

Real Prayer



Chapter 2:

Bible understanding in 1½-pages.

realprayer.org/prayer.pdf

with links to scripture references



Real Prayer

Chapter 1: Facing God


How many of us are hesitant to prepare for a future with God because we are unsure of what he wants or how to start? Or perhaps certain *habits* or *grief* get in the way. But change from such darkness *need not* be overwhelming.

Let God do the work!

Often we think in the *short term* and are unable to comprehend how to get beyond the things that hinder our spiritual growth. However, God thinks in the *long term*, over our lifetime with *salvation* as His goal.

Our choice:

✚ **Are we** going to be the obstruction to God's offer to live in his presence for eternity? We need to put our pride aside and be willing to ask Him to teach us *how to receive this gift!*

 **God wants** us to give Him consent to change our heart so that He becomes our motivation in life and sin becomes of *little value*.

How to Grow toward the light of Jesus Christ:

First, accept yourself as a sinner. We are likely to have repeated sin in the future. Rather than love the sin or wrap our self-identity around the sin, regard it as an infirmity or an unattractive weakness. Rather than justify it with self-righteousness, approach it with humility, which is the first step to repentance and turning away from it.

Is this really necessary?

As one's health deteriorates in the aging or dying process; greed, control, lust or other form of sin; it will be of little meaning when our soul comes before God. Sin is forgivable, however, as in the Lord's prayer: **His will is done in heaven**. If we spend a lifetime focused on self-centeredness or earthly things, who will our master be; ourselves or God? [Matthew 6:19-24](#) (.pdf edition links to scripture)

Repentance is a necessary first step to turn from *our own will* to *His will*.

Chapter 2: The Bible and God's Plan

- † **The Bible** talks about the beginning of mankind. Adam and Eve experienced the *presence of God* while in the Garden of Eden. When the two placed their own desires ahead of those of God, they gained knowledge of "free will." They came to know goodness **and** the opportunity to do *anything* to fulfill selfishness. In response, the God of Holiness had a choice; To live among the sin of man or separate Himself from mankind.
Genesis 3
- † **The Old Testament** of the Bible involved punishment and reward. The goal was to restore man to the level of righteousness that is acceptable before the presence of God the Father. Most treated these teachings *like a rule list* and lacked desire to have things done "God's way."
- † **The New Testament** is God's new promise that is made possible through the sacrifice of his son, Jesus Christ. For those of us with the *willingness to learn*, God extends his love, patience, and countless opportunities for us to come to know this reunification process. The Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) now promotes us to learn righteousness through love.

† **The Bible concludes** with those of mankind who *submit* to this learning process, to again have the privilege of being in the presence of our Heavenly Father.

The term “**Grace**” can take us from our current state to that of coming to know the righteousness of Heaven where God’s will is done. The acceptance of this gift requires a *willingness to learn* these things of God which is done through the Word, Jesus Christ. John 1:14 & John 14:6

Chapter 3: What is Prayer?

For our lives to become complete involving our role in God’s plan (prior chapter); The most important use of prayer is to ask God to teach us His grace through Jesus Christ.

Prior to being born on earth, Jesus Christ was know as “The Word.” John 1:14 In addition to His sacrifice, Jesus physically came to earth to teach us the word of God.

Our brains can physically absorb the Word by hearing or reading it. Yet, how can we *receive grace* if our hearts are blind and lack the motivation for the Word to become the foundation of our lives?

Prayer is a privilege and has a *primary* function. When we *ask* through prayer, the Father can transform Christ's message from our minds into our hearts. Through the



Holy Spirit, prayer can propel us forward in which avenues of life we follow. In being led by prayer to "*Do things God's way*" we become a part of His plan and abide in Jesus Christ, John 15:5 ESV.

Chapter 4: How to Receive Grace

One of the most profound statements in the Bible is contained in the Lord's prayer: "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:9-13 We are to ask for God's will to be done on earth, and it is made very clear that *God's will* is done in heaven.

If earth is a training ground for God to teach us His will, there are two groups of us: *Those willing to learn* and *those who turn a deaf ear*, insisting things be done their own way.

If one were forced to abide by God's will, would it not fill one with animosity? If animosity is not allowed in heaven, then *those in attendance* are likely to desire God's will.

Some believe that in the "small chance" that does God exists; then salvation can be obtained by "being good."

“Earthly goodness” and “heavenly righteousness” are different paths in life. The first can become a self-imposed earthly rationalization, “I am good because...” **Righteousness** is a lifelong learning process; derived from prayer that molds our heart and is taught to us by a living God. Bow your head in prayer and ask God that our heart may come to know this!

A relationship with God is a gift. God has given us the freedom to choose. The gift is not forced upon us. One must ask for it. Ephesians 2:8-9 This gift is not given lightly, for it was paid through God's son, Christ Jesus, who went to the cross. For those who accept this gift, He offers us moments within the presence of the Holy Spirit John14:15-21 and the eventual presence of God for eternity.

Experiencing God requires a step into the unknown beyond simply asking for forgiveness. It requires repentance, which includes the desire to turn away from sin. If your heart does not yet know Jesus, *this can be your moment*. He is waiting for **your consent** to come into your life.

Just bow your head and fold your hands in humility. Praying the following prayer requires submitting your heart before a God who loves you:

Dear Heavenly Father,
I have placed a lifetime of selfishness ahead of your will and wish to turn from my sin. I ask for your forgiveness. I give to you my entire existence, my hopes, my dreams, and my ambitions. Please be my "Lord" so that I may submit to your desires ahead of my own. Allow your will to become my motivator for the remainder of my life.

Amen

Each day is no longer about you. This prayer is the first step in opening up to a new world of learning. God has the patience to *rebuild* your life, however, it requires taking this step to *allow Him in*. He does not force; it is your choice.

Some having experienced this "spiritual birth" John 3:3-21, at a young age may have no recollections of the moment.

For some during the moment of this submission before God; the physical sensation associated with presence of the Holy Spirit may be experienced for the first time. Acts 8:14-17 Thoughts of God may go from just being a theory to knowing God exists.

For others, this re-birth may be a more gradual process.

Ephesians 2:8-9 explains that this spiritual birth is “by grace you have been saved, through faith” which is a gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Chapter 5: Forgiving Others

A well-respected elderly gentleman who was approaching death confided to a friend, that he could not comprehend **how God could forgive him** for the things he did as a bomber pilot during WWII. When one reflects on the history of that war, the man could have played a role in killing thousands of civilians. The lives of these elderly, women, and children ended with their hopes, dreams, ambitions, and the potential to carry on their family lineage.

In the afterlife, a natural reaction would be that the will of the many thousands of victims, would chase down that pilot and give him an eternal beating. Within such an afterlife, would the will of the many give the appearance of being a place similar to *Heaven, or Hell?*

In contrast to retaliation, Matthew 18: 21-35 Christ taught: Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

Jesus offered a parable where a master forgave a servant's debt. However, that servant then failed to forgive the debt of a fellow servant. When the master heard of this, he withdrew his forgiveness and the original servant was turned over to the jailer to be tortured.

Jesus ended stating: "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

What if one hasn't been able to forgive? An example might be, the buildup of frustration after a family member does not return love or acceptance. How about that lack of acceptance or respect from a boss, supervisor, government official, parent, or other authority figure? Might these individuals have their own shortcomings and such expectations are beyond the capacity of those individuals?

Consider:

- ✚ no longer projecting those expectations of personal support from such individuals.
- ✚ *seeking approval from God* as one's authority figure in fulfilling these emotion needs of love and acceptance.

✚ Removing this expectation for others to fulfill one's own emotional needs, may promote a greater *emotional self-sufficiency*.

Struggling with a severe heartache such as a spouse's unfaithfulness, the murder of a family member, one's childhood rapist, or anger at God? *Consider one's self as a branch*, Christ is the vine, and God desires one's life to bear much fruit. (John 15:1-17). Does fulfilling this mission in life *require* forgiveness to again *focus on what God desires*? Consider bringing the struggle to forgive to God in prayer and request his will. Ask for your heart to become open to recognizing and accepting help when an opportunity arrives.

This chapter began with a portrayal of that WWII bomber pilot being met with *animosity* as the *will of the many* got some payback on the streets of hell. Consider what might occur in heaven where the *will of the One* prevails (Matthew 6:10). Imagine thousands of victims standing in a line as the bomber pilot greets each individual, one at a time. As their eyes meet, the pilot offers a sincere apology with each victim extending forgiveness.

Because of God's mandate to forgive; in heaven, we may find it *very humbling* when this undeserved degree of love is extended to us.

In the Lord's prayer, we are taught to pray; "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" Matthew 6:9-13.

On earth, we are instructed to pray that *God's grace might touch others*. Next time we see a person with a troubled heart walking across the grocery store parking lot, pray that "*God's will be done.*" Here, we are given a choice to seek *His will*. However, God can create special moments to soften our hearts allowing us the opportunity to accept his grace. Our society is in need of such prayers.

Chapter 6: Facing Ourselves

Three common ways of dealing with guilt:

1. **Live in** self-righteousness or self-justification *denying any moral wrong occurred.*
2. **Allow the guilt** to become overwhelming and lead to self-destruction. *(When we give our hearts to Jesus, where in the contract does it say we can trade our focus on God for self-pity and self-righteousness?)*
3. **Seeking forgiveness** through repentance before God.

What might be the most *distasteful aspect* of sin? God wants our focus to be on the learning of being born of the spirit; that of his grace, and the things needed in heaven.

Sin is a barrier that consumes our energy to walk around. It delays or blocks our focus on his lesson plan in teaching us. If left unchecked, sin will compete with who our master is. Thus, the purpose of repentance. *God forgives completely* because he wants sin behind us so that we can again focus upon His path.

When such thoughts appear rather than re-living that cycle of guilt, how about "*thanking God for his forgiveness*"? If guilt cannot be overcome through prayer, consider consulting a trusted mentor, or a professional counselor who is also a Christian.

In a multiple victim investigation, a police officer interviewed a young sexual abuse victim for the third time after she claimed nothing happened. This time, the officer emphasized that prior to the abuse, the victim had *asked a friend for a ride home* but was turned down. The victim realized her attempt to avoid the situation, the self-blame disappeared, and she provided details of the molestation.

A good counselor can aid not only with coping skills, but also share insights while placing things into perspective.

Feeling overwhelmed, but not up to personal counseling? Consider that this day is not about you; it is about Him. Read the New Testament and pray. Seek the support of other Christians who have overcome a similar struggle and organizations which do the same. A prudent search on the internet may be "faith based _____ recovery". Volumes have been written on various struggles.

Why do we have to face temptation and guilt? Simple answer: God created us this way.

Have you ever become frustrated over a desire to change, but faults kept getting in the way? Then read over the New Testament and focus on how many times the disciples, whom Jesus selected, were wrong. The Disciple Peter was a prime example.

Isn't it rather egotistical to expect one's abilities to be greater than those of the disciples? Next time that frustration builds, show some compassion towards oneself. God created us this way as a motivator to come to him in prayer with humility and a desire to turn toward His light. We are a work in progress.

Jesus teaches that sin can start within one's thoughts prior to physically acting upon the sin. Jesus taught, "You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit

adultery. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Matthew 5:27-28

Sin and guilt can sometimes be avoided. Prior to considering performing a sin, [create the habit of jumping into prayer](#) when the thought first arrives. Such prayer may begin with, *"Dear Heavenly Father, allow my eyes to focus upon you."* Then surrender to him what is on your heart. (This prayer will have more power if you have surrendered your heart to Jesus, as described in Chapter 4).

Focus on the source that motivates the temptation such as lack of humility or self-centeredness rather than on the symptom that motivate the given incident.

Chapter 7: Effective Prayer

A prayer life focused on how we want things to be, may result in silence from God. This may be similar to a barking puppy telling his master what needs to be done despite the puppy's lack of experience and wisdom.

One of the larger concerns among pastors today are modestly mature Christians who's hearts are closed to further learning of Grace. Some parishioners compare themselves with earthly standards rather than realizing that's not the finish line.

When we gave our hearts to Jesus and were born-again, this “birth” placed us into a new spiritual world. John 3:3-22 Just as a small child has a natural curiosity to learn, we are directed to maintain a similar perspective toward spiritual growth, Matthew 18:3-4. Prayer is *essential* for us to fulfill our role as a student and the Holy Trinity as our teacher providing the lesson plan.

Consider how Jesus prayed about an earthly concern in Luke 22:42. At the Mount of Olives. Christ prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."

Jesus' prayer included:

- ✚ Expressing a concern to God the Father
- ✚ *Completely* placing it in God's hands without expectation.
- ✚ Asking for the Father's will to be done.

God's heart must have ached during his beloved Son's pleas prior to man's crucifying Christ. Yet, if God had yielded, *the gift of salvation God offers us* would not have occurred. The gift required Christ to give himself for the sin of man. (1Timothy2:5-6)

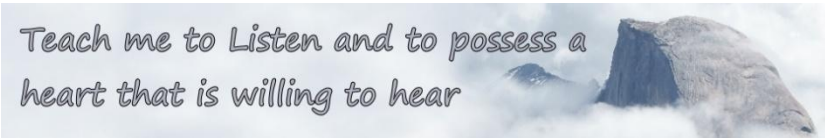
There was once a young Born Again Christian. He prioritized his life to do things he thought God would want and asked God for direction.

Twenty years passed as he listened to hundreds of sermons on *God's will* and had prayed the "Lord's prayer" thousands of times. The man was okay with the concept of *God's will* prevailing over his own; however, there was still some reluctance.

One day, the man shared a conversation with a church youth director who had taken a shortcut in life involving a pregnancy and once struggled with drug addiction. Her approach to prayer was a complete submission before God. She possessed a *selfless humility* in desiring that **God's will be done** as she expressed her concern.

The concept of herself was non-existent as she laid out her heart before God. The man finally recognized his own unenthusiastic hesitancy toward God when compared to the youth director's *free flowing desire to have things done God's way*.

This man now prays:



Teach me to Listen and to possess a heart that is willing to hear

Teach me to listen and to possess a heart that is willing to hear.

These **fourteen words** possess little meaning, unless they are actually prayed on a routine basis. After a period of time and we reflect back, we may be held in awe as to how our lives have changed.

Consider : “How does God hear our prayers?” Is it by sound waves? Or, by thought? God *knows* the thoughts that we are not proud of.

The story of the bible is one of God desiring eternal fellowship with those willing to honor his holiness. “Grace” is the journey God is offering to get us there. This destiny of righteousness is the gift that was made possible through His son, Jesus Christ.

The difference between *knowing it* and *living it* is derived through prayer.

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A life with Christ isn't about sin. It is about *submission*; Asking God to become the *first priority* in our life. We may have minimal self-control over habits of temptation. However, we can provide the openness *for our love to grow* in God through the Word of His Son.

Our first priority can then be for God to change us to "*His will*" according to His timetable. At that point we are facing God rather than turning our backs to Him.

His response is called "*grace*."

We provide the willingness to learn, place ourselves in a learning environment, and pray to a God who *teaches us love, by first loving us*. 1 (John 4:19) 1 John 4:7-30

Why do people attend worship? A visit may place us among those who seek to grow in His righteousness. Some church web sites offer video of their weekly worship service. Such a resource may aid in selecting which churches to visit.

God is worthy of our growth and praise. Consider a local faith-based church.