A SHORT BIBLE STUDY

Making Room for Prayer

Growing Closer to God · Book 3



Seeking God with trust and persistence

Andrew Dominguez

Trinfinity Enterprises

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A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Book

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this book direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

Introduction

Prayer brings us before the Father who knows us and cares for us. I want to come honestly, with requests that matter and a willingness to receive His answer. Scripture gives us reason to persist, reason to listen, and reason to trust God when we cannot see what He is doing. This is a relationship to grow in, rather than a technique to master.

My schedule fills up fast, and for long stretches I have let deadlines and noise crowd out quiet time with God. Prayer does not happen by accident when life gets busy. Making room for prayer starts when we stop treating God like an afterthought.

1 Ask, seek, and knock

> *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*
> **Matthew 7:7 (SLB)**

In Matthew 7:7-11 (SLB), Jesus uses the language of asking, seeking, and knocking. He directs our attention to the goodness of the Father. The comparison with parents giving food to their children shows why we can approach God with confidence. Our confidence rests in His character.

Luke 11:5-13 (SLB) places similar instruction beside a story about a friend asking for bread at midnight. The passage encourages persistence. It does not give me permission to believe that enough pressure will force God to approve a request He knows is wrong.

Persistent prayer is dependence on the Father, not an attempt to wear Him down.

I want to bring specific requests because real needs deserve honest words. At the same time, the length or precision of my prayer does not earn His attention. A person who is exhausted, frightened, or unable to find many words can still call upon the Lord. Prayer should not become a performance measured against somebody else's vocabulary.

Asking also means admitting I need help. Seeking means I am willing to give attention to God rather than simply delivering a demand. Knocking pictures coming back to the door again and again. These are helpful pictures of prayer, as long as I keep the Father's goodness at the center and do not turn them into a ladder to climb.

When we met in 1988, my wife wanted one date. On that date I fell for her, and two years later we were married. Some things worth having take more than one try. Jesus tells us to keep asking, seeking and knocking in prayer (Matthew 7:7).

2 When the answer is difficult

> *Be anxious about nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*
> **Philippians 4:6 (SLB)**

> *and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.*
> **Philippians 4:7 (SLB)**

Luke 22:42 (SLB) shows Jesus praying in Gethsemane. He brings the cup before the Father and submits to the Father's will. Jesus' prayer did not fail, and His fellowship with the Father did not break down. His obedience was part of God's plan to save us.

That passage helps me be honest about difficult requests. I may desire relief deeply and still need to trust God with an answer I would not have chosen. Submission is not pretending the difficulty is pleasant. It is bringing my desire before the Lord without claiming I know everything He knows.

Philippians 4:6-7 (SLB) connects prayer with thanksgiving and God's peace. The promise concerns His guarding of our hearts and thoughts in Christ. It should not be turned into a guarantee that every problem will disappear as soon as I pray. Peace can sustain us while the circumstances still require endurance.

I also need to avoid judging another person's faith by how quickly a request is answered. I do not know every part of that person's life or every purpose God may be working out. The church should be a place where people can ask for prayer without being made to feel that ongoing pain proves they have failed spiritually.

At 16, I wanted to join the Air Force and work with computers, and I worked hard to qualify early. When they would not give me that job, I walked away. Looking back, God had a different path for my life

and my family. Sometimes a hard answer protects us from a path we were never meant to walk.

3 Quiet enough to listen

In 1 Kings 19 (SLB), Elijah is afraid and exhausted. God provides for him and later addresses him at Horeb. The passage describes a strong wind, an earthquake, and a fire, while specifically saying the Lord was not in those events. After the fire comes "a sound of a thin silence" (1 Kings 19:12, SLB). It is easy to tell this story as if God spoke in the earthquake, but the text says He was not in it.

The practical point is not that God can only meet us in silence. Scripture records Him working in many settings. But the story does show that the loudest event is not always the one that matters most to God. God does not need to match the noise around me to make His Word matter.

Quiet time gives me an opportunity to stop filling every moment. I can read a passage, pray about it, and give attention to what it actually says. I should test my impressions against Scripture. My private feeling does not have the same authority as God's Word.

A realistic habit is a good beginning. Choose a time and place that allow attention. Put aside a distraction that can wait. If the day is interrupted, return when possible without treating the interruption as a spiritual defeat. The aim is fellowship with God and a willing response to Him, rather than completing a routine merely to say it is done.

I have worked on guitars for more than 20 years. I do not play, but I have trained my ear to hear small differences in tone. You cannot hear what an instrument is doing if the room is loud. We have to quiet the noise in our lives if we want to hear God speak through His Word.

4 Praying with the church

> *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous **man**, being at work, prevails much.*
>
> **James 5:16 (SLB)**

James 5:13-20 (SLB) brings prayer into suffering, sickness, confession, and restoration. The person who suffers is called to pray. The sick person is told to call for the elders. Believers are directed to confess and pray for one another. Prayer belongs within a community that cares for its members.

I should take these instructions seriously without pretending I can control how God answers. The Lord is the One who raises up and restores. Calling for prayer is an expression of dependence on Him. It is not a reason to blame someone who remains ill or to reject appropriate medical care.

Confession takes maturity. Opening my life to another believer should happen with wisdom and care. A prayer request should never become material for gossip. When someone trusts me with a struggle, I have a responsibility to respond with humility, discretion, and a desire for restoration.

Serving as a lay pastor and leading Bible studies, I have seen what happens when believers stop carrying burdens alone. When a group brings a real need before God together, pride drops away. We were never meant to walk the Christian life solo.

Prayer and concern should move together. I can pray for someone and also make the call, offer help, or have the difficult conversation. As I learn to pray, I want my dependence on God to make me more attentive to the people He places around me.

5 Helping someone return to the truth

James 5:19-20 (SLB) closes with concern for a person who wanders from the truth and the importance of turning that person back. James is writing to believers here, and these verses are not a license to guess about anyone's eternal destiny. The passage calls for serious care when someone is moving away from the truth.

That care may require more than a general prayer request. A person may need a patient conversation, a clear reminder from Scripture, or help facing a pattern they have begun to excuse. I should approach them with humility, remembering my own need for grace. Concern can become pride when I am more interested in proving the person wrong than helping them return.

In my lowest season, I had made choices that hurt my marriage and the people closest to me. A pastor listened to me, did not excuse what I had done, and

pointed me back to God. Helping someone return to the truth takes grace, honesty and a willingness to walk beside them.

Prayer brings comfort and points our hope for restoration to the Lord. It also strengthens fellowship as we bring one another's needs before Him. Confession, forgiveness, and correction require trust that grows through faithful relationships.

The closing words should leave us attentive rather than suspicious of one another. I do not want a church where people hide every difficulty because they expect immediate condemnation. I want a community that takes truth seriously enough to correct and love seriously enough to help. Prayer is part of that shared life before the Lord.

Making Room for Prayer

✦ ✦ ✦

Prayer is a relationship to grow in, not a technique to master. This book covers asking, seeking and knocking, what to do when the answer is hard, learning to be quiet enough to listen, praying with the church, and helping someone come back to the truth.

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

MATTHEW 7:7 (SLB)

Book 3 of 9 in the collection Growing Closer to God

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