

Week 6 ... Doing Prayer

Awe: Praising His Glory | Intimacy: Finding His Grace

Struggle: Asking His Help | Practice: Daily Prayer

“Tim TIME”

“... prayers should arise out of immersion in the Scripture. We should ‘plunge ourselves into the sea’ of God’s language, the Bible. We should listen, study, think, reflect, and ponder the Scriptures until there is an answering response in our hearts and minds. It may be one of shame or of joy or of confusion or of appeal — but that response to God’s speech is then truly prayer and should be given to God.” pg 55

“The power of our prayers, then, lies not primarily in our effort and striving, or in any technique, but rather in our knowledge of God.” pg 49

“We must not settle for an informed mind without an engaged heart.” pg 165

“If we want freedom from being driven by fear, ambition, greed, lust, addictions, and inner emptiness, we must learn how to meditate on Christ until his glory breaks in upon our souls.” pg 178

“We know God will answer us when we call because one terrible day he did not answer Jesus when he called. ... Jesus’ prayers were given the rejection that we sinners merit so that our prayers could have the reception that he merits.” pg 238

“To pray is to accept that we are, and always will be, wholly dependent on God for everything.” pg 128

“In short, God will either give us what we ask or give us what we would have asked if we knew everything he knew.” pg 228



What is essential in prayer is not that we learn to express ourselves, but that we learn to answer God.

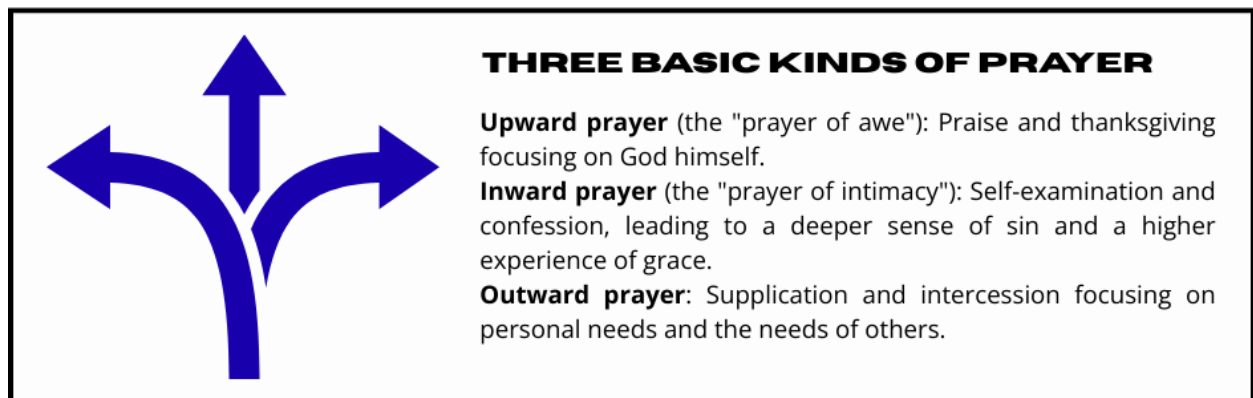


Timothy Keller

Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God

TEACHING TIME

- Chapter 12 | Awe: Praising His Glory
- Chapter 13 | Intimacy: Finding His Grace
- Chapter 14 | Struggle: Asking His Help



Awe: Praising His Glory

Upward prayer

- Psalm 148: Praise the Name of the LORD
- Psalm 149: Sing to the LORD a New Song
- Psalm 150: Let Everything Praise the LORD

PSALM 150

1 PRAISE THE LORD!

Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens!

2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his excellent greatness!

3 Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!

4 Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!

5 Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD!

"Let your thoughts be psalms, your prayers incense, and your breath praise."

— Charles Spurgeon

"In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him."

— C.S. Lewis

"The pulse of prayer is praise. The heart of prayer is gratitude.
The voice of prayer is obedience. The arm of prayer is service."

— William Arthur Ward

Intimacy: Finding His Grace

Inward prayer

Exodus 34:6-7

⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

This created a mystery about whether the covenant relationship with God was:

- conditional (based on human obedience)
- or unconditional (based on God's love and mercy).

The New Testament resolves this tension through the saving work of Jesus Christ, who acted as a "sacrifice of atonement."

"Jesus Christ paid for our sin. Sin's condemnation can no longer fall on
we who have repented and believed in him (Rom 8:1).
If we forget this, we turn confession into a grueling, self-punishing penitence
rather than gospel repentance."

(Keller, "Prayer," pg. 208)

Resolution: Because Jesus died on the cross and took the curse for unfaithfulness, God can be both just toward sin and mercifully justifying to sinners.

PSALM 32

- 1 Blessed is the one
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.
- 2 Blessed is the one
whose sin the LORD does not count against them
and in whose spirit is no deceit.
- 3 When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
- 4 For day and night
your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.
- 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the LORD."
And you forgave
the guilt of my sin.
- 6 Therefore let all the faithful pray to you
while you may be found;
surely the rising of the mighty waters
will not reach them.
- 7 You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.
- 8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.
- 9 Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle
or they will not come to you.
- 10 Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the LORD's unfailing love
surrounds the one who trusts in him.
- 11 Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!

Struggle: Asking His Help

Outward prayer

PSALM 13

1 How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?
3 Look on me and answer, LORD my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
4 and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.
5 But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.
6 I will sing the LORD's praise,
for he has been good to me.

The Bible shows three sorts of petitions:

1. **Asking (Ordinary Prayers)**

- **Own Needs:** Praying for "daily bread," which includes spiritual, emotional, and material needs, and above all, communion with God.
- **Intercessory Prayer:** Praying for family, friends, opponents, the sick, those searching for faith, the church's vitality, and general world needs (e.g., peace, prosperity, freedom).

2. **Complaining (Lament)**

- This is a biblical category for someone wrestling with suffering or questioning God's ways, appropriately evoked by **opposition**, **deprivation** (health/material goods), or **isolation**.
- The document argues that, contrary to cultural norms that dismiss complaining, the Bible views these prayers (e.g., asking "How long?") as wisdom. Lamentation is an integral part of a regenerate life of communion with God, submitting both thoughts and feelings to Him.

3. **Waiting on God**

- Praying with perseverance and patience, maintaining confidence that God will hear, while being extremely patient with His timing.
- Waiting can bring about necessary change in the petitioner before the request is received, or it can develop a more patient, calm, and strong temperament.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 98. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

*Ps. 62:8; 1 John 5:14; John 16:23; Ps. 32:5-6;
Dan. 9:4; Phil. 4:6.*

‘Agreeable to his will’

J. I. Packer suggests the Westminster Shorter Catechism's guideline to ask for things "agreeable to his will" works out in practice in the following three ways:

1. **"Arguing" with God**

- Laying before God the reasons why the request seems to be for the best, informed by Scripture. This practice helps to deepen and revise one's desires.

2. **Explicit Submission**

- Explicitly telling God that if He wills something different, the petitioner knows it will be better and truly desires His alternative. This calms the heart and serves as a signal for self-examination if one cannot sincerely say it.

3. **Self-Reflection**

- Asking what the petitioner themselves might need to do to implement the answers to their prayers, connecting the petition to their own motives, loves, sins, and weaknesses.

Practice: Daily Prayer

Moving forward

“True prayer happens at the intersection of surrender and celebration.”

— Paul David Tripp

“In our Christian pilgrimage, there is arguably nothing more important — or more difficult to maintain — than a meaningful prayer life. But here is help. If Jesus, the divine Son of God, needed to pray, then so do you and I. That humbling thought should drive us to our knees. And once there, we can freely employ the Lord’s Prayer as an aid in our own prayer. God has given you the great privilege of approaching Him in prayer and addressing Him as Father. He stands ready to listen and to help.

Be sure to treat prayer as a holy habit and never as an optional extra.”

— Alistair Begg, “Truth for Life: 365 Daily Devotions,” page 41.

Framework for daily prayer

1. **Evocation:** Briefly recalling God's nature and access through Christ.
2. **Meditation:** Reflective reading of Scripture.
3. **Word Prayer:** Praying the text or using the Lord's Prayer as a model.
4. **Free Prayer:** Pouring out one's heart, balancing adoration, confession, and petition.
5. **Contemplation:** Listening in silence for the Holy Spirit's affecting thoughts.

More than ‘quiet time’

More often: Prayer should be *more often* than the classic once-daily "Quiet Time," with suggestions for turning thoughts to God more than once during a 24-hour period (e.g., morning and evening).

More biblical: Prayer should be *more biblical*, grounded in systematic Bible reading and study and disciplined meditation on passages, which should precede or accompany prayer.

More expectant of experience: Daily prayer should include meditation and be *more expectant of experience in the full range*, including awe, intimacy, and also struggle and "darkness of soul."

“Paul said we should ‘pray without ceasing’ (1 Thess. 5:17), meaning that we should, if possible, do everything all day with conscious reference to God (1 Cor. 10:31). There should be background music of thankfulness and joy behind every incident in our day, audible only to us (Col. 3:16-17). This kind of spontaneous and constant prayer during the day should be a habit of the heart. We will never develop it, however, unless we take up the discipline of regular, daily prayer.”

(Keller, “Prayer,” pg. 240)

COLOSSIANS 4:2

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

PHILIPPIANS 4:5-7

5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-19

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually,

18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

19 Do not quench the Spirit.

“TOOL TIME”



- ✓ **Time + Place + Practice**
- ✓ **Organized Approach** - Prayer Model(s)
- ✓ **Content:** God's Word + Spirit Revelation =
Burden

- ☐ How has your understanding of prayer changed?
- ☐ In what ways have you grown in your intimacy with God?
- ☐ Are you more consistent in your daily prayer habits?
- ☐ Have you incorporated more Scripture into your prayer time (The Lord's Prayer, Psalms, The Ten Commandments)?
- ☐ How do you think your life would change if you committed more faithfully to daily prayer?

Questions & feedback

- Prayer helps
- Prayer hindrances
- Prayer hopes
- Prayer history



*Your thoughts on
prayers welcomed*

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Prayer

What It Is

Work	Prayer is a duty and a discipline.
Word	Prayer is conversing with God.
Balance	Prayer is adoration, confession, thanks, and supplication.

What It Requires

Grace	Prayer is “In Jesus’ name,” based on the gospel.
Fear	Prayer is the heart engaged in loving awe.
Helplessness	Prayer is accepting one’s weakness and dependence.

What It Gives

Perspective	Prayer reorients your view toward God.
Strength	Prayer is spiritual union with God.
Spiritual Reality	Prayer seeks a heart sense of the presence of God.

Where It Takes Us

Self-Knowledge	Prayer requires and creates honesty and self-knowledge.
Trust	Prayer requires and creates both restful trust and confident hope.
Surrender	Prayer requires and creates surrender of the whole life in love to God.

Timothy Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, pg 141.