

Great Prayers of the Bible

Timeless Truths in Approaching God

Theme Introduction

“Oh, God . . . we don’t know what to do, but our eyes are on You.”

I gathered with several prayer leaders in the Twin Cities as we watched the attack on our nation on September 11, 2001. This prayer poured out from our paralyzed and grief-stricken hearts. No one in our nation knew what to do at that moment—and the most we could muster was a cry to God for help.

God soon revealed His strategy. He directed us to walk across the street to the downtown Minneapolis sports stadium, where we knelt on the sidewalk and asked God to give us the stadium to call our city to prayer. With no budget or social media at that time to promote, God drew 24,000 people to the stadium to pray.

Although several leaders shared a small stage to lead worship and prayer segments, not a single name was mentioned or flashed on a screen. All eyes were on the Lord alone as we sought Him in our time of great need.

It’s the same prayer that Jehoshaphat offered centuries earlier in 2 Chronicles 20:12 when Judah

was surrounded by her enemies, poised to attack. As the king humbled himself before the Lord, cried out in despair, and sought God alone for help, the Lord revealed a heaven-inspired strategy that left Judah’s enemies scattered and destroyed.

Jehoshaphat’s entire prayer is recorded in Scripture for our

benefit. It's a beautiful example of how to seek the Lord in crisis. The Bible is filled with great prayers prayed by ordinary people, royalty, prophets, and spiritual leaders—all in moments of recognizing one's desperation for God.

In this Issue

We've grouped some of the great prayers of the Bible into four strategic responses: bold prayers, crisis prayers, repentant prayers, and prayers of praise. We asked our authors to reflect on scriptural prayers as examples for our day.

You might wonder why we did not choose the most obvious great prayers—The Lord's Prayer or Jesus' intercessory prayer in John 17. After all, those all-encompassing prayers supersede all other forms of intercession! Because we have devoted past issues to those prayers, we chose to highlight other practical prayers from ordinary people in need of their God.

Geoff Eckart kicks our issue off with the pattern he sees in bold prayers: a desperate need, a regular person, and a bold request. Rob Griepentrog goes deeper into King Jehoshaphat and his crisis prayer on behalf of Judah. The king knew his own army could not resolve their desperate situation; their only hope was to cry out to God.

Kyle Reno reminds us that Jesus established repentance as the most critical prayer that will align us with our Father. King David employed some serious repentance in his heart-cry to God in Psalm 51. Finally, Dana Olson closes out our theme section by reflecting on prayers of praise and intimacy that come from a thirsty heart. In tumultuous times, the psalms record how David found strength in his praise of the living God.

When we cried out to God on that surreal September day in 2001, I had no idea that kneeling on a hard sidewalk in front of a major stadium would result in one of the largest prayer gatherings in our city's history. We need once again to come

before the Lord with bold prayers that recognize the crisis our nation is in—while at the same time humbling ourselves in repentance and praise.

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect* and author of *Prayer That's Caught and Taught: Mentoring the Next Generation* .