

Pray Like David

DUE October 30th

Psalm 139

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

- ¹You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.
- ²You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- ³You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
- ⁴Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.
- ⁵You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
- ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.
- ⁷Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
- ⁸If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
- ⁹If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
- ¹⁰even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
- ¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
- ¹²even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.
- ¹³For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- ¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
- ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
- ¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed body;

- all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.
- ¹⁷How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!
- ¹⁸Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.
- ¹⁹If only you, God, would slay the wicked!
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!
- ²⁰They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.
- ²¹Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD,
and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?
- ²²I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies.
- ²³Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
- ²⁴See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Pray Like David

DUE October 30th

Psalm 139

Practice

This week's Prayer Practice comes from Charles Swindoll's book on the Psalms.¹ Tonight, as you do your evening prayers, step outside. If the air is clear and the sky cloudless, look up. Can you see any stars? Stay long enough to allow your mind to grasp the immensity of the galaxy above you. Then remind yourself that you are more significant to your Creator than all of those stars combined. They will pass away; you are eternal.

Spend another time in prayer outside in nature. Read aloud the passage from question 13, Matthew 10:28-31. Write out a prayer in response to these practices.

¹ Swindoll, Charles R. *Living the Psalms: Encouragement for the Daily Grind*. Worthy Publishing: Franklin, TN. 2012.

Primary Passage

1. Pick a key verse and write it out below. Try to memorize it this week.
2. Why did you pick this particular verse? What about it stuck out to you?
3. What is the main theme of this passage? Write out one sentence of what it teaches you about prayer.
4. Looking at verses 19-21- how does David shift in verses 23-24. Why the shift? Why are both important to do together?

9. In light of question 8 and your reading this week—how daring are verses 23-24? Do you feel confident to ask the same thing of God?

10. Have you struggled with feelings of insignificance? How can this Psalm speak to that?

Parallel Passages

11. Interpret Scripture with Scripture. What other passages connect to this section of Scripture? Are there any footnotes or cross references that help enlighten what you read?

12. Read Matthew 5:43-48 and compare it to verses 19-24 of Psalm 139. How can you explain this change? Also consider Luke 23:34.

- How much will God protect/help me? (the problem of fear/worry)

Pray

16. Write out a prayer in response to what you have studied this week.

Pray Like Jesus

DUE November 6th

Matthew 6:5-15

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But 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. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹“This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

¹⁰your kingdom come,
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹Give us today our daily bread.

¹²And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’

¹⁴For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Pray Like Jesus

DUE November 6th

Matthew 6:5-15

Practice

This week's prayer practice comes from Adele Calhoun's book on Spiritual Disciplines.¹

Use the Lord's prayer as a pattern for intercession:

- "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." Spend some time thanking God for His fatherly love and attention. Ponder who He is and adore His majesty, holiness, sovereignty, goodness, and beauty.
- "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Turn your intercession to God's purposes in the world. Where are you trying to bring *your* kingdom rather than putting your efforts towards *God's* kingdom agenda? Confess where God's priorities might be in your relationships and in the world. Pray for those things. What might partnering with God around His will look like?
- "Give us today our daily bread." Pray for your needs and those whose lives are closely linked with your own. Pray for those who are in danger, in suffering, and in places of decision making or costly love.
- "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Confess your grudges, bitterness, and oversensitivity; dwell at the foot of the cross. Thank God for what it is like to be forgiven.
- "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." As you look ahead into your day, notice the tasks and transactions ahead of you. Where might you get off track? Become aware of the ways you may be tempted to spin the truth, manage your image, live out of your false self, lose your patience or envy another. Pray for the Spirit to work in you to change you. Ask for protection and courage for the day.
- "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." End your time of intercession with prayers of trust in God's goodness and His redemptive plan.

¹ Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*. InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 2015. Pg. 260.

The book *Every Moment Holy* Volume III has a liturgical prayer for Election Day.² I invite you to read it on November 5th and as often as you need.

For Election Day

Jessica Smith Culver & Douglas McKelvey

If we are pleased with the results of
 Today's election. Let us yet in humility
 Remember that every earthly authority
 Must one day give way to your eternal rule—
 So let us in grace love all our neighbors well.

Or, if we are disappointed, let us resist all
 Fear, anger, accusation, and bitterness,
 But instead renew our trust in you—
 And let us in grace love all our neighbors well.

Whatever the outcome of this election,
 Let our citizenship and our hope be rooted
 First in your heavenly kingdom, that we might
 Live in exile here as winsome ambassadors of our
 Soon-returning King—
 Always in grace loving all our neighbors well

² McKelvey, Douglas Kaine. *Every Moment Holy: Volume III The Work of the People*. Rabbit Room Press: Nashville, TN. 2023.

Primary Passage

1. Pick a key verse and write it out below. Try to memorize it this week.
2. Why did you pick this particular verse? What about it stuck out to you?
3. What is the main theme of this passage? Write out one sentence of what it teaches you about prayer.
4. This prayer has been divided as having 3 petitions for God and 3 for ourselves. What are they?

5. All the verbs from this prayer are in the imperative mood. They are commands. List each one and give a definition or paraphrase of what that means.

Purpose

6. What are the key points of this passage? What does it tell you about God? What does it tell you about humanity?

7. What is the purpose of the prayer?

8. Darrell Johnson, in his book on this prayer,³ asks this question: If we authentically pray this prayer, what happens to the way we live? How would you answer that question?

³ Johnson, Darrell W. *Fifty-Seven Words that Change the World: A Journey Through the Lord's Prayer*. Regent College Publishing: Vancouver, British Columbia. 2005.

Promises & Problems

13. Are there any promises of God within this passage? What is the hope? What problems or sins are listed?

14. Darrell Johnson in his book on the Lord's Prayer⁴, says "The Lord's Prayer is a wonderful gift because in it Jesus *reveals* the heart of the Living God. In the Lord's Prayer Jesus reveals what makes God's heart tick. It is as though Jesus is saying, "These are the concerns on my Father's heart." With this in mind, what does this prayer show the concerns are of your Father's heart?"

Pray

15. Write out a prayer in response to what you have studied this week.

⁴ Johnson, Darrell W. *Fifty-Seven Words that Change the World: A Journey Through the Lord's Prayer*. Regent College Publishing: Vancouver, British Columbia. 2005.

Pray Like Paul

DUE November 20th

Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Pray Like Paul

DUE November 20th

Ephesians 3:14-21

Practice

This week's prayer practice is called "Prayer Walking". Think of a place that your heart feels moved for. Maybe it is your own home, your neighborhood, your church, workplace, or somewhere else. Walk through it in the company of Jesus. Spend at least 20 minutes doing this practice. As you approach each area of that place, pray for what happens there. Maybe pick a couple verses to bring with you to pray over that place.

Prayer Walking: from Adele Calhoun's book on Spiritual Practices¹

Desire: To align myself, while walking in particular places, with Christ and his intercession for the kingdom to come.

Definition: Prayer walking is a way of physically walking with Jesus through places that you are concerned about. From the vantage point of proximity, prayers for the kingdom to come are offered to God.

Practice Includes:

- slowly and deliberately walking through places for the purpose of intentional and listening prayer
- walking through your church (or wherever you are prayer walking) and giving to God the people and activities that go on there

God-Given Fruit:

- Seeing places through Jesus' eyes
- Becoming quiet and listening to God's prayer for a particular place
- Allowing the visual nature of this journey to prompt prayers
- Gaining a perspective on the larger activity to God
- Holding a place or person before the Lord when you don't know how to pray for them
- Growing in awareness that the Spirit is praying for him or her—and you are with the Spirit in His prayer
- Becoming aware of people and places that you ignore, don't care about, or have hard feelings toward and repenting
- Praying with others in environments of shared concern
- Exploring God's vision for places and people who gather there

¹ Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*. InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 2015.

9. John Stott, in his commentary on Ephesians, says this, “One of the best ways to discover a Christian’s chief anxieties and ambitions is to study the content of his prayers and the intensity with which he prays them.”² With this in mind, what does this prayer reveal about Paul’s anxieties and ambitions? What do your prayers reveal about yours?
10. Note all the superlatives found in this prayer. A superlative is an adjective or adverb that describes something or someone as having the highest or lowest degree of a quality.
11. This prayer is sandwiched between affirmations about God. Reading v. 14-16 and 20-21, what truths about God does Paul surround this prayer with?

² Stott, J. R. W. (1979). [*God's new society: the message of Ephesians*](#) (p. 131). InterVarsity Press.

Promises & Problems

15. Are there any promises of God within this passage? What is the hope? What problems or sins are listed?

Pray

16. Write out a prayer in response to what you have studied this week.

Prayer Study Questions:

1. How did this prayer study go for you? What are 3 big takeaways from it?
2. Did you participate in the daily prayer commitment? How did that go for you?
3. Which of the different prayer practices was significant for you? Here is a list of some that we tried: Liturgical written prayers, Daily office (praying 3 times a day), Breath Prayer, Praying in Nature, contemplative prayer, prayer journaling, and praying the promises of God.

4. Think back to the people whose prayers we learned from. Can you write just a sentence or phrase about what you learned from each one?

Abraham

Moses

Hannah

Daniel

Habakkuk

David

Jesus

The Disciples

Paul

Was one most meaningful to you?

Pray Like The Disciples

DUE November 13th

Acts 4:23-31

²³ On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

““Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?

²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord
and against his anointed one.’

²⁷ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

³¹ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Pray Like The Disciples

DUE November 13th

Acts 4:23-31

Practice

This week, we are going to practice contemplative prayer. The disciples address God as “Sovereign Lord.” Here are some verses to remind you about what this word means.

Job 42:2 “I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”

Proverbs 16:9 “In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.”

Proverbs 19:21 “Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails.”

Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Psalms 103:19 “The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.”

Isaiah 46:9-10 “Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’”

Colossians 1:16 “For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.”

This practice comes from Adele Calhoun’s book¹ on Spiritual practices. For this practice I encourage you to choose the phrase “Sovereign Lord.”

Sacred Word. Choose a prayer word as the symbol of your desire to let Jesus’ action and presence form you. The word could reflect a deep desire of your heart, or the word might be a name or title of God. Become still and offer yourself and your love to God. Let this word or phrase draw you into the presence of Christ. When you are distracted, return gently to your word and to the Lord. At the end of the prayer, remain still for several minutes. Throughout your day, return to your word and remind the Lord of your love for him.

¹ Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*. InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois, 2015. Page 241.

Primary Passage

1. Pick a key verse and write it out below. Try to memorize it this week.
2. Why did you pick this particular verse? What about it stuck out to you?
3. What is the main theme of this passage? Write out one sentence of what it teaches you about prayer.
4. Read chapter 4:1-22. How does the backstory help illuminate this prayer?
5. How do they address God in this prayer (you can learn more about this in the “Practice”? How could this be significant in light of the backstory you just read?

10. Read Matthew 26:69-75. How has Peter changed from then until this incident in chapter 4:8-12? What do you think can be attributed to this change?

11. Read Psalm 2. How does this connect to and inform this prayer?

12. Explain the idea of “boldness” by looking at the following passages:

Acts 9:27-28

1 Thessalonians 2:2

2 Corinthians 3:11-12

2 Corinthians 7:4

Hebrews 4:16

Promises & Problems

13. Are there any promises of God within this passage? What is the hope? What problems or sins are listed?

Pray

14. Write out a prayer in response to what you have studied this week.

