2. They enable me to pray for what God considers to be important. When I pray this way, I know I'm praying for what God values.
3. These prayers also help me understand the mysteries of God. As I study them and pray them, God is gradually teaching me His priorities.
4. These prayers are God-centered, not Devil-focused.

Praying them will help you, others, and the whole Church to come into our inheritance in Christ and grow to maturity in Him.

"...I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an **inheritance** among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Jesus said He was sending Paul to the Gentiles "...to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an **inheritance** among those who are sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:18).

Examining Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:

*15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that **the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory**, may give to you **the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him**, 18 the **eyes of your understanding being enlightened**; that **you may know** what is **the hope of His calling**, what are the riches of **the glory of His inheritance** in the saints, 19 and what is **the exceeding greatness of His power** toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*

In analyzing any apostolic prayer, look for a few things:

- The who: to Whom are we praying?
- The what: what are we asking for?
- The why: what is the purpose of the prayer?
- The results: what are the expected results of the prayer?

Some prayers are much simpler: “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Appendix: Some Additional Apostolic Prayers.

Ephesians 3:14-19:

...I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Philippians 1:9-11:

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Colossians 1:9-11:

...we... do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy...

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13:

...may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24:

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

2 Thessalonians 3:16:

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.

Hebrews 13:20-21:

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.