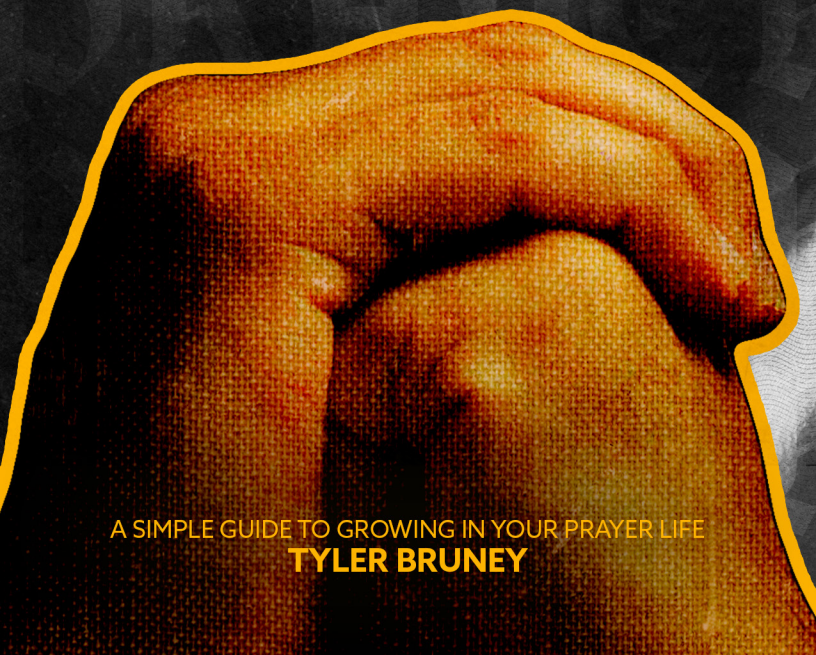


P R A C T I C A L

PRAYER



A SIMPLE GUIDE TO GROWING IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE
TYLER BRUNEY

What this guide is (and is not)

This is meant to be a simple and practical guide for those who are wishing to dive deeper into prayer, whether you are someone who has never prayed before or someone who has prayed every day for years.

This is not a comprehensive list of every single way that you can pray, but a collection of different tools that you may or may not find helpful for you based on where you are in your prayer life. I would encourage you, if one of the tools or ways of praying does not feel helpful to you right now, don't throw it out entirely. Set it aside and come back to it in a few weeks or months when you might be in a different season of life and try it again. You might be surprised how helpful something might feel in a new season when it didn't feel that helpful previously.

Teresa of Avila is famously quoted saying, "When it comes to prayer, we're all beginners."

This can be very helpful for us to remember or keep in mind. It can be so easy for us to hear someone else pray and think that they are so much better than we are, or to read a book or guide to prayer and feel like that person has it all figured out. But like Teresa said, "we're all beginners", no one has prayer all figured out. Everyone has something that they can learn or some way that they can grow.

The goal of this guide is to help everyone grow in their prayer life, not because we want to be recognized for how good we are at prayer or because we want to be ready at the end of our group time when it's our turn to pray. The goal is to grow in prayer as a way of growing closer to God and becoming more like Jesus - being shaped more into a person of love.

What is prayer?

There are many ways of defining prayer. How you would define prayer likely depends on a variety of different factors. One key factor is typically the tradition of the church you grew up in or first started attending. These different definitions can all help influence or inform our personal view on prayer.

Before we get too far into talking about what prayer is, take a minute or two and think about, maybe even write out, how you would define prayer right now.

When I think of prayer, I normally define it as a conversation with God. Which I believe is important because it includes both talking to God and listening to God. We likely have all been involved in a conversation with someone that really was not a conversation, it was just the other person talking at you. When those "conversations" happen, we don't often walk away from them feeling closer to that person, and if they are being honest, they likely don't feel any closer to us either.

The same is true for our relationship with God. If we spend all our time with God just talking at Him and not allowing Him a chance to speak and respond, then we are likely not going to feel like we are growing any closer to Him.

Timothy Keller, in his book *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, defined prayer this way, "Prayer is continuing a conversation that God has started through his Word and his grace, which eventually becomes a full encounter with him."¹

This is a beautiful way to think about prayer; it is continuing a conversation that God started. God is the one who made it possible for us to even have this conversation with Him in the first place. We have not earned this right or ability, but because of God's great love for us, He has shown us the grace, a gift that we do not deserve, to make it possible for us to connect with Him and continue this conversation.

This begs the question though; how do we continue this conversation?

There are so many ways that we can do this, some of which we might be familiar with, or others that might be completely foreign to us. That is what we are going to dive into and talk about in the coming sections.

Again, this is not a comprehensive guide to prayer, but when it comes to prayer there are two main categories that the different ways to pray fall into. These include praying to see God move or act and praying as a way of connecting with God.

Like so many things when it comes to our faith, it is possible for us to go too far one way or the other. Meaning that we want to have a balance between these two types of prayer, but we are often tempted to go fully to one side or the other.

Getting Started in Prayer

If you are anything like me, or most of the people who I have talked to about prayer, then you have likely had a moment where you simply didn't know what to pray. You had the intention to pray, or you felt like you should pray, maybe you even found a nice quiet spot in the morning with a fresh cup of pour over coffee, and then you just sat there unsure of what to do next.

This is a very common thing that many of us face in our prayer lives. Even after years of praying and following Jesus you will still have days or seasons where this is your experience with prayer. They usually become fewer and farther between, but you will still face them.

Now that begs the question, "What do I do about this?" There are many different options that we have, but I want to introduce you to a few of my favorite ways to start praying when I am not sure what to pray, or even when I just feel really tired and my brain is struggling.

PRAYING THE PSALMS

The first method that I would recommend is how I try to start every morning: Praying through a Psalm. The book of Psalms or the Psalter, as it is sometimes called, is a collection of prayers that were written by ancient believers. When you read through all the Psalms you cover a very wide range of styles of prayer and topics of prayer, which is part of what makes them so helpful for us to pray through.

How do we pray through a Psalm? It can be as easy as simply reading the words of a Psalm slowly while reflecting on what the words mean. That is not a bad place to start. I would encourage you to make sure that you are reading the words slowly. If we rush through it, we run the risk of missing something that God might be trying to say to us.

Another way to pray through a Psalm would be to read the Psalm a verse, line, or thought at a time. Take a second to reflect on it and then pray about whatever those words brought to your mind. Maybe you feel like you can relate to David or one of the other Psalmists in a difficult time, or maybe you read the word "mark" and it reminded you of a friend of yours named Mark who might be going through a difficult time or who you just care about and haven't prayed for in a while. It doesn't matter if what comes to your mind fits perfectly into the context of the Psalm, pray about whatever the word of

God brings to your mind.

This is an easy start to prayer that we can do multiple times a day. One of the most difficult parts of this can simply be picking which Psalm you want to pray. There are probably a million different ways that you could pick one, but I'll share with you a few methods that I like because it has an order that helps me keep track of where I am or which one comes next.

The first option is simply starting with Psalm 1, the next day do Psalm 2, and so on, maybe spending a few days on Psalm 119 when you get there. Then once you have finished all 150 Psalms, you go back and start at Psalm 1 again.

The other method is to use what Donald S. Whitney, in his book *Praying the Bible*, calls the daily Psalms. It is a simple process where you take the day of the month, that number is the first option, then you add 30 to that number 4 times. For example, if today is the 3rd, then your daily Psalms would be Psalm 3, Psalm 33, Psalm 63, Psalm 93, and Psalm 123. You pick one of those Psalms and then pray through it. This gives you 5 different options per day that you can look at and skim through to see if one of them stands out to you or connects with you in a way that the others do not.²

PRAY ACRONYM

PRAY is an acronym that is based off the Lord's prayer. It stands for Praise, Repent, Ask, and Yield. Jesus gives us two different versions of this model prayer of His, the better known one in Matthew 6:9-13, and a slightly shorter version of it in Luke 11:1-4.

"This, then, is how you should pray:

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

Matthew 6:9-13

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

He said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins,

for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.

And lead us not into temptation.'"

Luke 11:1-4

I love the context that we get from Luke. We see that Jesus was praying and when He finished, one of the disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. These were Jewish boys who had been raised praying three times a day. They would have been familiar with what prayer was and known parts of if not all of the Psalms, and the Shema (Deuteronomy 4:4-9), yet they are still asking to be taught how to pray.

They might have been familiar with prayer or been taught how to pray by their parents or rabbi's while growing up, but they are noticing something here. They are noticing that there is something different about the way that Jesus prays and the way that it affected Him, and they wanted to experience that for themselves.

Let's take a look at how to more practically pray the PRAY acronym:

P – Praise

Jesus begins His model prayer that we know today as the Lord's prayer by saying, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name," or as the NLT translation put it, "may your name be kept holy." Jesus starts His prayer by praising God and saying that He is holy and should be kept holy. This is not because God needed a reminder of how amazing He is because He has poor self-esteem. Jesus begins with praise as a reminder to Himself of who He is praying to, and that is something many of us need.

Often when we pray, we can treat God like He is a genie that exists to meet our every need. When we begin by praising God, we start our prayer with a different perspective than we would have otherwise. This new perspective changes how we continue to pray.

R – Repent

We are to repent, or to change our minds and turn around. Repentance seems to have a negative connotation for many of us today, but that is not how it should be. When we repent, we are realizing and admitting that we have been going the wrong direction, and then we do something about it.

If you are driving and get on the freeway only to realize that you are heading west instead of east, you can

either keep going the wrong direction, or repent, realize it is the wrong direction and do something, likely turn around and begin to head in the other direction. Sometimes we need help to realize we are going in the wrong direction, and we can also need help to do something about it. Lucky for us we have a God who wants nothing more than to help us. That is what Jesus is modeling for us: to go to God, be honest about how we have been going in the wrong direction and ask Him to help us as we turn around and get back on the right path.

A - Ask

This is the part that we are "good" at, or at least the part that we have a lot of experience doing. Again, there are times where we end up treating God like a genie who exists to make our lives easier and fulfill our wishes. I don't think any of us would say that is how we think of God, but there are times where, if we were honest about it, that is what our prayer lives show.

This is why praising before asking is so helpful. When we remember that we are approaching the Creator and Sustainer of the universe in our prayers, it can help us to change or reevaluate what we are asking for and/or how we ask for it.

God wants us to talk to Him and tell Him about the things that we need and want. The problem is that sometimes we get those things confused. There are

times where we begin to think of a want as a need without realizing it. There is nothing inherently wrong with asking God for the things that we want, but we shouldn't confuse it as a need, and it is always good for us to ask ourselves, "Why do I want this?". Are we asking for something because we think it will help us to look better or more impressive to those around us, or because it will help us in a meaningful way?

Y – Yield

When we are driving and we come up to a Yield sign you have two options, you can either slow down and yield to make room for another car to merge or allow pedestrians to go through the crosswalk, or you can ignore it altogether and keep doing what you want the way you want.

The same is true for us in our faith journeys and prayer lives. We can be so dead set on things happening exactly the way that we want them to and end up trying to force our way. Or we can yield, we pray for things to happen and how we want them to happen but, like Jesus in the Lord's prayer and also in the Garden of Gethsemane the night that he is betrayed, we can acknowledge that we do not know everything, and that God might have other plans.

CENTERING PRAYERS AND BREATH PRAYERS

The final tool or tools that we are going to touch on to help us get started in prayer are very similar and connected. They are called centering prayers and breath prayers. Breath prayers are in fact a form of centering prayer.

Centering prayers are prayers that help you to calm your mind, bring your thoughts under control, and direct them towards God. These are styles of prayer that I often use at the start of any of my prayers. They do not need to be anything complicated or crazy, it can be a simple phrase, or even just a single word. Your centering prayer could be something like the words that the priest Eli teaches a young Samuel in 1 Samuel 3:9, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." Or you could simply repeat the name of Jesus a few times. These prayers help us when we are getting started in prayer but can also be helpful when our minds wander off as a way of bringing ourselves back to God and our prayers.

Similarly, breath prayers are simple prayers that help us to slow down and bring our attention to God and what we are currently praying. Breath prayers are simple phrases that you pray the first half of while inhaling, and then the second half of when exhaling.

These phrases should be simple so that you can say them during a normal inhale and exhale, and like

centering prayers, it is helpful to have them be based on scripture if not directly scripture themselves. A few examples are:

"More of you Lord," as you inhale, and then, "Less of me," as you exhale.

"You are my peace," as you inhale, and then, "I trust in You," as you exhale.

"I will not be afraid," as you inhale, and then, "for You are with me," as you exhale.

When it comes to centering prayers, I would encourage you to try different words and phrases to see what works the best for you and feels like it is the most helpful to get your attention shifted back towards God.

Praying to See God Move

When it comes to praying to see God move, we often run into two words that can be slightly confusing to us, those being intercession and petition.

Petition – praying for your own needs, struggles, desires, etc.

Intercession – praying for the needs, struggles, desires, etc. of someone else

I also want to take a moment to note that when we are interceding on behalf of another person, we are to be praying for the good of that person, not their downfall. Even if it is someone that we do not like or agree with, we pray for them to have an encounter with God and to repent of any sin and wrongdoing, and to change their lives for the better.

Let's discuss a few ways to implement these types of prayer:

PRAYER WALKING

Prayer walking is exactly what it sounds like, you pray while you walk. It can be super helpful for people who sometimes struggle to sit still or focus. The simple physical act of walking can help many of us to focus our minds and better be able to keep our attention on God and our prayers.

It is also a useful tool to have when you are praying for your neighborhood or your workplace. If you are praying that your neighbors come to know Jesus or take their next steps with Him, then try walking around your neighborhood and praying for them by name when you walk past their home or apartment.

One of my favorite stories about prayer walking comes from the book *Praying like Monks, Living like Fools*, by Tyler Staton. In the book Tyler reflects on his experience with prayer the summer before his 8th grade year.

When I was thirteen years old, I wasn't sure I was buying all the Jesus stuff. I was a curious kid, but I wasn't an easy sell. Look, if this story is real, I want in. But if it's a fairy tale, I'd prefer to find out sooner than later so I don't waste so much time singing mediocre songs and sitting through all these meetings. That was my logic. Naturally, when a mentor approached me with an experiment of sorts, it caught my attention. "What do you think God would do in the lives of your unbelieving friends if you spent every day this summer walking a circle

around your school in prayer for them?" "I have no idea." "Why don't you find out?"³

Tyler went on to do exactly that, he walked circles around his middle school every day that summer, praying for each kid in his class by name using the school directory. Then the school year started and he started a bible study club before school as the next step, and this is what happened:

A couple months into these meetings, so many students were coming that we had to move from a math classroom into the school's theater. By the end of that school year, approximately one-third of my eighth-grade class had come into relationship with Jesus in the darkness of the early morning, with all the atmosphere of hospital lighting, through the potentially heretical sermons of a thirteen-year-old skeptic.⁴

If prayer walking can make that big of an impact on a group of eighth graders, then why wouldn't it be able to help one of your neighbors, friends, or coworkers come to know Jesus?

PRAYER JOURNALING

Like prayer walking, prayer journaling is, or at least can be, exactly what it sounds like. You journal or write down your prayers. You can do this either physically in a notebook or on a piece of paper, or digitally with your phone or tablet.

I prefer to write it out by hand, because my handwriting is not particularly good, so I have to write slowly if I am going to have any chance of reading it in the future. This ends up being a bit of a blessing for me because it makes me move through my prayer slower, which makes me be more intentional about what I am praying and think more about the words that I am using.

It is also helpful to have a record of the things that you have prayed for, because it gives you the ability to look back and see the prayers that God has answered for you. We tend to not look back all that often and remember the ways that God has answered our prayers. This can also help in those situations where we had this great idea of how things should go, but God answered our prayer in a way that we did not expect at the time.

This can be very encouraging for us when we are in difficult situations or seasons of life and it might feel like God is not answering our prayers, or at least not in the way that we want Him to. But the prayers that God has answered in the past can be encouraging to us in the

present and a reminder that the same God who helped us back then, is the same God who is helping us right now and will continue to help us in the future.

If you don't want to write out your prayers word for word, that is fine, but I would still recommend having a small journal or note in your phone that you can write down the people and things that you are praying for. Again, you can refer back to this to see the prayers that God has answered, but it is also a helpful reminder of things to be praying for, especially if your mind is anything like mine and you struggle to remember some of the things that people have asked you to pray for.

PRAYING FOR A SERVER/WAITER

This is a very simple yet very powerful way to pray to see God move. Many people go out to eat for lunch on Sundays after church. According to servers that is one of the worst times to work because it is very busy and people, sometimes even those who just came from church can be rude or downright mean to them.

The very easy and simple thing that we can all do, is anytime we are out to eat, when the server brings your food to your table say something to them like, "Hey, we are about to pray before we eat, is there anything that we can be praying about for you?" (Bonus points if you can remember their name when asking them this).

This can be a very powerful moment for the server but also for you. You never know what struggles or difficulties that another person is facing. Maybe they don't have much going on that they need prayer for, or they might have a whole laundry list of things that need prayer. If we don't ask them, we will never have any idea.

It should also go without saying, but if you are going to pray for your server, don't be a jerk to them. You are representing Jesus to them and even if they are not doing the best job, we should be kind and loving to them. It might even make more of an impact on them if you are kind to them and leave them a good tip, despite

bad service, especially if other people are not being very nice to them.

Praying to Connect with God

Praying to connect with God is the kind of prayer that many of us are not as familiar with. Often when we think of prayer it is a lot more about asking God for things or asking for God to move in some way, like we just talked about.

Praying as a way to connect with God is a form of prayer that focuses more on being present with Him than on the words or things that we are saying. Which might sound a little confusing if we are thinking of prayer as a conversation.

In 1980 Mother Teresa was interviewed by journalist Dan Rather. During the interview Dan asks, "When you pray, what do you say to God?"

Mother Teresa answered, "I don't say anything I listen."

Dan looks confused by this then asks, "What does God say?"

Teresa with a smile replies, "He doesn't say anything. He listens." After a moment of confused silence, she then added,

"And if you don't understand that, I can't explain it to you."

Mother Teresa wasn't insulting Dan or trying to tell him that he wasn't smart enough to understand so she wouldn't waste her time trying to explain it to him. What she is really saying was that it is something that words cannot properly describe. No matter how hard she tried, or how eloquently

she spoke, it would all fall short. The same is true when we try to describe some beautiful thing in nature to someone who did not see it, like a sunrise, or national park, or the northern lights. These are all incredible parts of God's creation that you need to see to really understand how amazing they are.

This is the heart of what Teresa was getting at in the interview and what is at the heart of prayer as a way of connecting with God. There is a beauty there that each of us needs to experience on our own to truly understand.

There are many ways to pray with the goal or intent of connecting with God. We'll discuss three practices that can be helpful for us to do this.

PRAYING THE ROOM

Praying the room is a simple practical way to pray that can help us to begin to connect with God. There are 5 simple steps to this way of praying:

1. Close our eyes and take a few deep breaths
2. Imagine yourself in a room with God the Father or Jesus
3. Pay attention and ask questions
4. Ask God or Jesus to invite into the room anyone you should pray for
5. Pray for them

When you are paying attention and asking yourself questions, it can be helpful to ask questions like:

1. What room am I in? One I love? The room I am currently in?
2. What is God or Jesus doing? Looking at me? Walking towards me? Moving away from me?
3. What is the expression on God or Jesus' face? Do they look happy? Sad? Angry?

There are other questions that you can ask, but these are helpful for us to think about. If God looks sad and has His back turned to you as He is walking away from you, why is that how you are seeing God? It can help to reveal to us how we feel about our relationship with God in that moment, and help us begin to realize the lies that

we have begun to believe or allowed to set in.

LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is Latin for “divine reading” or “holy reading.” I promise the name makes it sound scarier than it is. It is a way of slowly and prayerfully reading through a section of scripture and listening for God to speak to us through it. You can do this with any passage of scripture, but there are some that are easier than others. If you were to try Lectio Divina with a section of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-6), it will likely be easier to get something from than if you were to try to do it with one of the genealogies of Jesus (Matthew 1:1-17 or Luke 3:23-38).

There are 4 basic steps to Lectio Divina, but I like to add a fifth one to the beginning, that being to pray a simple prayer that helps to center you and bring your focus to God. Then once you have prayed something like, “Speak Lord, I am your servant and I am listening,” and taken a few deep breaths, begin these steps.

1. Read. Slowly read the passage that you are using. As you read pay attention to the words, phrases, or ideas that stand out to you or make you feel something.

2. Reflect. Slowly reread the passage a second, maybe even third time. This time pausing at the words or phrases that stood out to you. Think about them, and begin to ask why they stood out to you or moved you the way they did.

3. *Respond.* Pray asking for God to reveal to you why those words and phrases stood out to you, and what it is that He wants you to do with them. How should we live these out or what He is calling us to change and live differently?

4. *Rest.* Take a few minutes to sit in silence, breathing deeply, listening to God, and resting in His love for you.

Lectio Divina is a powerful tool that can help us to begin to listen to God, and we can do it with any passage of scripture, again some like the genealogies will likely be more challenging than other passages. If you are new to Lectio Divina and are not sure where to start, here are a few passages that can be helpful starting points for you:

1 Kings 19:11-13, Psalm 23, Matthew 11:28-30, Luke 5:18-25, Romans 10:14-17

SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

*He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."*

Psalm 46:10

Silence and solitude are probably the simplest and also most challenging of these three different ways of connecting with God in prayer. The goal of silence and solitude is to eliminate any and all other inputs that are not God.

The idea of silence is to get rid of all noise that might distract you. Some people might be able to have instrumental music playing and for others it needs to be totally silent so that they don't get distracted and start paying attention to the music or singing along with it.

Solitude means that we are alone, there are no other people around us that are adding input in our lives at that time. This does mean that we should not be around other people talking to them, or even just in a place where we can hear others talking because that can also distract us. But it also means more than that. Brennan Manning highlights this point perfectly in his book *Abba's Child*, when he writes:

The story is often told of a man who made an appointment with the famous psychologist Carl Jung to get help for chronic depression. Jung told him to reduce his fourteen-hour workday to eight, go directly home, and spend the evenings in his study, quiet and all alone. The depressed man went to his study each night, shut the door, read a little Hermann Hesse or Thomas Mann, played a few Chopin études or some Mozart. After weeks of this, he returned to Jung, complaining that he could see no improvement. On learning how the man had spent his time, Jung said, "But you didn't understand. I didn't want you to be with Hesse or Mann or Chopin or Mozart. I wanted you to be completely alone." The man looked terrified and exclaimed, "I can't think of any worse company." Jung replied, "Yet this is the self you inflict on other people fourteen hours a day;" (and, Jung might have added, the self you inflict on yourself).⁵

In this story, the depressed man is horrified at the thought of being alone with himself, and there are some of us that will

likely feel that same way. When we are totally alone and in the quiet that is often when we begin to feel the things that we have been pushing down and trying to ignore. There are things that come up and out of us when we are in the quiet that might be difficult for us to encounter or deal with, but they are also the areas of

our lives that help us to grow and lean on God and His great strength. This is just one of the struggles that we will face at one time or another when we are trying to practice silence.

Other Helpful Prayer Tools

Praying to see God move or act and as a way of connecting with Him are the two major categories of prayer that are helpful for us to think through. However, not every form of prayer fits neatly into one of these two categories. Here we are going to look at a couple of other prayer tools that might be helpful to you on your journey with prayer.

GRATITUDE

Gratitude should be a major part of our lives as followers of Jesus. There is so much that we have and should be grateful for because of what God has done for us and continues to do for us today. We have been forgiven and get to have a conversation with God. That is such an amazing thing that we can take for granted.

We as people also have a habit of focusing on the difficult or hard things that are happening in our lives. It doesn't matter how many good things you experience, we tend to focus on the bad things. We remember the mean or rude things that someone said to us and we tend to forget all the nice things that others said to us.

The goal of the practice of gratitude is to begin to shift our focus. We remind ourselves of the things that God has done for us and provided for us that we should be grateful for. This helps us to get our focus off ourselves and more onto God, the creator and sustainer of the whole universe who we are about to talk to.

When it comes to practicing gratitude, it can be very simple. For me, what has been most effective has been spending time each morning writing down three things that I am grateful for from the day before or that are coming up that day that I am looking forward to.

These lists don't have to be super spiritual either, they can be simple things like a cup of good coffee, or dinner with a close friend, or even nice weather that we can go outside and enjoy.

THE PRAYER EXAMEN

The prayer of examen is an ancient Christian prayer that traces its origins back to the founder of the Jesuit order, Ignatius, also known as Ignatius of Loyola. The prayer of examen is typically prayed at the end of the day, because as the name suggests it is a way of examining or reflecting on your day, but you can pray it whenever. I have found it helpful to pray as I drive home from work and feel like it helps me to show up better for my family when I get home.

The Examen has 5 basic steps to it:

1. Quiet yourself and become aware of God's presence
2. Give thanks or practice gratitude
3. Review your day
 - a. When did you feel the closest to God?
 - b. When did you feel the furthest from God?
4. Repent of your sins
5. Look forward to tomorrow
 - a. Ask God for help and grace for the day to come, to be better and overcome temptation and to follow Him more closely.

The goal of the examen is not to make ourselves feel bad about how far we felt from God or all the sins we committed in any given day. It's also not intended to make ourselves feel super proud of how great we did, but it is to reflect on where we realistically are and ask God to help us take the next step closer to Him, and to

grow to be more like Jesus.

As we work through the examen, it is ok if we feel guilty about our sins or how we felt distant from God, but we do not want to experience shame over these things. Guilt is a feeling that we experience based on our actions, while shame tries to tell us that our identity is those actions and sins. We are not our sins; God paid the price for our sins through Jesus. We are all guilty of sinning, as we read in Romans 3:23, but our identity is not our sins, our identity is as dearly loved children of God (Ephesians 5:1) and image bearers of God Himself (Genesis 1:27).

We need to remember these things and remember that God loves us and wants to help us. We are never alone, and we have power and strength that is not our own that we can lean on anytime if we just ask and accept the help.

Resources on Prayer

Before Amen: The Power of a Simple Prayer
Max Lucado

Prayer and Fasting
David Roadcup and Michael Eagle

Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools
Tyler Staton

Praying the Bible
Donald S. Whitney

Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God
Timothy Keller

How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People
Pete Greig

A Praying Life
Paul E. Miller

Lead with Prayer
Cameron Doolittle, Peter Greer, and Ryan Skoog

The Way of the Heart
Henri Nouwen

Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home
Richard J. Foster

References

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