

*Powerful
Positive
Prayer*

How to Pray in a Simple Way
and Strengthen Your
Personal Relationship With God

by
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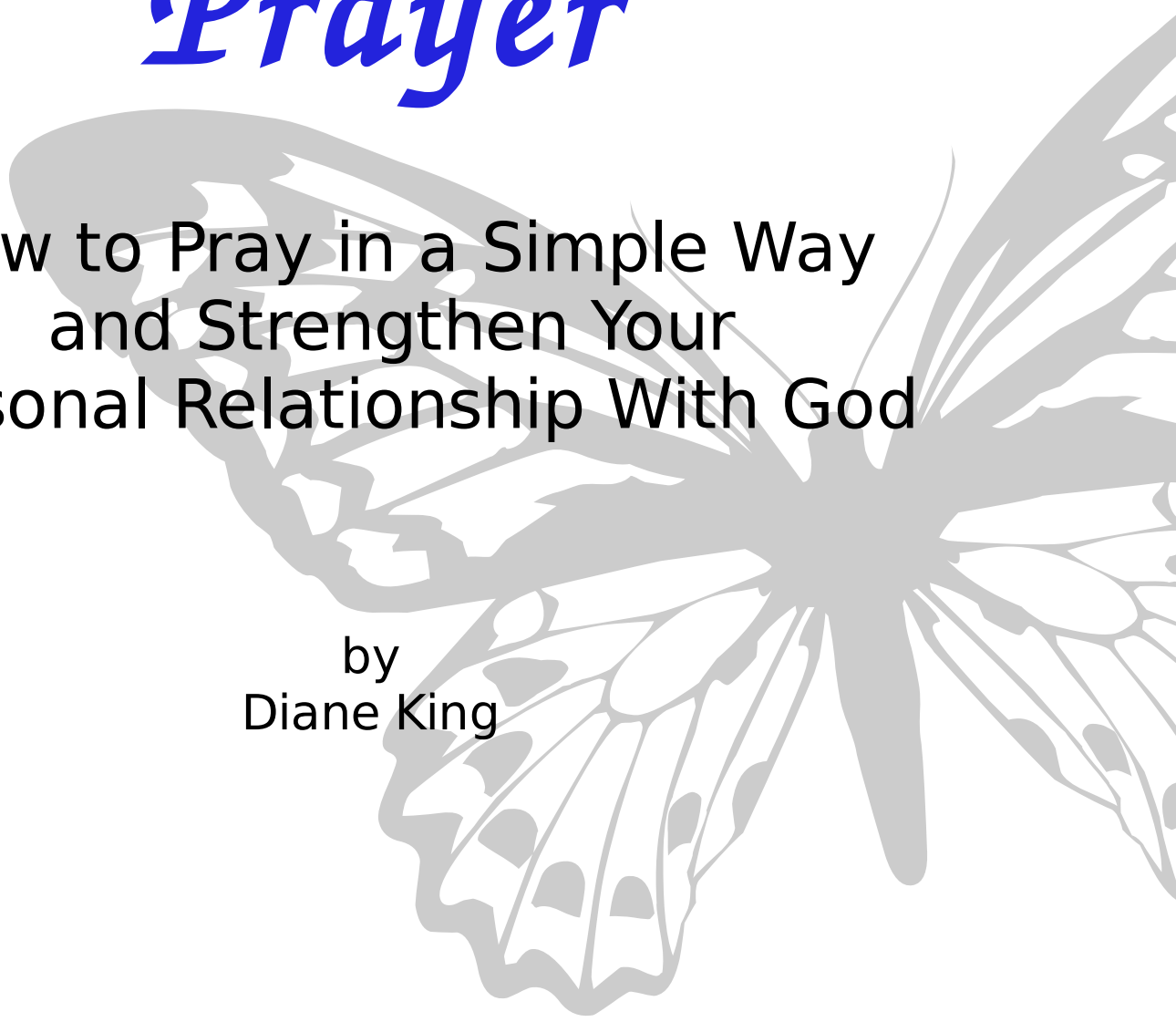


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I'm so grateful for you!

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Chapter One

Why This Book?

It seems like prayer should be simple. It's a uniquely personal process unlike anything else. It's not just thinking, it's communicating. It can be like a conversation, but it's internal. So, if it's personal and intimate, and if it is unique to each person, why would anyone consider writing what is basically a “how to” book about prayer?

Good question.

Like many people, there was a time in my life when prayer was hard. I just couldn't seem to connect with God. I felt isolated and frustrated. I knew this internal communication was possible, because I'd experienced it before.

That was fortunate, because if I hadn't done it before, I may have given up. I knew I could achieve that level of personal connection with God again, but I had either forgotten how to do it during the dark days in my life, or (the unthinkable) God had forsaken me during those days.

When I prayed, it wasn't from a place of confidence. I'd fallen away from my spiritual life. Don't get me wrong -- it's not like I was living on the street with a needle in my arm. I just forgot, somehow.

I don't know how someone could forget one of the most important relationships in her life, but I did. When I realized what I'd done, I felt ashamed. I thought God would have turned His back on me.

When I prayed, it was hard to focus because of my feelings of remorse. I couldn't ask for anything, not even for strength or guidance because I would be interrupted with thoughts like, "Who are you to ask God for anything? Where have you been lately?"

When I prayed I was coming from a mindset of lack. I had lost quite a bit, spiritually, and realizing it made my life seem bleak. An attitude like that made prayer very complicated. How could I ask for more when I was not in appreciation of what I already had?

I couldn't stop thinking about what I had lost. I couldn't stop obsessing about the subject of my prayers. First the prayers were ineffective because of so much static in my mind, and then I couldn't let them go in faith because I didn't trust them. They didn't feel right.

It was as if my prayers floated around somewhere in a dark corner of the ceiling, never making it out to God. I very clearly remember having that image in my mind – all my impotent prayers drifting around in my house like ghosts. I even had the thought that maybe if I sat next to the fireplace when I prayed, my prayer would go up the chimney and God might be able to find it.

That's how downright crazy my thoughts got during that difficult time. It was that fireplace idea that snapped me out of it. I mean, if I really thought that some pink insulation and tar paper shingles could inhibit communication with the Infinite, I needed to wake up!

It was time to approach my problem in a practical, not emotional, way.

At the time I was working and taking college courses. I was raising my son alone and life was pretty lonely. I really needed my relationship with God during those days.

A constant theme in my life during this period – in work, school and child-rearing -- were the concepts of "best practices" and "effective

methods.” I came up with the idea to analyze how I was praying and then come up with a better way – an effective method.

I needed a spark, something to ignite my passion for spirituality again. If I couldn't pray, I could at least study the concept of prayer. If my prayers weren't working, I needed to figure out why and then fix the problem. My prayer project gave me a sense of purpose and hope. And, it worked.

What This Book is Not

This book is not based on the science of prayer. I am not going to research scientific studies or cite them. If you are even the slightest bit interested in prayer, you've heard of the stories of prayer's effectiveness in self-healing, healing others, reducing stress, lowering cholesterol, curing heart disease and depression – even helping plants grow faster!

It is also not my goal to help you pray so I can then guilt you into using your prayer skills for the betterment of mankind! You know what is best for you and your life. You will do what you are inspired to do, whether there is scientific proof or not, right?

I'm truly not interested in arguing with skeptics. I know what prayer does for me. I believe I see results in my life and that's good enough for me.

Somehow I have the feeling that the people who, like you, chose to purchase this book don't give a fuzzy fig what someone with a white coat and a clipboard, tells them about prayer. There's lots of things I'd like to consult a person like that about, but prayer is not one of them.

I am also not writing this book to convince you that you *should* pray, but rather to show you one way to pray that I believe to be powerful. If there's any information here that helps you, I'm happy.

References to God

In the writing of this book, I have chosen to use the word “God” to represent...well, God! I know many people who write about spiritual issues use replacement names for God such as “Source,” or “Light,” or “Higher Power.”

I don't have a problem with those terms. In fact, they can be useful to round out our mental conception of God and help remind of of God's characteristics. God is the Source of everything, our Light in the darkness and an infinitely wise Guiding Presence. But to be honest, I've never been comfortable using them. I wanted to be comfortable while writing and not struggle over names.

Please feel free to use/fill in/replace whatever words are comfortable for you. I have no judgment about the use of them. I just can't comfortably have a conversation with you if I can't use the words that feel best to me.

Links and Book References

At the end of each chapter I have included a section with links to books or websites that might help you study more deeply about the topics I discuss. You may not wish to interrupt your reading to follow those links, which is understandable.

That's okay, because every reference will be collected in a “recommended reading” section at the end so they will be together in one convenient spot for you. The purpose of putting the links at the end of the chapter is to let you know that those particular books or sites relate to something in that chapter.



Sometimes Even Spiritual People Don't Pray

It's true. Even that lovely older lady who always sits in the third pew on Sunday goes through times when she doesn't pray. For all we know, she may never have developed a personal prayer practice and relied solely on guided prayer in church for her experience of prayer.

Life is constantly changing. Our faith and our discipline are occasionally challenged. So, why would somebody who is obviously steeped in a spiritual environment fail to pray during the toughest times of her life? It could be one of many, many reasons:

- Loss of faith
- Frustration about unanswered prayers
- Being distracted or overwhelmed during difficult times

All of these things can lead to a breakdown in prayer. Many people never even consider personal prayer. They just go through the motions every Sunday. So, look at you! See how far you are ahead of the crowd?

If you haven't prayed for a long time, or ever, it's okay. Please don't believe that God will punish you for your failure to pray, whether you've been taught that He would or not. It's hard to think of a less productive belief.

Yes, we should take good care of our relationship with God and give

Him and our prayer time the respect they deserve. If you have failed to do that for a week or a year, just get started again.

Let God know that you are grateful for His patience during your absence.

But back to the topic at hand, often we fail to return to a practice of prayer after an absence because we tend to personify God – or think of Him in human terms. This mistake applies to nearly every one of the reasons why sometimes even spiritual people don't pray. Let me share a few of them with you.

God is Busy

God is Infinite. He doesn't wear a wristwatch or carry around a day planner. Time means nothing to the Infinite. He is with you in every moment anyway, so you might as well pause to have a little visit with Him.

We are miraculous beings, but the idea of something that has no beginning and no end is pretty hard for us to comprehend. I struggle with it all the time.

God Has Bigger Problems to Deal With Than Mine

God is Infinite. The size of your problem is nothing to Him. He doesn't delegate smaller problems to middle managers.

Size is a characteristic of the physical universe, not God. You aren't going to overload God's server and crash the system if you ask his help.

God is Probably Mad at Me

God is Infinite. Infinite love, patience and acceptance. And besides, even if He was mad at you, He's probably over it by now!

What sounds more like the truth is, “I'm mad at myself and I can't imagine how God, the only One besides me who knows the whole truth about my actions, wouldn't be mad at me too.

God Doesn't Know Me

God is Infinite. There is no blade of grass on this planet that God isn't intimately familiar with. He lives within the heart of every person on this planet, including you. He lives within every person even if they have never heard of Him, or have rejected Him.

He is Infinite and cannot be separated from even a single atom or molecule of matter or energy in this Universe. God knows you. You are born of Him and he loves you.

God is Disappointed in Me

Yes, here it is again. *God is Infinite* – infinite love, patience and understanding. Disappointment is a human experience. You are transposing your own feelings onto God. Your mother may be disappointed in you, but God is not! You may be disappointed in yourself, but how will you ever forgive yourself and be healed if you don't pray?

God Ignores Me

Again, that is a human characteristic. Petty childishness and cruel arrogance are not in alignment with an Infinite Being with an infinite supply of love and kindness. If you use this book to develop your prayer practice and have faith that it will work, you will no longer be able to believe that God ever would or ever did ignore you.

I Feel Guilty Because I Haven't Prayed in So Long

Okay. it's one thing to feel guilty because you haven't called your grandmother as often as you should, but, *God is Infinite.* He doesn't have

limited time. He's not going to cut you out of the will.

Be careful with personification. If it helps you to feel closer to God, fine. If the personified God in your mind keeps acting like hormonal teenager, maybe you need a different image.

Time means nothing. Love means everything. Guilt is less than useless, it is corrosive. Remember, you cannot feel guilty enough to restore your relationship with God.

I have a question for you: why don't you know how wonderful you are? Even with your every failure, disappointment and mistake, you are still worthy to step up to God's figurative doorstep and knock. The door will be opened and God will be smiling, happy to see you. If you don't think He already has, it's because you've been too busy with your head down scuffing the dirt with your toe.

Personifying God – giving Him human characteristics – is tough. It's hard to relate to God if we can't imagine Him as being like us. It's perfectly natural for us to have such an image of God, and I don't believe it to be damaging in any way – unless we start to overlay our negative human emotions and pettiness on Him.

Does it seem right to you that God would fold his arms and turn his back on you? No. That's a punishing behavior used by people.

How about pouting? Can you picture the Almighty with his lower lip slightly protruding because you haven't been praying enough? I don't think so. That's a passive-aggressive tactic used by people in order to manipulate others. It all seems pretty silly when you imagine it that way.

Unfortunately, it's all too easy for most of us to imagine a wrathful God – a God wrapped in a fierce wind of fury, striking down sinners and scattering plagues across the land to punish us for our failures. This is just another personification.

Have you ever been consumed by rage? While you know it's incredibly destructive to your mind and body in the long run, right down to the cellular level.

Personification is often how we can best put God's power into context for our own limited minds and experience. It's not the only way to envision God, though.

Suggested Reading

Disappointment With God
by Phillip Yancy



Chapter Three

What is Powerful Positive Prayer?

I'd like to spend a couple of pages discussing what I mean when I talk about Powerful Positive Prayer.

If you had come up with this method on your own, which you may have, you probably wouldn't bother to give it a name. Neither would I, normally. When I decided to write it down, then decided to write a book about it, I knew I needed to create a name for it. Truthfully, it didn't take me long.

Powerful Positive Prayer is exactly what this process is for me. It is *powerful* because it will re-birth your conversation with God. That conversation will give you more personal power in your daily life. It is a powerful process and it helps you to feel more powerful.

I think of it as *positive* because the framework for my prayer is there. When you pray to ask God's help, you will feel confident that your prayer will be answered because of the way you will ask. That part will become clear when you get to the prayer method chapter.

So, let's break it down a little bit:

Powerful

Isn't all prayer powerful? Yes, I believe so. I don't think you have to read a single book on prayer in order for your prayer to be powerful.

When I use the word “powerful” I'm not necessarily talking about effectiveness. It's not about how effective your prayer is in terms of visible results or whether you get what you pray for. It's about the power inside of you – the power of your personal relationship with God.

It's strange. People who have enjoyed a long marriage know that a strong, healthy relationship is the product of hard work. Young people who are in love for the first time will say, “There is nothing in heaven or earth that could tear us apart.” Things are wonderful and magical until someone loses a job, gets very ill or begins to want different things in life.

We are sort of youthful and idealistic when we assume our relationship with God should always be easy. Especially when God is the one constant, reliable, unwavering truth in our lives. We, however, are not unchanging. We're human.

So, powerful prayer is about strengthening or empowering that line of communication with God. When you do, you will feel it more, know it better and trust it implicitly.

Positive

Upbeat? Assured? Effective? Charged up? Certain? Optimistic? Yes and yes and yes. All of the above.

Positive prayer is about asking for what you need and feeling okay about asking. It is about knowing your prayer was already answered before you even asked. It's about knowing the act of prayer is a positive force in the world around you and even in the world you can't see with your eyes. It's about lifting your mind and spirit to a greater resonance and understanding which isn't possible when we blindly stumble through our days without turning on our guidance system.

It means prayer without desperation, without lack, without fear. It means having faith in your relationship with God and being grateful for the

blessings in your life right now. It is understanding that you are God's beloved child and that he loves you beyond your knowing.

Man, I loved writing this section, because you *are*, you know? You are powerful and you are loved.

That is positive prayer.

Prayer

Prayers...I've gotta million of 'em. Well, a few anyway. Since there's not much more for me to say about prayer other than it is what we have named our communication with God, I decided to create a list of the different types of prayer. This is just more for fun than anything else. How many of these types of prayer have you used?

Types of Prayer

When I first began my “prayer project,” the first thing I focused on was the different types of prayer. I'm not sure how I even came up with the idea of different types of prayer, except I know that I had heard the term “prayer of petition” before. Once I began to think about it, I was surprised to realize how many ways we can pray.

Petition Prayer

Petition prayers are when we ask God for something specific. *Please grant me strength during this difficult time...Please give me clarity in my relationships...Please let me win the lotto this Saturday...*

There's really nothing wrong with a petition prayer. Well, okay, maybe praying to win the lotto is missing the point, but it's *okay* to ask God for things. God may or may not give them to you, and he may give you something better than you could ever imagine on your own. Petition prayers

can help us to identify what we want. We feel we can tell God our needs when we can't tell anyone else. We may rise up from a petition prayer and feel a greater sense of clarity and purpose.

Unfocused Prayer

We've all done this at some time or another, haven't we? An unfocused prayer is simply, *God, please...help!* When we are in a scary or traumatic situation, an unfocused plea for help may be all we're capable of doing. These prayers in our times of greatest need can be very powerful. They are backed by strong emotion and blast through any doubt or insecurity we may have when praying. The need is not unfocused, just the ability to know *what* we need. We only know we want God's help.

The ability to know what we want or even define the problem is unfocused, but not the laser-like connection to God.

A prayer like this may produce amazing miracles in your life if it is coming from strong emotion and a sense of urgency.

Angry Prayer

Yikes! Who wants to admit to being angry with God? Sometimes we don't understand why God “lets” a tragedy happen – like the senseless death of someone young and full of potential. I will admit to a prayer like this after the tsunami in 2004.

About all an angry prayer can accomplish is the venting of strong emotions and frustrations. They are simply a roaring, window-shattering, “Why?” Don't you think God understands and forgives our emotions – and that God can “take it” when we question him?

Forgiveness Prayer

Forgiveness is powerful, whether we are asking God to forgive us or

asking for the ability to forgive someone else. Both provide us with solace, which is pretty hard to beat.

A forgiveness prayer can be tough if we don't believe we deserve it or if we aren't ready to grant it.

Pleading Prayer

This is similar to petition prayer. The difference is that pleading prayer comes when you are fixated on a specific outcome and will not accept any alternative.

Please, please, God, let Harold fall in love with me.

It leaves no room for God to show you that Harold is not the one for you. It shuts down the entire world of wonderful possibilities. It is the prayer of obsession and micro-management. It is a prayer that comes from a lack of trust in God's good will.

Bargaining Prayer

This is the first-time drinker's prayer. *Dear God, if you get me through this night, I swear I will never drink again!*

We need to have absolutes in our lives and to measure results. Someone might think, "I only have to promise six months of church to get Johnny a job, but it will take six months of church and 90 days' worth of volunteer work at the nursing home to cure Aunt Lydia's pneumonia."

There is something disturbing to me about this kind of prayer, but I know it must happen all the time. It seems more like a bargain with the godfather than a prayer to God.

Conversation Prayer

I'd be willing to bet money, if I was a betting kind of gal, that more people pray this way than any other.

It's simply thinking a question to God and listening for the answer. It can be done while you're doing the dishes or mowing the lawn.

I believe this to be the ultimate goal of a prayer practice. No bargaining, no begging, no sniveling, just a genuine conversation. It may take time to develop, but if you continue to work at it, this will probably be your result.

You may or may not converse with God in your mind and in words. You might pray and then find unexpected answers to your prayer in many disguises, like surprise gifts. That is no less a conversation with God than words inside your head.

Suggested Reading

The Power of Simple Prayer: How to Talk with God about Everything

by Joyce Meyer

The Energy of Prayer: How to Deepen Your Spiritual Practice

by Thich Nhat Hanh and Larry Dossey

Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home

by Richard J. Foster



Chapter Four

Before We Start

Before we talk about the Powerful Positive Prayer method, let's quickly cover a couple of other ideas.

Ritual

Prayer is a ritual in itself. It is sacred, even if you are able to have a quick conversational prayer with God.

However, I would like you to consider creating a separate and distinct ritual to begin your prayer time. I believe in the power of repetitive practices. Ritual is an exotic term and some people might even think of it as pagan. If the term makes you uncomfortable, let me share a few definitions of “ritual” with you:

an established or prescribed procedure for a religious or other rite
a specific act, as hand-washing, performed repetitively to a pathological degree, occurring as a common symptom of obsessive-compulsive neurosis
any practice or pattern of behavior regularly performed in a set manner

These are three out of twelve definitions found on dictionary.com. While most of them – like the first example -- mentioned religious practices, none of them mentioned pagan groups.

The second example is also not in line with what I mean when I use the word ritual. Trust me, I do not want anyone to develop obsessive-compulsive disorder because of reading this book!

The example that best fits my use of the word is the third one. You might be surprised about that, since I am advocating you develop a ritual to assist you with your prayer practice. It may seem like the first definition would be more fitting.

The ritual I want you to create doesn't have anything to do with the prayer. The prayer itself is a religious ritual, and you don't have to bang a gong or light a candle to pray. However, the act of doing something like lighting a candle can signal your brain that it's time to pray now. It will help you to relax into prayer mode.

What are some rituals you could do before prayer? Try one (or more) or these ideas:

- Pour yourself a cold glass of water to have handy.
- Make a nice cup of hot tea and sip a little before beginning.
- Light a nice scented candle somewhere in the room.
- Reach your hands up to the ceiling and stretch.
- Put on some soft music.
- If you've always got the radio or television on, perhaps you might want to turn it off for this short time.
- If it's cold, you might want to put a cozy throw over your lap.
- Kick off your shoes and stretch your legs.

A Place to Pray

Do you have a specific place to pray, whether you actually kneel at your bedside or have a favorite chair? Again, it's not necessary to have a specific place where you always pray, which can be limiting. But, if you find comfort praying in the same place every time, you should do that as often as possible.

Having a quiet place to pray is enormously helpful. If you've got a house full of kids, that might be tough. Many of us live chaotic lives that eat up all of our free time. Let me give you some suggestions of places you can “steal” a little time to pray when it's pretty certain you won't be interrupted.

- The bathroom – a few minutes while the shower or bath is still running. The great thing about this one is that running water not only produces negative ions which make us feel happier, but the sound of running water also drowns out the noise caused by kids and telephones.
- The car – if you're alone, grab a few minutes before you go into the grocery store or while waiting in the car to pick up your kids from karate practice.
- After dinner – while everyone else is settling down with the TV or books or homework, sneak off to a quiet area of the house (bedroom, porch, garage) to grab a few minutes to yourself.

Body Language of Prayer

The posture you hold your body in while praying can be important. I don't mean “posture” in the sense of throwing back your shoulders and sucking in your gut.

I'm sure you've heard of the mind-body connection, and that's what all of this is about – rituals, places to pray, your body language when you pray. If you are consistent with these things, it will become easier for you to drop right into prayer eventually.

When you hear the words, “Let us pray,” what do you do? If you're like most people you close your eyes, lower your head and bring your hands together. This is the universal body language of prayer and reverence. So is a child kneeling by a bedside, or a grown-up kneeling in the pews at church.

Think about this for a little bit. Are you holding your body in a position that is uncomfortable for you because you think it's the “right” way to pray? When you are at the dinner table or at a service, you can follow the socially expected postures for prayer. In your own home, however, you should feel free to do what is most comfortable for you.

I remember seeing my grandmother wrap her left arm around her waist and cover her eyes with her right hand. Maybe she just had a headache, but I always thought she was praying. Who knows -- maybe she was praying that her headache would go away.

The point is, whatever physical posture you choose, if you use it consistently you will begin to develop a mind-body connection that will signal your brain that it is time to pray. It tells your mind, “Hey, it's time to settle down and focus. It's time to relax. It's time to let everything else go for a few minutes.” And that can be enormously helpful.

If prayer has been difficult for you, please consider changing your posture. Are you comfortable? Does it feel right to you? Would you rather stand at the kitchen counter and stare at your toaster?

Maybe you don't because that's not how you're “supposed” to do it. Maybe you're kneeling on the floor the way some of us were taught as a child and can't concentrate on your prayer because of shooting pains in your hip.

Comfort is important.

Whatever you do, if you have struggled with prayer, please find a new and different posture than you have been using. The mind-body connection works both ways.

Postures associated with negative feelings will trigger negative feelings. The last thing you want your body's posture to tell your mind is, “Okay...it's time to struggle, be frustrated and filled with existential despair...”

Even a very simple change can help, like sitting on the whole seat of your chair instead of the edge. Try it!

The Freedom to Pray

So you've found the time and the place and you're all ready to pray. Take a moment to think about what's going on around you. Are the kids in the apartment next door dropping water balloons from their third floor window? You are likely to be disturbed by the sounds of crying or cursing very soon.

Do you have something on the stove or in the oven? Is it almost time for your weekly phone call with Dad?

It's strange how often we set ourselves up for defeat. Give yourself a break! No, literally, I mean it. You need to be certain you can have a few uninterrupted minutes. Of course, it's impossible to avoid all distractions all the time, but give it a shot. Turn off the ringer on your phone. Lower the window blind. That kind of thing.

Soon, when you get back on your game, you'll be able to pray, chew gum and tie your shoelaces all at the same time. For now, just do your best to clear the roster.

Yes, That Story Again

I know. This story has been around so long it's teeth are yellowed. It's reprinted on probably hundreds of websites, and for good reason: it's a very good story. Lately it has come to my attention repeatedly, so I thought I would share it with you.

By the way, I looked and looked for the author of the article. From what I can tell it was in Stephen Covey's book *First Things First*. I haven't read it

yet, but I ordered it online in hopes that the rest of the book has as much meaning to me as this story:

A professor of philosophy stood before his class with some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly he picked up a large empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks about two inches in diameter. He then asked the students if the jar was full.

They agreed that it was full.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly and watched as the pebbles rolled into the open areas between the rocks. The professor then asked the students again if the jar was full.

They chuckled and agreed that it was indeed full this time.

The professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. The sand filled the remaining open areas of the jar. “Now,” said the professor, “I want you to recognize that this jar signifies your life. The rocks are the truly important things, such as family, health and relationships. If all else was lost and only the rocks remained, your life would still be meaningful. The pebbles are the other things that matter in your life, such as work or school. The sand signifies the remaining “small stuff” and material possessions.

If you put sand into the jar first, there is no room for the rocks or the pebbles. The same can be applied to your lives. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are truly important.

Consider that story in relationship to your prayer practice. If it is important to you, make it a big rock.

Suggested Reading

*Achieving The Mind-Body-Spirit Connection: A Stress Management
Workbook*

by Brian Luke Seaward

The Body/Mind Connection

by Steven D. Knope

Sink Reflections

by Marla Cilley

(or check out her website at Flylady.net)



Chapter Five

The Tools of Prayer

What tools could you possibly need in order to pray? A bible? A prayer shawl? You're probably thinking, "Great. Now we get down to it. She's probably going to try to sell me some prayer beads or something."

Don't be silly! I would never try to sell you prayer beads. However, may I interest you in these lovely hand-made kneeling pillows made from 100% silk fabric, hand-woven by pious monks living in a frozen Tibetan monastery?

Just kidding.

The tools you need won't cost anything. In fact, you already have them. You use them every day, all day long. They are:

- Words
- Images
- Emotions

Words

Most people think their prayers in words. They listen for responses in words, too. Sometimes that works just fine, right?

We pray the same prayers out loud, in unison, at church services or ceremonies. We listen to prayers said by others in words. Community prayer

can be wonderful, or not so wonderful. It may not really even feel like prayer, because the words were written by someone else.

When you pray alone, there is no distraction from the fact that it is communication between you and God alone. The words you speak or think come from you. Your mind, your heart...your dreams, your desires...your longing, your love.

It is creative and it's interactive.

Your words don't have to sound like Shakespeare or Swaggart. You don't have to compose a masterpiece. You don't have to get every word right. You don't have to be careful to cover all the bases and you don't *ever* have to use a single “thee,” “thou,” or “spaketh.”

All you have to do is make sense to yourself. God knows what you're saying. Can you imagine God saying, “Huh? What was that third thing?”

God knows your heart and understands your intention. Relax.

Images

While you pray with words, picture what it is you desire. If you are praying for someone's health, picture them well. If you are praying about having enough money to pay the bills by the end of the month, picture the bill envelopes stuffed with checks, stamped and ready to mail. Picture yourself happily mailing them because even though you wrote all those checks, you still have plenty of money in the bank.

This is the positive part of Powerful Positive Prayer. It's also part of faith – believing that your prayer has already been answered. Because if you are praying for someone's health, but you still imagine them as sick, are you expressing your faith that God will heal them? If not, then who is the prayer

for? Is it only for yourself, so you can feel like a pious person who prays for sick people?

It's great to feel good about yourself, but it would be better if you could feel good about yourself *and* have faith the sick person has already been healed.

Emotions

How will you feel when you are experiencing peace? How will it affect you when you go to visit your sick friend and find her well? What kind of emotion will you experience when unexpected funds show up in the nick of time?

Even if you are filled with anxiety or despair when you begin your prayer, allow yourself the time and the gift of experiencing the emotions you would feel if your prayer were answered.

That is what makes prayer powerful.

Imagine how difficult it would be to experience those joyful emotions if you couldn't *picture* the result that would bring the emotions? And, how would you conjure up that picture in your mind without the words to define the outcome you are seeking?

All of these tools – words, images and emotions – work together to make your prayer powerful and positive.

Suggested Reading

[Creative Visualization](#)

by Shakti Gawain (This is a classic text.)

[Creative Visualization for Beginners](#)

by Richard Webster



Chapter Six

Powerful Positive Prayer – Step One Breathe

We finally made it. Now that we've paved the pathway to it's door, let's take a look at Powerful Positive Prayer. When I first started praying this way, I didn't have it broken down into steps, but I've done that now to make it easier to explain.

I'm so grateful I decided to write this book. I have to admit that going through the process of creating steps has helped me to gain a deeper personal understanding of what I've been doing all these years. So, let's take a look at these steps.

Take a Breath...or Five

This is a short step, but it's important. Focus on your breath for a minute and be reminded of how perfectly engineered you are and how something so essential to life and health as your breath happens automatically and without any effort on your part.

Remind yourself how God's presence in your life is just as effortless as breath. God is within you whether you are aware of him or not.

This is a wonderful tool for grounding yourself and relaxing. It helps you get into the mindset that you aren't just resting for a few minutes, you are about to touch the miraculous part of life.

Words - “My breath is a miracle that happens automatically.” “God is always walking beside me, waiting to turn and answer my question.”

Images – My lungs expanding, oxygen flowing through my blood and nourishing my entire body. God beside/within/all around me.

Emotions – Amazement, wonder, gratitude

Suggested Reading

The Miracle of the Breath: Mastering Fear, Healing Illness, and Experiencing the Divine

by Andy Caponigro

Science of Breath

by Ramacharaka Yogi



Chapter Seven

Powerful Positive Prayer – Step Two Who are you praying to?

Obviously you believe in God or you wouldn't have purchased this book. Whether your idea of God is the same as mine is immaterial.

Even if you and I both imagine God as a wise elderly gentleman with a long white beard who lives in the clouds, the God in my imagination might have brown eyes while yours has blue. So no image or interpretation of God will be the same, person to person.

Remember when we talked about the different types of prayer? If you think about it, each one of those types of prayers were directed to a God with a specific “personality.” If you were praying for forgiveness, you prayed to a forgiving God. If you were angry, you were praying to a distant, uncaring God.

Right now is the time to tune into whatever doubts you may be feeling about whether God exists or whether he's going to welcome you...anything like that. If you've discovered a feeling like that, shoo it away. Nicely.

Be strong and confident in your belief right now. Right in this moment let any doubt, fear, guilt slip away. You don't have to hold those emotions at bay, threatening with a mental baseball bat if they come any closer. Just let those feelings go and attend to the task at hand.

So you're relaxed, you've realized the miracle of your breath. You've allowed any apprehension to leave for awhile while you attend to business. You are sitting or standing or kneeling or whatever is comfortable for you and you know that there is only one God, really.

That God is the God who adores and admires you, who lives within you even in your most difficult moments. The God who has no judgment of you. The God whose eyes light up when he sees you coming and throws his arms wide to greet you. The God of unending love, kindness and caring.

This is the God we learned about when we were children, when they told us, “God is love.”

That is who you are praying to.

- Words - “I am presenting myself to God, who loves me.”
- Images – How do you picture God? Like a man? Like a loving mother? Like a ball of light and energy that powers the Universe?
- Emotions – Love, acceptance, joy, gratitude



Chapter Eight

Powerful Positive Prayer – Step Three Who are you?

Well, you're doing a little better than usual because you told all those negative emotions to take a hike. In fact, you are feeling very calm and relaxed. You wonder why you ever doubted that God would welcome you.

Even better, you are remembering something else: you are not a beggar. You are not unworthy. You are not shameful. You are not a bad person.

How can you talk to God openly and honestly if you are loaded down with all that baggage? As you enter God's domain, be respectful and leave those bags outside the door -- preferably in a garbage bin.

Who are you, really? I'll tell you. You are God's most-loved child. You are His favorite. You have been on a grand adventure and you would like to tell Him all about it. You will feel so happy to be home again.

There may be some things you've done in your absence that you don't feel very good about. So, thank goodness you are here so you can tell God about them and ask his advice. You know that's the best thing to do because you always get great advice.

- Words - “I am a child of God and I am welcome here.”

- Images – Let's throw some possibilities out there – How about you and God settling in on the sofa so you can tell him all about everything. Or maybe you don't have to talk. Maybe you just ask for a hug -- because God already knows everything – and the hug is the answer to your prayer.
- Emotions – Love, relief, gratitude, acceptance, joy

So, we have remembered the miracle of our very existence – the life that flows through us unmonitored, unsupervised, uncontrolled. Miracles are happening inside our bodies within every second.

We have remembered who we are going to see – a loving, kind God who loves us deeply and is happy to have us in his presence.

And now we have remembered who we are – persons with innate, immutable value and every right and reason to come to our Father for advice.

Pretty good so far, huh?

Suggested Reading

The God Who Loves You: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

by Peter Kreeft



Chapter Nine

Powerful Positive Prayer – Step Four What do you need?

Asking for help is hard, even when you are asking God. Even when you are asking an infinitely powerful being who can provide us with everything we need with no effort whatsoever, we still resist asking for help.

But, that's changed a little bit hasn't it? Because you have remembered what a miracle you are. You have remembered the reality and truth of God. That he loves you and is happy to help you. And you have remembered who you are, a favorite child, beloved by God and welcomed with open arms.

It's a little easier to ask now, isn't it? If you still are struggling with asking, please just stick with me for awhile because the next two steps will help you in that regard.

Now, here's where you tell God your story:

- *God, I have this wonderful friend, Jean, and she's very sick...*
- *God, I don't know how I'm going to pay my rent next month and I'm very scared...*
- *Please watch over my son. I think he might be getting into trouble. I've come to you to ask You to guide him to a better path...*

That kind of list could go on forever, couldn't it? I won't give any more examples of prayers because it is much more important to talk about words, images and emotions during this part of the prayer.

Words

Again, I'm not going to harp on prayer topics, but what is important is how you describe the problem or issue. First you're going to describe the problem, and then you are going to describe the solution. I'll explain more in a minute, but it is very important that you describe the solution to your problem. For example, let's take the prayer about Jean who is ill.

God, I have this wonderful friend, Jean, and she's sick. She told me today that she's been diagnosed with _____. I know she's afraid and I am here to ask you to help her. Please give her the strength to face this issue head on. Please guide her to the best course of action to take for treatment. Please heal her body of this illness so she can live a long, healthy life. I know that you love Jean as you love me and that you will heal her.

So, here's the point I want to get to – don't be afraid to ask God for specifics, but be certain you aren't unconsciously trying to direct God's actions. We asked for Jean to be healed, which is the ideal outcome, but we didn't ask him to heal her before Thanksgiving weekend so she'll be able to make her flight back home to visit family.

How about finding our soul mate? Should we ask God for that? Here's a few ways that could be handled:

- *Dear God, could you please take Andrew by the hand and lead him to me? Make him see that I'm the only one that truly loves him and also that I'm the only one who cares enough to make sure he never wears that green plaid shirt to work again.*

- *Dear God, I'm so tired of being alone. Could you please send me someone to love and spend my life with? I'm ready for my soul-mate.*
- *Dear God, I'm so happy with my life and I would love to share it with more people. I ask for your guidance in finding and attracting people into my life who will love and respect me.*

So in every one of those examples a lonely woman is asking for companionship. The first one wants one guy and one guy only. Poor Andrew! The second one is not so bad, but if she doesn't get her soul mate she will feel her prayer is unanswered even if she starts meeting other people.

The third one is wide open. *I'm lonely and I'd like to have more friends in my life.* Plus she indicates that she understands it's up to her to bring people into her life, she's only asking for guidance in finding people who will be good for her life.

It's not about making your prayer so general that it's easier to feel like it's been answered. It's about knowing that as human beings we have limited knowledge and that God has infinite knowledge. It's about opening your mind.

Seriously, if you pictured each one of those women's minds as a door, you can see that the first woman's was shut tight with a battery of deadbolts.

The second woman's was cautiously open, just a crack.

The third woman's mind was thrown wide open. Who do you think is going to see an answer to her prayer? How can you see anything with your door slammed shut?

So, leaving your prayer, and your mind, wide open like that puts you into the mode of looking for your answer. You will be watching for it and it'll

be exciting. Every chance magazine article, song or overheard snippet of conversation will be encountered with heightened interest.

Images

When you are in this part of the prayer, you should imagine the best possible outcome. Now, I know that sounds like a contradiction to what I said in the previous section. Imagining an outcome, by it's nature, is honing in on specifics, right? Not necessarily.

For example, you might imagine Jean being healthy and strong. You might picture the two of you out shopping or having lunch together. Maybe she's back playing on the company softball team. You haven't imagined her getting a specific treatment and being cured by that treatment. You simply imagined her well.

Our lonely lady might imagine herself walking through a local street fair with a group of friends, laughing and having a great time. She might even imagine that one of those people is someone who's obviously interested in her and she's enjoying a little flirtation with.

She's not picturing Andrew on one knee in front of her with a rose clenched in his teeth.

There's a lot of information out there about creative visualization and, yes, this is similar to that. They also recommend you focus on the end result for various reasons. But, the reason I'm telling you to do this is much more simple.

First, you have established that you are praying to a kind, loving and generous God; that you are the beloved child of that God; and you have told God your trouble and asked for his help, and...now you're going to imagine the problem unsolved?

It seems like a bit of an insult to ask God for help and then hold a picture in your mind of the prayer *not* being answered. Picturing a positive end result is an act of faith. Be like that child who knows that God will know what to do. And He will.

Emotions

It's tough to go into much detail about this one without knowing the topic of your prayer, but it's similar to holding positive end-result images in your mind. You want to focus on the emotions you will feel when your prayer is answered, not the ones you feel when faced with the problem.

Now this, I have to tell you, can be tough. It's quite a trick to let go of despair or fear and then generate feelings of joy, gratitude and relief, but it's important that you do your best. Again, it's an act of faith. You are expressing your absolute belief that your prayer will be answered.

How would you feel if you were having lunch or playing softball with Jean – a woman you didn't think would still be alive? What kind of emotions would you feel watching her get out of her car and walk up to the ball field? What would you say to her? In fact, what would you say to her in the imaginary world in your mind where any and all emotions can be freely expressed without anyone feeling embarrassed or silly?

How great would it feel to be flirting with a handsome guy who is obviously attracted to you? Would you feel bold, but nervous at the same time? A little scared because it's risky, but also excited because it's risky? Well, feel it! Not the sadness you feel when you walk into an empty home. Not the jerk in your belly when a young, obviously-in-love couple walks by.

Feel the joy, thrill and excitement because you know, deeply know, that you will be experiencing that feeling in a real situation. Maybe not with the exact guy you pictured, maybe not at a street fair, but you'll be living those feelings very soon. The reality will be better than you imagined it.

Suggested Reading

Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?

by Philip Yancey

Life Prayers: From Around the World: 365 Prayers, Blessings and Affirmations to Celebrate the Human Journey

by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon

Prayers That Avail Much: Three Bestselling Works Complete in One Volume

by Word Ministries Inc., Germaine Copeland



Chapter Ten

Powerful Positive Prayer – Step Five Be Thankful

The first two steps and the next two steps are critical, because they are the foundation from which your prayer is launched. They are what allow your prayer to rise up. Gratitude is important because it helps us to eliminate the feelings of guilt we may have, especially if we feel that maybe we shouldn't even be “bothering” God with our problems.

When you express gratitude then you wash away the needy little voice that is filled with fear, doubt and anxiety. When you truly feel appreciation for the blessings you have now – for the beauty and bounty you have now – it reminds you that all things are possible through God.

Remember, your prayer is answered before you even begin it. Why wouldn't it be? Well, it might not be if you asked to win the lottery. That's too specific. What is the real prayer there? It may be, *I'm really broke and don't know how I'm going to pay the rent. I need help.* Or it might be, *I'm really sick of working and I just want to kick back and take it easy.*

But when you pray generously – in that you ask for God's help, believe he will give it to you and are willing to accept His help in any way it comes – there is no reason your prayer wouldn't be answered. In fact, there are so many millions of ways a single prayer request could be answered, you would have to be dodging solutions like trying to run through a downpour without getting wet.

I know I've already said it many times, but *God is Infinite*. He will rain his help and love down on you, but if you flip open an umbrella and grumble about how dreary it is, you won't see it.

So in this moment, give thanks to God for answering your prayer. It is not presumptive, it is faith. While you're at it, thank Him for some of the other great things that are in your life.

- Words -Thank you, thank you, thank you
- Images – You might imagine your prayer answered or you might even picture yourself expressing your thanks to God in some way
- Emotions – Gratitude, of course, and happiness

Suggested Reading

[Thanks! How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier](#)

by Robert Emmons

[Gratitude](#)

by Steve Potter, Jenica Wilkie, and Dan Zadra



Chapter Eleven

Powerful Positive Prayer – Step Six Let Go and Let God

It's hard to resist using that old slogan because it's perfect for this step. We are again going to talk about, you guessed it, faith.

Your prayer was answered before you asked. It is done. Just because you can't see the answer with your eyes, doesn't mean it wasn't solved. Just because you don't feel different right away doesn't mean it hasn't been answered.

So, release the prayer. Let it go. I mean it. *Put that prayer down right now!*

Okay, I'm being silly, but this is very important. If you get up from your prayer feeling great, but an hour later you begin fretting about your problem again, biting your nails, obsessing...then you've taken it back. Why pray for help if you aren't going to allow God to handle it?

God is infinite, but we live within the reality of time and space. We don't see all and know all. We're just people and sometimes we don't see what's right in front of our eyes.

Go on about your day with joyful expectation. Know that the prayer is answered and that soon you will see evidence of it.

Another appropriate saying for this section is, “A watched pot never boils.” Especially since if you are so busy staring at the pot, you’ll miss it when proof that your prayer was answered appears behind your back.

- Words – Thank you for answering my prayer; Thank you for handling this problem for me; Amen!
- Images – Imagine your prayer as a balloon. Let go of the string and watch it float away.
- Emotions – Release, relief, gratitude, faith, confidence

Suggested Reading

Secret of Letting Go

by Guy Finley

Love is Letting Go of Fear

by Gerald G. Jampolsky
(A classic, wonderful book!)



Chapter Twelve

Powerful Positive Prayer Step Seven & Review Let it Go Again and Again

There will be times when the topic of your prayer comes back into your mind. Obviously you prayed about something that is powerfully in your thoughts, and there will continue to be many reminders throughout your day.

When those thoughts come to you, let them go again. Let them go with a quick “thank you for answering my prayer.” (Words) Picture the problem already solved. (Images) Feel the relief of letting it go and knowing that your prayer has already been answered. (Emotions)

This step may seem redundant and unnecessary, but completely letting go of a problem into God's hands is one of the hardest parts of praying.

Review the Process

Let's review our process.

- Breathe and tune into the miracle of your body and your world
- Remember to Whom you are praying
- Remember who you are
- Express your need or desire
- Express your gratitude
- Let it go
- Let it go again and again

So, there you go. It can seem a little overwhelming when you look at it all written down like that. You might feel like it's too much work to juggle all these steps and tools and elements when you just want to say a simple prayer. That's okay. If you read the process carefully, you'll remember a lot of it when you sit down to pray. If you don't, that's fine. It's not going to hurt anything.

Every time you pray it will become easier. You'll start to fall into the rhythm of it naturally.

Now that you have seen all the steps, when you take them as a whole, you can see how the first few steps are designed to help you feel grounded in the truth of who you are. They help you to clear away any doubt or weakness. It's not about eliminating your humility. It's about valuing who you are. It's not about being arrogant, but feeling confident.

The last three steps are acts of faith. First you acknowledge that you have always been blessed and you appreciate that fact. Then you hand the problem to God and trust that he has already helped you.

These steps are important because if you don't believe you are already blessed, then why would you pray to a God who doesn't help you out at all? If you don't believe you are blessed, you are looking at your world through a negative filter.

Even if you live in a scummy apartment, have a difficult low-paying job, don't have a supportive family...you still have blessings.

If you are measuring your blessings against other people's blessings, then you're just being a bean counter. You're trying to get your "fair share" through prayer.

Once you begin the process of developing your sense of gratitude, a cascading effect will happen. Today you will think of five things you are

grateful for and tomorrow you will think of five more. Then you realize that you are twice as blessed today as you thought you were yesterday.

Gratitude and release are so important that I want to keep harping on it. Knowing, beyond what your senses tell you right in this moment, that you are blessed and that God will provide makes it possible for you to be blessed and sustained.

It seems like a sort of chicken-and-the-egg dilemma at first, but it's not. The faith must be there before the prayer can be answered. If you find it hard to have faith, then fake it! Imagine what it would be like to have complete and total faith that your problem has been solved, then act like that.

That brings us back to the mind-body connection again, doesn't it? If nothing else, the release of stress you will feel from acting as if your prayer has already been answered will probably go a long way toward solving parts of your problem immediately. Whether it's family relationship problems or health problems, a more relaxed state of mind can only help matters.



Chapter Thirteen

I'm So Grateful For You

In closing I would like to express my gratitude to you for reading my book. This project has meant a lot to me. Just the process of writing it has transformed and re-energized my personal relationship with God. I hope it does the same for you.

No matter how strong our relationship with God, there are times in our lives when we need a little kick start. When our starter is weak, if someone can just give us a good push then we can remember to pop the clutch and keep the engine running. Whether you gained value from this book or you are helped through some other source, before long you will be roaring through your spiritual world again, I have no doubt of it.



Chapter Fourteen

Recommended Reading List

Disappointment With God
by Phillip Yancy

The Power of Simple Prayer: How to Talk with God about Everything
by Joyce Meyer

The Energy of Prayer: How to Deepen Your Spiritual Practice
by Thich Nhat Hanh and Larry Dossey

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

*Achieving The Mind-Body-Spirit Connection: A Stress Management
Workbook*
by Brian Luke Seaward

The Body/Mind Connection
by Steven D. Knope

Sink Reflections
by Marla Cilley
(check out her website at Flylady.net)

Creative Visualization
by Shakti Gawain

Creative Visualization for Beginners

by Richard Webster

The Miracle of the Breath: Mastering Fear, Healing Illness, and Experiencing the Divine

by Andy Caponigro

Science of Breath

by Ramacharaka Yogi

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