



# I AM SECOND

Prayer Journal

# I AM SECOND

## Jesus is First

Is Jesus really first in my life? Is that the way I live? How do I show Him that He is first?

As we consider these questions, let's consider something Jesus said

in His prayer for His disciples—

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent (John 17:3).

The word Jesus used for “know” means to know through personal experience, to have a progressively deeper and more intimate relationship. Such a personal relationship with God is open to all who have received the gift of forgiveness and new life which is salvation. This is true from the moment we received it.

This is how we're meant to live: in a close, personal relationship with Jesus. One of the ways we put Jesus first in our lives is to cultivate spiritual intimacy with Him. We should ask ourselves, how real is our friendship with Jesus? How clearly do we hear His voice? How often during the day do we think of Him? How eager are we to spend time with Him in prayer and in the Word?

This prayer journal takes you on a path to help you focus on your personal relationship with Jesus through the principles of prayer that He taught. If you walk with Him is close, expect Him to draw you closer. If your prayer life is strong, rely on Him to make it stronger. He is always ready to meet us where we are and bring us further with Him.

Approach every day with, “Jesus, be first in my life.” And in ways you have yet to discover, you will be second. He will be first. And you will experience life in all of its fullness!

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For additional prayer resources:  
[e3resources.org](http://e3resources.org) [learntoprayer.org](http://learntoprayer.org)

## As You Begin

A special feature of this journal will help you remember and apply what you learn. Use your hand to remind you how to pray as Jesus taught. These points and Bible verses represent the first and most important principles Jesus taught about prayer. These principles, used every day, will help you enjoy a growing personal friendship with Jesus.

These simple hand illustrations enable people of all ages and from all walks of life to grasp and remember the key principles Jesus taught about prayer—a lifetime tool we can use personally and share with others.



As the palm is the foundation for fingers and thumb, time alone with God is the foundation for our personal relationship with Him (Matthew 6:6). We acknowledge the relationship—“Our Father” (Matthew 6:9).



Our thumb reminds us that we must worship God before we ask for anything. We “hallow His name” (Matthew 6:9).



Next we surrender our lives—“Your kingdom come, Your will be done” (Matthew 6:10).



Then we ask God to meet our needs—“Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11).



Now we ask God to forgive our sins, and we forgive others—“Forgive us as we forgive others” (Matthew 6:12).



Then we seek protection—“Deliver us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:13).



... and return to worship—“for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen” (Matthew 6:13).

## How To Use This Journal

This prayer journal can help you sharpen your ability to hear God’s voice and apply what you hear.

This journaling method is effective and efficient, ideal for busy people with limited time. The format encourages you to write only a few words, and the questions help ensure that what you write will be more focused. Your brief entries will be easy to scan and review—especially helpful when you are seeking God’s will and direction. (See page 35 for ways to continue this journaling method on your own.)

Begin each devotional message with a quick prayer— “Father, help me hear what You have for me today.” You’ll discover how clearly He will speak when you listen with your heart and desire to respond.

## Sample Journal Page

Date: Today's Date

**Scripture or quote:** This journal has Scriptures printed on each page as the heart of each devotional message. Later you will copy verses that provide special meaning from your personal Bible reading (see page 35):

“...the sheep listen to his [the shepherd’s] voice. ... his sheep follow him because they know his voice.”  
(John 10:3b, 4b, ESV)

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me?**

He is my Shepherd, and He wants me to hear and recognize His voice.

**My prayer response—**

Please help me to know when my thoughts and impressions are from You.

**My impression of what God wants me to do—**

Trust Him to help me know when He is speaking to my heart, especially as I read the Bible.

## Week One Overview

# Through Prayer We Find Intimacy With Jesus

### We can all live in close friendship with Jesus

We are strongest in prayer and service when we are living in a close, personal relationship with God, with Jesus. This relationship is the heart of our Christian walk from which we develop a meaningful and effective prayer life.

Every Christian is meant to have the same personal friendship with Jesus that John and the other apostles experienced long after He ascended to heaven:

“...that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3-4)\*

The word “fellowship” that John used refers to close, personal friendship, to a close personal walk with Jesus.

### We can all enjoy the blessing of knowing God personally

Throughout His ministry, Jesus (whom we are to imitate) demonstrated with His daily life the kind of close relationship we’re to have with the Father. He knew the Father. He prayed to the Father. He was dependent upon the Father. That’s how we are to live as well:

“And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3)\*

The full meaning of the word “know” in the original language of the Bible is to have a growing friendship, to become closer and closer to someone we know very well.

How amazing that we can know Jesus this way! This is much more than just understanding facts about Him. It is knowing God Himself—from the day we receive Jesus and throughout eternity. This is essential if we want Jesus to be first in our lives. This is what is meant by walking with Him.

This is the same personal relationship Jesus declared He will have with us:

“I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me [they will have a progressively deeper friendship with me]...” (John 10:14)\*

\*emphasis of scripture added

### Prayer is how we live in this close, personal friendship with God

When we spend time alone with God in prayer, He welcomes us into a personal friendship that grows deeper over time. In this friendship we not only sense His presence and speak to Him as we move through our days, but also learn to hear His voice:

“...the sheep follow [the shepherd], for they know his voice.” (John 10:4-5)\*

Daily consistency is the important thing. It does not have to be a long period of time, but it is not an option if we want to know God in a personal way. God will honor even a few minutes a day if we devote them to Him, reading His Word and praying as Jesus taught.

Beginning and continuing such a relationship is the focus of this week’s devotionals. As we begin, let us recognize that active service for God is not the same thing as close personal friendship. Empowered service that bears fruit is the result of an intimate friendship with God, not the cause.

Service can be effective and bear fruit, but without this intimate relationship we may not experience the fullness of God’s will. We may be out of step with His timing or working in our own strength instead of His. Without the relationship, we may succeed in our own plans but not fully succeed in His, settling for the good and missing the best.

### Where do we begin this kind of prayer life?

We must let Jesus teach us. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus laid out the basic, essential principles of prayer that will help us experience personal friendship with God and develop a meaningful and effective prayer life.

Jesus taught that we must spend time alone with God every day (Matthew 6:6). Everything else He taught about prayer and a close walk with God rests on this requirement. Jesus followed this revelation with principles for effective daily prayer, which we refer to as the “Lord’s Prayer” or the “Our Father” (Matthew 6:9-13).

This week, we begin applying these fundamental prayer principles. We’ll see why these principles help us grow deeper in our relationship with God and more effective in prayer. We’ll see how they help us put Jesus first in our daily lives.

Pause now to ask God to help you listen and learn to apply these principles of prayer...

## Week One, Day One Time With God



“But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:6).

Jesus didn't mean that we must go into a room and shut the door.

He did not do that when He prayed. But He did find ways to be alone with God, and that's what He is telling us to do today. To know God personally, we must spend time alone with Him every day, time that is devoted to Him and free of distractions.

Jesus said when we pray, not if. And we know He meant every day because in the model prayer that follows, we're told to ask “this day” for our “daily” bread. In this model prayer He provides a pattern for our daily prayer lives.

Time alone with God is essential for everything else Jesus taught about prayer. Fortunately for most of us, Jesus did not say how much time we should spend every day, just consistent time. It is amazing what God can and will do if we'll devote a few minutes to Him every morning.

*Why do you think it would be important to spend time alone with God every day? Pause and listen... Perhaps you should ask Him what He thinks. Pray about it now and listen...*

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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## Week One, Day Two Relationship With Our Father

“Our Father in heaven...” (Matthew 6:9a).

This is the beginning of Jesus' teaching for our daily prayer lives. Many of us don't immediately grasp the importance of the simple salutation “Our Father.” But it was revolutionary to those Jesus was teaching. In the Old Testament, God was rarely addressed as Father when He was, it did not indicate a close, personal family relationship.

“Father” is a family term, a word indicating the loving relationship we are privileged to have as God's children—for eternity—if we believe and receive Jesus (John 1:12). This close relationship can never be broken. No one can separate us from His love (Romans 8:35-39)! Because we have been reborn through Christ (Ephesians 2:5) and saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8), we can be confident that we have been adopted into His family (Romans 8:15). (If you have questions about this, turn to page 42, “Is Jesus Really First?”) What a great privilege is ours, to be children of God (1 John 3:1)!

*Now pause to thank God that You can call Him Father... Take a moment to reflect on what an amazing truth this is... Pause and ask Him what He thinks of you as His child. Be still and listen...*

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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**Week One, Day Three**  
**Worship**



“...hallowed be your name” (Matthew 6:9b).

Jesus teaches us to begin our prayers with worship. After coming to God like a child to a loving Father, we worship Him for who He is.

We are to “hallow” Him, to set Him apart in our heart and mind as holy. We are to spend a few moments in personal worship before we ask Him to meet our needs. Jesus teaches us to worship Him by name because His names reveal who He is. He is our Creator, our Savior, our Shepherd and King (Psalm 139:13; Jude 25; Hebrews 13:20b; 1 Timothy 1:17) and more!

When we begin each day by honoring God with our personal worship, our minds turn from our problems and concerns to focus on Him, the One who can help. When we begin our day with worship, we put Him first.

*How do you think worshiping God might help build our faith? Think about this for a moment...Are there ways in which you could make your daily time of personal worship more meaningful for you and for God? Be still for a moment and listen. Ask God what He thinks...*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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**Week One, Day Four**  
**Surrender**



“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

In this model prayer, Jesus speaks in the plural (our Father). Yet it is still very personal and individual in its focus. We each have a personal relationship with our Father, and we worship Him from hearts filled with a growing personal love for Him as our close friendship with Him develops.

This then becomes our personal prayer of surrender, “May Your kingdom come in me today; may Your will be done in my life right now.” When we give God our lives, we ask Him to take control and to work

His will in and through us for His kingdom purpose and glory every day. The kingdom is wherever the King resides (“The kingdom of God is within you” Luke 17:21) and where He resides, He must reign. He must be first.

*Is this the desire of your heart? Reflect on this for a moment... Does your life demonstrate this truth? Pause to consider this... Ask God if there is anything in your life that you have not fully surrendered. Pray and listen...*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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**Week One, Day Five**  
**Ask**



“Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11).

With this simple instruction, Jesus teaches several important points about prayer. First, we are to pray every day.

Second, we should pray early in the day—it doesn’t make much sense to ask for this day’s bread at the end of the day. We must always think in terms of giving God the first and best of what we have. And time is our most precious commodity.

Third and most important: when Jesus taught the steps of prayer, He didn’t put asking first. Yet asking is usually the largest part of our daily prayers. Perhaps that is why Jesus made such a point to teach us His pattern for prayer. He made it clear that we’re to begin our prayers with at least a few moments of personal worship and surrender. Such worship is our way of expressing our love and gratitude to our heavenly Father who is so willing and able to give. We put Him first. Only then do we ask.

*Pause and reflect over your prayers of the last few days. What has the pattern of your prayer life been? If you find it difficult to pray every day, or early in the day, pause now and ask God to help you...*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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## Practical Application

### Be encouraged—God will help you

It’s not the length of time we spend in prayer that honors God, but what we do with the time. We can put Him first by beginning a close, personal friendship with Him in only 10 minutes of prayer each morning, if we are consistent.

Start where you are—to begin or deepen your existing prayer life.

- **Our Father—relationship**

As you begin to pray, pause to consider what it means to you to be a child of God. Think about Jesus’ sacrifice and thank Him. Thank God for what He has done for you.

- **Hallow Your name—worship**

Reflect on some of God’s names, characteristics and attributes. You might pray like this—

*Father, I love you because...*

*(You first loved me. You are faithful, kind and compassionate...)*

*Father, I worship you because...*

*(You are holy, You are Almighty God, my Savior...)*

- **Your kingdom come—surrender**

Take one minute to give God your life. Give Him your mind, heart, will, attitudes, dreams and goals.

- **Give us this day our daily bread—ask**

We don’t have to do all our asking at one time. You may want to ask for a few things in the morning, and then pray throughout the day.

You are learning the secret to an effective prayer life and friendship with Jesus. Who will you teach this to? Pray now and ask God to bring someone to mind...

## Week Two, Overview

# Put Jesus First By Committing To Go Deeper

### David, our example—A man after God's heart

What an encouragement David is to us! As both shepherd boy and king, he lived in a special, deep friendship with God. Despite his sins, he will always be known as a man after God's heart (Acts 13:22).

That truth brings us much hope: we don't have to live perfect lives to have an intimate friendship with God. But we do have to confess our sins. We must draw near to Him with clean hands and a pure heart (James 4:8). Let's look briefly at David's friendship with God, the pain David's sin caused him, what he did about it, and how God forgave him:

David's love for God was obvious—

"One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life..." (Psalm 27:4a)

David's sin separated him from God— For my iniquities have gone over my head... I go about mourning... My heart throbs; my strength fails... (Psalm 38:4a, 6b, 10a)

David's confession—

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin (Psalm 51:1-2)!

God's mercy restored their fellowship—

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ...I acknowledged my sin to you and I did not cover my iniquity; ...and you forgave the iniquity of my sin... You surround me with songs of deliverance (Psalm 32:1, 5, 7, NIV).

### Lesson for us today—David's intimate closeness with God was restored when God forgave him, but for a time it was hindered by unconfessed sin.

That's a startling thought for most of us. Yet what was true for David is equally true for us today:

"...but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).

If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened (Psalm 66:18).

These verses speak of unconfessed sin, which is something we have thought or said, done or not done. They speak of sin that we know to be sin but choose not to confess and turn away from. It is a sin that is so much a part of our lives that it has become a way of thinking and reacting to people, things or circumstances.

We see in David's life that unconfessed sin can prevent God from even listening to our prayers! No wonder Jesus emphasized daily confession of sins! Other verses refer to hindrances to answered prayer as well.

For instance, Jesus warned us not to pray just to impress others:

"...you must not be like the hypocrites...they love to stand and pray...that they may be seen by others. Truly... they have received their reward" (Matthew 6:5b).

Unbiblical relationships between husbands and wives (and, by extension, with others) also can interfere with prayer:

"Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel...so that your prayers may not be hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).

### Loss of fellowship—Not loss of salvation

These Scriptures do not, however, mean that we can lose our salvation. Salvation is accomplished once and for all through Jesus, our faith in Him and in His finished work on our behalf. But unconfessed sin can keep us from personal friendship and intimate fellowship with God.

### We need never live apart from intimate friendship with God—*He is ready to forgive.*

The remedy is to confess our sins to God every day. In your morning quiet time, pray: "God, please search my heart and show me anything that might keep me from living in close friendship with You today—so that I may confess and be forgiven, according to Your promise" (1 John 1:9).

This is something Jesus clearly teaches that we should do, and we'll consider it this week. Pause now to ask God to guide you....

**Week Two, Day One**

**Jesus Teaches Us To Confess Our Sins**



“...and forgive us our sins...” (Matthew 6:12a, TLB)

Some Bibles say forgive us our “debts” or “transgressions” or “trespasses,” all of which mean sins. When Jesus gave us the pattern for our daily prayers, He clearly said that we should confess our sins.

Note that Jesus didn’t say “sin” but “sins.” We should confess our sins individually, specifically. We are not informing God. He already knows. This is for us. God wants us to identify our own actions—or inactions—and to confess each one (agreeing with Him that it is sin) to receive His mercy and cleansing (1 John 1:9). He wants our close friendship with Him to be uninterrupted.

By confessing our sins daily, we will be able to enjoy continuing friendship with Jesus, evidence that we are putting Him first. Each morning we should pause to ask.

*Is there any sin in my life that I’ve not recognized as sin? Pause and listen..  
Anything I am excusing or overlooking?... Or not wanting to admit?*

*Search my heart and show me my sins from Your point of view.  
Spend a quiet moment listening...*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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**Week Two, Day Two**

**David’s Sensitivity**

“For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...” (Psalm 51:3-4)

Again, we look to David as our example. David was sensitive to sin in his life, though he tried to ignore it. When he sinned with Bathsheba and had her husband killed (2 Samuel 11:2-24), he did not immediately confess. Psalms 32 and 38 describe how miserable this made him. When God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David, his response was simply, I have sinned against You and You only (Psalm 51:4). He made no excuse but asked God to forgive him and restore their friendship (Psalm 51:1-2, 7, 10-12).

That’s why David, who sinned so much, is still known today as the man after God’s own heart. David wasn’t perfect, but he loved God. He was broken over his sins and willing to seek God’s forgiveness.

*What have you learned from David today?*

*Reflect quietly on this for a moment...*

*Ask now, as we all should: Father, break my heart over sin in my life. Help me to see it as an offense against You and to be willing to confess.*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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**Week Two, Day Three**  
**We Need To Forgive**

“...forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us”  
(Matthew 6:12, TLB).

We are to ask God to forgive us as we forgive others.

We're to forgive others, but forgiveness does not require us to accept or excuse something someone has said or done to us that is wrong, or to remain in a hurtful relationship. If we refuse to forgive others, we don't hurt the one who sinned against us, but we hurt ourselves, building up resentment and bitterness inside. Unforgiveness is like an acid that destroys its own container.

Forgiving someone is a matter of will and obedience, not emotion (Ephesians 4:32). God will help us forgive, if we ask Him.

*Does anyone come to mind? Do you have anger, resentments or grudges? Think about it, and ask for God's help to forgive...*

*If not, thank God that you have no one to forgive. Otherwise, ask for His grace and strength to forgive as He leads.*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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**Week Two, Day Four**  
**Temptation**

“Lead us not into temptation...” (Matthew 6:13a, NIV)

Satan is our tempter (1 Thessalonians 3:5). He is not obvious (2 Corinthians 11:3). Rather, he subtly places choices before us that appear to be good (and are not essentially “bad”) but that distract us from God's purposes for our lives. We are often tempted to make a choice that is less than all God wants for us. The more subtle temptations are those we may not recognize—such as being too busy for prayer, pride that prevents our full surrender or worry that interrupts our peace. Jesus teaches us to ask for His help to deliver us from Satan's temptations, to protect us from our enemy's tricks and deceptions.

*What is our best defense against Satan's lies and deceptions? Think for a moment...*

*Ask God to help you to always be able to tell the real from the counterfeit. Pray about it now...*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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## Week Two, Day Five Seek Protection



“...but deliver us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:13b).

As we consider this point in Jesus’ model prayer, it’s comforting to read: “We know that those who have become part of God’s family do not make a practice of sinning, for God’s Son holds them securely and the evil one cannot get his hands on them” (1 John 5:18, NLT).

Yet Satan can still influence and exert control over us, if we allow it: “Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil” (Ephesians 4:26b-27, NLT).

Paul warns that unconfessed and unrepented of sin gives Satan an opportunity to establish a foothold, a place of control, in our lives. We put ourselves at risk. As we pray for protection, remember that our lifestyle could be an invitation to Satan to gain an influence over part of our lives.

*Ask God for His protection, but first ask if there are issues in your life that put you at risk and must be dealt with.*

*Pause and see if anything comes to mind...*

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**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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## Practical Application

### Taking sin seriously—

One of our greatest temptations may be to fail to take sin as seriously as we should. We may focus on the obvious sins and overlook those that are more subtle. We may fail to confess and repent of these sins, and then wonder why we still cannot experience the friendship with Jesus that we desire.

### One way to guard against such sins—

Many passages of the Bible clearly identify sins—such as the Ten

Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17), the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) or the Apostle Paul’s description of living as children of light (Ephesians 4:17-6:9). Consider these passages prayerfully, perhaps taking just one verse a day before Jesus. The moment He exposes a sin in our lives, we can confess and gain victory over it. This is one way we put Jesus first.

### What might that look like in our prayers?

Let’s consider how we might prayerfully approach the “children of light” passage (beginning with Ephesians 4:1, 17-25, NIV).

“Father, am I walking worthy of my calling (Ephesians 4:1)?”

“Does my character and do my relationships reflect (from Ephesians 4:17-25)

- a willingness to humble myself?
- gentleness?
- longsuffering, patience?
- bearing with others in love?
- working to keep unity with others?
- living in unity and peace with others?”

“Is there in my life any

- lack of purity, even in thought?
- failure to care about right and wrong?
- giving in to immorality on any level?
- greed or materialism?”

“Am I constantly putting off my old nature and any sinful habits?”

“Am I letting You renew my mind?”

“Am I consciously putting on my new nature, seeking righteousness?”

“Do I ever lie? Exaggerate? Shade the truth?”

*Reflect upon these questions, perhaps one per day, and look for other verses in the Bible to prayerfully consider in this regard.*

You are learning some difficult but necessary things for an effective prayer life and friendship with Jesus. Who will you teach these truths? Pray now and ask God to bring someone to mind...

## Week Three Overview

# Grow Stronger In Prayer

## By Building On The Fundamentals

### **The model prayer is all we need for friendship with Jesus and an effective prayer life—**

Jesus taught the model prayer in His first public sermon, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). He was telling His followers that this is the way they are to live and pray (Matthew 6:9-13). Again, consider that while these verses can be prayed just as they are written, they are meant to be used as a pattern or outline for our daily prayer lives. They do not all need to be included in every prayer we pray, but all the elements of prayer that Jesus taught should be included in our prayers at some point each day.

### **We do not grow beyond this pattern for prayer. This is the way Jesus taught us to pray.**

Praying as Jesus taught makes all our prayers more effective, even our hurried extemporaneous prayers. This is because following the pattern of the model prayer begins our day with a focus on God, rather than on ourselves or our problems and concerns. It assures that we honor God with worship, submit to Him as Lord and King, and confess our sins to prevent anything from hindering our prayers. We connect with Jesus and His power—as we put Him first in our lives.

If we begin our day with a few minutes of worship, surrender and confession, we clear the way for a day of praying effectively, without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The prophet, Nehemiah, lived out these principles of prayer centuries before Jesus taught them.

### **Nehemiah, our example: a man of prayer—**

The wall around Jerusalem had broken down (Nehemiah 1:4-11). Nehemiah's response to this heart-breaking news was to spend several days fasting and mourning before God. Then he prayed a prayer that in many ways reflects what Jesus would teach. Nehemiah worshiped God, indicated his surrender by identifying himself as a servant of God and confessed his personal sins as well as the corporate sins of God's people. Only then did he ask God for something—favor with the king (Nehemiah 1:11b).

As a result, God commissioned Nehemiah to rebuild the wall (Nehemiah 2:12). The prophet obeyed, but he didn't rush to try to do it. This is a lesson for us all!

Nehemiah waited and when God gave him the opportunity, he offered up a quick prayer and presented his request to the king. The king not only gave Nehemiah everything he asked for (time off and timber to rebuild the wall) but also an armed guard to go with him. Nehemiah's private prayer life (Nehemiah 1:4-11) had prepared him for his quick, urgent prayer in the middle of a busy day (Nehemiah 2:4b). It is the same for us today.

### **Nehemiah calls the people to prayer—as they work**

Once Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, the people joined him in rebuilding the wall—an “impossible” task that they completed in only 52 days! The reason is obvious. When their enemy threatened them, they prayed and trusted God to fight their battles. Then they did everything they could to be prepared and ready.

At one point Nehemiah instructed them to work with one hand and hold a weapon in the other (they kept a sword at their sides). Does that remind you of what the Apostle Paul said about prayer?

“Take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word [spoken word] of God. ...With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints (Ephesians 6:17b-18, NIV).”

So too, we need to enter each day with powerful prayer—the sword of the Spirit, spoken verses from the Bible. The more familiar we are with the Bible, the more naturally we will do this. We hear this in the prayers of mature believers, who are so familiar with the Bible that God's thoughts have become their own.

Every time we pray a verse from the Bible, even softly to ourselves, it becomes the sword of the Spirit, adding a new dimension to our prayers. It's easy to understand why:

“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 (1 John 5:14-15, NIV, italics added).”

Anyone, even the newest believer, can learn to pray effectively for God's will by praying verses from the Bible. This week we will see how to add verses to the prayer pattern Jesus established.

*Pause to ask God to help you to see easy ways to add Bible verses to your prayers as we move through this week's devotionals...*

**Week Three, Day One**

**Add Words From The Bible To Worship**



"I love you, O LORD, my strength....my rock and my fortress and my deliverer..."  
(Psalm 18:1-2a)

Let's look again at the elements of daily prayer that Jesus taught in Matthew 6, strengthening our prayers with words from the Bible. We begin with acknowledging our relationship with our Father and worship. One way to keep our worship fresh and meaningful is to incorporate God's names and attributes (character traits). The more often we use them in prayer, the better we'll remember them. You may want to begin a list of them somewhere in your Bible for quick reference.

Verses from the Psalms can enrich your personal worship as well. Many of the Psalms are, or include, prayers of worship. In Psalm 18, for example, you might pray, "Father, I love You, for You are the LORD, my strength. I worship You as David did, for You are my rock, my fortress and my deliverer."

*What other ways of using the Bible for worship come to mind?  
Think about it a moment...*

*Ask God to show you ways to expand your prayers of worship.  
Pause and listen...*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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*For examples of Names and Attributes of God, see page 36.*

**Week Three, Day Two**

**Surrender With Words From The Bible**



"...put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life... and... put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:22-24)."

An appropriate way to surrender is with a simple prayer, "Lord, I give You my life." But as we grow in prayer, it's worthwhile to expand our prayer of surrender with truths from the Bible. We might pause to ask, "What must I let go of—what part of my 'old self' should I put off and what should I put on in prayer to replace it?" Such surrender keeps Jesus first in our lives.

For example, if we struggle with worry, we replace it with peace (Philippians 4:6-7). We replace pride with a humble spirit (Proverbs 29:23) or materialism with contentment (Philippians 4:12). We learn to put off the old and put on the new by reading the Bible every day.

*In what way might this strengthen your prayer life? Think about it...*

*Ask God: What is left of my old self that I need to put off?*

*What should I put on instead? Then listen...*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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*For examples of how to surrender by "putting off the old and putting on the new" see page 37.*

**Week Three, Day Three**

**Ask According To The Bible**



“Make them pure and holy by teaching them your words of truth” (John 17:17, NLT).

Though Jesus taught beginners to pray for “daily bread” (physical and material needs), He prayed for spiritual needs as well. The longer prayers of the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 1:16-19; 3:14-19; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12) show the same thing. Out of the 24 specific requests in their prayers, there was only one for “daily bread.” Every other request was for spiritual needs such as spiritual growth, maturity, protection and unity.

As we grow and mature in our prayer lives, shouldn't we be praying for the things that were important to Jesus and Paul? An easy way to follow their example is to pray verses from the Bible. For example if we pray, “Father, help us to seek Your kingdom and righteousness as the most important priority in our lives” (Matthew 6:33), we can be assured that our “daily bread” needs will be provided as well (Matthew 6:25-32).

*Ask God to show you how your prayers might be strengthened by including Bible verses. Pause to listen...*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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**Week Three, Day Four**

**Seek Forgiveness As You Read The Bible**

“Rejoice always...” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Earlier we discussed using verses from the Bible that identify specific sins as a basis for our prayers of confession, perhaps reviewing a verse a day.

Another way is to read our Bible devotionally each morning. Whenever we find something that we clearly should or shouldn't do, pause to ask God about it. As we read the verse above, for example, we might pray, “Father, are there times that I'm not rejoicing as I should?”

When He brings something to mind, agree with Him: “You are right.

Forgive me. I revisit rejoicing in that situation. Help me to be a person You can count on to always rejoice in the knowledge that You love me, that You are faithful no matter what circumstances I face.” This prayer includes the willingness to turn away from sin in God's strength. It puts Jesus first.

*Ask God to help you to read the Bible slowly enough to give Him time to apply His truths to your life.*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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**Week Three, Day Five**

**Pray Verses From The Bible For Protection**



“...take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17b-18a, NLT).

In this passage, Paul identifies the spoken verses from the Bible (the Greek word is *rhema*) as our weapon against the powers of darkness. That is how Jesus defeated Satan in the wilderness. Three times as He was tempted, Jesus simply said, “It is written...” and quoted Bible verses (Matthew 4:1-11).

We can do the same. We can simply declare, “It is written—the blood of Christ protects me from the evil one” (Revelation 12:11) or “It is written—Jesus will bring me through any temptation”(1 Corinthians 10:13). We can also incorporate these truths into our prayers: “Father, thank You that it is written—the Spirit within me is greater than any evil spirit in the world” (1 John 4:4), or “Father, thank You that, although Satan is the father of lies, it is written that I have within me the Spirit of truth” (John 8:44; 14:16-17).

Referring to the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17) makes another strong prayer, when we understand that the armor isn’t just a word picture, but a description of the life we are to live in Christ (Ephesians 1:1-6:9).

*Ask God in what ways your armor is complete—or incomplete.  
Pause and listen...*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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**Practical Application**

**The power of the Bible, God’s Word—strengthens our prayers**

Let’s be encouraged to continue to add Bible verses to our prayers knowing that there is power in God’s Word (the Bible) to change lives:

God’s Word is living and active, exposing thoughts and attitudes. (Hebrews 4:12)

God’s Word will accomplish His purpose. (Isaiah 55:11)

God’s Word is like a hammer breaking rocks. (Jeremiah 23:29)

God’s Word is a lamp for our feet, a light to our path. (Psalm 119:105)

Jesus is called The Word of God. (Revelation 19:13)

**Praying for more people with fewer words—His words**

Jesus’ mother, at the wedding feast in Cana, provides an interesting insight about expressing concerns for others. The host had run out of wine. Jesus’ mother didn’t come to Him with a lot of details or explanations. She did not suggest ways He might help. She didn’t mention that He might consider turning water into wine. She simply presented the need, “They have no wine,” (John 2:3) and left it in His hands.

When we pray, most of us tend to give God far too many details. Wouldn’t it be better to give God fewer details, so that we can pray for more people and about more things?

**Praying over a list of requests—effectively**

Often we have lists of people or prayer requests to pray over, yet limited time. One way to pray more effectively is to use Bible verses as general prayers for everyone on a list. Who wouldn’t benefit from being “born again” if they aren’t saved (John 3:3, 5) or from “learning to imitate Christ” (1 Thessalonians 1:6) if they are?

We can pray verses from the Bible over a list of requests from family, friends and others we pray for. We can then quickly pray through the list, mentioning individuals by name. If we are aware of specific “daily bread” needs for some on our list, we simply bring them to Jesus as His mother did at the wedding feast in Cana (John 2:1). “They have no more wine” (or for us, Michael is very ill, Sharon needs provision, give Sam guidance, grant Amy peace). God knows the details and extent of the need far better than we do.

*Pause and ask God to help you expand your understanding of how to add Bible verses to your personal prayers...*

## Week Four Overview

# Grow Stronger In Prayer

## By Praying The Promises

### First, the minimum essentials of prayer—the “Our Father”

So far, we have considered the first and most fundamental principles of prayer that Jesus taught. These principles (Matthew 6:6, 9-13) lead us into a growing personal friendship with Jesus. As we follow these principles, our prayers become stronger and more effective. We learn to spend time with God our Father every day, and we pray as Jesus taught through the “Our Father” pattern. As we

- honor our *relationship* with our heavenly Father,
- hallow His name with *worship*,
- *surrender* our lives,
- *ask* for daily needs,
- *confess* our sins,
- *seek* protection from the evil one and return to worship.

...we can rely on God to help us find the discipline and consistency to mature and grow. Over time we're ready to understand and apply more advanced teaching on prayer.

### Next steps in prayer—persistence and boldness

The next level of prayer includes the principles of persistence and boldness. This teaching came in the form of two familiar parables: “The Friend at Midnight” (persistence in praying for others, Luke 11:5-8) and “The Widow and the Unjust Judge” (boldness in praying for ourselves, Luke 18:2-5). Jesus taught these parables to His disciples mid-way through His ministry. At this point His disciples had been with Him about a year and a half, and they had surely grown beyond the basics of prayer.

Jesus' earliest followers were not ready to understand and apply these principles of persistence and boldness, nor are beginners today. At first, His disciples were just learning to come to God personally to ask for their daily needs to be met. Like them we must all grow in our understanding of the faithfulness of God to find the persistence and boldness to continue in prayer without giving up.

Jesus said we must not give up (Luke 18:1). Have you known someone who has prayed for many years for something that God has not yet done? Have you prayed a long time, perhaps for someone's salvation? The only thing that can sustain such prayer is living and maturing in faith.

### Finally, prayer promises for the mature and committed—to receive whatever we ask!

The key to understanding the prayer promises of Jesus is to understand to whom they were given and with what conditions. The familiar “ask, seek and knock...everyone who asks will receive...” (Matthew 7:7-9), is given in the context of the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus lays out the principles by which we are to live. If we want the promise, we must live by these principles. This is another way we put Jesus first.

Other amazing prayer promises were given only in the last week of His life, all but one in the last night of His life. They were not given to casual followers, but to the *committed few* who had lived with Him for more than three years. These were the men to whom He would entrust the building of His church.

Are these promises for us today? Absolutely—when we are as committed to Him as His trusted 11 disciples were. We will consider some of these important promises this week.

### Obedience—not perfection—is required

Any promise of the Bible must be considered both in the context of the entire passage and the whole truth of the Bible. The Apostle John makes it clear that we cannot separate the life we live from the prayers we pray and expect God to give us whatever we ask.

God honors obedience—

“...if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, *because we obey his commands and do what pleases him*” (1 John 3:21-22, NIV, italics added).

This does not mean we have to live perfect lives, but obedient lives—confessing our sins so that our prayers are not hindered. How we live and what we pray *have a direct impact on the effectiveness of our prayers*. God can and will answer any prayer He chooses to answer. But we must consider that His answers, at least in part, depend upon the life we live. Through our obedience, we put Jesus first. The prayer of a *righteous* man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16b, NIV, italics added)

This not only means the righteousness of Jesus, but the daily righteousness we must choose to live by—our decision to live according to the Bible and to obediently confess and repent when we fail.

*Pause and ask God to help you live in such a way that He will be pleased to honor His promises when you pray (in His way, according to His will).*

**Week Four, Day One**

**Prayer Promise: The Power Of Agreement**

“Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:19).

This promise is not what it may seem at first glance. Jesus had been talking about church discipline. He was establishing a principle, that when we come on church business—kingdom business—and we ask in agreement with His will (1 John 5:14-15), we can have what we ask.

This puts an incredible value on praying with others. When we do, if what we ask will advance God’s kingdom and is according to His will, our prayers have power we can’t fully understand. Are you comfortable praying with others? Many are not and it’s okay to pray silently along with others who are. But if you always pray silently, how can others agree with you?

*If praying aloud with others is difficult for you, ask God to help. Pray about it now...*

*If you are comfortable in corporate prayer, ask Him to make you sensitive to those who are not.*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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**Week Four, Day Two**

**Prayer Promise: In Jesus ‘Name**

“If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it” (John 14:14).

Jesus gave this promise to the 11 disciples through whom He would build His church. They had lived with Him, learned from Him and were committed to Him. When we have that kind of devoted friendship with Him, these promises are for us as well. But we need to consider them in context.

To pray in His name is to pray in His authority—the authority that’s given to us to manage His kingdom affairs. We must pray according to His nature and character, from His perspective and point of view, asking for what He would ask if He were praying. Then—we can ask for anything and He will do it. When we pray for things such as spiritual needs according to His expressed will, we can ask in His name—because it is His kingdom business. Praying for His kingdom purpose is a way we put Jesus first.

*Ask God to give you His kingdom perspective on your prayers. Pray this now...*

*Ask God’s help to more fully understand how to pray in Jesus’ name. Ask Him now...*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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**Week Four, Day Three**

**Prayer Promise: Move Mountains**

“Have faith in God. ...whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes... it will be done for him” (Mark 11:22-23). Sometimes we feel like we’re facing mountains. In the Bible, mountains are often symbolic of obstacles to doing what God has given us to do. We’re often tempted to try to accomplish His plan with our own ingenuity and resources. This is as true for us personally as it is for us corporately in the body of Christ as we serve together.

Moving ahead of God reveals doubt that He will come through. If the mountain needs to be moved to accomplish God’s will, in His timing and in His way, He will move it. Our job is to pray in faith and wait.

Waiting doesn’t mean “doing nothing.” It means continuing to do the last thing God told us to do, until He gives us something else.

*In what part of your life do you feel your faith is strong?  
Pause to think about it...*

*Where is your faith weak? Ask Jesus to increase your faith (Luke 17:5).*

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**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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**Week Four, Day Four**

**Prayer Promise: Abiding In The Vine**

“If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit...” (John 15:7-8a).

In this passage Jesus is comparing the relationship we are to have with Him, as being like the relationship between a branch and its vine. We’re to live that close to Him, to have an inseparable and totally dependent relationship with Him. His words and His teachings, are to become part of us, and when they are, they will transform our minds (Romans 12:1-2).

As we live in such a relationship with Him, we’ll pray for the things on His heart, according to His will. We’ll receive what we ask because such prayers will bear fruit for His kingdom and for the Father’s glory, because we’re putting Jesus first. What a blessing to be such a vital part of His kingdom work through prayer!

*What impact do you think it will have on your life and the life of your church if you all begin praying for each other that you will be those who abide in Christ? Seriously consider this for a moment.*

*Ask God what He thinks. Pause and listen...*

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**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

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**My prayer response**

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**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

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## Week Four, Day Five

# Has God Become More Real To You?

“And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again” (Philippians 1:6, NLT).

As you have completed this journal, has Jesus become more real to you? Have you developed a deeper friendship with Him, heard His voice, seen Him answer your prayers for His purpose and glory? Have you learned that He desires to spend time with you? Have you realized that your friendship with Him is up to you and the choices you make? If so, our prayers for you and the impact of this journal in your life have been answered.

Now, prayerfully consider: what will you do with what you have heard from God, with what you’ve recorded on these journal pages? Will it make a difference in your life a week from now? A month? Five years down the road? Will it help you keep Jesus first? Will you share it with others?

*Ask God what He considers the most important thing He has shown you. Then listen...*

*Ask Him to help it make a lasting difference in your life. Pray about it now...*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me? Pause and listen...**

**My prayer response**

**As I listen, this is my my impression of what God wants me to do**

## Keep Going!

Once you have completed this I Am Second Prayer Journal, our prayer is that you will want to continue journaling with this format or something similar—whatever works well for you.

You can conveniently follow this format in any kind of notebook or journal. Keep in mind that you do not have to write something every day to keep an effective record of things God has revealed to you.

You may find yourself journaling several days in a row and then perhaps only once or twice a week for a period of time. The important thing is not to give it up.

Journaling will help you develop your sensitivity to God’s “still, small voice” (1 Kings 19:12) and to track your own spiritual journey in your desire to keep Jesus first in your life.

## Sample Journal Page

Date: Today's Date

**Scripture, or a quote from your daily devotional, or prayer**

(Record the Bible verse or something from your devotional reading or prayer that you sense God has impressed upon you.)

It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. Ps. 8:3.

**What does my heart sense God is saying to me?**

God knows how weary I am this morning. He wants me to know

I can count on Him to give me strength.

**My prayer response—**

My prayer response. Help me to remember this promise, not just today, but every time I feel exhausted and used up, to turn to You.

**My impression of what God wants me to do—**

Trust Him to always be there for me.

### **The Word tells us Jesus is—**

Our Comforter (2 Corinthians 1:4)  
Our Defender (Proverbs 23:11, NIV)  
Our Deliverer (Psalm 144:2)  
Our Fortress (Psalm 18:2)  
Our Guide (Psalm 48:14, NIV)  
Our Healer (Exodus 15:26)  
Our Hope (Romans 15:13)  
Our King (Psalm 10:16)  
Our Peace (Ephesians 2:14)  
Our Protector (Psalm 32:7)  
Our Provider (Genesis 22:14)  
Our Redeemer (Isaiah 47:4)  
Our Refuge (Psalm 46:1)  
Our Rock (Psalm 28:1)  
Our Shield (Psalm 18:2)  
Our Strong Tower (Psalm 61:3)  
Our Sure Foundation (Isaiah 28:16)

### **God's character and attributes show that Jesus is—**

abounding in love (Psalm 103:8, NIV)  
all-knowing (Psalm 94:11)  
all-powerful (Jeremiah 32:17)  
ever present (Psalm 139:7-10)  
faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9)  
forgiving (1 John 1:9)  
good (Psalm 86:5, NIV)  
great (Psalm 76:1)  
holy (Isaiah 6:3)  
kind (Psalm 18:50, NIV)  
majestic (Psalm 145:5, NIV)  
patient (2 Peter 3:9)  
rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4, NIV)  
righteous (Psalm 145:17)  
slow to anger (Psalm 103:8)  
trustworthy (Psalm 9:10)

### **We put off the old and put on the new—**

Consider the parts of your “old nature” that keep getting in the way of your living the life you desire to live. Put them off as Paul instructs (Ephesians 4:22-24), but don't stop there. Ask God to help you put on those opposite positive character traits that will strengthen you for His life and service. For example:

Help me to put off pride (Proverbs 16:5)—  
and put on humility (James 4:6).

Help me to put off my critical nature (Galatians 5:15)—  
and put on kindness (Colossians 3:12).

Help me to put off lack of love (John 4:7, 8, 20)—  
and put on unconditional love (John 15:12).

Help me to put off worry (John 14:1a)—  
and put on faith and trust in God (John 14:1b).

Help me to put off impatience (James 1:2-4)—  
and put on patience (Hebrews 10:36).

Help me to put off unforgiveness (Mark 11:26)—  
and put on forgiveness (Colossians 3:13).

Help me to put off my temper (Proverbs 25:28)—  
and put on self-control (Proverbs 16:23).

Help me put off unbelief (Hebrews 3:12)—  
and put on faith (Hebrews 11:1, 6).

Help me put off neglecting study of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:14-17)—  
and put on regular Bible study (Psalm 1:2).

Help me put off lack of burden for the lost (Matthew 9:36-38)—  
and put on compassion, witnessing (Acts 1:8).

Help me put off lies and exaggerations (Ephesians 3:25)—  
and put on speaking the truth (Zechariah 8:16).

Help me put off prayerlessness (1 Samuel 12:23)—  
and put on praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Help me put off procrastination (Proverbs 10:5)—  
and put on diligence (Proverbs 27:1).

Help me put off gluttony (Proverbs 23:21)—  
and put on discipline (1 Corinthians 9:27).

*(You'll want to make your own list.)*

## Let Your Hand Remind You

Now that you have completed this journal, our prayer is that you will use your hand as a reminder for your daily prayers. We hope you will share this simple tool with others throughout your life.

You will find this an appropriate outline for praying with small groups, in prayer-walking and in any opportunity you may have to teach or encourage others in their personal prayer lives and friendship with Jesus.



### Relationship

“But 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” (Matthew 6:6).

This teaching of Jesus immediately precedes His model prayer. We know that Jesus meant that we are to get alone with God every day, because in the prayer that follows, He said to ask God to give us “this day” our “daily bread.”

The palm of the hand is the essential foundation for fingers and thumb, our daily reminder that time alone with God is equally essential as the foundation of our personal relationship with Him. “This, then, is how you should pray:

‘Our Father in heaven...’ (Matthew 6:9). We acknowledge that we are coming to our heavenly Father as His child. We thank Him that we can come and tell Him how much we love Him as our Father.



### Worship

“...hallowed be your name...” (Matthew 6:9).

The thumb empowers our fingers. In the same way worshipping God and hallowing His name connects us to His presence and power for the coming day. Jesus taught us to worship before we ask. Your hand will remind you of this important truth.



### Surrender

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

Our first finger is second only the thumb in importance to our hand. It reminds us that surrender is our response to worshipping God in spirit and in truth. He is God; we are not. We pray for His kingdom to come—in our lives today. We ask that His will be done—in our lives today.



### Ask

“Give us today our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11).

Our second finger represents asking God to meet our needs. Jesus taught us to ask for what we need. But He also taught that prayer is much more than asking. We’re to begin with worship and surrender which honor God.



### Forgive

“Forgive us our debts (sins), as we also have forgiven our debtors (those who sin against us)” (Matthew 6:12).

Our third finger is weaker than the first two. It is especially appropriate in representing confession of our sins, our human weakness and failure. Though we may confess our sins throughout the day, in our time alone with our Father we should pause to let Him search our hearts and confess any sin He brings to mind.



### Protect

“And don’t let us yield to temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,” (Matthew 6:13, NLT).

Our fourth finger represents our prayer for protection from the evil one (Satan). We ask for protection with a proper view of God and Satan—they are not equal: Satan is a defeated foe!



### Worship

“for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen” (Matthew 6:13).

We begin our prayers with a focus on God, and that’s the way we close them. This builds our faith and encourages us to keeping mind that God is Almighty, more awesome and powerful than anything we face.

*May our hands remind us to spend time alone with Jesus every day, praying as He taught. May they remind us to put Jesus first!*



## Is Jesus Really First?

This is a question that is easy to answer—if you aren't sure—by verses from the Bible that reveal this truth:

- Have you believed in Jesus, trusting Him, relying on Him for everything?  
Have you received Jesus into Your heart and life? (John 1:12)
- Have you become a new creation in Christ? Have you changed—desiring to turn away from sin, to spend time in the Bible, to live the life His children are called to live? (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- Do you know Jesus through personal experience? (Matthew 7:21-23)
- Have you believed in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and spoken with your mouth that Jesus is Lord? (Romans 10:9)
- Have you repented—turning away from sin, desiring to live an obedient life? (Luke 13:3, 5)

If these things don't seem real in your life and you want them to be, speak to a pastor or godly friend—or pray a prayer like this:

“God, I believe Jesus is Your Son and I now receive Him into my heart, my life. I believe that Jesus died for my sins, that He was buried and raised again to new life. I confess that I have sinned against You and I'm sorry. Forgive me and help me to turn away from sin in Your strength. I acknowledge Jesus as my Savior and my Lord and I pray in His name—amen.”

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### Prayer Guide written by Jim and Kaye Johns, Directors/e3 Prayer

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