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# *the* sisterhood ROOTED IN GRACE AND PURPOSE magazine

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SHAPING  
WORRIES  
INTO

*prayers*

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FROM  
STRESS TO  
STILLNESS

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PRAYED-OUT  
WHEN PRAYER  
WON'T COME

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THE  
UNCEASING  
BREATH

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WHEN  
PRAYER  
BECOMES  
THE FIRST  
THING





## PEACE *of* MIND

**Call unto me, and I will answer thee,  
and show thee great and mighty  
things, which thou knowest not.**

Jeremiah 33:3

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↑ A promise of God's  
responsiveness and  
revelation through prayer.

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## Dear Sisters,

What a holy privilege we hold in our hands—prayer.

Not a ritual. Not a last resort. Not a religious obligation.

But an open invitation to speak directly to the Creator of the universe.

The One who formed the stars leans in when you whisper His name.

So many women carry silent burdens, worries no one sees, prayers no one hears, longings tucked deep into the heart. And yet, heaven is never silent toward you. Scripture reminds us that when we call, He answers. Not reluctantly. Not distractedly. But attentively, lovingly, intentionally.

**“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” — Jeremiah 33:3 (KJV)**

Prayer is not about finding the right words. It is about bringing our whole hearts before a Father who already knows. And when we pray His Word, when we speak His promises back to Him—we pray with divine confidence. We aren't hoping. We are agreeing with heaven.

**“The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.” — Psalm 145:18 (KJV)**

He is near. Closer than your breath. Closer than your fears.

For the weary woman, the waiting woman, the grieving woman, the hoping woman, prayer is where strength is exchanged, peace is restored, and faith is renewed.

**“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” — Philippians 4:6–7 (KJV)**

This spring, may you rediscover the sacred joy of conversation with God. May you find yourself speaking His promises over your life. May you remember that you are never praying alone.

He listens.

He cares.

He answers.

And He delights in hearing your voice.

Rooted in Grace & Purpose

the *Sisterhood*  
team



AN ODE  
TO THE  
PRAYING  
WOMAN

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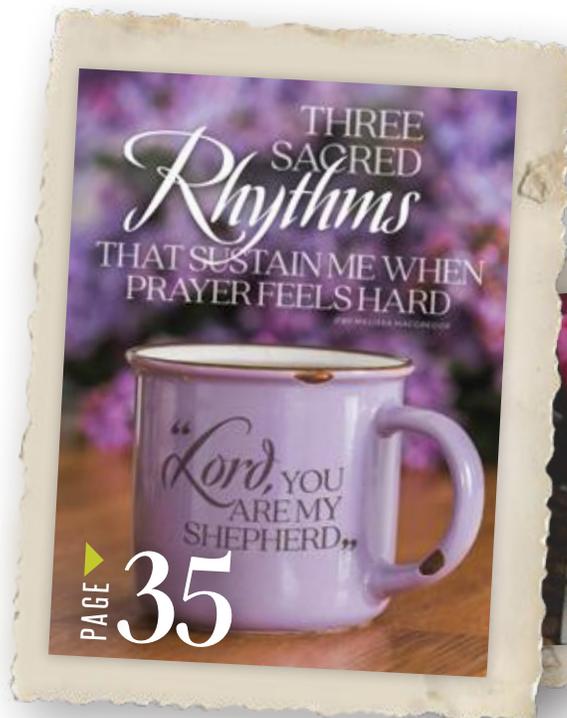
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# PRAYING BOLDLY EXPECTANTLY ON OUR KNEES

WHEN PRESENCE MATTERS  
— MORE THAN ANSWERS —

// BY ANNE WOOTEN



← Anne Wooten, founder of Anne Wooten, LLC, is a Christian life coach, author, and musician who empowers Christian individuals to overcome fear, step into their purpose, and live with confidence through her coaching and writing. Connect with her on social media and learn much more about her at [annewooten.com](http://annewooten.com).





**T**here comes a moment in the prayer life of every sincere believer when the words begin to feel heavy, not because God is distant, but because the heart is weary. We've prayed faithfully. We've trusted earnestly. We've waited longer than we expected. And somewhere in that waiting, a quiet question arises: Is God refining me... or am I being overlooked?

This is where many of us pull back in prayer, not because we've stopped believing, but because we're afraid to hope too boldly again.

Yet Scripture invites us into a different posture. Not demanding. Not transactional. But bold, reverent, and expectant in the deepest sense of the word; expectant not for outcomes, but for God Himself.

Moses models this kind of prayer in Exodus 33 during one of the most fragile moments in Israel's journey. The people have failed. The future is uncertain. God's presence feels at risk. And Moses, rather than asking for reassurance, success, or answers, asks for something far more intimate.

Before Moses ever asks to see God's glory, God reassures him:

"The Lord said to Moses, 'I am pleased with you and I know you by name.'

Then Moses said, 'Now show me your glory.'"—Exodus 33:17–18 (NIV)

This exchange is deeply personal. God affirms relationship before revelation. He reminds Moses that he is known before Moses dares to ask for more.

This is not a prayer for miracles or momentum. It is a prayer for revelation.

Moses doesn't bargain. He doesn't outline expectations. He simply asks to know God more deeply; to experience His presence so personally that it changes everything else. This is bold prayer, not because it demands something from God, but because it dares to desire Him fully.

There is a difference between expecting God to act and expectantly seeking His presence. One posture tries to control the outcome: the other surrenders to transformation.

Many of us have been taught to pray with faith, but not always with intimacy. We pray carefully. Respectfully. Sometimes even cautiously. And while reverence is holy, restraint born from disappointment can quietly rob us of boldness. We stop asking God to draw near, not because we don't want Him, but because we don't want to be let down again.

Yet Moses shows us that bold prayer is not irreverent. It is relational.

God responds to Moses not with rebuke, but with nearness. He covers him. He passes by. He reveals His goodness, not in spectacle, but in presence. And that presence becomes the very thing that sets Moses and the people apart.

This kind of prayer doesn't rush God or measure success by visible results. It is rooted in awe. It waits well. It trusts that God's glory revealed within us will eventually radiate through us.

And that is where revival truly begins.

Not in crowds.

Not in outcomes.

But in hearts that are fully yielded.

When we pray boldly for God's presence, something shifts. The striving quiets. The fear loosens its grip. We stop interpreting delay as punishment and begin to see it as an invitation. God is not withholding Himself—He is drawing us deeper.

This is the kind of prayer that refines rather than rescues.

The kind that says, "Even if nothing around me changes, let me know You more."

And paradoxically, it is often through this surrender that faith multiplies, not just within us, but through us. When we live aware of God's presence, others sense it. Our peace speaks. Our endurance testifies. Our quiet confidence points beyond ourselves.

Bold prayer does not mean loud prayer. It means honest prayer.

It is the courage to come to God without pretending we're strong, certain, or okay. It is the willingness to say, "I am tired of trying, but I still want You." And trusting that this prayer, offered with reverence and awe, delights the heart of the Father.

Because God is not after our performance.

He is after our presence with Him.

And when we dare to pray as Moses did, boldly, humbly, expectantly, we discover that the greatest answer to prayer is not what God does for us, but how deeply we come to know Him.

Exodus 33 reminds us that God affirms a relationship before revelation. It is my heartfelt prayer that it invites you to kneel—not in striving, but in deeper trust and awe of the God who knows you by name.

# PREPARE YOURSELF *for* THE KING

/// BY SUSAN BOLINGER

In April 2015, I found myself deeply unhappy with my life. I wasn't content at home, at work, or even at church. Everywhere I turned I felt unsettled. Eventually, I realized there was one common denominator in all of it — me.

One evening after a particularly difficult day, I took my dog for a walk around my neighborhood. As I walked, I prayed and vented to God, pouring out my frustration and confusion. In that quiet moment, I heard Him gently say, "Prepare yourself for the King."

I stopped and responded, "What?"

Again, He said, "Prepare yourself for the King."

The words immediately reminded me of Queen Esther in the Bible and her purification process before meeting the king. At first glance, Esther's preparation seems purely cosmetic, even vain. But as I began studying scripture, I realized it was anything but superficial. I learned that during the first six months of Esther's purification, she was bathed in myrrh—an essential oil with deep biblical significance.

Unsure how to begin this journey, I asked the Lord to guide me. After purchasing some myrrh, I prayed for direction. He instructed me to go into my prayer closet, anoint my head, and pray. I obeyed, though at first it felt awkward. I stood there with the door open, praying briefly, easily distracted—especially when my husband walked by and gave me a puzzled look.

I tried closing the door and kneeling, but then I became distracted by clothes and shoes I hadn't worn in years. Frustrated, I decided to

change the atmosphere. I turned off the lights, played instrumental worship music, knelt, anointed myself with myrrh, and began to pray—sincerely.

This time, my prayer was different. I asked God to change me—my heart, my mind, my attitudes—whatever He wanted. That prayer was difficult because it required me to get myself out of the way.

As I researched myrrh further, I learned that while frankincense was given to Jesus at His birth, myrrh symbolized His death. In biblical times, myrrh was used to prepare bodies for burial. The Holy Spirit revealed to me that there were things inside me that needed to die.

Over the next year, God began purging my life—my thoughts, my emotions, my attitudes and even friends. Some things I gladly released: feelings of inadequacy, worthlessness, perfectionism, pride, and the constant sense of never measuring up. But other things were harder.

I noticed that certain memories still stung when they crossed my mind. I asked God to reveal any unforgiveness I still carried—things I thought I had forgiven but hadn't fully released. Over the next two weeks, names began surfacing everywhere: while shopping, in conversations with my parents,

through acquaintances, even on social media. I knew God was bringing unresolved wounds to the surface.

I wrote down every name.

One Saturday afternoon, sitting on my screened-in porch—the Lord told me it was time to let them go. The list was longer than I expected, spanning from childhood to the present. I prayed for uninterrupted time, knowing how important this moment was.

I didn't offer a blanket prayer of forgiveness. Instead, I took the list one name at a time. I pictured each person sitting in front of me and replayed the offense from beginning to end in the presence of the Lord. Some memories were painful, and I wept uncontrollably. Then I spoke out loud: "I forgive you for what you did to me," and even "I'm sorry I hurt you—please forgive me." I did this for every name.

Many of those people had never asked for forgiveness, but with God's help, I released them anyway. As I replayed each situation

“  
I forgive you for what  
you did to me,” and  
even “I’m sorry I hurt  
you—please forgive me.”  
”



in my mind, I forgave them at the moment of the offense, and the enemy lost his grip on those memories. The process took over three hours, uninterrupted! I truly believe God protected that time.

Some names surprised me. I thought, That was petty. That doesn't matter. But I remembered a prayer I prayed: if God brought it to my mind, I would address it. Why allow even the smallest offense to stand between me and the future God had planned?

When I finished the final name, I felt an immediate lifting—as though a heavy weight had been removed from my shoulders. I was free.

I want to be used greatly by God—but preparation is required. The same is true for you. If your hands are full of unforgiveness, how can God fill them with new blessings, fresh anointing, and His promises?

I wanted to be free—once and for all.

And that freedom changed everything.

I know He will do the same for you.



← Susan Bolinger is the author of the book *Bloom – A Process to Achieve Complete Forgiveness*. She has a YouTube Channel where you can follow her video series “*Forgiveness in Five*.” To order a copy of Susan’s book and to obtain more information on her ministry, check out the links below.



Website “*Bloom – A Process to Achieve Complete Forgiveness*” – [The Book thesisterhoodmag.com/susanbolinger](http://TheBookthesisterhoodmag.com/susanbolinger)

# WHEN PRAYER BECOMES *the first thing,* NOT ANOTHER THING

/// BY CRYSTAL THARP

For the longest time, mornings were the hardest part of my day.

I constantly woke up with a sour attitude. Feeling so ashamed that I struggled to speak gently to my children. Desperately wanting to experience peace and calm the first few hours of the day.

But between sleepless nights from nursing my baby, getting my toddler back into her bed, and navigating unexpected sleep regressions with my oldest, I woke up every morning exhausted.

Layer that with postpartum depression, where I felt a heavy cloud following me everywhere.

I was trying to keep up with the demands of daily life, be a good mother, and take care of myself, as best as I could under the circumstances.

What I didn't realize then was that God never created us to just push through. We were never supposed to do everything in our own strength. God created us for something far greater than survival. He created us to live in

dependence on Him, to impact His Kingdom, and to walk in His grace.

But in that season, I was simply trying to keep my head above water.

After the hormonal rollercoaster from five straight years of either being pregnant or nursing came to a normal pace, the dark cloud finally began to dissipate. By God's mercy and power, I stepped into a new season of hope and gratitude.

And it was in that season that I realized that my time with God had become an afterthought. Something I squeezed in if time allowed. Something that felt like just one more thing on my already full list.

**I realized that prayer is not something I have to do, it's something I get to do.**

In the Old Testament, God's people had to go to the tabernacle to meet with Him. Only certain people could enter certain places. There were layers, barriers, and rituals. Access to God was sacred, but limited.

Then Jesus came. The veil was torn. And now, we have immediate, personal access to the Creator of the universe at any moment.

I don't have to schedule Him in. I don't have to wait. I don't have to earn my way into His presence. I get to talk to Him.

Instead of dreading the day and pushing through heavy emotions, I began starting my mornings with honest, surrendered prayers.

"Lord, I need You today."

"Please give me peace in my mind and my heart."

"Help me to be patient with my children the way You are patient with me."

Prayer stopped being a box to check and became a desire.

This rhythm became so foundational in my own life and in the lives of the women I coach that it eventually grew into the framework I now teach in my course, Faith-Fueled & Focused: Mastering Your Morning Routine.

And the mornings I skipped it? I felt it. The way you notice immediately when you walk outside without shoes on.

This is the power of a Faith-Fueled Morning Routine: letting your first thoughts belong to God before they contribute to the noise of the day.

Scripture tells us, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). When prayer becomes the first thing, not another thing, it reshapes everything that follows.



**Here's a simple way to begin, using my Good-Better-Best Framework that I teach my coaching clients:**

**Good:** Start with one small moment. Before you check your phone, say a simple prayer. Thank Him. Ask for help. Invite Him into your day.

**Better:** Create a simple routine. Sit with your Bible and a cup of coffee. Read one verse. Pray it back to God. Let His Word guide your thoughts.

**Best:** Build a rhythm that anchors your mornings. A quiet space. A consistent time. A heart posture that says, "Lord, I want You first."

Your mornings set the tone for your mind. And your mind shapes your day.

Prayer opens our hearts to God's guidance,

fills us with peace and gratitude, and aligns our intentions with His purpose. It reminds us that we are not alone, not forgotten, and not expected to do life in our own strength.

You don't need a perfect routine. You just need a willing heart.

Because prayer is not one more thing to squeeze in. It is the sacred invitation you get to accept every morning. And it has the power to change everything.

.....  
"And the mornings I skipped it? I felt it. The way you notice immediately when you walk outside without shoes."  
.....



→ *Crystal Tharp is a Home Organization & Productivity expert, helping busy Christian women to go from feeling stressed out, embarrassed and overwhelmed by their disorganized home, to experiencing more peace, confidence, and balance, through habits, routines and systems that create the organized home and productive lifestyle that she desires.*



# WHY PRAYER *and* DOUBT — JUST DON'T MIX

/// BY JOYCE MEYER

Prayer is a vital part of our relationship with God, and it's a great privilege, not an obligation. When you really think about it, it's amazing to know that the God Who created everything and knows everything actually wants us to come to Him boldly—through Christ—to have a relationship with Him.

Hebrews 4:16 (NLT) says, “So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.” It's so important for us to trust God's love for us and really know that He's merciful and sees us as righteous because of what Jesus has done for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). If we don't, we will struggle to have confidence that He hears our prayers and wants to help us.

The truth is God knows everything about us—what's right with us and what's wrong with us. He loves us unconditionally and He wants to have a relationship with us and meet every need in our lives. Our imperfections have nothing to do with His ability and willingness to answer our prayers.

However, one common hindrance to answered prayer is doubt, and when we

experience it, it's usually because we're focusing on us—our weaknesses and mistakes. The key is keeping our focus on God, trusting Him to give us wisdom and discernment so we know what to believe and what to do. James 1:5 (AMPC) says, “If any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him ask of the giving God [Who gives] to everyone liberally and ungrudgingly, without reproaching or faultfinding, and it will be given him.”

True wisdom comes from God, and He wants to give it to us “liberally and ungrudgingly, without reproaching or faultfinding” “Liberally” means He gives more than enough, and “ungrudgingly, without reproach or faultfinding” means that even when we're in messes we've created ourselves, we can still go to God and He will help us.

Now, this doesn't mean He won't correct us, teach, and train us when we've made a mistake. Like any parent who loves their children, He disciplines us because He loves us and wants what's best for us. But when we're in trouble, He doesn't decide whether to help us or not based on our performance. His love is unconditional.

Here's an example to demonstrate what I'm talking about: If my son was in trouble with the neighborhood bully and called for his dad and me to help him, we wouldn't respond to him based on whether he had done all of his chores at home. It would be ridiculous if we heard him crying for help, yet we took time to check the list first to see if he had done everything he was supposed to do before we intervened.

As parents, we don't refuse to help our children because they don't do everything right, perfectly or the way we want them to all the time. God is our Father, and He knows we are not perfect. He wants to be involved in every part of our lives and we don't ever have to doubt that!

When we doubt God, we're left midway between believing and not believing—we're double-minded. But 1 Corinthians 2:16 says we can live with the mind of Christ. In other words, we can learn to think the way God thinks so we're not led by the mind of the flesh, "which is sense and reason without the Holy Spirit" (Romans 8:6 AMPC).

James 1:6 AMPC says when we come to God for wisdom, it must be in faith "with no wavering (no hesitating, no doubting). For the one who wavers (hesitates, doubts) is like the billowing surge out at sea that is blown hither and thither and tossed by the wind." This doesn't mean we won't ever feel doubt, but when we do, we can know how to stand up to it.

Sometimes when I'm teaching, I doubt whether I'm sharing the "right" message based on how people seem to be responding to me. That's when I have to trust God and tell myself, "I've prayed about this. I've sought God about the teaching, and I'm not going to be double-minded. I trust God!"

I want to encourage you to ask God for the desires in your heart and then stand in faith for Him to do His will. Decide to trust Him and His Word, no matter what you feel, what people say or what your circumstances look like. The only thing that really matters is what God's Word says, and you will overcome doubt by putting your faith in Him every time you pray.

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-part teaching resource *Simple Prayer...Simple Life*. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting [joycemeyer.org](http://joycemeyer.org)

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→ Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 150 books, including *BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND* and *OVERCOMING EVERY PROBLEM (FaithWords)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* program, which is broadcast to millions in over 110 languages. For more information, visit [joycemeyer.org](http://joycemeyer.org)



# prayer PROMPTS

/// BY KAREN WINGATE



↑ *Karen Wingate is author of three devotional books including, [With Open Ears: 60 Reflections on the Wonder of Sound from a Woman Born Blind \(Kregel\)](#). You can learn more about Karen at her website [karenwingate.com](http://karenwingate.com).*



## “How do I know how to pray for someone?”

During an afternoon walk, I encountered a lady from my neighborhood bible study group. We spent a moment in chitchat, then she told me she was curious about something. After asking the above question, she elaborated. “I get all these prayer requests, and I don’t know what the person needs.” Her shoulders slumped. “What if I pray for something they don’t want?” I wanted to hug her for her vulnerability.

I’ve felt the same confusion over how to pray for someone, especially a request with barebone details. I belong to one group that has members fill out prayer cards at the beginning of a meeting, then at the end, we select a card so we can pray for that person over the next month. One time, my selected card simply read, “My health.” I felt frustrated. Any health diagnosis is a complex web of needs. What could I pray for specifically for this precious lady?

Conversely, when I asked for prayer for my eighty-nine-year-old mother who was near death, several people told me they were praying for complete healing. *Is that what I really want? I wondered. Is that what God wants?*

Yes, Romans 8:26,27 tells us that the Holy Spirit fills in the gaps when our knowledge is incomplete, but in other places, the Bible gives specific prayer prompts. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians outlines three talking points he used when praying for the believers in Ephesus. I’ve found it helpful to pray that the person in need grow in their knowledge and understand about God in these three ways.

### KNOW THE PERSONALITY OF GOD.

In Ephesians 1:17, Paul says, “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.” We can ask God to give our friends His wisdom to meet the situation they face and that, through the experience, they will come to know Him better.

### KNOW THE PROMISES OF GOD.

Ephesians 1:18 says, “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people.” Anyone in crisis needs a dose of hope. As Christians,

we find our confidence in the promises of God—promises that He will help us, stay with us, and have the glories of heaven waiting for those who have put their trust in Him. We can pray our friends find renewed hope as they watch God at work in their behalf.

**KNOW THE POWER OF GOD.** Paul goes on to pray, “and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:19,20).” Our friend’s situation might look impossible by human standards. We can ask God to demonstrate His great and mighty power to overcome anything. I often pray that God will provide in such a way that bystanders—whether family members, medical staff, or creditors—will be convinced this had to have come from God. Other times, I’ll implore the Lord, “Give my friend a story to tell,” a story that begins with “Let me tell you what God did for me.”

When I shared this outline with my neighbor, her shoulders straightened. “Those three prayers would apply to anyone,” she said. She is so right! The lady who asked for prayer for her health? I can pray that, through her health issues, she draws closer to God, she witnesses God’s provision in a way that builds her hope and trust, and she gets a front row seat to view the amazing power of God.

And my mother? In the last week of her life, moments happened as if they were scripted by an unseen hand. As my siblings and I gathered in her room for those final hours, we lived the powerful peace and unity of God. In the end, we had no doubt of her destination because of her hope in God’s ultimate promise—Heaven’s halls where she would find complete healing.



“ I’ve found it helpful to pray that the person in need grow in their knowledge and understand about God in these three ways.”

# *closer*

ENHANCING YOUR  
PRAYER LIFE THROUGH  
CONFESSION

/// BY TISCHA  
VAN DE REEP

# I'D LIKE TO START WITH A QUESTION: WHAT DISTANCES US FROM GOD?

Sin, disobedience, avoidance, distraction. These all distance us from God, and it's why we need confession to draw closer to Him.

Confession seems like a scary word to us. Maybe we've watched too many crime dramas where confession leads to conviction, and means lack of freedom.

But with God, it's all the other way around.

Conviction about our sin leads to confession, and confession leads to freedom.

We don't like to admit our wrongs, but we must keep two things in mind:

1. God already knows.
2. Confession is an unburdening.

Our refusal to confess is us clinging to things that are not of God. Those thoughts or actions occupy space in our hearts, minds, and lives that should be filled with the Spirit of God. They become burdens we carry around. Confession removes those burdens and gives us a clean slate.

### Read 1 John 1:9. What does God do when we confess our sins?

Does He condemn us? Does He punish us? No, He cleanses and forgives us because God is faithful and just.

### If confession leads to us being unburdened by a faithful and just God, what happens when we don't confess?

### Read Psalm 32:1-5. Can you relate to how David felt in verses 3 & 4?

Picture yourself covered in filth and you just don't want to acknowledge it. You put really nice clothes on; you even use perfume to cover the stench. You may look good, but there's still that stink. You're in such denial about the stink that you're more interested in concealing it than getting rid of it. The trick is not to let anyone get too close, including God. But the only way to get the stink off is to approach God and ask to be cleansed.

Only God can cleanse you, only He can free you.

Without confession, acknowledgement of your sin, a truly close relationship with God is impossible.

### Read 1 Peter 1:16. What is written? (Based on Leviticus 11:44)

### Now read 1 Thessalonians 4:7. What do you conclude from this?

God wants us clean! If we carry the stench and stain of sin, He wants to cleanse us of it. He calls us to be holy which means pure, blameless, set apart. A surgeon's tools are completely sterilized before use. A craftsman, artist, or artisan prefers to set aside the clean tools for her next masterpiece rather than use the dirty ones. Would you serve your friends by pouring from an unclean vessel? So why would God? Old, worn, used, damaged, broken, cracked, faded, tired, recycled, repurposed, salvaged, sure, He'll use those vessels, but not if they're unclean.

### CONFESSION ACKNOWLEDGES THAT:

1. God is holy – He and sin don't mix. If you're going to be close to God, you're going to have to separate yourself from sin. Give it to Him to dispose of for you. Confession draws us closer to His holiness and brings us closer to being holy ourselves.
2. You trust Him – You trust that He is for you and loves you. You trust that He is good and gentle, and that there's nothing that will override His affection for you. You trust that you're safe with Him.
3. You need His grace and forgiveness – To be clean, whole, and free requires God's loving hand. His grace and forgiveness give you permission to release the burdens you've been carrying.

4. You don't want sin, you want Jesus – This is where you're willing to lay it on the line and come clean because Jesus is more important than anything you're trying to hide. Confession allows us to step out of the darkness and into His Light.

### CONFESSION IS NOT:

1. An indictment of how bad you are.
2. An invitation to punishment.
3. For show – it's not part of a ritual – it's for prayerful release.
4. The end of you and God. It's a new beginning as you walk in repentance.

So how about it? Are you ready to draw closer to God in your prayer life through confession? Lay your burdens at His feet, dear sister, and leave them there.

### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, my sin no longer has power over me. You do. I confess my sins to You and ask You to cleanse my heart. I commit myself to You, my Savior, for all my days. In Your holy name I pray. Amen.



→ Tischa is a Trinidad-born writer and speaker married to Harald, a Dutchman. They live in The Woodlands, TX with their two sons, Julian and Aidan. Tischa brings authenticity and vulnerability to all her teachings on Scripture. She is the author of "Unpopular: Following Jesus, Not the Crowd" as well as several other Bible teachings and Bible studies. Apart from teaching Scripture from her living room and various churches, Tischa's work in ministry extends from homeless women in Houston, to expat wives in Budapest, Hungary, to rural villagers in Malawi, Africa, and women across the US. For more info, go to [tischavandereep.com](http://tischavandereep.com)



# WHAT 40 DAYS *taught me* ABOUT PRAYER

///BY TIELER GILES



I had lunch with a friend last fall, and during our last few moments, standing in the parking lot, she said to me, “I’m doing this 40-day prayer challenge and would love for you to join me.” She quickly texted me a link to the book by Freeda Bowers. I told her I would pray about it. But I knew, even as I drove home, that this was something I needed to do. I went on to complete the 40 days, which took me about 45 days. And it was during this time that God opened my eyes to prayer in new, transformative ways.

#### **THE POWER OF PRAYING FOR OTHERS**

I’ll admit, praying for others has often taken a back seat to my own prayers. But during those 40 days, my focus expanded to include six loved ones: one searching for a job after a spring layoff, one walking



through grief, one facing a mental health challenge, one navigating a relocation, one struggling with difficulties at work, and another feeling stuck and uncertain about the future.

Often, when I'm praying for myself, it's easy to slip into trying to be my own solution; to get ahead of God or "help" him out a little. But when I was interceding for someone else, there wasn't much I could do. All I had was faith that God would show up and do something. And he did. God answered every one of those prayers, including a job offer that came just days before the challenge ended.

I learned something simple but lasting: I really can pray, and then keep moving forward, trusting God with the outcome.

### **FACING NOT REMOVING THE HARD STUFF**

The prayer I'm most used to praying is the one that asks God to move the hard thing out of the way. To fix it. Remove it. But during those 40 days, I began to realize there's another kind of prayer; one that isn't about doing away with the difficult thing, but simply asking, "Lord, will you carry it?" I learned that sometimes, God invites us to face and feel the hard things so that we can be honest with ourselves and with him.

As I wrote in my journal one morning, "All this pretending is taking my energy. Acting like I'm okay. God, I'm angry. I'm upset. At this point, it just feels easier to give up than believe."

Those hard places were the very things God wanted to surface to begin the work of healing and restoration. The grief, disappointment, and loss we carry are real. And in my case, the path to peace hasn't come from seeing certain circumstances change just yet, but from trusting that God is willing to carry the hardest part with me.

### **WAITING PRODUCES FRUIT**

As I sought the Lord daily, something quietly beautiful began to happen. My need for answers and immediate outcomes began to quiet. I also realized I didn't feel compelled to do something because in many ways, praying was the doing. We live in a world marked by constant striving, where we must be working through something at all times. Or constantly making something happen. But I noticed God began to quiet my soul.

Was this stillness? The stillness Psalm 46:10 speaks of: "Be still, and know that I am God"? Was this the rest for my soul that Jesus promised in Matthew 11:28-29? Yes, it was.

I'm grateful to my friend Melia for the invitation to join her—and God—during the 40-day prayer challenge. Perhaps it's not surprising that some longings and questions remain after the 40 days. And yet, there is more peace and contentment. I've come away more aware of God's nearness, and with a deeper awe of his goodness and grace.

Perhaps that's the invitation prayer always offers: not to fix our lives, but to offer them to God, trusting how deeply he desires to meet us right where we are.

.....  
**ALL I HAD  
WAS FAITH  
THAT GOD  
WOULD  
SHOW UP  
AND DO  
SOMETHING.**  
.....



→ *Tieler Giles is an author, coach, and communications leader on a mission to help people live well and do good. In her debut book *How to Ditch the How-To*, she supports change-seekers on their journey to becoming who God has called them to be. Tieler is convinced that the gospel of Jesus is the best news ever, with the power to transform lives, culture, and the world around us. She currently lives in Charlotte, NC*



# The Everyday Power of Prayer

/// BY SHARA BUELER-REPKA

**I**t was our prayers for guidance that sent our road ministry back to the West. The Lord kept us in our home state of Texas for a bit, but now He'd impressed on us it was time to roll. The Holy Spirit actually sang to Bruce as he strolled through the pasture: "Go West, young man, haven't you been told?"

Our departure date, though, was not without challenges: an outbreak of equine viruses in Texas and Arizona; an irritated eye on my horse, Nocona; and a flu-type bug for me. But the Lord gave His wisdom as we prayed, and we rolled safely into the horse camp in Arizona.

However, for whatever reason, Nocona's eye became more irritated and cloudy. Eye ailments in horses can go from bad to worse in a heartbeat, so I scouted around for a good veterinarian.

More prayers: prayers for wisdom for the vet; for my horse to cooperate during the examination; prayers for focus, not on the problem, but on God's promises and direction. It's a scary thing to deal with the unknown when you don't know the whys or the how-to's. It's easy to feel a bit lost and helpless. (James 1:5-6)

As I waited for the vet, trying to ignore the butterflies head-butting in my gut, the Lord strongly, but compassionately, reminded me of Philippians 4:6-7: "Be anxious for *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 minds through Christ Jesus." (NKJV)

I've come to realize that this verse is not a suggestion, but a command. He has our best interests at heart, so when we pray, He's immediately on the move. And, He's the only One who knows the perfect trail through any rocky circumstance...even if He has to create one! (Isaiah 43:19).

I had a choice. Do I go with the knot in my gut and focus on the "what ifs" and bow to fear of the unknown? Or do I take God at His Word?

I couldn't bear not to honor Him in this situation, so I dug in my heels before the vet arrived. As I immersed myself in the promises of His Word, I thanked Him for all the other times He had been my help in every circumstance.

When the vet arrived, God's hand was clearly at work. Nocona did great, and the vet offered good news and a treatment plan.

I followed that plan to the letter, and Bruce and I also prayed over him every day. Of course, we wanted a miracle of immediate healing, but God had other ideas.

Little did we know, this eye challenge would be an opportunity to walk out the verse, "Let patience have its perfect work..." (James 1:4).

As the days dragged on, yeah, it was frustrating when we didn't see the progress we wanted. But back to our proverbial knees we'd go, thanking Him for the healing we knew would come, even though we couldn't always perceive what He was doing. And, we prayed for further guidance to make sure we weren't missing anything.

Of course, God could have miraculously swooped in and made it all go away. However, even though it's hard to admit, He knew my faith needed refining. Strong faith is not built by quick fixes. It takes time to build that foundation. And fervent prayer is part of His perfect process.

Maybe you're dealing with something a lot worse than a horse-eye-thing. Nevertheless, the plan of action is the same: hit your proverbial (or literal) knees in prayer; listen for His answer; take action when He gives direction; pray (and thank Him) through the entire challenge.

As we communicate with Him, we will have peace and power in the process. Even though the exact answer to the problem may not be clear, we can be encouraged that God would never encourage us to "pray without ceasing", if He didn't intend to lead us to the best answer. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Jeremiah 29:11).

The old hymn, What a Friend We Have in Jesus, nails it: "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!"

BIBLE

.....  
“I COULDN'T  
BEAR NOT  
TO HONOR  
HIM IN THIS  
SITUATION,  
SO I DUG IN  
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.....

→ Shara is enjoying life as a singer/songwriter/recording artist, freelance writer, award-winning author, and everything in between. She lives with Bruce, her awesome husband of 22 years, in their living quarters horse trailer and call “home” wherever their rig is parked. Their mail-base, however, is Hallettsville, Texas. They share God's Word through their music and testimonies (Pony Express Ministry) and minister with their horses (aka The Boys) in the backcountry.



# AN ODE TO THE PRAYING WOMAN

/// BY BRENDA SAVANHU

Sleep interrupted  
She rolls over and gently rubs her eyes  
Brushing away the fogginess of her mind  
It's 3 am  
Thoughts come into focus, she remembers  
why she's awake  
It's the dead of night, the perfect time to  
meet with her Savior  
Her desire to meet with Him overshadows  
her desire to go back to sleep.  
Only He knows exactly what she's going  
through  
Only He can relate fully  
She settles herself in her prayer corner  
and opens her prayer box again  
It is overflowing with requests, all  
seemingly insurmountable  
She looks up and is comforted when she  
sees Him  
Her eyes question, "which one today, Lord?"  
He smiles gently and nods and looks down  
at her hand hovering over that one request  
The one she has agonized over.  
The one that seems more impossible than  
the rest  
She takes a deep breath as she closes her  
eyes and whispers,  
"Lord, teach me how to pray,"  
She opens her mouth, and words begin to  
flow  
Her prayer starts timidly and gradually  
gains steam  
She hears herself and wonders, "Is that me  
praying?"

She is recalling scriptures she didn't know  
she knew  
And declaring boldly things she was never  
courageous enough to say  
She leans into the rapids of the river of  
her emotions  
It's dangerous sport, but her Protector is  
here  
He'll fish her out if she falls in  
The rapids are intense  
Tears flow down her face  
Her voice rises and falls  
She marches around her room  
Then she abruptly stops  
She is enveloped by His glory  
And throws herself on the floor  
The weight is too much  
All she can do is lay prostrate  
She is lost in intercession  
Time and space have ceased to exist  
Some nights this goes on for hours  
Other nights, only 15 minutes  
She is the praying woman  
She is the one who has partnered with  
Jesus in intercession  
She is the one who seeks neither credit nor  
expects to be rewarded for times in the  
closet  
He rewards her anyway  
Sometimes her reward is seeing answered  
prayers  
Sometimes it's simply the gift of His  
presence

Whatever it is, we will never know the  
breadth and depth of the ministry of the  
praying woman  
Thank you, Sister for your fervent,  
effectual prayers  
Thank you for midnight prayers  
Thank you for early morning prayers  
Thank you for noontime prayers  
Thank you for nighttime prayers  
Thank you for praying for our families  
Thank you for praying for our health  
Thank you for praying for our relationships  
Thank you for praying for our communities  
Thank you for praying for our cities  
Thank you for praying for our countries  
Thank you for praying for our world  
Thank you for praying for us  
Thank you, Sister  
May He be your everlasting reward  
In your private ministry of prayer



→ Brenda is the author of *Memorial Stones - A Guided Devotional Journal for Foundational Miracles in Your Life*, which was born out of her return to Jesus and subsequent journey of faith from then until now. *Memorial Stones* is available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, iTunes, and Google Play.



.....  
“HE SMILES  
GENTLY  
AND NODS  
AND LOOKS  
DOWN AT  
HER HAND  
HOVERING  
OVER  
THAT ONE  
REQUEST  
THE ONE  
SHE HAS  
AGONIZED  
OVER.”  
.....

# WHEN TALKING TO *God* FEELS TOO HARD

BY KIRSTEN D SAMUEL

She sits alone, staring out the window. The Bible lies open on her lap, but the words blur. All she feels is emptiness. Loneliness.

Glancing down, she tries to read a few more lines. What's the use? Nothing makes sense. The words feel dusty. She's tried to pray, but no one seems to hear. Maybe God doesn't care anymore...or maybe He never did.

"God, where are You?" Tears spill onto the open page. "Why won't You answer me? I can't go on like this any longer. I don't want to."

Dropping her head in defeat, she whispers, "Jesus, where are You?" And then, quietly, she hears a question rise in her heart: "Who do you say I am?"

Did she believe God was who He said He was—or didn't she? There was nothing left to try. Nothing left to give. In sheer desperation, she cried out, "Jesus, I believe. Help my unbelief."

Sometimes prayer feels like throwing words into the wind, hoping they somehow stick.

I remember those dark days as if they were yesterday.

Words wouldn't come, but my heart screamed its pain. My soul cried desperately for God. Life hurt. The only words that made sense to me were found in the Psalms. I resonated deeply with David's raw cries for relief, his honesty about suffering, and his refusal to pretend everything was fine.

Prayer? I couldn't follow the prescriptive formulas I'd been taught—ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication—or any other neatly packaged prayer method. They felt wooden. Lifeless. I didn't need a system. I needed God to become real to me again.

I also carried guilt. I'd been told kneeling was important to prayer, but it was physically painful for me to do so. What did it really mean to "pray without ceasing"? That phrase alone felt overwhelming. And then there were the smaller things—do you pray about finding a good parking spot or asking God to heal your sick dog? I'd heard that a true Christian wouldn't do anything without praying first. The rules felt endless. And confusing.



“Again and again, He impressed His words of love, grace, and mercy on my heart through those pages.”

One day, while journaling, something shifted. Without intending to, I began writing an imaginary conversation with God. I poured out my frustration, sadness, and questions as King David did in Psalm 40 in the New Living Translation, which starts with, “I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along.” I later learned this type of pouring out was called lament—but at the time, it was simply honesty.

And something miraculous happened.

For the first time in months, I sensed God’s quiet voice responding.

As I continued journaling my prayers, Scripture passages came to mind—sometimes in direct response to my questions or cries for help. I sensed God sitting with me, not fixing or correcting, but listening. I’d write what I felt Him saying and then immediately wonder if I’d made it all up.

Yet God kept meeting me there.

Again and again, He impressed His words of love, grace, and mercy on my heart through those pages.

To this day, I journal my prayers. They’re often disjointed. There’s no set structure. Just an honest conversation with my Abba Papa.

I imagine sitting with Him the way I once sat with my earthly dad—safe, heard, unhurried. This simple, relational way of praying has comforted my soul and helped me recognize God’s voice in ways I never thought possible.

From one prayer struggler to another, please don’t give up.

Tell God how hard it feels to talk to Him. Tell Him what you’re afraid to say. Let Him meet you in your own way, not someone else’s formula. Allow Him to show you how you communicate best with Him. Jesus told us to keep on asking, keep on knocking, keep on seeking (see Matthew 7). God desires a relationship with you. He wants your questions, your fears, your hopes, your anger, your joy—all of you.

If you feel lost, unheard, or simply need a safe place to process your struggles, I’d love to come alongside you. I promise to hear your heart without judgment. This free, no-pressure session gives you space to share your story and take one gentle step toward a freedom-filled future.



→ Christ-centered coach Kirsten D. Samuel helps women encounter God’s relentless love and find hope after marital betrayal, sharing from her and her husband’s journey of marital redemption. Featured on Focus on the Family, she invites women to embrace healing, grace, and God’s faithfulness. Connect at [KirstenDSamuel.com](http://KirstenDSamuel.com)



# the middle ground

## REMEMBERING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN WAITING SEASONS

/// BY SARAH FREYMUTH

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. -Hebrews 10:23 (ESV)*

**m**y running shoes crunch the gravel as I push my legs into the slight incline of the park I've just entered. The wind, a fresh breeze on my face, is welcome from the weeks of staying inside while Wisconsin thawed out from its long and relentless winter. Funny, how in this shifting season, my soul is thawing, too.





It's been a hard winter full of anxiety, fear, and exhaustion. Running by the wide blue of Lake Michigan works out the worry in my brain, smooths out the jumbled thoughts as we slowly move toward spring, as I slowly move toward healing.

I'm not the only one in the middle season where the trauma of life situations no longer shuts us down, yet we are not exactly where we want to be, either. Many of us are living in the middle, so what do we do to keep moving forward while we wait for our seasons to change?

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. -Hebrews 10:23 (ESV)

We look and remember, hold our Ebenezer stones (1 Samuel 7:12) that remind us how God has been with us.

### REMEMBER GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PEOPLE

Look at the Israelites and how the Lord had been with them throughout their lives. Though they grumbled and were uncertain coming out of their captivity, God never once took His eyes off of His chosen people. Through examples like the Red Sea parting and His provision in the wilderness, and even when they forgot their first love, God continued to pursue them and take care of them through His covenant.

Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. -Isaiah 46:9 (ESV)

### REMEMBER GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN OUR LIFE

Let's recall how many times God has shown us His faithfulness, His promised protection, His presence through our uncertainty, and help in situations we never thought we'd come out of. As He has led us through high seas though His

footprints were not seen (Psalm 77:19), the Lord makes a way through and has been faithful. When we couldn't produce the next payment or didn't know where our job was going to land, when we were sick and when our family was fracturing, the Lord held us together.

I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. -Psalm 77:11 (ESV)

### HOPE IN GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN THE FUTURE

This is where we lean and take heart in the hope that God gives us through the promises of His character and promises for our future. As He has been with us before, He will continue to be with us today and in the days to come. We fasten our eyes forward, fixed on Him who is unchanging and immovable, who loves us more than we even recognize, and lean on His goodness. We repeat His Word back to Him, reminding Him who He is and what He has said He will do.

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. -1 Corinthians 1:9 (ESV)

In the moment by moment living where we are no longer where we have been, but not yet certain of where we are going, we can build our faith brick by brick in believing in who God is by His Word, who He has been before in our lives, and how He continues to be those things today. God does not change (Malachai 3:6), and we can hold to hope in Him with confidence, trusting that He will continue to come through for us, even in the wind-swept days where we long and wait for fullness once again. It's a joy to remember and rest in His faithfulness, for God can be trusted.

**IN HIS WORD:**  
Read Lamentations 3:22-23. What does this passage say about God? List ways He has been faithful to you.

**IN YOUR LIFE:**  
What new mercies are you hoping for in this season? Spend time talking to God about your waiting and invite Him to show you His faithfulness today.



→ Sarah Freymuth is a writer and dreamer whose words weave honesty, vulnerability, and hope. As content and storytelling manager for Fellowship of Christian Athletes, she also writes for Proverbs 31, She Reads Truth, and YouVersion, sharing how God meets us in the everyday and in-between. She treasures life by Lake Michigan with her husband and finds beauty in simple Midwest living. Her book *All the Hard Things: 50 Days Through the Valley* from Harvest House Publishers walks women through seasons of struggle with gentleness and grace. [sarahfreymuth.com](http://sarahfreymuth.com)

# The Unceasing Breath. Prayer for the Woman Who Has *no time to pray*

/// BY KIMBERLY SUTTON

**B**etween the heavy demands of aging parents, the unpredictable needs of adult children, and the ‘lion’s den’ of a toxic workplace, the ‘sandwich generation’ woman is often left gasping for air. As a pastor’s wife who has lived in the trenches of family health crises, job and church drama, I’ve realized that peace isn’t found in a quiet closet, but in the ‘breath prayers’ we whisper in elevators and in the shower stall. This article is a field guide for the woman who feels pressed on every side, offering a humorous and scriptural roadmap to reclaiming your sanity - one inhale at a time.

## THE UNCEASING BREATH: PRAYER FOR THE WOMAN WHO HAS NO TIME TO PRAY

You’re sitting at your office desk, waiting for payday to pay a stack of unpaid bills, while your adult daughter stops by for some motherly advice, and your phone buzzes with a text from your mother that her oxygen levels are dipping and she needs you to come by after work. You feel less like the “virtuous woman” of Proverbs 31 and more like a human panini—pressed between the heavy weights of two generations, with the heat of a toxic workplace turned up to high.

I know that heat. As a former pastor’s wife, I used to think my “office” was a sanctuary. Then I realized that sometimes the “sheep” bite, and the office can feel like a lion’s den. Between caring for my mother with COVID-damaged lungs, navigating an office full of difficult personalities, and trying to life-coach adult children who are learning how to adult, I found myself gasping for air. But here is the secret I found in the trenches: You don’t need a prayer closet when your whole life is a battlefield. You just need to learn how to breathe.

## THE GUERRILLA WARFARE OF PRAYER

When you are in the “sandwich generation,” your prayer life cannot be a thirty-minute serene session with a leather-bound journal and worship music playing in the background. It has to be guerrilla warfare. I learned to pray with my eyes wide open, head on the pillow, whispering, “Help me today, Lord. Just... help.” I prayed in the shower, the steam carrying my pleas for patience. I prayed in the car, rebuking the spirit of chaos, while navigating traffic and having the sunrise shine right into my eyes. I even prayed in the office bathroom stall—the only “inner chamber” available—asking for the wisdom of Solomon and the restraint of a saint. After work, I prayed again as I rushed to take care of Mom’s needs, groceries, or laundry, or both, before going to my own home to care for my family’s needs.



If you are where I was, here is how we survive. We use Breath Prayers. These are short, scriptural lifelines you can inhale and exhale without anyone even knowing you're in a spiritual dogfight.

### SURVIVING THE "OFFICE LIONS" AND "CHURCH SHEEP"

We've all dealt with that one coworker—the "Reply-All" King or Queen who tries to throw you under the bus. Or the "Helpful" church member who has a "prophetic word" that's actually just a complaint about that one child in the nursery.

When the toxic fumes rise, try this:

The Inhale: "The Lord will fight for me..." (Exodus 14:14)

The Exhale: "...I will be still."

It's a way of rebuking the spirit of chaos before you hit "send" on an email you'll have to confess on Sunday. It's asking God to set a guard over your mouth (Psalm 141:3) when you'd rather give someone a piece of your mind that you truly can't afford to lose.

### COACHING THE KIDS AND CARING FOR THE PARENTS

Then there is the "sandwich" squeeze. Your adult children call with a crisis about a car payment just as you're walking into your mother's apartment to check her oxygen. You are being pulled in two directions, and your heart is breaking for both.

In the car, between the office and mom's house, pray this:

The Inhale: "Even to your old age..."

The Exhale: "...You will carry us." (Isaiah 46:4)

Remind yourself that He is the one sustaining your mother's health and your children's futures. You are the steward, not the Savior. When I started "outsourcing" the outcome to Him, the physical weight in my chest began to lift.

### REBUKING THE ATTACK

The enemy loves the sandwich generation because we are tired. And when we are tired, we are vulnerable to the lies that we aren't enough—not a good enough daughter, wife, or mother.

When those attacks come, use 2 Corinthians 12:9: "His grace is sufficient." If you're a mess, that's fine; that's where His power is made perfect. You don't need to be "together"; you just need to be His.

### YOUR SURVIVAL COMMAND

Sister, you aren't just "surviving life"—you are fulfilling the command to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). You do it not because you've mastered some impossible level of spiritual perfection, but because you're a woman who knows she can't take another step without a Divine Hand to hold. Your "unceasing" prayer isn't a religious performance or a checked box on a to-do list; it's your oxygen line. Take a deep breath right now. That's your first prayer of the minute. You aren't alone in that kitchen, that hospital room, or that office. He's already there, standing in the middle of your chaos, waiting for your next, "Help me, Lord." You've got this, because He's got you.

### JOIN THE JOURNEY

If you're navigating the "sandwich squeeze" and need a regular reminder that you don't have to walk this path alone, I'd love to walk with you.

Visit [justcallmepearl.com](http://justcallmepearl.com) to sign up for my free newsletter. You'll receive weekly encouragement, more practical "breath prayers," and a community of women who understand that life is messy, but God is faithful. Let's trade the overwhelm for His peace together.



← Kimberly Sutton knows what it's like to balance marriage, ministry, career, and the intense demands of caregiving for both aging parents and growing children. A firm believer in the power of "guerrilla prayer," she uses her experience as a wife, mother, pastor's wife, and office professional to help women rebuke the enemy's lies and reclaim their peace. She lives for the moments where faith meets the reality of personal struggles of difficult people, unpaid bills, and broken health, pointing women back to the One who sustains it all.



# prayed out

WHAT'S GOING  
ON WHEN  
PRAYER  
WON'T  
COME?

/// BY JENNY FOSTER

Anna wakes up to a cold house, making the blankets too cozy to abandon. She tries to start her morning prayers, but the text alerts on her phone are vibrating impatiently.

“I’m sorry, God. I’ll try again later.”

Anna works in a chaotic office that feels incompatible with prayer, but she tries again on her commute, only to be interrupted by a phone call. Slipping into the house before anyone notices, she locks herself in the bathroom, hoping to pray again, but the kids are pounding on the door, asking, “What’s for dinner?” After a long day, Anna can’t wait for the sanctuary of her bed. At 11:15 p.m., she begins to pray one last time.

“Hi, Jesus. Are you there? It’s me.”

As she fights to stay awake, her prayer begins in earnest, but she feels guilty for putting Jesus last on her list. Wordless, Anna feels stuck. Prayer paralysis sends her off to sleep, and another day has passed for Anna without meaningful prayer.

You may not see yourself in Anna’s story, but you may recognize these common feelings and behaviors that hinder prayer:

**AVOIDANCE** of prayer can look like procrastination. Perhaps we’re carrying unconfessed sin that may affect our openness and confidence to approach the throne. Self-reliance or pride often whispers, “We’ve got this.” Remember Jonah, who avoided God’s directives by fleeing in the opposite direction from Nineveh? He couldn’t hide from God, and neither can we. Jesus is our mighty counselor, and He wants us to come as we are.

**PRESSURE** A sense of PRESSURE can arise if we’ve internalized a performance-based view of prayer. This often comes from our upbringing or from feeling self-conscious if we’ve received messages suggesting we’re “doing it wrong.” If prayer feels like a test, resistance often follows. We must remember that prayer is not an evaluation, but a relationship.

**DISTRACTION** is at an all-time high. Society rewards us for being present at work, on our phones and computers, rather than being present with God. Without solid

boundaries and intentionality, the world sets us up for a wandering mind, impatience, disordered priorities, and the opposite of stillness. Remember Martha from Luke 10:38-42, who was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made? Jesus showed her that Mary’s choice to sit still at His feet was the better choice.

**DISCOMFORT** can arise when we sit down to pray. It might show up as guilt or conviction, anxiety, depression, or simply awkwardness. Sometimes it feels like numbness, an inability to find words, exhaustion, or even burnout. We may hesitate to pray because we’re acutely aware of our own sin. Discomfort can short-circuit our spiritual intimacy with God. When exhaustion is part of the picture, rest itself can become a deeply spiritual act.

**DISTANCE** can be the unfortunate result of not dealing with discomfort. It can create long gaps in prayer and a sense of emotional separation from God. Yet His mercies are new every morning, and Isaiah 59:1 reminds us that “Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.” Push past the gap and talk to Him, and He will bridge the distance.

**SPIRITUAL OPPOSITION** from the enemy is more common than we realize. When it arises, pray anyway. The Holy Spirit dwells within us, empowering us to overcome. Use the Sword of the Spirit—the Word of God—by reading scripture aloud and putting on the full armor of God as protection against the spiritual forces of evil. Lean on

the strength of others by asking them to pray with you. Often, prayer feels hardest precisely when it’s needed the most.

**SILENCE FROM GOD** can be discouraging. David wrote prolifically asking God questions like, “How long will you hide your face from me” (Psalm 13:1b)? Sometimes God is silent because we are right where He wants us. Other times, His silence speaks volumes, and it spurs us to press in and seek Him more deeply. God’s silence is not punitive. Continue praying even when God seems silent.

If you relate to some or all of these obstacles to prayer, know that you are not alone. Awareness is often the first step toward renewal. Ask God to search your heart for anything that might be getting in the way of comfortable prayer (unforgiveness is a common issue). When prayer still feels difficult, here are four simple actions you can take.

- Start with one sentence like, “God, I want to pray, but I don’t know how.”
- Call out with just one word: “Jesus.”
- Read a Psalm out loud.
- Silence is an acceptable form of prayer.

“ We may hesitate to pray because we’re acutely aware of our own sin. Discomfort can short-circuit our spiritual intimacy with God. ”



→ Author and speaker, Jenny Foster is passionate about helping people move from adversity to inspiration. The Lord called her to write a book and create an abortion healing ministry. She enjoys traveling, reading, mentoring, creative writing, and Bible journaling. You can reach Jenny at [jennyfoster.org/](http://jennyfoster.org/) or [author@jennyfoster.org](mailto:author@jennyfoster.org)





# From Stress to Stillness

## FINDING PEACE AND HEALING — THROUGH SURRENDER —

/// BY TRACY SCHMIDT

**A**s women, we are no strangers to stress. Each of us carries an invisible load every day. We are caregivers to children and aging parents—sometimes at the same time. We are wives, moms, daughters, sisters, friends, employees, and business owners, often feeling pulled in too many directions. Society has normalized this pace of life so that when we aren't feeling stressed, we wonder if something is wrong.

But stress is not normal. Nor is it something God designed us to carry. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 6:34 that worry was never meant to be our way of life. In fact, research consistently shows that chronic stress plays a significant role in many modern health issues—something that is not surprising when we understand how deeply stress impacts our sleep, hormones, digestion, mood, and energy.

Stress doesn't just live in our minds—it settles into our bodies. Tight shoulders. Restless sleep. A mind that's always racing and can't seem to turn off. Exhaustion that lingers. We often live with these things for so long that we start to accept them as normal.

So what actually happens in our bodies when we experience stress?

When we feel stress, our bodies activate a response often referred to as *fight, flight, or freeze*. God designed this response to protect us in moments of true danger. The body, however, cannot distinguish between a life-threatening situation and the pressures of everyday life—tight deadlines, family responsibilities, or ongoing worry. As a result, the body shifts into survival mode.

In this state, stress hormones increase, heart rate quickens, and blood is directed toward the muscles. At the same time, digestion, immune function, and reproductive processes are slowed—because healing

and restoration are not priorities in survival mode. While this response is a brilliant part of God's design for short-term emergencies, it was never meant to be activated continually.

When stress becomes chronic, healing is interrupted.

This is not something to feel guilt or shame over. Instead, stress becomes a **signal**—an invitation to pause, to listen, and to return to God's design.

So how can we reduce the stress in our lives? Prayer.

Paul tells us in Philippians 4:6-7 that when we turn our anxieties into prayer "**the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding**" (Philippians 4:7, Christian Standard Bible (CSB)) will guard and protect us.

Peace is not found in the absence of chaos, but in the middle of it.

Prayer doesn't just change our perspective; it changes our physiology. When we pray, we shift from self-reliance to God-dependence. Prayer is not merely the words we speak to God—it is the posture of laying down what we were never meant to carry alone.

Through prayer, the nervous system begins to calm. The body moves out of survival mode and into a state of rest, safety, and restoration—the very environment in which healing can occur.

You may be thinking, *I do pray, but I still feel stressed.* If that resonates, it may be worth asking: **Have I truly released control over what I am praying about?** Have I surrendered it fully to God?

Surrender is active. It is a daily, sometimes moment-by-moment choice. Our default as women is often to carry the load ourselves, believing we must figure everything out. But God already knows the way forward. He promises to guide us, to lead us, and to carry what feels too heavy for us to bear.

When we hand our worries over to Him and trust His guidance, peace begins to permeate not only our hearts but also our bodies. And when this occurs, calmness, restoration, healing, and true miracles happen.

This exemplifies how God created us to thrive, not merely survive. We are whole beings—mind, body, and spirit—and each part requires care. With our minds, we are called to align our thoughts with truth and take captive what leads to fear and anxiety (2 Corinthians 10:5). With our bodies, we are invited into rhythms of rest, nourishment, and movement. And with our spirits, we are strengthened through Scripture, worship, gratitude, and meaningful community.

God has designed our bodies with incredible wisdom. The more we understand how they function, the more awe we gain for our Creator who thought of every little detail. Our bodies want to live in a state of health—God made them that way. When we provide what He designed us to need, restoration naturally follows.

When we're faced with a health challenge, we must remember - God designed our bodies with an incredible capacity to heal. But healing often begins when we stop striving and start abiding.

If you are feeling overwhelmed by stress today, I encourage you to bring it honestly to God. Lay it at His feet. His peace is available to you right now.

## — PRAYER —

Lord, we come to You weary and heavy-laden. We release the stress, the striving, and the pressure to hold it all together. Teach us to rest in Your peace, to trust Your design, and to nourish our bodies, minds, and souls according to Your wisdom. Quiet our hearts and restore what has been worn thin. We surrender it all to You. Amen.



← Tracy Schmidt is a health and life coach who helps women feel like themselves again—energized, emotionally calm, and in control of their health. She believes the body

was created to heal and supports women through burnout, chronic stress, and hormonal imbalances using a holistic, sustainable approach rooted in faith.



THREE  
SACRED  
*Rhythms*  
THAT SUSTAIN ME WHEN  
PRAYER FEELS HARD

// BY MELISSA MACGREGOR



“*Lord*, YOU  
ARE MY  
SHEPHERD,”

Prayer is one of our most precious gifts from God; it's our way of connecting intimately with Him.

But what if prayer feels hard?

What do we do when the very thing meant to draw us close to God suddenly feels out of reach ... even impossible?

Maybe it's ...

- A dry season, when life feels dull.
- Chaotic life circumstances.
- A season of burnout, capacity is at 0%, and your soul is tired.
- The heaviest of seasons: you're drowning in emotional pain.

Perhaps one or more of these resonate with you?

All of these seasons have been a part of my story.

As I reflect on the difficult seasons God has led me through — and the intimate ways he met me — I want to share with you three rhythms of prayer that sustained me.

### THE RHYTHM OF BREATH PRAYER

I was introduced to breath prayers in a small group setting. As one precious woman vulnerably shared her current struggle, she spoke the gentle prayer she'd been anchoring herself in all week: "Lord, You are my Shepherd. I have all that I need."

Something in the simplicity of this prayer settled deeply in my spirit. As I later learned, breath prayers are short prayers spoken or silently meditated upon in a single breath—simple enough to be memorized, yet powerful enough to steady the soul in moments of need.

These sweet, uncomplicated prayers beautifully echo the spiritual directive of 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing."

I have found it helpful to include two key movements:

1. <breathe in> Recognize God for who He is.
2. <breathe out> Acknowledge your need for Him.

Try praying this with me:

<breathe in> Jehovah Rohi — You are my Shepherd.

<breathe out> I have all that I need.

Let this rhythm become as personal as your own breath.

Breath prayers remind us that prayer doesn't require many words — sometimes a willing heart and a single, sacred breath is all we need.

### THE RHYTHM OF USING SCRIPTURE AS PRAYER

As a homeschooling mom, I began writing Scripture daily alongside my children.

Writing Scripture often turned into prayer—especially on hard days. This simple morning rhythm put my heart into a posture of prayer and opened me to the Holy Spirit's guidance through difficult moments.

A few ways to weave Scripture into your prayers:

- Begin with one or two verses you can return to and meditate on throughout the day, allowing God's Word to gently shape your thoughts.
- Turn to Psalms or Proverbs for short, powerful passages—rich with both encouragement and practical wisdom—that naturally lend themselves to prayer.
- Stay with a verse for a season. Don't hesitate to write it, pray it, and reflect on it repeatedly over several days or even a full week, giving the Holy Spirit space to deepen its meaning in your heart. Linger longer.

"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

Psalms 119:11 ESV

Scripture is everlasting and true. When our own words run dry, nothing is more pure than breathing God's Word into our rhythms of prayer. Writing Scripture as prayer binds it to our hearts and invites the Holy Spirit to faithfully echo Truth when our human capacity fails.

### THE RHYTHM OF LAMENT

The book of Psalms is rich with laments, many written by David, the shepherd-turned-king. Though he failed in many ways, David consistently brought his true heart to God, expressing fear, grief, anger, doubt, and longing. From the field to the throne, he approached God with raw transparency.

God delights when we do the same. He invites us to come honestly, freely—without pretense or polish. He listens to our messiest experiences and emotions and longs to take part in our healing.

In Scripture, a lament often follows a recognizable pattern. It may include as many as seven movements:

1. Address to God
2. Reflection of God's faithfulness
3. A Complaint (or questions to God)
4. A confession of sin or claim of innocence
5. A request for help
6. God's response (not always included)
7. A vow to praise or a statement of trust

Lament teaches us that faithful prayer makes room not only for gratitude and joy, but also for grief, confusion, and deep need—and God meets us in that sacred honesty.

Friend, if you're in a season when prayer feels hard, I gently invite you to lean into these three simple, vulnerable ways to draw near to God.

He loves you deeply and longs to be close to you.

God welcomes every word and every tear. And He will meet you there.



← Melissa MacGregor is a Healthy Lifestyle Mentor and writer passionate about equipping women to cultivate their lives and homes with God-honoring, healthy

rhythms. Her devotionals are written from a place of vulnerability and truth, reflecting on the challenges that God has brought her through in her own life and health journey.

Get your copy of "When Prayer Feels Hard Guided Prayer Journal" at [melissamacgregor.com](http://melissamacgregor.com)





— WHEN YOU THINK —  
YOU'VE PRAYED ENOUGH...

*pray* SOME *more*

/// BY KELLEY TYAN



**T**here comes a moment in every woman's faith journey when she thinks, *I've prayed about this already.* I've said the words. I've cried the tears. I've asked God from every angle I know how. *Isn't that enough, God?* And that's usually the exact moment heaven whispers back, *Don't stop now.*

Prayer is not a one-time transaction—it's a living, breathing relationship. It's not something we check off a list or reserve only for emergencies. Prayer is our lifeline, our power source, our direct connection to a God who never grows tired of hearing His daughters call on Him.

**Just when you think you've prayed enough... pray some more.**

Because here's the truth we often forget: you cannot out-pray God. You cannot overwhelm Him. You cannot ask for too much or repeat yourself too often. God is not annoyed by your persistence—even when you feel tired of hearing your own voice. He is honored by it. Scripture tells us to pray without ceasing, not because God forgets, but because we need to remain connected to the One who never wavers.

Prayer is where strength is exchanged. Our weakness for His power. Our fear for His peace. Our limited perspective for His divine vision.

I learned this personally during one of the hardest seasons of my life. While walking through a breast cancer diagnosis, I found myself praying the same prayer every single day. Some days it was confident. Other days it barely came out as a whisper. I remember thinking, *God, You already know this. Why am I still praying it?* But each time I showed up again, something shifted—not always my circumstances, but me. Prayer wasn't changing God's mind; it was anchoring my heart. And that consistency carried me through.

**Sometimes, the most powerful prayers aren't even about us.**

When life feels heavy—when we feel tired, anxious, or unsure—our natural tendency is to turn inward. We focus on what hurts, what's broken, what we can't fix. But something supernatural happens when we choose to pray for someone else, especially when we feel weak ourselves.

Praying for others lifts our eyes off our own worries and places them on God's ability to move.

It reminds us we are not alone in our struggles—and neither is anyone else. When we intercede for another woman, another family, another situation, something powerful happens inside us. Our hearts soften. Our faith stretches. Our perspective shifts.

Sometimes the breakthrough we are asking God for comes when we stop asking for ourselves and start standing in the gap for someone else.

Your prayer could be the very thing that shifts the atmosphere in someone else's life.

**Think about that for a moment.**

**Your prayers can lead to someone else's miracle.**

The prayer you whisper in your car. The prayer you pray while folding laundry.

The prayer you speak through tears when you don't even feel strong enough to pray at all.

**God uses those prayers. Every single one of them.**

We often underestimate the power of obedience in prayer. We think miracles require perfect words or extraordinary faith, when in reality they simply require a willing heart. God doesn't need polished prayers—He responds to honest ones.

**Prayer isn't about performance; it's about presence.**

And when you pray for someone else, you are partnering with God in a way that is both humbling and holy. You may never see the full outcome of the prayers you

pray, but heaven sees every single one. Not one prayer is wasted. Not one tear goes unnoticed.

There is something deeply freeing about persistent prayer. When we pray continually, we stop carrying burdens we were never meant to hold alone. We stop striving for control and start trusting God with the outcome. Prayer realigns us. It reminds us who is truly in charge—and it isn't us.

If you feel weary in prayer today, don't quit. If you feel like your prayers are unanswered, don't stop.

If you feel like you've already prayed enough—pray some more.

**God is not done.**

Prayer is not just how we survive—it's how we thrive. It's how we grow in intimacy with God. It's how we build spiritual resilience. It's how we learn to hear His voice in a noisy world.

So keep praying, sister. Pray boldly. Pray persistently. Pray for yourself. Pray for others.

Because when women pray, heaven moves—and lives are changed.

**GOD USES THOSE PRAYERS. EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM.**



← Kelley Tyan is a faith-forward Christian mindset coach, speaker, and mentor who helps ambitious women grow in bold faith, God-confidence, and purpose. With a powerful story of overcoming

breast cancer, building multiple businesses, and raising a faith-filled family, she equips women to rise with courage and lead with confidence—whether in the workplace, business, or at home.

She is the founder of the Pray Lead Empower movement and co-host of the Chosen by Jesus podcast, where she and her daughter, Taylor, inspire women to live out their God-given identity with strength, clarity, and truth. Known for her bold voice, biblical teaching, and heart for transformation, she teaches women to overcome fear, stop overthinking, and fully step into the life God designed for them.



# the spark

## HOW PRAYER LIGHTS THE WAY

BY MYRA JOHNSON

**P** rayer forms our heart and our perspective while we steward what we have been given and trust God to do the rest. It is an act of reciprocity—giving and receiving. It takes faith to release our thoughts and emotions to a God we cannot see or touch. And it takes another act of faith to believe that His Spirit meets us there, shaping us, strengthening us, and enabling us to become more like Him.

“We don’t see things as they are; we see them as we are.” — Anaïs Nin

### LORD LET YOUR SPIRIT DWELL WITHIN US

It’s difficult to be light, especially when darkness surrounds you as the majority.

When cruelty is normalized and kindness is rare.

When integrity is optional and peace is not on trend.

I believe that we need prayer for more than just comfort; we need it for ignition. What happens when you flip a switch or light a candle? There’s a reaction. A change. A spark that brings the light needed in order for not only you, but anyone around you, to see clearly.

Prayer is the spark that ignites God’s Spirit, the flame, to burn brightly within us, purifying our hearts and minds, giving us the clarity, peace, discernment, strength, and wisdom needed to endure the process of becoming more like Christ.

And because fire requires a wick and oxygen, it’s not enough to spark the flame every once in a while. The environment affects the

duration and strength of the burn. We have to spark the flame daily, again and again... it allows us to see clearly.

### LORD HELP US TO SEE

Two people can watch the same movie and walk away with completely different takeaways. Two people can attend the same event and describe it entirely differently. One person wakes up energized and hopeful; another struggles to get out of bed. The environment may be the same—but perspective changes everything.

When I think about prayer and the role it plays in my life, I think about the courage it takes to believe in something I cannot see. To acknowledge pain, confusion, anger, or limitation. To ask for help. These are not easy things to do—especially when we’re praying for something we believe we need to survive or move forward.

Prayer helps us see things not just as they appear, but as they truly are: held in God’s hands, shaped by His timing, His purpose, and His plan.



↑ Myra Johnson is a Houston-based executive consultant, producer, and arts advocate with over 17 years of experience helping organizations grow, innovate, and connect deeply with the communities they serve. As CEO of Ephesus Investments, Myra leads 6-month and annual executive-level engagements, serving as a strategic advisor, interim leader, or embedded partner to guide organizations through growth, transition, and transformation. Her firm also provides coaching for CEOs and senior leaders in operations, strategy, storytelling, creative campaigns, and community engagement.



## LORD HELP US TO PRAY

Sometimes I cannot bring myself to speak out loud. The situation is too heavy, the pain too much to bear, so I'll write the prayer instead. And in those seasons, for me, prayer often takes the form of writing. Thoughts, ideas, struggles, and worries flow from my head and heart into my arm, down to my hand, through the pen, and appear on the page; a process that makes something intangible become real. Writing turns things swirling inside me into something I can review, reflect on, manage, and lovingly counter when necessary.

I've wondered if something similar happens when we pray out loud—using breath, voice, and sound to release what's been held inside, another traveling change in form.

Over the years, I've observed the practice of prayer unfold in many ways. Sometimes silently, under my breath and in my thoughts. Other times intertwined with moments of pure joy or laughter. Here lately, it happens while walking, not talking, but just listening.

## LORD HELP US TO LISTEN

In my experience, prayer can be the creation of a moment, not just to speak to God, but more importantly, to listen.

I used to think prayer was about petition; asking and believing, pleading, confiding, and then affirming. While that certainly has its place, I find myself more interested nowadays in what God has to say, in my ability to practice setting the stage for me to hear, listen, and understand.

Walking in nature, through my neighborhood, has become a routine, part of not only my mornings, but before and after stressful work calls or difficult family interactions that ignite parts of me that I know are damaging to myself and others. It has become our "one-on-one" time, less about getting something from God and more about just being with Him. Each step gives me the chance to inhale what God gives freely a little more deeply and exhale the things I cannot control.

After all, one of the first times God revealed Himself was while walking in a garden (Genesis 3:8–9). There is peace that comes from simply letting my agenda go, surrendering to the unknown aspects of God's master plan. And as I observe nature, I am reminded of the responsibility to do what I can as a responsible steward of what God

has given me—while intentionally choosing to trust Him to do all the things I cannot.

Sometimes, the only response I receive from prayer is clarity: the next task, the name of someone to call, the courage to apologize, the words for a difficult email, or the nudge to take action. And I am truly thankful for that. Because the responsibility always returns to us. What will we choose in this moment? Prayer does not remove agency—it refines it. The ball is placed back in our court to allow God's Spirit to work through us as we make choices of our free will.

## LORD MAKE US MORE LIKE YOU

We know that prayer does not guarantee the outcome we want in every circumstance, but we often forget that it consistently produces something far more powerful and lasting within us: a new way of thinking, a new way of seeing and experiencing the world.

Through communion, communication, and connection with God, we are slowly shaped over time to become more like Him.

We receive peace to guard our hearts and minds, wisdom in moments of weakness, and strength to endure. We slowly become a vessel where the fruits of the Spirit grow—a vessel that God works through to draw others close to Him.

As we interact with God's Spirit through prayer, His Spirit refines us, giving us not always what we ask for, but always what we truly need.

And so, we must keep praying... It is the only way we will see things, people, and situations as they really are—through God's eyes, in His hands, unfolding in His timing.

## SCRIPTURES TO STAND ON

### *Philippians 4:6–7:*

The peace of God... will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### *1 Samuel 16:7:*

The Lord looks at the heart.

### *James 1:5:*

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God...

Prayer is the spark that ignites light within us. And when we are surrounded by darkness, even the smallest spark allows us to see. When we continue to pray—again and again—we feed the flame that helps us not only remain, but also burn bright and courageously.

## A PRAYER FOR THIS SEASON

And so my prayer for us, in this season, is that we be transformed through the consistent practice of prayer, in all of its forms. May we carry the light, and by example, may it inspire a desire for transformation within others.

Dear Lord,

*Each day, help me to begin again.*

*To emerge from the darkness and cold of the night and reach forward toward Your light.*

*Help me breathe deeply—consuming what is life-giving, and releasing fear, doubt, frustration, and the weight of the past.*

*Teach me to trust Your process of growth. The steady pace of transformation, Day by day, inch by inch.*

*Remembering that everything begins as a seed. You alone make things grow. You know the environment in which I am planted. You know exactly what I need to thrive. You created me, and only You know how I am uniquely designed.*

*Whether alone or alongside others, In sunlight or shadows, in seasons of pruning or nourishment, give me the courage to take responsibility for what I can do And release what I cannot.*

*Give me strength to endure seasons of excessive rain and drought, persistence to clear weeds that stifle and interrupt,*

*And patience to trust Your timing—for every bloom, every fade, every pause, and every new beginning. Let Your Spirit flow through me with strength and resilience.*

*Let Your DNA be visible in me—in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*

*May my life bring glory to Your garden. May it attract others to Christ by reflecting You.*

Amen.

# FROM DEFEAT TO Victory— HOW GOD HEALED MY FACE AND STRENGTHENED MY FAITH—

When my smile disappeared, God showed me how to see hope again.

/// BY DR. D.J. MEREDITH

**I**t was September 2, 2022—just forty-eight days before my forty-eighth birthday—when life, as I knew it, shifted in a single afternoon.

The weekend before, I noticed a strange ache in my left ear. It wasn't painful enough to slow me down, but it felt unusual—almost as if my body was whispering something I didn't yet understand. By Friday morning, my left eye felt heavy and irritated. I assumed it was fatigue or my contact lenses, but something didn't feel right.

Later that day, while sitting in my new counselor's office, I realized the irritation hadn't improved—it had intensified. When I returned home, I tried to relax, hoping rest would make it pass. Still, my body felt unsettled. I suddenly craved a red-velvet cupcake from Nothing Bundt Cakes—maybe a small comfort before the weekend.

My husband drove me, and on the way home, I noticed something alarming: my words didn't sound right. My lips weren't moving the way they should. When we arrived home, my speech felt slightly slurred, and my smile was uneven.

I ran upstairs and asked my husband, "Can you watch me chew?" He looked at me and said without hesitation, "We need to go to the emergency room."

At the hospital, I heard the diagnosis for the first time: Bell's Palsy—a condition that causes temporary paralysis on one side of the face. The entire left side of my face was completely still—my eyebrow, cheek, and lips refused to move.

For a moment, I felt defeated. Why now? Why me? Yet even in that moment, God's Word rose in my spirit.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us that Jesus bore not only our sins, but also our sicknesses—that by His wounds, healing is made available to us (Isaiah 53:5, King James Version). In other words, healing was still possible—even now.

That night, I stood in front of the mirror, looking at my unmoving face, and prayed. I played healing Scriptures aloud, letting God's Word wash

over my heart and calm my fears. I reminded myself that God still makes all things new—even muscles that refuse to move.

Over the following weeks, I began acupuncture and physical therapy. Every tiny twitch felt like a miracle. I remember the exact moment my chin—just my chin—began to move. It wasn't much, but it was something. And that something became my reason to praise.

Day by day, more movement returned. Slowly but surely, my smile came back. My eye lifted. My lips began to move again. I thanked God for every inch of progress. Healing didn't happen overnight, but it unfolded through faith, gratitude, and consistency.

Today, no one would ever know that I once battled Bell's Palsy. There is no sign of paralysis—only a testimony of God's restoring power.

Scripture reminds us that nothing is beyond God's ability. As the angel told Mary, nothing will be impossible with God (Luke 1:37, New International Version).

## THREE STEPS TO MOVE FROM DEFEAT TO VICTORY

### 1. LISTEN TO YOUR BODY AND SPIRIT.

Sometimes the body whispers before it shouts. That earache wasn't random—it was a signal. God often uses our physical state to prompt rest, awareness, and realignment.

### 2. ANCHOR YOURSELF IN GOD'S WORD.

When fear speaks loudly, answer it with faith. Speak Scripture out loud. Let God's promises be louder than your pain. Even if circumstances don't change immediately, your spirit will be strengthened.

### 3. CELEBRATE EVERY SMALL VICTORY.

My healing began with a tiny movement in my chin—a reminder that progress is still progress. Gratitude shifts focus from what feels broken to what God is restoring.

Every still moment, every tear, and every scar have become part of my victory story. If you're facing paralysis of any kind—physical, emotional, or spiritual—know this: God still heals. And when your movement begins, may you praise Him with every smile.

.....  
“Healing didn’t happen overnight, but it unfolded through faith, gratitude, and consistency.”  
.....

→ *Dr. D.J. Meredith is a Houston-based Resilience Coach and founder of She Is Flawless, a faith-centered coaching ministry helping women move from defeat to victory. Through biblical truth, testimony, and transformation, she equips women to heal, rise, and walk boldly in God’s purpose. [she-is-flawless.com](http://she-is-flawless.com)*



# Shaping Worries *into* Prayers

/// BY SHARON JAYNES



← Sharon Jaynes is a conference speaker and author of 26 books, including *When You Don't Like Your Story: What if Your Worst Chapter Could Become Your Greatest Victories*, *The Power of a Woman's Words*, *Praying for Your Child*, and *Praying for Your Husband from Head to Toe*, and *Enough: Silencing the Lies that Steal Your Confidence*.

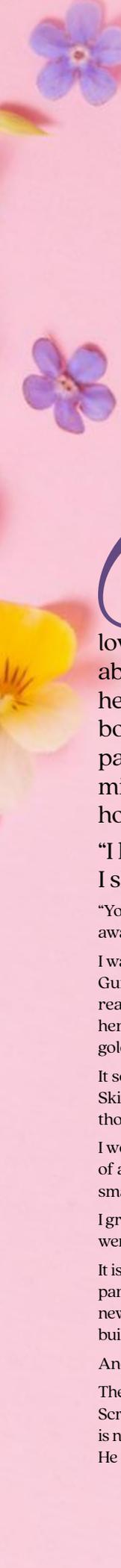
She is past VP and radio co-host for *Proverbs 31 Ministries*, co-founder of *Girlfriends in God*, and avid blogger.

Sharon is a storyteller who loves weaving story and Biblical principles to encourage and empower women to walk in courage and confidence as they grasp their true identity as a child of God and a co-heir with Christ. Her passion is to help women have a better story with Jesus as the hero. Sharon and her husband, Steve, call NC home.

For more on prayer, see Sharon's books *Praying for Your Husband from Head to Toe* and *Praying for Your Child From Head To Toe...30 Day Guides to Powerful and Effective Scripture Based Prayer*.

Also, Sharon would love for you to check out her weekly devotions that come right to your email box. Visit [sharonjaynes.com](http://sharonjaynes.com) to learn more.





Harper and I were having a visit on Facetime. This five-year-old bundle of

love, my niece's daughter, was telling me all about her Guinea pig, Skitters. Skitters was her new best friend. He went down the sliding board with her, nibbled on baby carrots at tea parties across from her, and nestled in the mini stroller in front of her during walks. Oh, how she loved Skitters.

"I had a Guinea pig when I was a little girl, too!" I shared. "His name was Oscar!"

"You did? What happened to Oscar?" she asked. "Did you give him away or did he die? Do Guinea pigs go to heaven?"

I was not expecting those questions and wished I had kept my Guinea pig history to myself. When we said our goodbyes, I realized that Harper, even at five years old, was worried about her little friend. She was anxious about Skitter's future. Goldie the goldfish had a short life, and well, do Guinea pigs live longer?

It seemed such a small thing...what was going to happen to Skitters in the long run. And then I wondered if my anxious thoughts seem like small things to God.

I worry about my son and then I remember that God has a host of angels surrounding him (Psalm 91:11-12). Protecting Steven is a small thing.

I grow anxious about pandemics and then I remember that all my days were numbered before there was even one of them (Psalm 139:16).

It is so easy to fall into the trap of worrying about world events, particularly wars and rumors of war we are hearing about in the news right now. The media shows us horrific details of bombed-out buildings and burned-out homes. People fleeing and parents weeping.

And I get anxious. I grow worried.

Then God reminds me of Who He is and What He does through the Scripture I read time and time again. He runs things. He is not aloof. He is not absent in life's happenings. As He told Moses at the burning bush, He sees, He hears, He is concerned (Exodus 3:7).

“

It is so easy to fall into the trap of worrying about world events, particularly wars and rumors of war we are hearing about in the news right now.”

I need to remember that God has a plan for history—it is providential and not accidental. The word “providential” means “to see before,” to have a particular end or goal in mind. What happens in history and with you and me is not happenstance. He is in control of the sacred and secular. World history and my history.

God said: “Remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me. Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish” (Isaiah 46:9-10 NLT).

I imagine God saying, *Oh honey, don't worry about what's going on in the world at large or in your life right now. The happenings are not a surprise to Me. I'm still in control. I'm still on my throne. And remember, nothing is too difficult for Me. Your worries may loom large for you, but they are not too difficult for Me.*

So what do we do when those anxious feelings creep in? We pray and give our burdens and worries to God (Psalm 55:2).

Paul wrote, “Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done” (Philippians 4:6 NLT).

A paraphrase of that verse says it this way: Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life (The Message). Don't you love that: “Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers.” I don't know what you're anxious about today, but I do know God is in control. And He is good. If you believe that, then say, “I don't know what God's doing, but I know it is good!”

*Heavenly Father, thank You for being the Omnipotent God Who takes care of every need and calms every anxious heart. I give You my worries and concerns, knowing that You are in control, and You always have a good plan. In Jesus' Name,*

*Amen*

DIY  
FAMILY  
RECIPES

# Spring Reset

A GENTLE  
DETOX FOR  
BODY, MIND  
& SPIRIT

Spring is a season of invitation—an opportunity to release what feels heavy and make room for what brings life. The Spring Reset is not about extremes or perfection, but about alignment: nourishing the body with vibrant ingredients while creating space for spiritual clarity and renewal.



SPRING RESET ELIXIR

1

## BLUEBERRY BASIL RENEWAL

FLAVOR: lightly sweet, herbal, refreshing

### Ingredients

1 cup blueberries (fresh or frozen)  
4 fresh basil leaves  
Juice of ½ lemon  
1 teaspoon raw honey or maple syrup  
12 oz cold filtered water

### Instructions

Blend all ingredients until smooth. Strain if desired. Serve chilled in a clear glass and garnish with a basil leaf.

#### WHY IT SUPPORTS RESET.

Blueberries provide antioxidant support for cellular renewal, while basil gently supports the liver and reduces inflammation—ideal for transitioning out of winter heaviness.



SPRING RESET ELIXIR

2

## RASPBERRY ROSE CLEANSE

FLAVOR: lightly tart with a floral finish

### Ingredients

1 cup raspberries  
1 teaspoon food-grade rose water  
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
(with the mother)  
1 teaspoon raw honey  
10–12 oz filtered water

### Instructions

Blend until smooth. Strain if preferred for a lighter texture. Serve chilled.

#### WHY IT SUPPORTS RESET

Raspberries aid digestion and skin clarity, while rose water promotes calm and emotional balance—supporting both physical and internal renewal.

SPRING RESET ELIXIR

3

## CUCUMBER MINT CLARITY

FLAVOR: crisp, cooling, clean



### Ingredients

½ large cucumber, chopped  
6–8 fresh mint leaves  
Juice of ½ lime  
12 oz cold filtered water or  
coconut water

### Instructions

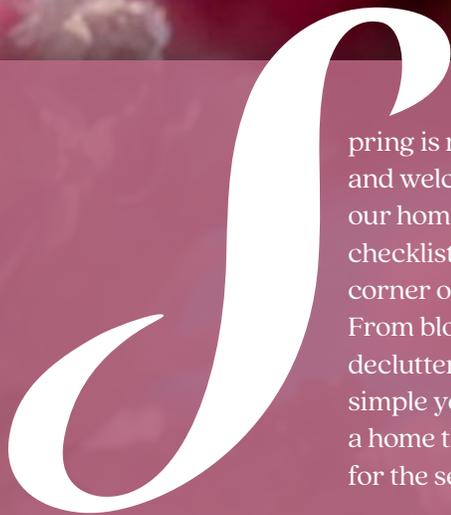
Blend until smooth. Strain for a clean finish. Serve over ice.

#### WHY IT SUPPORTS RESET

Cucumber hydrates and flushes excess waste, while mint supports digestion and mental clarity—perfect for days when you need lightness and focus.

# SPRING HOME *refresh* CHECKLIST

.....  
“A fresh start for your home, welcoming light, life, and joy.”  
.....



Spring is nature's invitation to let go of the old and welcome new energy into our lives—and our homes are the perfect place to start. This checklist is designed to help you refresh every corner of your space with light, color, and life. From blooming flowers and airy textiles to decluttered surfaces and sunlit rooms, these simple yet transformative touches will create a home that feels vibrant, peaceful, and ready for the season of renewal.

#### GENERAL / WHOLE HOME

- Open windows to **let in fresh air and sunlight**.
- Dust ceiling fans, light fixtures, and baseboards.
- Wash or replace **window treatments** (light curtains or sheer panels).
- Deep-clean floors: mop, vacuum, and shampoo rugs as needed.
- Swap out **winter décor for spring accents** (pillows, throws, wall art).
- Declutter**: donate unused items, organize closets, and storage.
- Check **air filters** and replace if needed.
- Add mirrors to **maximize light** and create a sense of space.

#### LIVING ROOM

- Lighten textiles: **pastel or floral throw pillows**, lighter blankets.
- Add **fresh flowers** in vases (tulips, daffodils, hyacinths).
- Arrange **indoor plants**: ferns, ivy, or small potted flowers.
- Dust and polish furniture to restore luster.
- Refresh **coffee table décor**: candles, bowls of seasonal fruit, or flowers.

#### KITCHEN

- Organize the pantry and refrigerator. Discard expired items.
- Clean oven, stovetop, and counters thoroughly.
- Add a **small herb garden** (basil, rosemary, mint) on a windowsill.
- Switch out **kitchen towels and rugs** for spring colors.
- Set up a **fresh flower centerpiece** for the table.

#### BEDROOMS

- Swap out heavy bedding for **lightweight, breathable linens**.
- Introduce **soft pastels or floral patterns** in bedding or pillows.
- Clean under beds and inside drawers.
- Add a **vase of fresh flowers** or a small plant on the nightstand.
- Rotate or declutter clothes for seasonal transition.

#### BATHROOMS

- Wash shower curtains and replace bath mats with **lighter, fresher options**.
- Add **citrus or floral-scented candles** or essential oils.

- Organize toiletries and toss expired products.
- Wipe down grout and clean tiles for a bright finish.
- Place a **small vase of fresh flowers** or a potted plant.

#### OUTDOOR SPACES

- Sweep patios, decks, and porches.
- Pressure wash outdoor furniture and surfaces.
- Replace or clean **outdoor cushions** in spring colors.
- Plant a **small flower or herb garden**.
- Add **seasonal accents**: lanterns, string lights, and decorative planters.

#### SPECIAL TOUCHES

- Create a “**spring scent corner**”: candles, diffusers, or fresh blooms.
- Introduce **pastel or floral artwork** in key areas.
- Rotate **books, magazines, or décor items** for a fresh look.
- Make **flower arrangements with garden or grocery flowers** for daily joy.
- Play soft, uplifting music to complete the fresh spring ambiance.

#### PRO TIP:

Focus on **small, intentional touches**—even a few flowers, fresh linens, and light-colored accents can transform your home for spring.

# PRAYER Essentials



Having the essentials for a rich prayer life is not about abundance, but about intention. A thoughtfully prepared prayer space—whether a quiet corner or a dedicated prayer closet—creates room for stillness, focus, and communion with God. Simple tools like a well-loved Bible, a journal for written prayers, gentle lighting, and a comfortable place to sit help quiet distractions and invite the heart into reverence. These essentials serve as sacred supports, drawing us into deeper conversation with the Lord, where faith is strengthened, burdens are surrendered, and intimacy with God is renewed.



Sisterhood  
Shop

# SUNDAY

*Best*



Products featured in this issue can be found in The Sisterhood Shop at [www.thesisterhoodmag.com](http://www.thesisterhoodmag.com), an Amazon Associate, we earn from qualifying purchases.



# rescued & REPURPOSED

/// BY LORI GASCA

She was found on the side of the road. Discarded and unwanted. Left for trash. My friend saw she still had value and snatched her up. Later, I was fortunate enough to give her a spot in my office where she closely held countless women as they poured out their hearts. So much healing happened while dreams were birthed, wrapped in her squishy arms. When the Lord called me to “make room for Him” and close my business, she was one of the few things I brought home.

Proudly tucked in the corner of my living room, she’s a rust-colored velvet beauty, and though her seat has lost its bounce and the springs popping out below can cut an ankle, I adore her. She reflects me, a little rough around the edges, but rescued and repurposed for good.

I spend hours in that chair every morning, watching the world wake up outside my window as I drink coffee and listen for Jesus to speak. I was in this old, discarded chair when my story gained a fresh perspective. For the first time, I could articulate a piece I had kept hidden and unhealed because I didn’t have the words to describe it.

I knew He wanted me to share my story, but I needed Him to give me the words. In a series of God prompts, I came across this one profound statement: “A coerced yes is a NO!” 40 years of pain was set free, releasing a flood of clarity like a dam breaching. Healing rushed in, washing away decades of guilt and heaviness. A freedom broke through my personal shame, all because I took time to sit with Him in prayer, listening more than I spoke.

When shame tightly clings, prayer can become the very instrument needed to loosen its grip by reawakening truth, re-centering our identity in Christ, and opening a channel through which healing flows. “Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; neither be disgraced.” (Isaiah 54:4) This promise allows you to show up proudly in this world with a Kingdom daughter posture and purpose.

First, prayer helps us discern the source of our inner voices. Shame often masquerades as truth, whispering, “You are not enough” or “Your past has disqualified you.” Prayer trains our spirit to distinguish between lies and truth. The voice of shame is designed to kill, steal, and destroy. (John 10:10) The voice of God breathes hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11) In prayer, we make space for God to help us discern the difference.

Second, prayer releases unresolved pain. Shame lives in the hidden rooms of the heart, often rooted in wounds that never found a safe place to heal. Jesus despised shame. Hebrews 12:2 tells us He endured the cross for the joy set before Him. When we bring our pain to God in prayer, we invite the work of the cross into our own stories. We don’t bypass grief; we allow it to meet the healing hands of the Father. Through prayer, the hurt is named, so that the memory no longer owns us.

Third, prayer allows you to see your identity through God’s eyes. Shame says, “My story is a stain.” Time in prayer says, “My story is a testament of grace and beauty.” This is not a one-time act but a posture: running again and again to the Father, bringing every insecurity, every tear, every fear, to Him, letting Him remap your sense of self. Each time you come to Him in prayer, He reaffirms you are forgiven and capable, by His power, to move forward into His promise and purpose.

## WHEN I MADE ROOM FOR JESUS IN THAT PRAYER CHAIR, I WAS ABLE TO:

1. Step confidently into full-time ministry by launching BloomHER Collective
2. Move into the final stages of my first book, *What Is Prayer: Real Answers, From Real Women*
3. Shift my annual women’s conference into a full Kingdom event

The **4th Annual Growth Summit** is now a transformational, faith-based leadership gathering for women seeking God’s purpose for their lives. This year’s theme is **Rescued & Repurposed**. Will you join us?



“ Again and again, He impressed His words of love, grace, and mercy on my heart through those pages.”



→ Lori Gasca spent 30-plus years doing the entrepreneurial hustle until God changed her definition of success. She went from full-time striving to full-time ministry. As an author, public speaker, and Founder of the nonprofit ministry BloomHER Collective, she leads women out of shame-filled overachieving into God-designed purpose.

[bloomhercollective.com](http://bloomhercollective.com) or [lorigasca.info](http://lorigasca.info)



# The CONVERSATION WE MISS

/// BY FRANCINE IVEY

“Why prayer isn’t complete if we do all the talking”

What Jesus Meant by Prayer

Jesus said, “My house shall be called a house of prayer.”

Not a house of performance.

Not a house of perfection.

Not a house built on polished words or spiritual formulas.



← Francine Ivey is the CEO of Consumed Coaching, an elite coaching company that empowers Christian leaders and entrepreneurs to

transform their passions into thriving businesses without compromising their faith. Francine is an author, speaker, and coach with a heart for helping others walk in their God-given purpose. Connect with her on social media or visit [consumedcoaching.com](http://consumedcoaching.com) for more information.



A house of prayer.

Somewhere along the way, we complicated what God always intended to be simple. Prayer wasn’t designed to impress heaven—it was designed to connect hearts.

## PRAYER WAS ALWAYS PERSONAL

When I was a little girl, I couldn’t wait for my daddy to get home.

Not because I had something profound to say—but because I had everything to say.

I wanted to tell him about the good parts of my day.

The things that made me laugh.

The things that hurt.

The moments that felt big and the ones that felt heavy.

I didn’t rehearse my words.

I didn’t filter my emotions.

I just talked—because I knew I was loved.

That’s what prayer has always felt like to me.

## TALKING TO A FATHER. WALKING WITH A BRIDEGROOM

When I pray, I’m talking to my Father God.

And I’m also talking to my Bridegroom.

Prayer is relational, not ritual.

Intimate, not intimidating.

It was never meant to be perfect—it was meant to be honest.

Yet so many of us get stuck trying to “do prayer right,” instead of simply showing up.

## WHY WE HOLD BACK

We tell ourselves:

God already knows what I’m going to say.

Does it really matter if I say it out loud?

What if I’m praying wrong?

But here’s what I know as a mother:

Even if I already know what’s going on in my children’s lives, I still want to hear it from them.

I want to hear what excites them.

What scares them.

What brings joy.

What brings tears.

Not because I need the information—but because I want the connection.

## PRAYER IS A TWO-WAY CONVERSATION

And not only do I want my children to talk to me—I want them to listen.



I want to speak into their lives.  
I want to shape their hearts.  
I want to guide, comfort, and correct them  
when needed.  
So often in prayer, we do all the talking.  
We pour it out.  
We list the needs.  
We ask the questions.  
And then we leave.  
But when we do that, we miss half the  
conversation—and honestly, the most  
important part.

### THE SACRED POWER OF LISTENING

There is something holy about the quiet place.  
The pause.  
The stillness.  
The moment when we stop filling the space  
and allow God to speak.  
Sometimes He brings correction.  
Sometimes comfort.  
Sometimes clarity.  
And sometimes just His presence.  
And I wonder—what if God is just as excited  
about that quiet place with us as we are  
meant to be?

### WHEN GOD MISSES US

There's a contemporary worship song  
from the 1980s that has never left me.  
The lyrics say:

"I miss My time with you,  
Those moments together..."  
The song is written from the perspective of  
Jesus.  
That idea has always undone me—that God  
misses us.  
That He longs for time with us.  
That somewhere in our busyness, our  
striving, and our schedules, we've crowded  
out the sacred conversation.

### A HOUSE BUILT ON PRESENCE

Prayer was never meant to be squeezed into  
the leftovers of our day.  
It was meant to be the foundation of the  
house.  
Jesus didn't say, "My house shall be called a  
house of sermons."  
Or "a house of programs."  
Or even "a house of miracles."  
He said, a house of prayer.  
Because prayer keeps us aligned.  
Prayer keeps us dependent.  
Prayer keeps us close.

### THE INVITATION

Maybe today, we stop trying to impress God  
with our prayers.  
Maybe we stop filling every moment with  
words.

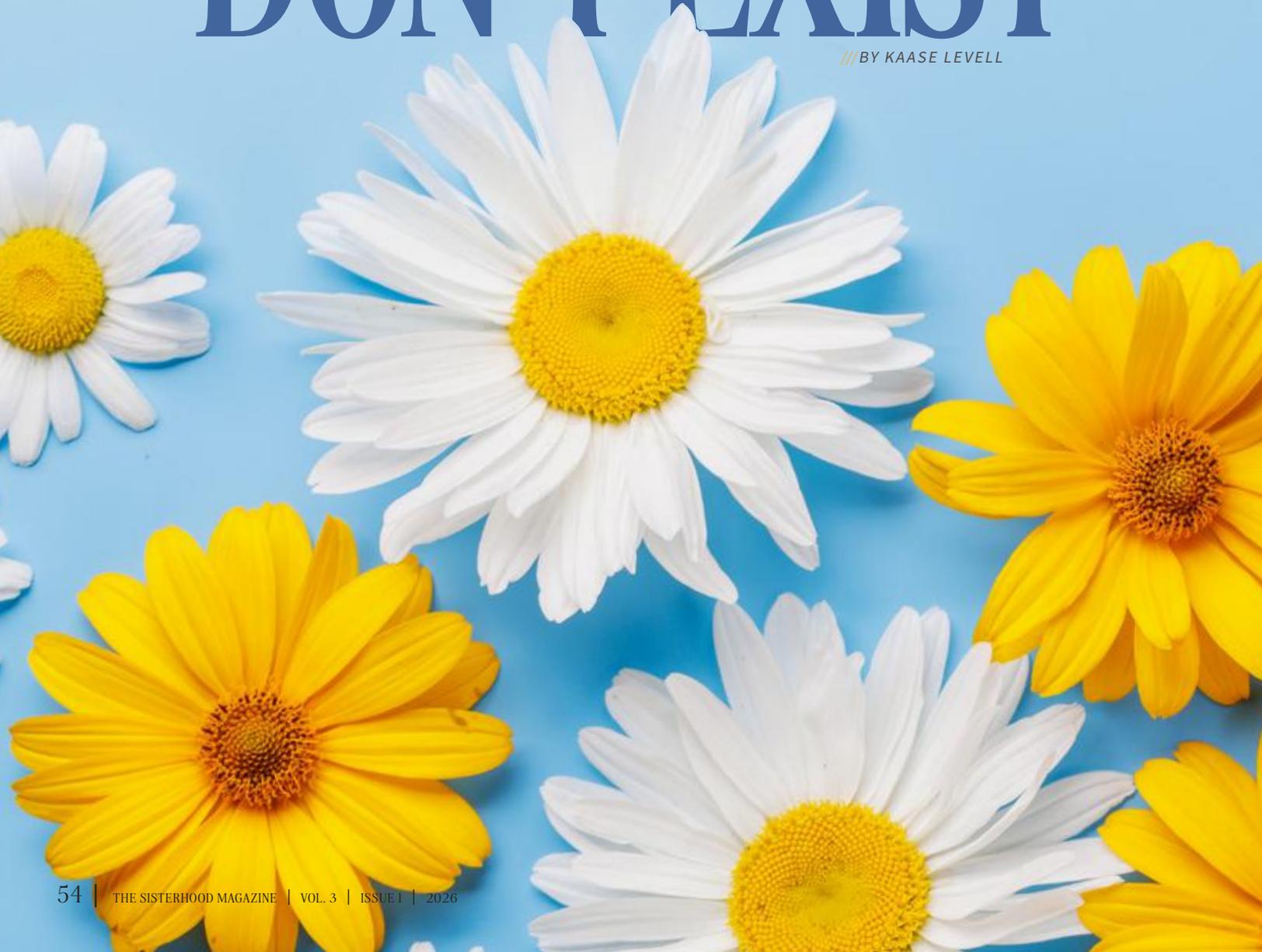
And instead, we listen.  
Like a daughter waiting for her father.  
Like a bride leaning into her bridegroom.  
Like a child who knows she is welcome.  
Because when prayer becomes a  
conversation again, the house becomes holy.  
And that—that—is the conversation we can't  
afford to miss.

### REFLECTION | AN INVITATION TO LISTEN

1. When you pray, do you find yourself  
filling the space with words—or leaving  
room to listen?  
What might change if you slowed down and  
allowed silence to be part of your prayer?
2. Do you approach prayer more like a  
task to complete or a relationship to  
nurture?  
What has shaped that view for you?
3. If God were inviting you into a deeper  
conversation right now, what do you  
sense He might want to speak to your heart?
4. What would it look like for your life—  
or your home—to become a "house  
of prayer," not through perfection, but  
through presence?

# *creating* THE SPACES THAT DON'T EXIST

/// BY KAASE LEVELL





here are questions that float in the air, unspoken, waiting for a space brave enough to hold them. Teen girls carry them, tucked behind laughter, buried in scrolls, whispered in hallways—questions about who they are, who God made them to be, and how to live faithfully in a world that seems to shift beneath their feet every day. I've watched these questions gather, quiet yet persistent, and I've seen what happens when there's no one to meet them with truth, curiosity, and grace: they grow heavy, confusing, lonely.

I've carried a soft place in my heart for girls who live in that tension. Maybe it's because I've been there—the small-town whispers, the sharp edges of words meant to sting, the ache of feeling just outside of belonging. I once thought that moving, studying, changing everything around me would dissolve it. But the ache doesn't disappear with geography; it moves with you, shape-shifting until your heart learns to recognize it, name it, and lean on something unshakable.

It was in ministry, with middle schoolers, that the calling became impossible to ignore. Their questions shimmered like firelight in a dim room, illuminating curiosity, courage, and longing all at once. I watched as they leaned in, asked, doubted, and hoped—searching for clarity, for guidance, for a hand to hold in the chaos. The space they needed didn't exist. So God nudged me to create it. *FR, Let's Talk* was born: a podcast where girls can ask anything anonymously and receive answers rooted in God's truth, a safe harbor for hearts navigating the storm of adolescence.

But even as the podcast grew, I noticed a new whisper of truth: these girls weren't searching for another screen or video, another video devotional to swipe past. They craved something tactile, something that invited them to pause, linger, and enter a world they could hold, touch, and explore. Something that met them *where they live*, in the vibrant, messy, beautiful reality of their lives, without ever losing sight of God's truth. Something that could be theirs.

That is how *Literally Magazine* came to life. Every issue is an invitation to explore identity, friendships, purpose, faith, and culture not as abstract ideas, but as living, breathing parts of who they are becoming. It is playful and imaginative, yes, but never shallow; stylish and trendy, yet always anchored in the unchanging Word of God. It teaches girls to be biblically salty and eternally lit—living faith outward, serving others, and carrying light into spaces that so often feel dark and confusing.

Creating *Literally* has been a tapestry of faith and chaos: homeschooling my daughters, leading a podcast, mentoring, managing life's many layers, and staying awake late into the

night sketching ideas, writing stories, and dreaming possibilities. Every moment of exhaustion, every tiny victory, every prayer whispered in the quiet hours has been worth it. Watching moms and daughters explore the first issue together—laughing, thinking, questioning, reflecting—is witnessing a quiet miracle.

This magazine is more than pages. It is a companion for a generation learning to navigate complexity without losing faith, a guide for mothers seeking to walk faithfully alongside their daughters, and a spark for anyone who believes that curiosity and wonder are holy gifts. It meets them in the world they actually live in—the one full of trends, social media, peer pressure, and comparison—and gently guides them to the One whose truth never wavers.

Our theme says it all: Biblically Salty, Eternally Lit. It reminds girls that faith isn't just something you study; it's something you live, share, and shine. It's an invitation to carry hope, courage, and joy into every corner of their lives, to ask hard questions, and to meet them with God's answer. It's a magazine for girls who want to lean in, a tool for moms who want to walk faithfully with them, and a witness to the beauty of faith lived out loud.

*Literally Magazine*: THE faith magazine teen girls actually keep—and moms actually trust!

*Literally* isn't just a magazine. It is a space that didn't exist—and now it does.



← Kaase Levell is your go-to girl for truth bombs and Bible drops! She's a coach, speaker, and podcast host behind *FR, Let's Talk*—a Q&A style

podcast where Christian teen girls ask anything. Her mission? Link arms with teen girls (and their mamas), crack open the Word, and cheer this generation on—loud, proud, and unfiltered! Want in?

Download her free resources—12 Prophetic Prayers for Moms + 5 Days to Slay for girls—at [frletstalk.com](http://frletstalk.com).



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# BREAD

---

*like*

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# RAIN

Encountering  
God's Miraculous  
Provision in the  
Lord's Prayer

/// BY ANDREA ANDERSON

“Here, tucked right inside the middle of this prayer, Jesus was telling His disciples to pray for miraculous provision every. single. day.”

If I asked you to name the moments that have shaped you most, you'd likely point to births, deaths, firsts, milestone seasons, and your conversion to Christ. Those moments mark us and become reference points we return to again and again. What I never expected was for one of those defining encounters to come through the Lord's Prayer. These are words so familiar that it's easy to recite them almost without thought. We've heard them preached, studied them, and repeated them in countless settings. Familiarity makes it easy to assume we've already received everything the Lord has to give in these words.

Until He interrupts that assumption. At least, that's what happened to me last year when He stunned me with a fresh insight about this line in the Lord's Prayer: Give us this day our daily bread. That revelation became a book, and what follows is an excerpt taken from it. I pray that as you read, it would ignite something in you that cannot be extinguished, and that you would encounter the Lord in a profound way through it.

#### LET ME TAKE YOU TO THAT MOMENT WHERE HEAVEN TOUCHED EARTH:

I was reading the familiar passages of Exodus 16. You know the ones about the manna, the miraculous provision, and the test of trust. But this time, as I was reading, God whispered something new—a connection I'd never seen before. One that stopped me in my tracks and made me stare at the page like it was all lit up with fireworks. This time, when I read about the manna, He had me immediately turn to the passage in Matthew where Jesus tells His disciples how to pray. I saw the familiar words: “Give us this day our daily bread,” but I heard it like this: *Ask Me for daily bread.*

*Not just bread you can pick up at the grocery store. Not the kind you buy because you have a paycheck and money in your bank account. No. I want you to ask for something greater.*

*Something supernatural. I'm inviting you to pray for MANNA. For Miracle Bread. For the going-before-you-to-give-you-what-you-need-before-you-know-you-need-it kind of Bread. Hear Me clearly on this: I'm telling you to ask Me for My miraculous daily provision.*

*For bread like rain.*

Let that sink in. Seriously, take a moment right now to pause and let it sink deep into your bones. Because whenever Jesus is quoting or

referencing the Old Testament, He's signaling to His listeners that they need to pay attention. Here, tucked right inside the middle of this prayer, Jesus was telling His disciples to pray for miraculous provision every. single. day. The revelation took my breath away. Because what if we were to start praying for miraculous daily provision every day? How might that change our prayer life and our faith? Change the world? Change us? I've never heard that line in the Lord's Prayer taught this way. I even did an online search to see if that point had been made so clearly. Nada.

Then I looked up the verse in The Amplified Bible, The Message, and The Passion Translation, since they're known for providing non-traditional interpretations of Scripture. None of them gave additional meaning to this verse. In fact, here's how each of those three translations wrote Matthew 6:11: The Amplified Bible (AMP): “Give us this day our daily bread.”<sup>1</sup> (No extra illumination there and is the same as the ESV.)

The Message (MSG): “Keep us alive with three square meals.”<sup>2</sup> (A little different, but still with the same take as every other version.)

The Passion Translation (TPT): “We acknowledge you as our Provider of all we need each day.”<sup>3</sup> (Okay, that none is a tiny bit closer, but it doesn't hit you between the eyes with a new level of truth.) This shocked me because I expected at least one of them to say, “Give us miraculous daily provision.” It's a revelation Christians have missed for centuries. Whether it was forgotten, softened, or simply assumed away, it is one we need right now. In a world growing ever darker, praying for God's miraculous daily provision goes far beyond asking just for what you need in the moment.

When daily bread shows up miraculously, it's a marker. It confirms that hope in an unseen God is not unfounded and provides undeniable evidence of the heart and character of our Heavenly Father. Miracles also verify the Kingdom is on its way.



← Andrea Anderson is a Christian business coach and the author of *Bread Like Rain: Encountering God's Miraculous Provision in Your Daily Life*. To read the full book and discover how God uses the practice of asking for daily bread to grow your faith and deepen your trust in Him, you can find it on Amazon. You can also learn more about Andrea at [andrealeighco.com](http://andrealeighco.com).

Scripture references include: Amplified Bible<sup>1</sup> (The Lockman Foundation, 2015); The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language by Eugene H. Peterson<sup>2</sup> (NavPress, 2002); and The Passion Translation: New Testament with Psalms, Proverbs, and Song of Songs, translated by Brian Simmons<sup>3</sup> (BroadStreet Publishing Group, 2017).

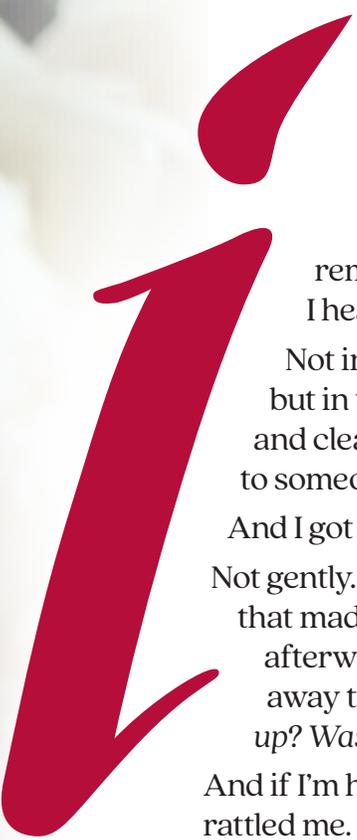
# the SLOW BURN of PRAYER

/// BY PEGGY EASTERLING



← Peggy Easterling is the Founder and CEO of The Mindset School, where she helps faith-driven women identify mindset blocks, renew their thinking, and step boldly into their God-given calling. A summa cum laude Psychology graduate with certifications from The Life Coach School, The Primal Question, and Kingdom Coaching Certification, Peggy equips women—whether in life, leadership, or business—to stop letting fear, shame, or limiting beliefs hold them back. Her clients learn to clear the mental and emotional clutter so they can hear God's voice, trust it, and move forward with clarity and confidence. Peggy believes God uses the unlikely to do the extraordinary—so He alone gets the glory (1 Corinthians 1:27).





remember one time I truly believed  
I heard the voice of God.

Not in an “audible-from-the-sky” kind of way,  
but in that deep inner knowing that feels holy  
and clear. I felt prompted to offer an opportunity  
to someone, and I obeyed with confidence.

And I got rejected.

Not gently. Not subtly. I mean, rejected in a way  
that made me replay the entire conversation  
afterward and question everything. I walked  
away thinking, “*Did I miss God? Did I make that  
up? Was that just my emotions?*”

And if I’m honest, that rejection didn’t just sting. It  
rattled me.

So I did what many of us do when we feel  
uncertain. I went searching for certainty.

I purchased a 12-week Bible study on hearing  
the voice of God. I highlighted. I underlined. I  
learned the techniques. I studied the methods. I  
paid attention to every suggestion on  
discernment.

And at the end of those twelve weeks, I  
realized something surprising.

I didn’t understand God better.

I understood the information better. I  
understood concepts better. I understood  
language better.

But I didn’t feel closer.

That study wasn’t wrong. It was just missing  
the one thing no workbook can manufacture:  
intimacy.

Because hearing God is not a formula. It is a  
relationship.

Prayer is not simply asking for direction  
like God is a GPS. Prayer is the place where  
trust is built. It is the place where we stop  
demanding clarity and start seeking His  
face. It is the place where we stop chasing  
outcomes and start learning His heart.

And that requires time.

That realization brought me back to an  
old memory during one of my first college  
chemistry classes.

We had a lab experiment. The professor  
warned us that if we didn’t follow

instructions, we could create a dangerous  
reaction. So before we ever lit the Bunsen  
burner, he walked us through every safety  
measure.

Safety glasses. Gloves. Lab coat. Eye wash  
station location.

Then he said something that mattered: it  
needed to be a *slow burn*.

Slow heat. Slow process. Slow reaction.

But I was an overachiever. I wanted results.  
I wanted to get it right. I wanted to speed  
things up.

So when it was my turn, I cranked that  
Bunsen burner up high.

And it worked, for a minute.

Until it didn’t.

My test tube literally burned in half. It put  
me at risk, and the entire lab had to be  
evacuated.

And as I reflected on prayer years later,  
I realized I had done the same thing  
spiritually.

I wanted answers fast.

I wanted God to speak clearly.

I wanted Him to confirm the next step with  
no risk of rejection and no chance of looking  
foolish.

I wanted the result.

And in that rush, I missed the point.

Prayer is often a slow burn.

It is the work of becoming a woman who  
can recognize His voice, not because she  
mastered a technique, but because she  
knows Him.

There is a verse that captures this beautifully:  
“*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean  
not on your own understanding*” (Proverbs 3:5,  
New International Version).

Leaning on our own understanding is what  
we do when we demand spiritual certainty  
before we obey. Trust is what we do when  
we pray, listen, take the step, and believe that  
even if rejection comes, God is still God.

The rejection I experienced didn’t mean I  
failed. It meant I was learning.

Sometimes obedience doesn’t lead to  
applause. Sometimes it leads to silence.  
Sometimes it leads to a closed door. But that  
does not mean God wasn’t in it.

It means He is growing something deeper  
than outcomes.

He is growing intimacy.

So today, prayer is not me trying to force an  
answer. Prayer is me surrendering to the  
slow burn of the Holy Spirit. Making space to  
look at His face. Sitting with God long enough  
to be shaped, softened, and led.

Not as a formula.

As a daughter.

If you are in a season where you want clarity,  
I understand. But maybe what God wants to  
grow in you first is trust.

Because hearing His voice is less about  
mastering steps and more about building  
closeness.

And closeness takes time.

So keep slowing down. Keep  
looking for His face. Keep  
praying with your ears  
open and your heart  
ready to receive.

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WHEN GOD USES YOUR  
GREATEST LOSS TO

BUILD  
*your*  
LEGACY

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/// BY ANGELA LEWIS





he deal looked perfect on paper. The partnership made strategic sense. But I missed one critical factor: I was prioritizing pride and people-pleasing over God's wisdom.

When it failed, I lost everything: my money, my confidence, my security, my future. Standing in the wreckage of what I'd built, I had to face an uncomfortable truth: I had trusted my own understanding instead of leaning on God's direction.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6, NIV). I have heard that verse countless times. Yet instead of truly living my purpose, I tried to fit in within "the business world."

### THE COST OF PEOPLE-PLEASING

Looking back, I can see how people-pleasing masqueraded as kindness in my decision-making. I didn't want to hurt anyone's feelings. I didn't want to seem unkind, ungracious, and/or unsuccessful. So, I ignored the red flags God was showing me and moved forward with a few partnerships that looked good externally, but they were built on a shaky foundation.

The Apostle Paul warns us about this very thing. In Philippians, he writes about being anxious for nothing but instead bringing everything to God in prayer (Philippians 4:6, NKJV). I was anxious about this one relationship, anxious about saying no, anxious about disappointing someone,

but I hadn't taken those anxieties to God in genuine surrender. This was the very scripture I wrote in my very first business notebook to remind myself of God's goodness. Instead of taking heed to it, I had tried to manage everything by myself, through compromise.

That compromise cost me everything.

### WHEN LOSS BECOMES CLASSROOM

In the aftermath of that loss, God transformed me through a different education. Harvard Business School taught me strategy. My years of experience had taught me execution, but losing everything taught me something neither credential nor experience could: the difference between worldly wisdom and godly discernment.

I learned that saying no with grace is not unkind; it is stewardship; that protecting what God has entrusted to you isn't selfish, it is obedience; that boundaries aren't walls that keep people out, they're frameworks that keep purpose intact.

God was teaching me that true success isn't built on people-pleasing and misplaced pride. It's built on pleasing Him, even when that means uncomfortable conversations and difficult decisions.

### THE REBUILD

What God rebuilt in my life looked nothing like what I lost, and I am forever grateful for that.

Today, I serve as a strategic advisor to entertainment executives, Fortune 500 consultants, and C-suite leaders through The Pink Elephant Solution. These are brilliant and well-connected people managing multi-million to billion-dollar enterprises. They call me their "vault" and "ultimate wingman" because I provide trusted counsel and vetted connections for their highest-stakes decisions.

But here's what makes this different from what I lost: every decision I make now starts with prayer. Every partnership is filtered through biblical wisdom. Every boundary I set honors the stewardship God has given me.

The executives I serve know that before I start my strategic sessions for the day,

I pray for vision, wisdom, and discernment to ensure I will be a better servant. They know that when I'm helping them navigate complex partnerships, I'm drawing on lessons learned through painful obedience. They know that the discernment they





“He’s not just restoring what you lost. He’s building your legacy which will serve His purposes in ways you can’t yet see.”

value so highly comes from years of learning to trust God’s over my own. They know because I cannot and will not hide what God has so graciously done for me.

### FAITH IN THE BOARDROOM

Some might wonder how faith informs strategic business advisory. For me, it’s inseparable.

When I counsel someone about protecting their legacy and reputation, I’m remembering what it cost me to be without proper boundaries. When I help leaders see their blind spots, I’m remembering how God revealed mine with love, but without compromise.

The principles that guide my work with executives are the same principles as scripture teaches: integrity in all dealings, wisdom over expedience, long-term legacy over short-term gain, and the courage to make difficult decisions that honor what matters most.

### WHAT I TELL WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Women ask me daily, “How do you build businesses and brands effectively?” They want to know about strategy, positioning, and market authority. I teach them all of that. But I also tell them what I wish someone had told me:

Your greatest business asset isn’t your talent, your network, or your credentials.

It’s your willingness to trust God’s wisdom over your own understanding.

Pride and people-pleasing will cost you more than any market downturn.

Compromising your boundaries to avoid difficult conversations will destroy more than any competitor could. Moreover, trying to build success on anything other than biblical principles will leave you with achievements that feel hollow.

God doesn’t call us to build businesses that merely succeed. He calls us to build legacies that honor Him, serve others excellently, and create impact that transcends our lifetime.

### THE LEGACY GOD IS BUILDING

Today, when entertainment executives and Fortune 500 consultants trust me with their most sensitive strategic decisions, I see God’s faithfulness. He took the worst business decision I ever made and transformed it into the foundation for serving leaders at the highest levels.

The loss that broke me became the lesson that positioned me. The painful season of rebuilding taught me to operate with the integrity and discernment that commands respect in boardrooms where billions of dollars are at stake.

The failure that devastated me became the wisdom that now serves others in a monumental capacity. That is why I created a free class to help start-ups and entrepreneurs build businesses with a solid foundation. So, when the winds and the storms come, you might bend, but you will NOT break.

I am living proof that God doesn’t waste our painful lessons. He redeems them, refines us through them, and uses them to position us for the calling He’s had planned all along.

Paul understood this when he wrote about being anxious for nothing and bringing everything to God in prayer with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6). That thanksgiving isn’t just for blessings. It’s for the trials that teach us to trust Him completely.

### YOUR TURN

If you’re in a season of loss right now; whether in business, relationships, or any area where you thought you knew the path forward; I want you to know something: God is not finished with you yet.

That painful lesson might be preparing you for the very calling He’s had planned (for you) all along. That loss might be stripping away everything built on your own understanding, so He can rebuild (you and your path) on the foundation of His wisdom.

What I’ve learned is that what God builds after loss is always more solid, more purposeful, and more aligned with His plans than anything we could have built on our own understanding.

He’s not just restoring what you lost. He’s building something greater, a legacy that will serve His purposes in ways you can’t yet imagine.

Trust the process, but most of all Trust Him with all your heart, even when you don’t understand the path; He is making a way.



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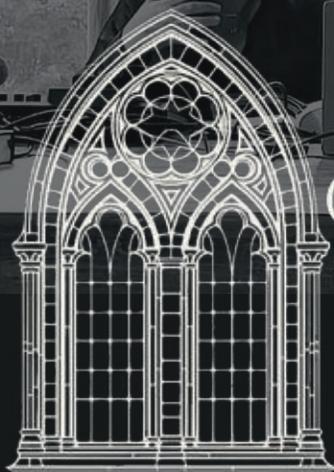


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