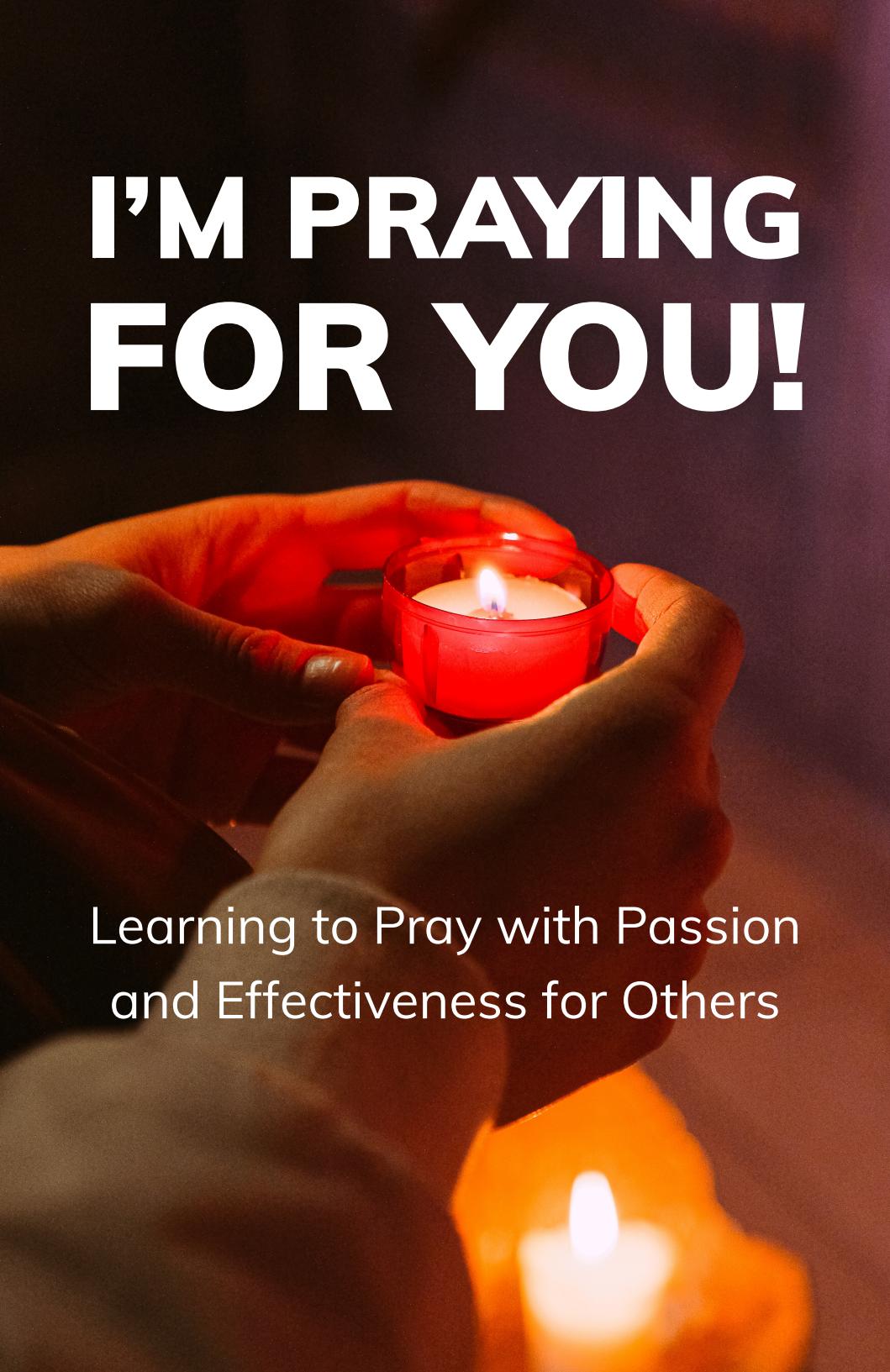


I'M PRAYING FOR YOU!



Learning to Pray with Passion
and Effectiveness for Others

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INTRODUCTION:

Learning to Pray



Most of us are deeply aware we should be praying for others. If you're anything like me, you regularly ask others at church or school how you can pray for them. Maybe you even keep a running list of needs and incorporate them into your devotional time and throughout the day.

But even then, it can be hard to put content and stability into those prayers. It can feel rote, or repetitive -- especially if you've prayed for a while and God seems to be a thousand miles from the situation.

And what about if you don't even have a list? How can you begin to wrap your arms around all of the needs, real and perceived, of all the people you know and care about?

Where can you begin? How can you determine where the Lord might be intending to work in that person's life?

The answer is we start the same place we always should: God's Word.

In His Word, God has revealed:

- His will
- His plan for the world
- The way we connect to those things and bring them into reality in history

This eBook will take you through several different things God's Word says we need. In these chapters, you will learn not merely what Scripture says about the need, but find examples of how you can approach the Lord to meet these needs in the lives of those you love.

God's Word is not powerless (Isa. 55:11). It is living and powerful (Heb. 4:12). It is God's power and voice on paper! If we pray the Word, it unleashes divine power into our lives and circumstances to make and remake, rule and overrule, to bring all the world into conformity with God's will and ways.

Is there any greater privilege than this?

Why don't you pray right now? Ask the Lord to make your heart attentive and humble before His Word. Ask Him to put names and

faces of men and women on your heart (even if you don't know them!) who need to be prayed for. Make notes of how the Lord is convicting, guiding, and teaching you through His Word.

And get excited about what He will do as You ask Him to make His redeeming power known on the earth!

CHAPTER ONE:

Praying for Salvation



Verse for Today

“God our Saviour...will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

1 Timothy 2:4

Reflection

God is by nature a Savior. While our sin has separated us from Him, He desires to rescue us from its consequences and bring us into a fruitful, ordered, life-giving relationship of liberty with Him.

He wants us to know Him as Father, Savior, King, and Friend.

As Christians, we can nurture this same concern for people who do not know the Lord. Do we understand what they currently

lack, and what their eternal destiny will be, if they do not have the Lord as their Savior?

How many unsaved people do you interact with on a regular basis? Some of us are very blessed to have grown up in strong Christian homes, active in local churches, and even attended Christian schools and colleges. But this can also mean we can go weeks without actually talking to someone who doesn't at least claim to be a Christian.

God became a man in Jesus Christ to forever deal with our sin. He took the punishment we deserved on the cross, rose from the dead to prove the Father accepted His payment and will one day return personally and bodily to complete His work of redemption for us and the world.

One of our priorities should be praying for people who do not know this:

- Perhaps we know them personally.
- Perhaps they're a friend of a friend.
- Perhaps they're well-known people (politicians, actors, writers, journalists).

Whoever they are, you can cultivate the discipline of intentionally praying that they would come to know the Lord.

If God desires that everyone be saved, should we desire less? While not everyone will be saved, God's heart is open, large, and extravagant. He wants everyone to know Him and to know His truth in Scripture and in Christ.

God works when people pray. **Prayer is absolutely essential for God's purposes to be fulfilled.** Make a list of people you care about that do not know the Lord. Set aside time each day or each week to pray for them.

What can you pray for?

- Pray that God puts the gospel message and godly people in their lives.
- Pray that God softens their hearts to be willing to hear.

- Pray that God awakens them to their need for salvation from sin and hell.
- Pray that God protects them from the lies and temptations of the enemy.
- Pray that God overcomes every obstacle and draws them to Him.

God honors the prayers of His people, because righteous people pray righteous prayers in accord with His will and character. Pursue Him. Don't let up. Ask Him to show Himself merciful to the lost. He will, because He desires their salvation more than you ever could.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding me how much you want people to be saved. Please forgive me when my zeal for sharing the gospel has waned. Give me a fresh heart for people to know You as their Savior.

Please bring men and women to mind who need You. Give me the discipline and desire to

regularly pray that they come to know You. In particular, these are some people that come to mind right now (name them).

Please honor my prayers for salvation, because You are a Savior. Please glorify the work of Your Son on the cross by drawing them to Yourself. Thank You that I can be a part of Your divine purpose by changing the eternal destiny of men and women You created in Your image.

In Jesus' name, amen.

CHAPTER TWO:

Praying for Spiritual Growth



Verse for Today

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

2 Peter 3:18

Reflection

The greatest need of every Christian is to grow spiritually. This means to progress from spiritual youth to maturity -- from infancy to adulthood. In this verse, Peter depicts it as growth in two things: grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Every Christian needs to grow in these two things:

1. **Grace.** To grow in grace means to increase in your understanding of the necessity of God's grace, in your reliance upon God's grace, and in your

recognition that grace, as one preacher said, is the “sphere” in which you grow spiritually.

- Growth in grace means you build your life on God’s grace to you in Christ. It means you relate to Him from a position of having received and desperately needing His grace.

2. **Knowledge.** To grow in your knowledge of Jesus is to increase in your intimacy with Him. It is both knowing more about Him (by understanding His attributes and character and understanding His mind and heart from His Word) and, upon that foundation, knowing Him more completely, accurately, and lovingly.

Note that Peter calls Jesus “our Lord and Saviour.” We are, especially, to mature in our understanding and experience of Jesus in these roles.

To mature in knowing Him as Lord, we are to increasingly grasp:

- His authority and rulership over all things
- His overruling of impossible circumstances
- His call to comprehensive and loving obedience to Him in every area of our lives

To mature in knowing Him as Savior, we must:

- Gain a greater understanding of the depth of our sin from which He continues to rescue us
- Know Him as our Sanctifier in rescuing us from our sins
- Enjoy and experience His deliverance from the fallenness in our flesh and in the world around us

Do you pray this for other Christians? Do you pray this for yourself?

Think of the height and depth of blessing that God offers you as you mature spiritually and of the glory that He will receive in a life crafted after His image.

May that motivate you, also, to seek sanctifying grace and knowledge in the lives of those you love!

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for teaching me about how necessary it is to be spiritually mature. I am excited to reflect on the potentialities and possibilities that await me as I grow into maturity.

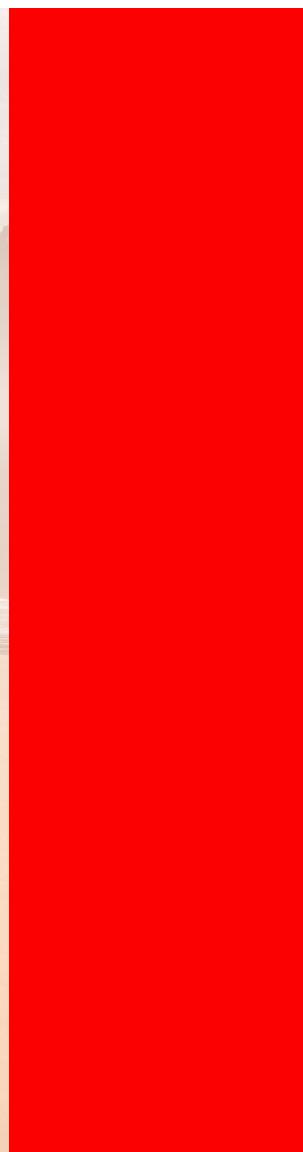
This also reminds me that I do not want other Christians I know to miss out on these blessings, or for You to not be glorified in their better reflecting Your character. Please bring each of them to the realization of their need for growth. Please help me to be an encouragement to them as they take the path of maturation.

Please show me areas where I still need to grow in grace and knowledge. As I do, use me to model for others the kind of life that best reflects Your character and brings You glory.

In Jesus' name, amen.

CHAPTER THREE:

To Walk in the Spirit



Verse for Today

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

Galatians 5:16

Reflection

There are many different phrases in Scripture for the way **the Holy Spirit is the absolutely essential power for our spiritual lives.**

We're told:

- To be filled with Him (Eph. 5:18)
- To be led by Him (Rom. 8:14)
- To bear His fruit (Gal. 5:22-23)
- To use His gifts (1 Cor. 12)

He is not a power. He is God Himself! And only He can enable us to live lives that please Jesus Christ.

In today's passage, we are told to walk in (or by) the Spirit. **What does this mean?**

It means to live your life each day in these ways:

- Surrendered to His authority
- Sensitive to His leading and guidance
- Reliant on His power not simply to accomplish all of your tasks, but to do so with a view to obeying and honoring the Lord in them

It means anticipating temptation and spiritual warfare and being confident of the Spirit's power to help you meet those challenges victoriously.

It means to keep in step with Him -- not going ahead of where He leads or lingering behind when He is pressing you to new places of maturity, service, and blessing.

In our verse, walking by the Spirit is the key to not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. Our “flesh,” when used negatively in Scripture, does not denote our physical body so much as our human nature corrupted and weakened by sin. This flesh has lusts -- cravings and demands that are contrary to God’s will and flawless holiness.

The flesh and the Spirit are at war in our lives. To be filled with, surrendered to, and led by the Spirit means we obey His leading and lordship and refuse the demands of our flesh. We can walk with the Spirit, or we can be a slave to our lusts.

We cannot do both.

What are some of these lusts? They aren’t limited to illicit sexual desires, as the word “lust” may make us think. **They are any desires that are sinful.** Think of greed, gluttony, self-absorption. Any craving or demand that is ungodly is a lust.

To love others, then, means praying that:

- They will consistently walk in the power of God's Spirit
- All of the things you learned above would be true of them
- They will see the image of God and the character of Christ more fully reflected in their choices, affections, actions, words, thoughts, and intents of their heart.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, I realize now how absolutely necessary it is to be empowered by the Spirit in every area of life. Only then can I overcome the lusts of my flesh and live a life that pleases You and brings glory to Your Son.

If this is true of me, then it is also true for others as well. They too need to rely on the enablement and filling of the Holy Spirit to live each day in holiness, love, and Christlikeness.

May each one learn to follow the steps of the Spirit as He leads them in the path of obedience, faithfulness, and love. May they be submissive to His guidance and direction in the gray areas of life or in the difficult questions of how to apply Scripture to their circumstances.

Lord, we all need the enablement of Your Spirit to resist the lusts of our flesh. Only He is stronger than they are. Please help us to see these for what they are, to resist their lies and temptations, and to woo our affections to the way of the Spirit as expressed in Your Word.

Please increase our faith in Your ability to deliver us from our sin and the fallen world around us. Please bring us joy as we make the sometimes-hard choices to follow the Spirit's way instead of our lusts. Please enliven our hope in the glorious future we will have with You as we walk in the Spirit's power all the way to Your Kingdom.

In Jesus' name, amen.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Praying for Divine Provision



Verse for Today

“My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:19

Reflection

What needs do you have that are most pressing to you? In what ways are you overwhelmed by your circumstances? What about those you love? Are there unpaid bills, college debt, health concerns? **God has a word of assurance for you and for them!**

Paul is writing a note of thanks to the Philippian church for their help in his imprisonment. (Paul was under house arrest, which required the prisoner to pay rent, or else they would be put on the street.) As he praises their generosity and love, he also tells

them **their giving has not gone unnoticed by the Lord.**

When you give to the Lord's work, when you sacrifice in the path of obedience to Jesus Christ, you may be concerned about how your needs are going to be met. Will God not take care of you?

Paul assures us that **in the path of giving and obedience is the overflowing supply of God's gracious provision.**

The word for "supply" means to fill to overflowing! And for God to give "according to" His riches means to give in proportion to them. Think of how much God has (all of everything and can do all that He wills). For Him to give in proportion to that vastness means His supply to us boggles the mind!

Paul continues: God's riches are "in glory" and come "by Christ Jesus." Think of it this way: We are united to Jesus by faith, so these blessings come by or through Him. And the blessings are sourced in glory.

**The point is that through the person of Jesus,
God shares His infinite riches with us!**

Our union with Jesus Christ invites us into the vastness of God's blessing, both spiritual and material. Those who are faithful in service and giving do not have to fear lack. God will meet all of their needs through Jesus Christ, who unites and rules over heaven and earth with all authority.

Seeking God to meet needs, then, is making an appeal to His beloved Son, who saves us from sin and its consequences in this life and the next. Look at the world around you, at the lives of those you love. On the basis of God's grace in Christ, ask God to meet their needs. He promises you He will.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank and praise You for Your willingness to care about every detail of my life. Thank You that nothing is too big or too small for You to be concerned about.

Lord, just as I have pressing needs in my life, so do people I love, especially those who have been faithful in obedience and giving. I thank You for Your promise of provision according to Your riches by Jesus Christ! Thank You for sharing your riches with us.

On the basis of Your promise, I ask that You look with favor and compassion upon their need (name it). Please dazzle them with Your ability to make a way out of no way and to glorify Yourself by meeting their needs. Please delight them as they have fresh confidence in Your care and covenant provision.

Please also show me how I can be the answer to their prayers. I look forward to being an instrument of Your love and concern for one of Your children.

In Jesus' name, amen.

CHAPTER FIVE:

To Grow in Love



Verse for Today

“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you.”

1 Thessalonians 3:12

Reflection

How important is it to love others, especially other Christians? So important that **it is one of the two great commandments** (Matthew 22:36-40). A barometer of how deeply and consistently you love the Lord is the way you love others.

Interestingly enough, a way you can grow in your love for others is by praying that they, too, mature and increase in love! After all, if you love someone, you desire what is best for them. What could be better for them than

seeking their greater obedience to and love for Jesus Christ?

One of the most fruitful discussions of love in the New Testament is Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. This was a church that loved the Lord, loved Paul, loved the lost, and loved each other.

Today's verse concludes the chapter, where Paul has discussed his desire to see the Thessalonians because of their persevering faith (vv. 7-8) and to complete what is lacking in it (v. 10). While the Thessalonians are strong in love, as Paul will write elsewhere in the letter, there is always a way to "excel still more" (4:1).

Paul desires them to grow in love precisely because **he has a forward-looking perspective:** the Thessalonians must grow in love so that the Lord will establish their hearts blameless in holiness at Christ's return on the last day (v. 13).

Paul does not want them to be ashamed when they see the Lord. He wants them to

have the joy of a holy life and godly character and for them to know the Lord's approval. For them to experience this, they must become better and better lovers of others.

Notice that Paul says that **this is ultimately the Lord's doing** ("abound in love...that He might establish your hearts"). It is in the way of love that we find ourselves being made firm and fixed in unblameable holiness. And this is a work of God's grace. What an amazing thought!

It's important to remember that **our love for others is directly tied to our love for God.** They go together.

While love for God is most important, it inevitably speaks to and involves how we treat others. This is why a lack of love for others is so serious: It ultimately reveals a deficiency in our love for Him.

Thus, when you pray for others to mature in love, you are ultimately praying that their relationship with the Lord will be revived, deepened, and purified.

A love relationship with the Lord Jesus overflows into real, deep, and abiding love for His people.

God places a high priority on His people being rich in love. He desires for us to receive His love and then extend it to others.

- Are there ways that others you know could mature in love?
- Are there ways you could?
- Why not make Paul's prayer your own, and see what miracles of grace He does as you seek Him according to His Word?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I realize now how critical it is that I mature as a lover of others. Like every area of obedience, it is an indicator of how mature, deep, and Spirit-led my love for You is.

All of us, no matter how godly, have room to mature in our expression and affections of love. And of course, this means that we will always have need of a more fruitful, purified, and consecrated relationship with You.

As I seek You to teach me and others to grow in love for one another, I realize I am asking You to teach me to be more selfless, giving, and surrendered in my love for You.

I pray that as one matures, so will the other. Let Your image be more clearly seen in us as we grow in holiness and joy.

Thank You for Your indwelling Holy Spirit that leads us on the path of righteousness!

Thank You for the hope of standing before You, blameless and in holiness as we respond by faith to Your work in us.

Please glorify Yourself and bring us joy as we learn to love You and others more.

In Jesus' name, amen.

CHAPTER SIX:

An Undivided Heart



Verse for Today

“Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.”

Psalm 86:11

Reflection

To have a “united” heart implies that my heart is divided.

Yes, we have divided hearts:

- We desire good things, and we desire sin.
- We have great energy for sometimes wasteful or lazy pursuits and little energy for the things of the Lord.
- Sometimes we are on fire for the Lord, and other times we can't be bothered to get out of bed half an hour early to

read the Word and pray.

- We are easily distracted, worried, and drawn away by things that gratify our flesh.
- We take the easy way out.
- We want shortcuts.
- We are double-minded.
- We doubt, question, and harbor resentment.

The psalmist asks of the Lord several things. He wants to be taught the Lord's way -- His path, the way of life marked out by conformity to His will, character, and holy Law. He wants to walk in obedience to God's truth.

He reasons that **what motivates this obedient way of life is a united heart that has one goal: fearing the Lord's name.**

Rather than have these disparate shards pulling your thoughts and affections in a

thousand contradictory ways, **ask the Lord to bind the pieces of your heart together**, that all of your inward powers and focus might be consecrated to cultivating the fear of God.

To “fear” the Lord does not really mean to be afraid of Him (although there certainly is a healthy fear or reverence in the presence of someone or something immeasurably bigger than us).

Rather, it means:

- To humbly, reverently, and earnestly view God as Lord and you as His servant
- To view Him as He is and have an attitude toward Him that reflects that
- To acknowledge your utter dependence upon and need of Him
- To trust and obey Him!

Our hearts need to be gathered back into a cohesive whole so that our whole inner person might be ready to walk in a reverent attitude of holy fear of our God. This will mean a life of obedience and love, a life that glorifies and praises His name.

Have you ever thought to pray this for others or for yourself?

How easily distracted we are. How easily tempted. Those whom you love need to have a united heart in order to fear the Lord. Make this a matter of prayer and see what great men and women of God the Lord makes them!

Prayer

Lord God, I am more aware now of my tendency to be internally divided as I seek to obey You. How easily I am drawn away! And if I struggle with this, I know others do as well!

Would You please grant us an integrated heart that honors You? Would You turn our affections away from selfishness and lust

and towards You and one another? Would You remind us that we live daily in Your presence and must give an account to You for what we have done?

Take our wills, imagination, desires, memories, longings, fears, hopes -- all of it -- and weave them into one whole that is entirely given over to loving, serving, and obeying You. Please help us help each other to do this with prayer, encouragement, and reminders.

As we grow in that united heart, let us grow in obedience, in walking in Your truth.

Help us to walk in righteousness externally and in the depths of our hearts.

Give us joy as we do so and let us be a shining testimony of the power of Your grace!

In Jesus' name, amen.

CONCLUSION



If you found it difficult to know what and how to pray for other people before, hopefully now you have a better idea. Use this book as a starting place. Let your thinking expand and grow as you are prompted to search the Scriptures to find other ways to lift people up to the Lord.

Remember that God assures us the prayers of righteous people are powerful (James 5:16). Righteous people ask God for righteous things, and He is happy to grant them.

Look for the answer to your prayers in the lives of those you love. **Expect the response of heaven.**

As the Lord leads you, feel free to **share with others that you are praying for them.** Many of them will find this to be deeply encouraging and will appreciate your expression of love and concern. You may also want to give them a copy of this book so they can be revived in their prayers for others, including you!

It is also helpful to remember that **God's timing is often not ours**. If your prayers do not seem to be answered in the affirmative right away, avoid concluding that what you are asking isn't God's will and giving up. That could easily be an attack of the enemy to prevent you from fulfilling God's purposes.

Instead, realize God is encouraging you to persist in prayer and to choose faith over what your natural perception may be telling you (after all, we often badly misinterpret the world around us).

Choose to keep praying and to build your life and responses around what God says in His Word.

Partnering with the Lord in prayer is a great privilege that can shape history. **How might God desire to use you to accomplish His glorious purpose of redeeming the world?**

May He richly bless your service to Him and do above and beyond all you can ask or think for the glory of Jesus Christ!