

God's Security System

By Barbara Gordon

Video game, science kit, a drum or violin. I scanned nine-year-old Bryce's birthday list. A bark of laughter escaped as I continued, *a home security system.*

Bryce's misunderstanding of a home security system was evident in his exact words, "I need one to capture special moments in the house and outside."

This morning I examined a different list—my prayer list. I wonder if I, too, could use a lesson or two or three concerning my entreaties. Is my purpose in praying to create special moments or to change the world?

The writer of Hebrews 10:36, lists three actions associated with suffering affliction I find applicable to prayer. "You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised." (NIV) This verse tells me in order to endure hardship and to effectively pray, I need to persevere, do the will of God and then receive his promises.

Dictionary.com tells me perseverance is a *steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, a state, etc., especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement.* The Bible is our best source of persevering prayers. The prophet Jeremiah continued his pleadings to God despite beatings, mockery and imprisonment. The apostle Paul stayed faithful through all sorts of abuse. Jesus' teachings are clear, we "should always pray and not give up." (Luke 18:1b NIV)

Steadfast praying often results in the answers we seek. After many years of praying for the salvation of a friend, I rejoiced when she confessed her sins and was baptized. Those

years of crying out to God on her behalf gained me not only my request, but also a greater faith and a stronger relationship with God. Persevering prayer has the power to change situations and to change me.

The second action in Hebrews 10:36 directs us to do the will of God. Disobedience hinders our relationship with God, and therefore negatively impacts prayer. John 9:31 is clear, "We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will." (NIV) The Old Testament Israelites, found this to be true. Even though they were God's chosen people, during times of idol worship, grumbling and corrupt sacrifices, their connection to God was broken. When they confessed and repented, restoration came.

Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived warns us, "If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable." (Proverbs 28:9 NIV) Recently I experienced a time of dryness in my prayer life. I lacked enthusiasm and my conversation with God felt one-way. I brought my requests to him, but nothing happened. Then the Holy Spirit reminded me of a disagreement with a church leader regarding a ministry area. Though the conflict had been resolved on the surface, I harbored ill-feelings toward my Christian brother. When I confessed and repented of my sin, power in prayer returned. Sin and prayer cannot co-exist.

The Hebrews' author assures us perseverance and doing God's will results in receiving his promises. Abraham persevered, obeyed and received. His wife, Sarah, was ninety-years-old when God announced she would have a baby. Paul describes Abraham's unwavering faith in "being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised." (Romans 4:21 NIV) Genesis chapter twenty-two highlights Abraham's obedient willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Perseverance and obedience equaled promise received.

Bryce made his list with full assurance I, his Nana, would

provide. God is more faithful than even the most devoted grandma. Intercession is the best security system in the world, and I am asking God to teach me to apply Hebrews 10:36 as I put together my prayer list.

By the way, I bought Bryce a drum.

—Barbara Gordon is a prayer leader from Moundville, Missouri.

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Lord, Make Us One

Prayers Toward Racial Healing



Fires of racial tension have been ignited in our nation. Hurt, fear, anger, suspicion, disappointment, pain, misunderstanding, and judgment surface in our relationships with people of different races. Many people express struggles that have marked their lives for years; others are uncertain of how to respond.

But the common cry within the Church and much of society is for change, healing, and a way forward.

What if the Church committed herself to 31 days of concerted prayer, seeking God to bring healing, restoring—and yes, even revival and spiritual awakening—to our nation? That would be a way forward that brings glory to God and hope to those who are hurting and in despair.

Niko Peele and Jonathan Graf invited prayer leaders from around the country to write prayers for racial healing that are steeped in God's Word. Peele and Graf have edited and compiled the book, titled *Make Us One*, to release this fall.

In this article we feature a sample of prayers that you can begin praying now. As you pray, invite God to do a radical work by using the Church to bring racial reconciliation through the power of Jesus Christ. Pray that God will use a season of concerted prayer to ignite new fires that consume our nation with love for God and for each other.

Forgive Us, Restore Us

Our loving heavenly Father, we come to You in the most powerful name of Jesus. We worship and praise You with every breath that is within us. We desperately seek You during this chaotic time. Our nation is in a spiritually war-torn state. Please cleanse us, forgive us, revive us, transform us, heal us! We cry out to You to intervene and heal our minds and hearts from any hatred, hurt, pain, confusion, or misunderstandings.

Search the depths of our souls and reveal anything contrary to Your Word that hinders the process of healing needed in our nation. Remove any pride and blind spots that keep us from accepting each other and being united in the body of Christ and our country.

Forgive us for the sin of racism—an age-old strategy and lie of the enemy that makes us feel or think we are better, more important, more valuable, or superior than someone who looks

different from ourselves in color, ethnicity, nationality, wealth, or culture.

Forgive America for the part it played in slavery and racism in our country's formation. This issue continues to plague us.

Help us to be patient with one another and to listen and learn from our differences. Help us to show empathy toward others even if we don't understand or agree with their point of view.

Father, restore to us a holy reverence and fear of God and a fresh revelation and understanding of Your Word, which declares we are all created from one blood and are all made in Your image after Your likeness. Penetrate our hearts so deeply with this truth that we can celebrate the truth that we are all part of the same human race, regardless of our background or the color of our skin. Saturate us with Your love so that we may embrace our calling as reconcilers and healers.

We expect to see a great spiritual awakening because we know Your eyes are on the righteous and Your ears are attentive to our prayers. We realize it is not by our own might nor by our own power, but it is by your Holy Spirit that this battle will be won! You are the Warrior; the Lord is Your name. Thank You for leading us and hearing our prayer. In Jesus' name, amen.

(Genesis 1:26; Acts 17:28; Acts 17:26; 1 Peter 3:12; Zechariah 4:6; Exodus 15:3)

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Move Me Closer

Father, Jesus said that nation would rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. But that would be just the beginning of the birth pains. The subject of race is one of the most

discussed topics in our culture today. Racism is one of the most basic and deadly problems in history—and it is increasing in power.

However, we know the Church is called to be different. Father, You call us to “move closer” to You and to one another. This problem of racism only changes if we change—from up close. It’s easy to judge what we don’t understand, but everything changes when we move closer to one another. We seek Your forgiveness:

- Father, forgive us for thinking that some races are better than others.
- Father, forgive us for thinking there is something better in us than in others.
- Father, forgive us for showing favoritism when we are all undeserving of Your mercy and grace.
- Father, forgive us for our pride, feeling sufficient in ourselves, believing that we don’t need God or anyone else.
- Father, forgive us for judging based on externals.
- Father, forgive us for our insecurity, for being afraid of those who are different and those we can’t control.
- Father, forgive us for not being a house of prayer for all nations, for every race.
- Father, forgive us for partnering with Satan, the accuser of the brethren, rather than partnering with Your Son, the Lord Jesus, who lives to intercede for us.
- Father, forgive us for separating ourselves from one another.

Father, help us learn to “listen” to one another. May we “move closer” to You and to one another. In the name of Jesus, amen.

(Matthew 24:7–8; Hebrews 7:25)

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National Prayer Committee.

Jesus, Awaken Me with Light

Father, Your Word tells us that You are our light and salvation. I, along with my brothers and sisters, acknowledge that, more than ever, we need Your light to shine in the darkness of the culture that threatens to overtake our nation, our churches, our neighborhoods, our homes, and our hearts. You are our only source of redemption and healing.

We proclaim Jesus is the light of the world. Help us to see all people, in all their array of colors and diversity, as manifestations of Your light, for we are all created in Your image and are sacred in Your sight. Shine Your light in our hearts, dispelling any place of prejudice. With boldness and courage, we ask You to change us any way You want.

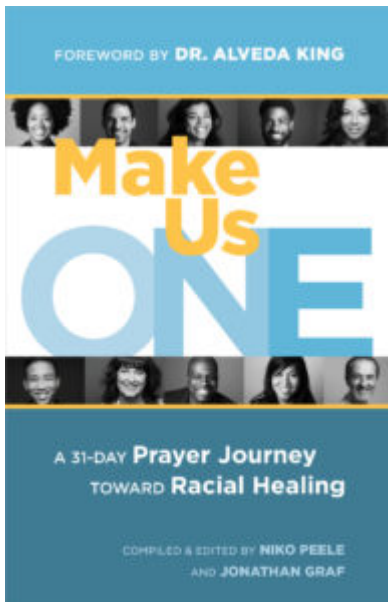
Empower us to love others in the same way You love each of us personally. Awaken our ears to hear the pain and suffering of others. May we also be quick to extend our hands in service, for we love not only with words, but also with action.

We are in awe that You have commissioned us to live as light bearers. As agents of Your light and dispensers of Your love, we speak grace and peace over fractured families, over our national discord, and over racial unrest. May we live collectively as “the city on the hill” that gives light to everyone and brings glory to God.

We ask this in Your name, amen.

(Psalm 27:1; 36:9; Matthew 5:14–16)

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—These prayers are excerpted from *Make Us One: A 31-Day Prayer Journey Toward Racial Healing*, compiled and edited by Niko Peele and Jonathan Graf.

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A Scripture-Based Covid-19 Prayer



This day Lord I choose to abide in Christ, to set my mind on Christ, to realign my thinking

and heart on things above where my true citizenship has been firmly established through the finished work of Jesus. Remind me continually Father, that this world is not my true home. Forgive me I pray, for allowing the roots of my living to grow deep in what is not eternal.

- For my satisfaction with earthly pleasures instead of Jesus, forgive me O God.
- For feasting on media of all kinds, but not on Your Word, forgive me O God.
- For giving in to the pull of the world in many ways, while ignoring the promptings of the Holy Spirit, forgive me O God.
- For the disparity between what I say I believe and how I actually live, O God forgive me!

(Pause and continue to pray as led by the Holy Spirit.)

During these days of restricted activity, may my heart become quiet enough, still enough, to hear Your voice clearly once again. Strengthen me by the Holy Spirit to resist distractions. Instead, like Mary, may I sit at Your feet choosing what is best. As I wait on You, I ask Father that You give to me the gift of a broken and contrite heart. Show me the ways in which pride has entrenched itself in my actions, reactions and relationships. Destroy it all I pray!

(Pause and continue to pray as led by the Holy Spirit.)

Lord God, Your Word admonishes me to not be anxious about anything, but to pray about everything. And so, in submission to Your Word, I bring my requests before You.

- Father, in Jesus' mighty Name I ask that You stop the spread of COVID-19 and bring healing to those who are suffering, and Your Name glorified!

- I lay before You my concerns for the physical well-being of my family, neighbors and friends at this time of sickness. Surround them with Your loving protection. I lift them before You by name . . . *(Pause and pray for your family members by name.)*

- May families grow stronger because of the extra time they have together. Use these days of restricted activity to bring healing to weak or fractured relationships.
- Father I give all of my finances to You, confessing that I am only the steward. Forgive me for the ways that I have been possessive of what is not mine. All that I have belongs to You. Remove all fear from my heart and remind me continually that You Father, will supply all my needs. Present needs, future needs—You are my provider.

- I ask for those who are without work and ask that You open doors of provision for them *(pray for the wait staff at restaurants you frequent, and other service oriented businesses)*.

- I pray for healthcare workers who have too much work, that You strengthen them and sustain them. Keep them from sickness. I especially pray for those working in hospitals and eldercare facilities close to me . . . *(Pause and pray for healthcare workers you know by name.)*

- Give wisdom to our Pastor(s) and leaders (pray for them by name) and grow us as a faith community during this time of separation. May we be increasingly intentional in staying connected and encouraging one another!

- Father give Your wisdom to those who lead our nation and

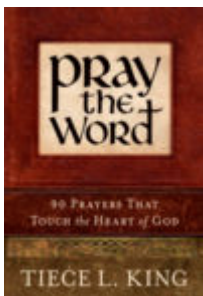
to all public officials. May their hearts turn to You and call on Your Name.

Holy Spirit show me, prompt me, as to how I might participate with Your purposes during this time. Use me as Your mouthpiece to calm fearful hearts and encourage the weary. Use me as Your hands to bless those around me with acts of kindness that Jesus might be seen through me. May Your goodness expressed through me, overcome evil.

I bring these requests before you Father with thanksgiving in my heart, knowing that You are the God who sees and hears and answers. There is nothing that is impossible for You! Therefore, I have hope.

I commit these things to You believing, in Jesus' Name. Amen

Matthew 6:21; Philippians 3:20; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 John 2:6; Philippians 4:6; Romans 12:21; Luke 1:37



—By Tiece King, Author of *Pray the Word* and *Pray the Word for Your Church*. These prayers are presented by the Church Prayer Leaders Network and PrayerShop Publishing.

Warfare Prayer for Believers

A Clash of Kingdoms

By Kathy Branzell



Family can evoke strong emotions. I am very protective of my younger brother Keifer. We never fought while growing up. And if anyone messed with him, I was there to protect him in a heartbeat. Even as adults we still have each other's backs.

Most of our families have some disagreements or squabbles among ourselves, but when an outsider comes after one of us, all the family members take their battle stations, coming to that person's defense. Taking aim at one member of our family is a declaration of *war* on us all!

The apostle Paul reminds us of the nature of war, especially in the spiritual sense, in 2 Corinthians 10:3–5:

Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (nasb).

Who are the people in your family? I pray you see yourself belonging to *God's* family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, a bond even stronger than siblings by blood or marriage.

God's family members pray all types of prayers for each other: protection and provision, direction and desires, jobs and joy, fruitfulness and finances. We even pray over weddings and the weather. We intercede for those who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. We pray over our own needs and the needs of others around us.

But as family members in the eternal sense, each of us is also at war with otherworldly spiritual forces, and we need to take our battle stations to fight for each other.

Developing a Warfare Mindset

Do you consider yourself a "go-to-war" type of family member? It's a good question for all of us. When Satan starts pursuing or pressuring our brothers or sisters in Christ, do we rush into God's throne room in fervent prayer on their behalf? In deep suffering and adversity, do we press in and pray scriptural promises with tears, tenacity, and faith?

When a mother fights for the life of her unborn baby that she is in danger of losing, are we likely to casually lift up a request? Or do we fall before God and plead with Him to glorify Himself in this life and situation?

How do we pray regarding a neighbor's cancer diagnosis? How about that pregnant teen at church whose life is about to change drastically? Can you and I be counted on to do battle in prayer when someone in our small group is "let go" at work? Do we have the courage to prayerfully approach a brother or sister who is being tempted or tormented?

When a fellow believer is wrestling against powers of darkness, God calls us to watch each other's backs. Think about your response when you hear of turmoil and distress. Are your prayers yielded to the Holy Spirit and filled with faith so that they produce divinely powerful responses from the

Almighty Hands that formed the universe and keeps it in motion?

John Piper says, “We cannot know what prayer is for until we know that life is war.”¹ In every breath, decision, and activity, Satan and his fallen army are fighting to fill their kingdom of eternal torment. After all, misery loves company. They do not care about people; there is no affection in them, no desire to see people fulfilled or happy. Their intent is to tempt, trick, and torture any soul into an eternal separation from God. Their goal is to hurt God by stealing His children away from Him. It is *war!*

Fighting the Right Way

We do not fight this war with gossip or judgment—or by leaving people alone to make their own bad choices. When we fail to press in and persevere in prayer, we’re abandoning our posts. We’re surrendering territory and family to the plundering of our enemy.

We must armor up, so to speak, and stand firm on the front lines (Eph. 6:10–17). We fight first on our knees in travailing prayer. We give ourselves to agonizing intercession that expresses our grief and God’s sorrow as He sees His child becoming a target of Satan’s battleplan to kill, steal, and destroy.

- *Family battlegrounds.* If you are a parent, you may know the pain of one of your children being drawn away from the spiritual and physical safety of your household rules. You’ve determined family guardrails for protection and success, but your children rebel, thinking you’re withholding happiness from them.

Parents, overcome Satan’s tricks with truth! Wield the sword of God’s Word over them in prayer (Eph. 6:17).

- *Community battlegrounds.* Millions of Christ-followers enter the marketplace every day. They take their places in schools, the military, law enforcement, business, and retail. They assume roles as government officials, judges, first-responders, and teachers. As influencers in our society, these believers may experience some of the most intense warfare.

Become an intercessor for one or more of them.

- *Cultural battlegrounds.* It's easy to complain about the eroding of biblical values in our culture, to post our frustrations on social media, or to rally in protest. Posting and protesting may make us feel better, but do not change things.

Fight in a more effective way. Try pressing in and praying for God's servants to be bold and courageous in making the right decisions and acting in righteousness.

James 5:16 tells us that the fervent prayers of the righteous are powerful and effective. Prayers tear down the devil's defenses and destroy his schemes. When we, as prayer warriors, fall to our knees, anything set up against or above God will tumble. The haughty are silenced in the humble prayers of God's servants. Even children can overcome fear and join in warfare prayer for others when they pray in the strength and authority of Jesus.

Finding a Higher Perspective

Growing up, all I dreamed of doing was joining the Air Force and becoming a SR-71 pilot. Known as a spy plane, the SR-71 was the fastest manned plane used for strategic reconnaissance. I wanted to serve my country, protect it from harm, and defeat its enemies.

I planned and worked for this my whole life. But, because of

one eye exam, my dreams came crashing down—or so I thought. I was night blind.

A few years ago I told this story to my small group. A friend who knew me well leaned forward, looked intently at me, and said, “Wow, so God put those desires in your heart. But His plans were to use you in His Kingdom, not a country—to fight every person’s enemy, not just America’s. God is allowing you to fly above the earth’s atmosphere and into the spiritual realm in warring prayers. God’s thoughts and ways are higher than ours, but thankfully you have volunteered in the ‘Kingdom Air Force.’”

Years of questions and pain faded as I realized God had deployed me to thousands of prayer battles. He gave me incredible squadrons of fellow prayer warriors who had my back, prayed me through, and taught me truths about prayer.

In warfare never fly alone. We all need prayer partners to defeat a deceiving enemy. Lock your shield with the shields of other warriors who pray with you and for you. Paul reminds us in a passage about spiritual warfare: “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people” (Eph. 6:18).

The war between God’s Kingdom and the kingdom of darkness is raging. Our family (the family of God) is under attack. It’s time to mobilize heaven’s army on our family’s behalf with passionate and persevering prayer.

¹John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010) 65.

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