

# PRAYING

with Purpose and Perspective



**CORE  
CLASS**



# Introduction

Studying prayer is like studying a mountain. It is helpful to stand at a distance and philosophically observe its size, shape, and features. Potential difficulties and dangers can be assessed, debated, and studied. This knowledge is useful, but will not satisfy the one who wants to touch the rocks, climb the walls, and see the world from on top of the mountain. At times, we need to step back and look at prayer from a big picture point of view. At other times, we must grab our pick ax and approach the mountain.

Tonight, we will do both. We will scan the mountain from a distance and go up close, look at its features, and feel the wind on our face as we climb. We have much to learn from those who have climbed this mountain before us. Throughout our study, there are numerous thoughts and quotes from saints who have climbed with vigor and passion and have left a roadmap of their journey and a journal of their experiences.

All of us need to work on our prayer life. All of us need to make sure that our lifeline is untangled, free of debris, and fully connected to the Lord. Join me in exploring God's Word on the subject of prayer.



Climbing with you,

*Mike Graham*

Mike Graham  
*Pastor of Community Life*

# Table of Contents

Framing Our Conversation About Prayer . . . . .	.4
A Biblical Study of Prayer . . . . .	.5
Session 1: Prerequisites to Prayer . . . . .	.7
Session 2: Bible Basics: God’s Commands, Promise, and Conditions . . . . .	.9
Session 3: Gospel Basics: Prayer in Light of Our Relationship with God, His Plan for the World, and His Plan to Transform Us. . . . .	12
Session 4: Applications and Examples of Prayer . . . . .	16
Bibliography & Additional Resources for Studying the Psalms . . . . .	25
How to Use the Prayer Chart . . . . .	26
Prayer Accountability Chart. . . . .	27
Proud, Unbroken People vs. Broken People . . . . .	28
Praying the Psalms . . . . .	29
Purpose of this Study . . . . .	30
How to Use This “Praying the Psalms” Study . . . . .	31
Psalms Observations . . . . .	32
Weekly Reflections . . . . .	34
Reflections on the Psalms . . . . .	36
2019 Core Class Schedule . . . . .	39

# **Framing Our Conversation About Prayer**

*Seeing Prayer in Relation to God's Nature*

1. God is Relational and Conversational, Actively Revealing Himself
2. God Transcends Creation
3. He Chooses to Dwell and Live inside of Time, Space, and Matter with Us
4. He Created Out of Abundance
5. He Created for His Glory, We Bring Him Glory by...

# A Biblical Study of Prayer

Some of you enter this study with excitement and others with dread. Prayer can be the most delightful and uplifting experience of the day or, for others, a lonely fight, struggling to sense God's presence.

## **The Struggle – Can you relate?**

We read that God has promised to answer our prayers. Yet, often I don't receive what I had requested. Did God not hear me correctly? Does He not want me to be happy? Over time we can grow cynical and faith turns to doubt.

We are told that prayer is a great time to connect with the Lord and enjoy him. But, I often feel like I am praying to the ceiling. Prayer reminds me of the distance I feel in my relationship with God. In shame, I don't share this experience with friends who speak with fondness of prayer. What is wrong with me? Does God not want to spend time with me?

I have achieved the family and income I have desired. What need do I have to pray? I have set up my life to be independent, why express needs that I do not feel that I have?

Every time I try to pray, I get distracted. I can't keep my mind in one place. Somehow, I am trying to pray for a missionary family, but I keep thinking about my grocery list. Perhaps I am not as spiritual as everyone thinks I am.

God knows what I have done. He knows my thoughts, fears, desires, and past failures. Why would he want to spend time with me? I already have enough guilt, why talk to a God who knows all of my problems and failures?

***Unintentionally, we slowly slide into doubt, cynicism, guilt, and hopelessness and we simply stop praying.***

## Where are you in your prayer life?

**Sailing** – living the Christian life with the wind at your back. God is real to your heart and you often feel his love. Life is hard, but the winds push you forward.

**Rowing** – prayer and the Christian life feels more like duty than delight. God's presence feels faint, but you diligently press on (wondering why things feel off or wrong). Pleasure may be sought in things outside of your Christian life.

**Drifting** – you are experiencing some of the conditions of the rower (spiritual dryness and distance from God), but the paddles have been put back in the boat. The Bible is placed on the shelf and prayers dry up. Life takes us down the stream, farther and farther away from our first love. Often cynicism can rise in our spirit as we question if God really hears us.

**Sinking** – forward motion in the Christian life is gone. Numbness and hardness take over. Your faith and identity in Christ no longer guide your decisions or perceptions. Spiritual despair fills the boat. Shame is added to cynicism as we stop praying so that we no longer feel the sting of seemingly unheard and unanswered prayers (points adapted from Keller, 258).

Which if these descriptions best describe your prayer life?

What are your hopes for your relationship with God?

No one sails forever! Everyone has times when they pick up the oars. God's means of grace – the Bible, prayer, Christian friends, and the church can help create a current for guidance and assistance. Disconnection from these will lead to that lonely paddle upstream.

**There is hope!** No matter where you are and how you feel. Your *abba* Father knows, cares, and wants you to drink deeply at his well. Our prayer life is designed to feel like a dinner with your closest friends. May this study help you grow in your relationship with God and cultivate your prayer life.

# Session 1 - Prerequisites to Prayer

*(Psalms 1 & 2 point to these prerequisites)*

## A. The Work of Christ

We must have an accurate view and understanding of our relationship with God to grow and flourish in our prayer life.

**Romans 3:21-22** What is the basis for our right standing (righteousness) before God?

Is there anything that can change our standing before the Father (**Romans 8:31-39**)?

What lies do we often believe that cause us to think that we are not fully accepted and desired before our Father?

**John 1:12** What kind of access does a child have to their parent? What is the response of a loving parent when they see their child running to them (**Romans 8:15**)?

How does this image and reality help us understand our prayer life?

**Hebrews 4:15-16** Why is it important for us to know that we have a sympathizer? How are we to approach the throne?

**Hebrews 10:19-22** How does it make you feel to know that the Creator God of the universe desires for you to “draw near”?

The enemy, our own hearts, and others around us often express, believe, and teach inconsistencies and lies against the truths taught above about our relationship with God. What are some of these inconsistencies and lies?

What happens to our prayer life if we begin to believe them?

“Jesus lost his relationship with the Father so that we could have a relationship with God as Father. Jesus was forgotten so that we could be remembered forever—from everlasting to everlasting. Jesus Christ bore all the eternal punishment that our sins deserve. **That is the cost of prayer.** Jesus paid the price so God could be our father” (Keller, 80).



## B. The Word of God

God begins the conversation with us through His Word. The Word teaches us our greatest needs, His will, and how to pray. To interact with God's Word is to interact with God himself (Keller, 54, 55, 62). Psalm 1, the intro to a book of prayers, is not about prayer, but about the need to start with meditation on God's Word for guidance.

The Word teaches us about the God to whom we pray and God uses his Word to give us instruction and examples of how to address him.

***“Turn the Bible into prayer.”***

– ROBERT MURRAY M'CHEYNE, (WHITNEY, 37)

The Bible itself can be our teacher. We open it and use it to converse with God. Its words guide our thoughts, hearts, and words, directing us to the Lord. It is a bottomless well of wisdom that allows us to drink deeply of the Lord guiding our prayer-filled times with him.

***“Open the Bible, start reading it, and pause at every verse and turn it into a prayer.”***

– JOHN PIPER, (WHITNEY, 33)

**Method:** “To pray the Bible, you simply go through the passage line by line, talking to God about whatever comes to mind as you read the text. How easy that is? Anyone can do it” (Whitney, 33).

The book of Psalms is a great place to start. It gives us examples of prayer from the highest heights and the darkest pits. Psalm 1 puts the reader at the feet of God with the Word opened and prepared to first hear from God before addressing God. We are called to meditate on God's Word as our first step. It is our light post as we enter the cave of prayer.

Read Psalm 1 – What do you learn about the Word of God?

How must this affect our prayer life? What happens when we do not center our prayer life around the Word?

***“God's word is living, and so it infuses our prayers with life and vitality. God's word is also active, injecting energy and power into our prayer.”***

– JONI EARECKSON TADA, (WHITNEY, 43)

***“Prayer is continuing a conversation that God has started through his Word and his grace, which eventually becomes a full encounter with him.”***

– TIMOTHY KELLER, 48

## Session 2 - Bible Basics: God's Commands, Promises, and Conditions

### A. God's Command

What do we learn from each verse? What is He commanding us to do in each verse?

***Romans 12:12***

***Colossians 4:2***

***1 Thessalonians 5:17***

***Ephesians 6:18***

It is easy to think of prayer as simply a one-on-one experience with God. Prayer is also to be experienced in community, with our brothers and sisters before the throne. "Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace" (Hebrews 4:16). The Psalms are also an example, "The praying people, whose prayers are the Psalms, prayed as a worshiping community. All the psalms are prayers in community... Prayer is not a private exercise, but a family convocation" (Peterson, 18).

### B. God's Promise

What do we learn from each verse?

***John 16:24***

Prayer "changed from musical clamor to beautiful music once the Father's hands grasped the little child's hands" (Bounds, 17). In his name, references our need for God to take us by the hand, and guide us down the road of prayer. It is not a stamp, making God bend to our wills.

## ***Matthew 21:22***

“Prayers are tools that God uses to work his will in our bodies and souls. Prayers are tools that we use to collaborate in his work with us” (Peterson, 2).

***“Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays.”***

– SOREN KIERKEGAARD

### **Prayer Works!**

How do we see prayer work in each verse?

### ***2 Corinthians 1:10-11***

### ***Philippians 1:19***

### ***Philemon 22***

“God can answer prayer, though he bestows not the very thing for which we pray. He can sometimes better answer the lawful desires and good end we have in prayer another way.

If our end be our own good and happiness, God can perhaps better answer that end in bestowing something else than in the bestowment of the very thing we ask.

And if the main good we aim at in our prayers be attained, our prayer is answered” (Edwards, Works, 1:122-42).

## C. Conditions for Answered Prayer

What condition is given in each verse?

**Matthew 7:7-8**

**1 John 3:21-22**

According to **1 John 3:19-20**, why should our hearts not condemn us?

**John 15:7**

“Faith that makes prayers strong gives it patience to wait on God” (Bounds, 26).

**1 John 5:14-15**

“If we will make use of prayer, not to wrest from God advantages for ourselves or our dear ones, or to escape from tribulations and difficulties, but to call down upon ourselves and others those things which will glorify the name of God then we shall see the strongest boldest promises of the Bible about prayer fulfilled also in our weak, little prayer life. Then we shall see such answers to prayer as we had never thought possible” (O’Hallsbey, 127).

**Hindrances to Prayer**

**James 4:3**

“Let no one profess to trust in God, and yet lay up for future wants, otherwise the Lord will first send him to the hoard he has amassed, before He can answer the prayer for more.” - George Muller

**Psalms 66:18**

How often should our prayers sound like Psalm 51? What role does repentance and faith play in the prayer life of the believer?

## Session 3 - Gospel Basics: Prayer in Light of Our Relationship with God, His Plan for the World, and His Plan to Transform Us

### A. Prayer in Light of Our Relationship with God

Prayer is like spending time with friends and family at the dinner table. Relaxed, open-ended, fun, and intentional. Remembering the nature of our relationship with God will help us see how God views us, our prayers, and the best way to answer our prayers.

- **Jesus is our Older Brother** – He knows what you are going through because he has gone before us and has experienced our struggles and pain (**Hebrews 2:17-18**).
- **He is our Father** – He cares, wants the best for us, seeks our spiritual maturity.

“It is fit that God should answer prayer, and as an infinitely wise God, in the exercise of his own wisdom, and not ours. God will deal as a father with us, in answering our requests. But a child is not to expect that the father’s wisdom be subject to his; nor ought he to desire it, but should esteem it a privilege, that the parent will provide for him according to his own wisdom” (Edwards, Works, 1:122-42).

- **Our Closest Friend** – He knows everything about us, inside and out, the good and the bad (Psalm 139).
- **Our Teacher** – He knows the lessons we need to learn. He understands our process of growth and where we need encouragement, redirection, and a new point of view.
- **Our Coach** – We have been placed on mission. He pushes us out of our comfort zone and presents challenges that will strengthen us and prepare us for action.
- **The Lord of All** - Sovereign – He is in control of every detail
- **Loving** – He wants what is truly best for us / Knowing Him more is always what’s best for us
- **All-wise** – He knows what is truly best for us
- **Patient** – He sees the long game and how to get there

Based on our relationship with Him, how would He respond to a request that would not be best for us? Or not best at this moment? Or not actually meeting our greatest need?

Our greatest need is spiritual growth. Often God will answer our prayers in such a way as to challenge us and grow us spiritually. He always hears, He always answers in way that represents all of the aspects of his relationship with us.

**The more we know God, the more we will love and trust Him—  
producing a heart and prayer life of faith and intimacy!**

## B. God's Plan for the World

1. **God Reveals Himself to the World Over Time through the Gospel** - Why do people in heaven respond to God differently than Adam and Eve in the garden?

- God reveals His nature over time through His plan of Redemption. God's great plan for the ages displays His infinitely beautiful nature.
  - Through good and bad circumstances, rebellion and obedience, and suffering and flourishing.
  - Through displaying His holiness, justice, and wrath and by displaying his love, grace, and patience.
- Everything that happens teaches us about the Lord, about man, and points to the need for Jesus.

2. **God Reveals Himself to Us Over Time** as He transforms His children through the ongoing work of the Gospel. Times of peace, celebration, suffering, sin, and even pain are all opportunities to see God's hand at work.
  - The Christian life flows from the work of the cross in every circumstance. Jesus is the centerpiece of all of human history and He is the foundation for all spiritual growth.
  - He transforms us to live out Mark 12:30-31 = **Love and Service**

Can He use anything and everything to teach us more about Himself?  
How might this perspective change the way we pray?

**Seeing life through these eyes, makes every moment in life,  
regardless of circumstances, an opportunity to learn more about  
the Lord and to see the work of Christ in our life!**

## C. God's Plan to Transform Us – What do we do with Suffering and Sin?

### 1. Suffering

Will there always be suffering?

Do trials and hardships cause upstrokes or down strokes?

Are there times that hardship and trial may actually bring God glory in our lives?

**James 1:2-4** What is the result of trials?

**James 1:5-6** How might God answer your prayer for wisdom where you presently lack?

Is God displaying love even in your trials and hardships? Why is it so hard to trust Him in these moments?

How would our lives change if we viewed hardships and sufferings as opportunities?

How does **Matthew 6:33-34** fit into this discussion? What do we learn about praying according to God's will in these verses?

In our prayers, are we asking for comfort or transformation?!?

“Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition.” – Mother Teresa

In times of suffering we must remember the Gospel communicates:

- God's love will overcome the situation
- In Christ, we are secure
- Our adoption is eternal
- Suffering does not dethrone the King
- He grows His children in the sunshine and in the rain
- Suffering leads to dependence on Christ
- Cracks create space for His light to shine through us
- Pain produces avenues for His comfort
- Our weakness displays His strength
- Hardships cultivate faith
- Trials produce endurance
- Even our sin makes much of His grace

With this perspective, we don't pray that God removes suffering but uses suffering.

We don't pray that God removes the rain but grows us from the rain.

We pray that hardships cultivate humility.

We pray that trials produce in us a heart and soul that loves Jesus with all of our strength.

## **2. Sin**

What do we do with the sin our life? The way we answer this question determines if we draw closer to the Lord or drift from the Lord and harden against Him.



## Session 4 - Applications and Examples of Prayer

### A. When do we Pray?

#### **1 Thessalonians 5:17**

“The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, ‘O God, forgive me,’ or ‘Help me.’” - Billy Graham

Our mood should not affect if we pray, but what we pray. Are there times in your life (moods, situations, or circumstances) that cause you to pray more than other times?

What would help you to learn to pray more in the ‘other times’ of your life?

#### **Philippians 4:5-6** Where is the Lord?

What is the wrong way to respond to a tough situation?

How should we respond?

What does God promise?

“Rather than set aside daily time for prayer, I pray constantly and spontaneously about everything I encounter on a daily basis. When someone shares something with me, I’ll often simply say, ‘let’s pray about this right now.’” - Thomas Kinkade

## B. God's Response to Prayer

**Ephesians 3:20** How can God respond to our requests?

**Matthew 7:9-11** How do you think God would respond to a request for something He knew would be bad for you?

What if He knew the answer would be better at another time?

**2 Corinthians 12:7-10** What happened to Paul? How did he respond?

How did God respond?

What do we learn about answered prayer from these verses?

“Prayer makes a godly man, and puts within him the mind of Christ, the mind of humility, of self-surrender, of service, of pity, and of prayer. If we really pray, we will become more like God, or else we will quit praying.” - E. M. Bounds

Often, God answers our prayers by changing our heart, desires, and wants. Can you think of any examples of this in your own life?

## C. Jesus' Example

What can we learn from each verse? What is happening in Jesus' ministry during each verse?

**Luke 6:12**

**Mark 1:35**

Prayer can be a community experience as we together enter into the throne room (**Hebrews 4:16**). Here we also see Jesus demonstrating our need to simply get time alone with the Father. Why do you suppose Jesus made this a priority?

What do we learn about Jesus' relationship with the Father from these passages? How would each verse relate to his prayer life?

- **John 5:19**
- **John 5:30**
- **John 8:28**
- **John 15:5**
- **Matthew 4:1-4**

**Matthew 11:25-26** We are reminded in this passage that the kingdom of God is not for the wise and learned, it is for those with child-like wonder and faith. As children, we are dependent on our Father.

“We, like adults, try to fix ourselves up. In contrast, Jesus wants us to come to him like little children just as we are” (Miller, 19). How do children approach their parents?

Persistent, distracted, randomly, crying out in pain, boldly, dependently... How would this thought change the way you approach God in prayer?

How does a parent respond to their child?

Lovingly, gracefully, with patience, with our best in mind, with a desire to grow us, with the whole picture in mind, understanding our true needs... How does this understanding of the Lord change the way you approach Him? How does this reality shape your understanding of how God uses prayer to shape our life?

“The very things we try to get rid of—our weariness, our distractedness, our messiness—are what get us in the front door! That’s how the gospel works. That’s how prayer works” (Miller, 21).

“Bring your real self to Jesus” (Miller, 21). In light of the previous thoughts and quotes, what does Miller mean by this statement?

How would your prayer life change if you believed this statement?

### ***Matthew 6:9-13***

How does Jesus begin this prayer? What does this teach us about our priorities in prayer?

What role does confession play in this prayer?

What requests and supplications are made in this prayer? What does this teach us about our greatest priorities in life?

How do we see Jesus’ priorities in ***Matthew 6:33-34*** demonstrated in his prayer? What happens when we no longer consider our basic needs as our greatest needs? What can happen if we get caught up in the ‘American Dream’?

What do we learn from Paul in ***Philippians 4:11-13*** about our view of possessions and wants?

### ***Matthew 26:36-42***

## D. Paul's Example

What do we learn about prayer (both priorities and content of prayer) from each verse?

***Romans 1:8-10***

***2 Timothy 1:3***

***2 Thessalonians 3:1***

***Colossians 4:3-4***

***Ephesians 6:19-20***

How do we see prayer and the gospel linked together in some of these verses?

Who is Paul typically praying for in these prayers? Is this similar to the content of our prayers?

## E. Additional Biblical Prayers

What is requested in each verse? What can adopt into your prayer life from each verse?

***Matthew 9:35-39***

How does Jesus link prayer and mission together?

***1 Thessalonians 3:10-13***

***Colossians 1:9-10***

***Philippians 1:9-11***

***Ephesians 1:17-18***

***Ephesians 3:17-20***

***James 1:5***

***2 Thessalonians 1:11-12***

***Philemon 6***

***1 John 1:9***

This verse is for believers. What role does confession and repentance play in the ongoing life of the believer? Why would a forgiven saint continue to live a life of confession and repentance?

***Hebrews 13:20-21***

## F. Examples from the Psalms

We have much to learn from the Psalms on prayer. “They were prayed by people who understood that God had everything to do with them. God, not their feelings, was the center. God, not their souls, was the issue. God, not the meaning of life, was critical” (Peterson, 14).

### ***Psalm 119:3-37***

What connection do we see between prayer and the Word of God?

### ***Psalm 86:11***

### ***Psalm 63:1-3***

### ***Psalm 32:5***

### ***Psalm 27:4***

***Psalm 67*** What are the 3 things requested in verse 1?

According to verses 2-3, why were these things requested?

What is the perspective of the psalmist as he prays?

What needs to be our perspective? How does this relate to the words and life of Christ?

“To get nations back on their feet, we must first get down on our knees.” - Billy Graham

## G. The Need to Persevere

What do we learn from each verse?

***Luke 18:1-8***

Luke 11:5-9

Psalm 40:1

“Prayer is not only an action in solitude, it is a community discipline. Nothing tends more to cement the hearts of Christians than praying together. Never do they love one another so well as when they witness the outpouring of each other’s hearts in prayer.” Charles Finney

How can you help your church (or small group) to engage in more prayer together?



# Signs of Gospel Renewal in Our Prayer Lives

## Our Prayers Change...

### From Prayers...

to control my circumstances  
focused on my requests  
filled with explanations and excuses  
to change my circumstances  
about my world and kingdom  
concerned with my goals  
about my desired next step  
prayed alone

### To Prayers...

requesting faith, contentment, and peace  
of extended times of praise  
filled with confession and repentance  
asking God to change me!  
about His world and kingdom  
for His Mission and goals  
for His next step in me  
calling others to pray with me

**Next steps for Bible Center!**

**Next steps for You!**

# Bibliography

Anderson, Bernard. *Out of the Depths; The Psalms Speak for Us Today*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.

Bounds, E. M. *The Necessity of Prayer*. Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1984.

Keller, Timothy. *Prayer; Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2014.

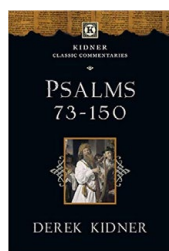
Miller, Paul. *A Praying Life*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2009.

O'Hallesby. *Prayer*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1931.

Peterson, Eugene. *Answering God; The Psalms as Tools for Prayer*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1989.

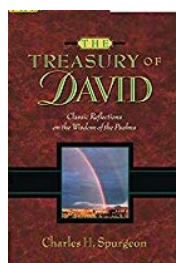
Whitney, Donald. *Praying the Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.

## Additional Resources for Studying the Psalms



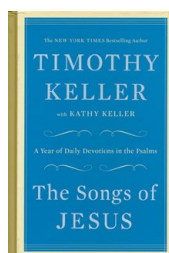
**Psalms TOTC**  
Derek Kidner

An excellent commentary with clear explanations for understanding the text!

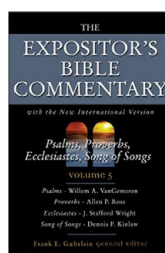


**The Treasury of David**  
Charles Spurgeon

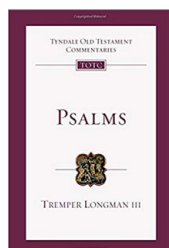
Offers thoughts along with quotes from tons of puritans! Rich and devotional.



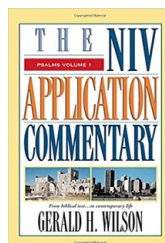
**The Songs of Jesus: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms**  
Keller, Timothy



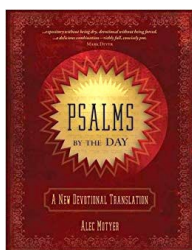
**Psalms, The Expositor's Bible Commentary**  
Wilem VanGemeren



**Psalms TOTC**  
Tremper Longman, III



**Psalms, The NIV Application Commentary**  
Gerald H. Wilson



**Psalms by the Day**  
Alec Motyer



# How to Use the Prayer Accountability Chart

*(next page)*

**The heart** of this chart is to improve and organize your prayer life.

You can fill up as much of this chart as you would like. You can use the same chart for weeks, or change it up frequently. It simply helps you to organize the most important people, things, and events in your life to make sure you are lifting all of these things up in prayer.

Notice it starts with some verses or a Psalm in order to start your time in-line with God's heart and desires.

Located after the Prayer Chart, is a page discussing the difference between broken/humble people and unbroken/prideful people. This is a great tool to help you determine areas where you need to continue to grow.

At the bottom, there is a place to write in an accountability partner. This chart usually works best when others join you in committing to their own prayer charts.

# Prayer Accountability Chart

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
<b>Verse or Psalm</b>							
<b>Area of Personal Growth</b>							
<b>Family</b>							
<b>Friends</b>							
<b>Ministry, Church</b>							
<b>Events</b>							
<b>Other</b>							

Prayer Accountability Partner: \_\_\_\_\_

## Proud, Unbroken People

1. Focus on the failures of others.
2. Are self-righteous; have a critical, fault-finding spirit; look at own life/faults with a telescope but others with a microscope.
3. Look down on others.
4. Are independent; have a self-sufficient spirit.
5. Maintain control; must have their way.
6. Have to prove that they are right.
7. Claim rights.
8. Have a demanding spirit.
9. Are self-protective of time, rights, reputation.
10. Desire to be served.
11. Desire to be a success.
12. Desire for self-advancement.
13. Are driven to be recognized and appreciated.
14. Are wounded when others are promoted and they are overlooked.
15. Think "the ministry is privileged to have me!"
16. Think of what they can do for God.
17. Feel confident in how much they know.
18. Are self-conscious.
19. Keep people at arm's length.
20. Are quick to blame others.
21. Are unapproachable.
22. Are defensive when criticized.
23. Are concerned with being respectable.
24. Are concerned about what others think.
25. Work to maintain image and protect reputation.
26. Find it difficult to share their spiritual needs with others.
27. Want to be sure no one finds out about their sin.
28. Have a hard time saying, "I was wrong. Please forgive me?"
29. Deal in generalities when confessing sin.
30. Are concerned about the consequences of their sin.
31. Are remorseful for being caught.
32. Wait for the other party to come and ask for forgiveness in a conflict.
33. Compare themselves with others and feel deserving of honor.
34. Are blind to their true heart condition.
35. Don't think they have anything of which to repent.
36. Don't think they need revival (think everybody else does).

## Broken People

1. Are overwhelmed with their own spiritual need.
2. Are compassionate; have a forgiving spirit; look for best in others.
3. Esteem all others better than self.
4. Have dependent spirits; recognize others' needs.
5. Surrender control.
6. Are willing to yield the right to be right.
7. Yield rights.
8. Have a giving spirit.
9. Are self-denying.
10. Are motivated to serve others.
11. Desire to be faithful to make others a success.
12. Desire to promote others.
13. Have a sense of unworthiness; are thrilled to be used at all; are eager for others to get the credit.
14. Rejoice when others are lifted up.
15. Think "I don't deserve to serve in this ministry."
16. Know that they have nothing to offer God.
17. Are humbled by how much they have to learn.
18. Have no concern with self at all.
19. Risk getting close to others; are willing to take the risks of loving intimately.
20. Accept personal responsibility; can see where they were wrong.
21. Are easy to be entreated.
22. Receive criticism with a humble, open heart.
23. Are concerned with being real.
24. Know all that matters is what God knows.
25. Die to own reputation.
26. Are willing to be transparent to others.
27. Are willing to be exposed; know once broken, there's nothing to lose.
28. Are quick to admit fault and to seek forgiveness.
29. Deal in specifics.
30. Are grieved over the root of their sin.
31. Are repentant over sin and forsake it.
32. Take the initiative to be reconciled; gets there first.
33. Compare themselves with the holiness of God and feel desperate for mercy.
34. Walk in the light.
35. Have a continual heart-attitude toward repentance.
36. Continually sense their need for a fresh encounter with the filling of the Holy Spirit.

# Praying the Psalms

## Growing our Prayer Lives, Using His Words

### The Nature of the Psalms

“The book of Psalms has a unique place in the Christian Bible. One reason for its singular role, as noted by Athanasius...is that most of scripture speaks to us while the Psalms speak for us” (Anderson, ix).

“We recite this prayer of the Psalm in Him, and He recites it in us” (Peterson, 4).

The Psalms will keep us centered on God. Our needs, fears, sins, and struggles will be seen and communicated in light of his power, goodness, and presence.

The Psalms are “prayers that train us in prayer” (Peterson, 7).

### The Results of Praying the Psalms

“God comes and speaks – his word catches us in sin, finds us in despair, invades us by grace. The Psalms are our answers” (Peterson 5). **The language of the Psalms become our prayer language.** They guide our hearts and words through each moment of our life.

“We don’t learn the Psalms until we are praying them” (Peterson, 12). We can pray the exact words of the Psalms, or we can paraphrase them into our own **words learning from God how to pray.**

We plunge deep into the Psalms and they plunge deep into us. The thoughts and feelings associated with our best and worst moments of our life can be found in these prayers. The Psalms guide us in how to respond to God. **Our lives become centered around our fellowship with the Father** as we seek him using the words he gave to us.

# Purpose of This Study

The Psalms can be studied to increase our knowledge of God, our passion for his Word, to deepen our understanding of human struggles..., but this study will be focused primarily on the role of the Psalms in teaching us how to pray.

We seek to learn from the Psalms, pray through the Psalms, and grow in our intimacy with God and others through the journey. Praying through the psalms influences our words directed toward God and impacts our own hearts at the same time. “We recite this prayer of the Psalm in Him, and He recites it in us” (Peterson, 4).

Therefore, our desire is to not only read and understand a Psalm, but to relate our life, our story, and the state of our heart to the author’s and pray with them to God. “We will not be looking here primarily for ideas about God, or for direction in moral conduct. We will expect, rather, to find the experience of being human before God exposed and sharpened” (Peterson, 12). All of us have times of joy, sadness, thanksgiving, and even despair. The Psalms explore all of these emotions and give us an example of how to take our hearts (joyful, broken, or bleeding) before the Lord with openness, honesty, and hope.

*“We don’t learn the Psalms until we are praying them”*

– PETERSON, 12

**Common thoughts** people have when they start praying the Psalms (Whitney, ch. 8):

- My mind doesn’t wander.
- My prayer was more about God and less about me.
- The time was too short.
- It seems like a real conversation with a real person.
- The psalm spoke directly to the life situation I am in right now,
- I thought more deeply about what the Bible says.
- I had greater assurance that I was praying God’s will.
- I prayed about things I normally don’t pray about.
- I prayed about the things I normally do pray about but in a new and different ways.

# How to Use This *Praying the Psalms Study*

## 1. Pick a Psalm and Thoughtfully Read Through It.

Write down a couple of your thoughts, observations, or prayers on the Psalms Observation page.

## 2. Create Themes.

As you read each psalm, take the time to create a simple, memorable theme for each. You can record your theme on the ***Overall Theme*** line.

Through different times of your life (praise, despair, thankfulness, broken relationships, joy, fear...) you can quickly look through your themes to find a psalm that can bring you guidance, insight, and comfort into each moment.

## 3. Study the Psalm and Pray Through It.

You will also have blank copies of the ***Psalm Observations*** page to fill out if you would like to go a little deeper with a psalm.

### Seek to Understand

- List what you learn about the Lord
- Create a brief outline of the psalm

### Stay to Pray

- Understand the position of the author (circumstances, stated purpose and situation, expressed emotions...)
- Pick moments recent and distant that relate to the author.
- Pray through this psalm.



# Psalm \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall Theme** \_\_\_\_\_

**Brief Outline of the Psalm**

**Type of Psalm**

**Context** (Author & Situation)

**Application:** How can you relate to the author's situation and emotions? How can you apply this psalm to your prayer life?

**Descriptions of God**

Prayed through this Psalm

*On the back of this page, you can write out a prayer reflecting this psalm in your own words.*

# Psalm \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Theme \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Outline of the Psalm

Type of Psalm

Context (Author & Situation)

**Application:** How can you relate to the author's situation and emotions? How can you apply this psalm to your prayer life?

Descriptions of God

Prayed through this Psalm

*On the back of this page, you can write out a prayer reflecting this psalm in your own words.*

# Weekly Reflections

We all enter the Psalms in different ways, with excitement, dread, hope, or even in despair. It is important for us to know that all are welcome!

When you think of the Psalms, what thought first pops into your mind? What is the first emotion that you sense?

How would you summarize what the content and purpose of Psalms?

What are you hoping to get out of your time in the Psalms?

How will you make sure you can stay consistent in your time in the Psalms?

Is there anyone who would like to do this study with you?

- Take a moment and ask God to prepare your heart.
- No matter where you are at in your life, heart, or spirit, the Psalms speak to you.

Look at the example on the next page and enjoy your time with the Lord! Your pastors are excited for you and are praying for you.

## Example – Psalm 100

How would you summarize the psalm?

This is a psalm of thanksgiving and praise.

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

- My relationship with God is active. I am called to shout, serve, come, know, enter, and give!
- He is my Creator.
- We are his people.
- I am a sheep in his pasture – he will protect, care, and lead.

What did you learn about prayer?

- It's a chorus of the whole earth to address God in worship.
- I am called to come before Him into his presence. I come with joy and with songs on my lips.
- I come before the one who has created me, therefore He knows me. I can be honest, open, and transparent.
- I come with thankfulness.
- I come to bless his great name.
- I pray with the knowledge that his love is unending and his faithfulness extends to all generations.

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

- Many songs reminding me of the work and love of Christ cause me to respond to God like this psalm.
- Blessings in my life and in the life of my family give me pause for thanksgiving and praise.
- It's a time of joy when I join with others in prayer and praise.

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

## Reflections on Psalm \_\_\_\_\_

How would you summarize the psalm?

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

What did you learn about prayer?

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

## Reflections on Psalm \_\_\_\_\_

How would you summarize the psalm?

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

What did you learn about prayer?

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

## Reflections on Psalm \_\_\_\_\_

How would you summarize the psalm?

What did you learn about God and your relationship with him from this psalm?

What did you learn about prayer?

Is there an area of your life or a time in your life where you can relate to the author's situation and the feelings expressed in this psalm?

Spend some time praying. Use the psalm to help you think of ways to express yourself to God. You can even simply pray through the psalm as though they are your own words.

# 2019 Core Class Schedule

## **GOD'S WORD**

- Feb 7 **Canonicity, Inspiration, Inerrancy**
- Feb 14 **Authority, Sufficiency**
- Feb 21 **Centrality, Spirituality**

## **GOD ALMIGHTY**

- Mar 14 **Knowability, Nature**
- Mar 21 **Incommunicable Attributes**
- Mar 28 **Communicable Attributes**

## **GOD'S CREATION *1-DAY, CORE CLASS INTENSIVE***

- Apr 5 **Angels, Demons, The World, Man (Dignity and Depravity)**

## **JESUS, THE MESSIAH**

- Apr 25 **The Person of Christ**
- May 2 **The Offices of Christ**
- May 9 **The Work of Christ**
- May 16 **The Work and Glory of Christ**

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH**

- Sept 5 **The Person of the Holy Spirit**
- Sept 12 **The Work and Gifts of the Spirit**
- Sept 19 **Nature, Purpose, and Marks of The Church**
- Sept 26 **Discipline, Offices, Sacraments**

## **SALVATION**

- Oct 17 **Redemptive Old Testament Historical Narrative, Prophecy**
- Oct 24 **The Work of the Cross**
- Oct 31 **Applications of the Cross**
- Nov 7 **Life at the Foot of the Cross**

## **THE END TIMES *1-DAY, CORE CLASS INTENSIVE***

- Nov 15 **Personal Eschatology – Death, Intermediate State  
Cosmic Eschatology – Return of Christ, Resurrection,  
Judgment, New Creation**





**BIBLE CENTER**  
CHURCH