

# Getting a Stronger Grip on Prayer

Message 4 of 5 in the series: "Stronger"

## 12 things we can do to strengthen our time with God in prayer:

1. **Scripture reflection.** "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right."  
2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what God said to you in your Bible reading today. What caught your attention? What affirmed/encouraged you? What convicted you? Write down anything God brings to mind.

2. **Prepare your heart.** "I love the LORD because he hears my voice and my prayer for mercy. Because he bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath!" Psalm 116:1-2 (NLT)

Spend a few minutes in silence allowing God to calm your mind and prepare your heart. Ask Him to show you what you are thankful for, concerned about, afraid of, excited about, or obsessing over. Write these things down so you can deal with them at the appropriate time(s) during this hour of prayer.

3. **Praise.** "Let all that I am praise the Lord; with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name. Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me." Psalm 103:1-2 (NLT)

Read out loud the following list of God's characteristics beginning each item with the phrase, "I praise you, Lord, because You are..."

- all-powerful. (Job 42:2, Jeremiah 32:27, Luke 1:37, Revelation 19:6)
- all-knowing. (Psalm 139:1-3 & 147:5, Isaiah 46:9-10)
- everywhere. (Proverbs 15:3, Psalm 139:5-10, Isaiah 66:1)
- eternal and unchanging. (Psalm 90:1-4 & 106:1, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17, Revelation 1:8 & 22:13)
- the creator of everything and the source of life. (Genesis 1:1, John 11:23-27, Colossians 1:15-17)
- holy, perfect, and sinless. (Isaiah 6:1-3, Revelation 4:4-11, Psalm 18:30-31, 1 Peter 3:18)
- love. (Psalm 103:11, Psalm 136, John 3:16, 1 John 4:7-10)
- great and greatly to be praised. (Deuteronomy 10:17; Psalm 95:3, 145:3, & 147:5)
- good. (1 Chronicles 16:34, Psalm 100:5 & 145:9, Nahum 1:7)
- working all things for my good. (Romans 5:3-5 & 8:28, James 1:2-4)
- patient and kind. (Exodus 34:6, Numbers 14:18, Romans 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9)
- forgiving. (Isaiah 1:18, Psalm 103:8-14, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 John 1:9)
- always with us. (Joshua 1:5-9, Psalm 23:4, Matthew 28:20)
- our provider. (Psalm 103:5, Matthew 6:25-34, Philippians 4:19, James 1:17)
- our refuge. (Psalm 18:1-3 & 46:1-3, Psalm 91, 2 Corinthians 1:8-10)
- our guide. (Proverbs 3:5-6; Psalm 23:1-3, 32:8-9, & 37:23-24; Isaiah 30:21)

To keep things fresh, look up 1 or 2 verses from this list each day and read them out loud in praise to God.

4. **Sing to the Lord.** "Come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come to him with thanksgiving. Let us sing psalms of praise to him." Psalm 95:1-2 (NLT)

Sing a favorite hymn or sing along to a Christian praise song from a playlist on your phone.

5. **Spiritual Warfare.** "Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm."  
Ephesians 6:10-13 (NLT)

"Today, Lord, I put on the armor you have given me so I can stand my ground against the devil's schemes. I put on truth as a belt around my waist, and I wear the body armor of God's righteousness on my chest. For shoes, I put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that I will always be ready to tell others about Jesus. I hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil, I put on salvation as my helmet, and I take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God and use it as a weapon to overcome the lies, deceptions, and distractions that are coming my way today." (adapted from Ephesians 6:14-17)

“He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” 1 John 4:4b (NKJV)

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7 (NIV)

“And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.” Matthew 6:13 (NIV)

- 6. Surrender.** “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.” Luke 9:23-24 (NLT)

“Jesus, you are my Lord and Savior. I believe in you and surrender every part of my life to you. I hold nothing back. I surrender: my health, family, resources, occupation, classes, skills, relationships, time management, choices, addictions, successes, failures, weaknesses, strengths, emotions, fears, insecurities, sexuality, even my understanding of how things ought to be. (Ask God to show you what else needs to be surrendered.) Amen.”

- 7. Empowerment through the Holy Spirit.** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (NLT)

“So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves.”

Galatians 5:16 (NLT)

“Heavenly Father, you are the vine; I am only a branch only as I remain attached to you will I live a fruitful life. Apart from you, I can do nothing. (John 15:5) Fill me with your Spirit, guide me, teach me, comfort, counsel, and give me the desire and the power to do what pleases you. (Philippians 2:13) Make me a little more like Jesus today. Give me the mind of Christ so I can think the way you think and love others the way you love them. Give me any spiritual gifts you want me to have, and show me how to use them for your glory. Amen.”

- 8. Repentance.** “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.” Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT)

Allow God to reveal to you any sinful attitudes, thoughts, or behaviors for which you may need to repent. (Ingratitude, neglect of Bible reading and/or prayer, unbelief, lack of concern for the souls of others, greed, neglect of family, impurity/sexual immorality, racism, love of the world and material things, giving in to addictions/compulsive behaviors, vanity, envy, critical spirit, gossip, slander, lying, pride, cheating, hypocrisy, bad temper, arrogance, hindering others, lack of love toward God and others, etc.)

“Heavenly Father, how can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. Keep me from deliberate sins! Don't let them control me. (Psalm 19:12) Please give me the grace of a truly repentant heart. I can't hide anything from you. Please forgive me for the sinful things I've done as well as leaving good things undone. Forgive me for my rebellion and stubbornly going my own way. (Isaiah 53:6) Please forgive me for living in a place of fear and worry and not believing that you will provide for me and protect me. Please change the way I think - renew my mind and create a clean heart in me. (Psalm 51) Amen.”

- 9. Forgiveness.** “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” Mark 11:25-26 (NKJV)

“Loving Father, I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_ because you have forgiven me. I forgive them of the wrongs they have done and the pain and hurt they have caused me. I surrender any bitterness that has grown in my heart (Hebrews 12:15) and pray you will bless them today, in the name of Jesus. Thank you, Lord, for giving me the desire and the power to do this. I cannot do this without your help. Amen.”

Ask the Lord to show you who you need to forgive today. (yourself, mother, father, siblings, spouse, children, extended family members, friends, boyfriends/girlfriends, neighbors, employers, school teachers, coaches, lawyers, doctors/nurses, clergy, etc.)

- 10. Prayers for others.** “I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:1-4 (NLT)

Spend a few minutes praying for the needs of others (people who need Christ; family members; coworkers; classmates; neighbors; friends; pastors; missionaries; people in our church; city council members; our governor; our president; victims of crime, natural disasters, and war; people who have illnesses, need surgery, or who have recently lost a loved one; people who need a job or have recently lost a job; people who are getting married; people who have recently gotten divorced; etc.)

- 11. Personal Prayer Requests.** “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”  
Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

Spend a few minutes praying for your needs (spiritual growth, finances, health concerns, relationships, career, fears, worries, problems, hurts, guidance, protection, provision, etc.)

- 12. Thanksgiving.** “Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever.”  
Psalm 107:1 (NLT)

Make a list of things for which you are grateful to God and thank Him for each item. Here are a few items for which we can give thanks regardless of our circumstances.

- Thank you, Lord, for causing all things to work together for good. (Romans 8:28)
- Thank you, Lord, for forgiving all my sins, redeeming me from death, and filling my life with good things. (Psalm 103:3-5)
- Thank you, Lord, for giving me power, love, and a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)
- Thank you, Lord, for never leaving or forsaking me. (Deuteronomy 31:8, Psalm 23:4, Matthew 28:20)
- Thank you, Lord, that I am fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14)
- Thank you, Lord, for guiding me along the best pathway for my life and planning good things for me to do. (Jeremiah 29:11, Psalm 32:8, Ephesians 2:10)
- Thank you, Lord, for the place you have prepared for me in heaven. (John 14:2)
- Thank you, Lord, for the Holy Spirit helping me in times of distress and interceding on my behalf. (Romans 8:26)
- Thank you, Lord, that I am more than a conqueror through Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:37)

Amen

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### Connect Group Questions:

1. On a scale of 1-10, with “1” representing “I hardly ever pray” and “10” representing “I love spending an hour with God in prayer every day,” how would you rate your prayer life?
2. Discuss the 12 sections of this prayer guide, and then answer the following questions:
  - Which section(s) of this guide did you find most helpful? Why?
  - Which section(s) of this guide did you find most challenging?
  - Why do you think each section begins with a passage of Scripture?
  - What do you do to keep your prayer times meaningful and fresh?
3. Spend some time as a group praying for our church to become stronger in prayer.

### Resources

“Let Prayer Change Your Life.” by Becky Tirabossi, Becky Tirabassi Change Your Life, Inc., 2015.

“Power Through Prayer.” by E.M. Bounds, Moody Publishers, 2009.

“Miracle Hour, A Method of Prayer That Will Change Your Life.” by Linda Schubert, Miracles of the Heart Ministries, 1991.