A SHORT BIBLE STUDY

Praying Every Day

Growing Closer to God · Book 4



The kinds of prayer and how to pray

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 is talking with God. It is expressing my heart to Him and spending time in His presence. It is not a one-way activity. God listens to me, and I need to learn to listen to Him. Prayer can be exciting and powerful, but for many of us it is also the first thing that slips when life gets busy.

I have believed in God as long as I can remember, but there were seasons I drifted from Him. Leading Bible studies, serving as a lay pastor and translating the Steadfast Literal Bible taught me that my walk with God rises or falls on simple daily conversation with Him. I wrote this book for believers who want to pray every day without fancy words.

This book is a practical look at daily prayer. It covers the kinds of prayer we see in Scripture, why prayer matters, how to pray, what can hinder our prayers, and how to build a simple daily habit.

1 Four kinds of prayer

Thanksgiving is the first. First Thessalonians 5:18 (SLB) says, "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you." I can thank Him for His protection, His provision, His blessings, and most of all for His Son.

Petition is asking God for what I need. Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us today our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11, SLB). When Jabez asked God to bless him and keep him from harm, Scripture says "God brought what he had asked" (1 Chronicles 4:10, SLB). There is

nothing selfish about bringing real needs to a Father who cares.

Prevailing prayer keeps asking. Jesus told a parable about a widow who kept coming to an unjust judge to show that it is "necessary always to pray and not to lose heart" (Luke 18:1, SLB). Some breakthroughs come after a long season of asking.

Intercession is praying for others. When Nehemiah heard that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, he wept, fasted, and prayed, and he confessed the sins of his people as his own (Nehemiah 1:3-6, SLB). Intercession is love on its knees.

For a long time my prayers sounded like a project manager's task list. I brought God my problems, asked Him to fix them and moved on. Reading Scripture closely showed me I was skipping praise, confession and thanks. Learning those four kinds of prayer made my time with God more honest.

2 Why I pray

Most people pray to change their circumstances. The greater benefit of prayer is that it changes me. It draws me closer to God and reminds me of things I easily forget.

When I was a boy in Victorville, Pastor Jimmy Carter lived down our street and paid me to mow his lawn. He took me to church and led me to Christ. The way he cared for a neighborhood kid showed me God was real and worth talking to. That seed stayed with me even in the years I drifted.

Prayer reminds me of my need for the Father. Jesus taught us to begin, "Our Father who is in the heavens" (Matthew 6:9, SLB). No matter how mature I become, I never outgrow my need for Him. Jesus said, "apart from Me you are not able to do anything" (John 15:5, SLB).

Prayer reminds me of my position in Christ. Jesus said, "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:14, SLB). I come to God not on my own merit but because I belong to Jesus. "He made the One who did not know sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21, SLB).

Prayer also reminds me of the goal of obedience. "The prayer of a righteous man, being at work, prevails much" (James 5:16, SLB). A righteous life means walking with the Spirit and obeying Him. To pray in the Spirit is to pray while walking with Him.

3 How I pray

I start by asking the Holy Spirit for help. Romans 8:26 (SLB) says, "what we should pray as is necessary, we do not know, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us." I ask Him to help me pray and to help me stay focused. I begin with adoration, praising God for who He is.

> *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous so that He may forgive us the sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
> **1 John 1:9 (SLB)**

Then I confess. The word "confess" in 1 John 1:9 (SLB) carries the idea of agreeing with God. I am not telling Him anything new. I am agreeing with Him about my sin. If I need to make something right with another person, I do that too (Matthew 5:23-24, SLB). Then by faith I accept His forgiveness.

After confession comes thanksgiving, praising Him for what He has done. Psalm 100:4 (SLB) says, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving, His courts with praise." After that I bring my requests and the needs of others.

4 What can hinder prayer

> *Be anxious about nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.*
>
> **Philippians 4:6-7 (SLB)**

Philippians 4:6-7 (SLB) promises peace when I bring my requests to God. When the answer is not what I wanted, that peace can carry me through in a way others may not understand.

Scripture also warns that some things block prayer. Psalm 66:18 (SLB) says, "If I had regarded wickedness in my heart, the Lord would not listen." When I hold on to sin I have no intention of giving up, my fellowship with God is broken. Ask any teenager who has just been grounded how well his requests are received.

Relationships matter too. Peter told husbands to live with their wives in an understanding way and to show them honor, "so that your prayers may not be cut off" (1 Peter 3:7, SLB). How I treat the people closest to me affects my prayer life.

Ignoring God's Word is another hindrance. If I will not listen to Him, I have little reason to expect that He will act on my requests the way I want. Prayer and the Bible belong together.

There were seasons when I knew Scripture and still made choices that took me further from God, and I pretended everything was fine. Nothing changed until I stopped hiding and got honest with God and with the people who loved me. Hidden sin blocks our fellowship with God until we bring it into the light.

5 Building a daily habit

Prayer grows with practice. I find it helps to have a set time and a set place, even if it is only a few minutes at first. A quiet morning before the house wakes up works well for many people. Others pray on the drive to work.

A simple pattern can keep me from wandering. I can move from praise, to confession, to thanksgiving, to my own needs, and then to the needs of others. Some people keep a list of names and requests and note when God answers. Looking back over that list is a great faith builder.

I also want to remember to pray for others beyond my own circle: for church leaders (Romans 15:30, SLB),

for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2, SLB), for other believers (Ephesians 6:18, SLB), and for people who do not yet know Christ. Jesus prayed for those who would believe in Him through the disciples' word (John 17:20, SLB). That includes us.

Most of all, I want prayer to be a conversation with someone I love, not a chore I check off. God is not waiting for perfect words. He is waiting for me.

After May 29, 2020, I learned to take recovery one day at a time. That changed how I approached my time with God. I stopped waiting to feel inspired and treated prayer and Bible reading as a set daily appointment. Small steps repeated every day build a habit that holds when life gets hard.

Praying Every Day

✦ ✦ ✦

Prayer is talking with God, and for many of us it is the first thing to slip when life gets busy. This book looks at the kinds of prayer in Scripture, why prayer matters, a simple way to pray, what can hinder prayer, and how to build a daily habit.

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)

Book 4 of 9 in the collection Growing Closer to God

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