

I DARE

YOU



Six Prayers That Will Change Your Life



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STARTING THE JOURNEY

You are invited on a journey into prayer. This book is a tool to help you begin engaging with God through the various forms of prayer we will be learning about each Sunday. **It is only a tool.** It is not meant to be a comprehensive guidebook on prayer. The guidance you will find here is simple, but can also be profound as you allow yourself the time and energy to interact with God.

Before embarking on this journey, please take some time to prepare. Here are a few things to do before you begin interacting with this guide.

PREPARATION:

- **Keep it simple.** The weekly devotions and journaling exercises will be very simple. Our lives are very busy and filled with challenging responsibilities. These prayer exercises are not meant to be difficult or be a burden to you. You might want to pick a certain time each day to sit and journal/pray. Or you might want to choose a few days during the week and dedicate some time during those days to go through these exercises. Decide what will work for you and commit to journal/pray as much as you can.
- **Go easy on yourself.** Prayer is a discipline and sometimes it can be work. There are so many things that can distract us and pull us away from the time we have set aside. Just do what you can and ask God to bless your desire to connect with Him.
- **Know your starting point.** It might be well worth your time to determine where you are starting from with this topic. Find a quiet spot and take as much time as you need to journal, thoughtfully consider, and/or dialogue the following with another person:

How would you rate your overall familiarity with prayer?

How would you describe your day-to-day experience with prayer?

What are the top two questions you have about prayer?

What is your personal prayer request as you begin this journey?

- **If you need a quiet place to be with God and reflect, consider coming out to the church property and using the prayer path as a way to anchor your prayer time.** The prayer path is located on the back part of the property over the bridge and to the left of the Creekside Barn.

MAY 29

why pray?

“To pray is to change.”

- Richard Foster

“Look at me. I stand at the door. I knock. If you hear me call and open the door, I’ll come right in and sit down to supper with you.” (Revelation 3:20-MSG). O. Hallesby writes that, “There may not be a greater passage in the whole Bible which throws greater light upon prayer than this one does. It is, it seems, the key which opens the door into the holy and blessed realm of prayer.”

Quite simply, to pray is to let Jesus come into our hearts.

This teaches us, in the first place, that it is not our prayer which moves Jesus. It is Jesus who moves us to pray. He knocks. Thereby He makes known His desire to come in to us. Our prayers are always a result of Jesus knocking at our hearts’ doors.

You might also look at prayer this way: Prayer is the breath of the soul, the organ by which we receive Christ into our parched and withered hearts. He says, “If any man or woman opens the door, I will come in to him or her.” It is not our prayer which draws Jesus into our hearts. It is not our prayer which moves him to come in to us. All He needs is access. He enters in on His own, because He desires to come in. And He enters in wherever He is not denied entrance in order to do his work in our lives. He calls it “to supper with us.” The Biblical language of the common meal is symbolic of intimate and joyous fellowship, which shows us that God has designed prayer as a means of intimate fellowship between God and humankind.

To pray is nothing more involved than to open the door, giving Jesus access to our needs and permitting Him to exercise His own power in dealing with them. This is how prayer changes us. (excerpt taken from O. Hallesby, *Prayer*, pgs. 13-15.)



JOURNALING EXERCISE

Each day this week, take time to read Revelation 3:20. Then take time and journal about what God is saying to you. For example:

Are there areas of your life where you “hear God knocking” but do not permit God to enter? If so, what are they?

What are the needs/hurts in your life where you need God to enter in and exercise His power? What are the worries and anxieties in your life in which you need to experience peace?





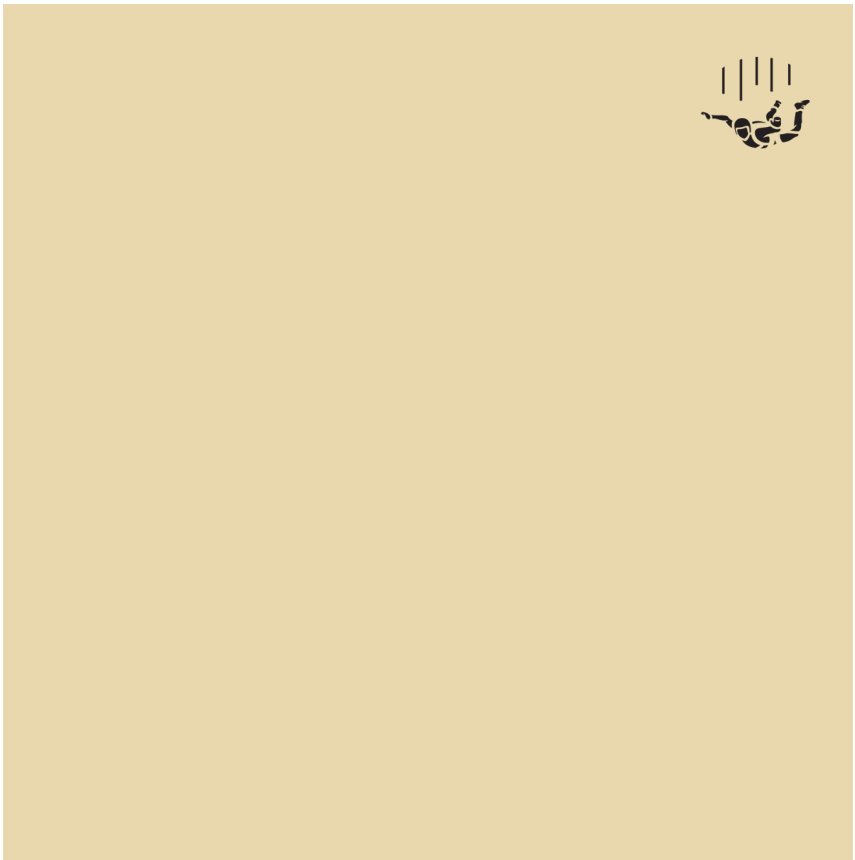
PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Each night this week, commit to praying a prayer of invitation to God. You can use the prayer below or write your own personalized prayer.

“Dear God, I am so grateful for your invitation to pray. Help me find the time, patience, and energy to make this a priority. Thank you for receiving me. Please help me open the door of my heart to you so that you have full access to the needs and the hurts in my life. Your Word says that if I open the door of my heart, you will come in and have joyous fellowship with me. I need that, God. I need to know you are near and that you can change me and change my life. But even more than that, I just want to know who you are. Please show me!”



PERSONALIZED PRAYER:



JUNE 5

**dare one:
prayer of submission**

“God shapes the world by prayer. The more prayer there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil.”

- E. M. Bounds

John 3:16-17 states that, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him." As Christ-followers, we realize that God sent Jesus to bring life and freedom to all peoples of the world and that for thousands of years, Jesus has been shining His light into the far corners of the world. John 1:9 says that, "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world." Our task, therefore, is to recognize and see where God is working and join Him in sharing the love of Christ with others. George Fox writes, "Let all nations hear the word by sound or writing. Spare no place, spare not tongue nor pen; but **be obedient to the Lord God**...and be valiant for the Truth upon earth...walk cheerfully over the world." (Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, 263)

When we submit to God, He shows us the people we are to be vulnerable with when it comes to sharing the love of Jesus. When we submit, He also gives us the compassion we need to reach out to others. And very soon, we find that He breaks our hearts for the things that break His. This is what it means to submit to God's mission for us in the world.



JOURNALING EXERCISE:

Each day this week, take time to read John 3:16-17. Then take time and journal about what God is saying to you. For example:

Are there people in your life who you unknowingly condemn? If so, who are they?

Do you sense that there are people God is leading you to in order that you might share your faith with them? If so, who are they?

Are you afraid of taking this kind of step in your faith? If so, express your fears to God.

Do you find that you have little or no desire to share your faith with others? If so, express this to God.





PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

PRAY FOR YOURSELF:

Each night this week, commit to praying a prayer of submission to God. You can use the prayer below or write your own personalized prayer.

“Lord, may I not be one of those who become so comfortable I can no longer hear what You are saying. May I not become apathetic, lethargic and complacent. Lord, I invite you to mess me up a bit. Make me uncomfortable. Disturb me. Shake off the mediocrity. Help my heart to be turned to the things your heart is...and help my heart to break for the very things that break Your heart! Please show me where and how you want me to serve You so that others can know who You are.”

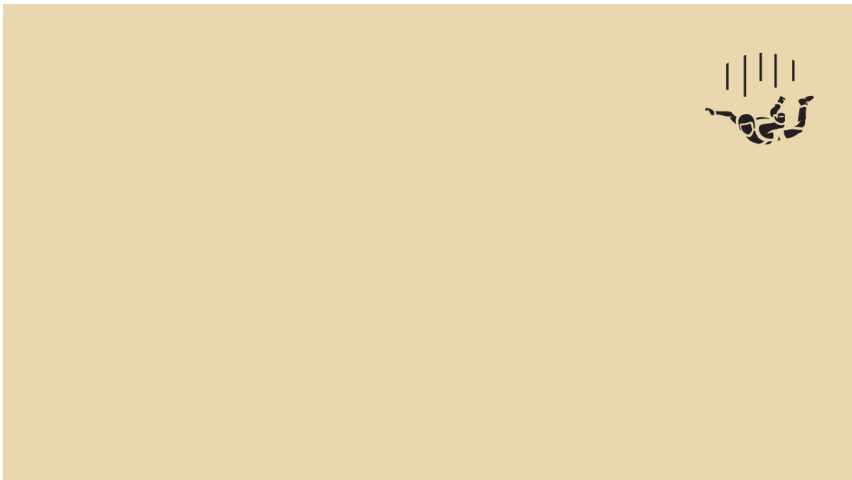
PRAY FOR OTHERS:

You can also submit to God’s mission in the world by praying that others will come to know Jesus. Again, you can use the prayer below or write your own personalized prayer.

“Father, I ask that You would fill _____ with the knowledge of who You are. I pray they may come to know You in a very personal way and that they might come to know Your will for their life. I pray that the light of the gospel of the Lord Jesus would shine and illuminate the mind of _____. I thank You, Lord, that Your light shines out of darkness illuminating _____’s heart and mind with the knowledge of You. Thank You for loving them.”



PERSONALIZED PRAYER FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS:



JUNE 12

**dare two:
prayer of release**

**“Prayer breaks all bars, dissolves all chains,
opens all prisons, and widens all straits by
which God’s saints have been held.”**

- E. M. Bounds

God's plans for you are good plans to prosper you and give you hope and a future. 1 Corinthians 2:9 reminds us that, "No one's ever seen or heard anything like this, never so much as imagined anything quite like it—What God has arranged for those who love him." But many times we are unable to move forward and reach our fullest potential in the Lord because we have the chains of our past binding our ankles together. But there is no need to walk around carrying guilt and condemnation about our past when Christ Himself has already released us from that burden. Romans 8:1-2 states, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death."

The anchors of our past can be many things: things you have done, unforgiveness of others or yourself, or a tragic, life-scarring event that you cannot overcome. All of these things can lead to things like bitterness, anger, depression, self-loathing, insecurity, fear, and despair. But how do we let go? How do we release the things from our past that weigh us down? Very simply, we pray for release. We **ask** God to show us our obstacles. We **confess** any sin that might be in our way. And we **receive** the forgiveness he offers.

The following is a guide for praying through the steps of release. Pick three days this week and determine that you will spend time journaling about each step. After you have taken some time to journal, you can spend time reading 1 Corinthians 2:9 and Romans 8:1-2 (above) and journal any thoughts you might have. Then pray your prayer for the week (either pre-written or personalized).



JOURNALING EXERCISE:

STEPS OF RELEASE:

WE ASK. More often than not, we are aware of the things that are weighing us down. But sometimes we are unaware of our roadblocks. The first step in the prayer of release is to ask God what it is that you need to release. Even if you already think you know, ask Him to confirm it for you. Consider the following questions:

What are the things in your life that cause you to feel overpowered, controlled, or mastered?

What are the things in your life that steal so much of your mental and emotional energy that your life seems to be joyless?

WE CONFESS. The next step is to acknowledge any sin that might be hindering you. Remember that God is loving and gracious so you can confess things without feeling like you have to make excuses for them: unbelief, arrogance, hardheartedness, self-sufficiency and any offense too personal to name or mention. Write any and all of them down if you can.

WE RECEIVE. Our God, who is faithful and just--and also full of mercy--will forgive and will cleanse. God rushes in at the first sign of our turning toward Him. 1 John 1:9 says that, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Take each of the things you wrote down in the above step and ask God to help you receive forgiveness and peace over each one.







PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

“God, I know that I can’t even imagine all of the amazing things You have arranged for my future. I want to be a part of Your mission in the world! But there are things in my past that are crippling me--things that keep condemning my present and my future. Please walk with me through this prayer of release. Show me my obstacles. Help me to be real before You and confess anything that is holding me back. And please help me accept Your love and forgiveness. And help me to live in the reality that there is now no condemnation for me because I have been forgiven. I am free! Help me to live like it. Amen.”



PERSONALIZED PRAYER:



JULY 3

**dare three:
prayer of praise**

“The very act of praise releases the power of God into a set of circumstances and enables God to change them if this is His design...I have come to believe that the prayer of praise is the highest form of communication with God, and one that always releases a great deal of power into our lives.”

- Merlin R. Carothers

If a prayer of thanksgiving is one that acknowledges what God has done, a prayer of praise is one that testifies to who God is. Because of this, many people consider praise to be the highest form of prayer. Ole Hallesby observes, "When I give thanks, my thoughts still circle about myself to some extent. But in praise my soul ascends to self-forgetting adoration, seeing and praising only the majesty and power of God, His grace and redemption" (Hallesby, 143). Praise is about God and only God.

One of the reasons that it is so hard for us to praise is because we are so busy. It is so easy to get caught up in life and miss the gifts that God is giving us. It is the constant demands of home, family, school and work that come together to make life a blur. And if our vision is hindered, we cannot praise. We cannot praise when we do not see.



JOURNALING EXERCISE:

This week as part of your journaling experience, take some time to sit in a quiet place where you are undisturbed--away from the constant demands of life. First, ask God to show you who He is and to reveal Himself to you. Then reflect on who He is. What words would you use to describe Him? What feelings are present when you think about God? Journal your thoughts and feelings about who God is for you in these moments.

Then, when you are done journaling, offer up a prayer of praise to God. The easiest way to begin praising God is by using the Psalms. There are many psalms of praise in the Bible. In almost every Psalm, you can find a passage that will help you in praising God. As you use the words of the Psalm, allow the words to become your words.



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PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

"I bless you God, the father of Israel--and our father of old and forever. You are great and mighty and you possess everything: glory, victory, majesty, splendor, YES! Everything in heaven and earth--the kingdom is yours. You have raised yourself on high over all. You give me all riches and glory--they come from you. You rule over all. You hold strength and power in the palm of your hand to build up and strengthen me. And here I am, God, my God, giving thanks to you, praising your awesome name. Amen."
(written from 1 Chronicles 29:10-13, MSG)

Write your own personalized prayer: You might also want to use one of the many psalms of praise and turn it into your own prayer--try Psalm 117.

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PERSONALIZED PRAYER:



JULY 10

**dare four:
prayer of thanksgiving**

**“We should spend as much time in thanking
God for His benefits as we do in asking Him
for them.”**

**- Vincent de Paul,
Roman Catholic priest and spiritual writer**

The Bible tells us that God has given us, “exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think,” (Ephesians 3:20). Having received such things from God, it is clear that we should return thanks to Him for it.

The Scriptures contain a number of passages that encourage us to give thanks to God. The strongest one is found in Ephesians 5:20, “Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is what God means by the prayer of thanksgiving--to give thanks to Him for what He has done.

It is easy for us to think that God is so great and so highly that it does not make any difference to Him whether we give thanks or not. But we need to know the heart of God. His is the most tender and most sensitive heart of all. Nothing is so small or inconsequential that it does not register an impression with Him. He is not made of stone. He is moved to happiness every time He sees that you appreciate what He has done for you.

Giving thanks to God also means giving glory to God. It is acknowledging His goodness in giving good things to His people. Even though our efforts to give thanks are weak at times, we find that when we succeed in truly thanking Him, we feel good at heart. The reason is that we have been created to give Him glory. And every time we do so, we feel that we are in harmony with His plans and purposes for our lives. (adapted from O. Halleby, 139-142).



JOURNALING EXERCISE:

As you think about things to give thanks for, make a list of all of the temporal things God has given you such as physical health, mental faculties, strength to get through your daily tasks, the desire to work, for your home and family, food and clothing, etc.

Next, make a list of the all of the spiritual gifts God has given you such as forgiveness, peace, security, love, etc. Journal your thoughts and feelings about the treasures that God has given you.





PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

“Lord, I shout my praises to you. I will raise the roof for the Rock who saved me. I will march into your presence singing praises, lifting the rafters with your hymns! Why? Because you are the best, the Highest King over all other gods. In one hand, you hold the deep places of the earth and in the other you hold the highest mountains. You made the ocean--you own it! Your hands sculpted the earth. So I will worship and thank you and bow down on my knees before you, the God who made me. Yes, you are my God, and I am part of your flock, the flock that you feed. Thank you for being the God that you are and for the grace you have given! Amen.”
(from Psalm 95:1-6-MSG)

Write your own personalized prayer. Your might want to use one of the many psalms of thanksgiving and turn it into your own prayer--try Psalm 100.



PERSONALIZED PRAYER:



JULY 17

**dare five:
prayer of promise**

“It is important that we know and hear God’s voice, for the words of God reveal the will of God.”

- Larry Lea

A prayer of promise is very simply a prayer that incorporates Scripture. Two of the most powerful things we have to enable us in our lives and in our walk with God are prayer and God's Word. Beth Moore says that they are like "two sticks of dynamite strapped together. What makes these two sticks of dynamite so powerfully effective when strapped together? Consider the stick of prayer first. Prayer keeps us in constant communion with God, which is the goal of our entire believing lives." (Moore, *Praying God's Word*, 6) Remember, prayer grants God access to the areas of our lives that need to be changed. It also helps us develop intimacy with Him.

When we pray Scripture, we not only find ourselves in intimate communion with God, but **we are also praying His will and His promises.** "We are also retraining our minds to think God's thoughts about our situation rather than our own." (Moore, 8) So when we use Scripture in our prayers, we are agreeing with God that He is who He says He is and that He can do what He says He can do in our situations and in our lives.

HOW TO PRAY SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 107:20 tells us that God "sent out His Word to heal them." Because God's word is true, as Christ-followers, we should use the Bible to help us voice our concerns, wants and needs to God. When you pray scripture, personalize God's Word by plugging yourself into the scripture. Trust God and believe that His word will bring about His will in your life. I John 5:14-15 tells us that if we pray in accordance with His will, which is His word, and believe that He is hearing us pray His word, then we will receive answers and results from our prayers. But please keep in mind that God will answer our prayers in His timing. When the answer comes, it might not be what we had in mind, but it will be something that is in line with His will and His promises.



JOURNALING EXERCISE:

The following are some examples of promises that are given in Scripture. For your journaling time this week, try choosing a few of the promises that speak to you and rewrite them to make them personal. Then you can use them as your prayers for the week. Here is an example from Matthew 11:28-29. The passage says: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."





PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

“God, I am so exhausted and tired over my burden. It is all I can think about. I worry constantly! I am in desperate need of rest in every area of my life: physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally. Please show me how to carry your yoke, which is so much lighter than my burdens. Help me to learn from you. I know you are gentle and humble. I want to experience your gentleness this week. Please show me how to trust you so that I can rest. Thank you in advance for helping me. Amen.”

PROMISES GIVEN IN SCRIPTURE (NLT):

Isaiah 40:29-31

He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

Philippians 4:19

And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:37-39

No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Proverbs 1:33

But all who listen to me will live in peace, untroubled by fear of harm.

John 14:27

I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.

Romans 10:9

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.



PERSONALIZED PRAYER:



JULY 24

**dare six:
prayer of blessing**

“When you are in an upsetting situation, pray for everyone involved. Pray hard and be open to the power of God. Prayer is a gift that blesses you and those for whom you pray and it is something that can be done at any time, in any place, whenever you have a moment to give.”

- Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

A prayer of blessing is an intentional prayer for you or for someone else. It is a request that God's blessing would be over a problem or situation. So often it is easy to be negative or feel overwhelmed when thinking about the situations and burdens of others. It is even easier to be negative and feel hopeless when thinking about our own problems and issues.

But God's purpose for others and for us is that His promises would be true in our lives. "One way we can begin to experience God's blessing and promise is to speak words of hope, health, encouragement, life and purpose." (Omartian, *Seven Prayers That Will Change Your Life Forever*, 104) They are God's truth for you and for those you love. "Wipe words of doubt, hopelessness, and negativity from your vocabulary. What we think and speak may seem harmless but it affects our body and soul." (Omartian, 104) Proverbs 6:2 says that, "You are snared by the words of your mouth." This includes any kind of message we receive - the silent messages we send to ourselves as well as those we speak aloud. But 1 Peter 3:12 states, "For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer." When we speak God's words of life over a person or situation, we are being obedient to God by desiring the wholeness and strength He desires for us.

Again, one of the best ways to pray a prayer of promise for you or for someone else is to use Scripture. There are countless prayers of blessing in the Bible. One of the most recognized is found in Numbers 6:24-26. It says,

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."



JOURNALING EXERCISE:

As you think about praying prayers of blessing, take some time to think about the following questions:

Who would you like to pray a prayer of blessing for?

What are the situations in your life or in someone else's that need God's blessing?

Is there any negative language or are there any negative thoughts you have surrounding the person or situation you are praying over?

What are the words of promise you would like to see "come alive" over yourself? Over someone else? (For example, the above prayer of blessing focuses on God being **gracious** and **granting peace**.)





PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Once you have decided who you are going to pray for, you can use the prayer of blessing above to pray over them. Try praying it daily. Put the prayer in a place where you will remember to see it (refrigerator, bulletin board, bathroom mirror).

If you would like to write your own prayer, you can do that as well. You can also look up the Scripture passages below. They all contain prayers of blessing. If you do not find what you are looking for, you can also Google “prayers of blessing found in Scripture” and see what comes up.

For **direction** in life: Psalm 67:1-2

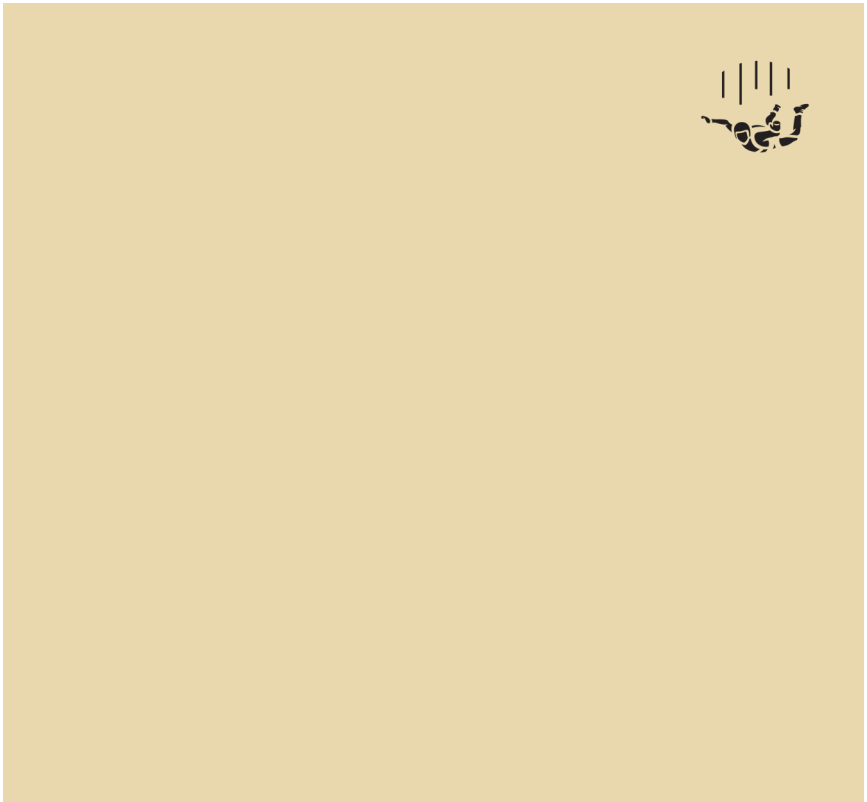
For **safety** and **protection**: Psalm 121:7-8

For **peace**: Romans 15:33

To **experience the love of God**: Ephesians 3:14-20



PERSONALIZED PRAYER:



Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New International Version of the Bible.

Fox, George. *The Journal of George Fox*. Cambridge: University Press, 1952.

Hallesby, O. *Prayer*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1994.

Moore, Beth. *Praying God's Word*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000.

Omatrion, Stormie. *Seven Prayers that Will Change Your Life Forever*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006.



Prayer is meant to be an important part of faith, but so often our prayers focus on what we want from God. We tend to keep our prayers safe, timid, and even mediocre. This series will challenge us to take a risk with our prayers, to experiment with the kind of prayers we might have never before said. We dare you to practice these dangerous prayers, and see what changes!



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